Gimme shelter

On March 3, HIV/AIDS agency Vida/SIDA cut the ribbon on its much-anticipated LGBT homeless youth shelter at 2703 W. Division St.—the first of its kind in the Midwest. Dozens of people attended, including activists and political officials. Read more on page 10. Photo by Kate Sosin
Men Overboard.

Actually, between the warm water, endless sunshine and incredible variety of things to eat, drink and do, it’s quite easy for everyone to go a little overboard in Key West. fla-keys.com/gaykeywest 1.866.904.0543

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photos on cover (left, from top): Chicago Takes Off by Kat Fitzgerald; pic of Chad Griffin by Rex Wockner; photo of Robert Green Jr. from Green Jr.; Judy Shepard PR photo

BLONDE DATE
Disc and That includes DVD releases of films such as My Week with Marilyn (left).

Photo from the Weinstein Company

BEAUTY MARK
Read about the Lesbian Leadership Council’s event at Beauty Bar.

EAT TO THE BEAT
Read an interview with The Cooking Channel’s Nadia G.

THAT’S ENTERTAINMENT
Read entertainment news about Janet Jackson, Adele and Brad Goreski.

IN CHAMBERS
See photos from the Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce open house that marked its new headquarters.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

WIN MADONNA TICKETS!
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See Madonna Sept. 19 at the United Center, touring in support of her new album MDNA. Tickets on sale Mon., Feb. 13 at 10 am. Every ticket purchased recieves a copy of MDNA!

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Winner will be selected at random from all entries and will be notified via email. One entry per person, please.

To win:
Simply find us at facebook.com/WindyCityMediaGroup and “like” our page by Mon., Mar. 12.

Winner will be chosen at random from all page fans and will be notified via Facebook.
Lesbian denied communion at mother’s funeral

BY CHUCK COLBERT

The denial of communion to a lesbian at her mother’s funeral in Maryland has touched a raw nerve among LGBT Catholics, prompting a variety of responses there and beyond. But first, the facts of the incident are perhaps best described in the words of the woman, Barbara Johnson, 51, who explained to local metropolitan media in Washington, D.C., what Rev. Marcel Guarnizo said to her. “I cannot give you communion because you live with a woman, and in the eyes of the church that is a sin.”

His denial stunned Johnson, a lifelong Catholic and former Catholic schoolteacher, who lives with a partner of 20 years. Johnson has ties to Chicago, having lived here for some time. “I just stood there, in shock. I was grieving, crying. My mother’s body was behind me, and all I wanted to do was provide for her, and the final thing was to make a beautiful funeral, and here I was letting her down because there was a scene,” she told the Washington Post.

The setting, for what Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, called a “grievous error of one priest,” was a Feb. 25 funeral Mass at St. John Neumann Catholic Church in Gaithersburg, Md.

Not only did Guarnizo put his hand over the communion platter, but he also walked away from Johnson’s mother’s body. “I am sorry that what should have been a celebration of your mother’s life, in light of her faith in Jesus Christ, was overshadowed by a lack of pastoral sensitivity,” Bishop Barry Knestout wrote.

Johnson told local media that she was satisfied with the archdiocesan apology, adding, “I do everything in my power to see that you are acknowledged in a statement, that Guarnizo had acted inappropriately, saying, “Any issues regarding the suitability of an individual to receive communion should be addressed by the priest with that person in a private, pastoral setting.”

The Washington archdiocesan policy of not withholding communion and for priests to counsel Catholics privately is similar to the rule in the Chicago archdiocese under leadership of Cardinal Francis George. Johnson also received an apology through correspondence from an auxiliary bishop, “I am sorry that what should have been a celebration of your mother’s life, in light of her faith in Jesus Christ, was overshadowed by a lack of pastoral sensitivity,” Bishop Barry Knestout wrote.

WikiQueer launches

The Aequalitas Project has announced the public launch of WikiQueer (www.WikiQueer.org), the nonprofit LGBT wiki program, according to a press release. WikiQueer is a web-based, not-for-profit, free-content encyclopedia and resource project, and it’s based on an openly editable model. Anyone with Internet access can write and make changes to WikiQueer articles—except in certain cases where editing is restricted to prevent disruption or vandalism.

WikiQueer is a program of The Aequalitas Project, a nonprofit organization serving as an incubator for new progressive programs. In addition to The Aequalitas Project, a global advisory board and participating content partners oversee the administrative and strategic aspects of WikiQueer.

Dignity/Chicago’s Lent program thru April 1

Dignity/Chicago and Wisdom & Word Works Foundation will present a program for Lent focused on “What Covenant means to us today ... after 40 years” through Sunday, April 1, at Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N. Broadway.

Rev. Barbara Zeman and Rev. Mary Ramden will lead reflections during customary soup supper after each of the five Sundays of Lent at 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.dignity-chicago.org or call 312-458-9438.
HRC appoints new president

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The next president of the nation’s largest LGBT political group will be Chad Griffin, a California activist who has made a name for himself by initiating and orchestrating one of the most important legal challenges in LGBT history. Griffin will succeed current Human Rights Campaign (HRC) President Joe Solmonese in June.

Griffin, 38, is the founder of the American Foundation for Equal Rights (AFER), the group that enlisted the legal services of some of the nation’s best lawyers to launch a lawsuit against California’s ban on same-sex marriage, Proposition 8. The lawsuit, which so far has been scheduled to end this month, will stay on until he organized the lawsuit Perry v. Brown, enlisted the legal services of some of the nation’s best lawyers to launch a lawsuit against California’s ban on same-sex marriage, Proposition 8. The lawsuit, which so far has been

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The announcement of that lawsuit drew resistance from many established LGBT legal activists at first. Many thought that taking the marriage issue into federal court—a seemingly inevitable issue for the U.S. Supreme Court—was risky and premature, given the growing conservatism of the high court. They wanted a lawsuit to evolve out of a careful campaign of public education. Even renowned constitutional law expert Laurence Tribe believed the timing was risky. Tensions were so high at one point, Griffin’s legal team opposed the appointment of LGBT legal groups as intervenors in the case, leaving the lawsuit Perry v. Brown, enlisted the legal services of some of the nation’s best lawyers to launch a lawsuit against California’s ban on same-sex marriage, Proposition 8. The lawsuit, which so far has been

However, as the litigation developed, Griffin and his litigators began to work with LGBT legal groups and the tensions turned quickly into teamwork. Prior to founding AFER, Griffin was a founding partner of the political communications and communications and campaign firm of Griffin/Schein in Los Angeles. A native of Arkansas, Griffin also worked for a time in the White House communications office of President Bill Clinton.

HRC is perhaps the LGBT national community’s most stable organization, having changed leaders on a fairly consistent basis every six years. The organization was established in 1978 by Steve Endean and hired Washington, D.C., activist Vic Basile as executive director in 1983. Basile was followed by Massachusetts activist Tim McFieley in 1989, California leader Elizabeth Birch in 1995, Washington operative Joe Solmonese in 2005 and, now, Griffin.

“2012 by Keen News Service. All rights reserved.”

What others say about Griffin’s appointment

—Valerie Jarrett, senior advisor to President Obama: “The President appreciates the leadership qualities critical to propel our movement for equality forward and I am so proud that he will succeed me this June leading HRC.”

—Writer Rex Wockner: “This is a new day for HRC—and a vindication/embracing of younger LGBT activists who have dared to think outside the box. Several national LGBT groups were, as you recall, ferociously opposed to Chad’s federal lawsuit against Prop 8—and now he’s to be America’s #1 gay activist.”

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Social-networking site launches for LGBT teens

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

LGBT teens have a new social-networking site they can call their own.

JustLeftTheCloset.com launched in February and is a social-networking space for kids just coming out or not quite out yet to connect with one another. The site is for kids age 13-18 and has already added nearly 800 members in its first three weeks.

“We wanted to give kids a community where they knew there were other people like them,” said Just Left The Closet Community Manager Jeremy Cabalona. “Growing up I kind of dealt with a lot of the same things, being in a small, isolated community and not really having any friends and being in a really conservative family without anyone to talk to. Feeling like I was the only person going through this. Having a resource where there are other kids going through the exact same thing in a non-threatening environment and a safe environment, I felt would have made a huge difference in my life so I’ve always wanted to do something like this.”

Unlike Facebook, Cabalona said the website offers gay kids a greater opportunity to be themselves.

“On Facebook, your friends from school are on there, your family is on there,” he said. “For a kid who is just coming out or not yet they can’t really say anything on there or be themselves on there. The goal of Just Left The Closet is to get someone who needs that space, who needs a bit of anonymity, or somewhere to just talk about how their day is going without being judged. A big part of Just Left The Closet is giving them that sense of security.”

Cabalona and founder Tomo Delaney decided to create the website in response to the onslaught of teen bullying stories and suicides that continue to occur across the country. The site is designed to be a safe space for teens to be themselves.

Cabalona said that visitors are encouraged to select user names. The site also does not offer a photo album feature and kids are reminded not to post photos of themselves if they are not comfortable or out. The site also emphasizes users’ ability to block or report anyone who makes them uncomfortable. Cabalona and Delaney monitor all content that is posted on the site for appropriateness as well.

Maryland’s marriage bill becomes law

Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley signed Maryland’s marriage-equality bill into law March 1, becoming the eighth state to legalize same-sex marriage.

The law takes effect January 2013, according to the Washington Times.

“Religious freedom was the very reason for our state’s founding and at the heart of religious freedom is the freedom of individual conscience,” O’Malley said.

Lambda Legal Executive Director Kevin Cathcart said in a statement, “It’s a great day for equality in Maryland. The state is indeed stronger today with marriage equality for same-sex couples and their families.”

“This past month has been a momentous one for the LGBT community. From coast to coast—in Washington, New Jersey and Maryland—many elected officials are standing up for equality, and old-fashioned American values of fairness and common sense again have carried the day. People all across the country understand that marriage protects families, and that separate and unequal are not the American way.”

National Center for Lesbian Rights Executive Director Kate Kendell, Esq., said, “There is no doubt that 2012 is off to a firecracker start when it comes to tipping the scales in favor of full equality for our relationships and a future where the promise of justice for all is realized.”

“Governor Martin O’Malley, like Washington Governor Chris Gregoire last month, has distinguished himself as a political leader who takes seriously his oath to uphold and defend the Constitution. We know we have farther to go before every LGBT person can live fully and freely, but today in Maryland our brothers and sisters can rest easier, knowing that their families are recognized and secure under the law.”

Opponents of same-sex marriage are already working to gather the 55,736 signatures necessary to refer the Civil Marriage Protection Act to the general election in November, the Digital Journal reported.
Travel regulation affecting gay couple’s future

BY NATASHA HEMLEY

It seems like something out of a movie; two lovers meeting on the Internet, thousands of miles away from each other, pouring their hearts out through a computer screen. However, this romance may not have a fairy-tale ending, thanks to a passport-related rule limiting same-sex couples.

Mike Roach and Carl Barlow first met on an Internet forum for newly out LGBT members. The two men were coming to terms with their sexuality; Roach was a newly out gay man and Carl was a former Mormon whose marriage to a woman was ending.

“We were both on symmetrical wave lengths at that time. Both of us venturing out embracing what we knew was inside of us and trying to find somebody of like heart [and] mind to talk with,” said Barlow.

The couple's love for travel and sharks kept them talking.

“Our first conversations were about sharks [and] places we would like to visit,” said Barlow. After three months of steady five-hour long conversations, the couple decided to transition their relationship from the virtual to the real world. Roach flew from the United Kingdom to Tennessee, where Barlow is in medical school; after two weeks, the couple was in love.

“It was amazing. We had a connection straight away. We decided to continue the relationship,” said Roach.

Roach was using the U.S. visa waver program, which allows citizens of other countries to come to the United States for a maximum of 90 days, without a visa, to visit Barlow on and off during 2010 to 2011. When Roach flew back to Tennessee, where Barlow is in medical school; after two weeks, the couple was in love.

Roach recently made a YouTube video called “My Desperate Plea: Let Me Be With The Person I Love.” The video, made a few weeks ago, has already generated more than 8,000 hits. In the video, Roach explains his story and begs viewers to go the White House website and sign a petition. Roach has already gotten 985 signatures, but needs 24,015 more before March 13 in order for his case to be examined.

“I was asking people to write to the White House [to] express [how] they think it’s wrong,” said Roach. Soloway added that because each case has been plaguing by immigration issues each year, but not as many as opposite-sex cases.

“Heterosexuals deal with this more because there is more of them,” said Soloway.

Soloway added that because each case has to be looked at individually, individuals cannot create universal laws that dictate the number of times each person can come into the United States. For now, the couple is relying on Skype and a shared love of video games to get them through.

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Barlow will be graduating from medical school in August. The couple will then have more time to decide what to do next.

“In ways, our relationship is really good, and then, in ways, it’s really tragic. If you had my apartment hacked with a camera, you would see someone sitting in front of a monitor anywhere from four to 15 hours just interacting with his computer monitor,” said Barlow.
Activist Judy Shepard coming back to Chicago

BY JERRY NUNN

Judy Shepard is the mother of Matthew Shepard who was murdered in Laramie, Wyo., in 1998. Since then she has become an advocate for LGBT rights creating the Matthew Shepard Foundation with her husband.

Several events are bringing Judy back to town and we caught up with her to talk about it. "Windy City Times: Judy, we haven’t talked in a while. You have been a little busy. Judy Shepard: It has been crazy busy. WCT: You are coming back to Chicago with a full schedule. JS: I am looking forward to it. Keep that weather nice until we get there, okay? WCT: I will do my best! You have an appearance at the Chase Auditorium and then a reception after. JS: Yes, at The Carlyle. WCT: Elaine Dame, who is singing in a jazz quartet, I have seen perform several times. JS: Great, I can’t wait she wonderful? WCT: Yes. I saw her perform at coffee houses years ago. On Saturday, you are a Center on Halsted. JS: I have been there before. WCT: Is it a speech that you are doing there? JS: It is H.E.R. day at the Center. I speak then there is a luncheon. After the luncheon there are several workshops dealing with women’s issues. This is also for anyone describing themselves as women so for transgender also. WCT: The play The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later opens that night. JS: It is in the second of 10 years later. WCT: So this is a completely different production. JS: It is the Redtwist Theatre group. The group went back in 2010 to do research and visited some of the same folks. They re-interviewed some of the same people from the first play to see if anything had changed since Matt was killed. I think, initially, they were pretty disappointed that things hadn’t changed that much but overall I don’t think it was less or more any different than the rest of the country at that point in time on how far they had come in the recognition of the gay community and their rights. In the last few years, things have totally turned a corner. WCT: What part did you play in the show? JS: It was interesting this time. That is pretty much it. As with the original production I had no input and no involvement other than being interviewed. WCT: So there is a person playing you on stage this time. JS: Weird, huh? Well, it was weird for me. WCT: I imagine it would be. Where have you been traveling to? JS: I couldn’t even tell you. I am gone all the time it seems like. I was at the UN. They are getting ready to do a giant global initiative on homophobia. It is really a big deal for them. I was part of a panel there. We were participants in getting awards for Chase. It was on TV before Christmas. It has been really busy in a really good way. I was happy to see that in some places; attitudes are changing. The poles are showing how much more accepting folks are about the gay community. That is wonderful. WCT: Has it been challenging to raise money in these economic times? JS: We have survived that. We are doing okay. We have been doing more corporate tasks and sponsorships. We are not huge. We never have been huge. There are only five of six of us at any given time. We are not looking to be a huge organization. We have our own little niche and we fill it very well. I think that is how we are still here. When times are tough we are tight with our money but we are doing okay. We never want to turn down a donation, don’t get me wrong, but we are not in danger of having to close our doors. WCT: Politically, how are you seeing things? JS: On a personal level, I am very much an Obama supporter. He has been wonderful for the community. In a follow up term he could do amazing things. One concern I have in the Republican campaign is that it has dissolved into this mess of 1950 attitudes. We could have the most amazing president in office but if he doesn’t get some cooperative work with Congress, nothing will get done. The system is the system and, yes, it is annoying but it works with people compromising. It is not what everyone wants 100 percent, but it certainly seems better than the stalemate we have right now. WCT: Were you involved with “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”? JS: I wasn’t directly a part of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” I spoke on it when asked. I was invited to come to the signing but I couldn’t. I had a conflict. Everyone in country worked very hard on that. It was a life changing moment for everyone. I think it is appalling that folks are still fighting against it. It is done so let’s move on! WCT: You’re doing something on the marriage-equality front. JS: I am on the advisory board for the organization that is sponsoring Prop 8’s decision. They have done amazing work. Chad Griffin is doing great work. Mr. Boyd and Mr. Olson, the attorneys, are keeping the discussion in the forefront. The fact that we have gone in Washington State and making progress in Maryland is important. I am very disappointed that Governor Christie took the stance that he did. Everyone should realize that when you put any civil rights issue to the popular vote it is never going to work. It just doesn’t. If we did that in the 1960s, we would still have segregation. That was disappointing. I understand he has to keep his little pocket of people happy. He is on the wrong side of history. I think in my lifetime we will actually see a national change like we did in Loving versus Virginia where there will be a federal mandate to recognize marriage equality. WCT: I am from Tennessee and wondered if you get a chance to speak down there with all of the recent controversy. JS: Oh, my. I have spoken to several colleges there and churches as well. If I am invited to an area it is never the area where I am the controversy. I am invited because they are already on the same page as me or I am on the same page as them. It is a reinvigoration of the movement. I don’t get invited to a place where I have the opportunity to change anyone’s mind. It is the yin and the yang of what I do, I guess. My husband was in Tennessee with the Tennesse hate-crime folks. He spoke to members of the state congress and was very critical of the “Don’t Say Gay” bill. I can’t believe the things they are doing in Tennessee and Virginia as well. It is beyond the pale how many steps we have taken backward. WCT: That is very common down there to avoid the subject and not talk about things. Well, I always enjoy talking to you. See you in town soon and keep up the important work you are doing. JS: I will. See you soon. Take your own steps forward to see Shepard in person March 9 at the Chase Tower Auditorium, 10 S. Dearborn St., at 11:30 a.m.; on March 10 at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St. at 11 a.m.; and the same day at 6:30 p.m. at Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. For more details and tickets for Judy’s appearances, visit www.matthewshepard.org.

Kameny ceremony delayed, but stone in place

BY TRACY BAUM

A planned March 3 graveside ceremony at the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C. for the late gay activist Dr. Franklin E. Kameny was postponed after a disagreement surfaced between his estate and organizers of the tribute. Many LGBTs were in town for the event, because it was held the same day as the Service-members Legal Defense Network national dinner, but fortunately the stones (one a head stone, and the other a grave marker stating “Gay is Good,” a phrase coined in the 1960s by Kameny) were in place. His remains will be placed there once there is a resolution between those who raised funds for the tribute and Kameny’s estate. The inscription on Kameny’s headstone (provided by the U.S. Veterans Administration which identifies Kameny’s rank, military service, WWII engagement and theater of battle in Germany as well as his date of birth and death) reads: Franklin E. Kameny, PFC, U.S. Army, World War II, May 21, 1925, October 11, 2011, Germany. The grave is just a few feet behind that of the late Sgt. Leonard Matlovich (1943-1988), whose headstone famously states, “A Gay Vietnam Veteran: When I was in the military they gave me a medal for killing two men and a discharge for loving one.”
Talking with the son of Bob Green and Anita Bryant

BY KATE SOSIN

In late January, Robert Green Jr. found himself back where he started more than 30 years ago—trying to reconcile the parents he knew with the public image they created, an image he fled and largely avoided for decades.

Green Jr. is the oldest son of famous anti-gay crusaders Anita Bryant and Bob Green, who battled the Dade County, Fla., ordinance banning discrimination against gay people and won in 1977.

On Jan. 26, Green Sr. died at the age of 80, after suffering kidney failure.

The news of his passing spread slowly, mostly because Green Jr. spent weeks agonizing over his father’s obituary before he widely announced the death. He has complicated feelings about his father, a man he said was devoted and kind to his children. He wants his father to be remembered for more than the fiercely anti-gay stance that came to define his family, but Green Jr. concedes disappointment in some of his father’s views.

Green Sr. married Anita Bryant in 1960, abandoning his deejay career to manage the fledgling singer. The couple raised four children together before Bryant called it quits in 1980 and left Nowhere have I seen … any expression on his part of responsibility for the life he ended up leading. To be honest, I didn’t really broach the subject with him. In the limited amount of time that I had with him, living up here in Chicago. ... I preferred I guess to keep things positive and not go into that territory.

I have to some extent gone into that territory with my mom, however. We’ve definitely have some back and forth about what her views were back then, what they are now and if those views have changed in any way and from my point of view, if not, then why not?

WCT: So, you don’t share your parents views on gay rights?

RG: I think of the four of us kids of Bob Green and Anita Bryant, I am probably the most sympathetic towards gay and lesbian rights and probably in a lot of ways more socially, politically, religiously left of certainly where my parents were at that time. All of us are more moderate than our parents.

WCT: Your dad converted to Christianity around the time he married your mom. Was your sense of he following your mom’s lead on gay issues?

RG: I think, at first, he was trying to dissuade her from taking any public position. He was clear-sighted about what the consequences for their careers would be. I do think that my mom always had much stronger religious and moral convictions than my dad. He did very much follow her lead in those areas of her life. I think he followed her lead in the decision to fight gay rights.

WCT: Do you think your mom has softened on the issue?

RG: I think she is certainly more willing now to live and let live, I guess. She’s about 70, and she’s still amazingly energetic, and she would be putting a lot more energy into fighting gay rights if she still felt as strongly.

WCT: Do you remember the details of the controversy and how it felt?

RG: I was in my early to mid teens in the late 70s and yeah, I certainly do remember a lot from it. I’m kind of like my dad in that until the past two years, I have not really liked revisiting those times, those memories.

WCT: What changed in the last two years?

RG: I think maybe it’s because I’m middle-aged. I have a family of my own. I’m just at a point in my life where there’s enough distance. I think more and more, it’s been easier for me to accept that past and not just turn away from it.

Green. Three of the four kids left with Bryant, but Green Jr. moved with his father just three blocks from their old home. Green Sr. spent the next three decades floated on the past. Green Jr. fled to Wheaton College in Illinois, far away from the controversy and pain of his parent’s divorce. For years, he avoided looking back.

Green Jr., a senior copywriter, lives in Chicago now and has a family of his own. He also has a number of gay friends, a fact he discusses unremarkably. He does not share his parents’ views on LGBT issues.

Windy City Times caught up with Green Jr. and asked him to share his memories of growing up and explain why he spent his life trying to reconcile the parents he knew with the strange forbidden tribe, but I was very open to meeting and talking with gays and lesbians.

Since then, I’ve made friends with a lot of people, some of whom I didn’t know were gay or lesbian. I don’t think in some cases they knew for a while… it’s deepened our friendship, or sense of loyalty and solidarity to still be friends after each came out and for them to see that there was no need to worry in our case.

WCT: Were your gay friends afraid to come out to you because you are the son of Anita Bryant?

RG: I don’t really think so, because people who potentially worried about that already knew to some extent. … I didn’t share my mom’s views. I don’t think it was a worry really. It was more like, it made me a curiosity to some extent.

WCT: Do you think your mom has softened on the issue?

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RG: I was in my early to mid teens in the late 70s and yeah, I certainly do remember a lot from it. I’m kind of like my dad in that until the past two years, I have not really liked revisiting those times, those memories.

WCT: What changed in the last two years?

RG: I think maybe it’s because I’m middle-aged. I have a family of my own. I’m just at a point in my life where there’s enough distance. I think more and more, it’s been easier for me to accept that past and not just turn away from it.

From left: Jamie Lee Curtis, Christine Lahti, Matt Bomer, Matthew Morrison and George Clooney at the March 3 Prop 8 reading. Photo by Michael Underwood/AFPImages.

Prop 8 reading: Top actors and global audience

The American Foundation for Equal Rights (AFER) and Broadway Impact presented the West Coast premiere reading of the play 8 March 3 before a sold-out crowd in Los Angeles and a worldwide audience watching on YouTube, according to an AFER press release.

The production is an account of the Federal District Court trial in Perry v. Schwarzenegger (now Perry v. Brown), the case filed by AFER to overturn Proposition 8, which denied marriage equality for California.

The West Coast premiere reading of 8 was written by Academy Award-winning screenwriter and AFER founding board member Dustin Lance Black and directed by founding board member Rob Reiner. Bryan Singer, director of The Usual Suspects and X-Men, was the presenting sponsor.

The benefit event raised more than $2 million for the fight to secure full federal marriage equality. Photos by Michael Underwood/AFPImages; more pics online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com
Vida/SIDA opens LGBT shelter

BY KATE SOSIN

It took years of revised plans and fundraising, but on March 3 Vida/SIDA cut the ribbon on its much-anticipated LGBT homeless youth shelter, the first of its kind in the Midwest.

More than 75 people packed into the Humboldt Park organization to celebrate the opening of El Rescate.

“This is about hope,” said Cook County Commissioner Edwin Reyes. “It’s about dignity, and it’s about saving lives.”

The transitional housing facility, located on the 4th floor of Vida/SIDA, 2703 W. Division St., will house up to 12 LGBT youths ages 18-24 and provide young people with social services like employment and education resources, skills training and case management.

The brightly painted space contains bedrooms with bunk beds and desks, a lounge and a full kitchen/dining area.

Plans to open the shelter have been in the works for more than three years. Vida/SIDA had announced the housing as a 2010 goal but struggled through fundraising and red tape to make it happen.

However, on March 3, the doors finally opened.

Vida/SIDA, the only local HIV/AIDS organization that specifically serves the Latino/a community, was founded in 1988 to address a lack of community-based organization focused on funding HIV-positive Puerto Ricans. Roberto Sanabria, a longtime activist with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, was founded in 1988 to address a lack of Vida/SIDA Di-rector Juan Calderón with making the project a reality. At age 25, Calderón has overseen the organization for four years now, making him the youngest to hold the position.

According to José López, executive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Vida/SIDA will operate with a budget in excess of a million dollars this year.

López noted that the shelter opening comes just days after the Tipsy Cake bakery controver-sy, when a Humboldt Park baker said in an inter-view that she moved her storefront to Bucktown because Humboldt Park was dangerous. The bakery has since apologized.

“The news media continues to perpetuate a myth,” he said, adding that the shelter opening was representative of the community.

Local politicians and LGBT leaders attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Among them were Chicago Commission on Human Relations Direc-tor Mona Noriega, state Rep. Cynthia Soto and state Sen. Iris Martinez.

Noriega called El Rescate “long overdue.”

“This is a citywide problem,” she said. “But [El Rescate] is a community-based solution.”

Attendees at the ceremony were given a tour of the new facilities and were shown other Vida/SIDA projects.

Immigration activists headed for trial

BY JAMIE ANNE ROYCE

Six youth immigration activists, arrested while protesting an U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Secure Communi-ties public hearing, face a bench trial March 20.

Through Secure Communities, when some-one is arrested, that person’s biometric in-formation (fingerprints) is checked against Department of Homeland Security (DHS) da-tabases. If there is a match, ICE is notified and takes action.

DHS hosted a series of public hearings across the country on Secure Communities to gain feedback from the people. During the Chicago hearing in August, members of the Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL), Nuestra Voz and the Latino@ Youth Action League (LVYAL) shared their opinions on the program and called for attendees to walk out.

After leaving the meeting, six undocumented immi-grants—Fanny Lopez-Martinez, Jorge Mena, Arianna Salgado, Inerri Unzueta Carras-co, Carla Navoa and Miguel Martinez—formed a circle on West Washington Street, blocking traffic. Police removed them from the street several times before the activists sat in an entrance to the I-94 expressway. Police asked the group to move, and upon refusing, the activ-ists were arrested.

Mena and Unzueta Carrasco have been named Windy City Times 30 Under 30 hon-orees for their work on LGBT undocumented immigrant rights.

The activists were scheduled for a bench trial March 2, but Judge Peggy Chiampas granted prosecutors a continuance because two police officers set to testify were not in court due to deaths in their families. Prosecu tors also added an additional charge of reck-less conduct to the mob action and obstruction of traffic charges the activists are already facing.

The activists are now looking at a sixth court date, with a trial set for March 20.

“I feel really frustrated. It seems like the city and state are really messy, really slappy,” said Mena. “We’ve been ready to testify, but prosecutors keep asking for a continuance. It’s just taking up a lot of time.”

The defendants will rely on the “neces-sity defense,” an argument anti-war activists spearheaded in the 1980s. To successfully ar-gue this defense, they must prove the protest action was directly connected with the laws being protested.

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CPD cutbacks consolidate Lakeview stations

BY KATE SOSIN

After a year of controversy over a perceived uptick in crime in Lakeview and a tight city budget, the Chicago Police Department is combining Lakeview area police districts in cutbacks.

Districts 19 and 23 have been consolidated into the Town Hall District station, 850 W. Ad-dison St., which previously housed Dist. 23.

Police Superintendent Gary McCarthy an-nounced the closure of four stations at a March 3 press conference at the Town Hall station. Those include Districts 1, 2, 9 and 19 (the Belmont station), all of which will be combined into other districts.

According to a CPD statement, the reorga-nization is the most significant the district structure has seen in more than three de-cades, putting 100 additional police officers on patrol duty.

“We have put more officers on the street and we are creating efficiencies to better serve the residents in communities across Chicago,” McCarthy said in a statement.

Residents have expressed concerns, how-ever, that the closures will make their com-munities less safe.

According to the Chicago Tribune, McCarthy said the cutbacks will save the city between $10 to $12 million.

The consolidation means some reorganiza-tion of Lakeview CPD officers, some of whom became familiar faces last summer when con-troversy over a perceived increase in violence sparked a heated community debate.

Kathleen Bohmier, former 23rd Dist. Com-mander, has been transferred to the Area Central Detective Bureau, according to a CPD news affairs spokesperson. Bohmier is well-known in Boystown as she attended several community meetings in summer 2011 when residents expressed concerns about a per-ceived increase in crime.

Taking charge of the Town Hall District sta-tion is Commander John Kenney.

Fairchild to head cream City Fdn.

Cream City Foundation, Inc.—a commu-nity-based organization focused on funding LGBT programs and organizations working to-wards social change in southeastern Wiscon-sin—has appointed Paul R. Fairchild as its new executive director.

Fairchild joins the organization as it cele-brates its 30th year.

He most recently served as chief develop-ment officer and interim CEO for Howard Brown Health Center.

Purdue Univ. to hire LGBT director

Purdue University has launched a search for a director of LGBT issues, a first for the West Lafayette, Ind., school.

According to Chris Sigurdson, a spokesper-son for Purdue, the position was created after a recent accreditation review suggested the lack of an LGBT director was an area where the school could improve. Other Big Ten schools already have such directors.

“I think it’s pretty clear that these positions and programs are necessary,” said Sigurdson. Sigurdson cited bullying and suicides like that of Rutgers freshman Tyler Clementi as proof.

The university has not said when the new hire will be announced. The school is accept-ing applications through at least March 23.

La Barbera up for anti-LGBT ‘award’

The San Francisco LGBT Pride Celebration Com-mittee and its board of directors have announced the slate of nominees for the pub-lic’s choice for Individual Community Grand Marshal, Organizational Community Grand Marshal and the Pink Brick, a faux award given to a detractor of the LGBT community, according to a press release.

Peter La Barbera, president of the Naper-ville, Ill.-based organization Americans For Truth About Homosexuality (AFAH), is up for the Pink Brick. On Feb. 12, he and a few other people held a counterprotest while LGBT ac-tivists demonstrated outside Chicago’s Holy Name Cathedral. AFAH’s mission, according to its website, is “exposing and countering the homosexual activist agenda.”

Previously, La Barbera was with the anti-gay group Culture and Family Institute.

From left: Juan Calderon, state Sen. Iris Martinez and Roberto Sanabria take part in a ribboncutting. Photo by Ed Negron

One of the rooms in the shelter. Photo by Kate Sosin
For the March 20 presidential primary election, through March 15 early voting to take our charts into the voting booth with commissioner.

A dozen who are running for everything from judicial posts to Metropolitan Water Reclamationistrict in general. We’re talking about the early-to

Peterson—or representation at all. Many people, and resources get better treatment, better representation—or representation at all. Many people don’t know whether those judges are going to treat us with respect…. or whether gender stereotypes are going to come into play in terms of awarding custody.

We need judges who have more than just sound legal minds. We have to have judges who understand the complexities of life today: human relationships, same-sex marriage, same-sex couples having children, domestic violence. It’s a different world than it was 20 years ago.

To learn more about Trowbridge, visit www.bradforjudge.com.
Paula Basta on priorities, campaign strengths

BY KATE SOSIN

When Paula Basta kicked off her campaign for 14th Dist. State Rep., Chicago’s LGBT community was given an unprecedented choice between two out lesbians for the seat.

Basta, a native of Ohio, stands at the helm of the city’s busiest senior center, the Northeast (Levy) Regional Senior Center. She served on the board for Equal Rights Illinois for seven years and has been active in the city’s LGBT community for years.

While some have said that Basta could have added to the ranks of openly gay politicians by choosing another office to pursue, others say that Basta’s run against freshman incumbent Kelly Cassidy may also present a new day in LGBT politics, where sexual orientation is neither a qualification nor deterrent to office.

Paula Basta: Currently, I run the busiest senior center in the country… not so much LGBT seniors but seniors in general.

WCT: Why the switch to politics now?
PB: I have lived in Chicago over 30 years. … I started out as a social worker. As I was working full-time, I was always involved in various non-profits, and that continues to this day. I was on the board of Equality Illinois from the year 2002 to 2009, president of the board … for a year. But I’m also currently on the board for TPAN, Test Positive Aware Network. I’m also on the Lesbian and Gay Task Force for Anita Alvarez, the state’s attorney’s office [and was] a Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame inductee in 2009.

WCT: Why the switch to politics now?
PB: Every day, I see the faces and hear the voices of people that are impacted by the legislation and policy. Everything that’s going on in Springfield, many times is directly affecting the people’s lives that come to me and come to our office. So, there’s no better thing for us to real-
Kelly Cassidy on marriage, activism

BY KATE SOSIN

Depending on where you stand on an issue, Kelly Cassidy can be your best friend or your mortal enemy. It’s a quality the recent appointee prides herself on. The freshman state rep says she intends to be annoying in her opposition to “concealed carry” legislation in Illinois, and she admits to telling anti-gay lobbyists to stop wasting her time.

Cassidy, a Rogers Park resident and a lesbian mother of three, got her start in Chicago as the legislative director for the National Organization for Women. She went on to work in Sen. John Culerton’s district office before holding multiple roles in the Cook County State’s Attorney’s office. She was appointed in May to fill the 34th Dist. house seat.

But as her political star has risen, so too have criticisms that she has become a Democratic Party insider. Windy City Times caught up with Cassidy and questioned her about that perception and about why she is feels like the best pick for her office.

Windy City Times: You are someone who started as a community activist and moved into politics. How has that transition been?

Kelly Cassidy: I think I have really done a great job for many years of bridging those two roles and carrying them out simultaneously and continue to in many ways in this role. So, it is funny because when my appointment was announced, the Sun Times headline was “Lesbian Activist.” [Laughs] It was sort of hilarious, but that’s obviously how the mainstream media writes headlines.

I think that we each carry different perceptions of what words mean, whether it’s “working from the inside” or being an activist. I actually think that all those roles are critically important to a successful movement, and I think that people can play multiple roles in any given.

WCT: What do you consider to be your most important legislative priorities right now?

KC: For all of us, we have to be focused on getting our state’s finances in order and getting this budget passed in a way that doesn’t harm the most vulnerable folks in the community. You go there, and you’re done, and obviously we can’t be done because the needs are too great.

I did an interview ... about the marriage bill, and somebody asked, “Do you think that you’re going to hear from critics that this is a bad year to push this because you have to pass the budget first?” I said, “We always have to pass a budget but we also have a responsibility to carry out good policies.”

Public safety; Going about that in a way that balances the need for public safety with the need for smarter policies that spend less money that actually make us safer, that’s going to be big. And fighting the coming wave of “concealed carry” is something that I’m quite excited to be part of. That’s going to be a big fight.

WCT: In this race, the community gets to choose between two out lesbians. What do you bring to the table that sets you apart?

KC: My combined experience, my ability to hit the ground running, pass legislation within the first couple of weeks within arriving there, tough legislation, the relationship building I’m able to do at a time when we need to be on the ground quickly and really the breadth of my experience and the issues that I can bring there really sets me apart.

WCT: You introduced a marriage-equality bill. Many activists say this won’t pass this year.

KC: Well, it took 30 years to pass human rights. It took three years to pass civil unions. I like the way those timelines shrink. Is it going to happen this year? Who knows? It would be remarkable if it were to rocket to the top of the house agenda. Whether we get there this year or not, shouldn’t be discourteous to folks... very few substantive bills get passed the first time they’re introduced.

WCT: Marriage equality has been introduced before in Illinois, however.

KC: It has been introduced a few times. This time is different in that it acknowledges the existence of civil unions and the transition to be made, so we did have to go about it differently.

But yes, this is not the first year that marriage has been introduced.

WCT: You have been billed as the political insider in this race by some. How do you respond to that?

KC: The reality is, I am related to no one in Chicago that I didn’t give birth to. I am the original nobody [that] nobody sent. I came from a little island on the west coast of Florida. I came here 20 years ago. I didn’t know a soul. The people that are supporting me are supporting me because I spent 20 years getting things done. They’ve seen it happen, and they are impressed by that and they like working with me.

WCT: You have also taken heat from conservatives. Do you have a favorite criticism you’ve received?

KC: The NRA lobbyist just threatened to endorse me if I introduced anymore gun-control bills. You know, “I’ll show you, I’ll give you my support and then everybody in your district will hate you for it.”

WCT: What is the single most important thing for voters to know about you?

KC: I don’t shrink from a fight, whether that’s about passing a bill or winning an election, and if I say that I am with you to get something done, I am not going to back down.


Kelly Cassidy.
Guide to the gays

The March 20 primary elections feature several openly gay and lesbian candidates for office. (All of the candidates are in the Democratic party.)

Paula Basta
Race: State House (14th District)
Web site: PaulaBasta.org
The skinny: This increasingly contentious race between Basta and incumbent state Rep. Kelly Cassidy took on intrigue because it’s possibly the first political contest in the state pitting two out lesbians against each other. (On Jan. 19, for example, 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.) Basta’s website highlights her LGBT-related accomplishments and “deep understanding of the intricacies of aging and City services.”

Kelly Cassidy
Race: State House (14th District)
Web site: CitizensForKellyCassidy.com
The skinny: Once a part of the Cook County state’s attorney’s office, Cassidy became a state representative in May 2011 after Harry Osterman stepped down to successfully run for alderman. Recently, she has protested library cutbacks, and helped introduce a marriage-equality bill and a gender-identity amendment.

Greg Harris
Race: Illinois State Representative (13th District)
Web site: GregHarris.org
The skinny: Harris, who is openly HIV-positive as well as being openly gay, has represented his district (which includes Uptown, Ravenswood, Lincoln Square, North Center and Bowmanville) since being elected in 2006. Although his name has appeared most prominently in LGBT publications in connection with the issue of marriage equality (in reproducing a civil-marriage bill), he is intimately involved with a host of other issues, such as the state budget, foreclosure mediation, children of incarcerated parents and insurance reform. He is currently running unopposed.

Deb Mell
Race: Illinois State Representative (40th District)
Web site: DebMell.org
The skinny: Mell, who started her first term making history as the first open lesbian in the Illinois General Assembly—and then did something historic in being the only representative to vote against impeachment of then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich, her brother-in-law. A staunch advocate for marriage equality, Mell is running unopposed in the primary, although it looks like she’ll face Republican Antoinette “Toni” Puccio-Johnson in the general election.

Mary Trew
Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Ninth Subcircuit, Epstein vacancy)
Web site: www.VoteTrew.com
The skinny: When she was the executive director of Domestic Violence Legal Clinic, she helped create one of the nation’s first on-site civil court clinics for orders of protection in the Cook County Domestic Violence Courthouse. In November 2010, Trew was appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court to the James R. Epstein 9th Subcircuit vacancy.

John Ehrlich
Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Eighth Subcircuit, Cole vacancy)
Web site: Ehrlich4Judge.com
The skinny: Another race pitting two out candidates is a judicial one involving John Ehrlich and Brad Trowbridge. As deputy corporation counsel in the City of Chicago’s law department, Ehrlich oversees almost three dozen attorneys and a staff of 15. He’s personally handled cases such as the Wrightwood porch collapse and the 52 nightclub tragedy.

Brad Trowbridge
Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Eighth Subcircuit, Cole vacancy)
Website: Brad4Judge.com
The skinny: On his website, Trowbridge discusses his legal and counseling/social service experience, and has worked at agencies such as the Northwestern University Counseling Center and the AIDS Legal Council. He also authored the “Alternate Family Relations and Civil Unions in Illinois” chapter for Illinois State Bar Association Family Law Handbook.

Alex Arroyo
Race: State House (84th District)
Web site: Arroyo2012.com
The skinny: Arroyo was born and raised in Aurora. The former chair of the Aurora Democratic Party is an active union member in good standing with the Association of Flight Attendants-Communications Workers of America. Arroyo also sits on the board of directors of the Illinois Coalition of Community Services in Springfield.

Mike Forti
Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Simmons vacancy)
Web site: MichaelFortiForJudge.com
The skinny: Forti has been practicing law for more than three decades and has been with the City of Chicago’s law department for 17 years. In an interview with Windy City Times, he said, “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.”

John Dalton
Race: 16th Circuit Court, Kane, “A” vacancy
Web site: JohnDaltonForJudge.com
The skinny: Dalton—who would be the first openly gay judge elected outside of Cook County if he prevails—has been an arbitration chairman for more than a decade and an attorney for more than two decades. Dalton plans to fund his campaign without accepting donations from attorneys—a rare position among Illinois judicial candidates. Also, Dalton is an active member of Eight’s First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

Deidre Baumann
Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Stewart vacancy)
Web site: DeidreBaumann4Judge.com
The skinny: Baumann is a member of the Chicago Bar Association, having served as president of the Constitutional Law Committee, the Cook County Bar Association, the Chicago Lesbian and Gay Bar Association and the legal fraternity Phi Alpha Delta. She is also an active member of her community, including serving as president of the Chicago/Cook County 4-H Foundation and as a board member of the Lane Tech Alumni Association.

Mike Forti
Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Simmons vacancy)
Web site: MikeFortiForJudge.com
The skinny: Forti has been practicing law for more than three decades and has been with the City of Chicago’s law department for 17 years. In an interview with Windy City Times, he said, “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.”

Debra Shore
Race: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District board
Web site: DebraShore.org
The skinny: Shore has been on the board since 2006. One of nine elected commissioners, she chairs the committees on stormwater management and state legislation and rules. Fun fact: Shore has climbed 42 of the 54 mountains in Colorado more than 14,000 feet high.

Andrea M. Schleifer
Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (12th Subcircuit, Rachford vacancy)
Web site: ElectJudgeSchleifer.org
The skinny: A resident of Des Plaines, Schleifer (a member of the LGBT organization the Alliance of Illinois Judges) has been serving as a Cook County judge at the Richard J. Daley Center for more than a year. She is currently hearing custody/visitation and child support matters, and is responsible for more than 6,400 cases.

There are also LGBTs running as presidential delegates, including for President Barack Obama. Those include Gail Morse, Ald. Tom Tunney, Debra Shore and Center on Halsted’s Modesto “Tico” Valle. Anti-gay former state rep. Penny Pullen is running as a Santorum delegate.
Altgeld, Haymarket Riots subjects of Darrow event
March 13

CHICAGO—Clarence Darrow aficionados will gather at the Darrow Bridge in Jackson Park Tuesday, March 13, at 10 a.m. for the annual ceremony commemorating Darrow’s death in Chicago on March 13, 1938. Darrow is remembered for his crusading role as “attorney for the damned” in such controversial cases as the Scoopes Monkey Trial, the Leopold and Loeb murder case, and the pardoning of the Haymarket anarchists.

After the ritual outdoor wreath-tossing ceremony, guests will move inside to the Museum of Science and Industry’s New Columbia Room for a lecture and discussion on the Haymarket case, “Absolving Anarchy: John P. Altgeld and the Pardon that Shook Gilded Age America,” to be given by Heath W. Carter.

The talk delves into the precipitous rise and fall of one of Illinois’ most progressive governors. On June 26, 1893, Illinois Gov. John P. Altgeld pardoned the three surviving prisoners from the Haymarket bombing. He was widely criticized for his decision and his political career was never the same, but upon his death in 1902, he was never the same, but upon his death in 1902.

The annual gala, regarded as the social kickoff to the NeoCon tradeshow, will take place June 9. The DIFFA/Chicago Believe 2012 Garden Gala will focus on meals and nutrition, one of the granting categories. This is the second in the series of galas dedicated to the chapter’s grantees.

For more information, visit www.diffachicago.org.

Residents criticize tour of Dahmer haunts by KATE SOSIN

In the two decades since the Walker’s Point neighborhood in Milwaukee became known as the stalking grounds of serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, the neighborhood has slowly rebuilt itself. Most of the old bars frequented by Dahmer, who killed at least 17 young men, are no more. However, a new commercial tour of the area threatens to open old wounds, say residents.

On March 3, Bam Marketing and Media hosted its first tour of Dahmer’s old stomping grounds, amid outcry from victims’ families and area residents.

Victor Ray, president of the Walker’s Point Association, said the tour is too soon for victims’ families, many of whom still live in the neighborhood.

“It’s been less than 20 years,” said Ray. “I think this is absolutely horrible. ... We’re elevating a very very sick individual.”

Bam is not the first company to offer tours on the lives of serial killers. Ray himself attended a tour on “Jack the Ripper,” the unknown London serial killer from the late 1880s.

The difference between the two, Ray said, is that the victims’ immediate families are not still alive to watch it go by.

Amanda Morden, head of marketing for Bam, said the tour does not dramatize the life of Dahmer. Rather, she said, it aims to dispel myths surrounding the murders and give a historical perspective of the neighborhood.

“It’s part of the city’s history,” Morden said. “It’s simply informational, not sensational.”

The tour, offered at three different times on Saturdays through September, covers a one-mile area where Dahmer stalked seven of his 17 victims, said Morden.

Morden said the tour offers a different historical perspective than one can get from a book or documentary. For arguments that the tour comes too soon for the community, Morden said that is a matter of perspective.

“We still have accurate information on this,” said Morden, adding that decades down the line the Dahmer story would likely become more legendary than history.

Not everyone agrees. The first tour was met with quiet protest from victims’ families. It received so much bad press leading up to the event that Groupon cancelled a deal promotion on the tour and released a statement saying that no offense was intended. The deal was pulled after 15 people purchased tickets.

Morden said that with the bad press, many people on the tour backed out or rescheduled.

“There was actually more media on the tour than there were patrons,” she said.

Hate-crimes amendment passes through committee

An amendment to the Illinois hate crimes statute that would add gender identity to protected classes passed out of committee March 1.

The Criminal Law Committee voted 5-3 in favor of HB 4725, which would amend the criminal code to include gender-identity protections. Such protections could be applied to transgender victims and others who are targeted because of their gender identity and/or presentation.

The Civil Rights Agenda (TCRA) announced the win in a press statement.

• HB 4725 does not create a new law, or confer special rights to a certain group of people, but rather, amends the current hate crime law to include people that are victimized at higher rates based on the perpetrator’s bias,” said Anthony Martinez, executive director of TCRA, in a statement.

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, said the step next will be outreach to lawmakers.

Other LGBT bills are up for passage in the General Assembly.

In addition to the hate-crimes amendment, 14th Dist. Rep. Kelly Cassidy has introduced a Family Medical Leave Act to allow same-sex spouses in Illinois to take time off work to care for a partner. That bill passed out of committee Feb. 29.

Cassidy is also pushing a bill that would bolster the state’s current anti-bullying policy as well as the “gender-identity bill. The fate of both are expected to be decided in committee March 7. Windy City Times will release breaking news on both as details become available at www.windycitymediagroup.com.

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The Civil Rights Agenda (TCRA) announced the win in a press statement.

• HB 4725 does not create a new law, or confer special rights to a certain group of people, but rather, amends the current hate crime law to include people that are victimized at higher rates based on the perpetrator’s bias,” said Anthony Martinez, executive director of TCRA, in a statement.

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, said the next step will be outreach to lawmakers.

Other LGBT bills are up for passage in the General Assembly.

In addition to the hate-crimes amendment, 14th Dist. Rep. Kelly Cassidy has introduced a Family Medical Leave Act to allow same-sex spouses in Illinois to take time off work to care for a partner. That bill passed out of committee Feb. 29.

Cassidy is also pushing a bill that would bolster the state’s current anti-bullying policy as well as the “gender-identity bill. The fate of both are expected to be decided in committee March 7. Windy City Times will release breaking news on both as details become available at www.windycitymediagroup.com.
Michael Forti will bring over 30 years of federal and state courtroom experience and knowledge to the Cook County Circuit Court. A graduate of Northwestern University School of Law, Michael is the only candidate in his race found Highly Qualified by the Chicago Bar Association and ranked Qualified or Recommended by every other bar association. He is the endorsed candidate in the Simmons Vacancy for Circuit Judge of Cook County.

Among Michael Forti’s key supporters are:
- Congressman Michael Quigley
- Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky
- Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle
- Debra Shore, MWRD
- State Representative Kelly Cassidy
- State Representative Sara Feigenholtz
- State Representative Greg Harris
- State Representative Deb Mell
- Alderman James Cappleman
- Alderman Joe Moore
- Alderman Ameya Pawar
- Alderman Tom Tunney
- Judge Tom Chiola (Retired)
- Hon. Carol Ronen
- Michael Bauer
- Art Johnston

Rated “Highly Qualified”, “Qualified”, or “Recommended”
- Chicago Bar Association
- Chicago Council of Lawyers
- Illinois State Bar Association
- Lesbian and Gay Bar Association
- Cook County Bar Association
- Women’s Bar Association
- Black Women’s Bar Association
- Hispanic Lawyers Association
- Puerto Rican Bar Association
- Asian American Bar Association
- Hellenic Bar Association
- Decalogue Society of Lawyers

ON TUESDAY, MARCH 20TH VOTE FOR MICHAEL FORTI

Paid for the Friends for Forti.
When John Park was laid off from his insurance job after 24 years, he turned to his passion for painting. “I wanted to do something more fulfilling, and this has more than exceeded my expectations,” Park said. “The business alone, in the first six month, we did what we anticipated doing in the first year. And to do that in this economy, I’m thrilled.”

The official one-year anniversary party/showing at Park Schreck Gallery is scheduled for May 4 at 7-10 p.m. The 1,300-square-foot facility has special showings once every six weeks or so, highlighting up to four artists.

There will be evening showings on Feb. 3 and March 16.

Park Schreck Gallery focuses on the work of emerging artists, often with a contemporary and modern look. Park said about half of the artists on display at the gallery are from the LGBT community.

“The focus of the artists [chosen to be showcased at the gallery] is those who are under-represented, artists with great talent,” Park said. “We really are about the long-term relationships—of our clients and the artists.”

Park Schreck Gallery is located at 1747 W. North Ave.; call 773-309-1747.
## Election 2012

### COOK COUNTY RACES

WCT = Windy City Times questions, number listed is of the total questions correct for that race
IVI = Independent Voters of Illinois/Independent Precinct Organization
PPAC = Personal PAC
EI = Equality Illinois
PP = Planned Parenthood

AIDS Foundation of Chicago also does a survey of candidates, but the results were not ready in time for our WCT Election Guide.

In addition, the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund endorses Debra Shore for Metropolitan Water Reclamation District.

### US CONGRESS RACES

WCT = Windy City Times questions, number listed is of the total questions correct for that race
IVI = Independent Voters of Illinois/Independent Precinct Organization
HRC = Human Rights Campaign 111th Congress, ratings are a percentage of total 100% based on HRC tracking of how candidates voted in the 111th Congress
PP = Planned Parenthood

AIDS Foundation of Chicago also does a survey of candidates, but the results were not ready in time for our WCT Election Guide.

### ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RACES

WCT = Windy City Times questions, number listed is of the total questions correct for that race
IVI = Independent Voters of Illinois/Independent Precinct Organization
PPAC = Personal PAC
EI = Equality Illinois
PP = Planned Parenthood

AIDS Foundation of Chicago also does a survey of candidates, but the results were not ready in time for our WCT Election Guide.

In addition, Gay & Victory Fund endorses Alex Arroyo for State House of Representatives, 84th District.

## COOK COUNTY CLERK

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### Recorder of Deeds

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<td>97TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Matt Samaala (D)</td>
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### JUDICIAL EVALUATIONS

Windy City Times does not endorse candidates. Rather, we list their answers to our questionaire as well as the ratings of legal organizations so that readers can make informed choices when they vote.

#### Key to Organizations:
- WCT = Windy City Times questions, number listed is of the total questions correct for that race
- Key to Ratings:
  - Q – Qualified
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  - WQ – Well Qualified
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  - (D) – Democrat
  - (R) – Republican
  - (Simmons vacancy)
  - (Sturtley vacancy)
  - (Riley vacancy)
  - (Jordan vacancy)
  - (Stralka vacancy)
  - (Delgado vacancy)
  - (Jones vacancy)

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<td>Cook Circuit Court (Shutes vacancy)</td>
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#### Precinct Organization
- CCL – Chicago Council of Lawyers
- CCBA – Cook County Bar Association
- DSL – Decalogue Society of Lawyers
- ISBA – Illinois State Bar Association
- LAGBAC – Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago
- WBAI – Women’s Bar Association of Illinois
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Cook Circuit Court-9th Sub (Bender vacancy)
Michael Ian Bender (D) 5/9  Q  R  R  Q  HR  R
Lionel Jean-Baptiste (O) 8/9  Q  HR  R  Q  R  R

Cook Circuit Court-9th Sub (Epstein vacancy)
Mary S. Trew (O) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  HR  R
Abby Fishman Romanek (O) 8/9  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
David C. Adams (Q) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  HR  R
Larry G. Axelrod (O) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  HR  R

Cook Circuit Court-9th Sub (Locasio vacancy)
Thomas R. Allen (Q)  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R

Cook Circuit Court-10th Sub (O'Brien vacancy)
Mary S. Trew (D) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
Abbey Fishman Romanek (O) 8/9  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
Michael R. Clancy (D) 8/9  Q  R  R  Q  R  R

Cook Circuit Court-11th Sub (Locallo vacancy)
Thomas R. Allen (D)  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R

Cook Circuit Court-11th Sub (Urso vacancy)
Lisa Ann Marino (D) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  HR  R
Pamela McLean Meyerson (D) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  HR  R
Deborah J. Fortier (D) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  HR  R
Jennifer A. Blanc (D) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  HR  R

Cook Circuit Court-12th Sub (Rochford vacancy)
Andrea M. Schleifer (D) 9/9  Y  WQ  R  R  Q  HR  R
Michael John Halloran (D) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
Robert P. Babbitt (D) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
Daniel P. Scott (D) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R

Cook Circuit Court-13th Sub (Pietrucha vacancy)
Ketti "Kay" Steffen (K) 6/9  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
Paul S. Pavlus (K) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
Nicholas G. Grapsas (K) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
Peter A. Pacione (K) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R

Cook Circuit Court-13th Sub ('A' vacancy)
Martin C. Kelly (O) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R

Cook Circuit Court-14th Sub (O'Gara vacancy)
Regina Ann Scannicchio (O) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R

16th Circuit Court-2nd Sub. ('A' vacancy)
John G. Dalton (D) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
John F. Hurlbut (R) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R
John N. Walter (R) 9/9  Y  Q  R  R  Q  R  R

17th Circuit Court-3rd Sub. ('A' vacancy)
Brendan Maher (R)
Bob Gibson (R)

18th Circuit Court (Thompson vacancy)
Alice Wilson (D)
Bob Gibson (R)

19th Circuit Court-2nd Sub. ('A' vacancy)
Patricia Fix (D)
Luis A. Berones (R)

20th Circuit Court (O'Malley vacancy)
Vincent J. Lopinot (D)
Ronald R. Doolan (D)

20th Circuit Court (Wharton vacancy)
Zina R. Ursus (D)
Anne Fohne Keeler (D)
Lanina A. Cason (D)

20th Circuit Court-St. Clair C (Cutler vacancy)
Ronald G. Matekaits (D)
Bill Brady (R)

23rd Circuit Court-DeKalb Co. (Klein vacancy)
Ronald G. Matekaits (D)
Bill Brady (R)

23rd Circuit Court-Kendall Co. ('A' vacancy)
Melissa S. Barnhart (R)
David S. Kim (R)

Particular races for which there were no data have been deleted for space. See our downloadable charts at WindyCityTimes.com.

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Endorsements and ratings to help you make the best decisions at the polls

CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS
We speak directly with candidates about issues important to you

OUR SPECIAL “GUIDE TO THE GAYS”
A special focus on all of the out candidates across all primary races

See more online at www.WindyCityTimes.com
The Rev. Sid Mohn: Chicago’s vanguard against AIDS

BY JOE FRANCO

The Rev. Sid Mohn grew up on a rural Pennsylvania farm in roots deeply entrenched in both the conservative Dutch environment that he lived in and the Anabaptists that enveloped him. To Mohn, his entire childhood was spent connected to the church and he very early on felt a call to work within that establishment.

“It wasn’t until much later,” said Mohn, “that I came out and struggled deeply with the irrationality to continue to seek ordination in an organization that was predominantly exclusionary to gay men and lesbians.”

Mohn’s Anabaptist pedigree—”their solemn critique of unfair or unjust social policy”—marked him.

“Just because society and the church oppose or condemn LGBT people is no reason to stay silent. I felt that I needed to complete my seminary training,” he said.

The Presbyterian church rejected Mohn but the United Church of Christ actually asked him to serve and he was ordained a minister in that congregation.

“Getting a job full time in the church was just not possible. I believe I became ordained not only say ‘there are gay men who are being ordained’ and as such to prove that there were openly gay people in the clergy,” said Mohn.

Mohn’s training and upbringing made work with the Chicago-based Heartland Alliance immediately attractive to him.

“I saw the service of people who are marginalized and typically the most excluded as the best opportunity,” he said. “I believed that I could translate my own personal experiences with the social exclusion to as many as possible.”

Mohn became president of Heartland in 1980. In 1981, the disease we now know as AIDS began to take its very early and immediate toll on large numbers of gay men—and others.

“I instantly recognized that this new ‘gay disease’ as it was branded at the time, had both public health and social justice issues that had to be dealt with,” said Mohn. “I wanted to ensure that those living with AIDS and HIV had the respect they deserved as well as having all of their rights to treatment with dignity protected. I also recognized that at that time, there were no organized systems of care available to those living with AIDS and that only some hospitals had emergency care that could handle this new crisis. We at Heartland sought to define a continuum of care to respond to the multiple needs of those with HIV, such as basic healthcare, nutrition and housing.”

“In those early years of AIDS, Mohn was instrumental in establishing one of the nation’s first specialty clinics with Cook County Hospital for those with AIDS. Mohn also worked in partnership with others to develop one of the country’s first integrated housing for those with AIDS and HIV.

“This was a systemic response,” said Mohn.

“We had to provide not only those basics but mental healthcare and become an advocate for those living with HIV and AIDS. We became fiscal agents seeking funds and grants to help with these projects. What we did then eventually laid the groundwork for the establishment of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.”

“It was the ’80s. The idea of ‘alternative health’ was quite radical but we were sure to help provide this early group of men and women with AIDS access to massage, acupuncture, diet and stress alleviation techniques. By the ’90s, these same folks were now not only living with a medical condition but had to deal with the social diseases of homophobia and AIDS-phobia,” said Mohn.

“We established the nation’s second integrated permanent housing project for those with AIDS which was modeled after a similar project in New York City,” he continued. “Up until that point in the early ’90s, separate housing for those with HIV was the norm. I felt that those folks should be living with members of their community and not apart from them. The debate in the public arena was enormous. There were literally busloads of people brought in.”

Mohn linked the mania surrounding the integration of housing with the hysteria surrounding the dental care of those with AIDS. “[Larger] numbers of dentists refused to provide treatment to those living with HIV, so we had to develop a dental clinic too,” he said.

Heartland Alliance continues to focus on the most vulnerable, not only in Chicago but across the globe. Mohn believes very strongly in “designing systems of care that ensure the dignity and just treatment for those who rarely experience in that in their lives.” Mohn believes that Heartland should make certain that individualized care “extends to the totality of the individual and the advancement of human rights.”

Heartland, unlike a number of other humanitarian and non-profit groups, re-establishes their own strategic plans on an annual basis. With such rapid changes in healthcare law in the coming years, this manner of doing business, more than other models, have Heartland poised for the new challenges 2012 brings.

“We’re focused on accountable care for vulnerable populations,” said Mohn. “We are determined to build models for integrated and supportive housing and finding reimbursement mechanisms for those reforms. Heartland is committed to community-based alternative care and community based re-integration strategies for folks in prison populations. We also are seeking integrated models of healthcare and legal protections for the LGBT populations for those living in the global South.”

Currently in Central and West Africa, the Caribbean and Central America, the same medical problems and social issues that the U.S. has dealt with as a nation 30 years ago are now becoming pressing issues and problems for the Global South.

“We have to insure that these people have legal rights and protection, access to healthcare, equal treatment in employment and housing and access to social and recreational supports,” said Mohn.

“It is our job,” continued Mohn, “to make certain that the U.S. Affordable Healthcare Act and the laws that come with it becomes a tool of real healthcare reform. We must build a system that is fully inclusive. We must build a system that not only makes well those who are in the mainstream but also those who are the most vulnerable.”

Positively Aware HIV drug guide available

The Positively Aware 16th Annual HIV Drug Guide, widely recognized throughout the country as the “must-have” reference tool for HIV service providers and consumers alike, is now available.

There are now 30 FDA approved HIV therapies to choose from, and finding the most effective and appropriate medication regimen is vital to success in treating HIV. The Positively Aware HIV Drug Guide provides important information to individuals living with HIV as well as their caregivers on how best to manage their treatment.

This 80-page issue of Positively Aware devotes a full page to each approved HIV medication, plus four experimental medications, three of which are slated for approval later this year: the integrase inhibitors elvitegravir and dolutegravir (the latter already expanded access), the new upcoming single-tablet regimen known as the “Quad,” and the pharmaceutical enhancer boosting agent cobaltistat. The pullout drug chart, sponsored by Walgreens, includes dosing information, as well as food and liquid requirements for the drugs, along with a photo to help easily identify each medication. Readers will also find detailed information on side effects, drug interactions, and current trends in HIV care and treatment.

This year’s HIV Drug Guide also has an updated and expanded article on HIV drug co-pay and patient assistance programs being offered by pharmaceutical companies, including an easy to read chart, plus information on AIDS Drug Assistance Programs, Medicare, and Medicaid.

“It’s so critical that people know that there is help available when accessing and paying for treatment,” says Positively Aware Editor Jeff Berry. “There is no reason why anyone should be denied access to lifesaving medication based solely on an inability to pay for their drugs or co-pays, because they cannot afford health insurance.”

One of the most popular features of the Positively Aware HIV Drug Guide is the viewpoint written by each medication from a well-respected physician and an activist. Contributors to this year’s Drug Guide include Dr. Joel Gallant, Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine’s Division of Infectious Diseases, and Associate Director of the Johns Hopkins AIDS Service; activist Joey Wynn, Director of Public Policy at Broward House in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Renata Smith, PharmD, Clinical Assistant Professor in HIV/Infectious Diseases at the University of Illinois at Chicago; and Associate Editor Erild Vázquez.

“Positively Aware’s Annual HIV Drug Guide is a great source for cutting edge treatment information, not only for those of us who prescribe these drugs, but for our HIV-positive patients as well,” says Dr. Gallant. “I was happy to be asked again to contribute to this year’s edition—it’s always an enjoyable project.”

Positively Aware is an internationally known and respected magazine dedicated to HIV treatment and health. It has a circulation of over 100,000, and is published bi-monthly by Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN). Founded in 1987, TPAN is Chicago’s oldest peer-led AIDS service organization and specializes in treatment information, support services, and prevention.

To order copies of the magazine, call (773) 989-9400 or distribution@tpan.com. For information about TPAN and Positively Aware magazine and www.positivelyaware.com.
Heartland Alliance: 125 years of protecting society’s most vulnerable

BY JOE FRANCO

The mission of Heartland Alliance for the last 125 years has been to advance human rights and respond “to the human needs of endangered populations—particularly the poor, the isolated, and the displaced—through the provision of comprehensive and respectful services and the promotion of permanent solutions leading to a more just global society.”

Heartland was also one of Chicago’s first responders during the beginning of the AIDS Crisis. Rev. Sid Mohn, president of Heartland, began a program for those diagnosed and living with AIDS who were being treated. “We had to become a fierce advocate of equal protection clinics for those with AIDS/HIV. Heartland also partnered with Cook County Hospital to provide one of the nation’s first specialty clinics for those with AIDS/HIV. Heartland also became a fierce advocate of equal protection for those who were being treated. “We had to be sure that those people, the most vulnerable, who are normally ‘cut out’ of the table were not cut out at that table,” said Karen Batia, the executive director of Heartland Health Outreach.

Since Heartland intervened, the face of AIDS has changed as have the funds made available to sustain their innovative programs. “We offered a holistic approach to those living with HIV. We offered not only the basic health needs but a supplement, recreational outings and a community nurse,” said John Dinauer, a case manager with the behavioral health unit for Heartland. “But things change. Funding changes. HIV changes. The money for our approach went away though we did try as long as we could to keep it going. We just ended our art therapy sessions but we think within time, that program will return.”

Currently, Heartland operates more than 140 scattered-site housing units for those with HIV and AIDS. “We understand that providing housing, real, viable housing for those most marginalized who are living with AIDS is an important part of their actual treatment,” said Dinauer. “My job as a case manager is comprehensive. Housing is a part but so is making sure our participants have healthcare and some sort of income. We also operate the Rafael Center to make sure our participants have some place to come during the day.”

HIV prevention has also been a recent objective for Heartland with the establishment of “Promise.” “This is community-based intervention. We are reaching out to the unidentified community. These are predominantly African-American men who have sex with men. First, we identify advocates in the community then take those advocates’ stories and disseminate them through those men who may be at risk. This is more than just distributing condoms. This is peer-to-peer intervention with counseling on safer-sex and testing,” said Dinauer.

Batia, with Heartland Health Outreach, stressed the importance of medical care that went beyond the basics. “We recently merged with Vital Bridges so that folks would have access to quality, fresh foods. This is not a food bank with canned and non-perishables but actual grocery centers where people can come and ‘shop.’ We offer nutritional counselors to make sure that the nutritional needs of folks are met,” said Batia.

HIV early intervention, funded by the City of Chicago, is another way that Heartland is seeking to ease and end HIV and AIDS in Chicago. “This program is for folks that we suspect are probably HIV positive and do not know it yet. We are looking at youth, single adults, men and women. We target those groups systematically based on the data we have available to us,” said Batia. Heartland’s early intervention program is multi-disciplinary, offering education, testing, harm reduction strategies and anything else that will promote the containment of HIV and AIDS.

Dinauer helps manage more than 140 scattered-site housing for those with HIV and Batia makes certain that the housing is there for those who need it. “We believe that access to both housing and healthcare are basic human rights,” said Batia. “One of our greatest goals today is finding that housing, although with the new healthcare law taking effect in 2014, that may become somewhat less challenging for us.”

The Affordable Healthcare Act (AHA) has become Heartland’s and other centers like theirs greatest “what-ifs.” “Heartland does have a strategic direction when AHA is in force in 2014,” said Batia. “It is important to remember that just because the law is there that suddenly all of the problems we had will be solved. It is up to us to help enforce that law and make certain that we shape the service systems for the benefit of the most vulnerable. We need to make sure that our folks, and those on Medicaid will continue to be enrolled into coordinated care,” said Batia.

“At the core of what Heartland does is provide medical care for those who need it most. But this is not enough. We must also be able to provide housing, connectivity, emergency care beyond the emergency room and security. Heartland works with the most vulnerable populations and oftentimes, these may seem small but these folks have no access to them,” said Batia. Heartland’s work does not end at the borders of Cook County. Mohn just returned from a trip to West Africa. He said, “The work that we started in the 1980s and ‘90s is still the work to start here. This is more than medical services. We are also responding to the advancement of equitable healthcare for those living with HIV and AIDS and advocate for their full participation in society.”

For more information on Heartland Alliance and the work that they do here in Chicago and abroad, visit the organization’s Website at www.heartlandalliance.org.
TPAN: Riding against AIDS in 2012

BY ROSS FORMAN

Gilberto Diaz was literally within shouting distance of the finish to the 2010 Ride for AIDS Chicago when disaster struck. He was just outside the rider holding area at Mile 199.5 of the two-day, 200-mile trek when his derailleur broke.

Enter Richard Cordova. He gave Diaz his bike, so Diaz could ride across the finish line.

"Seeing his face and watching him ride the last 500 yards across the finish line was one of the proudest moments of my life," Cordova said. "The Ride is about accomplishment, sacrifice, and intense pride."

Building friendships and supporting a cause, too, of course.

Cordova, 33, who lives in Chicago’s Lakeview neighborhood, is now the Director of Athletic Events for the Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN)—the benefactor of the annual Ride for AIDS Chicago. He has worked at TPAN for almost two years and has participated in four previous Rides (three as a rider, one as an event executive). The 2012 Ride will be Cordova’s fifth.

The 2011 Ride had 225 Riders and raised more than $538,000. This summer, TPAN organizers are shooting for over 350 riders, $600,000 in individual donations, and $150,000 in corporate sponsorships.

"TPAN is one of the organizations that helps save and turn lives around for the better. I know this because that’s exactly what they did for me," said TPAN client Evany Turk, 33, of Chicago.

"The staff is friendly, welcoming, understanding and intelligent, which helps when you’re in a dark place. The programs are taught well, and it gives you great motivation to know that it’s being taught by someone who is going through something similar as you.”

Such as, Cordova, who is HIV-positive.

"Living with HIV, it’s important for me to participate in these types of endurance events,“ Cordova said. "Knowing that I am stronger than my disease is important to me. In addition, helping to support other (HIV)-positive people is important to me, too. I want all people impacted by HIV to feel as strong and empowered as I do.”

The Ride for AIDS Chicago is scheduled for July 14-15, traveling from the Evanston to Elk-horn, Wisc, and back.

"An eight-person executive committee, over 37 captains and co-captains, and the staff at TPAN will make sure that fundraising goals are met and that we produce a safe, challenging, and rewarding experience for all participants,” Cordova said. “We already have such an engaged, vibrant group of riders and crew members signed up this year. It’s really great seeing so many people who are invested in their community.”

The Riders annually cross all communities, and even include celebrities. Illinois Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon and her husband were riders in 2011, which Cordova said “is so meaningful—she definitely enhances the weight of the event.”

Riders are required to raise $1,000 while crew members are encouraged to raise $500. Registration is $100, which helps offset the cost of producing the event. "We (TPAN) remain committed to returning 100 percent of the money raised back to the beneficiaries,” Cordova said.

"Corporate sponsorships, registration fees, and in-kind donations help offset the many costs of producing the event.”

James Sumers was the top fundraiser in 2011, committing to returning 100 percent of the money raised back to the beneficiaries," Cordova said. "The Ride is about accomplishment, sacrifice, and intense pride.”

So what goes into the two-day Ride For AIDS Chicago?

Food
8 cases of bananas
2 cases of oranges
2 cases of apples
8 cases of granola bars
14 cases of bagels
4 cases of peanut butter
60 pounds of pretzels
1300 gallons of water
60 pounds of pasta at dinner

Misc
48 tubes of sunscreen
20 bottles of bug spray

Mechanical
85 Inner Tubes used
3 Derailleur cables
2 Road brake cables
1 Mountain brake cable
3 Spokes

"TPAN helped me apply for rental assistance through the AIDS Foundation of Chicago when I couldn’t pay my rent and, most important, they were able to help me get back up on my feet in finding a job through a job fair this past year.

"TPAN has done so much, not only me, but for thousands of others throughout the Chicagoland area. Last year when I did this ride, I was living with 349 T-cells. This year I am riding with over 780 T-cells, thanks (in part to) TPAN and the efforts that they support with the money raised from this ride. This is a truly amazing experience and I owe my future to what TPAN has given thus far.”

For more information about the Ride for AIDS Chicago, to register, or to donate, go to: www.rideforaids.org or call Richard Cordova at (773) 989-9400 x230.
Dab Garner uses teddy bears to help others cope with HIV/AIDS

BY ROSS FORMAN

It was 30 years ago, on Valentine’s Day 1982 at San Francisco General Hospital, that Richard “Dab” Garner was diagnosed with PJP, a form of pneumonia. Garner then learned he had GRID, as it then was known: gay-related immune deficiency.

He was 19 and told he likely would not see his 20th birthday, which was six weeks away. “I was traumatized,” Garner said of the 1982 diagnosis. “I was one of the first to make it out of quarantine alive, so I felt all alone and really did not know what to do. I had already started giving teddy bears to my first partner and my best friend when they were dying from GRID in 1981.”

The bears are Garner’s direct, personal tie to the past, present and future. Now 49 and living in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Garner is the CEO of Dab the AIDS Bear Project, a grassroots project of concerned citizens joined together to raise HIV awareness, education and prevention. Teddy bears are the building block.

“The first year [1982] was very hard because there were so few people diagnosed who made it out of quarantine alive,” Garner said. “There was really no support group out there for people living with GRID. I never knew, from one day to the next, how long I would be alive, so it was hard to think of planning for the future.”

But still, he quickly became an activist, urging all to talk about what was happening. He also continued to give away teddy bears to people as they were put into quarantine—to let them know someone cared and was thinking about them. “Having been in quarantine myself I knew how scary a place it was,” Garner said.

“The upside of the first year was that there were so few people diagnosed that I could count the people who died and know exactly who,” Garner said. “I have gotten to meet people I probably never would have otherwise [met,] such as celebrities, including the love of a child and being a parent can make you put things into perspective,” Garner said.

Candace was, in fact, the one who gave Garner the name Dab, as he is now known. “When she tried to say the word ‘dad,’ it came out ‘dab’—and it’s stuck.”

“The 10-year mark, [in 1992] had its ups and downs,” Garner said. “The huge downside was Brad and Candace both lost their battles with AIDS in 1989 which devastated me. Then the 1989 San Francisco Earthquake destroyed my apartment and I lost everything except my car and the clothes I had on at the time.”

He also was attending funerals every week for those who lost their battle with HIV/AIDS. He once had nine funerals in one week.

“The upside of the 10-year mark was first of all living that long with the HIV virus and not having to be on any medications. I also was speaking at HIV events around the U.S., including the first AIDS walks and conferences,” he said.

Garner credits his survival for the past 30 years to a “fantastic support-group, including family, friends, partners and dogs.” Plus, Garner learned years after his 1982 diagnosis that he has a gene anomaly called CCR5 Delta 32 that helps him fight HIV.

“The way I have dealt with HIV/AIDS is [by] having a positive attitude, working out, eating healthy and abstaining from drugs and alcohol. I think staying active even after going on disability has been a huge difference and positive impact on my health,” he said. “I am also fortunate to have health insurance to help cover my health costs.

“HIV/AIDS has totally impacted every aspect of my life. Being diagnosed at such a young age and becoming an activist, my life has revolved around helping people with HIV/AIDS while doing awareness, education and prevention to keep those who are still negative to stay that way.”

“HIV/AIDS has also impacted my [professional] life from the start. When I was first diagnosed, I was modeling and after being outed about my status, the bookings dried up quickly since no one wanted a model with ‘the new disease,’ so I ended up going back to college and getting my MBA. I never thought this would be my life: I had [a] totally different plan for my future. But because of my work as an activist, I have gotten to meet people I probably never would have otherwise [met,] such as celebrities, politicians and so many people sharing their story about either living with HIV or someone they knew that either died or was living with HIV.”

“I never in my wildest dreams thought I would still be here to celebrate my 30th year of living with HIV. I count every day as a blessing since I consider myself being on borrowed time for so many years.”

Dab the AIDS Bear Project evolved from Dab the AIDS Bear, which was started in 2003 because of the start of ADAP AIDS drug waiting lists. Garner said. “I lost two partners, my goddaughter and over 10,000 friends before life-saving medications became available,” Garner said. “I was outraged that American men and women were dying [while] on the ADAP waiting lists. It will never sit right with me that our country allows any American to be on waiting lists for life-saving medications.”

Hence, Dab the AIDS Bear Project is a staunch advocate for increased federal Ryan White funding, including ADAP, and also a resource for those already infected with HIV. Plus, the project is involved with awareness, education and prevention at events around the world.

Dab the AIDS Bear Project has been supported by such celebrities as Cher, Christopher Meloni, Boy George, Lynda Carter, Jai Rodriguez, Sen. Edward Kennedy, Sen. Bill Nelson, and U.S. Reps. Ileana Ross-Liethen, Alcee Hastings, Debbie Wasserman-Shultz, and others.

“The public can become involved with Dab the AIDS Bear by donating and sponsoring a child

Dab the AIDS Bear Project means hope to the next generations of people around the world that we are all in this together, that we can be successful in the fight against HIV,” Garner said. “I was traumatized,” Garner said of the 1982 diagnosis. “I was one of the first to make it out of quarantine alive, so I felt all alone and really did not know what to do. I had already started giving teddy bears to my first partner and my best friend when they were dying from GRID in 1981.”

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“The public can become involved with Dab the AIDS Bear by donating and sponsoring a child
Jorge Mená

The time to come out is now

Coming out as gay showed me just how necessary it was to address my undocumented identity. I dealt with both separately, but every day both of these identities influence each decision I make. Being out (has not only been the best decision I made but) has allowed me to be more mentally healthy while fighting for my rights as an undocumented queer Latino immigrant.

As I stood on stage in downtown Chicago—about to come out as undocumented, unafraid, unapologetic—I was on the verge of tears. I had practiced what I would say but the fear that rushed back into me for a second something I could not have dealt with beforehand. I suddenly realized that I was about to come out to an immense crowd.

That day—March 10, 2011—I was anxious of how they would react. I knew I was about to come out and share my reality. I also remember thinking, “I need this. I’m going insane.” I was about to graduate from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and felt the same feelings that came forth when I was ploughing through high school. Feelings of frustration, fear, same feelings that came forth when I was graduating high school.

I was thinking, “What if my manager at work sees this?” I was afraid of losing my measly café job for coming out and sharing my gender identity. I dealt with both separately, but every day I realized that I was not hard to argue that Gerber/Hart is a vibrant organization that makes our history accessible organization that makes our history living breathing part of the community.

Indeed, it looks like a dilapidated second-hand bookstore.

John D’Emilio

Hopes with Propes

Dear Editors,

I am writing to correct what I see as an injustice. For those who do not know me, I have, for more than 40 years, been representing LGBT individuals, businesses and community organizations.

Many years ago, I asked Lorna Propes to help me defend a 20-year-old gay man on a charge of murder. Due to her prodigious skills as an advocate, she kept the trial focused on the real issues at a time when judges, prosecutors and juries were generally prejudiced against gay people, viz., Queer Injustice, Joey Mogul, Andrea Ritchie and Kay Whitlock. The witnesses, many of whom were gay, were treated with dignity, thanks to Lorna’s strong sense that all people have a right with respect for who they are as individuals. Her performance was especially heroic because we were in a courtroom where the judge had been censured by the judicial inquiry board for his open hostility to female attorneys.

Lorna is already sitting as a judge, having been appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court to fill a judicial vacancy. She is running to be elected in her own right. All the bar associations, save one, have accorded her their highest rating to serve as a Judge. The only bar association that has rated her unqualified is LAGBAC (the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago); the rating misrepresented me and others, including some gay judges and community leaders I have spoken with.

Lorna is preeminently one to be considered. Justice will prevail in her courtroom. When someone has proven that the LGBT community can rely upon her support, the community should support her. I am urging that there be a strong showing of LGBT support for her judicial candidacy. Please make an extra effort to find her name on the ballot and vote for Lorna Propes.

Edward Mogul

Edward Mogul was the founding attorney for the Howard Brown Clinic and is president of the Unicorn Foundation.

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

Jorge Mená is a queer undocumented organizer with the Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL). He came out as undocumented on March 10, 2011, and was arrested during a civil disobedience protest in Chicago six months later. He is also a 2010 Windy City Times 30 under 30 award recipient.

For more information on Chicago’s 2012 National Coming Out of the Shadows event, see www.facebook.com/events/347153208636270.
A return to Laramie

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Director Greg Kolack is surprised that it has taken more than two years for a Chicago theater company to produce an extended run of The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later. Now directing a production at the intimate storefront Redtwist Theatre, Kolack feels the Laramie Project: Ten Years Later should get more exposure on its own, but also should be paired with the original Laramie Project.

“These shows have to be presented together,” Kolack said, calling The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later more of an “epilogue” or “follow-up” than a sequel.

“Even though [The Laramie Project plays] were written 10 years apart, I still think of them very much as an Angels in America or The Kentucky Cycle where each play stands on its own, but to get the full impact you need to see them both,” Kolack said. “That became a bit of a project for me to pitch around to theaters.”

Although Redtwist Theatre isn’t presenting both plays as full-fledged productions, it is at least producing the first Laramie Project play in a staged reading form on Saturday afternoons. That way die-hard theater fans can see both works in one day the way many have also experienced the multi-play Kentucky Cycle and both parts of Angels in America. “It surprises me that there are a lot of people, even in theater, who know of The Laramie Project exists.” Kolack said, noting that despite the big publicity for The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later in 2009, there has been relatively few productions of it across America. “It surprises me that there are a lot of people, even in theater, who know of The Laramie Project, but don’t know the second one exists.”

Chicago actress Eleanor Katz appeared in a London staging of The Laramie Project in 2007 at the East 15 Acting School, and she’s grateful to be a part of Redtwist’s Laramie productions. “I think it’s given us a sense of closure,” said Katz about performing both Laramie plays back to back. “We’ve started with these characters and now we’ve seen how they’ve changed and how their lives have been affected over a decade.”

“I’m really more excited than nervous to meet her,” Katz said about Shepard’s Redtwist appearance. “I think she appreciates anytime a theater company does one of the two Laramie productions because it’s bringing awareness because that’s one of the best things about theater is how it can bring about social change.”

The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later continues through Sunday, April 7, at Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays with 3 p.m. matinees Sundays. Tickets are $25 to $30 and $20-$25 for students and seniors. Readings of the first play, The Laramie Project, are at 3 p.m. Saturdays until April 7. Tickets to the readings are $15. There is no late seating.

A special benefit performance of The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later is set for Saturday, March 10, at Redtwist Theatre presents a special benefit performance of The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later that will benefit the Matthew Shepard Foundation. It prominently features a post-show reception and introduction by Judy Shepard, Matthew’s mother.

The characters from the first one that you think will have a profound change over 10 years, do,” said Eleanor Katz. “It’s the new characters that come into the second piece that really I think shock you when you hear them because there are rumors that have manifested and have taken the whole murder and what surrounds it into a different and frustrating direction.”

On Saturday, March 10, Redtwist Theatre presents a special benefit performance of The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later that will benefit the Matthew Shepard Foundation. It prominently features a post-show reception and introduction by Judy Shepard, Matthew’s mother.

Taylor Kitsch portrays the title character in the upcoming film John Carter. See the review on page 32.

Mar. 7, 2012
Theater Review

The Petrified Forest

Playwright: Robert E. Sherwood

At: Strawdog Theater, 3829 N. Broadway

Tickets: 866-811-4111; www.strawdog.org; $28

Runs through: March 31

By Mary Shen Barnidge

Our setting is a remote family-operated outpost abutting the tourist-attracting post titled the bleak Arizona desert. The proprietors extending hospitality to transient guests are a proud WWI vet, his pioneering old dad and his restless young daughter. On this fatal day, however, their torpor is invaded by an assortment of strangers including down-on-his-luck writer Alan Squire and gangster-on-the-lam Duke Mantee. In matter of hours, everyone’s lives are altered permanently. “There’s something here that stimulates the autobiographical impulse,” observes the hard-drinking Squire, as one by one, the confessions of the prisoners align them into three camps: those mired down in the past, who have abandoned their ambitions, and those who still yearn to control their destiny.

This American classic can be viewed as the prototype for hostage dramas to this day, as a Depression-era melodrama, or as an acridly honest portrait of the social malaise existing in our country between the two great wars of the 20th century. Film buffs know it as the vehicle that introduced Humphrey Bogart to Hollywood, and political science scholars are quick to note that its author left show business to become a speechwriter for President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Unfortunately, this Strawdog production tries to be all of these things in equal measure. Potentially intriguing psychological glimpses—an African-American gunner’s attitude toward a wealthy couple’s subservient chauffeur, for example, or a pair of tradesmen’s views on communism—are barely registered, even by the actors uttering them. Instead we get ersatz-cinematic effects, such as the spotlighting of individual players to simulate close-ups, and a disruptive score of Alfred Newman-esque incidental music piped in at a volume to render already muffled dialogue wholly inaudible.

The kind of marathon stamina demanded by American Realism is not easy for young actors, accustomed to far shorter sprints, to bring off, but the myth of the romantic desperado is not only an inextricable component of western literature, but our nation’s history as well—and therein lies the reason for this genre’s enduring popularity. Jamie Vann and Paul Fagen grasp the parallels between the homicidal Mantee and the suicidal Squire, as do Caroline Neff, Walter Brody, Janice O’Neill and Shane Kenyon in their portrayals of familiar archetypes given fresh urgency by the eerie similarities of their motives to those faced by disgruntled citizens today. Wherever you find your dramatic tensions, it makes for gripping storytelling.
THEATER REVIEW

The Fisherman

Playwright: Jayme McGhan
At: Stage Left at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.
Tickets: 773-677-6398; www.theaterwit.org; $25
Runs through: April 1

BY JONATHAN ABarbanel

The Fisherman succinctly offers a superb rationale for anti-capitalist violence in this country. The terrorist act at its center seems (to me) perfectly justified, and makes me wonder when an organized assassination movement may be launched against exploitative and greedy corporate and banking honchos and union leaders who have grown on the backs of labor.

Such acts would not be in my own best interest. It’s taken me 40 years, but I’ve managed to make myself modestly secure even without the guarantees of a union contract—a security dependent on a stable political economy. Still, to reduce this play’s call-to-action to something local, I don’t understand why Chicagoans have not taken up sledgehammers and smashed every parking pay box in town. Hey, they can’t arrest us all. The Tea Party shouldn’t be arguing against tax hikes, they should be arguing in favor of term limits for political figures and CEOs, which may be the only way to limit entrenched power and political oligarchy.

However, The Fisherman refuses to be highly polemic in the manner, say, of Clifford Odets’s Waiting for Lefty or Mark Blitzstein’s agit-prop The Cradle Will Rock. I wish it were, but playwright Jayme McGhan gives equal importance to a domestic drama about three brothers, one of whom is a ghost. While this half of the play produces some moving moments and telling character notes, it’s not the same play as the sociopolitical story and, frankly, not as galvanizing. For the next round, McGhan needs to choose between having a powerful and current political drama or a familiar family drama.

For the record, The Fisherman is set in present-day Minnesota, where an airline Chapter 11 reorganization leaves two brothers, Carl and Chucky, without jobs and with their union pension gutted after 35 years as airline mechanics. One decides to take matters into his own hands. Chucky’s adult daughter, Jenny, a cop, also figures in when she necessarily must stand for law and order against her own close family. A third brother, Mutt, is seen only by Carl and serves as an emotional depth gauge, a function also served by Jenny, in part. Since Mutt has nothing at all to do with the socio-political side of the play, he’s the candidate for elimination.

As staged by Drew Martin, The Fisherman is an excellent production. McGhan writes his characters with warmth and reality, and so they are played in greatly appealing performances laced with gruff charm by Michael Pacas (Carl), Sandy Elias (Chucky), Kate Black-Spence (Jenny) and Ian Maxwell (Mutt). Alan Donohue (scenic) and John Kohn III (lighting) provide a lovely deep, high fishing pier that smacks of the North Woods boundary waters. I could all but hear the loons.

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

CRITICS’ PICKS

Dating Walter Dante, Raven Theatre Studio, through March 24. The always-contrary Jon Steinhenag asks how far we can suspend our prejudices in his provocative allegory of star-crossed lovers fleeing the court of Public Opinion. MSB

Orpheus Descending, Shattered Globe Theatre at Stage 773, through March 11. Tennessee Williams’ Southern tragedy may have flopped on Broadway in 1957, but Shattered Globe offers up a strong and enjoyable production of this symbol-laden rarity. SCM

Show Boat, Lyric Opera, through March 17. I have some nits about this new production, but the bottom line is that it’s a brilliantly-sung, colorfully-staged and engaging version of a justifiably legendary Broadway show. “Old Man River,” “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man,” “You Are Love” Go, hear, JA

Six Characters in Search of an Author, The Hypocrites at Chopin Theatre, through March 11. Steve Moulds’ modernized update of Luigi Pirandello’s massively influential play-within-a-play drama is full of laughs and chills as it explores the “realities” of theater and bringing stories to life. SCM
THEATER REVIEW

In the Heart of America

Playwright: Naomi Wallace

At: Theatre Seven of Chicago at Greenhouse Theater, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Tickets: 773-484-7334; www.theatreseven.org; $15-$25

Runs through: April 1

By Scott C. Morgan

There’s no denying that Naomi Wallace’s 1994 political drama play In the Heart of America is a damning condemnation of American military intervention across the globe. If Wallace’s U.S. military characters in her play are meant to be representative of the country, then the play’s title implies that the “Heart of America” is one mostly filled with irrational hatred toward outsiders—be they foreigners or sexual minorities.

Wallace’s play is so unreliantly one-sided in only depicting the U.S. military atrocities that it can be written off as a leftist anti-war and anti-American harangue. But watching Theatre Seven of Chicago’s production of In the Heart of America in light of the 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. (at Greenhouse Theater, left) at the Greenhouse Theatre Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

March, she’s collaborating with tello Films, a company in Chicago that makes online content for teenagers, and said with a smile, “It’s so cliche,” said Mirza, smiling. “I liked performing for people and making people laugh when I was a kid but I grew up in a very strict, conservative Muslim family. When it came time to go to college, it was like, Be an English major, get a political science degree. And then I went to law school.”

It was in law school, ironically, that Mirza was bitten by the acting bug. “I did this thing called trial team,” said Mirza. “You know, you’re in the courtroom and you’re giving opening statements and closing arguments and cross-examining witnesses. It was more like acting, and I liked that so much more than the lawyering part. It was like Law and Order. I was like, ‘What is this? This is great!’ ”

After working as a litigator for two years at a downtown Chicago law firm, Mirza left the legal profession to act in Catharsis Productions’ Sex Signals, a program on sexual-assault awareness. The show uses improv, humor and audience interaction to educate audiences on how to prevent sexual violence. Sex Signals recently began touring all branches of the military in addition to colleges. Of her work on the project, Mirza said, “It feels really wonderful to be doing these shows for these [military] men and women. They’ll come up to you afterwards and say, ‘Thank you for your work’ and I’m like, ‘Are you kidding me? Thank you for what you guys do.’ ”

Over the next six years, Mirza would continue her work on Sex Signals while taking on a slew of projects that grappled with queer or Muslim identity. She was a frequent collaborator with Silk Road Theatre, a company focused on telling Middle Eastern and Mediterranean stories. She can next be seen onstage in Theatre Seven’s production of In the Heart of America, an allegorical poetic Gulf War drama in which she plays a Palestinian woman. In the 2011 independent feature film, Jamie and Jessie Are Not Together, another side of Fawzia Mirza became apparent. She slipped her wine, nodded in the direction of the iguana, and said with a smile, “I’m just excited—because that’s the kind of project I can show my mom.”

Mirza is performing through April 1 in Theatre Seven’s In The Heart of America (see review, left) at the Greenhouse Theatre Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Check out Mirza’s new web series, “Keeping Up With Kam,” at www.youtube.com/user/kamkardashian.

Under the amber lights of the Iguana Café, a glass of red wine in hand, Chicago-based actress Fawzia Mirza was in her element as she discussed details of her latest passion project, The Queen of My Dreams. The three-minute film short, which Mirza described as a “Bollywood dream piece” is set to premiere March 22-24 at Outfest’s Fusion, “the only LGBT people of color film festival of its kind anywhere in the world,” according to its website.

The film—which Mirza wrote, produced and acted in—explores her experiences playing as a South Asian woman trying live up to the ideals set by Bollywood heroines. When asked what inspired her to tell this story, Mirza said, “For me, this was a way of thinking that I am—which is a Muslim, South Asian, queer, sexy woman—but also a woman with really short hair. And how do I take on all of those things at the same time, and can I be all those things at the same time? And my answer is yeah. It’s just that you may not always see it.”

With a burgeoning career exploring Muslim, Queer and South Asian women’s identity through performance, it may be surprising that Mirza has only been in the acting business seven years.

Seated at the corner table in one of her favorite scenes.

"For me, this was a way of embracing everything that inspired her to tell this story, Mirza said, "It feels really wonderful to be doing these shows for these [military] men and women. They’ll come up to you afterwards and say, ‘Thank you for your work’ and I’m like, ‘Are you kidding me? Thank you for what you guys do.’ ”

Over the next six years, Mirza would continue her work on Sex Signals while taking on a slew of projects that grappled with queer or Muslim identity. She was a frequent collaborator with Silk Road Theatre, a company focused on telling Asian, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean stories. She can next be seen onstage in Theatre Seven’s production of In the Heart of America, an allegorically poetic Gulf War drama in which she plays a Palestinian woman. In the 2011 independent feature film, Jamie and Jessie Are Not Together she played Jamie’s lesbian lover, Ronda. In her newly launched web series, Keeping Up With Kam, she plays the eponymous, fictional, outcast lesbian Kardashian sister.

When asked if she had advice for other emerging queer artists, especially those coming out under potentially adverse familial circumstances, Mirza said, “I think it depends. I think it’s tough. I think everyone’s family situation is really different. I think the idea of coming out, to me, can also mean having a drink in front of my mom, which I still wouldn’t do it at this age, because it’s out of respect for her. So coming out has so many other layers to me.”

As she moves forward, Mirza wants to focus on making more films while continuing to pursue education initiatives like Sex Signals. This March, she’s collaborating with tello Films, a company in Chicago that makes online content for lesbians. Mirza said, “I think it’s fantastic, because you could be in Pakistan and be like, ‘I want learn about American lesbian stuff. Oh, here’s a place to do it. Cool!’ ”

Currently, in the works is a feature film called 9/12 that Mirza is acting in and producing. “I get to play a strong Muslim woman,” said Mirza. “She wears a head scarf, but we get to see her when she’s not wearing a head scarf. And that, I think, is something you don’t get to have that insight into. You don’t see that on television. When a Muslim woman takes off her head scarf, what happens? Does the world burn?”

As she elaborated on the contents of her future film, another side of Fawzia Mirza became apparent. She slipped her wine, nodded in the direction of the iguana, and said with a smile, “I’m just excited—because that’s the kind of project I can show my mom.”

Mirza is performing through April 1 in Theatre Seven’s In The Heart of America (see review, left) at the Greenhouse Theatre Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.
Annie Potts:
From ‘Designing Women’
to ABC’s ‘GCB’

BY JERRY NUNN

Actress Annie Potts is known for playing quirky characters in a variety of roles over the years. She played a gun-toting secretary in two Ghostbusters movies, and Bo Peep in two Toy Story movies. She has had numerous television appearances, most notably as Mary Jo Shively on Designing Women.

She returns again to the small screen in the comedy-drama Good Christian Belles, or GCB for short. She plays grandmother Gigi Stopper, whose daughter returns home to Texas with her two children after a divorce. Small-town drama ensues when former classmates are thrown into the mix.

Potts talked with Nunn on One right before the premiere of the show.

Windy City Times: Hi, Annie. I have been watching you perform since the movie Pretty in Pink so I’m very excited to talk to you today.

Potts: Well, I am very excited to talk to you, too.

WCT: I read you were born in Nashville.

Potts: I was.

WCT: That’s where I grew up.

Potts: That is a nice place to grow up, isn’t it?

WCT: Yes, it was. It doesn’t seem like having an accent stopped you from landing roles.

Potts: I am trained, so I don’t have to have that accent.

WCT: I watched the first episode last night and you have the juciest role.

Potts: I think I do; don’t I?

WCT: You have the best one-liners.

Potts: They are awesome; I know.

WCT: What attracted you to this sitcom? I heard you had some other offers.

Potts: I thought it was the best one. One of the others—I won’t reveal what it was—is a success on TV right now and the other one didn’t go. This was, far and away, the juciest role. [Writer/producer] Robert Harling is an old friend of mine. Even if he wasn’t, it was easy to see that the script is going to be a whole lot of fun. Robert has such a pedigree of writing Southern women such as with Steel Magnolias. So who wouldn’t take door number one?

WCT: Your hair looks fabulous on the show, by the way.

Potts: Thank you. That is a wig.

WCT: Is it?

Potts: It is an awesome wig! Yeah, isn’t it great?

WCT: Do you know people similar to your character being from the South?

Potts: She is kind of an amalgam of people I have known and people I have heard about. She is not unfamiliar to me.

WCT: Do you film the show in Texas, with it being set there?

Potts: We shot the pilot in Dallas but we film the series in Los Angeles.

WCT: How is it working with Kristin Chenoweth?

Potts: Well, do you think? Pretty fantastic! She is so darling and talented. What fun that is…

WCT: Leslie Bibb, who plays your daughter, is really good in the show.

Potts: She’s terrific and not hard on the eyes, huh?

WCT: No, she’s a knockout. There’s also a gay character on there.

Potts: Yes, but don’t reveal who yet.

WCT: This article will be out right after so no spoilers here. Were you raised religious?

Potts: I was. We were raised Presbyterian. My parents said we were real Presbyterians because they believe in everything, which meant it was okay to drink. We went to church every Sunday. I always loved church.

WCT: The line you have—“If you are under my roof then you are going to church”—rings very familiar with me. I saw some guest stars are coming up, from Sheryl Crow to Sandra Bernhard.

Potts: Yes, that is right.

WCT: You have a Hallmark movie coming out also. You are playing a music teacher?

Potts: Yes, it’s called The Music Teacher, where I play a drama-music teacher. It is kind of a female version of Mr. Holland’s Opus. That is what the producer had in mind. It is so lovely. Most of us have had a teacher that changed our lives and that is what it is. I have had several of those in my life so I am very happy to play a role and live that out myself. Through that, I can honor them in acknowledging what they gave me.

WCT: Do you sing in the role?

Potts: A little bit.

WCT: You did God of Carnage. Do you want to do more Broadway?

Potts: I did and I loved it and hope to do more. It is my first love and I will always return to it whenever I can.

WCT: I wanted to give a big shout out to Designing Women. The AIDS episode was phenomenal.

Potts: It sure was! Our fantastic creator, Linda Bloodworth, wrote it. Her mother was, at the time, dying of AIDS. She had contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion before the CDC was screening blood for that kind of thing. So it was very personal for her. Around 1988 she managed in a little half hour comedy to make a big correction in the attitude of way that people looked at AIDS and people that had it. It was really extraordinary. We were really proud of that.

WCT: With good reason; it was groundbreaking.

Potts: GCB is like an hour of Designing Women. We are counting on our core audience, which is gay. I believe we are going to give you plenty to enjoy.

WCT: It has a good time slot, right after Desperate Housewives.

Potts: Yes, that is right. So get the word out.

WCT: I will. Are they going to make a Ghostbusters 3?

Potts: If they do I am in, certainly!

WCT: Who you gonna call for a little Southern gossip? GCB that’s who! Check abc.go.com for details and tune in every Sunday night.
John Carter; film notes

In John Carter—Disney's latest big-budget attempt at creating an action franchise—former Friday Night Lights television heartthrob Taylor Kitsch makes the first of two high-profile tries for movie junkfood as we inch our way into blockbuster season. (Battleship, based on the decades-old board game, follows this summer.) Based on Kitsch's physical attributes, which are noticeably on display throughout the movie's two-hour-plus running time as he skitters about shirtless in a man skirt and engraved breastplate, John Carter is sure to help build the actor's gay fan base tenfold. The movie itself? Not "meh" but not exactly "yeah," either.

The fault is not with Kitsch's acting—which falls under the standard-issue "brooding leading man with smoldering good looks" category—or with Andrew Stanton's direction, making his live-action debut after having spectacular results in the animated realm with Finding Nemo and Wall-E, John Carter is sure to help build the actor's gay fan base tenfold. The movie itself? Not "meh" but not exactly "yeah," either.

But it's not the kind of thing that sets a film critic's heart afire and, though the picture is certainly entertaining enough in the moment (there's more than enough sweeping adventure to satisfy action junkies) and will surely be adored by 13-year-old boys (and I would assume, plenty of action-minded 13-year-old girls), John Carter is—for good or bad—one of those big-screen blockbusters that doesn't leave much residue (not to mention pleasure) once its two-hour-plus running time as he skitters about the latter website.

The former, a mythical figure transported to exotic Mars (called Barsoom in the film) who lands in the middle of a war and finds himself the unwitting secret weapon that the movie's four-hour-plus running time as he skitters about all the way back to 1912. John Carter is the story of a former Civil War captain mysteriously transported to exotic Mars (called Barsoom in the film) who lands in the middle of a war and finds himself the unwitting secret weapon that every side of the conflict wants to put to use.

It's easy to pick out elements of other movies residing in that basic plot outline—with the entire Star Wars saga to Stargate, Cowboys & Aliens and Avatar being the most prominent—and the actual movie offers dozens more, to an almost embarrassing degree. It's not Stanton's fault that his source material has been picked over so thoroughly and for so long. (Film versions have been attempted going back to the 1930s but this is the first one to make it into theaters.) And this movie déjà vu, as I've noted in reviews of other film blockbusters which have suffered from varying degrees of this creative dilemma, is often a source of comfort for a filmgoer—and to marketers—who bank on familiarity when buying tickets (and to sell their expensive products)

Film notes:

—Cinema Q II—the free, LGBT-themed, weekly mini film series—returns for the second year on Wednesdays in March at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St., with screenings at 6:30 p.m. in the Claudia Cassidy Theater.

This year's series, focusing on queer youth, kicks off March 7 with a screening of lesbian director Jamie Babbit's hilarious 1999 black comedy But I'm a Cheerleader, about a notorious "ex-gay" camp for teenagers. It stars Natasha Lyonne, Clea DuVall, Cathy Moriarty, RuPaul, Melanie Lynskey and Michelle Williams. The March 14 installment is 2005's Blue Citrus Hearts, a gritty, coming-of-age/coming-out tale. Windy City Times is one of the series' media sponsors. www.queerfilmsociety.org

—Chicago Filmmakers' popular Dyke Delicatessen film series, curated by Sharon Zurek and co-sponsored by the Reeling Film Festival and Black Cat Productions, returns Saturday, March 10, with Ferron: Girl on a Road. This 2009 documentary from filmmaker Gerry Rogers (My Left Breast) focuses on the groundbreaking lesbian singer/songwriter and her long-awaited return to music, along with an emotional reunion with her band. As always with this series, a social

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

Lynn Collins and Taylor Kitsch in John Carter. Photo courtesy of Disney Enterprises, Inc.


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Yezak was set in motion on his documentary, driven by discrimination. "If the gay community isn’t aware of all these inequalities, these discriminations how will the general public know?" he said. The documentary will encompass all areas in which the LGBT community is discriminated against, including marriage rights, gays getting denied admission to private schools, private organizations and religious institutions, and more. The documentary also will detail gays getting bullied, not being able to adopt children, getting denied housing and more.

Yezak hopes to have the documentary completed by the end of September, and then show it next January at the annual Sundance Film Festival, scheduled for Jan. 17-27, 2013, in Park City, Utah.

Yezak’s trailer features the song “The First Day of Spring” from Noah and the Whale: “When I [first] heard [the song], I envisioned something really grand related to gay rights. As I saw these [gay rights] clips over the next couple of years, I knew that song, coupled with the images, would have a great, emotional impact on people. “I wanted to release the [trailer] on MLK Day since there are obvious similarities between that [King-driven] civil rights movement and ours.”

The trailer has been viewed more than 2.3 million times on YouTube. “I never envisioned that I’d be able to raise $150,000,” especially so quickly, Yezak said. “I’m just shocked and overwhelmed with support this documentary has received; it’s so unexpected, such a good feeling, truly incredible. It’s just been very overwhelming.”

None other than out actor George Takei has taken to social media outlets to promote the project.

To watch the trailer for the documentary, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=uv62OtMv5k.

Kyle Richards’ take on ‘Reality’

BY JERRY NUNN
Kyle Richards lives the life that some envied on Bravo television’s The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills.

Born in Hollywood, Kyle was raised on TV as the daughter of Mr. Edwards on the series Little House on the Prairie. She went on to scream for her life in the movie Halloween.

Her sister, Kim, also came along for the ride on the Prairie, and then went on to star in the Witch Mountain movies.

Kim and Kyle returned to the public eye recently as Bravo Housewives for two seasons that followed with an explosive reunion. Kim recently checked herself into rehab in January.

Kyle chatted, on the release date of her new book Life Is Not a Reality Show, about her real life and more.

Windy City Times: Heyyy, Kyle. How are you?
Kyle Richards: I’m wonderful, thank you. Well, actually not wonderful, I’ve been better.

WCT: You had a lot going on.
KR: A lot going on! [Laughs]

WCT: I wanted to tell you that I spent New Year’s with [Beverly Hills Housewives] Taylor [Armstrong].
KR: You did? She’s sweet.
WCT: She told me she is very close to you.
KR: Yes. I get so mad when I look at Twitter and some of the comments people make sometimes. I think, “If they only knew how sweet she is and how much those comments hurt her.”

WCT: I noticed on the reunion show how everyone was upset about what other people say, not what is said to each other. It is just hard.
KR: Exactly. It is very difficult. Going into the reunion, none of us want to talk about things that we have already fixed but that is what we are there for to be honest. It is very hard. People even ask, “Why did we bring that up?” Are we supposed to say everyone just fixed all of this? No, we are there to be honest. That is what makes it very difficult, especially when many of us are very sensitive.

WCT: I noticed you came in town for Fashion Week last year.
KR: Yes, I love Chicago! I absolutely love it.
WCT: I heard you went out to [the restaurant] Sunda.

Logo announces NewNowNext Awards

Logo has announced the nominees for the 2012 NewNowNext Awards, which honor icons, trendsetters and stars on the rise, according to a press release.

The public can visit www.NewNowNext.com or m.newnownext.com/awards to view the entire list of nominees and cast their votes across a wide range of outrageous categories including “Cause You’re Hot,” “Beyond Style,” and “TV You Betta Watch.” Among the nominees are Emily Van Camp (star of TV’s Revenge, up for "Next Mega Star"); Channing Tatum, Naya Rivera and Henry Cavill (among those up for the “Cause You’re Hot” award); Kelly Osborne (competing in the “Beyond Style Award” category); and Magic Mike, Prometheus and The Avengers (up for the “Next Must-See Movie” honor).

Winners will be revealed Monday, April 9, on Logo’s “NewNowNext Awards 2012 show. The 90-minute special will be taped in front of a live audience at the Avalon in Hollywood, Calif., April 5.

NUNN ON ONE: BOOKS

Kyle Richards’ Life Is Not a Reality Show

BY ROSS FORMAN
Ryan James Yezak has been an Internet and media sensation after releasing his seven-minute trailer for a planned documentary about the gay-rights movement.

He released the emotional video on YouTube in January to coincide with Martin Luther King Day after working on it solo for the past eight months.

The trailer has been featured on Ellen, and covered by Perez Hilton, MSNBC and other media outlets. In addition, about a week after its release, he had secured the needed $150,000 in funding to put the documentary into production, which will start in March. The documentary will be called Second Class Citizens.

“I first thought of the idea [for the documentary] when I came out to Los Angeles [several years ago] to intern at the entertainment industry. [Same-sex] marriage was passed on my roadmap out here; that was very exciting,” said Yezak, 25, originally from Houston. “I also witnessed [same-sex marriages] when [that right] was taken away.

“I really wanted to make a documentary about marriage equality, but the subject was so large that I didn’t know exactly how to tackle it.”

So he sat on the idea for about 18 months. Then he befriended a high school student from Florida through Yezak’s work mentoring the gay community.

“Then he befriended a high school student from Florida through Yezak’s work mentoring the gay community. It wasn’t until then that I got the courage to really move forward. I had the idea for the documentary but I couldn’t come out—or he’d be expelled from his school. Later he came out to me and I said, ‘Yes! Let’s do it!’”

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By JeRRy NuNN

To watch the trailer for the documentary, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=uv62OtMv5k.
Amy Ray.

In between projects as half of the beloved folk group Indigo Girls, Amy Ray continues to fulfill her artistic journey with her latest solo effort, **Lung of Love**. "Glow" and "Crying in the Wilderness" have just enough drums and guitar not to suit an Indigo Girls’ album, but the latter has the duo’s trademarkmelodies, Ray serves as a storyteller with a social conscience on “From Haiti.” “The Rock Is My Foundation” tackles the crossroads of being queer and raised Christian. "Cuts include tracks originally made famous by blues masters such as Sonny Boy Williamson ("Bring it on Home") and Muddy Waters ("I Want to Be Loved"), as well as recordings from R&B singers such as Ray Charles ("I Don’t Need No Doctor"), Al Green ("Rhymes") and Otis Redding ("Champagne and Wine"). Osborne is best known for her mid-1990s song "One of Us." "The music she has long loved and drew inspiration from. "I knew that, someday, when the time was right and my voice was ready," Osborne said in a press release.

**Joan Osborne, PR photo**

**Glessner House to host film narrated by John Waters**

**Glessner House Museum** is a national historic landmark and the last surviving work by H.H. Richardson in Chicago. Completed in 1887, the museum is recognized nationwide for its groundbreaking architecture as well as its important collection of original decorative arts. **Talking Pictures Fest to screen Killen film**

**Pink Ribbons, Inc., and Jeffrey film also screening**

**Global Groove: Dance 5** is now through multiple outlets including iTunes and www.theoutclub.com. Not only has **Paul Oakenfold** scored hits on his own with "Starry Eyed Surprise" with Shifty Shellshock and "Faster Kill Pussycat" with the late Brittany Murphy, but he has remixed many of music’s greats like Madonna and U2. Oakenfold won me over when he worked with Steve Osbourne as Perfecto. The superstar DJ will be spinning at The Mid, 306 N. Halsted St., on Saturday, March 17, to promote his latest, We Are Planet Perfecto, Volume 01. Yes, this has a remix to the Perfecto evergreen “Not Over Yet” by Grace.

**Joan Osborne to drop first blues CD**

Joan Osborne’s **Bring it on Home—a CD of vintage blues, R&B and soul songs**—will be released March 27 on Saguaro Road Records. A collection of some of her favorite classic songs, **Bring it on Home is Osborne’s tribute** to Lady Gaga at the concert experience **Bad Romance**. The all-ages show has a 12-person cast and is taking place at Copernicus Theater, 5216 W. Lawrence Ave., on Friday, March 16. Although she cannot shake the comparisons to Madonna, Lady Gaga can dent the charts, as she sent three songs to number one on the pop charts and 11 to the top of the dance charts. The New York fashionista also is an outspoken ally of the LGBT community, having just launched the Born This Way Foundation. For tickets and more information, visit www.broadmaneschow.com. **Chris Brown and Rihanna are making news again, as the former couple reunites on a remix to “Birthday Cake.” Three years ago, the two were coy about revealing whether they were an item. The eve of the 2009 Grammy Awards, they trended as the “S.O.S.” singer and she had to seek medical attention. A photo of a severely battered Rihanna then surfaced. Sure, we can learn a lesson on forgiveness here, but she could be an example by moving on, especially considering Rihanna’s recent marriage. In a day when an overhyped wedding is followed by a 72-day marriage, this is another case of sensationalism in lieu of substance.**

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We were not allowed to use glue for some reason, but she used toothpaste. Glue was contra-band. It was really good for us to be jail. For me, it was, at least, I don’t want to idealize it or romanticize it, but it gave us a little bit of space from the relentless [political movements]. Revolution as an Eternal Dream: the Exemplary Failure of the Madame Binh Graphics Collective ($13) is available from Half Letter Press at www.halfletterpress.com/store. Patten is a visual artist, video-maker, writer and educator who teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She’s spent the last 27 years in Chicago organizing with ACT UP and other groups.

Chicago lesbian gets ‘Graphic’ with latest book

BY ERICA DEMAREST

For a brief, intense period in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a group of female artists known as the Madame Binh Graphics Collective (MBGC) flourished in New York City. Recognized for its vibrant graphic style, militant politics and propagandist imagery, the collective produced hundreds of posters, prints and murals before eventually dissolving amid a flurry of protests, FBI raids and jail sentences.


A founding member of the collective, Patten interweaves personal anecdotes (“I remember going to bed under rows of 18”x24” posters, inhaling the fumes from drying mineral spirits/ xylene as I dozed off”) with historical context to create a holistic picture of a political movement.

Readers who aren’t familiar with the time period get primers in chapters on literary influences, graphic movements and political predecessors; while full-page graphics serve as lively examples of the collective’s work.

“In those days when cultural activism seems less than powerful,” Lucy Lippard writes in the foreword, “we can learn a great deal from those times, about the endless contradictions we could not escape, about art world successes that were actually failures, and political failures that were actually successes.”

Patten recently sat down with Windy City Times to discuss her writing style, spending time on Rikers Island and more.

Windy City Times: In the book, you hop between a first-person style where you share personal stories, to a more professorial tone where you talk about art in context. Why did you decide to go with both tones?

Mary Patten: [My publisher] talked about it being a memoir of sorts. I’m not really interested in that kind of privileging of a singular experience, but I think [the book] does have to cross back and forth because I’m not an outsider. I was an author of these events. At the same time, I’m critical about our history. It’s not like, ‘Everyone needs to know this; we’re so great.’

In a very short period of time, we produced a huge number [of pieces]. I mean, we lived this. We spent a year in Rikers Island; what was that like?

Patten: That’s where some really interesting stuff started to happen again. Even though it’s lousy to be in jail, and we were monitored all the time, the three of us who were in the graphics collective were constantly making stuff. It was a way to spend time; it was a way to be friends with other women in the jail. They’d say, “Oh, you know how to draw? Would you draw a picture of my daughter for me?” I’ll give you cigarettes.” We were very loved. (Laughter)

WCT: Did you have access to supplies, then?

MP: We really didn’t, until this older, retired art teacher read about us. She contacted the jail and said she’d like to set up a little art class where she’d bring in materials and allow us to draw. It was kind of an amazing thing, but we had a little difficulty with her because we wanted to bring other women from the jail to these art classes. She was a little bit like, ‘Well, I don’t know. I know who [you] are. I can recognize [you].’ We thought she couldn’t deal with women who were prostitutes drug addicts, who were all our friends in there.

We were allowed colored pencils and paper. Mangot did this amazing collage that I still have in my apartment. She used cut-up magazines.

ALMA, Vida/SIDA hosts night of pride, culture

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

The Association of Latino Men for Action (ALMA) and Vida/SIDA held a night of pride and culture (“una noche de orgullo y cultura”) at the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture March 3.

The event was attended by about 100 people who came to hear book readings by three prominent Latino gay authors (Charles Rice Gonzalez, Alfonso Ramirez and Jesus Ramirez-Valles), pursue a gay art exhibit and participate in a silent auction.

Julio Rodriguez, board president of ALMA, and Juan Calderon, executive director of Vida/SIDA, welcomed the crowd and thanked them for attending. Then master of ceremonies, Paul Lopez introduced each author to the crowd.

First up was Rice-Gonzalez, who read from his young adult novel, Chulita. Then Ramirez read his chapter in the anthology From Macho to Mariposa: New Gay Latino Fiction. Ramirez-Valles read from his book, Companeros: Latino Activists in the Face of AIDS.

ALMA’s mission is to empower Latino Gay Bisexual and Questioning men by providing support, advocacy, and leadership opportunities, through Innovative cultural programming.

The mission of Vida/SIDA Bartolo Hernandez de Jesus HIV/AIDS Initiative (a project of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center) is to educate, advocate and empower Chicago’s Puerto Rican/Latino community by promoting culturally responsive health care/resources that enable health affirming behaviors and attitudes. See www.almachicago.org and prc-cho.org/vidasida/ for more information on both organizations.
The Gage

Some days you just want to kick back with a Guinness and a basket of fish and chips at a quaint Irish pub. Other days you want to feast on elevated cuisine like bison tartare and oysters with caviar gelee paired with a cold bottle of Veuve Clicquot champagne at a chic downtown eatery. Well, at The Gage, a handsome tavern-restaurant hybrid on Michigan Avenue, you can do both.

The Gage is located in a historic landmark building across from Millennium Park, and many stately architectural elements remain, lending visual interest that draws you into the dark and noisy space. You can pick your poison here because the bar is fully stocked. You’ll find seasonal cocktails, beers from breweries near and far, dozens of wines and even flights of whiskey. Wine lovers, be warned and bring your wallets: There isn’t a single glass available for less than $13. I ordered a cocktail made with St. Germain prosecco (like the kind you can find on most $13. I ordered a cocktail made with St. Germain prosecco (like the kind you can find on most

The Gage was serving one of the most inventive desserts I’ve ever had—piping hot sugar-dusted anise churros with coffee clove crème Anglaise for dipping. It sounds complicated, but it is actually a genius reinterpretation of one of the simplest and most comforting treats in the world: coffee and doughnuts.

I appreciate The Gage’s higher-end offerings, several of which were quite good. However, what really shines at this place are the expertly prepared comfort foods that give just a subtle nod to haute cuisine without trying to be anything more. The simplest and most comforting treats in The Gage is pretty fantastic. It’s rich and creamy and is served with long toasted breadsticks that are kind of like edible fondue forks. My favorite starter, however, was the one that was free. After you settle into your table, the waiter arrives with a warm fresh-baked loaf of rye, which is some of the best bread I’ve eaten. You get duck fat nuts. Instead of cheese and

cracks, you get Brie fondue. In fairness, I’ve never met a melted cheese I didn’t love, but the Brie fondue is pretty fantastic. It’s rich and creamy and is served with long toasted breadsticks that are kind of like edible fondue forks. My favorite starter, however, was the one that was free. After you settle into your table, the waiter arrives with a warm fresh-baked loaf of rye, which is some of the best bread I’ve eaten. You get duck fat nuts. Instead of cheese and

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SUGAR & SPICE BY MEGHAN STREIT

The Gage

The Gage’s brie fondue. Photo by Meghan Streit

more into the high-end territory. Think venison pate, bass escargot with goat cheese fonduta and crisp rabbit salad with fried shallots and avocado. I opted for the caramelized lobster. It was served over lemon quinoa and drizzled with a spicy curry sauce. I’ll give it points for creativity, but I’ll have to deduct some for taking away from a delicious husk of lobster with culinary experimentation. I’ve had much better preparations of lobster, and they are usually less fussy and far better.

That seafood mishap was quickly redeemed by the fluke (a mild whitefish) I ordered for my main course. It was cooked perfectly and served with Swiss chard, bite-sized pieces of butternut squash and roasted potatoes, which all combined to provide the perfect hearty contrast to the delicate fish. I also tried the braised short rib ragout. The meat was tender and flavorful, and served in a sauce with vegetables over egg noodles—kind of like the pot roast your mom used to make (but much better). I’m glad I didn’t skip dessert because The Gage was serving one of the most inventive desserts I’ve ever had—piping hot sugar-dusted anise churros with coffee clove crème Anglaise for dipping. It sounds complicated, but it is actually a genius reinterpretation of one of the simplest and most comforting treats in the world: coffee and doughnuts. I appreciate The Gage’s higher-end offerings, several of which were quite good. However, what really shines at this place are the expertly prepared comfort foods that give just a subtle nod to haute cuisine without trying to be anything more.
Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) showed they were “good sports” with Game On!, this year’s Chicago Takes Off charity event, Sat., March 3 at Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave. The two shows—one at 7:30 and another round at 10:30—were both sold out in advance of the event. The audience was treated to elaborate and risque sports-themed dance numbers, comedy, and even a trained dog act. Brooklyn’s own Murray Hill hosted for the third year in a row. The event raised much-needed funds in support of TPAN’s HIV/AIDS programs and services which benefit more than 25,000 individuals through prevention, outreach, and direct care services and programs.

Help Wanted

Interior Design/SALES Closets by Design, the nationwide leader in home organization, seeks a full-time work from home designer for its Addison, IL location. Be likable, authentic, transparent, and a great team player. Must have flexibility in your schedule and be readily available for shoot dates per the Executive Producer and Director. Be non-union/non-SAG through the entire series. Must have basic sales experience. If so, we would like to talk with you. We provide you with the leads and the training; you provide the great attitude and a willingness to learn. Typical designers make 2k to 4k per month plus benefits. Email briab@closetbydesign.net or fax a resume to: 630-501-0190. Take a look at our websites: www.closetbydesign.com.

Home Improvement


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Counseling and Clinical Hypnotherapy: Providing help to individuals & couples in our community since 1987. Specializes in relationship issues, spiritual issues, childhood trauma, and recurrent patterns that inhibit potential. Stasia R. Shull, LCSW, PC, 773.877.5809, www.stasishull.com. The JUNIPER CENTER/CENTER FOR RELATIONSHIP LIFE. Life gets complicated. You have tried all that you know to solve a problem or repair a relationship. When you are not sure what’s next, we are here to help. LGBTI individuals, couples & families. juipercentericago@cs.com 847-759-8110 (4/25/12-13)


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Mar. 7, 2012
WINDY CITY TIMES
CLASSIFIEDS

CATCasting For Gay Male Host For New TV Pilot

We are casting for a pilot for a new reality TV series, and we are looking for a dynamic, energetic, and articulate female host and gay male host for our new pilot. Both hosts should have television and on-camera experience, with a natural talent for engaging others. Because this reality show is unscreened television, your ability to be yourself with a high degree of improvisational skills is essential. You must also be likable, authentic, engaging, quick on your feet, and with a fantastic sense of humor. Both candidates must reside in the greater Chicagoland area. Seeking two hosts for the pilot and TV series: Gay male: 25 to 35 years old, confident, with a quick wit, and a campy but respectful sense of humor. Straight or gay female: 25 to 35 years old, fun, interesting, practical, humorous, confident. Filming is expected to commence in late March or early April for the pilot episode, so you must be available for 2-3 days of shooting. We would like you to submit a video up to 3 minutes that showcases your personality, your sense of humor, your timing, and your interaction with others. This video does not have to be high-quality production. It is just to give us an idea of your personality and your ability to engage with others.

Requirements:
Be very comfortable being filmed for television. On-camera experience is required. Have a high degree of improvisational skills, being able to be authentic as yourself and to work creatively within a particular scene. Must be positive, upbeat, warm, friendly, approachable, and easy to work with. Must be able to take direction well from the Director, Writer, and other co-Executive Producers. Must have flexibility in your schedule and be readily available for shoot dates per the Executive Producer and Director. Be non-union/non-SAG through the entire series.

Must be comfortable in working in an LGBT (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered) setting. Ethnic background is a plus, especially for the female role. For serious consideration, you must send the following by Wednesday, March 14 to energyme@nycgig.com: Link to your audition reel (highly desirable). Resume with contact information, with 3 business and 3 personal references. Headshots (multiple photos would also be desired). (3/14/12)

Cleaning Services

CHESTNUT CLEANING SERVICES: We’re a house cleaning service for homes, small businesses, and small buildings. We also have fabulous organizational skills (a separate function at a separate cost that utilizes your assistants) for what hasn’t been cleaned in many months or years due to long-term illness, depression, physical/mental challenges, for the elderly. If you have down-sized and moved, and are deep cleaning about going home to chaos? We can organize your chaos, straighten out your chaos, help you make sense of your chaos and finally clean what is no longer chaos. Can we help you? Bonded and insured. Chestnut Cleaning Services: 312-332-5575. www.ChestnutCleaning.com. (11/21/12-52)

Home Cleaning Services

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HOME CLEANING SPECIAL: $40 - 1 bedroom apt; $50 - 2 bedroom apt. Cleaning supplies must be provided. Rodrigo Garcia, 214-710-4388. Five years experience, references available. (3/14/12)

Counseling

Counseling and Clinical Hypnotherapy: Providing help to individuals and couples in our community since 1987. Specializes in relationship issues, spiritual issues, childhood trauma, and recurrent patterns that inhibit potential. Stasia R. Shull, LCSW, PC, 773.877.5809, www.stasishull.com. The JUNIPER CENTER/CENTER FOR RELATIONSHIP LIFE. Life gets complicated. You have tried all that you know to solve a problem or repair a relationship. When you are not sure what’s next, we are here to help. LGBTI individuals, couples & families. juipercentericago@cs.com 847-759-8110 (4/25/12-13)


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Covering your assets

BY ANDREW DAVES

When it comes to same-sex couples and mortgagegages, Steve DiMarco—president of Baird & Warner Financial Services and a member of the firm’s executive committee—told Windy City Times there are two areas of concern.

“The first issue is federal taxation, specifically, how tax returns are filed,” he said. “That’s relevant because when you have mortgage-related interest, that’s deductible, and something needs to capture that.”

“However, the [main] issue is how a same-sex couple protects its ownership interest,” DiMarco added. “When you have two individuals—specifically, married individuals—there’s a number of ways they can own property. One is joint tenancy, which I think is one of the biggest pitfalls for same-sex couples. In a joint tenancy, a man and a woman married each owns 100 percent of the household.

“Let’s say my wife plows into an affluent doctor and maims the guy to the point where he cannot work. He sues my wife. In a joint tenancy, I’m included—but you can see where a judgment causes a forced liquidation of the assets. Ultimately, we want people to own property by tenants by the entirety, in which the assets are split 50-50 in the case of two people owning a property. Same-sex couples should consider this; what it does is establish that while the couple is alive, no more than 50 percent of the assets can be split.”

“Illinois, however, does allow civil unions, a situation DiMarco said ‘affords some protections’ to same-sex couples in the probate and estate process. There is now a legal structure to help couples dispose of property.

“Ultimately, however, I would recommend that a same-sex couple would purchase a home and utilize a living trust document that specifically dictates how their portions of the assets will be disposed of. This is important for anybody who might have a dicey relationship with blood relatives, because once this goes into estate, the probate officer might follow the bloodline. So a trust can dictate that a partner can continue to live in a house or that proceeds from the sale of a house can go [to the partner], children or someone else.”

“Same-sex couples who have children outside the relationship should also have trusts, especially if there are [substantial assets] involved.”

However, say there’s a situation where a couple has a home in one state that recognizes civil unions or marriage, and another in a state that doesn’t. What do you do, then? “[They should get] a tenancy by the entirety in the rest of the states. However, a trust could deal in that kind of complicated situation. You’re getting really hairy there.

“Also, if someone wanted to address ownership issues and include the assets in the relationship, they could file a quitclaim deed and record that with the county that the property is in. That would change the ownership so there’s some structure around it.

“What the readers need to understand is that there are some special considerations. The minimum standard is a tenancy by the entirety. Ultimately, these other factors like wealth, offspring and relationships with blood relatives may create the need for a trust.”

Regarding the aforementioned issue of taxation, DiMarco advised, “When a [civil-union] couple files federal taxes, they’re not filing as married couples would do, so there needs to be a decision about who may claim the interest deduction—and that can be split, by the way. Generally, thought, the couple generally needs to decide who needs the deduction the most.”

DiMarco added that he learned some things after talking with same-sex couples to see how they handle taxes. “One of the guys said he put a cover letter on his tax return explaining his household circumstances,” he said. “Another individual said that it was virtually impossible to file federal taxes because of the Defense of Marriage Act [which only recognizes opposite-sex marriages]. The tax stuff is just crazy.”

Steve can be reached at steve.dimarco@keymortgageservices.com.

Tickets available for Wright Trust’s Housewalk

Tickets are now available for the internationally acclaimed Wright Plus 2012 housewalk, showcasing rare interior tours of private homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and his contemporaries in historic Oak Park, Ill.

Wright Plus 2012, which will take place 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, June 2, features magnificent private residences from Oak Park—the community with the most Wright-designed structures. Guests will enjoy interpretations based on in-depth research of the homes’ history and architecture, including discussions of the original occupants’ lifestyles. This housewalk, which attracts visitors from around the world, offers intimate looks at a collection of beautiful homes lining the historic streets of Oak Park. Tickets are available at http://www.GoWright.org. Tickets are $85 for Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust members and $100 for non-members.

Along with the housewalk tour, the Preservation Trust also offers the Ultimate Plus Weekend, an exclusive four-day weekend of events Thursday, May 31-Sunday, June 3. As part of the Ultimate Plus Weekend, guests will enjoy a reception at the 1905 Wright-designed lobby of The Rookery Building in downtown Chicago on Thursday and a Friday excursion to Wright-designed buildings in Chicago's North Shore. Guests will enjoy the housewalk; a private luncheon and lecture and Exclusively Wright Dinners on Saturday; and a behind-the-scenes tour of Wright's Frederick C. Robie House on Sunday.

The Ultimate Plus Weekend Package is highlighted by a three-night stay in a deluxe room (double occupancy) at the historic Carleton of Oak Park, the official hotel of Wright Plus 2012, as well as transportation from the hotel to all events. For more information about the Preservation Trust and Wright Plus events, visit www.GoWright.org.

Real estate news:

Joan Rivers. Photo by Charles William Busch

—Can we talk?: You can have Joan Rivers’ New York City penthouse—for a cool $29.5 million, according to Curbed NY. The listing for the unit describes how “the original architectural detail was painstakingly restored by museum-trained artisans.” Rivers actually first tried selling the penthouse in 2009, then asking $25 million for it. The unit—which has a $7,500 monthly tax charge—is 5,190 square feet, and features a terrace, library and expansive view of Central Park.

—Rosie weighing options: Talk-show host Rosie O’Donnell is “re-evaluating her real estate holdings” and, by the looks of it, open to selling her 6,000-square-foot Lakeview home, according to a Chicago Tribune item. The five-bedroom house, purchased from OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network President Erik Logan, has been listed for $2.5 million. The home has, among other things, a sports bar, three-car heated garage and 11-foot ceilings.

—Arrest: Prominent local real-estate executive Michael Sato was charged last Nov. 26 with trying to steal three Burberry neckties (valued at $145 each) from Bloomingdale’s at 900 N. Michigan Ave. on Black Friday, according to the Chicago Tribune. Sato, 44, is president of Jame son-Sotohey’s real estate. Attorney Jon Erickson said, “The evidence will show that it was a mis understanding.” The case has been continued until March 7.

Wright Preservation Trust needs volunteers

The Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust is seeking volunteers to assist at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio in Oak Park; Wright’s Robie House, in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood; and The Rookery Building in Chicago’s Loop.

Volunteer orientation sessions occur monthly at all three national historic landmarks. Volunteers enjoy benefits such as invitations to exclusive excursions to art and architectural attractions; educational opportunities like architectural-based lectures; access to extensive online learning resources and knowledge bases; and discounts in the museum shops.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact the Preservation Trust at volunteer@gowright.org for more details.

Architecture foundation launches Net-based tool

Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF) launched DiscoverDesign.org, a web-based learning tool that gives high school students the opportunity to solve real-world design problems, according to a press release.

Using project-based learning and social networking, students can learn about architecture and develop important life and work skills.

Any school can participate in DiscoverDesign.org as part of a classroom curriculum, and any student can explore it on their own to supplement his or her after school enrichment. DiscoverDesign.org is available free 24/7 to anyone with Internet access.
Gay Liberation Network organizing meeting -- new members welcome! 7pm-9pm, group at their monthly organizing meeting at 973-209-1187, Berger Park Cultural Center, 3341 N. Halsted St., Chicago, www.palmspringscocktailchallenge.com; 6:30pm, Chicago Cultural Center in March. Info at victorsalvo@legacyproject.org; 5:30pm, 773-382-6115, Cliff Dwellers Club, 200 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, www.chicagoflowerandgardenshow.org.

TRAGEDY REVISITED

Saturday, March 10
A benefit performance of The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later will take place at Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., with special guest Judy Shepard.

Windy City Times

March 7, 2012

WINDY CITY TIMES

CALENDAR

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BLOOM WITH A VIEW

March 10-18
The Chicago Flower & Garden Show will take place at Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave.

Promotional photo

ST., www.roscoes.com

Drap Race with Frida Lay Chicago's only amateur drag contest, hosted by Frida Lay at Roscoe's! A hit at Roscoe's since its premier in 2000. 10pm, Roscoe's, 3356 N Halsted St., www.nscscoes.com

TUESDAY, March 13
Altgeld, Haymarket Riots subject of Clarence Darrow event: Clarence Darrow aficionados will gather at the Darrow Bridge in Jackson Park for the ritiral outdoor wreath-laying ceremony commemorating Darrow’s death and guests will move inside for a lecture and discussion on the Haymarket case, “Absolving Anarchy: John P. Altgeld and the Pardon that Shook Gild- ed Age America,” to be given by Heath W. Carter, 10am, Darrow Bridge and Museum Hall, the Capitol and Beyond. 10pm, Roscoe’s, 3356 N. Halsted St., www.orchardsh.com

Gay-Themed German Films of the Silent Era Screenings at Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, 7pm-9:30pm, 773-271-2146, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives 2117 W. Granville Ave., www.orchardsh.com

WED., March 14
Sara Paretsky, 50th anniversary of V.I. Warshawski series. Paretsky discusses her relationship with Chicago, including her new book breakout, with the Chicago Tribune’s Rick Kogan. Also, joining us are special guest actors from Steppenwolf Theatre Company who will give a brief reading of Paretsky’s work. Cindy Pritzker Auditorium; 6pm, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St., www.chicagopubliclibrary.org

The Orion Ensemble, Celebrating Women Composers in Honor of Women's History Month in March. The Orion Ensemble will be “Celebrating Women Composers” of three centuries, four countries and four distinct styles. 7pm-10pm, 630-628-9591, Roosevelt University’s Ganz Memorial Hall, 430 S. Michigan Ave., www.orionensemble.org

THURSDAY, March 15
Defending Women’s Rights: In the Courtroom, the Capitol and Beyond Honoring 2012 Impact Awards honorees, including a posthumous award honoring Christina Santiago, Puerto Rican, lesbian and femin- ist activist. Tickets on sale now. 6 pm reception, 7 pm awards ceremony; 6pm, Sertos Institute, Venue S&D10, 410 S. Michigan Ave., www.cfwnordic.com

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Angelina (or, rather, her leg) stole the show at the Oscars.

the spousal-equivalent of one of the most beautiful men in the world. If I didn’t know better, I would have sworn it wasn’t Angelina but, rather, her close namesake, Angelene. Yes, that’s how tragic it was.

In a related story, failed actress Sean Young (she’s just a statuette away from being Sally Kirkland) was placed under citizen’s arrest after trying to crash the Governors Ball and allegedly assaulting a security guard. But that wasn’t the best part. Earlier, she accosted a number of celebrities and tried to take photos with them—as if she were some pathetic fan...like me, for instance. Her “gets” were Glenn Close (clenching...and I know that pose), Sandra Bullock (looking almost sympathetic), and a bewildered Nick Nolte (who possibly expired when the camera flashed).

However, it was the photo of Sean between Brad Pitt and Angelina that is really priceless. Apparently, she saw the couple at the bar. She stormed over to them by hi and reportedly told An- gie, “Darling, we have the same hairdresser...and gifts like us need help with our hair.” While Jolie was trying to figure out if that was an insult or a compliment, Sean snapped the photo and dashed! I can relate. I, too, have inadvertently insulted my share of celebs. Remind me to tell you about ruining Billy Crystal’s night the first time he hosted the Oscars.

When people win a big game or award, they often like to say, “I’m going to Disney”—but not Octavia Spencer. When asked what she’ll do after her Oscar win, she said, “I’m going to get my boobs lifted.” There’s an answer you don’t hear every day—and one that would have livened the awards if she’d shared it from the stage. Spencer went on to say, “I figured going into my 40s, I want my boobs where they were when I was 17.”

We have to go back in time for our next story...back to the Jurassic Era. That’s when Zsa Zsa Gabor was born. I’m not sure where—Babylon, Mesopotamia or some other forgotten empire. On Feb. 6, the legendary beauty celebrated her 90th birthday with hubby Prince Frederic—a sumptuous soirée in her Bel Air mansion. Needless to say, Zsa wasn’t down mingling with the guests. She was upstairs in her hospital bed, probably hooked up to numerous machines. In fact, I would have bet my last ruble that she wasn’t even conscious. But that wily Prince has thwarted me by releasing pics of Zsa Zsa blowing out her candles. There’s even one of her and Larry King—who looks positive youthful in the glow emanating from Zsa Zsa’s life-support system.

Speaking of ancient ruins. Cher’s heading back out on the road. Of course, if you read this column with any regularity, this is old news. I told you eons ago that she’d be touring in support of her upcoming new CD. So much for “Living Proof: The Farewell Tour.” I believe the only thing she’s said farewell to is her dignity.

If there’s one thing I can’t stand, it’s sloppy reporting—or, at least, misleading reporting. I was shocked to read the following headline in the UK newspaper The Daily Mail: “Days of our Lives Makes US Daytime Soap Opera History By Featuring Gay Kiss.” Uh, really? Where have I heard that before? Oh, yeah, six years ago on August 17, 2007—Big Mama Master’s birthday. Back then, it was Noah and Luke on As The World Turns. Of course, you read the article and it clarifies: “Days made TV history yesterday by airing the show’s first same-sex kiss.” Once again, the truth is in the details. This kiss was between Chandler Massey and Jesse Kristofferson. And if you think he could be related to Kris, you’d be right—he’s the singer’s son. I’ll run photos and the video on my website.

Our “Ask Billy” question comes from Denny in Buffalo: “Ever since you wrote about Femme Fa- tales, I’ve gotten hooked—it’s really sexy and funny. I went back to watch earlier episodes and in the second show from season one, the guy sleeping with the nurse looks familiar. Plus he’s hot and nude. Do you know who he is?” That would be Scott Bailey, who is now married to Adrienne Frantz—who appears to be the Renee Zellweger of soap operas. You may remember Scott from Prayers for Bobby or, if you were a soap devotee, as Sandy on Guiding Light. He is most certainly gorgeous—and I can say that having seen him up close. Kinda like Matt Bomer. In fact, very much like Matt Bomer. I’d say more but, you know... lawsuits and all. He does indeed show quite a bit of skin on this episode—more than ever. I’ll post it so the rest of you can see it on BillyMasters.com.

When Octavia Spencer’s next job might be reviving those old “Support Can Be Beautiful” commercials, it’s definitely time to end yet another column. I’m sticking around Florida for another month—more of a secret. They have it for men. If it makes you thing you stayed awake. My Lord, just when you thought the show couldn’t get more boring, someone came up with the bright idea of not giving out an award anyone cared about for the first hour! These things never happened when Gil was alive.

It almost made me squeal with delight to see Angelina come strutting out in that ridiculous dress. I knew we were in trouble when her coral lipstick seemed to have been applied by Ste- vie Wonder. Then she straightened her dress, planted her hand on her hip and stuck out her right leg—she looked like she was auditioning for the sequel to Showgirls. On anyone else, it might not have been such a pathetic moment. However, this is Angelina Jolie, arguably one of the most sought-after actresses in the world and...
Project tackles locker-room culture

BY ROSS FORMAN

The message was simple: if you can play, you can play.

The messengers were most impressive. On Sunday, March 4, during the first intermission of a Boston Bruins-New York Rangers hockey game broadcast live on NBC, a PSA was aired, featuring eight NHL stars, including Duncan Keith of the Chicago Blackhawks.

Keith and the other NHL superstars voiced their support for the new “You Can Play” project, aimed at ending homophobia and discrimination in sports locker rooms, that athletes should be judged on athletic skill and ability, not sexual orientation or other discriminatory factors.

That video and other future videos will be posted at www.YouCanPlayProject.org, which will also offer resources for straight and gay players, coaches and fans. The You Can Play project is backed by numerous National Hockey League players and others, including several All-Stars.

“Our goals for You Can Play are clear,” co-founder Patrick Burke said in a statement. “We want to make locker rooms safe for all athletes, rather than places of fear, slurs and bullying. The casual homophobia in sports has to change, so all athletes know that what counts is whether you can play the game.”

The goal of the You Can Play project itself is to combat homophobia in sports locker rooms, that athletes should be judged on athletic skill and ability, not sexual orientation or other discriminatory factors.

Brian Burke, the father of Patrick and Brendan Burke, is the Toronto Maple Leafs general manager.

Brian Burke added in a statement, “The Burke family is very proud to carry on Brendan’s legacy by working to ensure that LGBT athletes, coaches and fans around the world to make the sports world safe for gay athletes.”

“I look forward to investing this into players all over the world to make the sports world safe for gay athletes.”

The group’s advisory board includes Miele, San Jose Sharks forward Tommy Wingels, Golden State Warriors president Rick Welts, two-time U.S. women’s soccer Olympic gold-medal winner Angela Hucles and the elder Burke.

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ESTATE PLANNING TO PROTECT YOUR PETS

Q. I am getting up in years and I don’t have a partner to leave my property to. My family and relatives are doing fine financially. I have two dogs that I want to make sure are taken care of if something happens to me. What can I do to protect my pets?

A. Unfortunately, pets cannot be beneficiaries of a Will. The law still considers pets to be property. That is why making a plan for your pets is very important.

First, plan for your incapacity. Carry with you a wallet card with contact information for emergency caretakers. A pet card provides, at a minimum, information that there is a pet in your house that needs emergency care and who should be contacted in case you are injured while away from home. A more detailed pet care document should also be prepared and left in an obvious location in your house with copies given to any emergency caretakers. A pet care document might include instructions for the care of the animals, medical information, and veterinarian information.

Second, plan for your death. One option is to make an outright gift of your pet to another person along with a reasonable amount of money for the pet’s care, with the request that the person use the funds to care for the pet. Or make an outright gift to another person of the pet and a reasonable amount of money for the pet’s care, conditioned on the caretaker providing proper care for your pet.

You could direct in your Will that your executor arrange for the adoption of your pet. Some organizations will take the pet and arrange for its adoption free of charge or in exchange for a contribution. When selecting a shelter to place the animal in, determine whether the shelter requires or recommends a gift of a certain amount and their placement rate.

In Illinois the Illinois Trusts and Trustees Act provides that a trust for the care of one or more domestic or pet animals is valid. You can create a Domestic Animal Trust for the pets you designate (“all dogs I own at my death”). You can provide in the trust, that no portion of the trust may be used by the trustee for a use other than the trust’s purposes or for the benefit of any covered pet.
Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC

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

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