



INTERVIEW WITH 'PINA' DIRECTOR WIM WENDERS PAGE 22

# WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI AND TRANS COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

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ROBERT BRAY: INTERVIEW WITH A NATIONAL ACTIVIST PAGE 16

# Gay alderman on Emanuel, cardinal

BY KATE SOSIN

For many in LGBT community, James Cappleman is not just the 46th Ward alderman. He and 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney represent the entire LGBT community as the first two openly gay aldermen in the city's history.

Cappleman, still in his first year on the job, has negotiated on recent Pride Parade changes and voted in favor of a hotly contested ward remap, a budget that slashed the Advisory Council on LGBT Issues and a protest ordinance that many activists opposed.

When Windy City Times questioned Cappleman about these and other controversies, the alderman invited the newspaper to come ask him "the really tough questions." Windy City Times sat down with Cappleman in

his Uptown office and asked him some.

**Windy City Times: What are you working on right now?**

James Cappleman: A lot of my focus has been on encouraging more economic development, creating more jobs, creating more retail in the area.

**WCT: When Lakeview residents were worried about safety this summer, did you believe that crime rates were going up?**

JC: What we're hearing from the police is that crime rates are going down. But there is a perception that it is going up. It was the perception that needed to be addressed. What adds to this perception is that there are upticks in violence. We saw that uptick in violence, and it wasn't necessarily a trend that we were seeing.

**WCT: Part of this safety concern was born from issues with the Pride Parade. Were you in those first meetings about the initial changes to the parade?**

JC: Yes. The reasons for the parade route itself was because there was that triangle where people were isolated and they couldn't get out. It was a safety issue. The thought was to make it to 10 a.m. because of the public drinking. I certainly listened to what the police had to say; 10 a.m. is rather early, so I was not thrilled about that. My understanding is that it has gone back to 12 o'clock. I was not part of that conversation.

**WCT: People complained that the community was**

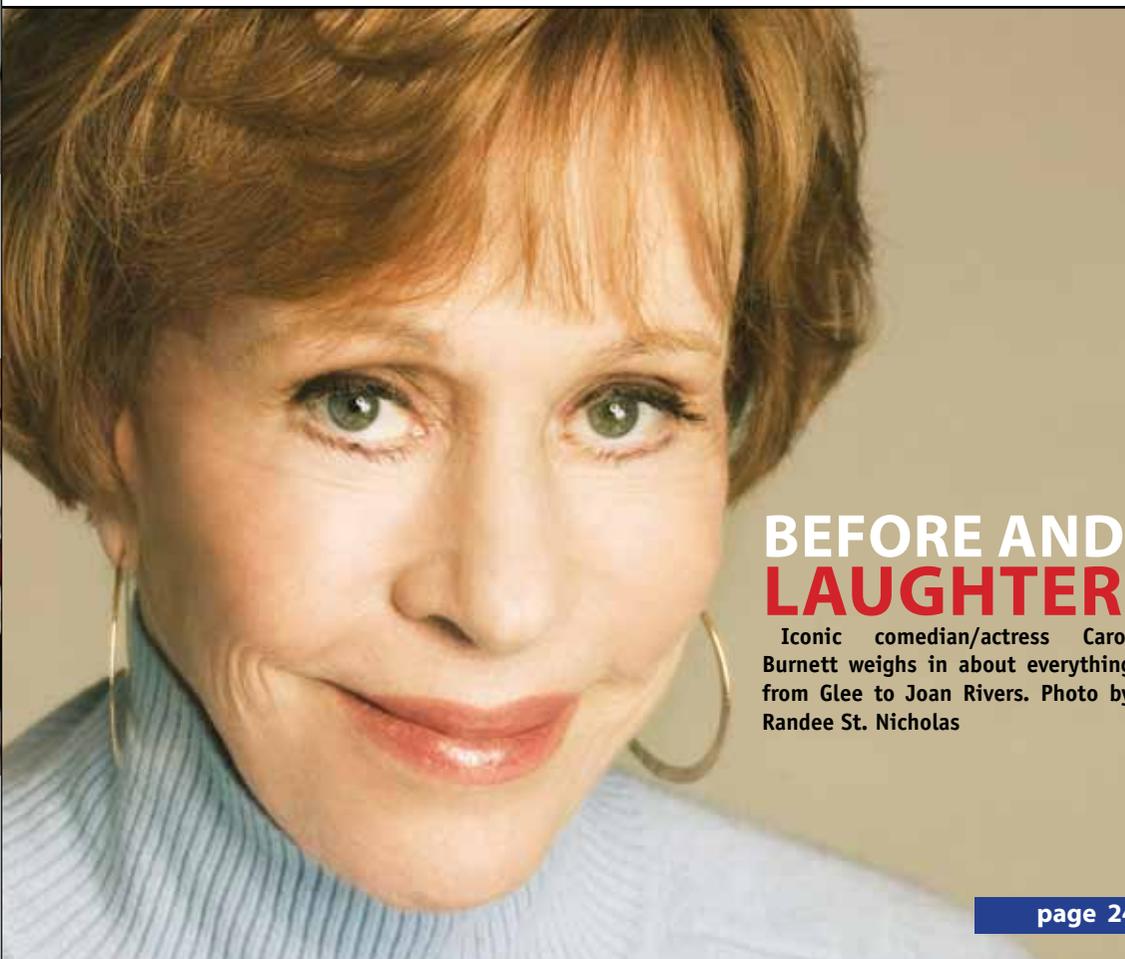
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MARILYN URSO DIES PAGE 10



GAY SOCCER PLAYER DAVID TESTO PAGE 34



## BEFORE AND LAUGHTER

Iconic comedian/actress Carol Burnett weighs in about everything from Glee to Joan Rivers. Photo by Rande St. Nicholas

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## Mayors, Freedom to Marry unite for marriage equality

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

Freedom to Marry formally launched a campaign Jan. 20 that included 80 mayors from across the country who have pledged to advance the cause of marriage equality.

Marc Solomon, national campaign director of Freedom to Marry, unveiled "Mayors for the Freedom to Marry" at a press conference at the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington, D.C. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined the campaign alongside Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; New York City Michael Bloomberg; Houston Mayor Annise Parker; San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders; Boston Mayor Thomas Menino; Santa Barbara, Calif., Mayor Helene Schneider and Gainesville, Fla., Mayor Craig Lowe, among others.

"Each of these mayors has committed himself or herself to the cause and to working with Freedom to Marry to ensure that loving and committed same-sex couples throughout America can marry the person they love and avail themselves of the crucial protections that their families need that only come along with marriage," said Solomon.

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Photos on cover (left, from top): Photo of Wim Wenders by Donata Winders; photo of Robert Bray by Gary Castille; photo of Marilyn Urso by Hal Baim; pic of David Testo courtesy of Testo

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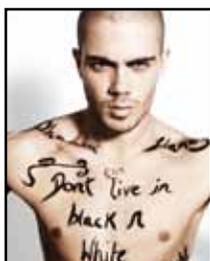
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### WHALE DONE

Windy City Times takes a look at the works of the late gay film director James Whale as Turner Movie Classics is about to run a marathon of his movies.

Photo of *The Great Garrick* from Turner Movie Classics



Max George of the British band The Wanted talks with Windy City Times.

PR photo



Financial guru Phil Sitar looks at stop limits and the Federal Financial Aid Application.

Photo from Sitar

### SOCIAL STUDIES

See pictures of and read about the Equality Illinois transgender social and the Out at CHM talk about the leather community.

### GRIFFIN KILLS IT

Read about Kathy Griffin's comedy show as well as see pictures from the Kills' show at the Riviera.

### THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Read about this week's entertainment round-up and see photos from the One Life to Live farewell party at Sidetrack.

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

### WEIGHT FOR IT...



See photos from Jennifer Hudson's appearances at Weight Watchers and Barnes & Noble.

Photo by Bary Brecheisen/Getty Images for Weight Watchers

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# Gingrich gets boost in S.C.

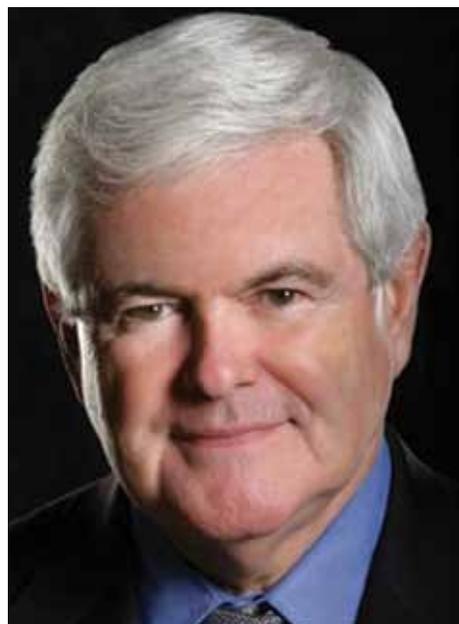
BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Three different contests, three different winners—and none of the remaining four major candidates for the Republican presidential nomination has a record of supporting equal rights for gays.

However, the candidate who described laws banning sexual-orientation discrimination as “religious bigotry”—Newt Gingrich—won the Jan. 21 South Carolina primary. Now, he must slug it out in Florida against Iowa caucus winner Rick Santorum and New Hampshire primary winner Mitt Romney.

Gingrich won 40 percent of the vote in South Carolina’s primary, in which 65 percent of voters identified themselves as evangelicals or born-again Christians. Romney took second place with 28 percent of the vote, followed by Santorum with 17 percent and Ron Paul with 13 percent. Other candidates garnered 2 percent.

In his victory speech, Gingrich hammered home his contention that “elites” and activist judges are threatening the United States



Newt Gingrich.

with “religious bigotry.” He belittled President Obama’s opposition to a pipeline through the mid-section of the U.S. as “taking care of his extremist, left-wing friends in San Francisco.”

Many political analysts are attributing Gingrich’s success in South Carolina to his pugilistic performance in debates, his having served as a member of Congress from neighboring Georgia, and the fact that Romney has been stubbornly reluctant to release his tax returns to the public for scrutiny. In addition, exit polling revealed that 65 percent of Republicans voting Jan. 21 said the debates were an important factor in making their decisions. Of those who said that, 50 percent voted for Gingrich.

In the Jan. 19 debate, Gingrich berated CNN moderator John King for asking him if he wanted to address his ex-wife’s widely publicized accusation that Gingrich had asked her to either let him have a mistress or a divorce. While a highly conservative audience might normally be expected to scrutinize an allegation that a thrice-married candidate may not respect the “sanctity” of marriage, it, instead, seemed to embrace Gingrich’s attack against the “media elite.”

LGBT voters were likely more interested in examining the allegation against Gingrich because he has been opposed to marriages of same-sex

couples. He told a debate audience in New Hampshire Jan. 8 that he did not support allowing same-sex couples to marry because it was “a huge jump from being understanding and considerate” of the pains of discrimination against same-sex couples and “saying we’re therefore going to institute the sacrament of marriage as though it has no basis.” Marriage, said Gingrich, was “between a man and a woman.”

Coming out of South Carolina, Gingrich now has 23 delegates toward the GOP nomination, which requires 1,144 to secure. Romney has 19 delegates, Santorum has 12, Ron Paul has three and Jon Huntsman (who pulled out of the race) has two.

Gingrich has already been campaigning in Florida, which holds its primary Jan. 31 and 50 delegates to offer. While in Miami campaigning this month, Gingrich claimed that Romney appointed the judges who delivered the decision that led to same-sex couples obtaining marriage licenses in Massachusetts. Romney did not. Three of the four justices who voted with the majority in that decision were appointed by other Republican governors; the fourth justice was a Democratic appointee.

It’s not clear how big an issue same-sex marriage, adoption or other civil-rights issues for LGBT people might be in Florida, but the Sunshine State—unlike the previous three states—has a significant gay Republican presence. There are Log Cabin Republican chapters in Miami, Broward County and Tampa Bay, and gay-related issues have been in the news regularly in Florida.

There will be two debates prior to the Florida primary. The first took place Jan. 23 on NBC, sponsored by a number of news outlets. The second comes Jan. 26 on CNN, sponsored by the Republican Party and the Hispanic Leadership Network.

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## YPS replies to call on possible hate crime

Youth Pride Services has responded to a call from the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) regarding the death of Florida A&M University band member Robert Champion Jr., who was killed during a hazing incident.

Champion’s parents have revealed their son was gay, according to Advocate.com. However, his parents do not believe sexual orientation was the primary reason for last year’s attack. Last November, the student, 26, was found unresponsive on a bus in Orlando after a football game against Bethune-Cookman University.

In a statement, YPS said, “We ... have heard [NBJC’s] call to arms and we are here to spread the word to our national youth population. As an organization that strives to create a better lifestyle for the Black LGBT youth communities across the nation, the possibility of this being a hate crime hits close to home.

“As the number of reported hate crimes goes down year by year, unreported cases are high, so our efforts to bring attention to them and invoke action are increasing. We are prepared to help in any way possible to make sure Robert Champion Jr.’s death is not just another skeleton in the closet of civil rights.

“YPS is already preparing for our Year of (You)th campaign geared towards improving the quality of lives of black gay youth living in the United States. A major component of our campaign is the well-being of our community. Our prayers and condolences are going out to Robert Champion Jr.’s parents and family.”

## Sarvis leaving SLDN

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) announced the search process for a new executive director to be named this spring, according to a press release.

Sarvis said, “Working with the team at SLDN on behalf of our nation’s LGBT service members has been the great honor of my life. But make no mistake—there is much more to be done.”

The position is currently posted at <http://www.sldn.org/content/pages/3312/>. Applicants should submit a resume or CV to [search@mc-cormackassociates.com](mailto:search@mc-cormackassociates.com).

## Obama’s address

Be sure to visit Windy City Times’ website, <http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com>, Jan. 25 to read the roundup of President Obama’s State of the Union address, scheduled to be delivered Jan. 24.

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NATIONAL NEWS



—Trans individual storms Rick Santorum (left) press conference

—Astronomical society honors Frank Kameny

—NCLR to honor Jane Lynch, six students

## MAYORS from cover

Villaraigosa, who chairs the campaign as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, spoke about growing up without a father as he highlighted the importance of family. He said the lack of marriage equality for same-sex couples has directly impacted members of his own family.

“I’ve seen the many faces of those hurt by DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) and Proposition 8 in California,” said Villaraigosa. “They are members of my own family. They’re our



Lesbian Houston Mayor Annise Parker at the event. Photo by Michael K. Lavers

nation’s own children who face daily bullying and violence because of who they are or who people think they are. They’re the couples the joyous marriages I’ve had the honor of presiding over, whose special day was shared by friends and families before their rights were stripped away.”

Parker spoke about the difficulties that she and her partner of nearly 21 years faced when they adopted their three children. A series of insurance, custodial and educational challenges followed suit.

“One simple thing would have made a tremendous difference in the lives of my family and truly the lives of millions of Americans, and that is access to the rights and privileges of marriage,” she said.

A Gallup poll in May found that 53 percent of U.S. residents now support marriage for gays and lesbians, but marriage-equality proponents stress that nuptials for same-sex couples also benefits the economy.

In a study released before New York’s marriage-equality law took effect in July, the Williams Institute estimated that nuptials for gays and lesbians could pump up to \$102 million into the state’s languishing economy. Bloomberg noted this economic windfall as he pointed out that 700 same-sex couples get married each month at New York City Clerk’s offices across the five boroughs.

“Every wedding is a celebration that generates money for our restaurants, banquet halls, caterers and other small businesses,” he said. “With many couples and guests traveling to

New York City from other states and countries, our hotels and tourist attractions benefit as well.”

Marriage-equality measures that have been recently introduced in New Jersey and Washington state underscore the sense of urgency behind the campaign.

Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire announced her support of the measure at an Olympia press conference earlier this month, while several Republican lawmakers have also backed the bill. Reports indicate that it only needs one more vote to pass.

“To all my senators who are watching—please stand up, please do the right thing and please pass marriage equality in Washington State,” said Tacoma, Wash., Mayor Marilyn Strickland.

Maryland legislators are expected to debate a marriage equality bill in the coming months, while Maine voters in November will decide whether to overturn a ban on nuptials for same-sex couples that they approved in 2009. And even though these efforts continue to build momentum, several states are considering measures that would prohibit gays and lesbians from tying the knot.

North Carolina voters in May will consider a constitutional amendment that would prohibit marriage for gays and lesbians. Minnesotans face a similar ballot initiative in November. New Hampshire lawmakers had been scheduled to vote on a measure this month that would overturn their state’s marriage equality law that took effect in Jan. 2010, but leaders of the Republican-controlled legislature have postponed it until at least February.

Chapel Hill, N.C., Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt is among the four mayors from the Tarheel State who have joined the campaign. A Public Policy Polling survey in December found that 58 percent of North Carolina voters support the proposed amendment. The same poll found that 56 percent of voters back either marriage or civil unions for same-sex couples.

“We have extraordinary momentum in North Carolina to be the first state in the country to actually turn back one of these hateful and discriminatory amendments,” Kleinschmidt told Windy City Times. “It’s events like this that demonstrate this broad level of support across the country for marriage equality [that] will actually enhance that momentum.”

On a local level, Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov said that Evanston Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl and Waukegan Mayor Robert G. Sabonjian have also signed the pledge.

“There are multiple reasons on the timing of this campaign,” Cherkasov said. Cherkasov said that the next push will be for public officials to show their support for LGBT rights on a large scale.

—Also contributing: Kate Sosin



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# Breast-cancer studies to examine lesbians, bisexual women and transgender individuals

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

Lesbian and bisexual women as well as transgender individuals will be the subjects of upcoming breast cancer studies taking place later this year.

Currently, Dr. Ulrike Boehmer, a researcher at Boston University School of Public Health, is searching for 600 lesbian and bisexual women to participate in her research on "Variations in Health Needs of Breast Cancer Survivors Study." Ulrike has partnered for the second time with the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation's Army of Women to help recruit women who have been recently diagnosed with breast cancer, those



Dr. Susan Love. Photo from the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation

who have metastatic disease, those with recurrent breast cancer, women with second cancers and women who are undergoing cancer treatment currently. These women will be asked to take part in a phone interview to assess their well-being and quality of care.

"This study is looking at breast cancer and its treatment, support that is available to women with breast cancer, how they perceive their health right now, and how they have been dealing with cancer," Boehmer said.

Boehmer's study is the result of two previous

studies that turned up inconsistencies. "One of our previous studies compared sexual minority women and heterosexual women with breast cancer, who had early breast cancer, were without recurrence, and were no longer undergoing cancer treatments. We found that there were no differences by sexual orientation in women's well-being. This is good news.

"Thereafter, we did another study of cancer survivors. This time the study was not restricted to breast cancer or to a certain stage or time since diagnosis. In this study, we found that lesbians with cancer had a significantly greater likelihood to self-report their health as fair or poor compared to heterosexual women with cancer. So this is a contradiction to our earlier study. This is why we want to learn now, whether specific groups of sexual minority breast cancer survivors have worse well-being than heterosexual women with breast cancer."

The responses provided by non-heterosexual women will later be compared to responses provided by heterosexual women to determine if there is a difference in well-being and quality of care. If significant differences are found, this information will then be used to help develop programs or services for the women to help increase their well-being and survivor outcomes.

Dr. Susan Love created the Army of Women (AoW) in 2008 in order to help breast cancer researchers like Ulrike locate women for their studies. Since its founding, the AoW has recruited 370,000 women, 55,000 of whom have participated in at least one breast cancer study. Many of the women who have participated in the research do not or have not had breast cancer.

Love said that non-heterosexual women have been largely ignored in breast-cancer studies, which is why research like Boehmer's is especially important.

In fact, due to a dearth in research on sexual-minority groups, Love's foundation is launching the "Health of Women Study" in June that will include questions specifically targeting sexual minority women and transgender individuals, both male-to-female and female-to-male.

"We will be doing an online cohort study, where we are going to track women who agree to do this over time, both with or without breast cancer. You'll fill out an online questionnaire that will take about 15 to 20 minutes every two or three months and that data will then be tracked and dumped together to look at a lot of different questions. We've been working to set up some specific questions for the gay and lesbi-

an community and particularly for the transgender community. I am very interested in trying to figure out if breast cancer is a higher risk or not in both groups of transgender people."

Love said the transgender community has the potential to provide a lot of answers to the overall understanding of breast cancer. She noted, "In female-to-male transgender people, they don't actually remove all of their breast tissue usually when they have surgery because it's more of a cosmetic operation than a cancer prevention operation, and they are taking hormones too. They are taking androgens, which we know increase breast cancer. So are they at higher risk? Or, are they at lower risk because they had surgery?"

Regarding male-to-female individuals, Love wondered how age and hormones might affect someone's risk for developing cancer and if there are correlations.

## Windy City Times nominated for GLAAD award

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) has announced the nominees for its 23rd Annual GLAAD Media Awards.

Windy City Times is up for an award in the newspaper article/series category for its 10-month "AIDS @ 30" series.

Other contenders in the category are "Coming Out to America," by Melanie Asmar, Westword (Denver, Colo.); "Even on Religious Campuses, Students Fight for Gay Identity," by Erik Eckholm, The New York Times; "Led by the Child Who Simply Knew," by Bella English, The Boston Globe; and "Local Lesbian Couple Navigates Life's Daily Challenges as Parents," by Najla Amundson, The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead (North Dakota).

GLAAD announced 116 nominees in 25 English-language categories, and 35 Spanish-language nominees in 10 categories. The categories include film, television, journalism, graphic novels and theater.

The GLAAD Media Awards ceremonies will be held in New York March 24 at the Marriott Marquis in Times Square; in Los Angeles April 21 at the Westin Bonaventure; and in San Francisco June 2 at San Francisco Marriott Marquis. Special honorees for each city will be announced in the coming weeks.

A complete list of GLAAD Media Awards nominees may be found at <http://www.glaad.org/mediaawards/nominees>.

## Elmhurst reports lower rate of LGBT applicants than expected

BY KATE SOSIN

Illinois liberal-arts school Elmhurst College has reported that fewer prospective students than expected identified themselves as LGBT.

The school became the first in the country to ask students if they considered themselves to be part of the LGBT community when it added an optional question to its application last year.

Just under 5 percent of applicants identified themselves as LGBT, while an estimated 80 to 95 percent answered the question.

Gary Rold, dean of admissions at Elmhurst, told Windy City Times that it is too soon to determine the exact percentage of applicants that identify as LGBT. Elmhurst accepts applications on rolling admission.

"We're still very much in the state of receiving applications," said Rold.

Rold said that nearly all applications will be in by mid-March, although most have already been received.

"I got really interested in it when a transgender woman asked me if she needed to get mammograms and I said I have no idea and I looked things up and I couldn't find anything," she said. "In fact, what you ended up with is people say well you've got breasts and you're taking hormones you better have mammograms, well that may not be true. It's a completely unanswered question."

Love said there is such a breadth of variety and variables in the trans community, which might really offer a lot of insight into breast cancer.

**To find out more about Dr. Boehmer's study and to sign-up, call 866-687-8814 or email [studies@armyofwomen.org](mailto:studies@armyofwomen.org). To register with the Army of Women, visit <http://www.armyofwomen.org/getinvolved>.**

The number of LGBT applicants has been slightly lower than expected thus far.

"I'm a little surprised that it isn't higher," Rold said. "I thought we would actually have more."

Rold cites various statistics that estimate that between 3-10 percent of college students are LGBT-identified.

However, he does not think the 5 percent necessarily reflects on the number of LGBT applicants the school has. Rold said that Elmhurst college parents tend to be involved in students application processes. He speculates that many young applicants who are not out as LGBT to their families either skipped the question, marked that they preferred not to answer or simply stated that they did not identify as LGBT.

According to Rold, the fallout over the historic decision to ask prospective students about their sexual orientation/gender identity has been small.

The question has sparked a community discussion on campus, he said.

Students who do identify as LGBT at Elmhurst are now eligible for the school's Enrichment Scholarship, offered to minority students. The scholarship slashes tuition by a third. Rold said that such large scholarships are very common at Elmhurst, and many LGBT-identified students may already qualify for discounted tuition for other reasons.

The application question is also being used to connect incoming LGBT students with resources, the college has said.

"I've gotten generally very good feedback from the admissions communities at other schools," said Rold, adding that between four and five other schools were consulting with Elmhurst on adding the question to their applications.

For young people especially, the question has been a non-issue, he said. "The 18-year-olds don't seem to remark on it. ... It's just accepted, and acceptance is a cool thing."

## Sen. Kirk suffers stroke

U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk, R-ILL., underwent surgery Jan. 23 after suffering a stroke, according to the Chicago Tribune.

"On Saturday, Senator Kirk checked himself into Lake Forest Hospital, where doctors discovered a carotid-artery dissection in the right side of his neck," his office said in a statement.

Kirk, 52, had the operation at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

In 2010, Kirk narrowly defeated Democrat Alexi Giannoulias to capture President Barack Obama's old U.S. Senate seat.

Illinois Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka released a statement saying, "Like anyone who knows Senator Kirk, I am stunned and saddened to hear about his recent stroke. But if there is one thing I have learned about Mark over the years, it's that he is a fighter and relentless in his efforts to accomplish a goal."

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# Basta survey sparks tension in race against Cassidy

BY KATE SOSIN

Reports of a phone survey from 14th District residents have spurred tensions between Illinois Representative Democratic candidates Paula Basta and Kelly Cassidy.

The two, both out lesbians and longtime community activists, are engaged in a tight battle for the post, which Cassidy has held since her May 2011 appointment.

On Jan. 19, Basta's campaign issued a press release accusing Cassidy of implying through a phone-survey question that Basta's campaign was in violation of federal law.



Paula Basta. Photo by Andrew Davis

Cassidy's campaign, however, denies any participation in or knowledge of the survey.

According to Marty Rogo, Basta's campaign chairman, a handful of 14th District residents have reported a phone survey, during which the caller accused Basta of working on her campaign while on the job as the regional director for the Levy Senior Center. Basta's position with the center is one of a city employee, making it illegal for her to campaign on the job.

In the release, the Basta camp calls on "Kelly Cassidy to pull a misleading survey being used across the district against challenger Paula Basta implying to voters that Basta is under federal investigation for conducting political work while on the job."

Neither Rogo nor Basta have heard the actual survey call, they both said.

One who reported being surveyed was Sue Augustus. Augustus, who is hosting an event in support of Basta, said she did receive the call, which lasted several minutes. Augustus said the survey started off by asking questions about other Democratic politicians, such as Governor Pat Quinn and Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

The surveyor also asked Augustus if she was a lesbian, which she confirmed.

Towards the end of the survey, Augustus said, the caller asked something to the effect of, "Are you aware that, or what if you knew that, Paula Basta may have violated federal law by fundraising for her campaign while still working at the senior center, which receives federal funds, thereby jeopardizing the senior center funding and all the services that are provided to hundreds of seniors?"

Augustus said she could not remember if the caller identified himself, nor was she certain it was someone affiliated with the Cassidy campaign. She did add, however, that her neighbor, who also identifies as a lesbian, reported receiving

the same call.

Basta denied the implication that she has mixed campaign work with her career.

"I am very clear and very meticulous about my work," she told Windy City Times. "From 8:30 to 4:30, I am a city employee."

Basta said she did not reach out to the Cassidy campaign regarding the survey. She also confirmed that she approved the press release regarding the survey before it went out.

The Cassidy campaign denied conducting the survey.

"I have no idea what it is," said Lauren Peters, Cassidy's campaign manager. "I even called around myself [to find out who did the survey]."

Windy City Times researched the phone number Augustus provided back to Mountain West Research Center, an Idaho-based company that does political polling and other research.

The company does not appear to be on Cassidy campaign expenditures, although Rogo believed the survey was conducted after quarterly reports were due.

Peters said that the Cassidy campaign has not asked any survey questions that implied Basta had mixed work and campaign time. The campaign is using another pollster entirely, Peters said.

"We are solely focused on screaming positive things about Kelly Cassidy," she said. "My guess is that they're using this to try to knock Kelly off her game, which is not going to happen."

Rogo accepted the possibility that Cassidy's campaign did not run the survey. Still, he said, Cassidy should speak out against it.

"I think if not directly by the campaign, it is still on behalf of the campaign, and they should still denounce it," he said.

## Cassidy talks crime in Edgewater and Rogers Park

BY KATE SOSIN

Kelly Cassidy, 14th Dist. State Rep., met with constituents Jan. 17 to strategize on a perceived uptick in crime in the district.

Cassidy's district, which encompasses the heavily LGBT Rogers Park and Edgewater neighborhoods, has been on edge in recent weeks after a string of shootings, most of which involved gang disputes.

According to Cassidy, unseasonably warm temperatures could be to blame.

"It hasn't gotten cold enough to drive all the activities indoors," Cassidy said.

Crime rates tend to spike during warmer months, when more people spend time outside. But as the temperatures drop, so do the number of violent crimes. Police and community groups tend to use those colder months to prepare for the warmer times, said Cassidy.

However, with temperatures remaining spring-like until recently, those groups have lost time in addressing community issues.

Residents of Edgewater continue to be concerned about the Thorndale Red Line stop, which they say has been a "hot spot" in the neighborhood for years. In recent months, residents have tried to fill vacant storefronts with art and provide better street lighting, but those efforts have yet to pull in businesses that might deter crime, say residents.

Rogers Park residents say that the Howard Red Line stop is also a hot spot for crime.

Cassidy spent Jan. 13 with a team from the Chicago Transit Authority assessing all the Red Line stops in her district. In the coming years,

many of those train stations will be updated in an effort to deter crime, she said.

She also wants to get more guns off the street. She is working two bills aimed at doing so, she said. House Bill 3809 would increase the penalties for providing a gun to a gang member while House Bill 3845 would make it easier for people to legally turn over guns to authorities.

Cassidy holds safety meetings at her Edgewater office approximately once a quarter. The last such meeting was held in October.

## State rep, WC&F co-owner protest library cutbacks

BY KATE SOSIN

In a last-minute protest, 14th Dist. State Rep. Kelly Cassidy and Women & Children First bookstore co-owner Linda Bubon met outside of the Rogers Park public library to demonstrate against library cutbacks Jan. 23.

Public library hours in Chicago were cut in the city's 2012 budget amid outcry from librarians and supporters. Libraries across the city will be closed on Monday mornings this year.

A handful of day-care children walked over

to the Rogers Park Library, 6907 N. Clark St., on Jan. 23 to find it closed. Instead, Cassidy and Bubon greeted the youngsters at the locked front door.

Bubon and Cassidy, both openly LGBT community figures as well as mothers, talked about their experiences growing up with libraries.

"I would spend hours just sitting in the stacks," said Cassidy.

Just four adults attended the protest, which was organized at the last minute in solidarity with other demonstrations in the city. Mystery writer Sara Paretsky protested outside of the Beverly library branch, while others led protests at the Bucktown and Little Village branches.

In Rogers Park, Bubon read to the group of children, despite the cold drizzly weather. The old library hours remained on the door, but inside, the Rogers Park branch was dark.

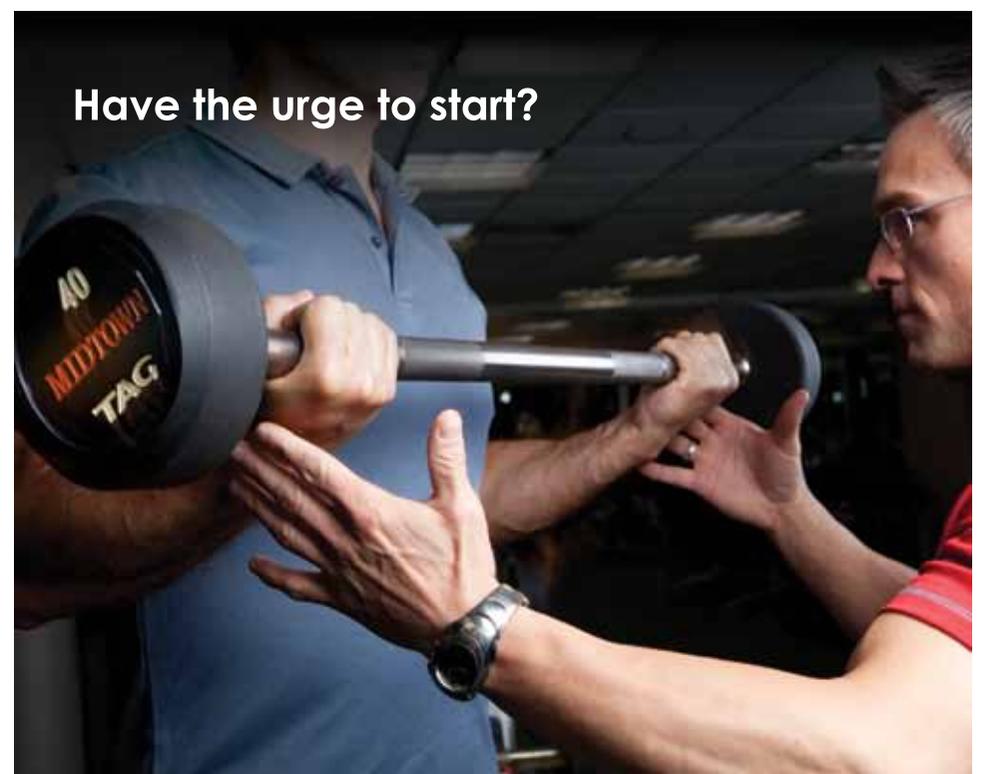
The Rogers Park protest was put together the night before, Bubon said. Cassidy was invited the morning of the event.

Cassidy, whose district encompasses Rogers Park and Edgewater, noted that she holds satellite meetings with constituents at the Rogers Park Library branch.

"Ironically enough, my satellite hours were on Monday," she said.



State Rep. Kelly Cassidy (left) and Linda Bubon at the Rogers Park library. Photo by Kate Sosin



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## ALDERMAN from cover

### not consulted on those first changes.

JC: I'm new in the process, and I knew the facts were we had to change the route. The focus was, how could we change that route to make it worthwhile for everyone? We wanted to balance that concern with the businesses along Halsted and the businesses along Broadway.

### WCT: How did you feel when Cardinal George compared the parade to a Ku Klux Klan gathering?

JC: Well, I'm a part of Dignity/Chicago, and we left the church property because the church required us to openly oppose same-sex relationships. [Note: In 1988, Dignity left to offer services elsewhere after the Archdiocese stated that it did "...not endorse organizations 'which assume a position of advocacy against Church teaching.'"]



Ald. James Cappleman. Photo by Kate Sosin

So, when the cardinal made this statement, I was disappointed. My stance has always been that the Roman Catholic Church should take a more pastoral stance and work to unite rather than divide. This was a more divisive action.

### WCT: Tell me about your decision to vote in favor of the budget, which cut the Advisory Council on LGBT issues. What was your feeling there?

JC: I hated it. ... I believe that the issues that LGBT community faces are different than what other groups face. We face intense discrimination, and I've personally experienced that myself. So, this was a group that I believed deserved special protection. So, I was disappointed.

The struggle I have is that the city's budget is very precarious, and I knew that we had some problems. It's much more serious than I wanted to believe. I don't think it will compare to the cuts that will have to be made in 2013 and 2014. So I went along with this. I certainly did some bargaining.

### WCT: People have called this a "rubber stamp" council for the mayor. What were the conversations behind the scenes that led to the overwhelming support of this budget?

JC: Part of my concern, and the concerns of other alderman, was the lack of information that we needed to make decisions. I did not like it that, at times, I had to make a decision as to who was telling me the truth and who was exaggerating things to make me vote a certain way. I almost voted "no" on the budget...

Many of us who had questions on this process saw Mayor Rahm Emanuel very new to this, as I am as well. There were lots of other factors that

it made it more difficult for him to create sudden reform, but we saw him going in that direction. I saw him focused more on wanting performance metrics for different directions, and I saw him going in the direction of wanting more transparency. So my vote, and the vote of many other aldermen, was "We're going to let this go this time, but we're watching very closely."

### WCT: Tell me about the new ward map. This was redrafted the morning it was voted on without a public hearing. Why did you support it?

JC: I went to one public hearing, held at DePaul University. Over 100 people [who] testified opposed [it]—many of them because their neighborhoods weren't being respected. The reality was that there were too many complicating factors to make this work. African Americans and Latinos are protected classes.

I did not want a council war based on race. This is 2012. This is embarrassing. And I was

angry that you could sense where an alderman stood on different maps based on what that alderman's race happened to be. That disgusted me.

So when this map came out where the Latinos and the African Americans agreed on it, and I saw this maybe as a way of stopping some of this tension that existed that felt so unhealthy, I felt it was my duty to support it. Did I like it? I did not like the gerrymandering. It disgusts me.

### WCT: Does this map disenfranchise North Side voters?

JC: In the past, my understanding was that the standard deviation was greater in the 2000 map. It's not the ideal. I don't like it. I weighed it with wanting to make sure the representation could withstand the court challenge. My biggest focus was not costing the city \$70 million in something that we couldn't possibly afford.

### WCT: Does this city need 50 aldermen? Many have argued we would be fine with 25.

JC: It makes a lot of sense. Here's my problem with it: I'm currently working around 80 hours a week. My job is typically seven days a week. So at this point in time, given the public's perception of what we should be doing, we need 50 aldermen. Most of our requests are all related to 311.

If you fix that—if you fix the public's perception that the alderman's job is to make sure that 311 does their job and that police [do] their job—then we wouldn't need 50 aldermen. I'm not sure we need 25 aldermen. The other part of this is that the public wants an available alderman. ... If we lessen the number the public has to understand the availability of the aldermen won't be as much. If they're okay with that, go for it.

### WCT: Why did you vote for the protest ordinance?

JC: Oh my gosh, that was frustrating. Originally, I was all set to vote no, absolutely no. I was originally suspended from high school for encouraging other students in some protest, so I'm an adamant believer in that.

I listened to the concerns of my constituents, and I also listened to the concerns of [American Civil Liberties Union]. It was my understanding from another alderman's conversation with the ACLU that their primary objection was with the raise in fines. A number of residents said I should not vote for this ordinance because they would have to register bull horns. That was taken out. Actually, the ordinance was even expanded so that if there is a large protest gathering that morphs into a parade, it could become a parade without the need for a permit for a parade.

...I did not want any perception that the city was discouraging protest. The biggest concern was about the increase in fines. I think the lowest cost is \$25, which it costs more to even process a \$25 fine, and it had not been raised in 40 years. When I heard the concern the ACLU had, I went back to mayor's office and said "You can't increase these fines." They said, "They haven't been increased in 40 years." I said, "I appreciate that. Shame on us for not reviewing this ... but increasing it now gives the perception that we are discouraging protest." When the city responded to that, I thought "Okay, I can support this."

### WCT: Some have lamented they feel that the mayor is not supportive of the LGBT community. What is your sense of his support?

## Global LGBT march announces Chicago leader

BY KATE SOSIN

The committee coordinating a "worldwide" LGBT march has announced a lead Chicago organizer.

Noa Shayden, 23, a rising activist in the Chicago scene, will be heading up efforts for the April 21 LGBT march, set to coincide with marches around the country.

The Worldwide LGBT Civil Rights March has been in the works since July of 2011, said Joe Knudson, principal organizer of the effort. The event has mostly been organized on Facebook, with more than 1,400 people saying they will attend one of the marches.

However, word of the marches has traveled slowly and leaders like Shayden have only recently been appointed, sending organizers scurrying to get the word out, apply for proper protest permits and finalize routes in time.

"We're working fast and furiously," said Knudson.

The Washington Blade noted that few major LGBT organizations had heard of the march. Still, Knudson is hopeful that news of the march is spreading.

"I think it's the perfect time," he said. "It's growing by leaps and bounds every day."

Knudson, a banker by trade, admits that this is his first foray into LGBT activism. The Oklahoma native organized fundraisers for victims of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, but the march will be his first major LGBT undertaking.

He said the march is in support of LGBT rights generally, but that it will aim to bring awareness about upcoming elections and garner support for marriage equality.

The marches will aim to spotlight young organizers, said Knudson.

"We kind of wanted to bring youth into this," he said.

Among those younger candidates was Shayden. Shayden, a genderqueer/ trans-

JC: Well, he knows my partner by name. I'll be getting married, and I'm inviting him to my wedding. I have always sensed his support for me. I think the tension that we see is the constraints he has on the budget, and it's going to get worse. But I've always felt his support. I believe it's there.

### WCT: Do you support single-room occupancy housing?

JC: Absolutely. We need to build more SRO housing. One of the problems we have with SRO housing is that when they start getting into difficulty...they need some help. When SRO housing gets in to trouble, the most vulnerable get affected. So, I would like to see a process in place to provide SRO housing the support they need so they continue to provide quality housing for single individuals.

I would like to see SRO housing scattered more throughout the city than just certain sections. The 46th Ward has a disproportionate number of SRO housing, and that's fine. I just think we need to make sure that the [SRO] housing that we have is run well for the safety and well-being of the people that live there and the safety and well-being of the community at large.

### WCT: Final comment?

JC: My final comment is when I am making a decision about public safety, or about development, or an ordinance that affects our free speech or the budget, there are multiple complex factors that are at play. My job as alderman is to weigh all that, so that when I make a decision, the good outweighs the negative, and it's fair.

identified activist, has just begun to make a name in Chicago. Shayden began organizing with Join the Impact-Chicago and has since worked with the Queer Intercollegiate Alliance, Occupy Chicago, Get Equal, Marriage Equality U.S.A. and Genderqueer Chicago. Ze (Shayden prefers gender-neutral pronouns) also co-founded Video Action League and currently works for Cramer PR and Events, which has a hand in much of Chicago's queer nightlife advertising.

According to Shayden, the Chicago-based march will focus on mainstream LGBT issues like marriage equality and upcoming elections. But ze also wants to use the march to show the community's diversity.

"With the Chicago march, I'm trying to bring an awareness of the other identities of the alphabet soup," Shayden said, adding that intersex, queer, questioning and pansexual identities will be represented during the march.

represented during the march.

Shayden is currently working on finalizing an organizing team as well as the route of the Chicago march. Those details are expected to be announced in the coming days, Shayden said.

At least 10 other U.S. cities will be staging marches April 21, including New York City; Washington, D.C.; Atlanta; and Portland, Ore. Organizers from Pakistan have also signed on. According to Knudson, marches in European countries will likely be announced soon.

## Correction

Last week's "T in the Life" featured an incorrect response. In response to the question "When did you start questioning gender?" Lex Lawson actually said, "I think I have always questioned gender. One of my first memories is from when I was about four years old making a case to my father about how the association of blue as a boy's color and pink as girl's color was antiquated. I'm not sure he was listening, but really I have spent most of my life believing that gender roles and assumptions are not natural but an outdated way of thinking."

Windy City Times regrets the error.

# Gingrich-Jones: Kelly Cassidy is the next Tammy Baldwin



Candace Gingrich-Jones at the Cassidy fundraiser. Photo by Kate Sosin

BY KATE SOSIN

Candace Gingrich-Jones, the half-sister of Republican Presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich, said she sees state Rep. Kelly Cassidy as "the next Tammy Baldwin."

Gingrich-Jones, an outspoken LGBT-rights activist and longtime personal friend of Cassidy, headlined Cassidy's recent Lakeview fundraiser Jan. 18.

She joked about her half-brother Newt, who she has vowed to vote against, particularly because of his stance against LGBT rights.

"While we don't get to choose who we're related to, we do get to choose who represents us," she said.

Gingrich-Jones, who came to Chicago solely for the fundraiser, gave her old friend a strong endorsement. "Kelly is destined to be a public

servant," Gingrich-Jones said, adding later that "Kelly is the next Tammy Baldwin."

Baldwin, who is running for U.S. Senate, could become the first openly gay person in that legislative body.

Cassidy said she is taking it one race at a time. She is running in the primary against Paula Basta, a veteran LGBT activist who is also an out lesbian.

Among the major players in local LGBT politics who attended the fundraiser were 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney, 46th Ward Ald. James Cappleman and state Reps. Greg Harris and Deb Mell.

Cassidy said she welcomes the challenges facing the Illinois House: "As my mother always said, 'How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.'"

The fundraiser was held at the Lakeview home of Bradley Lippitz and Jonathan Pizer.



Debra Shore. Press photo

## Debra Shore holds fundraiser

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Eric Nelson and his husband, Jess Jose, hosted a fundraising brunch at their home for openly lesbian Metropolitan Reclamation Water District (MRWD) candidate Debra Shore Jan. 22. About 15 people attended the event to hear Shore's latest campaign news.

Among the guests was Ald. James Cappleman, who represents the ward where Nelson and Jose live. Guests chatted and noshed on Jose's homemade creations before Nelson (Shore's campaign manager), Cappleman and Shore spoke.

Cappleman said of Shore, "She has always been ahead of the curve in the pursuit of reform and transparency and that is especially important in water reclamation. ... Water is our most precious resource and we need someone like Debra Shore who understands that. ... I wholeheartedly endorse Debra Shore."

Shore said, "I believe this agency has a chance to reinvent itself and no longer treat water as a waste product ... but as a resource recovery agency." Speaking about the upcoming primary vote Shore said, "I am concerned that there will be a low voter turnout in March due to the lack of big-ticket Democratic candidates running for office in Illinois." Shore

then opened the floor for questions, which ranged from the Asian carp issue to the biggest challenges that the MWRD faces.

The Chicago Federation of Labor, Personal PAC, the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, the Cook County Democratic Party and the national and Northside Democracy for America have all endorsed Shore's candidacy. Shore said she is hoping to get more endorsements going forward as well as raise more campaign funds.

Mailers will be going out to the voters in the near future and Shore said she will be at train stations and L stops in February and March to chat with commuters and hand out her campaign literature.

Shore has also been invited to be a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C. along with at least two other openly gay Chicagoans—Ald. Tom Tunney and Center on Halsted CEO Modesto Tico Valle.

For more information visit <http://www.debrashore.org>.

## Activists launch petition after local attack

BY KATE SOSIN

A Change.org petition against bullying has picked up nearly 16,000 signatures after a 17-year-old was attacked by seven of his peers.

A video of the attack, widely disseminated over the internet, shows a group of young people pummeling a Chicago high school student in Bridgeport Jan. 16. In the video, the youth kick and punch the victim in the head, beat him with his own shoes and push him into the snow.

The online petition, started by Timothy Hwang of the National Youth Association, calls on the Chicago Police Department to arrest and charge the attackers. It also asks Chicago Public Schools to develop an anti-bullying course and make it mandatory for the attackers.

"This video shows an extreme example of a young person being senselessly attacked," said Hwang, in a statement. "Actions need to be taken to ensure that incidents like this don't happen again. Young people who engage in this type of bullying and violence need to learn about the impact their actions have on others."

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# Marilyn Urso, HBHC MACS 'mother,' dies

BY KATE SOSIN

Marilyn C. Urso, a "second mother" to many HIV-positive Chicagoans through her nursing at Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC), died Jan. 10 after a short battle with lung cancer. Her age is not known.

A Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame inductee, Urso was best known in Chicago's LGBT community as a longtime medical coordinator with the Multi-Site AIDS Cohort Study (MACS),

"Many stood by their sons' sides, and many did not. But Marilyn was always there."

Before going to work at HBHC, Urso owned Toy Gallery, a children's toy store in Old Town. Later in life, she owned Maple Leaf Park, a recreational area in Earlville, IL. In her spare time, she wrote screen plays and published a book of games.

However, most in the LGBT community recall her dedication to those society marginalized and ostracized. Urso, they said, did not fear her patients or the virus they carried.



Marilyn Urso receiving her Chicago Hall of Fame Friend of the Community Award in 2009. Photo by Hal Baim

the world's largest and longest-running HIV study. Urso spent 17 years on the study, administering to hundreds of men both medically and emotionally.

"She was always the champion of lost causes," remembered John Weldt, who worked with Urso on the MACS.

A heterosexual nurse, Urso began working at HBHC in 1990, when stigma around AIDS was still thick and HIV-related deaths were many.

According to the Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame website, "Urso recalled that, while being interviewed for the position, she was asked if she felt comfortable visiting the homes of gay men. A bit put off by the question, she replied that she had been very comfortable with gay men long before it was considered 'fashionable.'"

Danny Kopelson, a longtime LGBT activist and HIV fundraiser, befriended Urso when she started working for HBHC.

"Somehow, you just never expected to see an older straight woman in this position," Kopelson said.

Urso supervised exams. But her talents went beyond her medical duties. Many of her patients referred to her as her "second mother."

She regularly sent birthday cards to patients, sat with them in the waiting room and bickered with colleagues who she felt were not taking care of patients the way they should. When her patients became too ill to travel to HBHC, she visited them in their homes.

"Often, families learned their sons were gay and dying at the same time," said Kopelson.

Colleagues remember Urso as a rebel, quick to embrace patients but equally quick to scold other healthcare providers who did not give the job their undivided attention.

Still, Kopelson credits Urso with a high retention rate of MACS volunteers. According to him, Urso wrote volunteers thank-you cards and went out of her way to make them feel important.

Urso left HBHC in 2007 but remained active in the community, consulting on HIV care.

"Over the years, I know one of the things that made Marilyn most happy was witnessing the development of new HIV medications and knowing that AIDS was no longer the same death sentence it once was," said Kopelson. "She witnessed the worst of AIDS and also how it developed into a more manageable virus."

In 2009, Urso was inducted as a "friend of the community" into the Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame. The honor thrilled her, and she brought her family to the ceremony.

In November, Urso was diagnosed with lung cancer, within days of her sister Betty Murphy's diagnosis of cancer. The two sisters also died a few days apart.

Urso was secretive about her age, said Weldt. Not even her official obituary contains a birthday or age, but Weldt believes she was in her 80s.

A memorial service will not be held for Urso, per her request. According to her Chicago Tribune obituary, friends are asked to donate to a charity of their choice instead.

## Forum looks at feminism and Steinem's legacy

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

A recent panel discussion at Northwestern University focused on feminism and Gloria Steinem's legacy.

The event featured four panelists: Veronica Arreola, assistant director of the Center for Research on Women and Gender and the director of the Women in Science and Engineering program at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Paula Kamen, author and longtime visiting scholar with the Gender Studies and Sexuality Program at Northwestern University; Lucy Knight, author and visiting scholar at the Gender Studies and Sexuality Program at Northwestern University; and Deborah Siegel, author and founding partner of the website She Writes. Each panelist talked a little bit about her background; then, the audience saw the HBO documentary *Gloria: In Her Own Words*.

Following the screening, the panelists asked audience members to share their experiences of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and then opened up the discussion to the rest of the audience.

Arreola said, "I see the feminist movement as a series of cycles. ... I do believe there has been a constant fight for equality in the United States since Abigail Adams wrote to her husband to 'remember the ladies.' ... As for today, feminists are everywhere—from the little girl on YouTube who ranted on about how girls' toys are pink to veteran stateswomen like Gloria."

Kamen added, "I also see the women's movement as a long series of cycles, not separate movements. Learning history ... we see that it takes all kinds. We see this diversity in the historic feminist fight for sexual freedom starting with Emma Goldman and later Margaret Sanger and now with Leslie Feinberg who has been working on transgender issues since the 1990s. ... It's important for each generation to define its place in feminism for itself: to define its own issues, and organize themselves while having fun."

"Today many young feminists work on issues that one may not even immediately see as feminist. For example, younger women are leaders in the LGBT-rights movement, the anti war and environmental movements, in movements against exploitive Third World sweatshop labor, against homelessness, and for prison reform."

"I do not see American feminism's history as three short 'waves' that took place between 1863 and 2000, but as a two hundred plus year struggle," said Knight. "We have not reached equality yet. The key, as Susan B. Anthony and Gloria Steinem agree, is that the younger feminists stay ungrateful to the older feminists, and don't stop pushing for women's equality in all realms, not just salaries and wages. Today's feminists are everywhere and are more likely to be experts in a field now, rather than generalists like Steinem, but that is good. Their numbers are legion and their feminist work is woven into the fabric of society."

"I think that sometimes older and younger feminists today are depicted as at odds, with veterans cast as relics of a bygone era and younger feminists portrayed as unaware of or ungrateful for the work their mothers did," said Siegel. "Younger women today aren't abandoning the movement; they're reinventing it. That is our legacy. Feminists have been creating, imagining, and reinventing since day one."

Northwestern University's Gender and Sexuality Program and Communications Studies

Department, along with the North/Northwest Suburban Illinois NOW chapter, sponsored the event.

Steinem will be speaking at the already sold-out Columbia College Conversation in the Arts series Tuesday, Feb. 7, at Film Row Cinema.

## Indiana license plate is first for LGBT youth

BY KATE SOSIN

A new license plate in Indiana is the first of its kind—one that celebrates LGBT youth. It is believed to be only the second LGBT-specific plate in the United States, after Maryland.

The plate is a project of Indiana Youth Group (IYG), an organization that operates a center for LGBT youth and helps schools from Gay Straight Alliances.

According to an IYG statement, the plate is intended to raise awareness about services available to LGBT youth in Indiana. Every plate sold will bring in \$25 for LGBT youth programs. The plate is available for purchase now.

"It makes a huge statement to the wider community that these youth are important and will hopefully let many more youth know



Indiana LGBT license plate. Image courtesy of Mary A. Byrne

that IYG exists," said Mary Byrne, executive director of IYG, in a statement. "We are thrilled that the community now has the opportunity to show their pride and support of LGBTQ youth by purchasing our specialty license plate."

The project has been four years in the making. The organization first applied for the license plate in March 2008 but was rejected. After another denied application, the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana filed suit. The state approved the plate as part of a settlement.

LGBT-rights activists have hailed the new license plate as an unlikely win for a state without a single openly LGBT person in its legislature.

## State senate candidate prays for gays to repent

BY KATE SOSIN

A state Senate hopeful recently said that he prays for gay people to repent, according to a report by the Daily Herald.

Don Castella, who is running in the 30th District in Lake County, posted on his Facebook page that he has "read what the Holy Bible teaches and pray for homosexuals to repent," according to the Herald.

The comment did not appear publicly visible by Jan. 20, while other statements by the Republican candidate were.

Castella did not respond to a request from Windy City Times to comment.

He is running unopposed in the primary, but will face off against Democratic three-time incumbent Terry Link in the general election.

On his campaign website, Castella lists himself as a conservative Republican and Christian.

# Gay attorney Mike Forti eyes judicial seat

BY KATE SOSIN

Mike Forti has had such a long and successful enough career that if he wanted, he could sit back and enjoy the fruits of his labor—a high-ranking litigation job with the City of Chicago and some of the city's biggest cases under his belt. Instead, the openly gay attorney is throwing his hat into the race for a seat as a Cook County Circuit Court judge.

Windy City Times talked with Forti on why he thinks the time is right to make the move to judge and where he thinks the law is prejudiced against LGBT people.

**Windy City Times: So Mike, tell us a bit about yourself.**

Mike Forti: I've been practicing law for almost 32 years in Chicago. I'm a St. Louis resident, but I came to Chicago and I loved it when I came to Northwestern in 1977. I began my practice in the private sector ... but for the last 17 years I've been at the City of Chicago's law department, and for virtually all of that time a deputy corporation council in charge of conflicts litigation.

**WCT: What made you decide to run for judge now?**

MF: Well, there were a couple of factors that led to my thinking. One was that I had been at city for a fair amount of time. With Mayor Daley's decision not to run for re-election, it made me think about what several people had suggested to me ... that perhaps I should think seriously about the bench. They thought that I had the right skill set to be a qualified judge.

**WCT: A lot of voters don't consider the judiciary because there seems to be less of an opportunity for change there. What do you think is important to know about you as a candidate for judge?**

MF: In some ways I understand when people say that judges don't have platforms in the sense that we value the fact that a judge is go-



Mike Forti. Photo courtesy of Forti

ing to be fair and impartial. ... But I think it is fair to say that people can look at lawyers and people interested in the bench on what their background has been. For example, I've been very passionate defending the city's gun ordinances. That's partly my job, but it's also my passion because I think it's important to abide by the second amendment, but still believe that there can be reasonable gun laws.

I also think it's important to provide a forum, particularly in these days when everyone is cynical about government and feeling that they're on the short end of the stick. In some small but important way, when people come to the courthouse and feel like they're going to get a fair shake based on the facts of their case and not feel like they're disadvantaged because of the

color of the skin or what their income level is or because they don't know a particularly powerful person.

**WCT: In the LGBT community there has been a bit of pushback against the city over recent budget cuts, among other things. Are you at all concerned that running as a person connected to the city will present a challenge for your campaign?**

MF: I haven't felt that in talking to people in the LGBT community. I certainly have had an important position in the law department, but that's primarily directed towards litigation. I haven't been an insider, if you will, when it comes to what the city's policies are with respect to LGBT.

**WCT: And you are a member of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association, correct?**

MF: Yes. I think I've been a member of that bar association for the last two years.

**WCT: Have you been active with any other LGBT community organizations or issues?**

MF: I've been active, as long as I can remember, being a contributor to the AIDS Legal Council. I couldn't, given my job, actually do AIDS legal work, but I tried to compensate for that by being a contributor of the AIDS Legal Council and Equality Illinois for quite some time.

**WCT: The Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago asks candidates what they see as a deprivation of rights for LGBT people under the law. So I'd like to ask you: How would you answer that question yourself?**

MF: Well, the one that I think most vividly and initially comes to mind is the discrimination by virtue of the fact that committed gay couples do not get the tax benefits by the federal government by virtue of the fact that if one is married or has a civil union in a state that does not affect how you're treated by the federal government.

I think we need to continue to be vigilant, and I think how, for example, the civil-union law is interpreted could go a long way towards really establishing greater equality.

**WCT: Do you see opportunities for LGBT advocacy on the bench?**

MF: I think that's very important, and I think there is some framework already established by the [LGBT organization] Alliance of [Illinois] Judges. It's a good way to create dialogue, and

I'm guessing that dialogue also can occur behind the scenes. We all know that whether it's in federal court or in state court, judges talk. They talk as friends and they talk about their cases. That's a whole additional way of having influence if there are more LGBT members on the bench.

**WCT: What do you want people know about you as an LGBT candidate?**

MF: I think I present a candidate that is both highly qualified based on my 30-plus years of practice and a proud member of the LGBT community. So, this is not an instance where people have to pick either someone that is highly qualified someone that is a member of the LGBT community. I think that people in the LGBT community want and deserve both, just like the rest of the population.

**A Mike Forti fundraiser will take place Wed., Feb. 1, 6-8 p.m. at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Tickets are \$50 each, and include two drink coupons and hors d'oeuvres. See <http://www.michaelfortiforjudge.com>.**

## 'Aging with Pride' forum at Rush Jan. 25

"Aging with Pride"—a discussion on health issues facing LGBT older adults—will take place Wed., Jan. 25, at Rush University, Room 976, 600 S. Paulina St., 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Guest speakers will include two individuals affiliated with Howard Brown Health Center: LGBT competency trainer Cecilia Hardacker and Chief Medical Officer Magda Houlberg, M.D.

The 2011-2012 Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellowship is presenting the free symposium.

RSVP to [rsvp@hmprg.org](mailto:rsvp@hmprg.org) or 312-372-4292, ext. 24.

## Freedom to Marry reception Feb. 22

Lambda Legal is hosting the 11th Annual Freedom to Marry Reception Wed., Feb. 22, 6:30-9 p.m. at the National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th St.

This is a family-friendly event. Child care is available.

For more information, email [RYadira@LambdaLegal.org](mailto:RYadira@LambdaLegal.org) or call 312-663-4413.



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COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN

**Preferred pronoun(s)**

He/him/his

**Identifies as**

Transgender boy, cuddly lump of queer

**Neighborhood**

Northwest Indiana suburbs

**Life's work**

"To spread acceptance through understanding. I would also say to share the beauty of music with others."

**Job**

"I proudly hold a position at the local Dairy Queen. The no nametag policy is amazing, and it's quite nice having discounts."

**Hobbies**

Biking, walking, singing, playing the piano.

**When did you start questioning gender?**

"At the age of 4 I knew something didn't feel right, by late elementary school/beginning of middle school I knew I didn't identify as a woman."

## Michael Raymond Comandella

**What is your coming out story?**

"There are many little occurrences that have happened, but the best one would probably be in my last semester of high school. I wrote a trans narrative for comp class, and (with my permission, of course) my teacher read it out loud to my entire class. It was a tad scary, but exhilarating in the end, especially when my peers began attempting to refer to me as Mikey."

**What is the best thing about being trans/gender-variant?**

"It's quite the experience. It's like doing a rendition of someone else's piece on an instrument. Some genius has given you these blueprints, and you get to mold the piece into your own. I was given this being, and I have the daily adventure of discovering/uncovering another part of me."

**Whom do you admire most?**

"I admire Dr. Maya Angelou. As a child and early teenager, her poems and autobiographies helped me through many a dark night. Cliché, I know, but she is a powerful woman, and I respect and admire everything she does as a human being."

**How do you explain the way you feel about gender to others?**

"I try to explain that it just isn't a factor. I don't fully understand myself, and I won't pretend that I do. My friends understand the fact that I believe gender is fluid, and has no set state. For some people it is a lot harder to get through to, since to them, their gender has been, is, and will remain the same forever. But they'll usually still smile and nod nonetheless."

## Lakeview business Pie Hole closes temporarily

BY ROSS FORMAN

The latest chapter in the wild tale of the Pie Hole Pizza Joint went down Jan. 18, when officials from the City of Chicago arrived at the Lakeview restaurant at about 5:30 p.m. It reopened Jan. 23 at 5 p.m.

Pie Hole owner Doug Brandt texted Windy City Times the morning of Jan. 23 that the business was reopening. The publication later confirmed the time with him.

On Jan. 18, authorities stuck a bright orange sticker on the door, closing the pizzeria immediately due to financial woes Pie Hole owner Doug Brandt has battled for about a year.

Last winter, "I got behind paying the sales tax," Brandt said.

So fees and penalties were imposed, and they kept accumulating.

At one point in 2011, Brandt was six months behind in paying, he said.

"The only reason I was late was, well, I hate to blame the economy, but it just hasn't been easy; things are always slower in the winter," Brandt said.

Brandt's tardiness paying state tax impacted his \$600 city license, since the city does not renew a business that is delinquent or even late in paying.

"I can't really say I was surprised. I guess it was inevitable, eventually," Brandt said.

Brandt would not say exactly how much he owes, but said the total is enough to buy "a nice used car."

Brandt spent Jan. 23 going to multiple city and state offices in downtown Chicago to repay all that he owes. The business reopened later that same day.

"It's been a colossal headache," Brandt said.

Brandt had left Pie Hole about 10 minutes before city officials had arrived. Employees at the restaurant sent Brandt a text about who had shown up—and he immediately returned.



**Pie Hole owner Doug Brandt. Photo by Ross Forman**

Brandt, 40, lives in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. He said there are nine employees at Pie Hole, all part-time.

Pie Hole is one of several businesses impacted by the economy within Chicago's LGBT neighborhood, with numerous bars and restaurants closing. Examples include Cocktail and Firefly, while Ful posted a sign on its door that it was "in hibernation" for the winter. However, as of Jan. 24, there was a 'For Sale' sign at the restaurant..

Pie Hole opened at its current location Oct. 1, 2010, after closing at Roscoe and Halsted in May 2010.

## EQ IL's 'Justice for All' gala Feb. 11 at Hilton

The annual Equality Illinois "Justice for All" gala will take place Saturday, Feb. 11, at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

More than 1,000 guests are expected to attend, including elected officials, candidates and other VIPs.

Individual tickets start at \$300 each; see <http://www.eqil.org> or call 773-477-7173.

## Hull House Association to close

BY KATE SOSIN

The Jane Addams Hull House Association, the historic social service agency dating back to 1889, will close its doors this spring.

Stephen Saunders, chair of the association's board of trustees, confirmed the news in a press release stating that funding issues will force the agency to close by the end of March.

Hull House, founded by Jane Addams 121 years ago, has long been a fixture for LGBT Chicagoans, whose namesake was widely believed to be a lesbian. Addams' companion during her time at Hull House and thereafter was Mary Rozet Smith.

According the statement released by Hull House, the demand for its services has increased while its ability to fundraise in a weak economy has dwindled.

"During these challenging times, we have remained committed to the mission established by Jane Addams more than 120 years ago," said Saunders, in the statement. "Now, our goal is to ensure the families and individuals we serve continue to have access to the services they need. This was a very difficult decision, but it was the responsible thing to do."

The association is filing for bankruptcy. Metropolitan Family Services will take on some of the agency's programs. The agency said it also working to connect current employees with new jobs.

## Gloria Steinem at Columbia Feb. 7

Iconic activist and lecturer Gloria Steinem will be the featured speaker for Columbia College Chicago's Conversations in the Arts at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7. This season, the featured speakers are innovators who have shaped trends and topics in disciplines taught through Columbia College's School of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The free public lecture will be in the Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash Ave. Theater seating is limited so advanced registration is highly recommended. Reservations are at [www.colum.edu/conversations](http://www.colum.edu/conversations).

## Chicago House's 'Clicquot' event Jan. 26 at Willis Tower

Chicago House will host "Champagne Wraiture 2012: Clicquot in the Sky" Thursday, Jan. 26, on the skydeck (99th floor) of the Willis Tower, 233 S. Wacker Dr., at 6 p.m.

Advance tickets are \$99 each and \$110 at the door. There is also a limited \$130 VIP ticket that includes a gift pack with products from various vendors, including Garrett Popcorn and Sweet Miss Giving's Bakery.

Visit <http://www.ChicagoHouse.org> or call 773-248-5200, ext. 303.

Hull House runs more than 50 programs around foster care, domestic violence, homeless issues, senior services, youth services, education and workforce development. It currently serves nearly 60,000 Chicagoans.

The association, located at 1030 W. Van Buren St., is not affiliated with the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, housed on the University of Illinois at Chicago campus.

## WCT now on Apple Newsstand; website redesign launched

CHICAGO—Windy City Times, Chicago's only weekly LGBT newspaper, is among the nation's first LGBT-media companies to offer its publication through the Apple iPad Newsstand.

The company already has general news applications for the iPad and iPhone, but it now also offers the newspaper as a free subscription that includes a full print version of the weekly paper as well as daily headlines and category sorting, available through the innovative new Apple Newsstand system. Users can download the app for Windy City Times News, and it will automatically show up in their Newsstand.

The addition of the Newsstand product parallels Windy City Media Group's (WCMG's) redesign of its company website, <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com>, to further enhance the daily breaking news and features that complement the weekly newspaper, biweekly Nightspots bar magazine and weekly Windy City Queercast podcast produced by WCMG.

"This redesign was done by our amazing long-term Web developer, Martie Marro of LoveYourWebsite.com," said Tracy Baim, publisher of WCMG. "For the last several years, Marro has been moving our design in a daily news direction, integrating our weekly print visibility needs with the daily needs of our readers and advertisers. This new design, with a focus on categories of news and entertainment, will make it easy for people to find the information they need."



Public health consultant  
**Anthony Galloway**

TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN

PHOTOS BY ROSS FORMAN AND JERRY NUNN



**Age**  
30

**Hometown**  
East St. Louis, Ill.

**Lives in**  
Uptown

**Relationship status**  
Single

**Job title:**  
Independent public health consultant,  
Austin CBC Initiative

**Favorite Chicago restaurant**  
Joy's Noodles & Rice

**Favorite bars**  
Second Story Bar and Club Escape

**Award-winner**  
Honored by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force in 2004, at age 23. The plaque reads, "For your inspiring leadership of St. Louis Black pride and your untiring work to teach young gay men about HIV." Galloway said, "I was extremely honored to receive such a prestigious award. It really empowered me and set my foundation."



Anthony Galloway went to his Southern Baptist church one day in 2000 with his grandmother. Galloway was 18 at the time and ended up sitting next to a man in his 30s.

His grandmother told Galloway to leave his seat near the front and, instead, come sit with her—because he was sitting next to an HIV-positive person and she just didn't know how the disease was spread.

That moment still resonates with Galloway—and is one of the main reasons he was pushed into the HIV/AIDS field.

It was, he says years later, his "a-ha moment."

Galloway is now actively involved in HIV/AIDS awareness and more, and has been for 12 years.

"The work I do is not necessarily a hobby, but it's what I am most passionate about," Galloway said. "I have always wanted to be a part of positive change."

That includes speaking to young Black males about HIV/AIDS, such as the session this past December, a moment he won't soon forget.

"Afterward, one of the young men wrote to me on Facebook and said that [my speech] was as if I was speaking directly to him," Galloway said. "The clients are the number-one reason I do what I do, and I truly feel like I made a positive impact on his life."



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**Susanna Lang**  
**Two by Two**

**Sunday, Jan. 29**  
**4:30 p.m.**  
**Mary Sommers**  
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# Chicago House expands beyond housing

BY ERICA DEMAREST

With an operating budget of nearly \$5 million and programs dispersed throughout the city, the Chicago House and Social Service Agency is considered one of Chicago's largest and best-known HIV/AIDS nonprofits. It's been inducted to the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame and has welcomed luminaries such as Bill Clinton and Madeleine Albright.

And it all got started with a simple meeting in a drag bar.

In 1985, a group of community members, sick of seeing their AIDS-positive friends die on the streets, met at the Baton to address Chicago's need for nonjudgmental housing. The would-be activists soon banded together, fundraised through "tag days," and within a year, had enough money to lease an Uptown mansion.

"There wasn't one visionary," said Stan Sloan, current executive director. "There was a whole collection of people from the LGBT community. A little known fact about our history is that it was the whole LGBT community; it wasn't just gay men."

The Chicago House was incorporated as an Illinois not-for-profit on Sept. 9, 1985. Armed with private donations and \$91,500 worth of city block grants, the NGO opened its first home on Feb. 25, 1986.

The renovated twenty-room Uptown mansion housed eight individuals in private rooms with shared dining, cooking and living areas. Since medications were largely nonexistent and life expectancies short, the house provided a space where people could die with dignity.

"[We offered] an environment where no one put blame on them, shame on them," said Dan Sesztak, who's worked at Chicago House since March 1987. "At least they were in an environment that was home-like. We tried to make the rooms as homey as possible."

Modeled after similar group homes in San Francisco, Houston and Boston, Chicago House's Uptown residence soon developed a hefty wait-list.



AIDS mural at the Chicago House.

In November 1986, noted LGBT activist Thom Dombkowski became the organization's first executive director. Under his guidance, the fledgling NGO expanded operations to open Lakeview and Northwest Side homes in 1987.

Though the organization was making strides, it soon became evident that some residents desperately needed 24-hour hospice care.

"You can only be in the hospital for x-amount of time because of the insurance system we have," Sesztak said. "Then where do you go? Who wants to be in a nursing home and have AIDS?"

In 1988, Chicago House launched its 24-Hour Care Program on the first floor of its Lakeview residence. The need for hospice support quickly outgrew the tiny space, and in 1989, the organization opened a seven-bedroom Edgewater home that would become a permanent location for its 24-hour support services.

By the early 1990s, AIDS had become a truly global pandemic that touched people of every nationality, race and walk of life. To address the needs of shifting HIV/AIDS-impacted populations, the Chicago House launched its Family Support Program in 1992.

"From the start, our roots were in the gay community," Sloan said, "but we've always been about the much bigger picture of HIV and AIDS."

Chicago House partnered with the Children's Place Association to become the first service provider in the Midwest to offer family-focused housing. With funding commitments from the U.S. Department of Housing and Human Services (HUD) among others, Chicago House broke ground in 1995 on what would become known as the Fred Woods Home.

Open to the public in 1997, the North Side facility housed nine families in a collection of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. In its first year alone, the home received 53 applications for just nine spots; and the Chicago House soon launched a second family facility in Uptown.

In the late 1990s, the HIV/AIDS landscape shifted once more with the development of highly active antiretroviral therapies (HAART). As people impacted by HIV and AIDS lived longer, fuller lives, their needs grew to include counseling, medication adherence therapy and much more.

Chicago House rose to the occasion.

"When you look back at our history," Sesztak said, "we tried to meet the needs of our clients as soon as we could. We saw [a problem] and—bam—we implemented the need."

In addition to offering myriad counseling and support services, Chicago House launched the Independent Living Program in 1997 with the purchase of a 24-unit building. Clients who could live independently but might still need financial support could apply to live in studio apartments.

"The question was: What could people do now that they could kind of manage their health and see their life expectancies extended?" said Jeff Pulliam, resident manager.

Regular case management and other social services were soon added to Chicago House's growing repertoire.

Health had improved so much in the HIV/AIDS community that by early 1999, Chicago House's 24-hour care facility had free beds and empty waiting lists for the first time in its history. After serving more than 400 people over the course of a decade, the facility closed its doors in 2000.

"It was a very clinical, hospital-like setting,



Jeff Pulliam, Resident Manager. All photos by Erica Demarest

and we just didn't need that anymore," Sloan said.

What Chicago House did need was a push toward prevention services, medication adherence programs and alternative housing. Today, the NGO boasts numerous counseling and employment programs, not to mention five distinct housing programs located in neighborhoods across the city.

The Supportive Living Program offers a "first step" home for those who are coming directly off the streets or might need substance abuse counseling; while family housing options now include aftercare and tutoring for children. And programs such as Gaining Ground and Scattered-Site offer rent subsidies for those working toward economic independence.

Helping clients achieve that kind of independence is what Chicago House is all about, Sloan said.

"The analogy is: People show up at our door, and we give them a toolbox," he said. "Over however many years that they need to live with us, they fill that toolbox up with tools to live healthy, independent lives. And they save [money] while they're with us: They take part of their income and it automatically goes into an account that we give to them when they move out."

While creating safe, affirming housing will always remain central to Chicago House's mission, Sloan said, the organization plans to focus its energy on social services, such as peer-to-peer education and employment programming, as it moves forward. [For an in-depth look at Chicago House's employment services, see other article this issue].

"Chicago House has always chased the virus—whatever the new thing is," said Lisa Razzano, a UIC professor who conducts research with the organization. "Initially it was housing. There

were no housing programs, so they made housing. Now there's no work for people with HIV, so they're doing that. We have a peer workforce in recovery that we could be taking advantage of. They're doing that."

Razzano believes Chicago House will continue to be on the forefront of innovative, adaptive programming well into the future.

"They've evolved as much as HIV science has evolved in the last 30 years."

To learn more about the Chicago House and Social Services Agency, visit [www.chicagohouse.org](http://www.chicagohouse.org) or [twitter.com/HereTilTheCure](https://twitter.com/HereTilTheCure).



Above: Stan Sloan, Chicago House CEO. Below: Jeff Pulliam (left), resident manager, talks to a client.



# Chicago House helps clients with employment concerns

BY ERICA DEMAREST

During his first several years at Chicago House, CEO Stan Sloan noticed an alarming trend.

Every year, hundreds of clients would make their way to the HIV/AIDS nonprofit to take advantage of its housing and case management services. But only a small number made the leap out of subsidy-based programs and into more permanent employment situations.

"The HIV/AIDS population will not access mainstream employment programs because there's too many fears unique to them," Sloan said. "They're afraid of disclosure in the workplace. They're afraid of what it's going to do to their health. They're afraid of taking their medications and whether they're going to be able to do that. And mostly they're afraid of what happens if: 'OK, It took me years to get onto Social Security income. If I go off and get sick, how can I get back on?'"

Hoping to address the panoply of concerns, Sloan set to work meeting with lawyers, AIDS organizers and city officials. And in 2005, Chicago House launched the city's first citywide employment program for people with HIV/AIDS. [Sloan asked that the program's name be kept private to protect its participants' safety and confiden-

Those who have been living on the streets or have never held a 9-5 job benefit from sessions on professional etiquette and hygiene expectations. Yoga, spirituality and substance abuse therapy are also integrated into sessions, many of which are conducted by Inspiration Corporation, a local NGO that works to end homelessness.

"If something is left behind and isn't addressed, it'll pull the whole person back," Sloan said.

HIV-related concerns naturally take center stage. A representative from the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities talks to groups about managing paychecks, weaning off Social Security and how to get back on it, if necessary.

"You can cost yourself out of a public benefit very easily, and then you're not earning enough money to keep up with your life," said Lisa Razzano, a UIC professor who researches barriers to employment for those with HIV/AIDS. "The core of what [Chicago House is] trying to accomplish is that dependence on benefits. They're not saying: Get off your benefits; their bad. They're saying: Benefits change, and you can't rely only on that entitlement."

To date, more than 600 people have gone through Chicago House's employment program.

goods that are made from scratch on-site. Most bakers are interns working with Chicago House's employment program, and 100 percent of proceeds are funneled back into Chicago House services.

Participants start things off with a 4-week unpaid training session (offered in rotating locations throughout the city) where they learn food service basics such as baking, packaging, customer service and delivery.

"Even in a very bad economy, the food service continues to hire and need people," Sloan said. By learning a variety of skills, interns' job prospects increase considerably.

Next up is a 6-month paid internship that doubles as continued education and the first line on many people's resumes. Close to 100 percent of Sweet Miss Giving's graduates find full-time employment.

Sloan originally worried that transitioning from unemployment to full 40-hour workweeks might be detrimental to clients' health.

"What we have found is just the opposite," he said. "The more that people enter into normal life activities such as work, which is such a part of human dignity, the better their health perceptions are. They're no longer just sitting in their apartments thinking about being sick... As

their health perceptions change and they start thinking more positively, their actual health follows."

Razzano and colleagues at the University of Illinois at Chicago conducted studies comparing the health of HIV-positive and HIV-negative people who work fulltime.

"It was not a physiological thing or a biological illness-related thing that put people in the workforce," Razzano said. "What we found in one of our studies... was all mental health stuff. Did people believe their health was stable? Did they have a more positive general outlook on their health?"

Worldwide, the No. 1 barrier to employment is depression, Razzano said. By boosting a client's mental health and feelings of self-worth, employment programs such as those at Chicago House can augment physical health.

Additionally, helping clients become self-sufficient reduces the strain on already underfunded NGO programming. With 50,000 new infections every year in the United States (most of which come from poor communities), it is essential to make sure those who are newly diagnosed will have access to social services by alleviating overcrowding. And employment is one of the best ways to do that.

"Employment is the key for the future for HIV and AIDS services," Sloan said.

To learn more about the Chicago House or Sweet Miss Giving's, visit [www.chicagohouse.org](http://www.chicagohouse.org) or [www.sweetmissgiving.com](http://www.sweetmissgiving.com).



Trainees baking cookies and coffee cakes at Sweet Miss Givings. Photos by Erica Demarest



tiality.]

"Housing's always going to be at our core," Sloan said, "but our most cutting edge, our most important program right now, is our employment program. Nobody else in the nation is focusing on it the way that we are, to the degree that we are, as successfully as we are."

After preliminary meetings with Mark Ishaug, former president/CEO of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, and Chris Brown, assistant city health commissioner, Sloan realized that to address the HIV population's unique concerns, Chicago House would need to create an entirely new breed of programming.

"We tried to find a program to model ours off of, and there wasn't one," Sloan said.

Chicago House's 4-week program offers a holistic approach to employment preparedness. Participants address basic career concerns through resume help, mock interviews and meetings with career counselors.

The average placement rate sits at 40 percent, a high number for populations that are HIV/AIDS-affected or formerly homeless, Sloan said.

Though the program was doing exceptionally well and participants rated it highly, many found it difficult to obtain full-time positions.

"They never thought they would be productive again in their lives," Sloan said. "All of a sudden, they're so excited. They do stellar in the program. They're ready to move forward, and because of their histories, we couldn't get an employer to take a chance on them. So we thought, well, let's just start our own business where we can give them that chance."

Chicago House partnered with a class at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management to explore viable business models. After weeks of deliberation, they settled on a bakery, and Sweet Miss Giving's was born.

Launched in October 2008, Sweet Miss Giving's sells all-natural, preservative-free baked



# Robert Bray: Decades of activism add up

BY TULLY SATRE

For a man whose work may be often overlooked, not counted among the public face of the LGBT rights movement, Robert Bray's influence is immeasurable.

Many of today's LGBT activists can draw a line back to Bray, likely in less than six degrees of separation due to his efforts on both the national and local level. But despite the lack of credit often reserved for the celebrities and speech-givers, Bray could be described as jovial and grounded, even without receiving the credit due. Perhaps this is for reasons unrelated to his work at all.

Bray acknowledged that yoga has kept him physically and mentally grounded through it all. He discovered yoga in the early 1990s while on the road traveling from state to state to conduct media trainings for local activists.

"At one point I even integrated yoga into our trainings," Bray recalled. "Nothing like Downward Facing Dog and High Cobra to loosen up stressed out activists and get them back in their bodies." Bray joked that many folks didn't know how to react to meditation breathing, "But that's happens when you move to California from the nation's capital."

The seeds for Bray's beginnings were planted on the steps leading to the U.S. Supreme Court, a romantic backdrop for any activist starting at the nation's pulse. He was among the hundreds of thousands that poured into Washington, D.C. in early October 1987 for the Second National March on Washington for LGBT rights. The march was a series of events intended to shift the limelight on the unfair treatment of LGBT Americans. Crowds of activists from all over the country stormed the Supreme Court on the first anniversary of *Bowers v. Hardick*. The ruling upheld a Georgia sodomy law, which criminalized consenting same-sex relations.

At the time of the march, Bray was still in the closet. "My boss and my family did not know I was gay," Bray said. He had been working as a junior public relations executive for IBM. It was a time when the HIV/AIDS crisis stigmatized the American psyche and tarnished the social acceptance of the gay community. But Bray's interest was piqued when he saw a flyer in Washington's Dupont Circle neighborhood (the District's equivalent to Chicago's Boystown) calling for volunteers to help facilitate a large-scale demonstration condemning the infamous Supreme Court ruling.

Bray immediately answered the call to arms and began attending meetings in the basement of a local church. "Amidst all the chaos of the meeting, I found a lesbian who appeared to be in charge," Bray recalled, "I introduced myself ... said I was a trained corporate PR practitioner, knew how to work the media, [and] did the event organizers need help with the press?" That's how Bray and Urvashi Vaid first met. Bray described Vaid as, "one of my great progressive inspirations and movement goddesses to this day." (Vaid, a long-time LGBT rights activist, has led organizations such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and was named among the most influential LGBT activists in the U.S. by *OUT* magazine in 2009.)

Almost instantly, Vaid pressed Bray into service. "I was given the responsibility of setting up, detailing and working the media event [for the march]," said Bray. Bray's duties ranged from "writing messages for speakers, crafting the press release, decorating the podium, [and]

spinning the reporters."

Volunteering for the March on Washington events prompted a major seismic shift in Bray's career. "Suddenly I found myself using professional skills for something very different and exciting than marketing computer products," Bray joked. "[But] there was only one little problem: I was not out of the closet!"

Despite that detail, Bray's hard work paid off: "The media turnout at the event was phenomenal!" The late 1980s was a time when the American public was just starting to pay more attention to LGBT issues. As the spotlight shifted from a purely negative portrayal onto a community ready (and prepared) to fight back, Bray stood witness to the events. "TV producers could count on visually well-staged events," Bray said. "I recall one cameraman saying, 'You gays really know how to make a picture!'" Bray recalled that as more gay and lesbian reporters came out in the newsroom, there was more pressure to cover LGBT issues.

"The topic itself was hugely controversial as LGBT people and people with HIV/AIDS were taking their story directly to the government, often getting arrested in the process," said Bray. But living in an era when the American public fed off of controversy, it was not hard to get coverage.

"There was a phalanx of TV cameras at the press conference," Bray remembered. "A nest of microphones covered the podium. Behind us, queers were being arrested in waves ... 'Arrest bigotry, not Gay People!' was one chant I remember well," said Bray. Bray recalled the press conference going off perfectly.

After the press conference ended, one reporter, recognizing Bray from IBM ("she normally covered the Beltway business beat," Bray noted) approached him for a follow-up. For Bray, what happened next was pivotal: "She told the camera to roll, thrust the microphone in my face, and asked, 'Why are you here at this protest?'" Without much thought about the consequence, Bray answered dutifully, "I responded something like, 'I'm here because I'm gay. We demand an end to discrimination and sodomy laws that criminalize our sexuality. The police should not be in our bedrooms. Every person has the right to live openly and freely and free of fear and discrimination because of who they are or whom they love.'"

Not really realizing what he had just done the reporter complimented Bray before moving on, "Good soundbite," she said, then walked off to get B-roll of the riot police," remembered Bray.

That evening, Bray was scanning coverage from the press conference and the day's events. That's when he saw himself, his face pixelated and projected through thousands of tiny mirrors on televisions broadcasting nationwide. "Suddenly on the TV screen was my talking head, outing myself," Bray said, "Back at home in Arizona my dad and other relatives were watching the news and saw me on TV. My boss at IBM saw it. I outed myself to several million people at once."

Looking back, Bray attributes everything to the timing of events, "the ferocious and thrilling combination of queer direct action, media spotlights, the headline-seizing news of AIDS and gay rights, the exploding controversy of government inaction in the face of one of the worst epidemics in history ... all of which converged in D.C. at that moment."

Hard part taken care of, Bray decided there was no better time for a change. "I found myself



Robert Bray. Photo by Gary Castille

directly in its centrifugal center, whirling myself right out of the closet and onto a course of social justice."

Shortly after outing himself, Bray resigned from IBM (what he called his "yuppie job") and decided to make working for the LGBT and HIV/AIDS movements his full-time job. Initially, Vaid roped Bray in as communications director at the Human Rights Campaign Fund. He later became communications director at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, where Vaid served as the executive director.

In 1993, Bray moved from Washington to San Francisco to continue work for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. By then, Bray had been working for NGLTF for several years and he was ready for change. Bray started the "Fight the Right Project" for the Task Force with his colleague Scot Nakagawa. At the time, many anti-gay ballot measures all argued under the umbrella that there be no special rights for gays, "[they] were popping up in states around the nation, particularly out west," said Bray.

With the "Fight the Right Project," Bray and Nakagawa traveled to several "hot spots" around the nation conducting trainings for the grassroots. The idea was to provide local activists on the frontlines the tools necessary for pushing back against the radical/religious right-wing.

Bray pointed out that it was not just the LGBT community that was being targeted by these different groups but also people of different races and even genders. "Our approach was progressive in nature, grounded not only in LGBT equality, but also racial and gender justice," said Bray. "We helped LGBT activists from Cortez, Colorado to Bend, Oregon to Rapid City, South Dakota and many other places, urban and rural, understand the interconnected agenda of the Far Right."

Being on the road showed Bray the gritty reality many faced fighting for social justice. "I met amazingly courageous queers along the way," Bray recalled, "especially in small towns." Aside from meeting with local activists and dodging

homophobic extremists, Bray laughed that he also "ate a lot of country food on the road those days."

By the late 1990s, Bray's influence continued to expand. He founded the SPIN Project in 1997 to give social justice activists the tools they needed to sharpen their relationships with the media. Bray recognized that his experience both in the corporate world and the LGBT movement were applicable to other movements as well. "LGBT activists are very savvy and skilled when it comes to telling our stories, staging impactful media events and photo ops, and communicating strategic messages," Bray said. "I felt activists from other movements could benefit from our experiences." With the SPIN Project, Bray and his staff conducted media trainings all over the country. Bray described the SPIN Academy as a "multi-day media boot camp," which is still going strong, though Bray no longer works with the project.

Today, Bray continues to support social activist movements primarily through philanthropy. He funds media training as well as other communications capacity building resources to bolster the ability of immigrant rights and other activists so they may communicate their messages more clearly.

Robert Bray's legacy is a testament to the often under-appreciated and perhaps less glamorous parts of the greater LGBT movement. Often working behind-the-scenes to foster positive relationships with the media, Bray may be credited with influencing hundreds, and quite possibly thousands of social justice activists nationwide. This is, of course, aside from detailing the credit due for his bringing a message of equality and fairness for all Americans through his work as an ambassador between activism and the media. His efforts to sharpen the media tools of grassroots movements across the states have provided activists the necessary confidence to shed a positive light on the LGBT movement.

# Couple runs to fight AIDS

BY ROSS FORMAN

Kinnier Lastimososa and Jennifer Cheng will celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary on May 18 and will be running the annual Copenhagen Marathon two days later, marking the 17th marathon each has run over the past 3-½ years.

They will be sporting red Team To End AIDS (T2) shirts for the 26.2-mile journey through the streets of Copenhagen, standard wardrobe for the couple that has lived in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood since they got married.

They have been staunch T2 and AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) supporters since their first race mile—at the Amsterdam Marathon in 2008. They have raised about \$25,000 for AFC through their running careers—and were recognized for their fundraising efforts in 2011 during a T2 pasta party before the Chicago Marathon.

"We support AFC because we want to raise awareness [for] the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS, and we believe in the AFC's leadership in this fight: helping people in Chicago living with HIV/AIDS and working nationally and internationally to advocate regarding rights, healthcare and research," Lastimososa said. "In addition to helping fund the AFC's efforts, we appreciate being a part of T2 because it has helped us strengthen our relationship with each other, develop strong long-term friendships, and realize goals on the courses and in our daily lives."

Cheng added: "Marathon running has changed my life. I signed up to run [a] marathon in 2008 to stay in shape and cross [that] off my bucket list. I thought I would do it once, and then forget about it. I didn't expect to fall in love with running, to embrace its challenges and rewards so fully. Training with T2 taught me that a seemingly intimidating goal is attainable when, one, it is broken up into manageable portions and, two, individual success is also the result of a group effort."

Lastimososa, 35, works as an attorney for the law firm of Sedgwick LLP, specializing in products liability, trade practices and insurance coverage. Cheng, 33, is a designer and project manager at PGAI Design Partners, a commercial interior architecture firm.

"There are many marathon training programs, and several of them support charities," Lastimososa said. "We chose T2 because the AFC's mission is important and because the people supported by the AFC remain marginalized. We keep training with T2 because of that mission and because we see that T2 has a similar effect on others as it has had for us."

"T2 represents not only endurance training, but also people whom I cannot wait to see every weekend to catch up during our long runs and

speed work and who share a common goal."

Cheng, a member of the AFC Junior Board, added: "On some days, finding the motivation to get all your miles in can be difficult. In addition to the [T2] coaching, the long runs or track workouts on the weekends were a like an outing with friends. My favorite part of the morning was stretching together afterwards and exchanging training tips."

"Runners are such a diverse group of people. Since joining T2, I have befriended so many individuals from different professions, organizations, and cultural groups whom I never would have met otherwise. I am definitely a more well-rounded person since becoming a T2 runner."

This dynamic duo has run marathons in London, Berlin and throughout the U.S. When they hit the starting line in Copenhagen, that will be their sixth of 2012, already.

Goofy?

Yes—and they started the year in Orlando, Fla., completing the annual Walt Disney World Marathon Goofy Challenge, which consists of a 13.1-mile half marathon on Saturday, then a 26.2-mile marathon the next day.

"Some of our closest friends during the last few years have come through T2, and I cannot imagine our lives without those people and T2," Lastimososa said.

They mostly run every marathon, not to mention training runs leading up to race day, side by side. But Lastimososa's best-ever time is 3:46:50 while Cheng's best is 3:59:50. Naturally, both set their Personal Record (PR) at the same race—the 2010 Metro Health Grand Rapids Marathon.

Lastimososa also has run seven half marathons, while Cheng has completed eight.

The 2010 London Marathon was the favorite for each.

"We have been fortunate to visit London periodically, and I have loved the city since I was a teenager. In fact, it may be my favorite city other than Chicago," Lastimososa said. "Running through the city was wonderful. The crowds were some of the loudest I have ever witnessed, and the course ran past some of the major, historical sites. Running across the Tower Bridge was one of my favorite running moments."

Cheng added: "Since the majority of London marathoners are charity runners, we could only secure spots through T2; it was a great feeling to be surrounded by like-minded athletes. The crowds were amazing; there wasn't an empty stretch of sideline anywhere on the entire course. When we ran past a cheering section of a nearby runner's charity, the crowds roared even louder; it felt like they were cheering for us as well. We have several friends who live in London, and they all turned out to support us

on race day. The course was great as well—the best sightseeing tour of one of my favorite cities—but all of the vocal love we got from our friends and complete strangers gave me the best feeling I've ever had as a runner."

The pair has run six marathons over the years on behalf of AFC: Amsterdam, Chicago, London, Grand Rapids, New York and Berlin.

"We started running with annual fundraising goals regardless of the number of races," Lastimososa said. "In theory, we have run all of [our races] on behalf of AFC."

"My dad was an avid runner when I was younger. I never appreciated the [training] he put in because I [then] did not enjoy running [and] did not share in his love of the sport. In 1996, he [finished] a marathon fast enough to qualify for the [prestigious] Boston Marathon. I [then] did not understand the prestige and history of the race, which was the 100th that year. After completing the Boston Marathon, he took time away from distance running, but stayed fit through other disciplines."

"After Jennifer and I started training to benefit the AFC more than a decade later, the three of us decided to run a half marathon together. As it turns out, my dad still had his running legs and good speed for his age, or any age really. We then set a goal that I would pace him to qualify for the Boston Marathon again. The first time we tried in 2009, he barely missed his qualifying time, but, at the 2010 Dallas White Rock Marathon, I successfully paced him to a Boston-qualifying time with less than 30 seconds to spare. It was wonderful to be able to share the success and the passion for the sport." The two have had plenty of other memorable moments in running shorts, too.

"Being a charity runner is really a testament to the fact that almost anyone can run a marathon or participate in an endurance event," Cheng said. "I've seen blind athletes running with guides and watched people 'who have never run for the bus' transform while training to complete 26.2 miles. But my favorite inspiration is father-and-son [duo of] Dick and Rick Hoyt of Team Hoyt, who have completed over 1,000 races—including 6 Ironman competitions—together."

Lastimososa and Cheng will be training with T2 again this summer, running with the red-clad crew along the lakefront.

"I think there is a misperception in the U.S. that HIV/AIDS is a disease that mostly affects gay patients," Cheng said. "I try to make my donors aware that domestically, infection rates are on the rise among heterosexuals; and worldwide, HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects women and children. I want people to know that the fight



Lastimososa and Cheng participate in a Las Vegas marathon. Photos by the couple

against HIV/AIDS is not a 'gay issue,' but rather, a human issue."

So the two will just keep running for T2.

Here is a look at the Marathon Slate for Kinnier Lastimososa and Jennifer Cheng, both of Chicago:

- October 19, 2008: ING Amsterdam Marathon
- October 11, 2009: Bank of America Chicago Marathon
- April 25, 2010: Virgin London Marathon
- October 17, 2010: Metro Health Grand Rapids Marathon
- November 7, 2010: ING New York City Marathon
- December 4, 2010: MetroPCS Dallas White Rock Marathon
- March 20, 2011: Honda LA Marathon
- May 7, 2011: Wisconsin Marathon
- September 25, 2011: BMW Berlin Marathon
- October 23, 2011: Solutia St. Louis Rock 'N' Roll Marathon
- December 4, 2011: Zappos.com Las Vegas Rock 'N' Roll Marathon
- January 7, 2012: Walt Disney World Marathon (as part of the Goofy Race and a Half Challenge)
- February 19, 2012: IMS Arizona Marathon in Phoenix
- February 26, 2012: Cowtown Marathon in Fort Worth
- March 18, 2012: Publix Georgia Marathon in Atlanta
- April 14, 2012: Carmel Marathon (in Indiana)
- May 20, 2012: Nykredit Copenhagen Marathon



Lastimososa and Cheng have participated in marathons worldwide, including in (left to right) Berlin, Chicago, London and New York.

## VIEWPOINTS

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 e-mail: editor@windycitymediagroup.com or Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

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 Community Marketing, Inc.

JOHNATHAN  
FIELDS

## Suppressing the sissy: My complex relationship to gender

*Sis-sy/sis-é/ (noun): A person regarded as effeminate or cowardly.*

I was the little boy America is supposedly becoming more comfortable talking about. I was the little boy who, on his sixth birthday, asked for the Aladdin and Jasmine Barbie dolls, only to cut off all of Jasmine's hair. I was the boy who would "cry too much," and would eventually learn not to because "boys don't cry." I was the boy who played with all the girls on the playground; the boy who preferred to play house and dress-up instead of video games and race cars. I still remember the confused stares I received from numerous people.

I was 6 years old and I was a sissy.

Throughout most of my adolescence, I learned to start the process of suppressing my inner sissy. It could have been my family's rigid expectations of traditional, patriarchal gender roles. Or perhaps it was the moment in sixth grade when I began my education at a new school, an education filled with hide-and-seek.

I had been fairly popular in elementary school but this was a new territory. On the bus, I encountered what I thought would be my first new friends and had apparently gotten a little too excited for them. I say "apparently" because by the same time next week they had stopped talking to me. A few days later, I had been called into the vice principal's office; someone had written "John Fields is a faggot" on the boy's bathroom wall. Who else would have known who I was? I had been at the school for four days. The popularity I gained in middle school was a new kind, a shameful one.

After that incident, I spent all of sixth grade being tormented in the hallways, eating lunch by myself, and excelling in all of my homework because it was the only escape I had. On the rare occasion I engage in a brief verbal encounter with another boy, the moment I started to get "too comfortable," he made sure to put me in my place. Back off, faggot. I can still remember most of their names.

We can't even begin to talk about the shame I felt every time I was forced to undress in the boy's locker room for gym: the whispering, the stares, the making sure my eyes didn't wander off that tiny circle on the ground I was piercingly focused on. Some people wonder how you get a C- in physical education. Try being a sissy in a room full of testosterone.

The prison built around that part of my identity during such a formative period became so unbearable that I decided to stop riding the bus and walked two miles each way to and from school every day. I began to participate in upholding the very beliefs that caused me to stifle parts of myself that felt natural, clinging to uninformed ideas of what it meant to be a "real" man.

It was the year I attempted suicide. But I was lucky—because I was unsuccessful and lucky because I only attempted it once.

I was 12 years old and I was a sissy.

I spent the next 10 years or so engaging in behaviors that I can now shake my head and laugh at but are far from funny. They lack humor because they further show how I had been suppressing that inner sissy.

All of these experiences taught me that there is a relationship between sissy and faggot. While I still don't have the vocabulary to articulate what it is exactly, faggot is much more complex than a derogatory word aimed at homosexual men. It encompasses how one is perceived with regards to gender; heterosexual men that don't fit some masculine standard are also targeted by the word faggot. Homophobia and misogyny reach far above and beyond gay men.

Even after I learned what homosexuality was, came out of my closets and started to understand what those people had meant when they called me a faggot, I did what I watch a lot of gay men do. I ran from the feminine.

I didn't want to be called "girl." Not because it didn't reflect my gender expression, as various parts of my identity carried feminine attributes; but because I didn't want to be perceived as weak. Whenever I entered a space I was not sure I was safe in, my voice would deepen and my friends would mock me. I walked on eggshells to make sure I was not acting too sissy-like to avoid ever being called a faggot again.

Eventually, I would be fortunate enough to have a friend who helped carry me out of the patriarchal cage that made me fear femininity—a friend who would lead me further into a feminist identity.

Years later, after finding myself recovering from some of the patriarchal addictions that caused me to suppress pieces of myself for so long, I realize my recovery is not over.

I have begun the process of becoming more comfortable in my gender. My hair became longer and started to flip. Purses and rain boots started coming out. I started looking for accessories throughout stores instead of just the men's sections—until, one day, I thought I was ready.

There we were: three sissies in the fitting room of Akira Chicago trying on dresses, wigs and heels for a friend's birthday party. Drag was something I had never done before and something my former self probably could have never imagined doing. You know we practiced those

walks. Living rooms and hallways became catwalks. Surprisingly, I had never felt more "masculine" than when I put on those six-inch stilettos.

I never went public with that drag. The night we made our big group debut, my friends did it up while I walked a few blocks in those heels. I observed as people made comments to us, mainly directed at my friends. But, I will never forget what a young man said to me as he looked on at my Tina Turner-esque friend. He grabbed my arm and told me, "I better not ever catch you dressed like that." In that moment, I wished I would have had the courage to queen out in my little black dress and Charlie's Angels Brunette wig.

Then, a man I was briefly seeing decided to end things the moment I wore my skinny jeans. Apparently, they were too feminine for him. The mask of masculinity came crashing into my world all over. But, this time I had a shield to protect my sissy from having to burrow deep inside my soul. I knew I was finally strong enough to begin protecting my inner sissy. The keyword: begin.

Last week, I walked up and down the aisles of Nordstrom Rack with a gorgeous man. I watched him put on a pair of glittered sequin five-inch heels and stomp down those aisles like it was his block. Judy and Diana would have been proud. While I wanted to look him directly in his eyes and say, "Baby, you look beautiful," I got lost in my own thoughts; thoughts of how long I had suppressed my inner sissy and how I was finally ready to unleash it.

My relationship to gender might be complex but it is my own. So, if you ever catch a six-foot-three being sashaying down the aisles of Nordstrom Rack in six-inch heels, check for me.

Years ago, I was a sissy. But today, I *am* a sissy.

**Johnathan Fields is a graduate student in media and cinema studies. With a bachelors degree in African & Black Diaspora studies and philosophy, his areas of interest include aesthetics; media representations of race; gender and sexuality in popular culture; Diasporic literature; and critical race and feminist theories.**

**He can be reached at fields.johnathan@gmail.com or on Twitter @JohnnyGolightly.**

## Letter to the editor:

By George

Dear Cardinal George,

It is deeply disappointing that you would compare gay people organizing for their rights to the Ku Klux Klan. Your comments to Fox News demonstrate the disrespect and hostility that the Catholic Church exhibits toward gay people.

One can add your comments to the long list of disrespectful claims about gay and lesbian human beings. The Church's hostile rhetoric against gay people include that we are:

- "an objective disorder;"
- "an intrinsic moral evil;"
- "of grave depravity;"
- "intrinsically disordered;"
- "morph(ing) into something like the

Ku Klux Klan, demonstrating in the streets against Catholicism" by marching in the Pride Parade (one day of the entire year) past a single church in your archdiocese: Mt. Carmel; and

—"threatening the future of humanity" by securing civil marriage equality under law.

How would you feel if your personal and collective identity were so characterized?

You claim to represent the God on this earth

and in our city. It is deeply disappointing—both to me and much of my extended family—that you portray gay people with such disregard for our humanity, our aspirations for family and our commitment for a just and equal place in society, free from discrimination.

Respectfully,  
 Gary L. Cozette  
 Chicago

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

## GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo by Patrick Redmond

## CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Mia Wasikowska (left) and Glenn Close star in the gender-bending film *Albert Nobbs*. See the review on page 22.

## DISH

See food.  
Page 26.

Photo by Shira Kollins



## THEATER

'Clutter' mess.  
Page 20.Photo from Clutter  
by Peter Coombs

## ART

'Myth' understanding.  
Page 25.Image courtesy of  
Philip Hitchcock

## SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

## Everything's coming up Klea!

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

When Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook Terrace announced that its revival of the 1959 Broadway musical *Gypsy* would star Klea Blackhurst as the pushy stage mother Momma Rose (or Madame Rose as the show's late playwright Arthur Laurents insisted), anyone familiar with the theater scene knew what a natural choice she was.

The Utah-born Blackhurst rose to fame in New York cabaret circles with her critically acclaimed 2001 show, *Everything the Traffic Will Allow*, which celebrated the life and career of original *Gypsy* star and Broadway legend Ethel Merman. Although Blackhurst has gone on to build a theater career apart from her Merman tribute, she's also taken on a few Merman-created roles like in the musical *Call Me Madam* for San Francisco's 42nd Street Moon Theatre and *Annie Get Your Gun* as understudy to opera soprano Deborah Voigt at New York's Glimmerglass Festival last summer.

"Merman has been a real gift for me," Blackhurst said. "I was around for a long time plugging away trying to get people to pay attention to me and it wasn't until I wrote [my Merman show] that people really stopped to notice me and take me seriously as a performer and actress."

However, like Blackhurst's cabaret show and her subsequent performances in Merman-associated musicals, she wants people to know that she doesn't do a physical or vocal imitation of the late Broadway legend.

"It's more a tribute, a celebration of her as

seen through my talents and my work," Blackhurst. "You're going to get me doing [*Gypsy*] with my love and knowledge and affection and expertise I have on Merman, but it's still me and from the point of view of someone who is a musical theater historian but is still very current and in the moment."

The character of Momma Rose is, of course, based on the real-life domineering mother of burlesque star *Gypsy* Rose Lee. As originally created by director/choreographer Jerome Robbins, composer Jule Styne, lyricist Stephen Sondheim and the aforementioned Laurents, *Gypsy* has grown in stature through the years as one of the most important and serious works of U.S. musical theater.

In particular, the role of Momma Rose (whose drive to live her dreams of stardom through her children at any cost) has become likened in difficulty for actresses to play the same way that actors have trepidation in tackling Shakespeare's *King Lear* or *Hamlet*.

"Every musical theater actress wants to play it," Blackhurst said about the complex Momma Rose. "But it is not an easy show to perform, that's for sure."

This is the first time Blackhurst has tackled Momma Rose, and she's grateful for having Jeff Award winner/Drury Lane Artistic Director William Osetek helming *Gypsy*, with fellow co-stars like Jeff Award winner Andrea Prestinario as Louise and David Kortemeier as Herbie.

"[William] cares about this show so much that he rivals my own passion," Blackhurst said. "He really isn't letting me land on the obvious choice



Klea Blackhurst. Photo courtesy of Drury Lane Theatre

es sometimes. He's helping all of us dig a little deeper."

This is also the first time Blackhurst has performed at Drury Lane, and throughout rehearsals she has become infinitely impressed with the way the theater is run. She's also relishing the chance to play Momma Rose through such a long run after such a thorough rehearsal period.

"This is beyond my wildest dreams of getting to do [*Gypsy*] for the first time," Blackhurst said. "I also hope that my performance comes across as thoughtful and fun and whimsical and not just always the steamroller that is going to take you down."

*Gypsy* continues in previews through Jan. 25,

with an official opening on Jan. 26. The production then runs 1:30 p.m. Wednesdays, 1:30 and 8 p.m. Thursdays, 8:30 p.m. Fridays, 5 and 8:30 p.m. Saturdays and 2 and 6 p.m. Sundays through April 1 at Drury Lane Theatre, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace.

Tickets run from \$35-\$45 with lunch and dinner packages available from \$49.75-\$68. Student and senior discount tickets available for select performances. Call 630-530-0111 or visit <http://www.drurylaneoakbrook.com> for more information.

## Expanding Profiles

Profiles Theatre announced some big news last week. The daring 65-seat storefront theatre at 4147 N. Broadway has not only won the rights to do the U.S. premiere of Neil LaBute's recent drama *In a Forest, Dark and Deep* from April 13 to June 3, but Profiles has also acquired the former 99-seat National Pastime Theater space nearby at 4139 N. Broadway for this premiere.

Profiles, of course, has a long association with LaBute, so to get the rights to one of his shows before New York is quite a coup. (*In a Forest, Dark and Deep* is going to replace the originally scheduled LaBute work *The Break of Noon*, which will be presented next season.)

The acquisition of the National Pastime Theater is also a sign how Profiles is bullish on expanding its storefront theater empire, since it also operates The Second Stage (formerly Stage Left Theater) at 3408 N. Sheffield Ave.

However, one concern is Profiles' re-christened name of The Main Stage for the former National Pastime. Unfortunately, the name might cause some confusion with similarly named Mayne Stage theater at the intersection of Morse and Wayne in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood.

For more information on the changes going on at Profiles Theatre, visit <http://www.profiles-theatre.org>.

Please send theater news and other related tidbits to [scottishplayscott@yahoo.com](mailto:scottishplayscott@yahoo.com) or [Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com](mailto:Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com).



Mr. Rickey Calls a Meeting. Photo by Sean Williams

## THEATER REVIEW

### Mr. Rickey Calls a Meeting

Playwright: Ed Schmidt

At: Lookingglass Theatre at the Water Works, 821 N. Michigan Ave.

Phone: 312-337-0665

<http://www.lookingglasstheatre.org>; \$27.50-\$68

Runs through: Feb. 19

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

It's not easy being a "Famous First." The person daring to change the status quo is no longer an individual human being, but a representative of a tribal community, whether actual or conceptual. On April 10, 1947—the opening day of baseball season—Brooklyn Dodgers team member Jackie Robinson accepted the burden of being the first African-American athlete to play in a major league game. If this occurrence appears trivial to us today, consider that the U.S. military continued to be racially segregated until 1951.

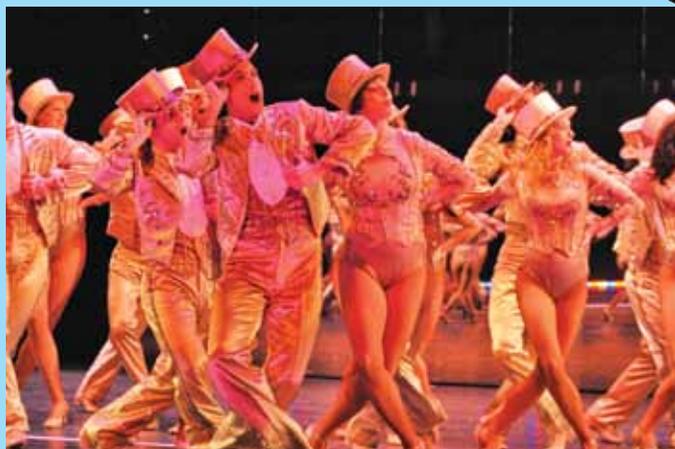
This socially significant event didn't happen by accident. In Ed Schmidt's speculative play, Dodgers manager Branch Rickey convenes a secret conference at the Roosevelt Hotel, attended by the most famous celebrities of color of the time—heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis, Hollywood dancer Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and actor/opera singer Paul Robeson—to ask their support for his proposal. It's not an

easy decision: Louis is restless and Robeson is contentious. All have bitter personal memories and current money problems. Some suspect that Rickey's motives may be as self-serving as they are lofty. They bicker, accuse, call each other names, throw furniture and commandeer the bellhop into abetting their petty intrigues. In the end, history takes its course, but the star of the moment has learned from his elders the difficulties of the road he will travel.

Since its 1991 production at the now-defunct Chicago Theatre Company, Schmidt's text has been trimmed to a swift 90 minutes, but the Lookingglass Company's staging at the Water Works sacrifices none of the intimacy so crucial to the dramatic tension. The spacious room may allow for a more kinetically varied stage picture, but the action is still essentially that of men huddled around a table deciding the future of their country.

This is ensemble acting at its most challenging, and the cast assembled by director J. Nicole Brooks keeps its eye on the ball to deliver line readings of riveting intensity and breathtaking eloquence. Anthony Fleming III endows Louis with sullen menace, contrasting with James Vincent Meredith's fiery portrayal (and startlingly accurate vocal impression) of the volatile Robeson. Ernest Perry Jr., delivers a deceptively effacing portrayal of the avuncular Bojangles, flanked by Javon Johnson's suitably hesitant Jackie, while Larry Neumann Jr. (as the calculating Rickey) and Kevin Douglas (as the young Clancy Hope) retain their dignity throughout to bring this too-long-ignored play to fulfillment.

## SPOTLIGHT



**A Chorus Line** is the third production in the Paramount Theatre's inaugural season of presenting its own Broadway musicals. This production truly promises to be "One Singular Sensation" since director/choreographer Mitzi Hamilton is staging the production. Hamilton is not only a veteran of many international A Chorus Line productions, but she also was the inspiration for the character of Val in the original Michael Bennett workshop productions. A Chorus Line continues now through Feb. 5 at the Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Blvd., Aurora. Performances are 1:30 and 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, 8 p.m. Fridays, 4 and 8 p.m. Saturdays and 1 and 5 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$34.90-\$46.90; call 630-896-6666 or visit <http://www.ParamountAurora.com>. Photo by Liz Lauren

## THEATER REVIEW

### dark play or stories for boys

Playwright: Carlos Murillo

At: Collaboraction, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets: 312-226-9633;

<http://www.collaboraction.org>; \$15-\$25

Runs through: Feb. 26

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Nick, the central figure and narrator, explains that "dark play" is a game in which some participants don't know they are players and, therefore, don't know the rules and may be manipulated easily. Nick knows; at 14 he's a master of Internet false identity, and a whiz kid with superior verbal skills (often a signature of author Carlos Murillo's characters). To alleviate boredom and, more importantly, to confirm his self-proclaimed superiority, Nick engages Adam in an increasingly elaborate sexting—Adam being 16, naïve and looking for the girl of his dreams. Nick's uber-mensch attitude comes from the Leopold and Loeb "thrill killing" playbook, with nearly as deadly results, and with a touch of Edward Albee's Zoo Story included.

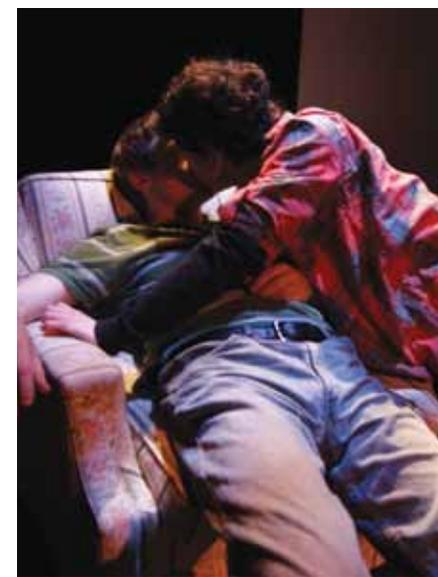
In this extremely taut 90-minute drama, Murillo ratchets up the stakes repeatedly, stretching probability and credibility—which is precisely his point, at least in part: the limits of gullibility. He crosses sexual lines, too. Neither adolescent is, apparently, gay, but Nick is willing to go down (literally) that path in order to extend his control over Adam. The fact that actors Clancy McCartney (Nick) and Aaron Kirby (Adam) are comely young men with adolescent looks will give this secondary aspect additional appeal for some readers.

It's far more important that they are dynamic actors, especially McCartney, who carries most of the show on his slim shoulders. As directed by Anthony Moseley, McCartney makes Nick truly scary, an intensely focused boy with angelic looks and a twisted interior life, equal parts neediness and aggress-

sion. Kirby is his admirable foil in the less flamboyant role of the normal, nice kid who ignores his instinct that he's being played. When you're 16, horny and an object of sexual desire, it's hard to say no. Hey, it's hard to say no if you're 60!

As a script and as a production, dark play is easy to admire but difficult to like because the work has little compassion, which also is a Murillo hallmark. He prefers to engage audiences via ideas rather than via emotion or sentiment. The play offers little justification for Nick's behavior other than Nick's belief that his mother is sluttish and his passing references to being mocked and bullied, but we have no evidence, only Nick's dubious word. Adam is the boy for whom we care, but he disappears the nanosecond he's fulfilled his plot function. Nick probably has destroyed Adam's life, but we never know.

Moseley gives this thorny but mesmerizing work a bare-bones production in a simple black-box space in which Michael Reed's lighting design is the most important physical feature, other than the actors' movements. It's enough. The forbidden fruit of adolescent evil is alluring.



dark play... Photo by Cesar Moza

## THEATER REVIEW

### Clutter: The True Story...

Playwright: Mark Saltzman

At: MadKap Productions at the Greenhouse, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Phone: 773-404-7336 or

<http://www.greenhousetheater.org>; \$40

Runs through: March 11

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Don't be fooled by the title: It's true that there were, in the early years of the 20th century, two brothers named Langley and Homer Collyer, blue-blooded heirs to a vast fortune. It's also true that they were known for their reclusive lifestyle and eccentric behavior: Langley fancied himself a concert pianist, while Homer devoted himself to reading and caring for his mercurial sibling. Both were obsessive savers and collectors—Langley out of sentiment, Homer out of thrift—and both, in 1947, were found dead in their home, buried amid the accumulated detritus of nearly five decades.

That's not what this play is about, however. It's about the relationship between officers Reilly and Kevin Dolan, the two policemen who lead the investigation into the final days of the Fifth Avenue oddballs. We know this because the Dolan brothers are portrayed as sympathetic human beings suffering commonplace problems (Kevin being a shell-shocked war veteran), while the Collyers are construct-

ed as vaudeville clowns, swapping repartee and slapstick in affected English accents—presumably also scavenged from some dustbin—with only one unabashedly sentimental moment of redemption before they become as one with their possessions.

Did author Mark Saltzman relapse into habits acquired during his days of writing for Jim Henson's enterprises, or did director Wayne Mell mistrust his audiences' ability to refrain from giggling when confronted with too much pathos? Whatever the answer, the results are a hodgepodge not unlike that onstage: Saltzman claims to have found hints of a "film noir detective story" in the Collyer legend—listen closely and you'll hear them. The now-threadbare gimmick of having all auxiliary personnel played by only two actors drew opening-night laughter and applause at the end of their every appearance. A running score of incidental piano music is probably meant to invoke Langley's obsessive hobby, but emerges more reminiscent of silent-movie comedy.

The actors soldier on through the contradictions of their characters with nimble alacrity (Joe Mack and Michael J. Bullaro providing welcome sanity as the bewildered flatfeet), while Bill Morey's quick-change costumes, Andrei Onegin's scrim-based scenic design and Mary O'Dowd's museum-grade set dressing supply an abundance of visual interest. So who is responsible for turning this fundamentally tragic tale into a camp-cartoon spoof of a Victorian penny dreadful? Now *there's* a mystery worth pursuing!

## DOUBLE REVIEW

**Love and Money**

Playwright: Dennis Kelly

At: Steep Theatre, 1115 W. Berwyn

Phone: 312-458-0722; \$20-\$22

Web: <http://www.SteepTheatre.com>

Runs through: Feb. 25

**Don't Act Like a Girl**

Playwright: Wes Perry

At: Annoyance Theatre, 4830 N. Broadway

Phone: 773-561-4665; \$10

Web: <http://www.TheAnnoyance.com>

Runs through: Feb. 12

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

There's no denying that Dennis Kelly's drama *Love and Money* is a downer. But *Love and Money*, now in its Midwest premiere at Steep Theatre, is a timely work with astute observations on economic greed and materialism as we discover one couple's ruin due to extreme debt.

Right from the start—when telecommunications salesman David (Peter Moore) flirts via email with a recent French fling—we soon become horrified by the depths he went to in shedding excessive debt from his life (in the U.K., if a spouse has racked up thousands in credit card debt, the debt dies with her).

Kelly's play then reveals in reverse how David had to degrade himself in order to help his late wife, Jess (Julia Siple), who had racked up \$70,000 worth of credit-card debt thanks to high interest rates and her shopping addiction.

However, it's not all about David and Jess, as we meet comical and disturbing periphery characters. Jason Michael Lindner and Molly Reynolds are an amusing duo as Jess' mourning parents with a violent resentment of others' wealth. Darci Nalepa's Val also relishes the newfound power she has over her college ex-boyfriend when he comes groveling for a higher-paying job. Gregory Rothman also has fun as a lowlife who finds dubious ways for desperate people to get fast cash.

*Love and Money* is definitely sobering, which

is why the final flashback scene of Jess fascinated by the miracle of life hits such a wrong note. Jess is portrayed with so much self-assurance that it's hard to make a connection to her here and to her later unfortunate fate with David.

Still, director Robin Witt gets strong performances from her acting company to help contemplate the characters' dilemmas with people we may know who have similar economic struggles. *Love and Money* is definitely another dramatic triumph for Steep Theatre.

Another triumph of a funnier sort can be seen at the Annoyance Theatre in Wes Perry's *Don't Act Like a Girl*, which is a one-man-and-a-band memoir of growing up gay on prescription drugs in Southern California.

Perry's deadpan comic timing and askew anecdotes are hilarious under Tim Paul's fine direction. Also, the visual progression of a bearish Perry singing and applying makeup to ultimately appear in drag by the end is also a lot of fun.

My only qualm is that the show could have a title that better emphasizes Perry's relationship with prescription drugs. Perry is of a generation not only when being gay is more okay, but also one where pharmaceuticals are overly pushed to solve any small behavioral problem. It's this aspect of the show that stands out and calls for further examination.



*Love and Money*. Photo by Lee Miller

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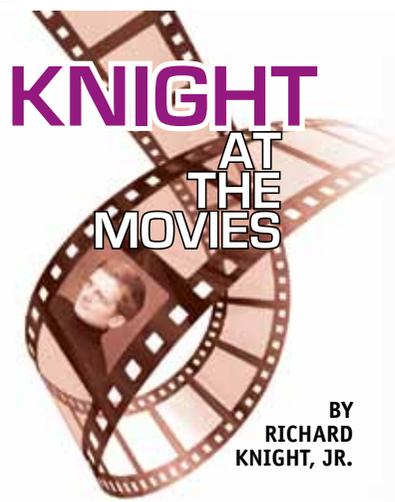
**Blizzard '67**, Chicago Dramatists, through Feb. 12. A battered Ford in a snowstorm is like a bunker under enemy fire to the four car-pooling suburbanites, each facing his own personal crisis, in Jon Steinhagen's microcosmic portrait of the worst meteorological disaster in Chicago memory. MSB

**Late Nite Catechism**, Royal George Theatre, open run. The Church of Rome may be ready for a trip to the principal's office, but after 17 years, Sister still rocks the classroom in Vicki Quade and Maripat Donovan's interactive drama-verité that even non-Catholics can enjoy. MSB

**Opus**, Redtwist Theatre, though Jan. 29. A vicious queen destroys a famous string quartet in Michael Hollinger's acerbic drama about the intense world of classical music. There's much more going on in this beautifully-acted staging, but I got your attention, right? Go see it. JA

**Penelope**, Steppenwolf Theatre, through Feb. 5. Enda Walsh's modernization of Penelope's preening suitors from *The Odyssey* receives a poetical and meditative production from director Amy Morton and an ensemble who isn't afraid to strip down to their Speedos. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge  
and Morgan



BY  
RICHARD  
KNIGHT, JR.

## Albert Nobbs; Tomboy; film note

Glenn Close first played the character of **Albert Nobbs**—a woman passing herself off as a man working as a waiter in a hotel in 19th-century Dublin—20 years ago in an off-Broadway production. She has worked on getting a film version made ever since and because of her tenacity that the movie has finally arrived. The timing dovetails nicely with a trend that seems to be happening in indie cinema: an increased focus on the fluidity of sexual identity. Both Albert Nobbs and the French-made **Tomboy** (also opening this Friday in Chicago at the Music Box) are marvelous films that incorporate these questions into the heart of their storylines.

On one level, Albert Nobbs has the typical pleasures of all Upstairs/Downstairs type stories (like the current rage *Downton Abbey*) with servants gossiping about their wealthy, persnickety employers or, in this case, the guests of Morrison's Hotel, the small, fancy residential inn presided over by Mrs. Baker (Pauline Collins). In that sense the movie is a sort of Victorian-era *Separate Tables*.

Mrs. Baker, tough and unforgiving, dotes on the fussy, detailed work ethic of her taciturn head waiter, Albert, who she allows to handle

her more difficult guests. Mrs. Baker has an eye for the handsome rake Viscount Yarrell (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) and his lusty companions, while relying on the advice of longtime resident Dr. Holloran (Brendan Gleeson). Meanwhile, pretty Helen Dawes (Mia Wasikowska), one of the maids, falls hard for the studly Joe (Aaron Johnson), a big piece of man-candy with a bad temper who Mrs. Baker hires in a moment of weakness as a handyman.

Albert observes this and more but keeps to himself. Then, the arrival of Hubert Page (Janet McTeer)—who works at the hotel temporarily as a painter and who accidentally learns Albert's secret and then reveals his own gender-bending secret—deepens both the movie and Albert's life. Albert has been dreaming of opening a tobacconist's shop with his life savings. During a visit to Mr. Page's home he is shocked to discover that Page's "wife" is, in fact, a real woman. "She's real!" Albert gasps, startled at a world of possibilities he has never before imagined. After a gorgeously delivered monologue in which he reveals his past, Albert quietly tells Hubert that "life without decency is unbearable" and, taking that maxim to heart, becomes fixated on the idea of pretty Helen becoming his wife. Albert's enlarged fantasy and further plot complications then set into play a tragedy that takes on lyrical proportions as it reaches its conclusion in the adaptation co-scripted by Close and Irish novelist John Banville.

Close and McTeer's performances are easily dismissed as acting tricks—made or broken by their ability to convince you of the reality of them as men rather than drag kings. Within the context of the movie's period in which appearances and one's station in life really could deceive, however, it's easy to believe these women could fool the world around them. The sequence when the two dress up in long gowns and bonnets and gawkily walk about the seaside is all the more wondrous for the level of complexity the actresses bring to the scene—a mixture of unease, remembered familiarity and, finally, exuberance.

McTeer has the much flashier, more memorable part and is, as usual, a pleasure to watch but there's a lot to be said for Close's willingness to remain within the parameters of her character. The role does not provide a single showy



Tomboy. Photo from official website

moment, which makes the character's revealing monologue all that much more dazzling. The close-mouthed Albert, with his huge interior life, is a psychological cousin to Heath Ledger's Ennis in *Brokeback Mountain*—and Close's work is no less sensational than his. Other elements—the spot-on production design and costumes, the cast of distinguished Irish actors and Brian Byrne's elegiac score (which concludes with a mournful ballad sung by Sinead O'Connor), all under the director of Rodrigo Garcia—aid Close in beautifully realizing her dream of bringing the multilayered Albert Nobbs so vividly and entertainingly to life.

French writer-director Celine Sciamma follows up her insightful 2007 lesbian teenage romance *Water Lilies* with *Tomboy*, another treatise on budding sexuality, this time focusing on 10-year-old Laure (played by the amazing and fearless child actress Zoe Heran). Laure has just moved with her family to a new town on the outskirts of Paris. She meets Lisa (Jeanne Disson) in the apartment building where the family has moved and soon the new friends are playing a game of capture the flag in a wooded area near the building with other kids from the neighborhood. Sciamma, in an unforced manner, establishes an idyllic childhood—new home, loving family, new friends—that is almost palpable.

Laure—with her short haircut and dressed in shorts, T-shirts and gym shoes—has, seemingly without conscious thought, introduced herself as a boy named Mikael to her new friends and they accept her as Mikael. The secret of Laure's anatomic gender only seems to become a problem as the friendships and Lisa's budding romantic interest in her new friend grows. As gender problems have arisen during the days that follow, Laure has come up with simple or creative solutions to get around them. (Invited to go swimming, she simply cuts off the top of her girl's bathing suit and fashions herself a penis out of her sister's Play-Doh.)

Each time Laure passes one of these self-imposed tests, our fear for the child is tremendous. At times, the movie is like a prepubescent version of *Boys Don't Cry* and you're terrified about what the reaction will be when the truth is discovered. But what exactly is that truth? Neither Sciamma nor her young leading character obviously knows that just yet.

Nor do we. We're not sure if we're seeing a budding lesbian, transgender male or a heterosexual girl who truly is just a tomboy and nothing else. In presenting an open-ended viewpoint, Sciamma gives us something that feels much closer to reality and her low-key approach to such a seemingly complex topic really illuminates the subject in both very basic and rather profound ways. This—along with her facility with actors, especially the children—is a marvel to behold. *Tomboy* is terrific.

### Film note:

—Pedro Almodovar—Spain's pre-eminent queer writer-director—returns to form with his latest film seduction, **The Skin I Live In**, which also marks the return of Antonio Banderas (after a 21-year absence) to his stable. The movie, an omnisequal mystery thriller, taking its cues from Hitchcock and the French classic *Eyes Without a Face*, is playing a return theatrical engagement at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., beginning Friday, Jan. 27. [www.siskelfilmcenter.org](http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org)

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

## MOVIES

# Dance fever: Wim Wenders talks Pina Bausch

BY DAVID-ELIJAH NAHMOD

High atop a cliff, a man dances madly about, his steps bringing him dangerously close to the edge. Behind him stands a steep hill. He dances from one to the other—the intensity of his movements suggest someone in deep anguish.

He dances before a three-dimensional (3-D) film camera. As he moves closer to the cliff, the breathtaking 3-D visuals underscores the potential danger for him.

This is one of many thrilling sequences in *Pina*, the new documentary tribute to the late dancer choreographer Pina Bausch. It's highly unusual for a documentary to be shot in 3D. The acclaimed German filmmaker Wim Wenders took the time to talk with Windy City Times and discuss his decision to shoot *Pina* in 3-D, as well as other aspects of Bausch and his filmed tribute to her.

**Windy City Times: How/when did you become familiar with Pina's work?**

Wim Wenders: Summer of 1985, and the place was the gorgeous theater La Fenice in Venice, Italy. I had no clue who Pina Bausch was, and I wasn't into dance at all. My girlfriend and I were in Venice on a short holiday, and when she pointed to a poster announcing a week of sev-

eral pieces by Pina Bausch, I said "No! Definitely not!" I caved in. Instead of a boring evening, I was up for something incredible, a night that was going to change my life. After a few minutes I found myself on the edge of my seat, crying. I was touched by what I saw on stage like I had never been touched before by any theater event. My body wept, uncontrollably."

**WCT: What was it about her style that intrigued you?**

WW: Pina Bausch's work was neither ballet, nor modern dance, not pantomime, nor theater. It was something altogether new. Dance put upside down, or, in my book, dance put back on its feet. Pina's priorities were clearly not aesthetic ones, but seemed to be the same questions that are driving contemporary cinema or literature: who we are, what are we here for, how can we love, how can we be understood. She expressed it better herself than I can.

She said, "I'm not interested in *how* my dancers move. I'm interested in *what* moves them." For her, we expressed everything with our body language that words could no longer grasp, or had gotten wrong, or had turned into cliches. Pina really meant it, when she said, "Dance! Dance! Otherwise we are lost!"



Wim Wenders. Photo by Donata Wenders

**WCT: Why did you choose to shoot the film in 3-D?**

WW: There was a major problem between film and dance. When I started to imagine a film that Pina and I would do together, I was soon at a loss. My craft didn't seem to have what it took to do justice to the beauty and energy and physicality of Pina's work. What I could do felt "flat," literally.

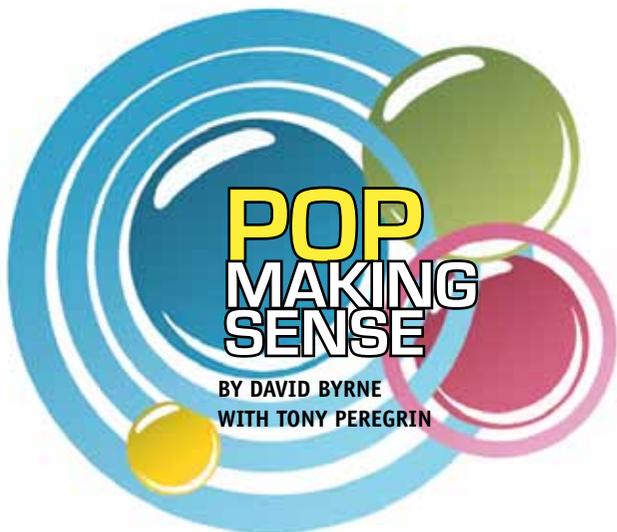
The dancer's kingdom, their very element, is space. With each and every gesture, they conquer it from scratch. And space was exactly what cinema could never handle. Whatever we did, for more than a hundred years—with fancy camera

moves, cranes, tracks, helicopters, Steadicams—always ended up on a two-dimensional screen. Only the arrival of 3-D changed that, drastically. For the first time I could be in the dancer's realm, truly with them, no longer on the outside looking in.

**WCT: How different was your original concept for the film before Pina passed on? How different might the final film have been had she lived?**

WW: We had written a concept for the film we

Turn to page 28



Lana Del Rey. PR photo

After her performance of "Blue Jeans" and the haunting "Video Games" on a recent Saturday Night Live, **Lana Del Rey** is receiving a lot of unfounded flack. More established acts have delivered much worse showings.

Ashley Simpson's embarrassing Saturday Night Light moment in 2005 is the first to come to mind. Britney Spears bombed at lip-synching for her life at the 2007 Video Music Awards, ultimately making "Gimme More" her much-needed comeback hit. Let's not forget Madonna and Lenny Kravitz's uninspired effort on "Ray of Light" at the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards. Then there's the all-time low when Katy Perry was caught for fake-playing a recorder (the instrument).

Del Rey's voice did not project well, but that could have been tweaked on the soundboard. As far as the rumors whether she had plastic surgery, the same could be said about any celebrity. Only Amanda Lepore and Pete Burns can cast that first stone.

Regardless, I look forward to hearing Del Rey's new album, *Born to Die*, when it is released Jan. 31. Give the rising starlet another chance; Del Rey is slated to appear on *Late Show* with David Letterman and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.

**Levi Kreis** captures his one-man show on Live @ Joe's Pub. Here, Kreis proves he has the grit and soul that rightfully won him the Tony Award in 2010 for his portrayal of Jerry Lee Lewis in *Million Dollar Quartet*. Throughout the set, Kreis talks with the audience, assuring the listener that once an artist finds his or her truth, success

will follow. Although Kreis is single-handedly handling vocal and piano duties during this concert, he carries it well, as heard on his cover of "I Can't Make You Love Me." The openly gay singer-songwriter dedicates the coming-out tale "We're Okay" to his mother. The storming anthem "Nothing at All" brings down the house as the finale. Live @ Joe's Pub is out now digitally.

**Darren Hayes** has tried with more experimental sounds, but on *Secret Codes & Battleships* he returns in fine form doing what made us fall in

love him in the first place: pop. The set opens with the surprisingly mature ballad "Taken by the Sea." He still holds onto the giddiness from his Savage Garden days as heard on the stand-out "Talk Talk Talk." Here, he chirps, "All I want to do is just talk talk talk to you." On "Nearly Love" he confesses endearing pillow talk. Nobody else could make quite an upbeat number called "Hurt." The midtempo "Black out the Sun" recalls Leona Lewis' smash "Bleeding Love" as Hayes belts out, "I don't wanna be lonely." "Bloodstained Heart" shows off the out singer's mighty upper register. *Secret Codes & Battleships* is out now via Hayes's appropriately named label Powdered Sugar Productions.

Hayes issued a moving "It Gets Better" video on his YouTube page, where he discusses being bullied as a youth and how he can look back at those times from a much happier place.

**Uh Huh Her** avoids the sophomore slump with *Nocturnes*. Here, the duo favors more rock leanings, but the electro-pop vibe that made "Not a Love Song" a hit can be found on "Same High." "Human Nature" is bursting with a delicious guitar hook and "Debris" is a welcomed edgier turn. "Criminal" is the set's highlight, as Leisha Hailey wails on the chorus, "Say it, say it loud, say it again please, I cannot hear you."

The pair recently caused a stir when Hailey was escorted off of a Southwest flight before departure for kissing girlfriend/bandmate Camila Grey. A heated argument and fiery exchanges over Twitter followed. Hailey portrayed Alice Pieszecki on *The L Word*.

Last month I caught an acoustic show by **Graffiti6**, as the British pair opened for Ximena. Here, Jamie Scott sang soulfully and played the guitar with TommyD on bass. "Free" and "Good-bye Geoffrey Drake" sounded fantastic, even



Graffiti6. Photo by Marina Chavez

though these were stripped down considerably compared to the more elaborate production heard on the newly released full-length *Colours*. Graffiti6 returns to Chicago Saturday, Jan. 28, to Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave. This time, Scott and TommyD will be joined by a full band. Here's to hoping my favorite "Annie You Save Me" finds its way into the setlist this time.

The queer-oriented **Flesh Hungry Dog Show** takes place at Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St., on Friday, Feb. 3. The line-up consists of the acoustic medley-makers *Fatally Cool*, *Dyke van Dyk*, *Skinny Paul* and *Andrea Sottovoce*.

I caught van Dyk's hilarious drag performance at last year's Alt Q Festival. Van Dyk croons

beautifully and in an over-the-top fashion, as if teleported straight from Las Vegas circa 1960. For more information and tickets, visit <http://www.fleshhungrydog.com>.

Another great artistic showcase is in store as **Cake Chicago** will be at The Red Line Tap, 7006 N. Glenwood Ave., on Saturday, Feb. 4. On the bill are performance artist Rebecca King, multi-instrumentalist Vanessa Vincent and local vocal talent Roxy Swain. Ripley Cain hosts *Cake Chicago*. To celebrate the night's theme, come as your favorite Madonna moment to win a prize. The *Material Girl* is the entertainment during the Super Bowl XLVI halftime show Sunday, Feb. 5.

## Clarke, Gore collaborate on 'Ssss'

Electronic-music pioneers Vince Clarke (Erase/Yaz/Depeche Mode) and Martin L. Gore (Depeche Mode) have joined forces for the first time in more than 30 years to craft a 10-track album, *Ssss* (Mute).

The CD will come out March 13.

The album includes the recent "12" of "Spock," plus the forthcoming song "Single Blip."

## 'W.E.' soundtrack to be released Jan. 31

The Golden Globe-nominated music from Madonna's upcoming film *W.E.*—composed, orchestrated and produced by Abel Korzeniewski—is scheduled to be released digitally on Interscope Records Jan. 31.

The soundtrack includes Madonna's Golden Globe-winning song, "Masterpiece," which is played during the end credits of the film.

*W.E.* tells the story of American divorcee Wallis Simpson (Andrea Riseborough) and England's King Edward (James D'Arcy), who abdicated his throne to be with the woman he loved. The story is told through the eyes of modern-day New Yorker Wally Winthrop (Abby Cornish).



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## NUNN ON ONE

# Carol Burnett: Icon on Joan Rivers, Betty White and her '70s show



BY JERRY NUNN

The Carol Burnett Show made television history, running for 11 years and receiving 25 Emmy Awards. Burnett's winning streak didn't stop there with 12 People's Choice awards, eight Golden Globes and the Kennedy Center Honors.

More recently, she has made appearances on *Mad About You* and *Law & Order: SVU*—she received another Emmy nomination for the latter.

She has played Sue Sylvester's unforgettable mother on *Glee* and now pops up on *Joan Rivers WE tv show Joan & Melissa* where Joan Knows Best.

Whether it's yelling like Tarzan, pulling her ear on Broadway or writing another *New York Times* best-seller, Ms. Burnett continues to entertain crowds for generations.

**Windy City Times: Hello, Carol. I heard you are going to be on Joan Rivers' reality show. How did you get involved with that?**

Carol Burnett: She called me—easy as that. This was through a friend of mine, Kenny Solms. I don't know if you know him but he is a great comedy writer. She is best buds with him and I am, too. I have known Joan forever because she was on our show as a guest three times.

**WCT: I didn't realize that.**

CB: Oh, yes—way back. She asked me to do it and I said, "Sure, what the heck?" They rented out tables in a restaurant near where I live. We just had a little scene in a restaurant together. It was very easy and we kind of improvised. We knew where we were going with the plot, we shot it a couple of times, and that was it. She sent me the most gorgeous bouquet; there were roses, and I don't know what all—there was a forest! It lived a long time and was just beautiful.

**WCT: In the past I told Joan I would bring her flowers to thank her for an interview and she said since she is getting on a plane just bring chocolate!**

CB: [Laughs] Well that makes sense if she is getting on a plane.

**WCT: I actually told her that you are my dream interview.**

CB: Well thank you, Jerry!

**WCT: So what do you think of reality shows?**

CB: I don't watch that many. I had watched Joan's because I know her and Melissa so I got a kick out of what they were doing. That is actually the only one I have watched.

**WCT: Do you watch shows such as *Law & Order*?**

CB: I do have shows that I watch each week that I TiVo. Actually, I had Joan on my TiVo,

which was funny. Reality shows in general I am not thrilled about only because they are so expensive and putting good writers out of business. Where there could be some good shows they are slotting reality shows. Why? Most of the time it is money. That is too bad because people are not getting what they used to get when there was more quality television. There is room for certain reality stuff but I feel it has gotten out of hand.

**WCT: Would you want to be on *Glee* again?**

CB: Oh, sure.

**WCT: That was such a great guest spot.**

CB: It was fun. I love Jane Lynch. She's a hoot to work with. Boy, do they work hard.

**WCT: Do you prefer comedy or drama?**

CB: Either one. When it is live and I am going to be on stage I like comedy because I like the feedback and the laughs. When you are doing



Carol Burnett. Photo by Randee St. Nicholas

drama, unless you are terrible, hopefully they won't laugh at you. I enjoy doing straight stuff, too.

**WCT: People enjoy watching you do both.**

CB: I am glad for that.

**WCT: Would you ever do more Broadway?**

CB: Not really. I live in California with my husband. He is based out here with his career—maybe a real short run or something, but not open-ended. It would depend on what it was.

**WCT: I heard you have never refused an autograph.**

CB: No, I haven't and I answer my mail.

**WCT: Do you go out to many events?**

CB: No, I don't. I used to when we had a show but it's like been there, done that. I would rather sit home and watch it on television, like the

Academy Awards and the Golden Globes, in my fuzzy slippers and just vote on who I think will win.

**WCT: Did you know you would still influence people's shows today? Rosie O'Donnell just talked about you and wanted a Q&A at the beginning of her show to be like yours.**

CB: I am very flattered.

**WCT: No one has really been able to do a variety show since.**

CB: Well, people ask why but, again, the answer is money. We couldn't do today what we did on my show before. We had a 28-piece orchestra, no synthesizers, nothing filling in; it was a real sit-down with an orchestra, violins and harps. We had 12 dancers and singers with at least two guest stars a week. We had a rep company. Bob Mackie—let me put it to you this way—designed 50 costumes on average a week.

**WCT: As a gay boy, I loved those shiny costumes growing up.**

CB: Did you? I would wear maybe seven or eight costumes for sketches, finales, and duets with the guests. Today this would be prohibitive. I don't think a network would pay that kind of money these days. It would have to be a hybrid or some other type of variety show that wouldn't cost that kind of money. The V word has become a bad word. Before variety, it was. "Vaudeville is dead."

When we were on there were about nine variety shows on at the same time. There was Dean Martin, Sonny & Cher, The Smothers Brothers, Flip Wilson, Laugh-In, and on and on. That was a great time for television.

**WCT: What's your reaction to the canceling of *All My Children*?**

CB: Well, boo hiss! That is all I can say. I am not knocking the show that replaced it; they could have put it on somewhere else. It is just too bad. Everybody loved that show and I loved the characters. I got to be on the show so I miss it selfishly, for myself, and I know I am not alone.

**WCT: How do you pick projects these days?**

CB: Just if they appeal to me, from one level to another. If they can make me laugh, then I will say okay. I don't like to work long hours and I talk to them about that because after eight or 10 hours one starts to fade. With our show we never worked that much! [Laughs] We just rehearsed, do it, then go home.

**WCT: Do you still keep in touch with people from *The Carol Burnett Show*?**

CB: Sure. Tim Conway and I just saw Vicki Lawrence the other night because we were there to celebrate Betty White's 90th birthday for NBC. That was televised [Jan. 16]. Her birthday is actually Jan. 17 and she [turned] 90.

**WCT: Wow.**

CB: She is like the Energizer Bunny.

**WCT: She was so sweet when she was at a book-signing recently in Skokie.**

CB: She is sweet, funny, sharp, healthy—she's everything. Ninety for her is like today's 65, as far as I am concerned. You see how she takes care of herself and still as sharp as a tack.

**WCT: I noticed your daughter Erin has a big gay following, as far as her dance music.**

CB: Yes, she does.

**WCT: Do you have a website where people can purchase Carol Burnett items?**

CB: No, I don't do that. There is one that someone does for me but I have never really been in touch with them. It is called All Things Carol Burnett. There is a lovely gal that runs it and has been doing it for forever. It is really sweet.

**WCT: Your latest book can be purchased on there?**

CB: I am not sure about that; you might have to go to Amazon.com.

**WCT: Do you want to do more writing?**

CB: Oh, yeah; I am in the middle of writing another one. It is letters and e-mails that Carrie—my daughter who passed away 10 years ago—and I wrote to each other. She was on the road going to Graceland doing research for a story she was going to write. The emails were amazing and she was an amazing human being.

She did all kinds of things. She directed, and she was on television a lot. She had one of the leads in *Rent*, the musical, for the first national company. She played Maureen. She was just coming into her own when she died, unfortunately, from cancer.

**WCT: Are you coming to Chicago anytime soon?**

CB: I would love to someday. We are trying to figure out what theatre. What I do is I go on the road and do a Q&A.

**WCT: I gotta be there!**

CB: Well, if we come to Chicago, please come, darlin'.

**Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best?—where Burnett appears—is back for a second season on WE tv Jan. 24. Visit <http://www.wetv.com> for details and listings.**

## Jim Flint at Center on Halsted Jan. 25

The Center on Halsted will host a chat with Jim Flint, Wed., Jan. 25, 7:30-9 p.m., at 3656 N. Halsted St.

Chicago leatherman Douglas O'Keeffe will interview Chicago legend Flint, owner of the Baton Show Lounge.

This interview, the first in a series of four O'Keeffe will conduct at the Center in 2012, coincides with the Owen Keehnen and Tracy Baim biography about Flint released in December 2011, *Jim Flint: The Boy From Peoria*. Following the formal interview, the floor will open for audience questions.

See <http://www.CenterOnHalsted.org>.

## Music of Webber at Mayne Stage Feb. 12

A glimpse at the inspiration of some of Broadway's biggest hits, "Kevin Moore Presents Score-by-Score, *The Best of Broadway Musicals: An Evening of Andrew Lloyd Webber*" will take place Sunday, Feb. 12, at Mayne Stage, 1328 W. Morse Ave., at 7 p.m.

Moore, a WSBC personality, will enlighten the audience as to what inspired Webber; what was going on when he wrote *Evita*, *Cats*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Jesus Christ Su-*

perstar, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*; and more.

Tickets are \$25; visit <http://www.MayneStage.com> or call 773-381-4551.

## E. Faye Butler's 'Valentine' Feb. 13 at Millennium Park

The series *Cabaret with a View* returns to the Jay Pritzker Pavilion Monday, Feb. 13, with theater actress and singer E. Faye Butler in "My Funny Valentine."

*Cabaret with a View* offers audiences a chance to sit on the stage of the Jay Pritzker Pavilion to experience music in an intimate setting and a climate-controlled environment.

Butler has won six Joseph Jefferson Awards, a Helen Hayes Award, a Barrymore Award, three Black Theatre Alliance Awards, an Excellence in the Arts Award, an Ovation Award, a RAMI Award, and the 2011 Sarah Siddons Award. In 2012, she will be inducted into the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

Tickets are \$25—which includes seating at cabaret tables on the Pritzker Pavilion's stage level and two complimentary drinks—and \$15 for seats in the Pritzker's choral balcony. Call 312-742-TIXS (8497) or visit <http://www.millenniumpark.org>.

## NUNN ON ONE: TV

# Phi Phi part of Chicago charge on 'RuPaul's Drag Race'

BY JERRY NUNN

Chicago is lucky and talented enough to have three contestants on RuPaul's Drag Race for the fourth season on the Logo Channel. One of them, Phi Phi O'Hara, may be gone with the Windy City; however, we learned that she is originally from the Lone Star State, among other fun facts, in this interview before the show premiered. (Incidentally, the other two Chicago entries are The Princess and DiDa Ritz.)

**Windy City Times: Hey, Phi Phi. You have been performing at Spin Nightclub for a while now.**

Phi Phi O'Hara: Yes, since I moved here. It has been three years now.

**WCT: I just went to one of your shows recently and you were amazing.**

O'Hara: Well, I try. Thank you.

**WCT: You host as well as perform?**

O'Hara: I host and have this Dollhouse Review. I switch every other Thursday.

**WCT: You just went to Florida, I saw on your Facebook.**

O'Hara: I did. I was there on Saturday. It was my first gig outside of Chicago as an official contestant. It was insane. I didn't expect it but they were very loving. I didn't realize how many Phi Phi Phanatics there are out there!

**WCT: After the show starts you will be all over the place.**

O'Hara: I know. I can't believe it already. It still hasn't sunk in yet. I feel like I am a real performer now and will be on TV.

**WCT: What made you want to do RuPaul's Drag Race?**

O'Hara: I have been a fan of the show since it first came out. I always wanted to audition but just didn't feel like it was my time yet. I still wanted to grow and learn more. I figured it would be the perfect opportunity to do this season. I feel like I am up to par for this competition so I did it.

**WCT: Was it difficult to audition or easy?**

O'Hara: You don't know what to expect. I just tried to be myself and hoped that they liked me. The good thing is that each of the girls is completely different this season. I think that helped us all because we were all unique and I got to stand out.

**WCT: They just announced the guest judges. Was there one that you particularly liked?**

O'Hara: Kelly Osbourne was, ironically, my favorite. You meet all of these celebrities and think they will be something else but actually she was so down to earth. She was just one of the girls.

**WCT: She hugged me after an interview recently, and that doesn't happen every day.**

O'Hara: [That] is cool, because there is a stigma with celebrities that they don't want to be around everyday people sometimes, but she wasn't like that.

**WCT: Jesse Tyler Ferguson from Modern Family is going to be a judge, also.**

O'Hara: There are a lot of amazing people on there this season.

**WCT: It looks like RuPaul has more of a budget now.**

O'Hara: [Laughs] I have noticed that! I couldn't believe it when I saw the commercial alone. I was there, of course, but didn't know what they



Phi Phi O'Hara. Photo by Mathu Andersen

were going to do with it. When it came out, it beat any reality-television show commercial that I have seen in a while. I am excited.

**WCT: The Worlds of Wonder team told me it had been shot a while ago. I didn't realize this was shot so far in advance.**

O'Hara: Yes, there is a lot of preparation.

**WCT: Then you can't tell anyone about it until the cat is out of the bag.**

O'Hara: That is probably one of the hardest things.

**WCT: I can imagine. Are you doing a big party for the premiere?**

O'Hara: The Chicago girls are going to get together. The Princess and I will be performing at Spin that night as well as host. I am excited because there are so many of us from Chicago this season.

**WCT: Isn't that the best?**

O'Hara: It is. The stress level is very high. Like I said everyone is very strong this season. You have to be on top of your game on everything. It was nice having the Chicago sisters there to

rely on each other for moral support.

**WCT: There hasn't been that on the show before.**

O'Hara: Right—they will have one friend, then they kicked off. So we had a great time.

**WCT: We had Jade on the first season and Mystique, who was from the suburbs. Where are you from originally?**

O'Hara: I am from San Antonio, Texas. Prior to the show I was friends with [former contestants] Sahara Davenport and Shangela. We are all from Texas and worked for the same people.

**WCT: Did they give you any advice?**

O'Hara: They all gave me advice to help me with my career and what to do. They have been extremely helpful with information. I didn't expect it even though people say we are in a sisterhood and didn't know how true everyone would be to each other.

**WCT: Instead of it being all competitive and catty, like some people can be...**

O'Hara: We all love each other.

**WCT: You have a lot of different looks and I don't even recognize you out on the town sometimes. You are the chameleon.**

O'Hara: For me, the point of drag is to look different. I get that some people have one look that they want to stay with and it works for them. That is good but for me I wanted to have different looks. I wanted to change and I like the fact that some people can't recognize me. I feel like my whole job is doing an illusion.

**WCT: Who is a favorite artist you like to portray?**

O'Hara: I do Nicki Minaj because it gets requested a lot. I will say I don't like the pictures that are taken during it because I make the ugliest booger face!

**WCT: That's hilarious. Looks like 2012 will be a big year for you.**

O'Hara: I have been given so many opportunities already I can't even imagine what will come.

**Catch the premiere party at Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave., on Monday, Jan. 30, at 9 p.m. with a live performance by Phi Phi at midnight. Visit <http://www.spin-nightclub.com> for details. For listings on season four try <http://www.logotv.com>.**

## ART

# Philip Hitchcock blends mythological with the erotic

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

Sculptor Philip Hitchcock will be merging the worlds of mythology, realism and eroticism in a new exhibition entitled "Of Myth and Mortals," which opens at the Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave., on Friday, Jan. 27.

Hitchcock has developed a national reputation for combining fantasy with photo-realism using a technique call "lifecasting" or "bodycasting," which involves working with real-life models to create molds that act as the basis for the sculpture.

A graduate of UCLA, Hitchcock spent more than 20 years making a name for himself out in California, including the publishing of his first book, *Dark Impressions: The Art of Philip Hitchcock*. In 2005, he returned to his hometown of St. Louis, Mo., and opened his own gallery in 2007.

The return to the Midwest has not been without its challenges. The last few years have involved a lot of reflection and a re-dedication to his craft.

"Moving back to the 'Medieval West' was really an eye-opener for me because I didn't really

change who I am in order to be here," Hitchcock said.

Soon after returning to St. Louis, Hitchcock sculpted a redux of Michelangelo's famous "Creation of Adam" from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel for an exhibition in St. Charles, Mo. The piece involved two life-size sculptures, one of which was, of course, a nude Adam. The organizers of the exhibition perceived it would be controversial and tried to cover the statue with a tablecloth and then foliage before placing a mobile wall in front of the sculpture.

"[The wall] had the opposite effect; it kind of forced you into a force-up view of this penis which was lovingly and graphically depicted but not the centerpiece of the sculpture by any means," Hitchcock said.

Before long, the sculpture made the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and put Hitchcock at the center of a mild controversy.

"In my career there have been times when I've spoiled a little controversy," he said. "This wasn't one of them. This to me was church art, it was very benign and familiar and suddenly it turned into this controversy, kind of a welcome back [to the Midwest]."

At the same time, Hitchcock's work has also



Philip Hitchcock's sculpture of Anubis. Image courtesy of Hitchcock

been welcomed in St. Louis. He was commissioned by St. Louis University to do a life-sized Christ for its art-museum collection. That turned into the piece "Christ Embracing the Cross."

The Midwest homecoming has caused Hitchcock to question his work and career choices, but with the purpose of affirming his passion for both.

"It was somewhat jarring to come back to the scene of the crime as it were in St. Louis and seeing peers from my high school days and where

they are in their lives," he said. "The temptation, of course, is to compare it with where I am in my mind. Although I have all this freedom and critical success and avant-garde edginess, I don't quite have the 401K or the retirement fund or any of that. It's interesting. I wouldn't do it any differently."

Hitchcock is aware that the eroticism present in much of his work poses certain challenges as an artist, but he's intent on changing perceptions of male portrayals in art and culture.

"The minute you put a penis on the piece, an exposed penis—God forbid it's erect—you've limited your audience and you've limited your commercial viability," he said.

One particular piece that will be displayed in the Leather Archives exhibition is "The Birth of Cernunnos." Known as the Celtic god of fertility, Cernunnos is often depicted with an erection.

"This is a culture [today] where sexuality and, God forbid, male-on-male sexuality is not talked about a lot," Hitchcock said. "People don't want to think about it, they don't want to discuss it and the last thing they want is their kids to see it. To me it feels like there's a real need for this. It's important to stay with ideas and images that challenge and cause people to think and re-evaluate what their ideas are."

Mythology has long been a source of inspiration for Hitchcock. He said we revisit it so often because it's "archetypal and raw" with themes of lust, envy, greed, revenge and sex.

For a long time, Hitchcock said he never realized how graphic some myths were, such as the story of the birth of the Minotaur, in which the wife of King Minos becomes infatuated with

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## WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES



BY MEGHAN STREIT

### Tapas Las Ramblas

I finally made it to Tapas Las Ramblas, a cheery tapas lounge on the South end of Andersonville. When Tapas Las Ramblas first opened a couple of years ago, I figured they'd be out of business within a year like the other restaurants that had tried – and failed – to make it work in the same space on Clark St.

But, Tapas Las Ramblas has been going strong for a while, and now I know why. They serve tasty tapas in a fun environment in prime Andersonville location. You'll find all the usual suspects you'd expect at a tapas place: baked goat cheese in tomato sauce, patatas bravas, paella and, of course, sangria, with a few unique offerings and special seasonal items.

The sangria is good enough, and my usual drink of choice to wash down tapas, but I actually preferred the mojitos and martinis at Tapas Las Ramblas. Next time I'll skip the sangria and go straight to a pomegranate mojito, which is bubbly, refreshing and not too sweet.

You have to start with the baked goat cheese in tomato sauce (it's the chips and salsa of tapas, in my opinion), and Tapas Las Ramblas' version is quite good. I especially liked the buttery toasted bread that is served with the dish.

The cold potato salad was also just as it should be – creamy and very, very garlicky. It was the perfect accompaniment to the beef tenderloin skewers, my favorite dish of the evening. If you order them medium rare (as you should), the skewers are tender and packed with enough flavor that they can stand on their own. But, that shouldn't stop you from slathering the bite-size pieces of beef in the horseradish sour cream they're served with.

I also tried the mushroom caps stuffed with spinach, garlic and Manchego cheese. They were fine and a good option for vegetarians, but didn't leave any lasting impression on me. I wanted to



Grilled shrimp at Tapas Las Ramblas. Photos by Meghan Streit.

sample something from the seafood menu, and should have taken my friendly server's recommendation to try the tilapia, which is sautéed with wild mushrooms, spinach, potato puree and lemon. I ignored her good advice, and rolled the dice with the grilled shrimp with lemon and garlic butter. The shrimp were small and generally underwhelming. Next time, I'll try the tilapia.

On my visit to Tapas Las Ramblas, the kitchen was serving a winter special of pumpkin ravioli, drizzled with olive oil and fresh sage – an offer I couldn't refuse. The ravioli were nicely prepared,

but could have used a pinch more savory seasoning. I remedied that with a dash of salt, and enjoyed the dish.

There are plenty of tempting sweets on the dessert menu. The pear poached in Rioja wine with vanilla bean ice cream and raspberry coulis is the one that piqued my interest the most. But, I was too full for dessert, so ended my evening instead with a pomegranate martini, which was smooth, sweet and potent – not a bad way to top off a meal.

While Tapas Las Ramblas didn't knock my

socks off, I certainly hope it doesn't meet the fate of its predecessors any time soon. I think it's a reliable little tapas joint and a lively addition to the Clark St. strip. It's a festive place to start your night with a cocktail and a couple of Spanish nibbles and an equally suitable spot to linger for a few hours over several rounds of drinks and tapas with friends.

Tapas Las Ramblas is located at 5101 N. Clark St.; call (773) 769-9700 or visit <http://www.tapaslasramblas.com/index.html>.

Do you need some more Sugar & Spice in your life? Follow me on Twitter: @SugarAndSpiceMS – for inside scoop and commentary on Chicago's dining scene.



Pumpkin ravioli at Tapas Las Ramblas.

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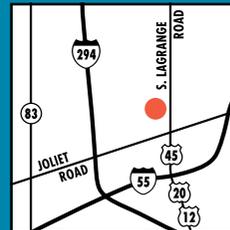
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# Trends at Detroit's 2012 auto show

BY RICHARD READ, GAYWHEELS.COM

Walking the floor of the North American Auto Show in Detroit, it's easy to become overwhelmed. Staff from each company rattle off details about their newest rides and how they differ from the competition. With all that minutiae running around in your head, you could begin to think that each automaker works in a vacuum.

But take some time to relax and view things from a distance, and you'll see trends emerge. Here are the six most common themes I saw running through this year's auto show.

## Electric cars and hybrids

The auto industry has come a long way since the Honda Insight, Toyota Prius, and Toyota RAV4 EV launched over a decade ago. Most of the world's other automakers laughed at those vehicles, but now, nearly every major brand has at least one hybrid on the lots and an electric car waiting in the wings.

The success of hybrids (and, to a lesser degree, electric cars) is due to several reasons. Some consumers are drawn to these vehicles because they reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

Others like the environmental benefits hybrids and EVs provide. But as gas prices continue to rise, one thing's for sure: customers will drift toward electrics and hybrids because of the savings they offer at the pump.

Nearly all automakers agree that hybrid technology is a stopgap solution and that electric-ity is where things are headed. However, there's heated debate as to whether future electric vehicles will run on plug-in powered batteries, hydrogen fuel cells, or something else.

## Smaller cars

To make hybrid, electric, and small combustion systems feasible, automakers are scaling back on vehicle size. But that doesn't represent a sacrifice in safety—in fact, the pint-sized 2012 Honda Fit is one of the IIHS's Top Safety Picks. It simply means that these new powertrains can be more productive, since they've got less weight to move around. The fact that more Americans are living in congested urban areas also contributes to the shrinking U.S. vehicle.

## Smartphone integration

At the moment, some automakers are trying to push proprietary infotainment systems, with brand-specific apps and such, but it seems to me as if smartphones are the winning bet. Think about it: we deal with our phones all day long, and we carry them with us wherever we go.

In the near future, it looks like those devices will be the means by which drivers enjoy music, navigation, and other features.

Down the line, as more data moves to the cloud, this may change, since we'll be able to enjoy music, apps, etc. from anywhere just by logging in.

## LGBT-friendliness

I noticed two things when I spoke to company reps about the vehicles on display in Detroit: (1) They were familiar with Gaywheels, and (2) the LGBT factor was a non-issue for most of them. According to my colleagues, the situation was very different just five or six years ago, when

some executives laughed in the faces of gay journalists.

However, there were exceptions. In one case, a company spokesperson was pretty brusque and condescending. (More about her later.) And there were two instances in which people asked, "Why do gay shoppers need their own car site?" My response was that LGBT consumers often feel intimidated in the very straight-male world of automobiles, and Gaywheels provides a comfortable space for them to get the information they need.

Furthermore, only three automakers have scored a 100-percent rating on the HRC's Corporate Equality Index. Until that's addressed, LGBT employees at most companies are subject to discrimination. LGBT consumers often choose to spend their money with equality-minded organizations, and it's Gaywheels' job to explain which companies those are.

Read the full article at <http://www.Gaywheels.com>.

## Chicago Auto Show Feb. 9-19 at McCormick

The 104th edition of the Chicago Auto Show will take place Feb. 9-19, 2012, at McCormick Place, 2301 S. Lake Shore Dr.

"First Look for Charity" is a black-tie event that will take place Feb. 9, 6:30-10:30 p.m. The public show runs 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Feb. 10-18, and 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Feb. 19. Admission for the public show is \$7-\$11.

The show utilizes 1.2 million square feet of the McCormick Place complex. Exhibitions include multiple world and North American introductions; a complete range of domestic and imported passenger cars and trucks; sport utility vehicles; and experimental or concept cars. In total, nearly 1,000 different vehicles will be on display.

See <http://www.chicagoautoshow.com>.



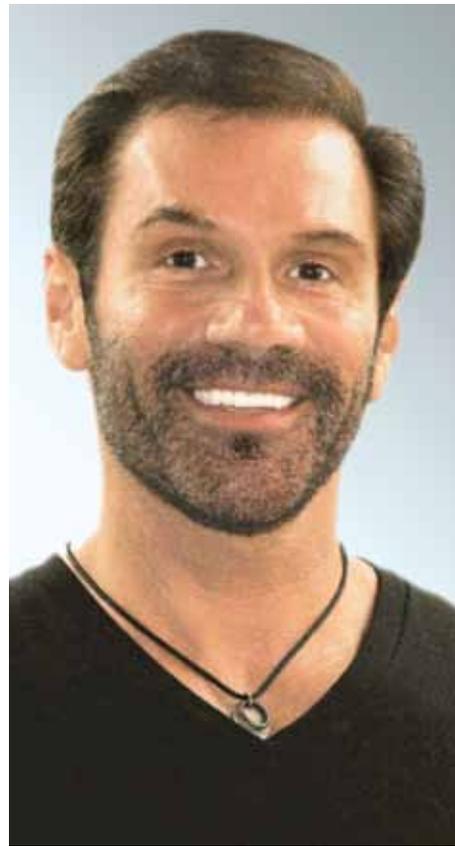
Chicago Auto Show 2011. Photo by Andrew Davis

## HITCHCOCK from page 25

Poseidon's bull and has an architect design her a contraption that will allow her to seduce it. She then becomes pregnant by the bull and gives birth to the Minotaur.

Hitchcock noted that those who first depicted these stories gave the gods, monsters and heroes very human characteristics, so myth has always been a fitting realm for his ongoing fascination with and exploration of the human form.

"So much of what's going on in the art world is about conceptual pieces and abstraction and



Philip Hitchcock. Photo courtesy of Hitchcock

sometimes the more literal arts are not as highly regarded," Hitchcock said. "Then if you add this extra layer of eroticism, often been described as the bastard child of the legitimate art world, it makes for an interesting mix, but nevertheless that's the path I chose."

"Of Myth and Mortals" will be Hitchcock's first show in Chicago. He's particularly excited to have it at the Leather Archives & Museum, because, he said, members of the leather subculture are among those who understand his work best.

"The leather community is a place where eroticism is not just acknowledged but celebrated, out in the open and discussed," he said.

The show will feature Hitchcock's classical and erotic work. Blow-up prints from his "Dark Impressions" book will offered as a more affordable alternative.

To learn more about Hitchcock and view photographs of his work, visit <http://www.philiphitchcock.com>.

To find out more about "Of Myth and Mortals"—which runs through June 30—visit <http://www.leatherarchives.org>. The opening reception is Friday, Jan. 27, at 7 p.m.

## Huge 'Morbidity' exhibit at Cultural Center

One of the Chicago Cultural Center's largest exhibitions to date, "Morbidity: The Richard Harris Collection," runs through July 8.

"Morbidity" showcases the eclectic selection of nearly 1,000 works of fine art, artifacts, massive installations and decorative objects. Harris, a resident of Riverwoods, Ill., has been an art collector for four decades.

The two major components of this exhibition are the "War Room," highlighting the atrocities of war in notable works from the 17th century to present day in the 4th floor Exhibit Hall; and the "Kunstammer of Death," a modern-day "cabinet of curiosities" housed in the Sidney R. Yates Gallery, featuring a wide-ranging survey of mortality across cultures and spiritual traditions.

Additional highlights include works by artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Jasper Johns and Rembrandt; ethnographic artifacts; and a 13-foot-high chandelier made of 3,000 hand-crafted plastic bones.

There will be a public reception Friday, Jan. 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m., at the center, 78 E. Washington St.

Visit <http://www.ChicagoCulturalCenter.org>.

## WENDERS from page 22

were going to do together. We were only a few weeks away from starting to shoot, then Pina passed away, from one day to another. Nobody had even been able to say goodbye to her. From one day to another she was gone.

I immediately cancelled the film. It seemed unthinkable to continue.

It was the dancers who made me realize that this was the wrong reaction. They continued to perform, actually decided to continue as a company, and fulfill all the obligations the Tanztheater had undergone under Pina, for at least the next three years.

They made me understand that we certainly couldn't make the film with Pina anymore, but we might be able to make a film For Pina, as an homage. Most of all as a way to say goodbye, and thank you to her. We had to invent a new film together, which we did, over the course of the next year: a journey into the world of Pina Bausch.

**WCT: The dancers are of different sizes and age groups, which is rare in dance. Could you offer a comment on this—what Pina was, or you were, trying to say with these casting choices?**

WW: Her company was some sort of a utopian humanity. They were from all continents, spoke many languages, and were too old for other companies, too voluptuous, too skinny or too short. These dancers were themselves.

That's all Pina wanted them to be. No role models, no athletes, no perfect bodies, just themselves, as truly and beautifully as possible. She wanted us to recognize ourselves in these dancers, with our flaws and deficiencies. She didn't mind those, on the contrary, she made them look lovable.

**WCT: What was the response of the dancers when they saw the finished film?**

WW: There were a lot of tears. Of course, I showed it to the dancers before I showed it to anybody, press or public. And that was an incredibly emotional moment. After all, we had worked on this together over the span of one whole year. And Pina herself appears in the film—even only sparsely—and none of the dancers had seen or heard her anymore after her death. But when I saw how happy they were, in the end, with the result of that year's work, I was also sure that Pina was fine with it.

**WCT: What would you say Pina's legacy is?**

WW: She has done pioneering work in a new art form she invented herself: Dance Theater, which is now accepted and done all over the world. She has brought the common language mankind knows, body language, to a new height that was unheard of before. Nobody has ever presented the grammar and the vocabulary of that language with that precision and deep understanding as Pina Bausch did.

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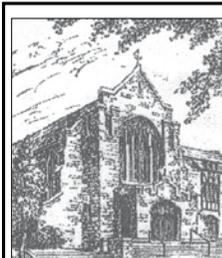
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## Celebrations

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## Flint donates Redoubt bar items to Leather Archives



On January 5, 2012 Chicago legends Chuck Renslow and Jim Flint got together at the Leather Archives and Museum at 6418 N. Greenview in Chicago when Flint, owner of the the Baton Show Lounge as well as the one-time Chicago leather bar Redoubt, donated several items to the museum's extensive collection. The Redoubt first opened in Chicago in 1976 at 65 W. Illinois St. Among the items given to the Leather Archives collection were the Redoubt sign, the bar's phallic downstairs handrail, t-shirts, license plate, posters and matches. Donations also included leather items by Redoubt bartender and manager Dan Neniskis of additional posters as well as a leather vest, cap and patch from the historic Chicago Knights Motorcycle Club. Pictured from left, in the Teri Rose Memorial Library at the Leather Archives and Museum: LA&M Executive Director Rick Storer, Chuck Renslow, Redoubt manager Dan Neniskis, and owner Jim Flint. Photo by Hal Baim

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**Paula and Friends at The Glenwood** Hosts Marla Levie of Focus on Aging, Kerry Peck of Peck Bloom, LLC, and Oscar Zambrano for an event honoring Paula Basta, candidate for State Representative of the 14th District. Suggested donation \$25. RSVP to Michael at 847-801-9543; 5:30pm-7:30pm, The Glenwood, 6962 N. Glenwood Ave

**Neighborhood Night** Every Wednesday evening is Palette Bistro's local neighborhood night. Anyone with a 60614 or 60657 zip code gets 15% off their bill; 6pm-11:30pm, Palette Bistro, 2834 N Southport Ave., Chicago

**James Hormel** The out former ambassador to Luxembourg signs his memoir, *Fit to Serve*. The Book Cellar prefers customers to purchase the book from their store, but it is not required for autographs. 7pm, The Book Cellar, 4736 N. Lincoln Ave., <http://www.bookcellarinc.com>

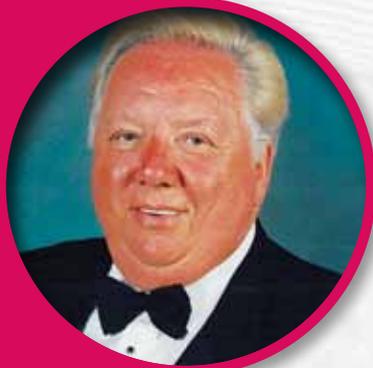
**Fireside chat with Jim Flint** Chicago legend Jim Flint of the Baton Show Lounge interviewed live on stage by Chicago leatherman Douglas O'Keeffe. This interview, the first in a series of four O'Keeffe will conduct at the Center in 2012, coincides with the Owen Keehnen and Tracy Baim biography about Jim Flint released in December 2011, *Jim Flint: The Boy From Peoria*. Following the formal interview the floor will open for audience questions. 7:30pm-9pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

**Hydrag Revue's 10th Anniversary Show** Featuring Aurora Sexton, Kelly Lauren, Monica Munro, DiDa Ritz, Naysha Lopez, Sorraya Dash and Mercedes Andrews.

## JIM DANDY Wed., Jan. 25

Baton Show Lounge owner Jim Flint (right) will be interviewed at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Photo by Hal Baim



Hosted by the one and only Tajma Hall. 8pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, Chicago, <http://www.hydratechicago.com>

## Thursday, Jan. 26

**2012 Champagne Wrapture: Clicquot in the Sky** Soar to new heights and join Veuve Clicquot and Co-Chairs David Kaufman, Tom Segal, Matthew Harvat, Dennis Remer, Scott Silverman, and Christopher Hubbard for Champagne Wrapture 2012: Clicquot in the Sky. 6pm-9pm, The SkyDeck, Willis Tower 233 S. Wacker Dr., [http://www.chicagohouse.org/event\\_champagne\\_wrapture.html](http://www.chicagohouse.org/event_champagne_wrapture.html)

**Out in Chicago** Join Center on Halsted and the Director's Circle for drinks, hors d'oeuvres and private tour and viewing of the exhibit dealing with 150 years of history and stories of the LGBT community in Chicago...before the exhibit is gone. RSVP [jkosior@centeronhalsted.org](mailto:jkosior@centeronhalsted.org) or call by Jan. 20. 6pm-9pm, 773-661-0788, Chicago History Museum, 1601 N Clark St., <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

**Childhood sexual abuse recovery meeting** SIA is a 12-Step fellowship of adults recovering from the after-effects of childhood sexual abuse. On most occasions at least one woman in recovery will be present and it is expected that a man will also be present. [literaturehotline@yahoo.com](mailto:literaturehotline@yahoo.com); 6:30pm, 630-646-6402, New Town Alano Club, 909 W. Belmont Ave., 2nd Floor, <http://www.siaawso.org>

**Book Signing with Readings and Conversation** This will be an evening with Roger Goodman, author of a new book; 7pm-9pm, 773-764-8088, Unabridged Bookstore, 3251 N. Broadway, <http://www.unabridgedbookstore.com>

**danc(e)volve** A selection of pieces developed by Hubbard Street dancers. Through Jan. 29. Tickets: \$35 for non-members, \$28 for MCA members, \$10 for students through [hubbardstreetdance.com](http://www.hubbardstreetdance.com); 7:30pm, 312-850-9744, Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave., <http://www.hubbardstreetdance.com>

## Friday, Jan. 27

**New Philharmonic:** New Philharmonic begins 2012 with a must-see concert staging of Giacomo Puccini's tragic love-story masterwork "Madama Butterfly" at the McAninch Arts Center at College of DuPage; 8pm-10:15pm, 630-942-4000, McAninch Arts Center, College of DuPage 425 Fawell Blvd., Glen Ellyn, <http://www.atthemac.org>

**Spin Shower Contest** Join super cute Victor at Midnight for Spin's outrageous and infamous contest! Get there by 11:30pm to enter, and you could win First Prize of \$150 or Second Prize of \$50. 9pm, Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave., <http://spin-nightclub.com>

**Bi-Polar Fridays at @mosphere Bar** Every Friday the ONLY place to be is @mosphere Bar in Andersonville for Bi-Polar Friday's. Hosted by Regina Upright; 10pm, 773-784-1100, @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St., <http://atmospherebar.com>

**Mr. Chicago Leather 2012 Welcome Party** Lube wrestling hosted by Mr. Chicago Leather 2011 Jason Southerland. 10pm, Touche, 6412 N Clark St, Chicago, <http://www.touchechicago.com>

## Saturday, Jan. 28

**Morbid Curiosity: The Richard Harris Collection** A deadly obsession takes hold of the Chicago Cultural Center this winter when one of its largest exhibitions to date, *Morbid Curiosity: The Richard Harris Collection*, opens. 10am-6pm, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St., <http://www.explorechicago.org>

**Latin Street Dancing at the Chicago**

**French Market** Looking for something different on a cold Saturday afternoon? How about learning a few new dances? The French Market is offering Latin Dance lessons. 11am-1pm, 312-575-0306, Chicago French Market, 131 N. Clinton St., <http://www.frenchmarketchicago.com>

**Gay For Good volunteer day** Help the MGR Foundation's Care Team pack and distribute personal care packs for the needy. 12pm, Visit site for location and time, <http://www.gayforgood.org>

**7th Annual Chili Cookoff** The big cookoff is back. Enter your recipe for the \$100 cash prize. Be creative and win our "Christopher Lowell" Award. \$10 donation to be a judge and sample the chili. Hosted by NBC-5 reporter Wayne Johnson. All money raised will be donated to Care For Real, a Chicago food pantry. \$3 Bud Light drafts, \$3.75 Shiner Bock. 12pm-2pm, Crew Bar & Grill, 4804 N Broadway, Chicago, <http://www.worldsgreatestbar.com>

**Chicago Spirit Brigade: Toys in the Attic** CSB's only fundraiser for operating expenses will take you back to youth with music, rousing dance numbers, fabulous drag and a toy surprise and support cheerleaders, dancers and drill team in raising money for other non-profit groups that provide support to people with life-threatening challenges. Shows 7 and 9, doors open an hour early. 7pm-9pm, Circuit Night Club, 3641 N. Halsted St., <http://www.chicago-spiritbrigade.org>

**cllaw 12** Strap on your armbands and build up your biceps! The fearsome Chicago League of Lady Arm Wrestlers is mauling its way back onto the Chicago scene once again! Brought to you by Sideshow Theatre Company and benefiting Sideshow Theater and our partner charity, Marwen, our 12th match to date continues to be "one hell of a show" (Penthouse Magazine) with an open bar, outrageous costumes, shady referees and audience participation into a wild, crazy, one-of-a-kind event and fundraiser. 10pm, 312-206-8959, Club 162, 3551 North Sheffield Ave, <http://www.sideshowtheatre.org/performances/productions/cllaw>

## Sunday, Jan. 29

**Taverna 750 First Call Brunch** Come sample the amazing food and drink of Taverna 750. Spruce up your Sunday as Taverna 750 unveils its tasty creations and wonderful libations. \$20 packages to meet your Sunday Brunch goals! 11am-3pm, Taverna 750, 750 W. Cornelia Ave., <http://www.taverna750.com>

**Urban Village Church** Spiritual worship is about coming together as community to make space for God to move in us. It's a place to receive God's grace and love and to give of ourselves, as well. 10:15am-11:30am, Urban Village Church, Spertus Institute, 610 S. Michigan, <http://www.urbanvillagechurch.org>

**Urban Village Church: Andersonville service** Andersonville is a neighborhood full of passion, art, diversity, and eclectic energy, all which makes Urban Village Church thrilled to be joining the community! 10:30am-11:45am, 1602 W. Ainslie (at Ashland), <http://www.newchicagochurch.com>

**12th and Delaware Screening** Illinois Choice Action Team Annual Roe event ground-breaking documentary from the makers of Academy Award-nominated *Jesus Camp*, follows activity on a quiet street corner in Florida where a women's health clinic stands across from an anti-choice "crisis pregnancy center" (CPC). RSVP to [leadership@ilchoiceactionteam.org](mailto:leadership@ilchoiceactionteam.org); 4:30pm, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, 800 S. Halsted St.

**SIN Sundays** Sundays are heating up at Hydrate with SIN Sundays! Just because the weekend is over doesn't mean the party is! Join some of your favorite service industry staff members from all over the city partying it up at Hydrate! 9pm, Hydrate,



## GLESS IS MORE

### Tuesday, Jan. 31

Hannah Free (starring Sharon Gless, above) will screen at Oakton Community College. (Gless is not slated to attend.)

3458 N. Halsted St., <http://www.hydratechicago.com>

### Monday, Jan. 30

**Salsa lessons** Join the Velvet Rope for open Salsa Lessons with Anna Marie every Monday. Stick around for open salsa dancing. Bring your partner or come alone; 7pm-11:30pm, 708-358-8840, Velvet Rope, 728 West Lake Street, Oak Park, <http://velvetropetralounge.com>

**Mike Quigley New Year Celebration** Individual tickets \$150. RSVP Erica Beechen [ebeechen@quigleyforcongress.com](mailto:ebeechen@quigleyforcongress.com); 5pm-7pm, 312-618-6636, La Gondola, 1258 W. Belmont Ave.

### Tuesday, Jan. 31

**Dreening: Hannah Free** Chicago-made lesbian movie starring Sharon Gless, about an independent spirit and the woman she calls home. Hosted by Megan Drilling, the film's art director. Free and open to public. 6:30pm, Oakton Community College, Des Plaines campus, room 1604

**Chicago Academy for the Arts presents "Showcase"** Tomorrow's artists in dance, musical theater, visual arts, theater, media arts and music take center stage in Chicago Academy for the Arts Showcase; 7pm-10pm, Goodman Theatre, 170 N Dearborn, Chicago

**Homotown 2: This time it's personal!** An evening of community, cocktails, and heartfelt performances by some of Chicago's most talented theatre professionals - all supporting About Face Youth Theatre. With performances by Paul Oakley Stoval, E. Faye Butler, Hollis Resnik, and Brandon Dahlquist. \$25. 8pm, Schuba's, 3159 N. Southport Ave., <http://www.aboutface-theatre.com>

### Wed., Feb. 1

**Gay Liberation Network organizing meeting** Join with Chicago's LGBT direct action group at their monthly organizing meeting -- new members welcome! 7pm-9pm, 773-209-1187, Berger Park Cultural Center 6205 N. Sheridan Rd., <http://www.gayliberation.net>

### Wed., Feb. 8

**Sex, Chocolate and Your Pelvic Floor event- What You Want, What You Need, What You Need To Know** is Chicago's unique, fun, educational ladies night out (women only - no men allowed!). This event gives women the opportunity to learn how to improve pelvic and sexual health while offering a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere where women can easily laugh and learn. Advance tickets only \$50! Tickets will be available at the door for \$75. 7pm-10pm, Beauty Bar, <http://www.totalcontrolprogram.com/assets/root/html/scpf>



## CAT'S ALL, FOLKS

### Thursday, Jan. 26

Chicago House's "Champagne Wrapture: Clicquot in the Sky" will take place at Willis Tower, 233 S. Wacker Dr.

Photo from 2011 by Kat Fitzgerald ([MysticImagesPhotography.com](http://MysticImagesPhotography.com))

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# BILLY MASTERS

"Having sleepovers with little boys ... and you're a 40-year-old man? Uh, NO. You're like a child molester."—Kurt Loder shares his thoughts on Michael Jackson's legacy. I, for one, am shocked. Who knew Kurt Loder was still working?

When I walked into the Beverly Hilton for the Golden Globes, a strange man stopped me on the red carpet and handed me his business card, saying that I should call him. He could help me. I shoved it in my pocket and forgot about it. When I took my tux to the cleaner, I found a card for "Instant Burn Recovery," specialists in plastic surgery for burn victims. Did I look THAT bad? This reminded me of the first time I met Gloria Allred. We were seated together at a par-



Elton John and David Furnish (above) have taken their feud with the Material Girl to the next level, Billy says. Photo by Doug Meszler

ty. After a few of my anecdotes, she handed me her card saying, "You should always have this on you—something tells me you'll need it."

Speaking of the Golden Globes, the Madonna/Elton John/David Furnish feud hit new highs (or lows, depending on your perspective). The latest kerfuffle was about who would win Best Song in a Motion Picture—Elton for Gnomeo & Juliet or Madonna for W.E. It was Elton who fired the first shot on the red carpet when he told Carson Daly, "She doesn't have a fucking chance of winning tonight." This led to Madonna's retort, "May the best man win." Of course, it was Madge's night. Furnish immediately took to Facebook and wrote "Madonna? Best song??? F\*\*k off!!!" He later implied that perhaps the Hollywood Foreign Press gave Madonna the award in return for her being a presenter. What? These aren't merit-based awards? I refuse to believe it!

When asked about Elton at the press conference, Madonna said, "I hope he speaks to me for the next couple of years. He's been known to get mad at me so I don't know. He's brilliant and I adore him. So he'll win another award. I don't feel bad." This led to headlines all over the world: "Madonna Sniffs, 'I Don't Feel Bad'" said one. Another said, "Elton & Hubby Trash Madge." One headline proclaimed "Uranus Takes a Pounding" which, as it turns out, had nothing to do with either Madonna or Elton ... or David, for that matter.

Then Furnish (begrudgingly, I'm sure) apologized: "Wow! What a tempest in a teapot. My comments regarding the Golden Globes have been blown way out of proportion. My passion for our film 'Gnomeo & Juliet' and belief in Elton's song really got my emotional juices going. But I must say for the record that I do believe Madonna is a great artist, and that Elton and I wish her all the best for next week's premiere of

the film 'W.E.'" Not as poetic as "F\*ck off," but just as sincere.

Another battling duo is hitting the airwaves in what promises to be a riveting encounter. If you're old enough to remember when Three's Company was considered risqué TV and appeared on one of the three networks, then you probably know the story. After the fourth season of the hit sitcom, Suzanne Somers refused to come back to work until she was paid the same as a male lead—back then it was \$30K per episode for the girls and \$150K for the guys. That might explain why John Ritter froze her out. But what of Joyce DeWitt? Honey, Joyce wanted to keep her job! The two haven't spoken in 30 years. Suzanne recently started a web series called Breaking Through. Allegedly the reunion idea came from her "producer"—which all web shows have, I'm sure. Somers says she wasn't initially interested, but was convinced. And DeWitt? Well, what else does she have to do? Oh, except for five performances of "Love Letters" at the Sandhills Community College in Pinehurst, N.C., last week, where she appeared alongside Tab Hunter! Bottom line, she did the interview with Suzanne and it will debut online Feb. 2—and I'm sure will turn up on BillyMasters.com shortly thereafter.

Johnny Weir is back! He left the world of competitive figure skating after ranking sixth place at the 2010 Olympics. He planned to go pro, but none of the pro shows would hire him. He hoped to start his own show, but that didn't happen. So now he's planning to resume serious training, compete in a series of regional events leading up to the US Figure Skating Championships and, hopefully, the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. You go, girl!

You don't expect to read a story about Corey Feldman in a newspaper ... except in England, where he's currently appearing on the TV show Dancing on Ice—competing against such luminaries as Charlene Tilton! Feldman has "vowed" to write a book. Perhaps a better word would be "threatened," for he plans to talk about the sexual abuse he suffered as a young actor. And he promises to name names (I think we can guess one of the names)! In what I suppose is a "teaser," he told a reporter from The Sun, "When I was 14 and 15, things were happening to me. These older men were leching around like vultures. It was basically me laying there pretending I was asleep and them going about their business." Not to minimize this, but if I had a nickel for every time I was "asleep" when something happened, I'd be a rich man, indeed—sticky, but rich.

Apropos of the Golden Globes, our "Ask Billy" question comes from Gordon in Dallas: "Everyone is talking about Michael Fassbender's penis in 'Shame.' Have you seen it? Is it as big as George Clooney said?"

Well, I don't know if he could golf with it—maybe croquet. Something where you swing the mallet directly betwixt your legs. Yes, that would surely be Fassbender's game. Of course I've seen Shame—I'm a SAG voter, after all. So, yes, I've seen his penis. But I'd seen it before in Hunger. And it's quite. ... well, the word that comes to mind is pendulous. Look it up. Of course, you can check it out for yourself on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm comparing a penis to a croquet mallet, it's definitely time for me to end yet another column. Amazing. Even in these days of proposed Internet crackdowns, one site always delivers—www.BillyMasters.com. If you've got a question that simply needs my attention, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Corey wakes up ... in a shower! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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# Gay soccer player David Testo hopes to hit main goals

BY ROSS FORMAN

David Testo might have played his last professional soccer match. His cleats might be hung up and his grass-stained uniform washed for the final time.

Testo has bigger goals to score.

Retirement is now certainly a possibility, at age 30, "and it doesn't terrify me at all because I've been playing soccer since I was 5; it's been my whole life, including the past 10 professionally," he said. "Soccer has gotten me to this point where I can share my story and maybe help others; I find that more important than playing another year."

Testo, who lives in Montreal, came out Nov. 10, 2011, in an interview on French Canadian public broadcaster Radio Canada. He said that his family, friends, teammates and team management were aware of his sexual orientation.

He was a superstar at TC Roberson High School in North Carolina, earning state player of the year accolades in 1998. He then played two seasons at the University of South Carolina, tallying 6 goals and 11 assists in 33 games. Testo transferred to the University of North Carolina as a junior, leading the Tar Heels to the National Championship.

He also was a two-time All-ACC second team honoree at the University of North Carolina after scoring 11 goals and having six assists as a junior, and seven goals and nine assists as a senior.

Testo then started kicking professionally, although he was not drafted in the 2003 Major League Soccer (MLS) SuperDraft, despite experience with youth U.S. national teams.

Ultimately, Testo signed with the Richmond Kickers and claimed the A-League's 2003 Rookie of the Year award. Testo played 33 matches for the Columbus Crew in 2004-05, then moved to the Vancouver Whitecaps. He played for the Montreal Impact from 2007-2011.

Will he play professionally again?

"That's a good question," Testo said. "I think all of this has happened at the right moment in my life.

"Sure, I could push to play a couple more years, but I've had quite a few injuries, and I just feel all of those doors are closing while so many other doors are opening. I really want to follow the path that is laid out for me. A lot of people are encouraging me to [continue to] play, and that by playing I would make an even bigger difference, but that might be someone else's role in life, not mine.

"I just hope to be as happy in five years as I am right now," he said.

Testo had his best professional season in 2009, playing for Montreal in the 11-team, top-tiered First Division of the United Soccer Leagues (USL). Montreal, ironically, battled Testo's former team, Vancouver, in the finals—and Montreal wound up winning its third USL Championship, which was Testo's second USL Championship. Testo also earned the Giuseppe-Saputo



David Testo. Photo courtesy of Testo

Trophy, presented to the Impact's Most Valuable Player.

"I really want to influence the sports community and help eliminate the stigma of gays in sports," Testo said. "I really hope that one day when someone does come out as gay in one of the major [team] sports that it isn't even newsworthy at all. Hopefully it eventually won't matter if you're a sports player at the professional level and also gay."

Testo was released by Montreal Oct. 12, 2011, about a month before coming out—although it was not because he is gay. Testo said he's been out to teammates, friends and family for about five years.

When he told his Montreal coach, Testo said it was "such a relief," because he was, at the time, a team captain and he didn't know how his coach was going to react. But the coach just laughed, said he knew, said it was not a big deal. "I was very well accepted here; I think that's why I stayed here after won championship in 2009 and was the MVP, [despite] offers to go to the [more prestigious] MLS."

Testo said his life has been a whirlwind since coming out. He's gotten emails of support from, literally, around the world. He's heard from fans, friends, former teammates, and plenty of strangers.

All have been supportive.

The response, he said, "has not been anything like what I expected.

"When I did [the coming-out interview,] I didn't even think I'd do a follow-up interview," he said, laughing. "But since [that first inter-

view], I haven't stopped [granting] interviews.

"I want to reach as many people as I can in hopes of affecting positive change on people."

Testo's coming out has been covered by ESPN and many other mainstream media outlets worldwide.

I was prepared for the fallout [from the coming-out interview] to go in any direction; I have a solid support group of friends in Montreal, so I really wasn't worried. I knew it was strong enough to withstand anything that might not have been positive," he said. "I really wasn't expecting [my coming-out announcement] to hit worldwide, but it certainly has, and hopefully it created a thought or a movement of change in a positive direction.

"My whole life since that day has been on the phone, [answering] emails, doing interviews. I cannot believe the response that story got; it's overwhelming.

"I thought I'd do that [coming-out] interview, and then just go back to leading my normal life. But I quickly realized that was not going to happen."

Testo said the biggest surprise since coming out is the "overall effect that it's had."

He admitted that, at first, some in his family took his coming-out pretty hard, pretty harshly because they went from having to deal with him just being gay privately to now being gay for the world to know. "It's been a process for them, and for me," he said.

"I'm proud of myself for what I'm doing, and I'm happy. [Having come out] brings a lot of meaning into my life. Maybe everything in my life was leading up to this point, for a purpose."

Testo said his driving force to come out was to reach the younger generation, to tell them that, yes, it is OK to be gay. "I wanted them to know that there are other people out there like them," he said.

However, Testo admitted he instead has had more responses from the older generation—those in their 50s, 60s and 70s—including random people on the street.

"Everything is really going in a positive direction for me," Testo said. "I want to help players struggling with this issue, so they know they will have a place to go or someone to talk to, so they can feel safe and secure, so they know they aren't the only one. That's one thing I wish I had when I was younger, even as young as 15 and 16 years-old."

Testo, who said he's all smiles these days with his private life, too. He has had four serious, long-term relationships, starting with Shane Landrum of TV's Road Rules fame. The two dated in college.

"I've found a little bit more about myself in each relationship, helping me become the man who I am today," he said. "I think I was attracted to [Landrum] because, maybe subconsciously, being around him and being with someone who already was in the public eye would kind of force me to come out to my friends and others.

"Dating [Landrum] forced me to open up [about my sexual orientation] to a lot of people who I probably never would have."

Despite the media spotlight Testo has walked in since coming-out, Testo said he truly is not a spotlight kind of guy. In fact, he considers himself, "a really, really private homebody."

When Montreal won the league championship in 2009, and even though he was a team standout, he rarely was asked for quotes—but that was fine with him. The local media always seemed to want to talk to players in French, he said, laughing, and he did speak fluent French.

Testo enjoys yoga and spending time with his two dogs. He loves to laugh, and wishes more of his interviews of late were a bit more lighthearted, although he knows coming out and gays in sports are, or can be, serious subjects. He likes reading at home, but also could be seen dancing at local clubs until 3 a.m.

So who is the real David Testo?

He said that he is "generally, a very positive, happy person."

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## AVOIDING A WILL CONTEST; THE IRONCLAD WILL

**Q.** My lover is currently hospitalized due to complications from cancer and the doctors do not expect him to live much longer. As he made a lot more money than I, everything is in his name and we never had a civil union. Now he wants to make a will so that all of his property will go to me but I am worried that his family might contest the will.

**A.** To avoid will challenges from greedy relatives everyone will want to ensure that their will is ironclad. Although there is no way to guarantee that a will won't be challenged there are ways to avoid and win will contests.

First, just because your partner is in the hospital doesn't mean he can't make a will. If he is of sound mind without any undue influence upon him, he can and should make a will. Use a lawyer who specializes in probate and estate planning to ensure that all possible safeguards are employed when the will is prepared and signed. Lawyers do make hospital and house calls.

Second, the will must be clear not just to a friendly reader, but to a hostile one avidly looking for some doubt or ambiguity. The lawyer who supervises the will signing must orchestrate every detail or the will may be invalidated.

Third, the law requires two witnesses to the testator's signature. Witnesses can be total strangers, but where a will contest is expected, it is wise to use witnesses who know the testator, so their testimony concerning the mental soundness of the testator will be more convincing.

If the maker of the will is in the hospital the lawyer should ask the doctor if the maker is capable of understanding the will. Hospital records should be noted with comments that the patient was "alert" or had a "good day." This will constitute helpful, admissible evidence that the maker knew what he was doing when the will was signed.

Although one may expect a will contest from disinherited family members, attacking a testator's mental soundness is not easy. Even persons of conceded diminished mental capacity are entitled to make wills. The courts have held that physical weakness, senility, stroke, drug addiction, or even institutionalization for mental problems are not necessarily inconsistent with the ability to make a will.

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

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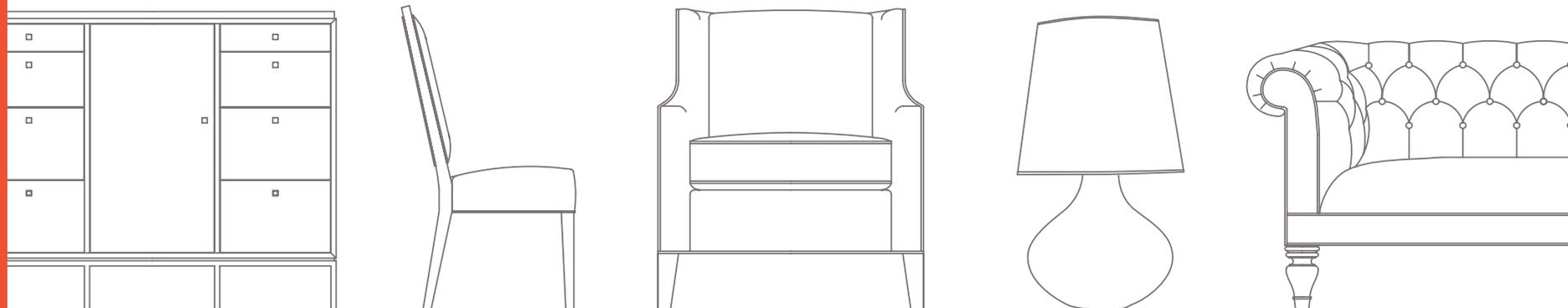
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