



DAVID RAE HELPS RAISE FUNDS TO FIGHT AIDS

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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Catholic conference confronts marriage

BY CHUCK COLBERT

BALTIMORE—A Catholic case for same-sex marriage took center stage over the weekend during a national conference when a church theologian advocated marriage equality from faith-based perspective and a bishop called for a “new study of everything to do with sexuality,” which he suggested, “would have a profound influence of church teaching concerning sexual relationships, both heterosexual and homosexual.”

Martin O'Malley, the governor of Maryland, addressed the gathering at New Ways Ministry's Seventh National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality. A niece of President John F. Kennedy, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, also spoke, providing additional star power.

Barbara Johnson, the lesbian recently denied communion at her mother's funeral, addressed the closing ses-

sion, rounding out the event headliners.

New Ways Ministry—based in Mt. Rainier, Md.—is a gay-positive advocacy organization of justice, healing and reconciliation for LGBT Catholics and the church.

If [church] teaching on homosexual acts is ever going to change, the basic teaching governing all sexual acts must change,” retired Auxiliary Bishop Geoffrey Robinson told the gathering of nearly 400 Catholics at the Seventh National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality.

“For centuries the church has taught that every sexual sin is mortal sin,” said Robinson, an auxiliary bishop of Sydney, Australia.

“The teaching may not be proclaimed as loudly as today as much as before, but it was proclaimed by many popes, it has never been retracted, and it has affected countless people,” Robinson said.

“There is a serious need for a change in the church's

teaching on heterosexual acts,” he said, adding, “If and when this change occurs, it will inevitable have its effect on teaching on homosexual acts.”

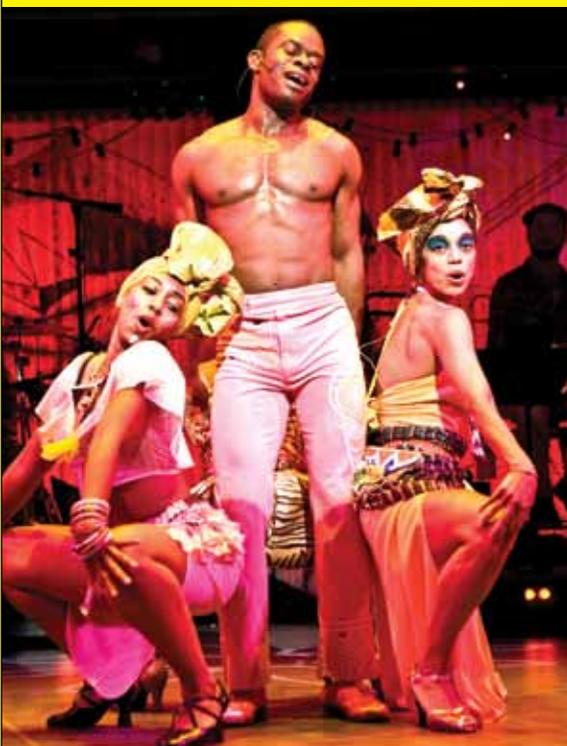
“The teaching fostered a belief in an incredibly angry God,” explained Robinson, “for this God would condemn a person to eternity in hell for a single unrepentant moment of deliberate pleasure arising from sexual desire. I simply do not believe in such a God. Indeed, I positively reject such a God.”

Robinson is the author of the 2007 book, *Confronting Power in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*, which addressed the clerical sex-abuse crisis and was controversial among his fellow bishops in Australia who faulted him for a 2008 lecture tour in the United States

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Election results at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

Spring's the thing



Our Spring 2012 theater preview section includes such hot productions as *Fela!* at the Oriental Theatre. Photo by Monique Carboni

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Life of a pioneer

Brother Outside: The Life of Bayard Rustin—a look at the late civil-rights activist—will screen at the Chicago Cultural Center March 28. Windy City Times had an in-depth interview with the movie's co-director, Bennett Singer. Photo courtesy of Singer

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Nikhil Prachand, MPH, City of Chicago Department of Public Health

- HIV Infection and HIV-Associated Behaviors Among Men Who Have Sex With Men- Chicago, 2011

Bio-Medical Research, (Rush University Medical Center)

Kimberly Smith, MD, MPH, Section of Infectious Diseases

- 2012 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) updates
- N.I.H. AIDS Clinical Trials Group research updates (therapies, treatment as prevention, clinical trials)
- Perceptions of behavioral risk among Black MSM and implications for treatment as prevention

Socio-Behavioral Research (University of Chicago)

Alida Bouris, PhD, MSW, School of Social Service Administration

- MSM and Families

Cathy Cohen, PhD, Department of Political Science (Moderator)

- Black Youth and Digital Communication

John Schneider, MD, MPH, Infectious Diseases and Global Health

- Networks and HIV Elimination

Dexter Voisin, PhD, School of Social Service Administration

- Black MSM and HIV Self-Disclosure

Institutional Research Partnerships (Chicago Development Center for AIDS Research)

Alan Landay PhD, Chicago DCFAR and Rush Medical College (Immunology-Microbiology)

- Interdisciplinary HIV research updates and opportunities

HIV Research, Health Disparities and Coordination (HIV/AIDS Regional Resource Network)

Lesley Craig, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services- Region V

- National HIV/AIDS Strategy and Implementation

Community-based organizations will also discuss research projects and organizational partnerships on behalf of Black MSM, including AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Center on Halsted, Stroger Hospital of Cook County, South Side Help Center, Black Treatment Advocates Network.

Who Should Attend

Researchers, case managers, service providers, public health and community advocates, people affected by and living with HIV/AIDS, physicians, nurses, social workers, educators

* Limited street parking is available along the Midway, on and near the campus. Check parking signs for restrictions.

** Planners are investigating availability of CEU's/CME's.



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MAKING AN IMPACT

See photos from the Chicago Foundation for Women's Impact Awards.

Photo of Rosa Yardira Ortiz (left) accepting award for Christina Santiago by Hal Baim



See photos from the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago's gala.

Photo by Kat Fitzgerald



Find out about what went down during local designer Borris Powell's runway show.

Photo by Steve Starr

ERROR OF ONE'S WAYS

Phil Sitar is back to discuss money mistakes you may be making as well as to talk about investments.

HORSING AROUND

See photos from The War Horse's appearance at a Broadway in Chicago preview.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Read entertainment news about Wanda Sykes, Omar Sharif Jr. and Lenny Kravitz.

plus DAILY BREAKING NEWS

FLOWER POWER



See photos from the Chicago Flower and Garden Show.

Photo by Andrew Davis

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CATHOLICS from cover

to speak about the issues his book addressed.

A high point of the March 15-17 conference came when O'Malley, who weeks earlier signed a same-sex marriage bill into law, briefly addressed the faithful—but without ever saying the words “gay” or “lesbian.”

“I am not here as a Catholic, I'm here as the governor of all Maryland,” he said. “Each of us in the public arena brings with us our own perspectives, our own traditions, our own faith traditions, and our own perspectives. We hope and what we should expect of all our leaders is when they look at the Constitution is to protect equality among all people.”

O'Malley received a sustained, standing ovation at symposium, held at the Renaissance Inner Harbor Hotel.

“At the end of the day, all of us want the same thing for our kids—we want our children to grow up in caring, committed, and loving homes, protected equally under the law,” said O'Malley, who went on to say success in the state legislature, rested on a “belief in the dignity of every individual.”

In advocating equal marriage rights, O'Malley has framed the issue as a balancing of protections for religious liberties and provisions for equal rights. He is not alone among other Catholic governors, including New York's Andrew Cuomo and Washington's Christine Gregoire, both of whom have recently signed same-sex marriage into law.

However Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn (also Catholic), while favoring civil unions, which he signed into law, falls short in his support of full marriage equality.

New Ways Ministry advocated equal-marriage rights in Maryland, with representatives of the group testifying on their behalf in Annapolis, the state capital, during legislative hearings.

The new law in Maryland does not take effect until 2013 and is almost certain to face a referendum drive, a rollback fight.

For now, Maryland is among eight states and the District of Columbia that have legalized marriage for gay couples.

Meanwhile, Patricia Beattie Jung, a professor of Christian ethics at the St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Mo., presented a theological argument for same-sex marriage, which relied on the Catholic tradition and church teaching.

While a Catholic argument for same-sex sacramental marriage has yet to be fully developed, Beattie Jung makes a strong case for embracing at least same-sex civil marriage.

“Sexuality is ambiguous,” she said. “It can be dangerous and a grace. So we channel it in marriage. Monogamy entails promises to be steadfast and sexually exclusive.”

“I'm pretty conservative,” explained Jung, who said her main reason for promoting sexual fidelity is its service to “love” and to “life.”

“Great sex is wholehearted,” she said. “This is what makes it graceful and us vulnerable and vicious. These promises give us the time and focus to learn how to love.”

“Can fidelity serve same-sex lovers the same way?” asked Jung, who taught for 13 years at Loyola University Chicago from 1995 to 2008. She was tenured there in 1998.

“Yes!” Jung said.

“Fidelity in service to life,” she said, means “marriage is good for the life of spouses, children, and elders bonded together as kin by marriage.”

For these reasons, “The state promotes marriage by linking to it a broad array of economic and legal benefits and rights that cannot be accessed any other way,” said Jung, who also said that same-sex marriage does not harm children or opposite-sex marriage. Nor will it unduly violate religious liberty.

Jung's talk generated a variety of responses during a question and answer session following her presentation.

One gay man, Arthur Fitzmaurice, 31, of Los Angeles, Calif., who attends St. Monica parish, asked her about same-sex divorce, wondering if



Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley. Photo by Chuck Colbert

same-sex and opposite sex couples break up for the same or different reasons.

Another gay man asked about emotional fidelity or steadfastness in same-sex marriages, but not necessarily sexual exclusivity.

“I asked the question because there is an acceptance, at least among my young gay male community, mostly secular, of open relationships that are emotionally committed but sexually open,” with “a variety of rules about threesomes or whatever,” said Kenneth Dowling, a member of Dignity Washington, D.C.

“And that's pretty well accepted,” he said afterwards in a short interview.

“I think it comes from an attitude that fidelity is for straight people, for women, for lesbians,” said Dowling, 22, who recently graduated from the University of California at San Diego.

“I am caught in the middle and don't know what is actually right, and I am still figuring this out,” he said. “While I appreciate Catholic moral teaching, I also know it has been wrong, especially on the gay issue.”

“Open relationships, with lots of rules. It's playing with fire,” Dowling said. “I just wanted her to know that some people, including Catholics, rule out sexual openness and emotional fidelity and are exploring it.”

In her reply, Jung said sexual exclusivity is “not just an issue in the gay community.”

“I truly believe because of human finitude and limits, we really don't have the time and energy to give people what they deserve,” she explained.

“I understand the appeal and attraction to other people and know that would energize my life,” Jung said, adding, “I don't think I can be fair to my spouse in terms of loving.”

It's an “important question,” she said. “Why would anyone promise to be exclusive? Steadfast maybe, but exclusive—that's a question for gay and straight alike.”

The New Ways Ministry symposium drew attendees from 35 states, including a dozen from Illinois and Chicago, the District of Columbia, Canada, England and Scotland, said Francis DeBernardo, the organization's executive director.

About 10 percent, he added, were under the age of 30.

In addition to plenary speakers, the event included workshops dealing with lesbian nuns, gay priests, Catholic marriages through gender change, LGBTQs among Latinos and African Americans, and coalition-building among gay-affirming advocacy organizations.

Chicagoans Karen Allen and her partner, Mary Jo Hoag, attended the gathering, this their second one.

“What brings me here is the chance to be rooted in my faith and with the people of God and to be sent forth to create loving communities,” said Allen, who leads a gay and lesbian family-and-friends ministry at St. Nicholas parish in Evanston.

Allen said the parish group grew out the idea

she and others got 10 years ago at the Louisville, Ky., New Ways symposium.

In proposing the idea, she explained, “We were welcomed to do so by our pastor at the time, who said, ‘Where have you been?’”

The ministry is about education and prayer and not so much advocacy, Allen said, but “more about how can we as gay and lesbian Catholics live fully integrated, authentic lives in our tradition.”

“Many have walked away [from the church] but returned in mid-life,” she explained, while readily acknowledging, “struggling mightily” with “clericalism and the hierarchy.”

“The church is our church,” said Hoag, explaining why she stays. “Many of us are cradle Catholics who grew up with the rituals, sacraments, and the teachings and feel comfortable. We are gifts to the church and shouldn't go away, as we provide those gifts of love and understanding and outreach.”

New Ways Ministry, Allen added, provides us “a shot in the arm” to keep up our work in ministry.

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NATIONAL NEWS

—Bonamici (left), other U.S. reps back DOMA repeal

—Obama criticizes N.C.'s Amendment One

—Criminals target middle-aged gay men in San Francisco

Lesbian speaks about denial of communion

BY CHUCK COLBERT

BALTIMORE—A Catholic symposium dealing with gay and lesbian relationships in the Church concluded on an affective note here when the woman who was denied communion at her mother's funeral spoke poignantly about the experience.

“It's my mother's love and compassion, and willingness to stand up for what is right that you see standing before you today,” Barbara Johnson told conference attendees.

“And not ‘Barbara Johnson, lesbian denied communion’ or ‘Barbara Johnson, Buddhist Catholic,’” she added.

During the funeral Mass Feb. 25, in Gaith-



Barbara Johnson. Photo by Chuck Colbert

ersburg, Md., Rev. Marcel Guarino refused the Eucharist to Johnson, telling her, “I cannot give you communion because you live with a woman, and in the eyes of the church that is a sin.”

The incident caused a media stir and dismayed Catholics nationwide and around the world.

In the several weeks time since, detractors have attempted to discredit Johnson, a 51-year-old artist, labeling her an activist, Buddhist, communist and even atheist.

However, Johnson, who has local ties, having lived in Chicago for some time, would have none of it on St. Patrick's Day.

A lifelong Catholic and former Catholic schoolteacher, Johnson lives in Washington, D.C., with her partner of many years.

“What I want to share with you today is the story of a daughter, a lesbian daughter, who felt her mother's love and acceptance deeply,” Johnson told several hundred people during the closing session of New Ways Ministry's Seventh National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality (March 15-17).

“I remember when I first came out, and my mom was not happy,” said Johnson. “Each year at the Gay Pride parade, I would stand and applaud those P-FLAG moms and dads for their courage and their compassion. And I would pray that one day mom and dad would walk beside me in that contingent.”

“As I got older, I stopped needing parades,” Johnson continued. “And what I got was even better. I got a life where my mother and father adored my life partner. I got a life where my parents walked me down the aisle at our (not so legal) wedding. I got a life where, on our last happy time together, I thanked my mom for accepting and embracing me and for loving my partner so much. Her response was to pat Ruth on the leg as she looked her in the eye with the most beautiful smile and said, ‘I wouldn't have it any other way—right?’”

As Johnson spoke, a number of symposium attendees fought back tears.

“You see Midge and Dick Johnson's youngest daughter, who is deeply heartbroken her parents are no longer her on this earth with her and her family,” said Johnson.

“You see this daughter who wound up in a whirlwind of media spectacle,” she continued. “You see this daughter who was placed in a state of grace by none other than her beloved mother.”

“For there is no more amazing state of grace than the one I was honored to receive as my mother allowed me to witness her passing from this life and into the dancing arms of my dad.”

Johnson's remarks struck a chord.

Chicagoan Kevin Mannara said he came to Baltimore for the symposium to serve God. “And service to God means many things,” he said, referring to “the needed ministry with gay and lesbian Catholics” in the Church.

As Mannara, a doctoral student at the Catholic Theological Union in Hyde Park, explained, “What happened to Barbara Johnson should never happen again.”

People like her get hurt and then walk away, Mannara said, “and because of their walking away, Barbara got hurt.”

“If you are not part of the solution, then you become part of the problem,” he added.

Johnson said several priests approached her afterwards and apologized on behalf of the church for the painful incident.

For his part, Guarino has insisted, “I did the only thing a faithful Catholic priest could do,” in refusing communion to Johnson. This was according to a written statement he issued March 14 that was first published by Catholic News Service.

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High court refuses Christian student case, but conflict continues

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The U.S. Supreme Court, on March 19, refused to grant review for a second attempt to challenge school non-discrimination policies by saying they violate the free exercise of religion. However, the conflict between the First Amendment and laws prohibiting discrimination is far from over, and at least one school has relaxed its policy rather than go to court in its defense.

A divided Supreme Court ruled last year that the First Amendment guarantee to free exercise of religion did not require that a religious student group be given official campus recognition and privileges when it refused to abide by a non-discrimination policy that all other student groups were required to abide by.

That 5-4 decision came in *Christian Legal Society v. Martinez* out of the University of California-San Francisco's (UCSF's) Hastings College of Law.

Supporters of campus Christian groups came back with another case with a slightly different set of circumstances. This time, in *Alpha Delta Chi v. Reed*, the case emerged from the San Diego State University.

While the UCSF policy requires all officially recognized student groups allow "all-comers" to be members and participate in group activities, the San Diego policy allows groups to "restrict membership to those individuals who agree with, support, or believe in the purpose that brought the group together, or to those individuals who

agree with the particular ideology, belief, or philosophy the group seeks to promote."

In Alpha Delta, the Alliance Defense Network was representing two Christian social groups, Alpha Delta Chi sorority and the Alpha Gamma Omega fraternity. The groups require members to actively participate in and adhere to Christian "evangelical" principles.

The Alliance said San Diego State refused official status to two groups because the groups "require [their members and/or officers] to profess a specific religious belief."

The Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals took prominent notice of last year's Christian Legal decision when it issued its opinion last August in Alpha Delta. It made note that the Supreme Court had held out the possibility that it might rule differently, depending on the exact wording of a university's non-discrimination policy.

However, the Ninth Circuit ruled that the Alpha Delta circumstances were not significantly different from those of the Christian Legal case.

Alliance's petition to the high court argued the San Diego policy is different in a significant way. While the UC-SF policy requires all officially recognized student groups be open to "all-comers," noted the Alliance, the San Diego policy allows groups to "restrict membership to those individuals who agree with, support, or believe in the purpose that brought the group together, or to those individuals who agree with the particular ideology, belief, or philosophy the group seeks to promote."

"Thus, under SDSU's policy," noted Alliance's

petition, "all student groups may exclude students from membership and leadership who do not agree with the groups' beliefs, except religious student groups." And that, it argues, is discrimination based on the free exercise of religion.

The Christian Legal Society, which sponsored the San Francisco Christian student group, filed a brief in support of the San Diego case, arguing that the policy at San Diego was different from San Francisco. It also argued that the high court's recent decision in another free exercise case, *Hosanna-Tabor v. EEOC*. In that case, the high court ruled that the First Amendment bars discrimination lawsuits by "ministers" against their "churches."

"It is common sense, not discrimination," said the Christian Legal Society, "for religious groups to require their leaders to agree with their religious beliefs."

By refusing to take the Alpha Delta appeal, the high court does not necessarily signal the justices' rejection of the argument. The court takes only about 100 appeals out of 10,000 filed per term. However, the refusal to accept the appeal does leave the Ninth Circuit decision intact.

Alpha Delta and Christian Legal are just two of many cases attempting to challenge non-discrimination laws and policies through arguments of free exercise. A similar case at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro (UNC-G) settled out of court March 13. At first, UNC-G officials denied campus recognition to a pro-abstinence and anti-abortion group called "Make Up Your Own Mind" that requires members to support a Christian statement. The university noted that the group was affiliated with a local pregnancy care clinic, not a church. The school relented after the Alliance filed a lawsuit in federal district court.

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Iowa justices to receive award for marriage ruling

Three Iowa Supreme Court Justices who were ousted in the 2010 judicial retention vote will receive the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award in May, according to a press release. This is the highest and most prestigious award that can be bestowed upon public servants and was created to celebrate political courage.

Justices Marsha Ternus, Michael Streit and David Baker will receive the award May 6.

The 24th Annual May Dinner celebrates the life and legacy of President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy and the 50th anniversary of their White House years. Hosted by Caroline Kennedy and Board Chair Kenneth R. Feinberg, and co-chaired by Gerard F. Doherty and Peter & Carolyn Lynch, the dinner is held on the eve of the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award ceremony.

On April 3, 2009, the Iowa State Supreme Court unanimously ruled that excluding same-sex couples from marriage was unconstitutional. In August 2010, the state's most prominent anti-equality leader, Family Leader CEO Bob Vander Plaats, launched an attack on the three Iowa Supreme Court justices who were up for retention on the November 2010 ballot.

Through a campaign bankrolled by out-of-state anti-gay groups and leaders, most notably the National Organization for Marriage (NOM) and the American Family Association (AFA), the three justices were ousted.

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The Accidental Activist, the title of Candace Gingrich's 1996 autobiography, captures best her path to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) advocacy. Her involvement in the movement for queer equality began in 1995 when her brother, current Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich, was elected House Speaker and she had an opportunity to make her voice heard. Since then she has not stopped advocating for the issues important to the LGBT community.

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Student found guilty in Clementi case

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

A jury in New Jersey found Rutgers student Dharun Ravi guilty of a hate crime against his gay roommate, Tyler Clementi, for using a webcam to spy on Clementi's intimate encounters with another man. The jury also found Ravi guilty of a number of other charges, including invasion of privacy and witness tampering. The jury found Ravi not guilty in relation to charges as they affected Clementi's male date, identified in court only as "M.B."

Ravi faces up to 10 years in prison for the convictions. The guilty charges could also result in Ravi, who is on a student visa to study here, being deported.

During the two-week trial, Ravi's chief attorney, Steve Altman, repeatedly characterized Ravi's actions with the webcam as the sort of foolish prank one should expect from an 18-year-old college student.

Ravi and Clementi were both in their first year at Rutgers University in September 2010 when Ravi set up his computer webcam to capture images of Clementi having intimate relations with M.B.

Middlesex County Prosecutor Julie McClure portrayed Ravi as a person who expressed to his friends discomfort with having a gay roommate and who deliberately set up his webcam to in-



Tyler Clementi.

vade Clementi's privacy and ridicule his being gay. She said Ravi's preoccupation with Clementi's sexual orientation "drove his escalating and deliberative acts."

McClure's position was weakened by Judge Glenn Berman who discouraged any mention during the trial that Clementi had jumped to his death from the George Washington Bridge in the early morning hours of September 23 after discovering Ravi's webcam spying and Twitter posts about Clementi's relationship. He also struck from evidence the details of Clementi's communications to university officials in which he asked for a room change because of Ravi's spy cam activity.

Ravi did not take the witness stand in his own defense during the trial in Middlesex County Courthouse in New Brunswick, New Jersey. But Altman played a videotape of Ravi being questioned by detectives at the police station Sept. 23, while Clementi was still missing.

During that interrogation, Ravi stated, "Yes, I did" in response to a question about whether he violated Clementi's privacy. However, he added

that he didn't do so deliberately.

Ravi's attorneys also introduced into evidence a long text message Ravi wrote to Clementi, saying that his turning the webcam on while Clementi had a date in the room had been an accident. The email said he had turned the camera on only to show his friend "how I set up my computer so I can access it from anywhere." Ravi's email said he turned the camera off as soon as he saw Clementi and his male date but felt "uncomfortable and guilty" about it and "told people what occurred so they could give me advice."

Ravi's email said the reason he turned the camera on a second time Clementi had his date in the room was because "I wanted to make sure what happened" the first time "wouldn't happen again."

Ravi's text message to Clementi was sent at 8:46 p.m. Sept. 22, four minutes after Clementi posted a message on his own Facebook page saying, "Jumping off the gw bridge sorry."

It is not known whether Clementi saw Ravi's text that night, but records of Clementi's own computer use, introduced into evidence, indicated that Clementi viewed Ravi's Twitter posts about him numerous times and saved screenshots of them.

Ravi's text message to Clementi also seemed to contradict him. It claimed he posted something on Twitter to let his friends know "not to video chat me" while Clementi was in the room with his date on the second occasion. But the Twitter post to friends stated, "I dare you to video chat with me" during Clementi's date.

The prosecution also introduced evidence that Ravi deleted more than 80 text messages from his own phone as investigators were preparing to interview him.

The hate-crime law in New Jersey, entitled "bias intimidation," states that a person is guilty of "the crime of bias intimidation if he commits, attempts to commit, conspires with another to commit, or threatens the immediate commission of an offense...(1) with a purpose to intimidate an individual or group of individuals because of race, color, religion, gender, handicap, sexual orientation, or ethnicity; or (2) knowing that the conduct constituting the offense would cause an individual or group of individuals to be intimidated because of [the minority status] or (3) under circumstances that caused any victim of the underlying offense to be intimidated and the victim, considering the manner in which the offense was committed, reasonably believed either that (a) the offense was committed with a purpose to intimidate the victim or any person or entity in whose welfare the victim is interested because of [his minority status] or (b) the victim or the victim's property was selected to be the target of the offense because of the victim's [minority status]."

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Dignity/Chicago's Lent program through 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 Ramsden will lead reflections during Dignity's weekly Sunday Mass followed by group discussions 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.

Senate confirms gay court nominee

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The U.S. Senate, on March 15, approved the nomination of the first openly gay federal judge for California, Michael Fitzgerald of Los Angeles. The vote was 91-6, with three senators not voting, making Fitzgerald the fifth openly gay federal judge currently on the bench in the country.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted in November to recommend Fitzgerald's confirmation to the U.S. District Court for Los Angeles. But the full Senate did not act on the appointment until March 15, due to an ongoing effort by Republicans to block many nominations and pieces of legislation supported by the president.

In his State of the Union address last month, President Obama asked the Senate to give all judicial nominees an up-or-down-vote



Michael Fitzgerald.

within 90 days. However, as The Hill newspaper has reported, some Republican senators have continued to exercise their power to block nominations for a whole host of reasons—sometimes in retaliation for Democratic legislative advances, sometimes as a bargaining chip for a Republican-backed measure.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid tried to break the blockade on 17 nominations March 14 by calling for a cloture vote—a procedural vote that forces a matter to the floor. It requires 60 votes to pass and there would have to be one for each nomination. Instead, Reid and the Republican leadership—perhaps moved by recent clamor in the media about the emergency need to fill a record number of judicial vacancies—agreed to vote on 14 nominees. The agreement called for votes on two a week and Fitzgerald, one of the longest-waiting nominees, was called up first.

In return, Democrats have agreed to take up a Republican-supported bill for small businesses.

U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., sent out a press release March 15 praising the Senate for confirming Fitzgerald to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. She noted Fitzgerald is the first openly gay judge to be appointed to a federal judgeship in California.

Fitzgerald becomes the fifth openly gay judge in the country—along with Emily Hewitt and Deborah Batts, appointed by President Clinton, and Paul Oetken and Alison Nathan, appointed by Obama.

Fitzgerald said, "I am honored by the Senate's confirmation vote today. I am grateful to the President for my nomination. I am grateful to Senator Boxer for her recommendation of me to the President. I am grateful

to Senator Feinstein for her support in the Senate Judiciary Committee. I look forward to serving the people of the Central District of California."

The six votes against Fitzgerald's confirmation—all Republican—were Roy Blunt of Missouri, Jim DeMint of South Carolina, Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, Mike Lee of Utah, Rand Paul of Kentucky and David Vitter of Louisiana. Not voting were Sens. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Orrin Hatch of Utah, and Mark Kirk of Illinois.

By a 95-2 vote, the Senate also approved the nomination of Gina Marie Groh to the U.S. District Court for West Virginia.

Last October, the Senate approved the nomination of openly lesbian attorney Alison Nathan to serve on the district court in Manhattan. That vote was 48-44. However, an openly gay nominee to the federal appeals court, Edward DuMont, withdrew after it became clear his nomination would not be given an up-or-down vote.

Fitzgerald, 53, is a partner at the law firm of Corbin, Fitzgerald & Athey in Los Angeles. He has been fairly heavily involved in both gay and non-gay legal and political issues and contributed "hundreds of hours" doing pro bono work that led to the elimination of a gay ban on FBI agents in 1993.

The biographical information he sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee noted his membership in four gay-related organizations: the Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, the Harvard-Radcliffe Gay and Lesbian Caucus, the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center Leadership Task Force and the Stonewall Democratic Club. The biographical information also indicated Fitzgerald participated in the campaign to defeat California's same-sex marriage ban, Proposition 8.

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Analysis out on Tennessee's 'Don't Say Gay' bill

The Williams Institute released analysis and data that provide background and context for the ongoing debate on Tennessee House Bill 229/Senate Bill 49—the so-called "Don't Say Gay" bill—and its potential impact on at-risk youth throughout Tennessee.

As originally drafted, the "Don't Say Gay" bill would have prohibited Tennessee public school teachers, counselors and officials from discussing or providing information about homosexuality, including in response to student questions in one-on-one counseling.

Amendments have been proposed to restrict information instead to biological reproduction, and to allow information about sexual orientation only in specified circumstances.

Among the information the institute has released:

—Hostile environments created by bullying and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender nonconformity lead to adverse health effects for LGBT youth; and

—Anti-gay stigma has been shown to be related to increases in violence against LGBT youth and adults, as well as to lower levels of health.

Regarding passage of the bill itself, the House sponsor delayed the measure March 13 to let legislators consider a more comprehensive bill, according to Memphis' Commercial Appeal.

State Rep. Joey Hensley, R-Hohenwald, said there are problems with the measure, once again delaying it so lawmakers can review another proposal that would restrict "family life education" subjects taught in schools.

Talking with the organizer of Femme Conference 2012

BY SARAH TOCE

The Femme Conference 2012: Pulling the Pieces Together will be held in Baltimore, Md., Aug. 17-19. We spoke with conference organizer Jennifer Valles recently to uncover the many layers of femme identity and expression and find out a little more about the conference itself.

Windy City Times: What was the impetus behind creating The Femme Conference?

Jennifer Valles: I wasn't around when the Femme Conference was founded, so I can't speak to this directly. I came on during planning for the 2008 Chicago conference, though, so I was fortunate enough to work with some of our founders—Christine De La Rosa, Jessica Eve Humphrey, Angie Ward and Dr. Kathe Young.

From what I understand from working with them and from my current co-chair, Krista Smith, who has been organizing since the 2006 conference, the founders wanted to create a conference about and for femmes that was by femmes. The intention was for the conference to be a place for queer femmes of all genders to gather, discuss and celebrate our femme identities and to provide a space for organizing and activism within queer communities. This is very much what we try to achieve with the conference still. It is, hands down, one of the most affirming and transformative spaces I've been fortunate enough to experience.

WCT: Why do you feel it is so vital for the femme community to utilize the tools and resources available to them?

JV: I think it is vital for people to do whatever it is they need to do for themselves. That doesn't always mean that people have to utilize the tools and resources available to them, assuming there are any. I do think it's vital to make sure that people have tools and resources available and have access to them if that's what they want! That's why I ultimately decided to help organize the conference and [the reason] I've stayed a part of it for so long. [The conference] is such an amazing resource and it is so important [that] it continues.

WCT: What are some unique obstacles and stigmas directed toward femmes, specifically?

JV: This is such a difficult question to answer! When you consider all the varied femme communities, there is just no simple answer—or, at least, there is no answer that is universally true, especially when you start to consider all the ways in which people's femme identity intersects with their other identities.

Prevalent themes, especially those we've seen presented at the conference, though? Femme misogyny, femmephobia, invisibility, the devaluation of femme/ininity...

WCT: Was there a moment in your life where you connected with a particular obstacle directed toward the femme community?

JV: Well, I have (and still do) often have to defend my queer identity because of my femme presentation. I definitely experienced being told I was femme before I considered it part of my identity. People were constantly assuming that I must be femme—or were insistent that I was femme even, sometimes especially, if they knew I didn't actively identify that way. I was always struck at how people that I knew would never have assumed, let alone insisted, on other people's identities but were so comfortable to do that with the femme identity. Femme is often actively devalued and I suppose this [experience] was a representation of that.

WCT: The Femme Conference 2012 will be hosted in Baltimore, Md. on Aug. 17-19. What goes into pulling all of the pieces together for a groundbreaking event such as this one?

JV: There is so much that goes into this conference that I could barely begin to scratch the surface [of it all] in an interview! We're all volunteer-run and not only do the organizers

donate their time, they also commit to directly contributing to the conference financially as well.

In addition to the two conference chairs, Krista Smith and myself, we currently have 10 main committees—Accessibility and Awareness, Film, Fundraising, Logistics, Media, Outreach, Performance, Programming, Registration, and Volunteer. Each of these committees has one to three chairs and most of them have additional working committee members—and we're always in need of more help!

Also, because we're still relatively small, we're always in need of donations. In the past, we've really had to rely on the generosity of our contributors and collaborators to pull off the conference successfully and have not been able to offer some of the services we consider to be essential—or have not been able to guarantee those services early enough for them to be truly useful to our attendees. In 2012, I'd love to see us have enough funds early on to provide services like ASL [American Sign Language] interpretation and child care without relying on people to volunteer their services—and to be able to guarantee those services as early as possible.

Our fundraising committee has been just amazing this year and has already completed one campaign, "Honor a Femme," where people could donate to the conference in a femme's honor. It was so well received that we may relaunch it again in the summer.

WCT: Past Femme conferences were held in 2006, 2008 and 2010 in San Francisco, Chicago and Oakland [respectively]. How does the participation vary by location? Does the conference specifically target top femme demographic areas?

JV: In terms of choosing location, we consider a number of factors in our decision-making process. We spent over a month choosing our location for 2012! We invited all of our 2010 attendees to fill out an online survey that asked where they would like to see the conference held. We then took that info, looked at our capacity as a committee, and considered where we would be wanted, needed and successful. We try to strike a balance between heading toward where we have a base and areas of the country that may be lacking in access to femme-centered resources.

We have definitely seen a lot of flux in our numbers depending on host city location, but it's hard to attribute attendance rates solely to our location; we're still young as conferences go and I'm always having people tell me that they didn't even know there was a Femme conference! Even of the people who do know of the conference, many of them aren't sure it's for them. (If you're femme-identified, or a questioning femme or a femme ally, it is!) I think the flux we've seen in numbers can be attributed to our outreach efforts and the kind of support we have on the ground as much as anything else.

Our media team this year has been so awesome. In January—in collaboration with the Heels on Wheels Glitter Roadshow and a dozen of the Beyond Visibility NYC event organizers—we launched a Femme Week of Action to spark conversations, build alliances, celebrate each other, have fun—and instigate the January launch of the calls for performers and workshop proposals for FemmeCon. Eight cities hosted events, so hopefully we're really getting the word out there so far!

WCT: Specifically, referencing Chicago's role in the conference, can you tell us about the organizers and organizations involved in making it a success? We understand there is a deep Chicago base.

JV: In my opinion, Chicago was one of our more difficult conferences to organize. We didn't have many steering committee members that year, so a very small number of us were trying to pull off a successful conference. We were so



Jen Valles. Photo courtesy of Valles

fortunate to have had the local support that we did! I came on late in that organizing and was chairing the Awareness and Accessibility committee. Even being hyper-focused on the specific responsibilities of my committee, Early 2 Bed, Women and Children First and Center on Halsted really stuck out to me as important supporters of that conference.

WCT: There is a call for performers and workshop presenters for the upcoming 2012 conference. What traits and qualities will help a candidate stand out this year? Also, how might interested parties apply?

JV: Anyone interested in presenting or performing at the conference can find our call for submissions on our website: www.femme2012.com. We look for workshop proposals, art submissions, films and performances from as many different voices from within our femme community as possible. Even if you are a first-time presenter, don't hesitate to apply! In fact, our film chair this year has launched a new process for 2012 where she's encouraging femmes—regardless of experience—to create short films specifically for the conference—you can even shoot it on your iPhone. She'll also mentor budding filmmakers who are interested in creating a film for the conference!

Submissions that relate to 2012's theme, Pulling the Pieces Together, are encouraged. Beyond that, we're looking for well-thought-out, well-planned submissions that recognize and respect the array of queer femme experience, and we are interested in work that challenges systems of oppression.

WCT: If a city is interested in hosting The Femme Conference 2014, where might they apply?

We don't currently have an application process for cities who are interested in hosting the conference, although it is something that we've considered in the past. We're not quite at the point where we can entertain bids, but we are super accessible (and approachable!), so folks can always reach out to us with suggestions and we'll add those to the list of potential host cities.

It's essential for us to have organizers on the ground in our host city, so if you've got a strong organizing group already in place and are interested in hosting the conference in 2014 or beyond, please let us know. We're also still in need of some local Baltimore organizers—especially those who are strong in logistics—so if you're local or know of someone who is and might be interested in organizing the 2012 conference, hit us up at info@femme2012.com!

See www.Femme2012.com.



Indiana Youth Group license plate. Image courtesy of Mary Byrne

Indiana LGBT plates pulled over contract allegations

BY KATE SOSIN

When news broke that Indiana Youth Group (IYG) had finally won the right to a specialty license plate earlier this year, the win was hailed by LGBT activists as a progress in a state with few LGBT protections.

IYG, an organization that serves LGBTQ youth, battled for four years to get the plate. But in early March, the state's Bureau of Motorized Vehicles (BMV) revoked the plate after a group of Republican Senators accused IYG of violating their contract.

According to a letter signed by 20 Indiana lawmakers, IYG violated its contract with the state by selling low-numbered specialty plates on its website.

A letter from the BMV to IYG states that such a transaction is illegal and that after following up on the senators' request to investigate, the bureau has decided to suspend the plates.

Mary Byrne, executive director of IYG, said the organization did not sell the plates. Rather, she said, IYG sent them as thank-you gifts to donors, much like public television stations do for those who donate during pledge drives.

"There's no way we wouldn't have done this if we didn't see other organizations doing this," said Byrne. "We were a little bit more blatant about it, for sure, but we were using them as thank-you gifts."

Byrne maintains the IYG did not violate its contract and that senators had found a loophole to pull the plates because they disagreed with state's decision to issue an LGBT-specific plate.

"It's like an acknowledgement that we exist," said Byrne. "I don't think that they even want us to exist."

However, BMV spokesman Dennis Rosebrough told the Indianapolis Star that officials had found information on how to purchase plates on IYG's website. According to that report, the BMV found similar information on the websites of Greenways Foundation and the 4-H Foundation and consequently suspended those specialty plates, too.

It took IYG four years to get its specialty plate. The state rejected the organization's first two applications before the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana filed suit. The state approved the plate as part of a settlement.

LGBT-rights activists praised the new license plate as an unlikely win for LGBT Hoosiers, who lack most LGBT protections and openly gay political leaders.

Byrne said the next steps remain unclear. The organization's board is scheduled to meet in the

coming days to discuss the plate suspension. What is at stake, she said, is significant.

"Ultimately, [the plate] says 'we've arrived,'" Byrne said. "We're here."

Minn. Anoke-Hennepin student plaintiffs: 'It Gets Better'

Student plaintiffs in the now-resolved gender and sexual orientation harassment lawsuits against Minnesota's Anoka-Hennepin School District deliver a special "It Gets Better" message to other students who are being bullied, according to the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR).

The video is at www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPE0-k1ADPQ.

Six bullied students from Minnesota's Anoka-Hennepin School District had the courage to challenge a district policy that made it difficult for staff to protect LGBT students, filing two federal lawsuits with NCLR's help. In a historic agreement, the district resolved the lawsuits by agreeing to significant changes that will protect students who are or are perceived to be LGBT.

Anti-gay views at Iowa high school assembly

At Iowa's Dunkerton High School, teacher and students said they were surprised when a traveling band, Junkyard Prophet, aired anti-gay, pro-life and other views during what they thought was an anti-bullying assembly, according to the New York Daily News.

Jennifer Littlefield, a parent, told the LaCrosse Tribune, "They told my daughter, the girls, that they were going to have mud on their wedding dresses if they weren't virgins." She also said, "They told these kids that anyone who was gay was going to die at the age of 42."

Besides criticizing homosexuality, the group also condemned transgender individuals and abortion, showing graphic images of fetuses that were reportedly aborted, according to Advocate.com.

Superintendent Jim Stanton said that, overall, the group offered "a very strong anti-violence, anti-drug, anti-alcohol" message.

According to its website, Junkyard Prophet is a Minneapolis-based Christian rap-metal band whose focus are "youth and their future."

Principal Mike Cooper has resigned.

QUOTELINES

COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN

"The heart has reasons that reason does not know. When Cupid's arrow strikes [whether it's opposite-sex couples, racially mixed couples, or same-sex couples], it's a feeling that can't be denied. Love in all its diversity is a part of the human experience."—Actress Fran Drescher, to *Huffington Post*, March 6.

"I spoke as honestly as I could, but some people believe my responses were not loving toward those in the gay community. That is not true. I can assuredly say that it's my life's mission to love all people... I believe we need to learn how to debate these things with greater love and respect. I've been encouraged by the support of many friends [including gay friends, incidentally]."—former *Growing Pains* TV star Kirk Cameron, in an email to *ABC News*, Feb. 6.

"I'm a squishy romantic in spite of living alone and being without a romantic partner for years and years. Songs about unequivocal happiness or unrequited love seem to resonate with me. I suppose the best way to narrow my list of favorite songs is to think about what would be playing while the credits roll on a [short] biography. Okay, it's the Pet Shop Boys singing 'Absolutely Fabulous!'"—Fashion expert Tim Gunn, to *Huffington Post*, March 8.

"Families look different. They always have looked different. I mean, you have single-parent families. You have families of parents with different races. You have families with different religions. No matter what we might want a family to look like, we can't put into a constitution a document that supposed to protect our rights with one narrow definition."—Clay Aiken speaks against North Carolina's Amendment One, in a *ProtectingFamilies.org* message, Feb. 22.

"In my youth, I did some exploring of bisexuality. And perhaps I said things, put labels on things, and put measurements on things that actually you can't put measurements on. I wouldn't put labels of either gay or fucking straight or any other thing. I do believe people often explore their sexuality."—Sinéad O'Connor to *The Advocate*, April issue.

"The common thread running through our efforts together in Maryland is the thread of human dignity: the dignity of work, the dignity of faith, the dignity of family, the dignity of every individual, the dignity of a free people who, at the end of the day, all want the same thing for our children."—Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, on signing marriage equality into law, to *Huffington Post*, March 2.

Iraq: Investigate 'emo' attacks

Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) have said that the government of Iraq should immediately investigate and bring to justice people targeting Iraqi youth seen as belonging to the non-conformist "emo" subculture, according to a news release.

On March 8, the Interior Ministry, in an official statement, dismissed reports by local activists and media of a campaign against those seen as emo. The ministry said the reports were "fabricated" and "groundless," and that it would take action against people who were trying "to highlight this issue and build it out of proportion."

The groups contend that an official ministry statement released Feb. 13 that characterized emo culture as "Satanist" led to the government's reluctance to protect vulnerable youth.

People perceived to be gay, lesbian and transgender as well as effeminate men told the rights groups they feel particularly vulnerable. In 2009, these organizations documented torture and murder by Iraqi militias against men suspected of same-sex conduct or of not being "manly" enough.

"The Iraqi Ministry of Interior's inaction and denial of the ongoing campaign to punish people seen as non-conformists threatens everyone who is different, including those who defy traditional notions of gender and sexuality," said Jessica Stern, director of programs at IGLHRC. "The government needs to ensure the safety of all Iraqis, not amplify the threats against those already being targeted."

Ugandan LGBT activists sue preacher Lively

A group of Ugandan LGBT activists filed suit in federal court in Massachusetts against activist/writer/evangelist preacher Scott Lively, the founder of the Springfield-based Abiding Truth Ministries, according to a MassEquality press release.

The group, Sexual Minorities Uganda, is accusing Lively of violating international law by inciting the persecution of LGBT people in Uganda. It is suing Lively under the alien tort statute, which allows foreigners to sue in U.S. courts when international law is involved.

MassEquality Executive Director Kara Sufredini said, "Scott Lively can claim that he has not harmed anyone by speaking out against LGBT people in Uganda, but that does not make it true. In 2009, he traveled to Uganda and preached that gay people sodomize children. After Lively's appearance, the Ugandan parliament proposed a bill imposing the death penalty on gay Ugandans.

"To travel to Uganda and slander LGBT people is to incite grave violence against them. Lively's words and actions are dramatically inconsistent with the values of the great Commonwealth in which he lives and a shameful disgrace to our country. He should be held accountable."

Lively is also president of Abiding Truth Ministries, based in Springfield, Mass.

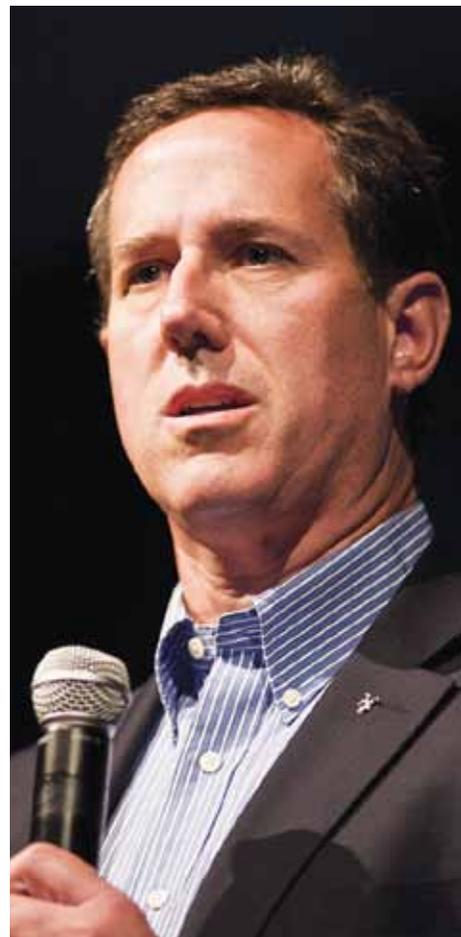
Santorum campaign rally sparks protest

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Alumni from Carmel Catholic High School in Mundelein protested a rally in support of GOP presidential candidate Rick Santorum March 16. The rally was held at Christian Liberty Academy in Arlington Heights, ahead of the March 20 Illinois primary.

Santorum, a 1976 alumnus of Carmel Catholic High School, has made numerous statements against the LGBT community as well as women's reproductive issues such as contraception and a woman's right to choose.

"Rick sends a message of bullying, but we want high school students to know that other alumni



Rick Santorum. Photo by Tim Carroll

send a message of equality. The LGBT community needs allies and support from the entire community and it's great that people are speaking up today," said protest organizer and class of 2002 alumni Matt Muchowski.

About 50 demonstrators gathered across the street from the academy's entrance during Santorum's two hour rally. Representatives from other groups joined Carmel Catholic High School Alumni to protest Santorum. Protestors of all ages held signs and chanted at rally attendees as they streamed inside the building. Some protestors held Ron Paul signs while others held President Obama signs alongside those who held signs in support of the LGBT community and women's reproductive rights.

Two members of the Northeastern Progressive Democrats of America, Jim Kearby and Barb Hogman, attended the rally, which was open to the public, for a brief period of time. They said that as Santorum was speaking about healthcare he was spewing hateful rhetoric towards President Obama.

Aaron Zider, a protestor who went to the rally with four other protestors, said that Santorum's speech focused on freedom, liberty, the founding fathers, climate change and Obamacare. Zider noted that during the entire time they were at the rally Santorum didn't speak about LGBT or women's reproductive issues.

However, one incident did happen while Santorum was speaking, Zider said. A gay couple

started chanting Santorum's last name and then began kissing each other. As the couple was being escorted from the building the crowd chanted "USA," Zider recalled.

As rally attendees were leaving, the Christian Liberty Academy protestors chanted "love, not hate" and other phrases in support of LGBT equality and women's reproductive issues. One rally attendee held a sign that read "Yes to DOMA" while other rally attendees shouted back at the protestors as they descended the stairs.

All of the major local news outlets were on hand to cover the event. Police were stationed outside of the venue; however, their services were not called upon since both Santorum supporters and protestors kept their distance from each other the entire evening.

Ahead of the protest, 400 people joined the Facebook page "Carmel Catholic Alumni Against Rick Santorum."



Protesters outside the Santorum rally. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

Spring Men's Flag Football Open Registration Party

Saturday, March 31, 2-5pm

D.S. Tequila
3352 N. Halsted







Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association

Season begins
Saturday, April 28.

Teams, groups and
individual players
welcome at all skill levels!

Placement assistance available.

Check out our website for more info on our flag football league:

chicagomsa.org

or email mensfootball@chicagomsa.org

Equality Ride stops in Chicago

BY KATE SOSIN

Soulforce's 2012 Equality Ride rolled through Chicago March 15-19, bringing with it 18 young people who met with local LGBT leaders and schools that lack LGBT protections.

The two-month bus tour, a major project of LGBT faith organization Soulforce, aims to educate colleges and universities across the country that often use religious teaching to discriminate against LGBT students.

However, this year's tour is different than past tours, said Bethany Meier, a rider who planned the Chicago leg of the trip. Unlike past rides, the 2012 tour is not just focused on schools. This year, the riders are meeting up with local organizations, churches and religious leaders.

The riders even had an accidental run-in the "Rick Bus" (a bus touring in support of Rick Santorum's presidential campaign, led by Maggie Gallagher). The bus (sans Gallagher) landed in Atlanta at the same time as the Equality Ride. The "Rick Bus" sports a large picture of Santorum, a widely-known anti-gay candidate, while the Equality Ride bus boasts a rainbow and a slogan about the ride's commitment to social justice.

"I think that one of the most powerful things about that moment was seeing our bus right alongside her bus," said Meier. "That was pretty fantastic."

The Equality Riders also arrived in Chicago the same weekend that GOP presidential candidates were in the city campaigning in anticipation of the March 20 primary, but the two camps did not cross paths.

In the Chicago area, the ride stopped by Wheaton College and Moody Bible Institute. Wheaton was a target for several reasons, said Meier, among them college Provost Dr. Stanton Jones' advocacy for gay reparative therapy. Both schools, Meier said, have a long way to come in making LGBT students feel safe. Students at Moody contacted the riders just days before the ride arrived in Chicago and asked them to come.

The group also ventured beyond the schools. On March 19, the riders toured Center on Halsted. During their time in the city, they also held a social-justice symposium and poetry slam at the People's Church of Chicago and joined a potluck at Urban Village Church.

"We've really opened it up from just a narrow focus on these schools to a focus on the community in general and how we can make dialogue happen in all sorts of places," Meier said.

The tour, which kicked off in late February, will be stopping through 12 cities in total and wrapping up in early May. At some of those locations, the riders will be doing community service. They will also be holding panels and workshops.

Still, the focus of this ride remains on the schools; the Equality Ride has visited more than 80 since it began in 2006.

"I just think that it's really important that, as a community as a whole, we start having these conversations," Meier said. "We're never going to grow in society if we don't talk about stuff that can be really difficult to talk about sometimes."

Man in critical condition after Boystown beating

BY KATE SOSIN

A 44-year-old Latino man was transported to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center Monday morning, following a beating in Chicago's gay neighborhood.

According to police, three men attacked a man walking down Halsted Street in Chicago's Boystown neighborhood. The incident occurred on the 3300 block of N. Halsted at 5:50 a.m.

The man was walking alone, when a man knocked a cell phone out of the victim's hand. Chicago Polices News Affairs Officer Daryl Beaty said the man "confronted" his attacker, at which point two other assailants joined in, kicking and punching him. The three ran south on Halsted, Beaty said.

The victim was left in critical condition.

Police are searching for three attackers, described as Black men in their early 20s. One is approximately 6'1" and 220 lbs. with a brown jacket and blue jeans. Another is 5'9" and 180 lbs. wearing a purple do-rag and black pants. The third is 5'4" and 145 lbs., wearing a blue jacket. Police are investigating.



Soulforce's Robert Moore makes a diagram during an earlier stop. Photo courtesy of Soulforce

CAN TV hopeful over pending RCN renewal

BY KATE SOSIN

It took more than a year of petitions, penny-pinching and community activism, but on March 14, a franchise renewal for cable company RCN was submitted to City Council.

The ordinance is big news for local access station CAN TV, which relies on money from RCN to run its programs, some of which cater to Chicago's LGBT and AIDS communities.

"The city has really stepped up on this, I'm happy to say," said CAN TV Executive Director Barbara Popovic.

Cable providers like RCN must include public access stations in their cable packages. But RCN's franchise has been expired for months, leaving CAN TV scraping by without funding from RCN.

Popovic estimates that CAN TV has been operating at a deficit of at least \$200,000.

RCN's contract expired in June 2011 and



Barbara Popovic. Photo courtesy of CAN TV

was temporarily renewed through September, when it again expired. Since, CAN TV has suffered cutbacks and a lack of growth.

According to Popovic, CAN TV had set aside reserve funds for such circumstances. Those funds have kept programming going, but the station has been unable to grow, Popovic said, all while cable profits are on the rise. Popovic estimates that CAN TV's current financial situation could have sustained operations for just five years. After that, she said, CAN TV likely would have either been shuttered or downsized beyond recognition.

"We were beginning to pay down our reserves," said Popovic.

CAN TV supporters, LGBT groups among them, distributed online petitions late last year calling on City Council to swiftly renew RCN's franchise, and 46 aldermen submitted a letter to RCN urging the company to support a fair deal with the network.

CAN TV has hosted several LGBT programs over the years and regularly broadcasts LGBT talks and events. The Association of Latino Men for Action, Gay Liberation Network, Illinois Gender Advocates and several AIDS service organizations have hosted shows on CAN TV.

RCN's franchise renewal could be considered as soon as next month. The renewal is especially important for CAN TV as many believe it could set the standard for other cable company renewals like Comcast in the coming years.

Also, the renewal contains something else important for CAN TV supporters: the switch-

ing of funding models from a flat-fund to a percentage-based deal. For the last 15 years, CAN TV received a flat rate from RCN, regardless of how much money the cable provider took in annually. In this renewal, CAN TV is to receive 1 percent of RCN's profits. That means that funding streams for the network will keep pace with cable growth and inflation.

"We're satisfied that we're moving in the right direction now, and that's progress," said Popovic.

RCN also likes the deal, said Tom McKay, general manager at RCN Chicago. McKay said that the company stands behind CAN TV and supports the switch to percentage-based funding.

"We're happy with the terms," McKay said. "It's pretty fair."

Flash mob to support 'Out at Chicago' exhibit March 25

A local activist, Elaine O'Sullivan, is organizing a flash mob to "Just say, thank you" to the Chicago History Museum for its Out in Chicago exhibit, according to a press release. Supporters will gather at 1 p.m. Sunday, March 25, at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St., "as we circle the building in thanks," she said.

The "Out in Chicago" exhibits display 150 years of urban history through the lens of gender, sexuality and nonconformity. It closes March 26.

"We simply surround the CHM to say 'thank you' en masse to the CHM and all those dedicated folks who worked so long and hard to help create the largest, finest and most comprehensive GLBT museum exhibit in the U.S., ever," O'Sullivan said.

E-mail eo@osullivanandunlap.com for information.

G-8 relocation has LGBT protest up in the air

BY KATE SOSIN

President Obama's decision to relocate the G-8 summit from Chicago to Camp David in May has had at least one consequence for LGBT activists: relocating their protest target.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin was expected in Chicago for the G-8 summit, and LGBT activists had planned to protest the Russian delegation in the wake of crackdowns on LGBT demonstrations in Russia. However, the relocation likely removes Putin from Chicago.

Andy Thayer of Gay Liberation Network (GLN), which is part of the LGBT Caucus in the coalition against G-8/NATO, said the switch means an uncertain target for the LGBT protest in May.

"Our point was to protest because the [LGBT] Russians are unable to do so," Thayer said.

Activists rescheduled the focal point of the general protests, aimed at G-8 and NATO, from Saturday, May 19, to Sunday, May 20. However, final plans for the LGBT-specific action, just two months away, are still in the works, said Thayer.

Still, Thayer called Obama's decision to move G-8 a "victory" that shows the power of protest. Thayer noted that host countries tend to hold G-8 in remote locations, where massive protest is less likely.

"People have taken heart from the G-8 skeddaddling off to the Appalachians," he said.

A revised plan for the LGBT protest is expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

T in the LIFE

Nicholas Behr Holcam

COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN

Identifies as
FtM Transguy

Pronouns
He/him/his

Age
16

Job
"I work at a retail store called Hot Topic. I started working there over a year ago."

Life's work
"Currently I'm a junior at Stevenson High School, but I really stand for human rights and equality. After high school, I plan to be a paramedic."

Neighborhood
Vernon Hills, IL

Hobbies
"I'm really into music. I play guitar, along with multiple other instruments."

What is the best thing about being trans/gender-variant?
"I just think it's amazing that I can finally feel like myself."

Do you have a coming out story?
"I came out to my mother in March of 2010. My therapist knew before, and finally my therapist and I thought it was time to tell her I didn't feel right in the body I was in."

Do you consider yourself an activist?
"Yes. I really try and help the other trans people who are struggling with their identities. I am also the co-president of the Stevenson High School Gay-Straight Alliance."

Whom do you admire most?
"I really admire my mother. As I was growing up, we faced some difficulties. She has always had the best interests in mind for her children and is very selfless."

What issues, if any, outside of the queer community do you care about?
"Animal rights, as well as human rights. I believe the government shouldn't be controlling how people live. Because of this, I'm pro-choice. I believe in freedom over security. I am quite the humanist."

How do you explain the way you feel about gender to others?
"Basically I just tell them 'I'm a boy in a girl's body.' That's the best way to describe it."

What do you think are the most important issues facing the trans/gender-variant community?
"I think that the biggest issue is having equal legal rights. Not until then will we be truly equal."



To nominate a person for T in the life, email: [Kate Sosin sosin@windycitytimes.com](mailto:Kate.Sosin@windycitytimes.com)

Schakowsky, Quigley help Chicago House announce grant

HIV/AIDS agency Chicago House hosted a press conference March 15 announcing an unprecedented grant in support of the iFour Employment Program from the U.S. Department of Education.

The conference took place at Chicago House's transitional jobs program site, Sweet Miss Givings' Bakery, 1229 N. North Branch St.

Chicago House CEO the Rev. Stan J. Sloan welcomed U.S. Reps. Jan Schakowsky and Mike Quigley, both from Illinois. U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin helped launch Chicago House's iFour Employment Program, the first of its kind in Illinois, in 2006. Attendees also heard some words from one of the program's success stories, Trisha Lee Holloway.

The iFOUR Employment Program provides a continuum of services may include employment readiness training and career services, among others.

Chicago House's partner in for the grant is the University of Illinois at Chicago, which will offer its expertise in research and evaluation, with Dr. Lisa Razzano serving as the lead consultant.

Photos from the press conference by Tim Carroll



Top: Trisha Lee Holloway. Above (from left): U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley, Chicago House CEO the Rev. Stan J. Sloan and U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky. Photos by Tim Carroll



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Out exec director aims to help Southwest Side youths

BY ROSS FORMAN

During her two-year stint from 2009-2011 as the youth program director for the Center on Halsted, Alicia Tellez Vega began to understand the plight faced by South Side and West Side youths who needed LGBTQ resources.

"Many were shunned by their own communities and families so they would travel far distances seeking a place where they could be safe and welcomed," Vega said. "For many young people, they did find the safety and security they needed at the Center on Halsted, Broadway Youth Center, Night Ministry, Youth Lounge and Café Pride.

"However, there were other dynamics in place on the north side that created barriers and obstacles to providing South and West Side young people with the high-quality, culturally-competent services that they deserve. As a Latina born and raised on the South Side, I felt called to

"When I first learned about the executive director position opening at Southwest Youth Collaborative (SWYC), I was immediately interested because of the respect I have for the history and accomplishments of the organization," Vega said. "I feel passionate about the mission and the youth community that it serves—Southwest Side youth. These communities are near and dear to my heart because it is the community my fiancée and I currently live; it is where we both grew up; and it is where my family's children are growing up. In addition, it is one of the communities where LGBT youth are leaving to seek services far north and they should be able to find these services in their own communities. SWYC has already begun to support LGBT youth with their Generation Y program, community organizing efforts and LGBT competencies it is services."

Vega received a bachelor of science degree in applied psychology and a master of jurispru-

She then went to revamp the youth program at the Center on Halsted.

In addition, she currently serves on the Illinois Children's Justice Task Force, was a member of the Illinois Child Death Review Team and provided community leadership as a board member of Amigas Latinas Association.

"After leaving [the Center], I was hired by Mary Morten to join her team as a community engagement leader on the Chicago-Metro LGBT Community Needs Assessment to inform a fund developed by Chicago Community Trust," Vega said. "As I conducted community leader interviews and facilitated focus groups, I gained an enormous amount of perspective on the complex needs of LGBT youth in Chicago, particularly South and West Side youth of color.

"I have a master of jurisprudence in child law degree and a bachelor of science degree in psychology. I brings over 15 years of experience working with children, youth and families in communities across Chicago. Born and raised on the South Side, my vision and drive has always been to serve the South Side communities of the city, particularly those affected by violence."

Vega said the SWYC has already begun to support LGBT youth with its Generation Y program, as well as community organizing efforts and the LGBT-competent services it provides. "However, there are so significant unmet youth needs," she said. "As mentioned, youth are leaving these communities to find resources on the far North Side. This may be because they are fearful of being found out within their own community and don't feel safe. So my vision is to build on the LGBT foundation that SWYC has created, conduct community engagement in educating the South and West Side communities on LGBT issues and develop collaborations with other South and West Side agencies to increase the safe and competent services on the South and West Sides so

our youth can feel they can turn to their own communities for support.

"For 20 years, SWYC has empowered youth from marginalized communities to overcome unthinkable obstacles. Often times other institutions or communities have pushed youth out or given up on them. SWYC has reached out to the most challenging populations of young people and proven that with support, compassion, and healing, all youth can find strength and power to make healthy choices for themselves and their communities. I plan to build on these accomplishments and create stronger resources and networks to reach more youth and families."

SWYC has scheduled an open house for Thursday, March 1, 5-7 p.m., 6400 S. Kedzie Ave., to introduce Vega to the community.

"Alicia has a compelling vision for the future and possesses the drive, energy and compassion to make the vision a reality. The Board has full confidence in her commitment to youth and to the communities we serve," said Usama Houliila, president of SWYC's board of directors.

Camille Odeh, founding executive director of SWYC, added: "I am honored to pass the leadership of SWYC to Alicia Vega, a competent and committed social justice advocate. Alicia is experienced in developing comprehensive children, youth and family systems, providing leadership in not-for-profit administration and program development. She is a strong child welfare advocate and proponent of civic engagement. During these urgent economic times and difficult conditions facing children and youth, her experience will give SWYC the ability to develop a new generation of leadership and build vibrant intergenerational communities which will improve the quality of life for all of Chicago's children, youth and families."



Alicia Vega. Photo by Maria del Carmen Calderon

work to address these unmet needs. I left [the Center] to seek other ways to support South and West Side marginalized youth, especially LGBT young people."

Vega, 42, who lives in Chicago's McKinley Park neighborhood, was appointed as the new executive director of the Southwest Youth Collaborative (SWYC), its board of directors announced Feb. 14. She brings more than 15 years of experience working with children, youth and families in communities across Chicago, particularly, her native South Side—areas particularly impacted by violence.

dence in child law degree from Loyola University Chicago. She is engaged to Sofia G. Sarabia. Vega began her career at Loyola University Chicago in a management position at the CIVITAS Childlaw Center. She later moved into the child welfare arena by working at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

The majority of her career was at the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center, serving as the chief program officer for a national model agency providing multi-disciplinary investigations of child sexual abuse.

Trans ordinance introduced in City Council

BY KATE SOSIN

Ald. Proco Joe Moreno has introduced an ordinance to City Council aimed at easing problems within the Chicago Police Department (CPD) in handling transgender detainees.

Moreno introduced the ordinance March 14, after nearly two years of advocacy by local transgender activists.

The ordinance would mandate that CPD adopt a policy for handling transgender detainees and would create oversight by the city's Human Relations and Public Safety committees.

The ordinance comes after years of complaints from transgender people who have reported being harassed by CPD officers.

Last month, a Chicago transgender woman filed a federal lawsuit against the Town of Cicero over similar complaints. According to the complaint, Bianca Feliciano was stopped by police under suspicion that she was engaged in sex work, without reasonable cause. The complaint alleges that police verbally taunted her because of her gender identity, refusing to use her legal name and referring to her with male pronouns.

Moreno has said that he hopes the ordinance will ease distrust transgender people feel towards police in Chicago.

"It's a human-rights issue," Moreno previously told Windy City Times, adding that the ordinance is intended to address a "hole in the policy of the police of Chicago."

Similar policies have been implemented in other cities, most notably in Washington D.C., which has an active transgender coalition. But the D.C. policy has largely failed to keep police accountable, according to activists.

In late February, the DC Trans Coalition announced that they would testify before the DC Council Judiciary Committee that police had not followed through with the promise to keep transgender detainees safe and solve anti-transgender murders.

"We have concluded that a culture of anti-trans bias within [the police department] is at the root cause of these persistent challenges," the coalition said in a statement. "This intrinsic bias against trans people manifests itself in several ways."

Transgender people have reported being denied access to hormones while behind bars as well as being placed according to their birth gender in jail and prison facilities, sometimes putting them at risk for violence.

Lakeview Action Coalition (LAC) began talks about writing a CPD policy approximately two years ago, after receiving a report for a transgender woman who claimed she had been arrested under suspicion of soliciting sex while she was actually grocery shopping. LAC has been in meetings working on the policy itself, while other activists have been pushing for the city ordinance.

The LGBT Citywide Coalition, which is made up of more than 30 groups, has signed on in support of the ordinance. Nearly 80 organizations in total are backing the ordinance.

An original draft of the ordinance mandated the created of a mayoral-appointed commission to oversee CPD handling of a transgender policy.

That commission would have contained both police and transgender advocates. The initial draft, however was abandoned in favor of an ordinance that placed oversight within the council. Moreno said the shift represented a compromise that cut down on bureaucracy and cost.

Moreno said he expects the ordinance to pass after a full hearing with transgender individuals and advocates.

"We have some education to do out on the floor," he said.

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GAY *in the* **LIFE**
Joshuah Thurbee

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROSS FORMAN



Age
36

Neighborhood
East Lakeview

Hobbies
Movies, reading

Job title
Foundations Year Coordinator & Induction Coach, University of Chicago

Relationship status
Single

Favorite local restaurant
Twist

Pets
Two cats: Shadow and Jelly Bean

Favorite local bars
Sidetrack, North End and Wang's

Favorite animal
Giraffe, and has about 25 giraffe-related items at home

Joshuah Thurbee wanted to challenge himself in 2010 to become an athlete, something he could never truly claim.

He focused on physical fitness last year, worked with a personal trainer, and participated in the gay kickball and volleyball leagues, and was a member of the gay rowing team the Chicago Rowing Union (CRU).

"Now, everyone [I work with] thinks of me as the athlete," said Thurbee, who admitted he laughs when he hears the label and hates basketball, though he stands 6'6".

"I would always hear my kids [who I taught] say that they couldn't do the work because they weren't a math person. I would tell them that they just had to focus, much the way [I did] because I was not an athlete [for most of my life.]"

Thurbee is in his third season with CRU, a member of the top-tiered competitive team.

"I enjoy getting better [at sports] and really like the whole team aspect," Thurbee said. "I love being proud of others [for sporting accomplishments.] I even clap for opponents."

"Great things can happen if you work together in sports."

Teamwork is paramount for success on the water—and Thurbee is proud to own a few medals through CRU success.

"I really, really love CRU. I have a lot of good memories over the years," Thurbee said.

CRU is one of two predominantly gay rowing clubs in the United States. The other is in Washington, D.C.

Thurbee has adapted sporting philosophies of success into his real-life teaching work. He also has shared his sporting successes with students and others, to help motivate and inspire them.

Thurbee said he is not a baseball or softball fan, but can't get enough roller derby—particularly, the Windy City Rollers—and he has even traveled out of state several times to attend events.

"Roller derby is so much fun. It's so quick and there really is a lot of strategy involved. I love the physical aspect of the sport," he said.

Thurbee, in 2008, had a housewarming party at his current apartment, and he insisted attendees not bring gifts. Instead, he provided each with a blank canvas and black Sharpie. He asked that all draw something, anything—and most drawings are now mounted and hanging around his apartment.

Thurbee said he logically should have taught English—because he often earned A's in those classes. However, he said, "I really enjoyed teaching math, a subject that I, historically, had to work hard in to get into the top math classes, and I never got A's in those classes. It's been a challenge for me, and a challenge making it fun for others."

"I like the challenge of doing well at something you're not traditionally strong at."

And sports would be just one example.



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Kathie Bergquist

Sunday, April 1
4:30 p.m.
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Girchild



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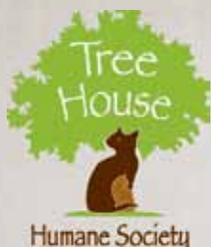
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David Rae: Sports legacy helps raise money for LGBT and AIDS causes

David Rae. Images courtesy of Rae

BY ROSS FORMAN

David Rae was a sports junkie growing up in Southern California. He played, watched and collected. He was a high school football quarterback who transitioned into cornerback and played for the prestigious California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) championship while also, GLEE-like, participating in his high school's choir.

Rae went to National Football League (NFL) games and also many University of Southern California (USC) battles—as his dad, Mike, played for the Trojans and then was an NFL quarterback.

Rae collected sports cards and now owns more than 100,000, along with about 3,000 autographed items. He has signatures from such sports legends as Joe DiMaggio, O.J. Simpson, Nolan Ryan and Deion Sanders. His prized collectible is an autographed painting of Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken, Jr.

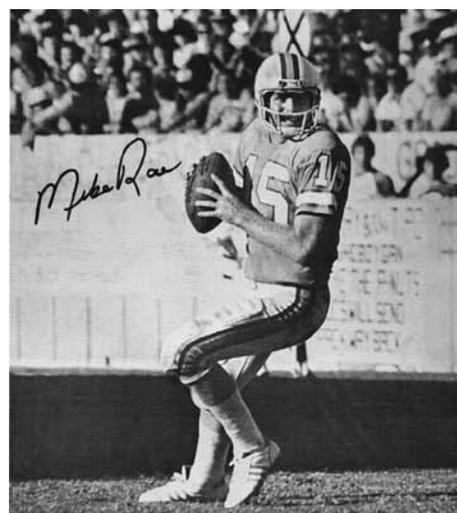
"I was an avid sports memorabilia person as a child, and still am, though not as much," he said.

Rae, now 33 and living in West Hollywood, is a successful financial planner who still has his hands in the sporting world, just different sports, with a different outlook.

He is now a triathlon participant who truly has taken to the bicycling portion of the three-sport event. After all, he has participated in the annual seven-day, 545-mile AIDS/LifeCycle from San Francisco to Los Angeles for the past four years—and is registered to ride again this June.

Plus, Rae has been among the top 25 fundraisers all four years. He raised \$14,500 in 2011, helping his 60-member team raise more than \$400,000.

The AIDS/LifeCycle raises money and awareness for the HIV and AIDS services of the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center and the San Francisco AIDS



Left: David's dad, Mike Rae. Right: David Rae on the cover of Compete magazine.



Foundation. About 2,500 rode last year, and the event raised about \$13 million.

"I've always been athletic and I was looking for something to do sports-wise. Friends suggested [participating in the AIDS/LifeCycle], and I just thought it'd be a great challenge," Rae said. "For me, [the event has] expanded, grown from the athletic aspect to the philanthropic aspect.

"It truly is an amazing event, one that has changed my life and changed what I can do for others. Hearing the stories of those who I have helped through the fundraising, hearing how their lives have changed, some who admit that they likely would be dead without the support ... it's powerful.

"It's simply an amazing experience, though daunting ... sleeping in a tent for a week ... using Porta-Potties ... sitting on a bike for a week is tough enough. I call [the ride] an adult sum-

mer-camp. No phones, no Internet, yet 3,000 people, [which is riders, crew and event staff] all working for the same cause—to ride, to support, to cheer."

Rae will be joined on the ride, set for June 3-9, by his partner of 2-½ years, Ryan Meadors, who Rae said, "is fast and likes [riding up] hills."

"The bottom line [of the ride is], the [L.A. Gay & Lesbian] Center would not be able to do a large portion of what it does without the money that comes in from this event," said Rae, who has supported multiple LGBT events and causes—though his personal coming-out was, well, a bit tense.

Such is life for the son of a former NFL quarterback.

The elder Rae played football and basketball at USC, playing quarterback on the Trojans' 1972 National Championship team. He was named the MVP of that team, which ESPN selected as the greatest college football team of all time. Rae went on to play 13 years of professional football, and was a member of the 1976 Oakland Raiders team that won the Super Bowl during his rookie season.

He has been the golf coach at Saddleback College since 2008.

"I'm sure he started to realize [I am gay] when I started to get more involved with musical theater and was part of a choir," while in high school, Rae said.

He came out to his mom, Terri, at age 20. He didn't tell his dad until he was 25.

"He has been amazingly supportive, but it definitely wasn't ... easy telling him, nor was it something I wanted to do," Rae said. "It's been a very positive experience [coming out to my parents.] I'm fortunate that I haven't had a lot of the negative [experiences] that a lot of people have."

Rae said he has limited memories of his dad's playing career, mostly just that he attended a few games.

"I probably should have told him earlier," Rae said. "I wouldn't say [coming out to him] was easy, but it's much easier to not have to hide who you truly are and have people who you love and yet you feel that you can't truly share your life with.

"I am lucky to have two supportive parents."

Still, Rae said his mom was afraid for him when he told her. "I think she cried for a week. I think she was really worried that [being gay] was going to make my life really hard. But life has gotten much easier over the years."

The Rae's have since learned of other gay relatives and friends.

"There were a lot of gay people around once we opened up about it," he said.

Rae, in January, was named the 2011 Athlete of the Year by Compete Magazine—and featured on the cover of the publication.

"David easily won over the selection committee. The only thing that trumps his athletic abilities is his genuine desire to help others. It was that combination that made him stand out," said Eric Carlyle, publisher/CEO of Compete Magazine.

Rae, who also appeared on the magazine's cover last summer, said the annual award is, "very nice, a big honor." He was the runner-up in 2010.

Rae and Ben Cohen, a superstar rugby ally who participated in events last summer in Chicago in conjunction with the annual Gay Softball World Series, are the only two-time Compete Magazine cover boys.

Rae also was in Chicago last summer, vacationing here during Northalsted Market Days.

"Chicago is a fun place to visit, and I've been to Wrigley Field," he said. "I can't imagine being a Bears fan, sitting outside at Soldier Field in the winter when the temperature is 0 degrees. I'm much happier watching football sitting on the couch."

But Rae truly is an accomplished athlete, just like his dad.

Partners
Ryan
Meadors
and
David
Rae.



Lambda Legal gathers 130 HIV orgs to support Affordable Care Act

Lambda Legal released a list of 130 HIV and healthcare advocacy and direct-service organizations who have endorsed Lambda Legal's friend-of-the-court brief urging the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold the Affordable Care Act. The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in several cases challenging the constitutionality of the law the week of March 26, 2012.

"The list of supporters for our brief urging the Court to uphold the ACA continues to grow because of the law's enormous potential to impact the domestic AIDS epidemic," said Scott Schoettes, HIV Project Director for Lambda Legal. "By signing on to the statement of support, organizations across the nation have affirmed the demonstrable effect the ACA will have on reducing rates of transmission and increasing prevention education, early detection, and access to quality care for everyone living with HIV."

In January, Lambda Legal filed a friend-of-the-court brief highlighting the crucial link between the ACA and the ability to curtail the domestic AIDS epidemic. The brief supports the federal government's position that the ACA's minimum coverage requirement (also known as the individual mandate) is constitutional under the Commerce Clause and the Necessary and Proper Clause.

In March of 2010, the ACA was signed into law, reforming aspects of the private health insurance industry and expanding access to health insurance for millions of Americans. The constitutionality of the law was immediately challenged in federal court in multiple jurisdictions; the U.S. Supreme Court will rule on the appeals in these cases this term and has scheduled oral arguments for the week of March 26.

The list of organizations includes AIDS Interfaith Network, National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors, National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Queer People's Health Collective and Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition. They join Lambda Legal in supporting the federal government's position that the ACA's minimum coverage requirement is constitutional.

To read the complete list of organizations that have signed the statement of support, visit http://lambdalegal.org/in-court/legal-docs/dept-of-hhs_us_20120315_statement-of-support.

When the ACA was enacted, only 17% of Americans with HIV had private health insurance. In the individual insurance market, people living with HIV are generally considered "uninsurable" and are routinely rejected when they apply for coverage because they have a pre-existing condition. Even when these individuals find an insurance company to cover them, most states have no rating limits, allowing insurers to charge prohibitively expensive premiums. The ACA is designed to address this problem by eliminating pre-existing condition exclusions and requiring that everyone acquire health insurance. The impact of such reform has already been demonstrated on a state-wide level. In Massachusetts between 2005 and 2008, after similar health care reform was implemented, the state had a 37% decrease in HIV infections while the nation had an 8% increase.

Lambda Legal's HIV Project Director, Scott Schoettes, and Director of Constitutional Litigation, Susan Sommer, are joined as counsel on the brief by Ropes & Gray LLP attorneys Douglas Hallward-Driemeier, Bradley Grossman, Brendon Carrington, and Jacob Heller.

The following organizations are listed as signatories in the amicus brief filed at the U.S. Supreme Court: AIDS United, Asian and Pacific-Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS (APICHA), Black AIDS Institute, Center for HIV Law and Policy, Gay and Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD),

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA), HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA), Latino Commission on AIDS, National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), National Native American AIDS Prevention Center (NNAAPC), U.S. Positive Women's Network/WORLD, and Treatment Access Expansion Project (TAEP).

The case is *Dep't of HHS v. Florida*. See case page at: www.lambdalegal.org/in-court/cases/dept-of-hhs-v-florida.

To read the brief visit: www.lambdalegal.org/in-court/legal-docs/dept-of-hhs_us_20120113_brief-for-amici-curiae.

Obama appoints Grant Colfax as Dir. of the Office of Nat'l AIDS Policy

President Obama announced the appointment March 14 of one of the nation's leading public health policy experts as the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP).

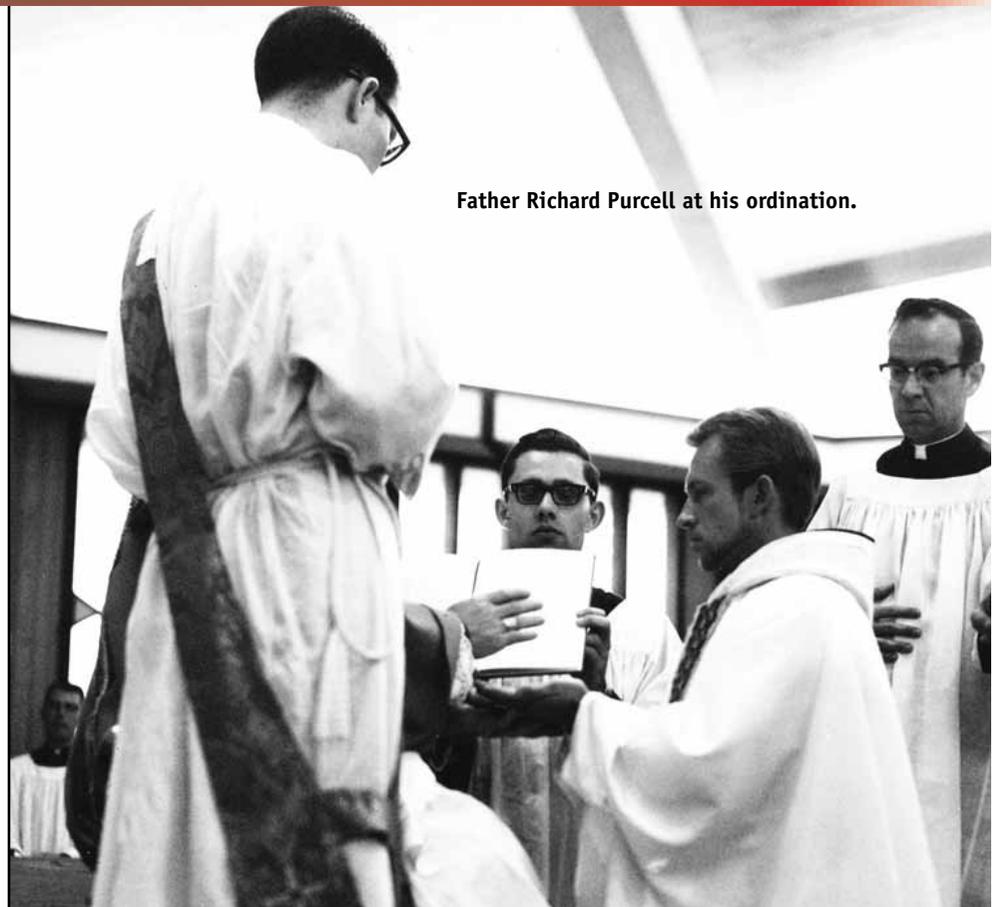
Grant Colfax, MD, Director of the HIV Prevention Section in the San Francisco Department of Public Health will coordinate the continuing efforts of the government to reduce the number of HIV infections across the U.S. A component of the White House Domestic Policy Council, ONAP emphasizes prevention through wide-ranging education initiatives and helps to coordinate the care and treatment of citizens with HIV/AIDS.

"Grant Colfax will lead the my Administration's continued progress in providing care and treatment to people living with HIV/AIDS," said President Obama. "Grant's expertise will be key as we continue to face serious challenges and take bold steps to meet them. I look forward to his leadership in the months and years to come."

ONAP coordinates with the National Security Council and the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, and works with international bodies to ensure that America's response to the global pandemic is fully integrated with other prevention, care, and treatment efforts around the world. Through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) initiative, the U.S. has made enormous progress in responding to the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, working with countries heavily impacted by HIV/AIDS to help expand access to treatment, care, and prevention.

Grant Colfax, MD, was most recently Director of the HIV Prevention Section in the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Colfax is a graduate of Harvard Medical School and completed his medical residency at the University of California, San Francisco. His work focuses on collaborating with community stakeholders to implement sustainable, evidence-based HIV prevention and treatment interventions and policies in public health settings and measuring their effectiveness. Under his leadership, San Francisco greatly expanded HIV testing and treatment support efforts.

National Minority AIDS Council's Executive Director Paul Kawata applauded the selection. "As Director of HIV Prevention and Research at the San Francisco Department of Public Health's AIDS Office, Dr. Colfax has served on the front lines of the battle against this epidemic. His experience working with highly vulnerable populations such as gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) as well as transgender populations will prove critical in ensuring that appropriate resources are directed to those communities most severely impacted by this epidemic. His thorough understanding of the correlation between substance abuse and HIV infection will also prove vital in our efforts to repeal the ban on federal funding for syringe exchange, which was reinstated by Congress in December."



Father Richard Purcell at his ordination.

Gay priest who helped people with AIDS is subject of new book

Father Richard Purcell was an openly gay Franciscan priest who died in 2011 of Lou Gehrig's disease.

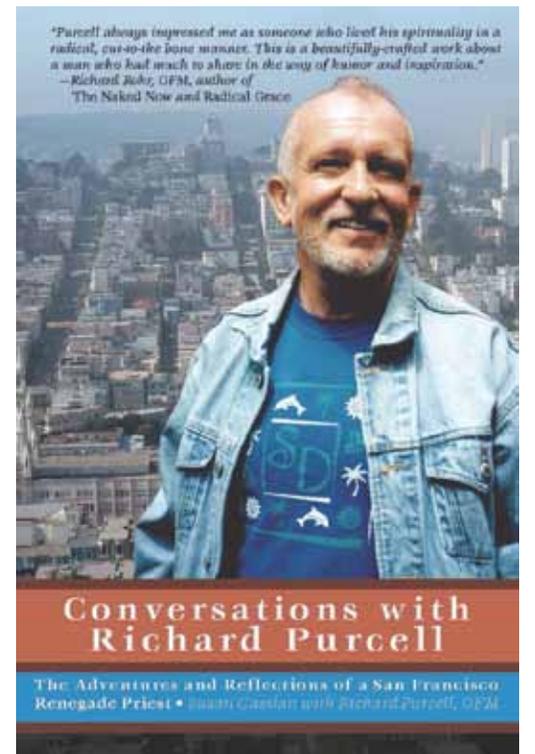
He spent his last years in San Francisco where he ran a homeless shelter in the Mission District for men with AIDS.

Purcell was widely admired for his humor and spiritual insights, and he garnered much of his spirituality from his decades of work with Native Americans in Arizona. In a new book, *Conversations with Richard Purcell: The Adventures and Reflections of a San Francisco Renegade Priest*, Susan Casslan documents the life and death of a remarkable and courageous man.

"Casslan's excellent book tells the story of a fascinating and inspiring man," said Donal Godfrey, author of *The Gays and the Grays*. "Purcell lived life as a man of contradictions: Catholic, gay, charismatic Franciscan, unorthodox priest, radical, maverick, Irish American, caregiver, spiritual guide, and so much more. In these pages I enjoyed getting to know a man who was at times exasperating, yet saintly. Richard was a true follower of St. Francis, patron of San Francisco, and friend of the poor."

Sean Madison, co-producer of *Out: The Glenn Burke Story*, said that Burke, a gay baseball player who died of AIDS, "lived at Marty's Place with Richard Purcell. I met Richard while working on a film about Burke, and Purcell's charisma and character were powerful. His illness was no match for his personality. The time with Richard wasn't just helpful to the film, it was personally enlightening. I am happy to know that Richard's legacy, especially his humor and words of wisdom will live on in this book."

The book is available through Meandering Trail Press in paperback and e-book form. Visit: www.meanderingtrailpress.com or contact: meanderingtrailpress@gmail.com. Also available in paperback form on Amazon.com and on Barnes & Noble websites.



The book about Purcell.



Purcell at a Catholic Worker farm.

AIDS Legal Council of Chicago and Windy City Times 2012 Advocates of the Year

The AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC) and Windy City Times will be hosting the 18th annual Advocates of the Year Awards Thursday, March 22 to recognize several outstanding men and women who are working locally to make a difference in the lives of people with HIV. The reception will be held at Sidley Austin

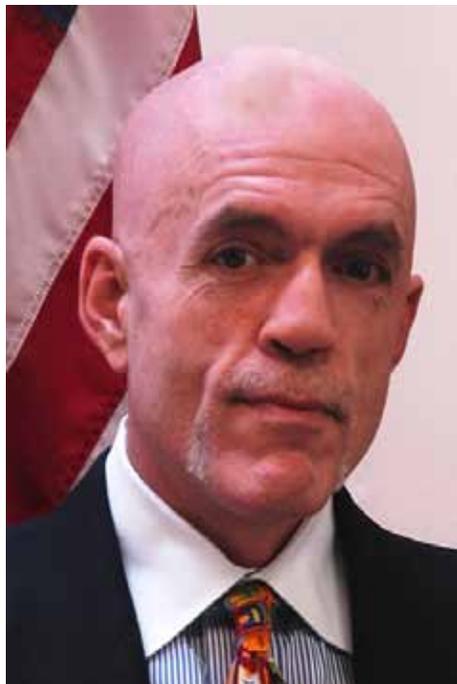
LLP at One South Dearborn in downtown Chicago.

Started in 1994, the Awards acknowledge unsung heroes who, through advocacy, medical care and case management, are working to improve the quality of life of people with HIV.

"These men and women are on the frontlines of the

epidemic and represent some of the most dedicated people in HIV care and advocacy today," said ALCC Executive Director Ann Hilton Fisher. "It is an honor for us to pay tribute to them and acknowledge their invaluable work."

This year's winners are:



State Rep. Greg Harris

As Illinois's highest ranking openly HIV-positive elected official, Rep. Greg Harris has provided extraordinary leadership in the fight against HIV.

Working with AIDS Legal Council of Chicago and other advocates, Harris crafted legislation to preserve informed consent in HIV testing, thus protecting people's ability to make informed decisions about their health and their lives. He has worked to protect the Illinois AIDS Drug Assistance Program during tough economic times and continues to advocate for progressive health care policies in Springfield.

As architect of the Illinois civil union bill, Rep. Harris led the fight to grant Illinois same-sex couples the same rights as married couples. Now people with HIV know that if they become sick, their partners will be able to make life-or-death decisions, visit them in the hospital, and take on responsibilities previously granted only to a legal spouse. Harris has made, and continues to make, a dramatic impact in the lives of thousands of people with HIV.



Matthildur "Matta" Kelley

Few advocates have stories as compelling and inspiring as Matthildur "Matta" Kelley, who emerged from drug abuse 25 years ago to become a lifeline for people with HIV.

Hired in 1988 as a prevention outreach worker with Community Outreach Intervention Projects (COIP), Kelley spent most of her time on the streets, giving injection drug users the encouragement and empathy they needed to manage their health and protect themselves from HIV. No abandoned building was too dangerous, no dark alley too forbidding for Kelley and COIP eventually saw a 70% reduction in new HIV infections among the people she served.

As a Ryan White Case Manager, Kelley drew upon her professional experience in prevention, as well as her personal experience as a recovering addict and single mother, to help the most vulnerable. She once convinced a local hotel owner to house COIP clients at a reduced cost—often paid by Kelley herself—until permanent housing could be found. Kelley has devoted herself to reaching the most marginalized and transforming, and often saving, their lives.



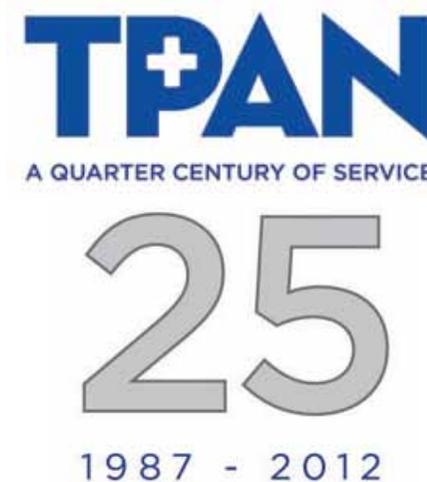
Cheryl Potts

Cheryl Potts has dedicated her professional life, and much of her personal life, to being a champion for people with HIV.

Upon receiving her master's in public health, Potts went to work for AIDS Foundation of Chicago, where she eventually became director of care and quality improvement and coordinated the Chicago Service Providers' Council and created the first HIV AmeriCorps program.

Potts moved to Washington, D.C., five years later to join the National AIDS Fund, but returned after only two years when dear friends—a married couple with HIV—suddenly passed away, leaving behind their daughter. Potts adopted her as her own daughter, and went back to work, eventually heading to Chicago House to direct its iFour employment program for people with HIV. Under her leadership, the program achieved an enviable 40% employment placement rate for its participants.

Today Potts continues to make a difference, working as executive director of Alexian Brothers AIDS Ministry to provide housing to destitute people with HIV.



Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN)

Since opening in 1987 Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) has become a national model for peer-led programs that support, serve, educate and empower people with HIV. Whether a person needs an initial HIV test, help filling out an ADAP application, up-to-date information on antiretroviral therapies or to join others in a weekly support group, TPAN's doors are open. More than 60% of the staff and the majority of the volunteers are HIV-positive.

TPAN also publishes Positively Aware, the only nonprofit magazine for the HIV community. The monthly magazine covers everything from dating worries to international rights, medication contraindications to mental health. It boasts a national subscription base of more than 100,000 readers.

Perhaps State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz put it best: "I'm sure all of you have heard a story of an individual, newly diagnosed with HIV, distraught and confused, who has walked through the doors of TPAN and found the support he/she needed. The stories are even more powerful when you hear that the same person, a year later, started leading a support group and helping other HIV positive individuals become advocates."



Additionally, ALCC will be presenting its Friend of the Council Award to **Ed Jeske and John Hern**, longtime friends and volunteers who have raised thousands of dollars for the Council, most notably through their participation in ALCC's Run and Walk team, the AIDS Legal Beagles. This award is chosen by ALCC staff annually to recognize outstanding supporters of the Council's mission.

For more information about the Advocates of the Year Awards or to learn how you can nominate someone for the 2013 Awards, contact Ricardo Cifuentes, Director of Development of the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago at (312) 427-8990. Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased over the phone, or online at www.aidslegal.com.

Text Me: Innovative approach to youth HIV med compliance

BY JOE FRANCO

The Center for Gender, Sexuality and HIV Prevention at Children's Memorial is in the midst of an inventive study utilizing the way youth communicate today as an advantage to increase their compliance with HIV medication regimens.

"A centralized computerized text message is sent to each of the participants using a message of their own choosing like 'drink your juice Shelby' to remind them to take their meds," said Dr. Robert Garafalo.

Garafalo, the director of adolescent HIV services at Children's Memorial and associate professor at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, is the study's principal investigator.

The TxTxt Study has enrolled more than 70 youth and is still actively recruiting participants.

"The study came out of my own experience with adolescents and their social reality and in some cases addiction to text messaging," said Garafalo. The study has been active for a year now and still has another 18 months of operation.

"This is a randomized control trial. So some of the group will get the texts and some do not. But then we deal with some ethical responsibility regarding the group that does not," said Garafalo. "A pilot study conducted from funding from the National Institute of Health (NIH) originally had a successful study using 25 individuals over a much shorter period."

That rudimentary study found that text messages did increase the likelihood that young people with HIV would remain compliant with their treatment regimen. "The pilot group found the text messages annoying but very helpful," Garafalo said.

The TxTxt Study is aimed at vulnerable populations, homeless and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.

"The only criterion that must be met in order to be a part of this study is that the youth



The TxTxt logo.

must be on a prescribed regimen of treatment and have their own cell phone," said Garafalo. "We worked with T-PAN, Stroger and Sinai [hospitals] to help find those who might qualify for this study. Currently, we are still seeking some to participate."

The study still has about 50 more openings for those who are interested and who qualify.

Garafalo began his medical career as a primary care physician but began finding himself drawn to working with adolescents with a subspecialty in HIV-positive care. "Working with younger people with HIV is no different than working with those who are negative. They still talk about dating, school, acne. These are normal adolescents," said Garafalo.

The study, if successful, could have enormous ramifications for those living with HIV and AIDS. "If this process is shown to be effective in increasing medication compliance this could greatly alter medicine compliance for a great many individuals under ACA [the Affordable Care Act]," said Garafalo.

If you or someone you know believes they are qualified for the study and would like to participate or would like more information, please call 773-880-6984 or email txtxt@childrensmemorial.org.



Dr. Robert Garafalo. Courtesy Jan Terry, Children's Memorial Hospital

Blacks, research and HIV subject of program

"Conversations on HIV Research" a program addressing the gaps between research and the HIV epidemic among Black gay and bi men, will be held March 29, noon-5:30 p.m., University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration, 969 E. 60th Street. The event is free, RSVP at www.chiblackgaycaucus.org by March 23.

Among the presenters are Dr. Kimberly Smith, Cathy Cohen, PhD, Dr. John Schneider, Nikhil Prachand from the Chicago Dept., of Public Health, and Lesley Craig from the U.S. Dept. Of Health & Human Services.

New initiative responds to gender-based violence in global HIV response

On March 14 at the White House, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verveer and U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Ambassador Eric Goosby announced a joint initiative to provide \$4.65 million in small grants to grassroots organizations to address gender-based violence (GBV) issues.

With funding from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the initiative supports programs that prevent and respond to GBV, with a link to HIV prevention, treatment

and care. Grants of up to \$100,000 for programs that leverage existing HIV/AIDS platforms will be awarded to organizations working in one of more than 80 PEPFAR countries. U.S. Embassies and Consulates will oversee and support these grants.

Addressing gender inequities and norms is essential to reducing the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV infection. One in three women worldwide will experience GBV in their lifetime, and in some countries, 70 percent of female populations are affected. Gender-based violence increases women and girls' overall vulnerability to HIV, with country studies indicating an up to three-fold risk of HIV infection among women who experience violence. GBV also fosters the spread of HIV by limiting women's ability to negotiate safe sexual practices, disclose HIV status and access services, due to fear of further violence. While women and girls are the most affected by GBV, men and boys are also victims of these abuses.

The U.S. Government, including the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) at the Department of State and the interagency PEPFAR initiative, is committed to advancing women's health and rights, a core principle of the U.S. Global Health Initiative. Through the GBV small grants program, grassroots organizations will receive support to prevent and respond to GBV, helping to address the structural drivers of both violence and HIV. In addition, the grants will strengthen the capacity of such

organizations to access other sources of funding. This will contribute to a longer-term effort to create an AIDS-free generation and societies free of violence, where women and men can realize their full potential. The State Department and sister agencies across the U.S. Government stand with partners across the globe in expressing American values by responding to the global GBV pandemic.

See Secretary's Office on Global Women's Issues (www.state.gov/s/gwi/) and President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (www.pepfar.gov).

Separate and unequal: Discovery looks at the color lines of HIV/AIDS

More than 30 years after the first case report of HIV, AIDS remains a significant problem in America. Despite tremendous advances in testing and treatment, not everyone has benefited equally. Discovery Channel takes an in-depth look at the color lines of HIV/AIDS in a world premiere documentary HIV/AIDS: America's Divide airing March 17 and 24, and also online at <http://www.discoverychannelpatiented.com>.

Every nine-and-a-half minutes someone in the U.S. is infected with HIV—and chances are that it will be someone of color. African Americans represent nearly half of all new cases of HIV, although they represent only 15% of the population.

SiriusXM OutQ and Greater Than AIDS host AIDS programs

SiriusXM OutQ, a 24/7 LGBT radio channel, and Greater Than AIDS, a national movement to respond to AIDS in America, has launched SpeakOUT: Real Talk about AIDS in Gay America, a limited-run series of live, call-in shows that will connect listeners across the country with medical experts, people living with HIV and notable members of the LGBT community to have an honest and challenging dialogue about the current state of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the gay community as well as the country at large.

According to a 2011 national public opinion survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 8 in 10 Americans say they heard little or nothing about HIV/AIDS in the last year and public concern about HIV/AIDS has fallen steadily over the years, including among those most heavily affected.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in five (19%) gay and bisexual men in 21 major U.S. cities today are HIV-positive—and nearly half (44%) of those who are infected don't know it. See www.siriusxm.com/greaterthanids.

LETTERS

WINDY CITY
TIMES

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"Windy City Media Group generated enormous interest among their readers in this year's LGBT Consumer Index Survey. Out of approximately 100 print and online media partners who participated in the survey, Windy City was the best performing regional media in the U.S. Only survey partners with a nationwide footprint were able to generate a greater number of responses." —David Marshall, Research Director, Community Marketing, Inc.

 Community Marketing, Inc.

Crumblin' down?

Dear Editor:

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) appears to lack unity in dealing with the birth-control issue with the Obama administration.

The basis for this lack of unity appear to be found in its end goal. Initially, the bishops wanted a broader exemption from the contraception mandate for religious institutes; now the leadership appears to be moving into a political mode by seeking roll back the entire regulation. They are hoping to position themselves for the fall election in which they hope to be able to help the GOP defeat the Obama Administration. This is not a wise course of action for the Church.

In our opinion, the bishops should stay out of politics, the last time they got involved was the French Revolution and we all know how badly that turned out for the Church. It is time for the leadership of the USCCB to turn its vision to the future: What happens if Obama gets re-elected? What type of a relationship will the bishops have with the government then? We are suggesting that the leadership of the USCCB use Catholic social justice as its standard, and put the poor ahead of organizational ego in this matter.

The bishops started this journey by initially seeking broad conscience-related protections, but they are losing this debate solely based on the fact that most Catholics are dismissing what they have to say in the political arena—because of their insignificance when it comes to political leadership of Catholics.

The bishops support the "Taco Bell rule," which allows for individual business owners to be exempt because "If I quit this job and opened a Taco Bell, I'd be covered by the mandate."

The major problem is that this won't fly with either the White House or Congress.

One of the major issues facing the USCCB is that its organizational operating style only allows for two meetings a year, and during the rest of the year they supposedly have an administrative committee that can run things in between meetings—except the bishops are so suspicious of each other that they have not given this committee the power and authority to work on their behalf. One only has to remember the fiasco of getting the document "Always Our Children" approved. This signaled the end of any real power for the Administrative committee, now it is more about bloated egos than real management authority.

Clearly, the bishop's allies are fragmented in their support. Catholic social organizations such as hospitals and universities are not behind the bishops. The Rev. Joe Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame, described the Obama compromise as a welcome step—a view other Catholic universities echoes. Sister Carol Keehan, head of the Catholic Health Association that represents a sprawling network of Catholic hospitals, also hailed the accommodation.

Lacking the Church's institutional muscle behind the bishops' position, their stance has become much weaker.

Even conservatives in the Church are quickly realizing the bishops may be losing the debate. "If the bishops reject this deal, they don't have a lot of options," Russell Shaw wrote in *Crisis Magazine*, a conservative Catholic outlet. "Closing down thousands of Catholic institutions and programs isn't likely. Remedial legislation pending in Congress has little chance of becoming law with Democrats controlling the Senate and the White House. As for simply refusing to obey the ... rule, it's a last resort."

The elephant in the room for the bishops is that the 67 million Catholics do not support their position—whatever it turns out to be. Surveys show that U.S. Catholics, including the most devout, do not heed the bishops' teachings against artificial birth control, and framing the issue as a threat to religious freedom hasn't

moved Catholics to mass opposition.

In reality, the state of the economy, not birth control or religious liberty, is likely to determine the outcome of the election, and that is out of the hierarchy's control.

What is going to determine the election is the state of the economy, and not birth control or religious liberty, no matter how much Cardinal Timothy Dolan and his clueless USCCB administrative committee want to change the political reality. Are the bishops ready to jump ship?

Bill O'Connor
 Rainbow Sash Movement

Beyondmedia transition problems

Dear Editor:

As a group of Chicago-based activists and long-time supporters of Beyondmedia Education, we are writing this letter to the editor of Windy City Times to publicly express our extreme disappointment regarding the way that the process of closing the organization and transitioning the programs is being handled.

In light of Beyondmedia's mission to give voice to marginalized people in Chicago and their indispensable work in creating unique opportunities for people to reclaim their lives, share their stories and impact their communities, we are committed to preserving the ongoing work of the organization even as the corporation is being dissolved, and we ask that Beyondmedia's board demonstrate this commitment, too.

We find it ironic and tragically poetic that an organization whose mission is to amplify under-represented voices has not had a media voice in this historical moment. The process has been secretive and certainly not in keeping with Beyondmedia's collaborative mission, spirit and practice for the past 12 years. Beyondmedia's board has made no formal announcement to the organization's partners or the wider community.

Further, the very people who created and maintained the organization's award-winning programs and projects for all these years—the staff, including Beyondmedia's founding director—have been left out of the decision-making process regarding the preservation and transfer of programs.

The loss of Beyondmedia is a loss for Chicago. They provided media literacy and anti-violence workshops for underserved youth, video services to nonprofits to build their media and organizing capacity, screenings of first-voice films in festivals, schools and universities worldwide, gatherings of people committed to social justice for dialogue and movement building, and so much more. The media treasures they produced constitute an important archive of women and youth organizing in Chicago and belong to everyone.

On Jan. 11, 2012, more than 30 people gathered at Las Manos Gallery to discuss the decision by the Beyondmedia board to close the organization, which many felt was rushed and unnecessary, and was acted upon against the advice of both the organization's banker and auditor. In addition to representatives from a wide range of partnering organizations, the meeting included former board, staff, youth leaders and

interns who contributed a total of more than 60 years of service to Beyondmedia. The meeting was framed in terms of brainstorming—thinking about ways that Beyondmedia's social justice values, vision and mission could be kept alive and thriving despite the dissolution of the corporation. We saw this not as a death, but as transition.

In what was experienced by those in the room as a miraculous moment, Craig Harshaw, founder and executive director of Insight Arts, and Aislinn Pulley, Insight Arts board president, stepped up and offered to provide the space and infrastructure that would allow Beyondmedia programs to be maintained. Everyone present voiced enthusiastic support for the transition.

Since that time—more than two months ago—Insight Arts has been locked in an arduous and seemingly never-ending process with the Beyondmedia board and its consultant. Insight Arts has devoted countless hours to transition the programs in a timely fashion to uphold Beyondmedia's commitments and requests, which include exhibitions of Beyondmedia's Chain of Change installation; copies of Beyondmedia videos; the postings of hundreds of articles, interviews and poetry by and about women in prison to Beyondmedia's womenandprison.org; and requests for meetings and project support by members of Beyondmedia's Youth Leadership Council.

Meanwhile, the work is not being done, but the need is still great. We have been patient throughout this process. Now, we are at our wits' end, and this is why we turn to the media, as we know the power of a media voice to effect positive change.

We urge the Beyondmedia Board to immediately complete the process of transferring all of the organization's assets so that the programs may become active and self-supporting again. Further, we demand that Beyondmedia's rapidly dwindling funds be used for their legitimate purpose: to support programs serving women and youth.

Signed,
 Michelle Peterson Albandoz, Joanne Archibald, Davey Ball, Aimee Bass, Maritza Bautista, Dalida Maria Benfield, Christine Bepalec-Davis, Ronit Bezalel, Lara Brooks, Shawn Campbell, Clay Chalupa, Salome Chasoff, Thom Clark, CL Cole, Rebecca Connie, Patricia Coonan, Tim Coonan, Rachel Durchslag, Tiara Epps, Marissa Faustini, Simon Fisher, Cheryl Graves, Dawn Hancock, Craig Harshaw, Joe Hollendonner, Jessi Lee Jackson, Alexis Jennings, Mariame Kaba, Njoki Kamau, Jacob Klippenstein, Craig Kois, Elias Krell, Lauren La Rose, Lisa Lee, Manwah Lee, Riva Lehrer, Laurie Little, Lynda Lopez, Michaela Lovegood, Mickey Mahoney, Tara Malik, Jeff McCarter, Ethan Michaeli, Cheryl Miller, Madsen Minax, Daria Mueller, Brenda Myers-Powell, Kelly Noah, Jane Nolan, Susan Nussbaum, Aislinn Pulley, Taina Rodriguez De Velarde, Jerzy Rose, Francesca Royster, Rachel Rozycki, Ann Russo, Jane Saks, Zaida Sanabria, Carrie Sandahl, Ellen Schumer, Gail Smith, Mary Sommers, Melissa Spatz, Stacia Spencer, Ann Stanford, Shannon Sullivan, Nancy Tartt, Paul Teruel, Roxy Trudeau, Daniel Tucker, Jaimie Turner, Jorge Valdivia, Tiffany Mae Witkowski and Denise Zaccardi

Send letters and viewpoints to
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 Items may be edited
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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo by Liz Lauren

'HAIR' ESSENCE

Hair, running at the Paramount, is in the Windy City Times spotlight. See page 20.

DISH

Eggs-cellent.
Page 32.Photo of a scramble at Fork
by Shira Kollins

MOVIES

For 'The Birds.'
Page 27.

THEATER

Frisky 'Rebellion.'
Page 20.

Photo by Jason Beck



SPRING PREVIEW

Revivals to look out for

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

There are plenty of vintage classics and more recent theater pieces to look out for this spring. All shows are in Chicago unless otherwise noted.

Of LGBT interest

Tea and Sympathy, The Artistic Home at Stage 773, now to April 22. Just how will this drama about a sissy male student at a boarding school who is pressured to "butch it up" come off in our more enlightened age? Find out in this rare revival of Robert Anderson's 1953 play. 773-327-5252 or www.theartistichome.org

Angels in America: Millennium Approaches and Perestroika, Court Theatre, March 30-June 3. Tony Kushner's epic 1990s plays set during the Reagan Administration touch upon homosexuality, AIDS, Mormonism, McCarthyism and so much more. Kushner himself has given his blessing to artistic director Charles Newell to stage his epic plays, so expect great things on the intimate Court Theatre stage. 773-753-4472 or www.courttheatre.org

The Turn of the Screw, First Folio Theatre at Mayslake Peabody Estate, Oak Brook, March 28-April 29. Jeffrey Hatcher's acclaimed two-person adaptation of Henry James' spooky novella about an English governess who suspects that the children in her charge are under the influence of the ghosts of their abusive former caretakers. 630-986-8067 or www.firstfolio.org

Doubt, AstonRep Theatre Company at Heartland Studio Theatre, April 5-May 5. Is Father



Tea and Sympathy. Photo from Kristin Collins

Flynn abusing an African-American student, or is just the unbending suspicions of a zealous nun? Take your sides in this revival of John Patrick Shanley's 2005 Pulitzer Prize-winning drama. 773-828-9129 or www.astonrep.com

Being Shakespeare, Chicago Shakespeare Theater at Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place, April 18-29. Celebrated out British actor and playwright Simon Callow returns to Chicago

Spring theater preview

with a one-man show looking at the life and works of the immortal Bard. 312-642-2000 or www.chicagoshakes.com

Rent, American Theater Company, April 27-June 17. Jonathan Larson's 1996 Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical about New York artists finding love and loss in the age of AIDS (inspired by the 1896 Puccini opera *La Bohème*) returns in a newly conceived production. 773-409-4125 or www.atcweb.org

Text appeal

The Sea, Theatre Mir at Theater Wit, now to April 15. Edward Bond's 1973 comic drama concerns the dynamics of an East Anglia town in the U.K. and how it reacts when a stranger and a drowned local wash ashore. 773-975-8150 or www.theatremir.com

MeTube, Collaboraction at Flat Iron Arts Building, now to April 8. If you missed Yuri Lane's two-show only presentation at Victory Gardens Theater on what life has been like for a beat-boxing YouTube sensation, then don't miss his show as it is remounted by Collaboraction. 312-226-9633 or www.collaboraction.org

A Moon for the Misbegotten, Seanachai Theatre Company at Irish American Heritage Center, March 23-April 29. Eugene O'Neill's classic drama about two lonely outcasts who find hope with each other gets revived in a production directed by Kevin Theis. 866-811-4111 or www.seanachai.org

The House of Yes, Hubris Productions at Greenhouse Theater Center, March 22-April 28. Watch out for that murderous mentally unstable twin sister who has an obsession with Jackie-O! See how fun a dysfunctional family can be in this revival of Wendy Maceod's dark comedy. 773-404-7336 or www.hubrisproductions.com

The Sweetest Swing in Baseball, Step Up Productions at Athenaeum Theatre, March 23-April 22. Rebecca Gilman's dark 2004 comedy focuses on an artist facing who starts identifying with the troubled baseball player Darryl Strawberry when she faces a mental crisis. 312-902-1500 or www.athenaeumtheatre.com

The Butcher of Baraboo, A Red Orchid Theatre, April 5-May 20. First presented in 2006 as part of Steppenwolf Theatre's First Look Repertory of New Work, Marisa Wegrzyn's dark comedy is all about a town cop who tries to sniff out the dark secrets of a family in Baraboo, Wis. 312-943-8722 or www.aredorchidtheatre.org

Enfrascada (A Hoodoo Comedy of Jarring Proportions), 16th Street Theater at Berwyn Cultural Center, April 5-May 12. Tanya Saracho's 2008 play Jarred has been renamed and reworked to look at a Latina woman who turns to the underworlds of Brujeria, Santeria and Hoodoo for magic recipes. It's from the same playwright behind *Our Lady of the Underpass* and *Kita y Fernanda*. 708-795-6704 or www.16thstreettheatre.org

The Rainmaker, Bohemian Theatre Ensemble at Theater Wit, April 6-May 6. Before it was transformed in the musical *110 in the Shade*, N. Richard Nash's 1954 drama told the Depression era tale of a drifter who promises a drought-suffering small town a miracle rainfall. 773-975-8150 or www.bohotheatre.com

As You Like It (A New Adaptation), Strange-loop Theatre at Trap Door Theatre, April 6-May 6. Shakespeare's classic romantic comedy is reinterpreted with a new take in this updated adaptation. 773-757-6689 or www.strangelooptheatre.org

Turn to page 22



Camino Real.
Photo by Liz Lauren

THEATER REVIEW

Camino Real

Playwright: Calixto Bieito and Marc Rosich, after Tennessee Williams
At: Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St.
Tickets: 312-443-3800;
www.GoodmanTheatre.org; \$29-\$79
Runs through: April 8

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Camino Real is rarely produced. Its style and structure are notoriously difficult and its cast is large. Inarguably, this expressionist drama is Tennessee Williams's most experimental work. Its 1953 Broadway failure drove him back towards the poetic realism which had brought him success, but from which he always wanted to escape.

This is my fourth time seeing Camino Real, which is a lot even for a theater critic. Catalan director Calixto Bieito and Catalan playwright Marc Rosich have heavily altered the play, but they are no more successful than any of the others at negotiating the many difficulties. They have slashed the original text to ribbons, inserted passages from other Williams's writings (including his memoirs), eliminated characters but added a dying Williams himself as a symbolic chorus and generally radicalized an already radical script.

The net result is that audiences who've never seen Tennessee Williams's Camino Real still will not have seen it after attending this production. But what of that? This effort proves—at least to me—that success with this particular play probably is impossible.

Williams sets Camino Real in a parched Latin American town presided over by an unseen *gen-*

erissimo and his cruel capo, Gutman. The town is populated by desiccated versions of real and fictional romantic figures, among them Casanova, Lord Byron, Marguerite Gautier and Baron de Charlus. All are lonely and “alone together,” but terrified of being alone apart. Sex provides temporary relief but can't fill the emotional void. Dropping into this mix is all-American Kilroy, a symbol of purity soon to be corrupted.

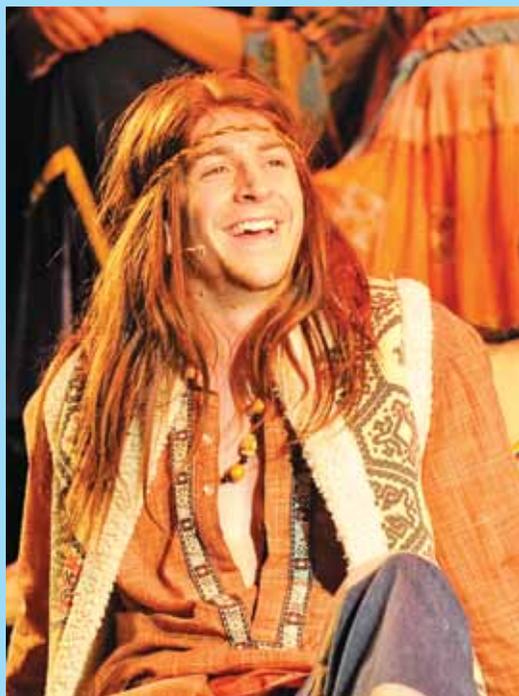
Supported by a crack design team, Bieito and Rosich have created a luridly colored, quasi-industrial wasteland with no sense of place (no walls, windows, doors or buildings). Some visuals are quite striking, as are several Spanish love songs which replace poetic or tender moments in the original text. But melodies aside, Bieito and Rosich reduce Camino Real to a litany of emotional and physical horrors as each romantic is debased, humiliated and brutalized (physically and emotionally).

Admittedly, the roots for this interpretation—even for the graphic violence—are there in the script; but the script *also* sows seeds of redemption and resurrection which Bieito and Rosich have drummed out of existence. That's a fatal mistake. Williams had an almost Catholic belief in redemption, and it's not true to him to toss out the other shoe.

David Darlow, Matt DeCaro, Andre De Shields, Marilyn Dodds Frank, Barbara E. Robertson, Mark L. Montgomery and Jacqueline Williams are among the wonderful cast. All are stalwart in the service of this singular, ambitious and misguided vision. Bieito's often-controversial work has been called “visionary.” Perhaps he should tackle a more familiar play for us to better understand how he thinks.



SPOTLIGHT



Don't let the suburban location lull you into thinking that the Paramount Theatre in Aurora won't go all out with its production of **Hair**. Paramount's take on the iconic 1960s “tribal love-rock musical” comes complete with the show's expected depiction of drug use, profanity and nudity. Hair also concludes what has been a very strong first season for Paramount in producing its own homegrown Broadway musicals. Hair continues through Sunday, April 1, at 8 E. Galena Blvd., Aurora. Performances are at 1:30 and 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays; 7:30 p.m. Thursdays; 4 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; and 1 and 5 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$34.90-\$46.90; call 630-896-6666 or visit www.paramountaurora.com. Photo by Liz Lauren

OPERA REVIEW

Hansel und Gretel

Playwright: The ensemble after the Brothers Grimm and the 1893 Humperdinck opera
At: The Building Stage, 412 N. Carpenter St.
Tickets: 312-491-1369;
www.buildingstage.com; \$22
Runs through: April 22

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

As fairy tales go, Hansel and Gretel is definitely one of the darker ones since it features starvation, abandonment, cannibalism and killing (pushing a witch into an oven). So it's understandable why The Building Stage would mention in a press release that its new production of *Hansel und Gretel* is targeted more at adults rather than kids.

Yet, The Building Stage's artistic forces under director/set designer Blake Montgomery don't quite seem to know what they really want to say with *Hansel und Gretel*. Thanks to the actors' exaggerated German accents (very akin to those chubby Bavarian kids in Bugs Bunny's 1954 cartoon encounter with Witch Hazel), this *Hänsel und Gretel* comes off as an odd mix of a silly send-up in addition to being a somber look at neglectful parenting and a sadistic witch's manipulative mind games that border on torture. Kids may squirm due to the 90-minute running time with no intermission, but there really isn't anything that would compel you to shield the innocent eyes of young children.

The Building Stage's *Hänsel und Gretel* starts

out with the much more sanitized approach from the 1893 opera by composer Engelbert Humperdinck and his librettist-sister Adelheid Wette. The show then shifts into the earlier and harsher Grimm Brothers version of the story.

Yet the transition isn't so seamless, and it cries out for more postmodern contextualizing rather than just the kids questioning their father's shifting profession from a broom merchant to an experienced woodcutter.

Like the opera, two women portray the plucky title brother and sister, and Chelsea Keenan and Pamela Maurer respectively have a fun time at playing Hansel and Gretel. Jenny Lamb is also a dynamic force as the aggravated stepmother who also doubles as the sadistic witch. Ian Knox is fine as the father, although one would want more internal conflict as he is morally torn about abandoning his children in the forest.

On the production side of things, everything is mostly simple and sometimes cartoonish, especially in the candy-colored costumes of Mieka van der Ploeg and the changing painted backdrops that variously depict an empty cupboard, the parents' bedroom and the flames of the oversized oven.

Oddly, Matthew Muniz's scoring doesn't borrow from Humperdinck's score for his live piano accompaniment, even though the opera is in the public domain. The stylistic switch from Humperdinck's melody-filled opera to Muniz's own atmospheric underscoring of dread might have helped when things turned darker in the production's storytelling approach. However, like so many questionable decisions made in The Building Stage's *Hänsel und Gretel*, it feels like yet another missed opportunity for the production.

THEATER REVIEW

The Oxford Roof Climber's Rebellion

Playwright: Stephen Massicotte
At: Caffeine Theatre at Lincoln Square in the Berry
Methodist Church, 4754 N. Leavitt Ave.
Tickets: 312-409-4778;
www.caffeinetheatre.com; \$20
Runs through: April 14

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Once upon a time, there were two discharged war veterans who returned to school, ostensibly to write their memoirs. One still suffered, physically and mentally, after having been wounded on the battlefield so terribly that he was erroneously reported as dead. The other, despite being hailed as a hero, found academe boring and expressed his restlessness in irreverent pranks. When they met, each saw in the other something lacking in himself, leading them to forge a close, almost obsessive, meeting of the minds.

Oh, by the way, the war was World War I, the battle was Somme, the school is Oxford University and the two ex-GIs are Robert Graves and T.E. Lawrence—yes, *that* T.E. Lawrence, popularly known as *Lawrence of Arabia*, whose thrilling adventures in exotic lands continue to attract admirers of both genders to this day. As recounted by Canadian playwright Stephen Massicotte, however, their relationship is not merely an exercise in Edwardian bromance (although this Caffeine Theatre production includes an erotically charged moment featuring a shirtless Brian Grey), but instead explores the problems associated with post-war re-assimilation of men—and nowadays, women—forever changed by their experience.

Chief among these is the loss of partisan loyalties engendered by exposure to other cultures. Col. Lawrence, ostensibly retired

from his country's service, continues to intrude into England's peace negotiations with the tribal emirates of the Middle East. Under the guise of schoolboy mischief, he protests his government's reluctance to grant the latter independence, even to flying an Arab flag from the top of the campus library. This incorrigibility proves as irksome to the university chancellor as it does to the neglected wife of the smitten Robert. (Even a cross-dressing protofeminist likes her husband to help around the house once in a while.)

Massicotte's metaphor equating the scaling of Renaissance domes and 17th-century turrets with “reaching for greater heights” is carried comfortably by a diligent cast under the tutelage of dramaturg Daniel Smith and dialect consultant Christine Adaire, as well as director Thomas Weitz, who keeps the action from spilling over into the self-conscious excess that so often plagues plays set in this period. Finally, a sleekly coordinated technical team supplies us with a dazzling multimedia panorama of historical background to keep us anchored in our environment for a round of brain exercise at once invigorating and thoroughly satisfying.



The Oxford Roof Climber's Rebellion. Photo by Jason Beck



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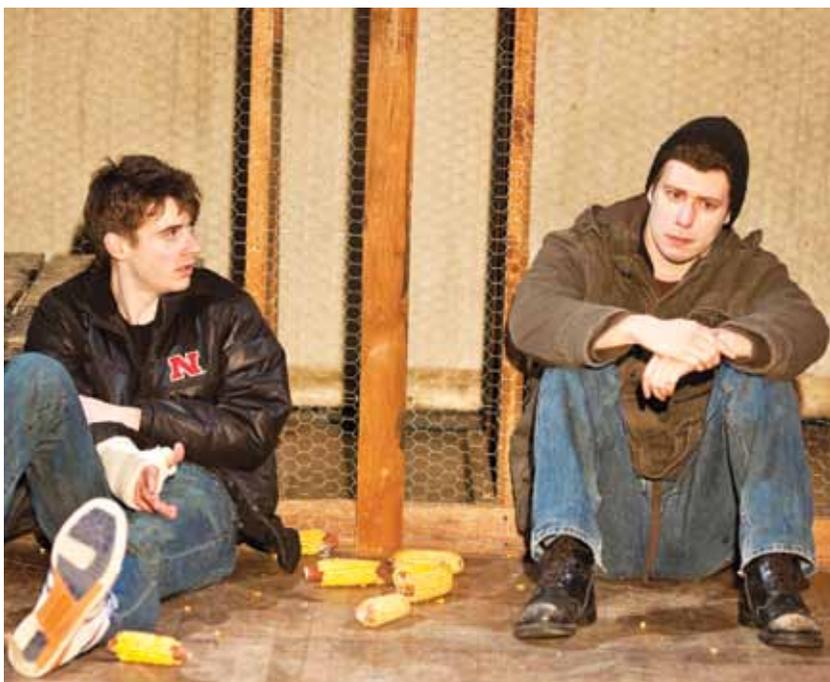


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EPIC EVENT

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The Xylophone West. Photo by Gretchen Kelley

THEATER REVIEW

The Xylophone West

Playwright: Alex Lubischer

At: Fine Print Theatre Company at Red Tape Theater 773, 621 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: thefineprinttheatre.org or www.brownpapertickets.com; \$20-25
Runs through: April 4

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

The language we use when we talk about bullying, especially as it relates to issues of sexual orientation, can be so bogged down by platitudes. Messages of standing up and speaking out and yes, even "it gets better," start to detach themselves from the reality of the sordid situations they aim to end.

The Xylophone West, a new play by Alex Lubischer from the Fine Print Theatre Company, is an LGBT-related play about bullying that's least concerned with LGBT-related bullying. The main character's sexuality is a matter of little import; the play focuses on the way he chooses to handle his adversity, how he confronts his peers and how he elects to move forward.

Patrick (played by Donnie Sheldon) has had trouble fitting in at school. After some other kids going out for the basketball team bully him and break his arm, he conspires with his only friend, Shane (David Weiss), to hop a train to California, except an accident forces him to stay and confront the situation.

Lubischer takes a much more physical and grittier approach to this topic than one might expect, especially given the surface-level similarities to *The Laramie Project*. Both stories take place in small, conservative communities,

but that's where it ends. The amount of movement, along with Patrick's volatile personality, adds some powerful tension and suspense to the story. In doing so, it explores the psychology involved in an abusive situation and forces the audience to dig deep in terms of how we would truly and honestly handle the physical and emotional grind Patrick endures.

So we're not treated to the expected tropes of a repressive and ignorant community or the traumas of being closeted or questioning one's self. All those issues hover around the drama and in some ways probably intensify it, but the play is about doing, what the characters—both victim and perpetrators—do when they must face the issue instead of flee, run away or change schools.

While watching plays we feel a validation of the themes and subject matter based on the dialogue, when the playwright delivers the issues at hand in a verbally mainstreamed sort of way. So there's a bit of discomfort in Lubischer's near refusal to use that familiar language, but it seems to have a point. Even for all the use of the word "faggot" in the play, Patrick says "retarded" on a few occasions, as if to diminish the emphasis on hate language, period.

The notion of action in *The Xylophone West*

goes all the way from the execution to the thematic core. There's even a violence to the scene transitions. All of this is quite a feat for a story so wrapped up in the psychology of its characters.

This play doesn't necessarily add to the dialogue about LGBT bullying; it's more of a reminder of the harsh realities and consequences of such abuse and how challenging it is to meet this issue face to face. In a sense, it calls for a re-examination—to look at bullying with new eyes and recall what it actually is and how it might more productively be stopped.

Clown revue at Neo-Futurarium March 25

The Chi-Town Clown Revue returns to the Neo-Futurarium, 5153 N. Ashland Ave., on Sunday, March 25, at 9:30 p.m. for its eighth installment.

Physical comedians, circus clowns, vaudevillians and bouffons will present their unique comic stylings in the 70-minute show.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at www.chitownclown.com.

REVIVALS from page 19

The Duchess of Malfi, Strawdog Theatre, April 19-May 26. John Webster's ultra-violent Jacobean political thriller is back complete with murderous revenge and phony Christian piety. 773-528-9696 or www.strawdog.org

Pride and Prejudice, Lifeline Theatre, April 20-June 10. Christina Calvit has spruced up her acclaimed adaptation of Jane Austen's beloved 1813 novel for another go round. 773-761-4477 or www.lifelinetheatre.com

The Iceman Cometh, Goodman Theatre, April 21-June 10. The appearance of stars Nathan Lane and Brian Dennehy in a revival of Eugene O'Neill's epic drama directed by artistic director Robert Falls is unquestionably one of the most anticipated theatrical events of the year. 312-443-3800 or www.goodmantheatre.org.

Timon of Athens, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, April 24-June 10. Ian McDairmid (*Star Wars*) stars in one of William Shakespeare's lesser-known dramas about a wealthy Athenian gentleman who finds out who his true friends really are when he loses everything. Artistic director Barbara Gaines directs the revival. 312-595-5600 or www.chicago-shakes.com.

Arcadia, New Leaf Theatre at Lincoln Park Cultural Center, May 3-June 16. Tom Stoppard's brilliant 1990s time-shifting comic drama is back again to challenge and confound audiences with its topics of English gardening, chaos theory and that old standby of love. 312-742-7726 or www.newleaftheatre.org.

Bang the Drum Slowly, Raven Theatre, May 15-July 14. Eric Simonson's adaptation of Mark Harris' acclaimed baseball novel is back for another Chicago run around the bases. 773-338-2177 or www.raventheatre.com.

Same old song?

Pippin, Music Theatre Company, Highland Park, March 22-May 6. There will be magic to do with a revival of Stephen Schwartz's popular 1970s musical about Charlemagne's son trying to find himself in a world filled with war and violence. 847-579-4900 or www.themusictheatrecompany.org.

The Pirates of Penzance, Marriott Theatre, April 4 through June 10. Gilbert and Sullivan's ever-popular 1879 comic operetta about easily fooled pirates returns to a new staging in the round in Lincolnshire. 847-634-0200 or www.marriotttheatre.com.

Jersey Boys, Bank of America Theatre, April 5-June 2. The world-wide smash-hit Broadway musical about the rise to fame of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons is back in Chicago for another run (albeit shorter than the previous time around). 800-775-2000 or www.broadwayinchicago.org.

Little Shop of Horrors, Street Tempo Theatre at Stage 773, April 9-May 11. The killer alien plant Audrey II is back in this perennial 1960s-styled off-Broadway favorite by the Academy Award-winning team of composer Alan Menken and the late librettist Howard Ashman. 773-327-5252 or www.stage773.com.

Hairspray, Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook Terrace, April 12-June 17. The smash hit 2002 Broadway musical based upon John Waters' 1988 film celebrating Baltimore teen dance shows of the early 1960s is back. 630-530-0111 or www.drurylaneoakbrook.com.

tick, tick... BOOM!, Porchlight Music Theatre at Stage 773, April 27-June 10. Before Jonathan Larson skyrocketed to tragic fame with *Rent*, he penned this intimate semi-autobiographical musical about a young composer facing down his 30th birthday. 773-327-5252 or www.porchlightmusictheatre.org.

A Little Night Music, Writers' Theatre, Glencoe, May 1-July 8. Get your tissues ready to weep to the song "Send in the Clowns" when Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler's Tony Award-winning Broadway musical romantic comedy is revived in the intimate space of Writers' Theatre. 847-242-6000 or www.writerstheatre.org

Cats, Cadillac Palace Theatre, May 1-6. Andrew Lloyd Webber's massive world-wide hit musical dance revue set to playful feline poems by T.S. Eliot comes back to town in a touring non-Equity production. 800-775-2000 or www.broadwayinchicago.com

Camelot, Light Opera Works at Cahn Auditorium, Evanston, June 1-10. Nick Sandys is set to star as King Arthur in Lerner and Loewe's classic 1960s musical filled with numerous song hits like "If Ever I Would Leave You" and its title song. 847-920-5360 or www.lightoperaworks.com

Rock of Ages, Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place, June 5-Aug. 5. See whether or not the forthcoming movie musical based upon this Broadway jukebox show will drive or detract from ticket sales from this return extended Chicago summer engagement. 800-775-2000 or www.broadwayinchicago.com



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DVOŘÁK 8

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Dance, dance, dance

BY VICKI CRAIN

There is a ton of dance happening this spring, so let's get to it. Here are some of the performances—in order of appearance.

March goes out like a lion with four major shows this weekend.

American Ballet Theatre comes to town for five performances of *Giselle* at the Auditorium Theatre at Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy. Live accompaniment is by the Chicago Sinfonietta; Thursday-Friday, March 22-23 at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, March 24 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sunday, March 25 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$32-\$137; call 800-982-2787 or visit www.ticketmaster.com/auditorium.

New York company **Ballet Hispanico** hits Chicago for three shows at The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Thursday-Saturday, March 22-24, at 8 p.m. Tick-



Ballet Hispanico.
Photo by Eduardo Patino

ets are \$26-\$30; call 312.369.8330 or visit www.colum.edu/dancecenter.

Three local female choreographers—**Winifred Haun, Jessica Miller Tomlinson** and **Jacqueline Stewart**—band together for *Triptych: 3 Dance Voices* at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St. Friday-Saturday at 7:30 p.m., March 23-24. Tickets (\$30) are available online at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/190747.

Carmen.maquia is a one-night-only event presented by **Luna Negra Dance Theater** Saturday, March 24, at 8 p.m. at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St. Tickets are \$25-\$65; call 312-334-7777 or visit www.harristheaterchicago.org.

April showers audiences with a variety of styles to choose from.

The Auditorium Theatre at Roosevelt University welcomes back **Alvin Ailey Dance Theater** Wed.-Friday, April 11-13, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, April 14, at 2 and 8 p.m.; and Sunday, April 15 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$30-\$90; call 800-982-2787 or visit www.ticketmaster.com/auditorium.

The Wrecking Project, work from nine modern female choreographers from around the country, performs three separate trio programs at Links Hall (3435 N. Sheffield Ave., #207) Thursday-Saturday, April 12-14, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10-\$15; call 773-281-0824 or visit www.linkshall.org.

Vanishing Points, the spring production of Chicago's **Hedwig Dances**, will be presented over two weekends at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave. Friday-Saturday, April 13-14, at 8 p.m.; Sunday, April 15 at 3 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, April 20-21, at 8 p.m.; and Sunday, April 22 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$25; call 773-327-5252. For more information, visit www.hedwigdances.com.

Indian dance company **Natya Dance Theatre** and modern staple **Mordine & Co.** present a collaboration with live jazz accompaniment Saturday, April 14, at 8 p.m. at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. Tickets are \$30-\$38; call 847-673-6300 or visit www.northshorecenter.org.

Joffrey Ballet closes this season with 10 per-

formances of *Spring Desire* featuring a world premiere plus two staples from the repertory at the Auditorium Theatre at Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy. Wed., April 25, through Sunday, May 6. Performance times vary. For more information, visit www.joffrey.com. Tickets are \$25-\$149; call 800-982-2787 or visit www.ticketmaster.com.

Punk ballerina Karole Armitage brings her troupe, **Armitage Gone! Dance**, to the MCA Stage (220 E. Chicago Ave.) for three shows Thursday-Saturday, April 26-28, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10-\$35; call 312-397-4010 or visit www.mcachicago.org/performances.

BONEdance revisits this year's *This is a Damage Manual* at a new venue. **DAMAGE REdux** takes the stage at the Viaduct Theater at 3111 N. Western Ave. Friday-Saturday, April 27-28, at 9:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 at the door. For more information, see www.bonedance.com.

On Saturday, April 28, local jazz company **Ina-side Chicago Dance** takes the Athenaeum Theatre stage (2936 N. Southport Ave.) at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20-\$30; call 773-935-6860 or visit www.athenaeumtheatre.com.

May blossoms with smaller local companies taking the spotlight alongside old favorites.

Kalapriya Foundation, Center for Indian Performing Arts performs at the Ruth Page Center for Dance at 1016 N. Dearborn St. *Finding Home* will be presented in the Larry Long Studio, Friday-Saturday, May 4-5, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15-\$20; call 773-363-9303 or visit www.brownpapertickets.com.

Ballet Chicago will perform three works from famous ballet choreographer George Balachine Saturday, May 5, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, May 6, at 3 p.m. at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St. Tickets start at \$25; call 312-334-7777 or visit www.harristheaterchicago.org/events.

Head south to the DuSable Museum, 740 E. 56th Pl., and get your tap on. **Chicago Human Rhythm Project** celebrates National Tap Dance Day Thursday, May 10, at 10:30 a.m. and Friday, May 11, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15-\$25; call 773-281-1825 or visit www.chicagotap.org.

Elements Contemporary Ballet celebrates its five-year anniversary with a program of three world premieres, a company premiere and an encore work Saturday, May 12, at 8 p.m. at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport Ave. Tickets are \$25-\$30; call 773-935-6860 or visit www.athenaeumtheatre.com.

DanceWorks Chicago and African dance company **Muntu Dance Theatre** take the stage together at the Northshore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie at 9501 Skokie Blvd. Friday, May 11, at 12 p.m. (\$5); or Saturday, May 12, at 2:30 p.m. (\$10) and 8 p.m. (\$30-\$38); call 847-673-6300 or visit www.northshorecenter.org.

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago performs a company premiere and two audience favorites at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St. Performances rare Thursday, May 31-Sunday, June 3. Show times vary. Tickets are \$25-\$94; call 312-850-9744 or the Harris Theater box office at 312-334-7777. For more information, visit www.hubbardstreetdance.com.

June breezes us into summer with a first-ever tour of a world-famous ballet company.

Luna Negra Dance Theater will present three new choreographic works at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave. *Luna Nueva* runs Thursday-Sunday, June 7-10, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10-\$28; call 312-397-4010 or visit www.mcachicago.org/performances.

The Paris Opera Ballet comes to Chicago for the first time to perform *Giselle* and a repertory program at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St. Wed., June 27-Saturday, June 30, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, June 30; and Sunday, July 1, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$55-\$125; call 312-334-7777 or visit www.harristheater.org.

THEATER REVIEW

Falling: A Wake

Playwright: Gary Kirkham

At: Rivendell Theatre, 5779 N. Ridge Ave.

Tickets: 773-334-7728;

www.rivendelltheatre.org; \$28.50

Runs through: April 14

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Harold and Elsie are an elderly couple living on a farm in a remote region of Ontario. Harold is a former science professor, his thinking dominated by a fact-based exactitude that the more mystical-minded Elsie pretends not to understand by way of encouraging him to explain himself. Years earlier, we learn—shortly after their move away from the university to the country—their pre-teen son went missing. Since that event, they have remained in self-imposed isolation, passing the empty time with the affectionate bickering characteristic of long marriages, in anticipation of his return. Then one night, a commercial airliner explodes over their property, scattering detritus that includes a young man strapped into his passenger seat—earbuds intact, unscorched, unscarred and very, very dead.

In the search for answers to the problem faced by all playwrights of how to bring the play's characters together and *keep* them together, a corpse in the room is probably as valid a solution as any—especially when the derelict clay is posed like a neighbor making a social call (except for the closed eyes). Indeed, Elsie vows to watch over the body until emergency responders arrive, Harold fetching her chairs and other furniture until they have assembled a cozy parlor in their barnyard, where they hold discourse about, and with, the stranger who has, literally, dropped in on them.

Oh, of *course* the celestial visitor is an angel-analog sent to heal these sorrowful parents' pain and uncertainty, so that they can abandon their exile and move on—and if superstar—"sound"ista Victoria DeIorio (who also directs) hadn't been so eager to start the action with an extra-big bang replicating the overhead detonation, we'd be quicker to recognize this. As the story spools out now, we spend too long before warming to Mark Ulrich and Jane Baxter Miller's comfy marital dynamic (Gary Kirkham's dialogue is word-perfect), making their catharsis and denouement appear overly abrupt—since we haven't been attending to the hints leading up to reversal.

The primary value of this Rivendell Theatre Ensemble production does not lie in its choice of an obviously workshop-generated script, however, but in its inauguration of a performance space linking the playhouses along Edgewater's East Bryn Mawr Avenue with the burgeoning Rogers Park arts district. Doesn't every recently relocated theater company need adjustment time to realize the extent of possibilities offered by its new home?



Falling: A Wake.
Photo by Mark Campbell

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SPRING PREVIEW

New to these parts

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

There are plenty of world premieres and regional premieres to appease Windy City theater fans who are always on the lookout for something new. All shows in Chicago unless otherwise noted.

Of LGBT interest

Ten Chimneys, Northlight Theatre, Skokie, through April 15. The Chicago-area premiere of Jeffrey Hatcher's comic drama about the famed real-life actors Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontanne is bound to have some gay appeal since Noel Coward is a featured guest at this couple's fabled Wisconsin home. 847-673-6300 or www.northlight.org

Girl You Know It's True, Pavement Group at Chopin Theatre, April 12-May 13. Bixby Elliott's world-premiere drama takes inspiration from the Milli Vanilli scandal to guess at what might happen when a 40-ish playwright conjures a new identity as an African-American lesbian in a wheelchair in order to get his work produced. 773-789-8093 or www.pavementgroup.org

The Roar of the Butterfly, KMP Artists at Victory Gardens Richard Christiansen Theater, May 2-20. Cabaret singer Spider Saloff takes on numerous personalities in this revue that starts as a memorial service to an Asian drag queen. 773-871-3000 or www.victorygardens.org

2012 Gay Play Weekend, Pride Films and Plays at Center on Halsted's Hoover-Leppen Theater, April 13-15. Five new plays featuring LGBT characters or themes are presented in staged readings. On the bill is Adam Siegel's *Lost In History* at 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 13, George Smart's *Mr. Teddy* at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, April 14, Dylan Costello's *Hello Norma Jeane* at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 14, Sean Chandler and David Leeper's *At the Flash* at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, April 15 and Leo Schwartz's *Under a Rainbow Flag* at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, April 15. www.pridefilmsandplays.com

[title of show], Northlight Theatre, Skokie, May 4-June 10. Two gay guys try to create a new musical in just three weeks in this critically acclaimed self-reflexive Broadway musical about the process of writing a show. 847-673-6300 or www.northlight.org

World premieres

Rick Bayless in Cascabel, Lookingglass Theatre, March 21-April 22. Tickets are probably impossible to come by for this limited engagement featuring celebrity chef Rick Bayless, but



Ten Chimneys.

you can still try for this collaboration with Tony Hernandez and Heidi Stillman that combines circus feats with culinary passion. 312-337-0665 or www.lookingglasstheatre.org

Eyes Without a Face, Chicago Tap Theatre at Stage 773, March 23-April 1. Poet Marc Kelly Smith provides a running commentary and Andrew Edwards contributes an original score for this percussive adaptation of a 1959 French horror film about abduction and plastic surgery. 773-327-5252 or www.chicagotaptheatre.com

Trash, Babes With Blades Theatre Company at The Side Project, March 24-May 5. Playwright Arthur M. Jolly was a winner of Babes With Blades' Joining Sword & Pen contest, so now they present a double-cast staging of his drama about two sisters pouring through a dump to find an unopened letter from their late mother. 773-904-0391 or www.babeswithblades.org

L-Vis Live!, Victory Gardens Theater at Richard Christiansen Theater, March 27-April 14. Kevin Coval performs in his show adapted from his book *L-Vis Lives! Racemusic Poems*, which is all about how white artists are inspired by (and steal from) African-American artists. 773-871-3000 or www.victorygardens.org

We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Heroics of Namibia, Formerly Known as South-West Africa, From the Ger-

man Sudwestafrika, Between the Years 1884-1915, Victory Gardens Theater, March 30-April 29. Jackie Sibblies Drury's new dark comedy is about a group of high-minded actors who gather together to give a presentation on a distant genocide, only to have their presentation get out of hand. 773-871-3000 or www.victorygardens.org

Re-Spiced: A Silk Road Cabaret, Silk Road Rising at Chicago Temple, April 4-May 6. Formerly known as Silk Road Theatre Project, the company offers up another cabaret revue featuring Asian and Middle Eastern themes explored in American and British song. 312-857-1234 or www.silkroadrising.org

The March, Steppenwolf Theatre, April 5-June 10. Out artist Frank Galatti (Ragtime) adapts and directs E.L. Doctorow's epic novel about the destructive march of 62,000 Union soldiers through Georgia during the Civil War. 312-335-1650 or www.steppenwolf.org

Rise of the Numberless, Bailiwick Chicago and The New Colony at Flat Iron Arts Building, April 6-May 26. A collaborative sci-fi piece about a country's "One Child, One Nation" policy to curb overpopulation. thenewcolony.org or bailiwickchicago.com

Fish Men, Goodman Theatre, April 7-May 6. Candido Tirado's world premiere is all about a group of chess wizards who engage in high-stakes games and hustles. 312-443-3800 or www.goodmantheatre.org

The Improv Play, InFusion Theatre Company at DCA Storefront Theater, April 10-May 20. This world premiere by Randall Colburn incorporates sketch comedy and improv sessions to tell the tale of three Chicago improvisers seeking success and validation after one of their troupe members leaves for New York to star in an internationally famous NBC-TV show. 312-742-8497 or www.infusiontheatre.com

Liberal Arts: The Musical!, Underscore Theatre Company at Second Stage Theatre. A new musical revue by Alex Higgin-Houser, David Kornfeld, Laura Stratford and Brendan Siegfried looking at student loans and debt incurred by attending Secular Liberal Arts College. 773-549-1815 or www.liberalartsthemusical.com

White Trash Wedding and a Funeral, Factory Theater at Prop Thr, April 20-June 2. Mike Beyer and Bill Havle's dark comedy about a guy hoping for an inheritance of a septic tank cleaning company. 312-409-3247 or www.thefactorytheater.com

My Kind of Town, TimeLine Theatre, May 1-July 29. John Conroy's world premiere drama is drawn from his decades-long work as a journalist following the Chicago police torture scandal. 773-281-8463 or www.timelinetheatre.com

Chicago-area premieres

Tom Jones, Polarity Ensemble Theatre at Josephinum Academy, March 20-April 29. The Midwest premiere of David Hammond's take on Henry Fielding's bawdy 18th century novel, which was also famously adapted into an Academy Award-winning 1963 film. 800-838-3006 or www.petheatre.com

Fucking A, Urban Theater Company at Pegasus Players/Beacon Street Hull House, March 20-April 15. The Midwest premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winner Suzan-Lori Parks' drama that focuses on an abortionist in a post-apocalyptic world. This provocatively titled show takes its inspiration from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. 312-239-8783 or www.urbantheaterchicago.org

The Giver, Adventure Stage Chicago, March 22-April 26. Eric Coble provides a new stage adaptation of Lois Lowry's Newbery Medal-winning novel exploring conformity and independent thought. 773-342-4141 or www.adventurestage.org

Fela!, Oriental Theatre, March 27-April 15. Out choreographer/director Bill T. Jones helms this exuberant Tony Award-winning musical celebrating the life and controversies of Afrobeat legend and Nigerian activist Fela Kuti. 800-775-2000

or www.broadwayinchicago.com

Chesapeake, Remy Bumpo Theatre at Greenhouse Theater Center, March 28-April 29. Call it a dog-napping gone wrong in Lee Blessing's dark comedy when a performance artist tries to create a media event by stealing the beloved dog of an arch-conservative senator who has cut off his NEA grant. 773-404-7336 or www.remybumpo.org

Breaking Up is Hard to Do, Fox Valley Repertory at Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, March 29-May 20. Kevin Bellie directs the Midwest premiere of a jukebox musical featuring the songs of Neil Sedaka set to a new script by Erik Jackson and Ben H. Winters. 630-584-6342 or www.foxvalleyrep.org

Motherhood the Musical, Royal George Theatre, March 30-May 20. Sue Fabish's musical comedy about the joys (and horrors) of motherhood finally makes it to Chicago after some initial scheduling delays. So get ready to rock out to songs along the lines of "Costco Queen," "Baby Weight Blues" and more. 800-982-2787 or www.motherhoodthemusical.com

After the Revolution, Next Theatre, Evanston, April 5-May 13. A Jewish-American family is forced to reevaluate its history regarding a famously blacklisted grandfather in this Midwest premiere of Amy Herzog's drama. 847-475-1875 or www.nexttheatre.org

Tunnel Rat, Genesis Theatrical Productions at Preston Bradley Center, April 5-29. The U.S. premiere of Australian playwright Neil Cole's drama is all about a short 17-year-old who chooses to serve in the Army rather than going to jail, which means he ends up in Vietnam. 773-724-1554 or www.genesis-theatricals.com

Route 66, Paramount Theatre at Copley Theatre, Aurora, April 11-June 10. Roger Bean (*The Marvelous Wonderettes*) pens another musical jukebox revue, this time celebrating that famed U.S. roadway stretching from Chicago to California. 630-896-6666 or www.paramountaurora.com

The Receptionist, Steep Theatre, April 12-May 19. Adam Bock's one-act drama starts out mundanely, but then it turns very sinister as it delves deeper into the notion of institutionalized torture. 866-811-4111 or www.steeptheatre.com

In a Forest, Dark and Deep, Profiles Theatre's The Main Stage, April 13-June 3. The U.S. premiere of Neil LaBute's dark psychological thriller is about a sparring brother and sister who are clearing out a remote cottage in the forest. This show also opens Profiles Theatre's new space near its original home. 773-549-1815 or www.profiles-theatre.org

Moscow, Cheryomushki, Chicago Opera Theater at Harris Theater for Music and Dance, April 14-25. Back in 2009, a voting and fundraising public selected Shostakovich's comic operetta about Soviet housing shortages and love games to be part of Chicago Opera Theater's "The People's Opera" initiative. 312-334-7777 or www.chicagooperatheater.org

Sixty Miles to Silver Lake, Collaboracion at Flat Iron Arts Building, April 19-May 27. Dan LeFranc's one-act drama is seemingly about a divorced father pumping his teenaged son for information about his ex-wife, but don't be fooled by all the anger and resentment that keep emanating out of them. 312-226-9633 or www.collaboracion.org

Teseo, Chicago Opera Theater at Harris Theater for Music and Dance, April 21-May 2. Chicago Opera Theater concludes its Medea-inspired three-opera series with this baroque work written by Handel. 312-334-7777 or www.chicagooperatheater.org

Tigers Be Still, Theater Wit, April 24-June 3. Kim Rosenstock's dark comedy is about an unemployed college graduate who hopes her crazy life will turn around when she gets hired as a high school art teacher. 773-976-8150 or www.theaterwit.org

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'The Xylophone West' puts different spin on LGBTs and bullying

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

Alex Lubischer wants you to know that *The Xylophone West* is not like most LGBT plays about bullying. Although it shares a certain kinship with *The Laramie Project*, the young playwright is not simply adding his own thoughts to the "It Gets Better" project.

The *Xylophone West*—which opened last Friday at the Red Tape Theater, 621 W. Belmont Ave., courtesy The Fine Print Theatre Company—centers on Patrick, a victim of constant bullying by other kids at his high school. He hatches the idea to try running away with his only friend at the school, but a nightmarish accident occurs that forces him to confront them. All of this drama is set in a small Nebraska town.

"Patrick must come into his own, figure out who he is in this very athletic, hetero-normative traditionally masculine environment," Lubischer said. "What sets it apart is that it's a very masculine, athletic, movement-based play."

"*Xylophone*" will mark Lubischer's Chicago debut. In fact, the play's selection for production by Fine Print, which happened through his friend and the play's director, Josh Sobel, essentially brought him to Chicago in September.

It was only a few years ago that Lubischer had even decided to commit to becoming a playwright. He attended the University of Southern California with the intention of studying acting but became more and more interested in writing. His first play, *Acts of Contrition*, won Best



Playwright Alex Lubischer. Photo courtesy of Lubischer

Concurrent Play Lab Script at the Great Plains Theatre Conference in 2008. The summer after he graduated in 2009, he attended the Theatermakers Intensive at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Conn., where he had his epiphany to become a writer.

Despite time in Los Angeles and Connecticut, the foundation of *The Xylophone West* comes from Lubischer's experience growing up in rural Nebraska. He said the play couldn't take place anywhere else.

"There's not a lot dialogue in rural towns and problems can arise for LGBT people in those

communities," he said. "Closeted individuals must fend for themselves until they get out. That isolation is really unique to *The Xylophone West*."

Showing the challenges of what Lubischer described as places "where they believe an LGBT person has never come out of that town" and where "It Gets Better is a fictitious reality" motivated him to write the play.

"Telling these stories is the way of saying this exists and in more conservative parts of the country, that's where it starts," Lubischer said. "This exists. This is a real thing. [The play] doesn't say conservative people are bigoted—it doesn't have that stance at all. This is a real problem and an important thing we need to deal with now in this country."

Lubischer said he wanted the play to be appreciated in different ways by both the traditional liberal theatergoer and a more conservative audience. He was, consequently, anxious recently when a great aunt from Nebraska visited him in Chicago and wanted to see the play. He warned her about the nature of the content, but Lubischer said she was very moved by it.

Creating a play that would have a greater universality to it was very important to Lubischer.

"I didn't write it to be topical or make political statement," he said. "I wanted to try and write a play about bravery, bravery to become okay and accept yourself, but also the bravery of a community to have empathy. It takes a certain amount of bravery to say everything around me says this is wrong, but I'm going to treat [LGBT people] with dignity and worth."

The Xylophone West draws on his own experience growing up, though in terms of his own sexuality, Lubischer did not begin to come out as bisexual until very recently.

"This is not a play I would've been able to write even two years ago," he said. "So much was born out of this need to write a story I was afraid to write and to find that bravery for myself as an artist."

As for the play's cryptic title, Lubischer doesn't

want to ruin anything for audiences, but said that it was inspired by the lyrics to an old Tom Waits song.

The Xylophone West runs through April 4. Tickets are available through www.thefineprinttheatre.org as well as www.brownpapertickets.com.

CRITICS' PICKS

Bring it On: The Musical, Cadillac Palace Theatre, through March 25. So what if this corporate franchising touring musical isn't based upon the original film? Any fan of the TV show *Glee* will love this very-of-the-moment high school tale of competitive cheerleading and backstabbing ambition. SCM

The Convert, Goodman Theatre, through March 25. The hopes and hypocrisies of Christianity and colonialism are explored in the hilt in Danai Gurira's historical drama set in 1895 Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Catch it now before the production heads off to Los Angeles. SCM

Fulton Street Sessions, TUTA Theatre at Chicago Dramatists, through March 25. A delicious Euro-style cabaret of nearly wordless clowning, arresting visual devices and unexpected musical juxtapositions. Sam Beckett goes to the circus! A seamless whole, not a series of acts. Tops! JA

The North Plan, Theater Wit, through April 1. Nobody does grassroots revolution like Jason Wells and Kate Buddeke as they light the spark to fiery holocaust in this sinister/slapstick look at uprisings in humble quarters. MSB

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NUNN ON ONE: THEATER

Gregory Haney brings it in cheerleading musical



BY JERRY NUNN

Many fans of the hit movie *Bring It On*, about the champion high school cheerleading squad, will be happy to know that it is the foundation for a musical made for the stage.

It's going to be a catfight as the school rivalries compete to win in this new show.

Windy City Times spoke with Gregory Haney who plays the trans cheerleader La Cienega in this touring production. Haney has taken over New York's Broadway in Memphis and Tarzan as well as touring with smashes such as *Cats* and *Wicked*.

Before coming to Chicago, Haney talked with WCT about his background and his one-of-a-kind character.

Windy City Times: Hi, Gregory. Where in the world are you?

Gregory Haney: I'm in Dallas, Texas.

WCT: Enjoy the weather down there while you can. You have had some history with Chicago, I noticed.

GH: I do. I lived there for a year and a half with *Wicked*.

WCT: You studied at the Gus Giordano Dance School here also.

GH: I studied at Giordano's then went to the Joffrey Ballet in New York a couple of years after.

WCT: How did you then get on Broadway?

GH: I was in school in 2003 then decided to go to New York to train at Alvin Ailey but wound up training in other places. I auditioned for a show and got it. I was gone for three years. When I came back Tarzan was on Broadway. I auditioned and got that one. That was my first Broadway experience.

WCT: Was Josh Strickland in that cast?

GH: Yes he was.

WCT: I saw him in *Peepshow*, which he was excellent in. You have been in some great productions as well, with *Memphis* and *Cats*.

GH: I have been very lucky. Now I am in *Bring It On*, so that is amazing.

WCT: Are you a triple threat, with singing, dancing, and acting?

GH: That is really what is great about the show is everybody does everything. It is not even triple threats; it is more like quadruple threats.

WCT: What is the fourth threat?

GH: Tumbling.

WCT: How acrobatic do you have to be for this performance?

GH: I don't have to do any kind of tumbling for the show. I can, but I don't. I think my wig would fall off so I leave it to everyone else!

WCT: Do you have a lot of makeup to put on in the show?

GH: I have a 15-to-18-minute transformation in the middle of the show while it is going on. I am in the opening number then I run to my dressing room. The first number when they get to my school I am a girl. It is very interesting the dynamic between the two. When I come out of the stage door no one realizes that I was just a woman onstage.

WCT: What have you learned with the experience of playing transgender? Has it opened up doors for you?

GH: It has. It is a double-edged sword a little bit because you know you have all the qualities of being a man onstage and at the same time very easy to flip into being a woman. You are so versed in being around women that you don't have to dig that deep, especially being an African American and having such strong female roles in our life it is very easy to tap into my other experiences.

WCT: What is your character La Cienega like? Sassy maybe?

GH: She is sassy. She can be your best friend as well as your worst enemy.

WCT: Have you heard reactions from transgender people in your travels?

GH: I have. L.A. was our first stop with the tour and there were a few transgender community members that came to the show and sought me out after the show. They were very excited



Gregory Haney. PR photo

about my portrayal of the character. That made me feel really great.

One of the biggest things I was worried about was if I was being real with who she was and showing respect to the community. It is such a hard thing in general to do. I didn't want to poke fun at it or be disrespectful. I wanted to show there is strength in who you are.

WCT: That would be hard to do if the show is campy. Is the show campy?

GH: Jeff Whitty is the writer so, of course, there will be an element of camp. Have you seen Avenue Q?

WCT: Yes. He won the Tony for it.

GH: It is a traditional musical theatre show so it gives you two acts. The characters just follow and you will have a lot of belly laughs.

WCT: Tell our readers about some of the music.

GH: The music is amazing. We have Tom Kitt (*Next to Normal*) and Lin-Manuel Miranda (*In the Heights*) on music, Amanda Green on lyrics, music supervisor Alex Lacamoire, so it is literally the dream team.

WCT: Do you have a favorite song that you like in the production?

GH: "It's All Happening" at the top of act two.

WCT: Do you have a solo in *Bring It On*?

GH: I do a lot of the backups but when "Ain't No Thing" comes up it is myself, Nautica, and Bridget singing. It is a self-empowering song.

WCT: Anything else you want to say about the show?

GH: Just buckle up!

Buy your seat to buckle into fast as *Bring It On: The Musical* runs through March 25. Visit www.broadwayinchicago.com.

SPRING PREVIEW

New tenants in old theaters: Relocations abound

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Visitors to our city commenting on the abundance of theaters scattered throughout the neighborhoods are typically told that any empty room bigger than a bathroom stall eventually becomes a playhouse (smaller, and it probably hosts a weekly poetry reading). Despite the fears engendered by a shaky economy, this last year has borne witness to Chicago's thrifty utilization of vacant space. For every performance space lost, others have opened their doors.

In the vanguard of newly rehabbed entertainment palaces is Black Ensemble's snazzy new home at 4450 N. Clark St. where, since its gala opening last fall, the recently closed Jackie Wilson Story has lit the corner just north of Graceland Cemetery. Next up on the Black Ensemble Theater's documusicals roster is **Don't Talk About My Father, Cause God Is My Friend**, featuring the songs of Marvin Gaye, opening in early May (773-769-4451; www.blackensembletheater.org).

Running a close second on the new-construction circuit are a pair of comedy outlets: **UP**, carved out of the former Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding environmental setting on the third floor of Piper's Alley (312-662-4562; www.upcomedyclub.com) and **The Laugh Factory**, nestled in the shell of the former Lakeshore movie theater (773-327-3175; www.laughfactory.com).

Other new tenants in the neighborhoods include the previously itinerant Rivendell Theatre, inaugurating its new Edgewater home at 5779 N. Ridge Ave. with the midwest premiere of Gary Kirkham's **Falling: A Wake**, running to April 14 (773-334-7728; www.rivendelltheatre.org), and National Pastime, after 20 years in its Uptown Speakeasy, moving into the deco-splendor of the Preston Bradley auditorium at 941 W. Lawrence Ave., where it will break champagne on its landmark-status playpen with Michael Sokoloff's Sam Peckinpah-inspired **A Bend In The Road** (773-327-7707; www.npt2.com).

The year has also seen acquisition of stage-worthy properties that would otherwise be slated for non-artistic purposes. Foremost among the new landlords is Profiles Theatre Company, whose empire now boasts no less than three performance spaces: its well-established home base at 4147 N. Broadway, where **Bachelorette** has been extended through April 29, as well as the Wrigleyville storefront now dubbed "The Second Stage," at 3408 N. Sheffield Ave., where the long-running **Assisted Living** will make way for **Liberal Arts: The Musical** opening April 14. Profiles' third room is (surprise!) its longtime neighbor, the Old Speakeasy—a few doors away at 4139 N. Broadway—whose new ownership will be inaugurated April 19 by quasi-resident playwright Neil LaBute's **In The Forest, Dark And Deep** (773-549-1815; www.profilestheatre.com).

Teatro Luna keeps the solitary Live Bait theater at 3914 N. Clark St. occupied, with a new show, **Living Large In A Mini Kind Of Way**, opening May 10 (773-819-5862; www.teatroluna.org). The Den at 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave. (773-609-2336; www.thedentheatre.com) and The Charnel House at 3421 W. Fullerton Ave.—the latter currently extending hospitality through April 7 to The Agency Theater Collective's **Paradise Lost** (773-490-5265; www.wereatheagency.org)—continue to provide rental space for homeless fringe troupes. Making headlines, too, is the news that Gorilla Tango has recently assumed management of the long-shuttered Skokie Playhouse in the north suburbs, where DC Pierson, a member of the Derrick Comedy group, provides the housewarming April 7 (773-598-4549; www.gorillatango.com).

Urban Theatre, after being evicted from the



Black Ensemble Theater. Photo by Scott Morgan

Center for the Performing Arts in River North, found temporary shelter in, appropriately, a desanctified Wicker Park church, but its production of Suzan Lori-Parks' **F***kin' A**, playing through April 15 (312-239-8783; www.urbantheaterchicago.com) is now housed in more artist-friendly quarters at the Beacon Street Hull House at 4520 N. Beacon St., presently leased to the reorganizing Pegasus Players. If that address strikes a familiar note among seasoned Chicago playgoers, it's because the community center was, for decades, synonymous with—wait for it!—Black Ensemble Theater. Thus comes full circle the tradition of Chicago Theater guarding its temples, without whose "empty space" (according to Aristotle and Peter Brook) there can be no performance.

NEW from page 24

A Brown Bear, *A Caterpillar And A Moon*: Treasured Stories by Eric Carle, Chicago Children's Theatre presents the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia at Victory Gardens Biograph Theater, May 2-27. A triple bill of magical puppetry shows inspired by Eric Carle's children's books. 773-871-3000 or www.chicagochildrenstheatre.org

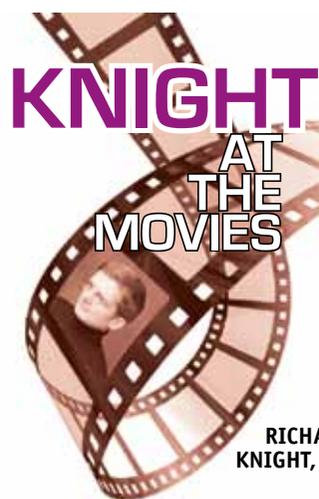
Hostage Song, Signal Ensemble Theatre, May 3-June 9. Clay McLeod Chapman and Kyle Jarro's indie-rock musical shows two hostages who try to keep their sanity by discussing their love of music. 773-347-1350 or www.signalensemble.com

Making God Laugh, Theatre at the Center,

Munster, Ind., May 3-June 10. First Folio Theatre is an associate producer on this Chicago-area premiere about empty nest parents adapting to their new stage of life. 219-836-3255 or www.theatreatthecenter.com

A Bend in the Road, National Pastime Theater, May 4-June 9. An adventure of two men heading out to see the Great American West during the gold rush. 773-327-7077 or www.npt2.com

The Blonde, the Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead, Writers' Theatre, Glencoe, May 22-July 29. Australian playwright Robert Hewett's international hit one-woman show is about a thwarted housewife who loses herself in a heated moment of passion. 847-242-6000 or www.writerstheatre.org



BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT, JR.

The Birds; film notes

Director Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, his 1963 adaptation of the Daphne du Maurier short story, is generally acknowledged to be his final masterwork. Tippi Hedren stars in the film as Melanie Daniels, a spoiled newspaper heiress who visits Bodega Bay, a small northern California hamlet in order to play a prank on Mitch, a handsome lawyer (Rod Taylor) she's met in a bird shop.

Melanie's comeuppance begins with an attack on her by a lone seagull as she's motoring across the bay and ends with a room full of winged

creatures flying directly at her face that found the nascent actress trapped inside a cage on the set for days until she literally collapsed, an emotional wreck.

Hedren, a stunningly gorgeous blonde, had been a print model when Hitchcock and his wife and closest creative collaborator, Alma, saw her in a television commercial for a diet soft drink and immediately thought of her for the part of Melanie. After a series of meetings and tests, they quietly put her under personal contract and assigned the untrained Hedren the lead in the movie (where she co-starred alongside veterans Taylor, Jessica Tandy, Suzanne Pleshette and Veronica Cartwright).

According to several of his biographers and Hedren herself, Hitchcock then literally took control of the young divorcee's life. Choosing everything from her clothes to the choice of wine she drank at dinner, the autocratic director soon overwhelmed Hedren, who did her best in what must have been an extremely difficult situation. (In a truly bizarre development, Hitchcock had a doll made up to look like her as a birthday gift for Hedren's daughter, Melanie Griffith—and had it delivered in a tiny coffin to the child.)

with TCM movie host Ben Mankiewicz. Tickets are free—on a first-come, first-served basis—and available for download at www.tcm.com/2012/roadtohollywood.

Film notes:

—**Cinema Q II**, the free, LGBT-themed film series with screenings Wednesdays in March at the Chicago Cultural Center at 6:30pm in the Claudia Cassidy Theater continues March 21 with French Canadian queer auteur Xavier Dolan's 2009 black comedy *I Killed My Mother* (which I wrote about at length last week) and concludes Wed., March 28, with the 2003 documentary *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*. Rustin, a justly celebrated late African-American civil-rights activist, has been lauded with a series of tributes and commemorations this month (in honor of what would have been his 100th birthday) but as out director Bennett Singer's film reminds us, Rustin began as a true rebel—an unapologetic, openly gay Black teenager in a time when those things were unheard of.

Singer will attend the screening, which The Legacy Project (Rustin will be inducted in October as one of the group's initial honoree's)

and Affinity Chicago are co-sponsoring. DVDs of the film will be available for purchase. A dessert reception, provided by Ann Sather, will follow a post-screening discussion with Singer. Windy City Times is one of the series' media sponsors. www.legacyprojectchicago.org

—The late Whitney Houston's biggest movie hit, *The Bodyguard*—the 1992 romantic thriller in which she co-stars with Kevin Costner (who claimed in his rather self-serving eulogy to her that he was responsible for her casting)—is retuning to movie theaters for one night. In the quasi-musical Houston plays an onscreen variation of herself, a pop superstar named Rachel Marron; Costner plays Frank Farmer, a sullen, former Secret Service agent assigned to protect the diva because she's been receiving death threats. The movie—melodramatic and rather far-fetched—is best enjoyed as a microcosm of early '90s culture, from its fashions to its music.

(The soundtrack, one of the most successful ever, contains Houston's signature song, "I Will Always Love You.") Surprisingly, as the picture progresses, Houston's chip on her shoulder/vulnerable little girl performance and stunning beauty and voice somehow do sorta seem to match up with Costner's terse line readings and barely contained ego. (He was also then at the height of his screen popularity.) The 20th-anniversary screening takes place at various Chicagoland theaters Wed., March 28. www.fathom-events.com/classics/event/thebodyguard.aspx

—**Four DVDs of note:** Michelle Williams stars as the ethereal Monroe in *My Week with Marilyn*, based on the memoirs of bisexual English writer Simon Curtis (already out on DVD) while Rooney Mara takes on the role of the tough, bisexual computer hacker in David Fincher's American remake of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (now available). Both ladies were nominated for Oscars but lost to mighty Meryl Streep (whose *The Iron Lady*, from lesbian director Phyllida Lloyd, is out April 10). *Eating Out: The Final Weekend*, the fifth installment in Q. Alan Broc-

ka's guilty-pleasure gay-sex comedy franchise, is out March 27.

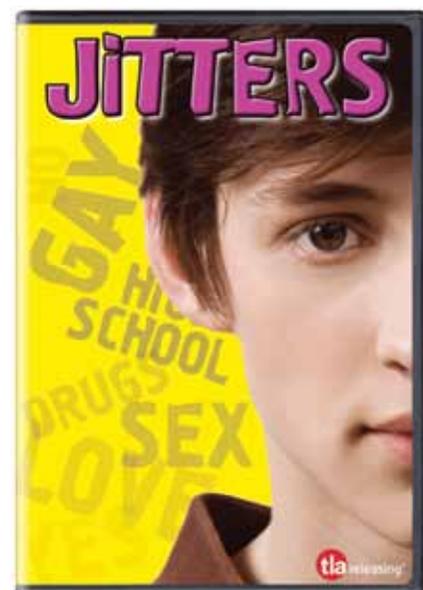
Check out my archived reviews at www.windycitymediagroup.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter website.

Jitters on DVD March 27

TLA Releasing will release the Icelandic coming-of-age drama *Jitters* on DVD March 27.

Jitters is about a budding relationship between two teenage boys: uptight teen Gabriel and free-spirited Marcus. Becoming friends while studying in England, things change their last night together when they share an unexpected kiss.

See www.jittersfilm.com for more information.



The Birds.

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MOVIES

'Brother Outsider' filmmaker Bennett Singer talks Bayard Rustin

BY YASMIN NAIR

Out filmmaker Bennett Singer is the co-director and co-producer, with Nancy D. Kates, of the critically acclaimed 2003 film, *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*, about the gay, African-American civil-rights activist whom many consider the main organizer behind the historic 1963 March on Washington.

Rustin, who was also an adviser to Martin Luther King Jr., was born in 1912 and died in 1987.

Using a vast trove of archival footage, *Brother Outsider* distills the complex life of a multifaceted and enigmatic personality. It has been making the rounds as part of several centennial events on Rustin's life and career. Singer, originally from Chicago but now based in New York, will be in town for a March 28 screening at the Chicago Cultural Center. He spoke to *Windy City Times* via phone.

Yasmin Nair: What inspired you to make this film?

Bennett Singer: I had worked for almost five years at Blackside, the company that produced *Eyes on the Prize*, the 14-hour PBS documentary on the history of the civil-rights movement, and it was while I was working as a researcher on that project that I first learned about Rustin. I was struck both by his incredible achievements as well as by the fact that he seemed to have been erased from history.

I teamed up with another filmmaker friend, Nancy Kates, some years later and together we set out to make a film whose mission was really to rediscover Rustin and to bring him from the margins back to the center and to look at both his accomplishments as a strategist and organizer and mentor as well as his ongoing relevance in the 21st century.



Bennett Singer. Photo courtesy of Singer

YN: What specifically sparked your interest or led you to him?

Singer: Well, I came across him in the process of doing research on the March on Washington. I had never heard of him and I think it was this realization that a gay man who was really remarkably open about being gay in the '40s and '50s and '60s had been at the center of the civil-rights movement. That certainly sparked my interest.

And then the more I learned, the more intrigued I was to think about and really probe, get a clear understanding of the way in which Rustin's openness and honesty about being gay

made him a target not only for opponents of the civil-rights movement but even for other civil-rights leaders. It was that intersection, I think, of his work for social justice at the same time that he was being persecuted—I don't think that's an over-statement—for his own honesty within a movement for social justice [that interested me].

YN: Right, that's the irony there. You must have had to wade through a huge amount of material, and I was struck by the footage at the very beginning of the film, from his high school years. You found old black-and-white film of him in the middle of a football game. How did you find that and so much more of what seems to be a fair amount of archival material given that, as you point out, so much of his life had been erased from history?

Singer: Yes, the football footage—it's miraculous [laughs] that we managed to find that. We had researchers who were literally scouring the globe and we found material from India and Africa and various private individuals' collections and peace movement and labor movement archives. In an attempt to be thorough, we called his high school and asked, if by chance, they had any photographs or old yearbooks or footage of him as a high school student in the late 1920s. It was quite a surprise and a miraculous one when they told us that they, indeed, had footage of him playing football.

I think that was about 1929, and that really brought that piece of him to life, to be able to show him as an athlete. As a high school student, he really was both a star athlete and an orator who won a speaking prize and was really beloved by his classmates and teachers. As we say in the film, he told his grandmother, while still a high school student, that he was gay and I think that openness, even in the late 1920s, was quite remarkable.

But, yes, the footage: When we set out to make the film, I honestly wasn't sure that we could make a film about Rustin, given that he did make a conscious effort to stay behind the scenes, and I wasn't clear that there would be enough footage or photographs to tell his story. I was very pleasantly surprised that we managed to find as much as we did.

The other great archival element is the music. He really did use music as a central part of his activism, and he did quite a bit of singing, and we used those songs as much as we could. Not just to show that he was such a good singer but also to tell his story. There's an uncanny way in which the lyrics of those songs actually relate to his own life and really serve as a narration that allowed us to use his own voice to tell pieces of his story through the singing.

YN: This was a man with an extraordinarily complex history, and with many facets to him. Yet, the film has a clear focus and narrative arc. How would you describe that arc, and how did you come to a decision about how to present it?

Singer: Honestly, it was a challenge. We had 300 hours of material and we had conducted phone interviews with about 200 people and then narrowed that list down to about 20, whom we filmed. There really was a lot of material and a lot of facets, as you say, to weave together. We did want to show, to the extent we could, what a complex vision he had, an intertwined vision in which he was working for racial equality and economic justice and equality for LGBT Americans and I think he saw those as very connected and interwoven.



Martin Luther King Jr. (left) and Bayard Rustin. Image courtesy of Bennett Singer

Certainly, the economic aspect of it which has gained so much relevance with Occupy Wall Street and recent events was very central to his work and his mentor, A. Philip Randolph, imparted to him the notion that social change can't be reduced simply to race; it's a matter of economic and class. And that there's potential there for such a broad coalition if people come together based on their economic interests. So that would be a way for the labor movement in which Rustin was very focused and connected to, to become an ally of the civil-rights movement, and he certainly devoted a lot of attention to that alliance.

In terms of the arc, we wanted to develop that sense of his complexity and the intersections of his identities and I think that there was this core of openness and honesty from his days as a high school student which both liberated him and also made him a target. So we look at both the price he paid for his openness as a gay man but also the ways in which that openness really set him free, was a form of liberation. I think that was an arc that we wanted to develop.

YN: Given his complexity and the fact that he did live for a long time and was involved in so many different movements, there's also an arc to his politics.

Singer: Absolutely.

YN: Just the left alone—forget even the right—would have some issues. When you screen the film, what kind of responses do you get and how do you respond to them?

Singer: It's true that people come away with varying reactions to Rustin's life and to various pieces of his work, and certainly folks who are committed to Pacifism have a lot of issues with the stance he took on Vietnam. He was opposed to the Vietnam War but he didn't speak out as forcefully against it as Dr. King did, for tactical reasons. As we show in the film, he felt that that would jeopardize the alliance with LBJ and would potentially backfire in terms of ongoing civil-rights movement, and the connections between the Democratic Party and the civil-rights movement. So, he justified that position with a tactical reason and we try to portray that in the film as well as the fact that, for some people, it's a betrayal.

But many of the people who watch the film, particularly high school students and young

people usually come away with the notion that Rustin is a role model or a hero. They seem to say that despite differences they might have on specific issues, when you look at the overall arc of his life, it's one of courage and bravery and this insistence on continuing to fight and continuing to struggle and to push for social justice, even when he was taking an unpopular stance or when he was not fully supported by members of the civil-rights movement.

I think on that level he can serve as a source of inspiration for activists, even if they don't agree with all of the choices that Rustin made. In retrospect, there is the notion that for 60 years, he was committed to social change and the notion, as he says in the film, of putting one's body on the line and taking a stand. On that level there has been a pretty pervasive response among many audience members that there's something inspiring and something that can really resonate with 21st-century issues.

YN: I was also curious about Rustin's relationship with the African-American community and its relationship to homosexuality. Obviously, in an 83-minute film, it's very difficult to distill and even address everything. But in the context of the conversations going on today about homophobia and race, where there are controversies, I was struck by one scene in particular.

You have the voiced words of Amiri Baraka criticizing Rustin in an open letter with the words, "Bayard, when you denounce us nationalists for teaching hate, based on your white folks' analysis, you are actually functioning as the big gun of white oppression. ... You are a slaveship profiteer, a paid pervert for the racist unions, and I feel it necessary to expose you." Those words are illustrated by a photo of Rustin standing next to an African-American man holding up a sign with the words, "Fag! Bayard."

Singer: It was a remarkable image in that there's Bayard, very calm and very poised, standing right next to this guy who's denouncing him with a blatant, bigoted message of "Fag." And so it seems related to the idea that Amiri Baraka was conveying in his open letter.

Turn to page 29

RUSTIN from page 28

YN: You also show Stokely Carmichael [Black Panther leader] debating him. That reminded me of Huey Newton's statement about homosexuals, where he went beyond simply preaching tolerance and even analyzed the reasons for homophobia. I'm wondering what it means that the Black response to Rustin, especially towards the end, come across as very potently homophobic, but there's a different, more complex reality outside the film.

Singer: The debate with Stokely Carmichael—there isn't overt homophobia there, maybe within the broader responses of some people in the Black Power movement. I would say certainly in recent years it's been heartening to see the ways in which Civil Rights and African-American groups have used Rustin and the story as a way to address homophobia in the Black community.

For instance, at their convention last year, the NAACP did a session precisely on homophobia in the African-America community and used Rustin's story as a springboard to look at the history and the present-day aspect of that. It's been also really heartening to take the film to historically Black colleges. There is often a perception that there is no overlap of Black and gay issues, which denies the reality of Black lesbian and gay people who are often invisible in many of our conversations.

YN: On those lines, does the film also resonate for white gay communities, where many often decide that there are no Black gay people or no support for gays and lesbians in the Black community?

Singer: Yes, absolutely; the film has been very warmly received in LGBT communities, at gay film festivals and gay events. Among white viewers there's definitely this sense of his courage and integrity coming thorough. It's healthy to see the kind of bridges that his story can create. Showing the film and reflecting on his life

has been a way for Black and white and other LGBTs of color to think about common grounds.

YN: You mentioned, at an earlier Chicago History Museum discussion, that one of your favorite scenes was the clip of Rustin walking behind Joan Baez and Bob Dylan as they start to sing on the stage during the March. I liked that too, because he seems so oblivious to these two huge celebrities just inches away, and is the epitome of cool, in his dark glasses as he nonchalantly smokes a cigarette. What makes you like that scene so much, and what are your other favorites?

Singer: Well, there's that, and the scene with Mahalia Jackson, where he's standing next to her and mouthing and singing the words. That just captures the joy that he was feeling on that day and there's something in that scene that you can only understand by watching it. It's impossible to describe in print, whereas seeing it in a film clip really does epitomize so much of Rustin's sense of spirit, so I like it for that reason.

The clip of him walking by Joan Baez and Bob Dylan—it would ordinarily have been something that nobody focuses on, just a guy walking behind the talent, the main focus. That's also the embodiment of what Rustin embodied or represented, the man behind the scenes who, once you look behind the metaphorical curtain, you realize that the March on Washington might not have materialized without him.

That he was central to bringing Gandhi's ideas and tactics of non-violence to America and shaping the course of the civil-rights movement and really mentoring and guiding Martin Luther King in the application of non-violence. As we show in the film, when King and Rustin first met, King still had guns in his house and armed guards. It really was Rustin and some of his other colleagues who persuaded King to embrace nonviolence fully. King went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize and that is a really key part of Rustin's legacy, that role he played.

YN: Do you think there's been a shift in the understanding and recognition of Rustin since the time you made the film and if so, why?

Singer: Well, yes, the film has been seen by millions but there have also been three or four biographies, a couple of children's books; his high school was renamed after him, after some controversy. There is a sense of him being rediscovered, there has been that shift in recognizing what he did and his ongoing relevance for anyone involved in social justice and change.

I think the [film] sparked a new appreciation of his central but previously overlooked role in the shaping of the civil-rights movement, which transformed America, which led to, among other things, the election of the first African-American president which, until recently people were saying was impossible. There's the overturning of ["Don't Ask, Don't Tell"] and the progress that's being made with same sex marriage and other aspects of equality for gay and lesbian Americans. I think his work and his life and the example he set and the stances he took and the intersections that he represents all have contributed to a new appreciation of the role he played in making America a better place and in advancing the agenda for social justice.

Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin will be screened Wed., March 28, at 6:30 p.m., at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St. Affinity Community Services is co-sponsoring this screening. See www.ExploreChicago.org for more.

In next week's issue of Windy City Times, there will be a piece on the book I Must Resist: The Life and Letters of Bayard Rustin as well as the Bayard Rustin Centennial Conference, which will take place at the University of Illinois at Chicago March 30-31. Find out more about the conference at www.uic.edu/depts/quic/gsc/bayadrustin.html.

Centennial events are listed at www.rustin.org.

OWN cancels Rosie's show

After just five months Oprah Winfrey's network, OWN, has canceled Rosie O'Donnell's talk show, the New York Times reported.

The show is taping its final episode March 20, and will air March 30.

When OWN acquired The Rosie Show last year, it was produced inside Winfrey's Harpo Studios in Chicago, with Winfrey and O'Donnell present for the unveiling.

However, ratings steadily declined after the show's October 2011 premiere drew fewer than 500,000 viewers—dropping to about 200,000. The show was changed constantly, including a staff reduction, the removal of a space for the studio audience and implementing more one-on-one interviews.

O'Donnell had recently put her 6,000-square-foot Lakeview house on the market for \$2.5 million. It was reportedly bought a day later.

In a statement, Winfrey thanked O'Donnell for "working to deliver the best possible show every single day."

The Chicago Tribune reported that OWN just laid off 30 employees due to poor ratings.

Amy Ray releasing new CD, Lung of Love

Amy Ray—known as half of Indigo Girls—has released the CD Lung of Love on her own Daemon Records imprint.

Ray will be kicking off the first leg of her U.S. tour March 10 with a hometown Atlanta show and will include her first SxSW appearances in over a decade. (No Midwest venue is yet listed on the tour.) The first single is entitled "Glow."



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TELEVISION

Zach Knighton of 'Happy Endings': On Chicago show, marriage equality

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Zach Knighton is front and center every Wednesday on the ABC ensemble comedy *Happy Endings*—and the show's title couldn't be more apt.

After being on several pilots and the promising ABC show *FlashForward*, Knighton seems to have found his groove with *Happy Endings*, a series set in Chicago that revolves around a group of six friends, including a gay character who—gasp!—lives like a slob.

Knighton talked with *Windy City Times* about his own acting background, his show, reality TV and marriage equality.

Windy City Times: I was looking at your background, and we have something in common: You went to high school in Virginia Beach, and I went to school in [nearby] Chesapeake.

Zach Knighton: Oh, cool. That's awesome!

WCT: So how'd you end up in L.A.?

ZK: I went to an acting high school—Governors School [for the Arts] in Norfolk. I went to

that world in a much more natural way than most television shows do, and I know the gay community appreciates that. I know my gay friends appreciate it. I'm like, "How did it take so long to have a television show with a gay character who doesn't dress like RuPaul?"

WCT: No offense to RuPaul...

ZK: Oh, no. I love RuPaul. It's just that there are all kinds of people; there are flamboyant straight people. Adam Pally [who plays Max] has brought such great life to that character. I love what he does on that show.

WCT: I just saw the episode "Max's Beard" [where Max comes out to his parents] again—and you kiss Max, too.

ZK: I've kissed everyone on that show, except Damon [Wayans Jr.]. I recently had an episode where everyone had a sex dream about me, so I got to make out with everyone from the show; that was pretty funny.

WCT: Speaking of Damon, his father [comic actor Damon Wayans] has been on the show, right?



Zach Knighton in ABC's *Happy Endings*. Image courtesy of ABC

[another] high school as well, but this was a conservatory setting. I went to VCU [Virginia Commonwealth University] in college, and then I started my career in New York.

I came to L.A. My first series, *Life on a Stick*, was cancelled really quickly. So now I've been out here about six, seven years.

WCT: *Happy Endings* is one of the few shows that makes me laugh out loud. I also like the fact that it's set in Chicago and you see items like Chicago Cubs caps and tins of Garrett Popcorn. Are you a Cubs fan in real life?

ZK: I actually am. I'm one, interestingly enough, because of one player: Ryne Sandberg. I grew up a Cubs fan; I've been to more Cubs games at Wrigley than I have Dodgers, Yankees or Mets games. It's awesome that the show's set in Chicago. I've been pitching to everyone that we need to do a Cubs episode.

WCT: Something else that's pretty fun is that one of the characters is gay [Max]—but he's no stereotype.

ZK: Yeah. I love everyone but I'm particularly a big fan of Max because I have a lot of gay friends, but he's not stereotypically gay. They like to pretend sometimes, though. However, what I think we do [on the show] is represent

ZK: Yes, he was on last season. It was pretty cool; Damon Wayans Sr. was iconic for me. In *Living Color* was one of my favorite shows when I was a teenager. Just having him on was like working with a legend—and, of course, he was perfect as Damon Jr.'s dad.

WCT: You were also in [the gay-themed film] *The Mudge Boy*, which is a pretty heavy drama.

ZK: That was a big movie. It won several awards, and did really well in the gay community. That was one of my first movies when I just started in New York. I was about 21 or so. I haven't seen that movie in years; it'd be interesting to go back and take a look at it.

WCT: So which is tougher to do: comedy or drama?

ZK: They're really two different beasts. Comedy is definitely, I feel, way more technical; there's so much timing with setting up jokes. If I had to say that one was more difficult, I'd say comedy. But just in general, you can't lie in front of the camera—and in comedy, you have to be *really* honest.

WCT: The chemistry among the *Happy Endings* cast is pretty undeniable. What do you attribute it to?

ZK: It really is undeniable. I think the show came at the right time for everybody. This was my ninth pilot and my third series; I never had a show go to a second season. I was coming off of *FlashForward*, and ABC offered me this show. I mean, the writing was on the wall. I'd been down this road and I wasn't sure I was going to continue in this business.

I can't speak for the rest [of the cast], but it seems like we were in that mindset. We really came together and tried to make the best thing we could without any promotion. They put us on the spring, burning us off two episodes at a time. It was really destined for failure. The fact that people discovered the show is kind of a small miracle, really.

WCT: You mentioned *FlashForward*. To me, that show started with such promise. Do you have any idea what happened?

ZK: I think the pilot was amazing. I think maybe they focused too much on the couple during the second and third episodes—too much on the cheating thing instead of the adventure and the sci-fi. [Also,] creatively there was some tension between the creator and the network; when that happens, things start to fall apart. It's no secret that the creator left halfway through the first season.

I had a great ride, though. I liked the character I played and I had a nice arc that season. It did a lot for me, professionally. People still come up to me about that show, which is a great feeling. A guy came up to me on the plane yesterday and said it's still his favorite show ever. But [*Happy Endings*] is a ride, and a whole lot of fun.

WCT: You also said you weren't sure you'd stay an actor. What career would you have, alternatively?

ZK: I've got a great love of the ocean. I've always thought that I'd be working at some sort of marine conservancy. All of my classes were, like, oceanography. I'm an avid surfer, and I just

love water. I have a sailboat, and I'm a licensed captain. I still may do the marine thing; if I get a good seven or eight years with [this show,] who knows?

But I also like directing. If I stick around L.A., I'd love to direct. I'm going to start lobbying to direct episodes of this show. I feel like I'm evolving toward being behind the camera.

WCT: What about directing appeals to you?

ZK: I love the idea of putting the whole picture together and telling a story. I love the technical aspects and the multitasking, as well as being collaborative with the crew and the actors. I just did this webisode for the show; I directed one of those, and that was a really fun experience.

WCT: It seems that over the years, the definition of "celebrity" has changed, thanks [largely] to reality shows. Now, it seems anyone can be famous. Do you watch reality shows?

ZK: Honestly, I think they're contributing to the downfall of our society. I've got a little daughter, and the idea of her emulating these people on TV who get famous with sex tapes... I don't even know why half of them are famous. I'm sure they're perfectly nice people. I just think these shows are contributing to the end of our society, culturally speaking. People would prefer to watch [these shows] instead of going to the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art] and checking out some art. That's a sign that we're in trouble, culturally.

WCT: Is there anything you wanted to add?

ZK: I can say—to you guys, especially—that I'm a big advocate for marriage equality. It's a really important time in our society right now, and vote. I'm preaching to the choir right here, but I think we're on the precipice of letting the dark side win. When my friends are told they can't love the way I love my wife, it angers me.

Happy Endings airs on ABC Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m. CT. See www.abc.com for more information.

New book features queer Orthodox Jewish women

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

About 30 people attended a reading and discussion for the anthology, "Keep Your Wives Away From Them: Orthodox Women, Unorthodox Desires" at Women and Children First Bookstore March 14.

Editor Miryam Kabakov, as well as contributors Goldie Goldbloom and Elaine Chapnik, were on hand to read their essays.

The anthology features the stories of 14 women and their journeys in the LGBTQ world as they reconcile their queerness with their Orthodox Jewish faith. The essays, by women who were or are Orthodox Jews, give a voice to lesbian, bisexual and transgender Jewish women who were once silenced and effectively made invisible by their faith.

Kabakov, founder of the NY Orthodykes, said the title "refers to the group of women in the Orthodox community that you should

not let your wives see, meaning women who have relationships with other women and essentially disrupt the social order."

Before reading an excerpt from her essay, "I Will See You on the Way Out", Kabakov shared a little bit about the inspiration for the book, her background in the Orthodox Jewish community and her coming-out process.

Goldbloom, a Chicago resident who's a visiting professor of creative writing at Northwestern University and Chassidic mother of eight children, read from her essay, "You Lose These: A Little Review of my Life in Eighteen Episodes."

Chapnik, a lawyer from New York City, read from her article, "Women Known for These Acts, Through the Rabbinic Lens: A Study of Hilchot Lesbiut" on what the Torah, the Talmud and modern Jewish law say about lesbianism.

Closing out the evening, the authors took questions from the audience and then signed copies of their book.

See www.keepyourwivesawayfromthem.com.



From left: Elaine Chapnik, Miryam Kabakov and Goldie Goldbloom. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

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WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES



BY MEGHAN STREIT

Brunch at Fork

I'm always on the hunt for new brunch spots to add to my rotation, so I was happy to (re) discover Fork a few weeks ago. The large restaurant at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Wilson Avenue in Lincoln Square was formerly known as Fiddlehead. Last year, it underwent a makeover, got a new chef and a revamped menu, and re-emerged as Fork.

Thanks to exposed brick, plump leather sofas, comfy booths and a glass-enclosed fireplace in the center, the spacious restaurant manages to feel warm and cozy. Also, because of its large size and seating capacity, Fork is one place where you may not have to wait until lunchtime to eat brunch.

The brunch menu has a mix of reliable staples like classic eggs Benedict with smoked ham and Belgian waffles, and some unique dishes like duck confit hash and truffled eggs. Before I even had a mimosa in hand, I knew I'd be ordering the truffled eggs, a dish that promised to combine several of my favorite foods: shitake mushrooms, truffle goat cheese, arugula and puff pastry. It was good, but even with all of those strong flavors it didn't have the quite punch I was expecting.

If you're not quite ready for puff pastry and



Fork's turkey and bacon panini. Photo by Meghan Streit

truffle in the morning, try one of the scrambles, which are served sizzling hot in tiny cast iron pans. You can't go wrong with the simple ham and cheese scramble. Three-year aged Hook's cheddar and "Cure 81" ham give the basic dish a little boost. If you're feeling more adventurous, there's a scramble with house-made sausage, mushrooms, spinach and onions and another with chorizo, jalapeños, queso fresco and cilantro.

On the lunch side of the menu, you'll find a smattering of some savory staples like mac and cheese with English white cheddar and a half-pound burger on a brioche bun as well as a few inventive takes on comfort foods like a "Reuben" made with pork belly and Jarlsberg cheese instead of corned beef and Swiss. Normally, I'm all about the eggs, but my favorite brunch item at Fork was actually among the lunch offerings. The turkey and bacon panini was the one thing I couldn't get enough of. Thin slices of turkey and juicy strips of bacon are smothered in melted Fontina cheese and pressed between two slices

of crisp grilled country bread. A tasty basil mayonnaise brings the whole scrumptious sandwich together.

For those days when you need a seriously hearty brunch (perhaps to undo damages from the night before), Fork's brisket might be just the cure for you. The tender meat is slathered in a sweet and tangy root beer BBQ sauce and piled high with fried onion strings. Somewhere underneath the monstrosity are two slices of Texas toast to mop up the BBQ sauce. This is an entrée you can definitely sink your teeth into, and one that quickly dispels any illusions that brunch is always a dainty affair focused on quiche and scones.

Fork is located at 4600 N. Lincoln Ave.; call 773-751-1500 or visit www.forkchicago.net/.

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

DINING NEWS

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

—**Roots Handmade Pizza**, 1924 W. Chicago Ave., has expanded its weekend delivery hours, and will offer patrons 50 percent off late-night delivery (between midnight and 2 a.m.) on Fridays and Saturdays during March. Patrons must use the code "50AFTER12" when ordering on RootsPizza.com or they must mention the code when calling in an order for delivery at 773-645-4949. Offer not valid on GrubHub.com.

—Chicago chef **Stephanie Izard** (Girl and the Goat) appeared on Hallmark Channel's *The Martha Stewart Show* March 6-7. Izard prepared an artichoke noodle dish and grilled broccoli side with blue cheese dressing.

—This Easter (Sunday, April 8), both **Shaw's Crab House** locations are offering a very special Sunday brunch buffet priced at \$48 for adults, with kids 12 and younger eating for free (limit two children per adult). The buffet will feature a hot buffet line with classic breakfast fare, plus Shaw's specialties. See www.shawscrabhouse.com.

—**LUXBAR** has added a new item to its beer list: Bells Java Stout from local Bell's Brewery in Michigan. LUXBAR is one of the only restaurant in Chicago to serve this brew, which is 7.5-percent alcohol and is available for a limited time only. Java Stout uses a custom blend of coffee beans, roasted locally for Bell's by Water Street Coffee Joint. See www.luxbar.com.

—Chicago's **Home Run Inn** is hosting a sweepstakes contest to give away 65 tickets (a pair of tickets will be given to 32 lucky winners and three tickets to another lucky winner) now through Tuesday, March 27, for the first performance of the Tony, Grammy and Olivier Award-

winning musical *Jersey Boys* April 5 at the Bank of America Theatre. For more information and to enter the sweepstakes, visit www.homeruninpizza.com or call 630-783-9696.

—March 18-23 is **Chicago Chef Week**, with a variety of places offering three-course lunches for \$22 and three-course dinners for \$39. Among the dozens of restaurants participating are Blackbird, Allium, Il Mulino, Boka, Taxim, Sable, Epic, Zealous, David Burke's Primehouse and Cafe des Architects. See www.chicagochefweek.com.

Send items to Andrew@WindyCityMedia-Group.com.



Chicago chef Stephanie Izard (left) makes an appearance on the Martha Stewart Show. Press photo

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Windy City Gay Idol kicks off 10th year

Windy City Gay Idol, now in its 10th year, is kicking off the 2012 search for the best amateur LGBT singers in the Chicago area.

What began as a fun promotion has grown into the largest and most highly anticipated annual competition in Chicago's LGBT community. Past winners have gone on to sing at Wrigley Field, Soldier Field, Allstate Arena and Market Days, and at festivals around Illinois, Milwaukee and even Toronto. Also, the Windy City Gay Idol Finals in 2008 featured a then-unknown Lady Gaga as a guest performer. So you never know what you will see and hear. You don't have to sing to be a part of it. Just come and vote.

Windy City Gay Idol, produced by Windy City Media Group, kicks off Wed., April 4, at the Glenwood Bar, 6962 N. Glenwood Ave.. The competition continues through June with competitions in Chicago's bars and clubs.

Windy City Gay Idol 2012 preliminary competitions are one-night-only at different bars. As many as 20 participants sing at each venue, where all contestants compete for the chance to advance to the semi-finals Saturday, June 2, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted. Results from every preliminary, semifinal and final event come from audience votes. Votes from friends, family and audience members hopefully land them on the stage at the finals Saturday, June 16, at Sidetrack.

The 2012 Windy City Gay Idol premium sponsor is Smirnoff. Other Sponsors include Creaoke and SpeedPro Printing. More sponsors will be announced soon.

With more than \$5,000 in cash and prizes, all contestants will face local celebrity judges that include singers, DJs, actors, talent and casting agents, and others familiar with the performance arena.

Each winner collecting the most votes at each preliminary bar will win \$100 cash. Two winners from each bar will advance to the semifinals. Audience members at each bar also have the chance to win great prizes, such as Smirnoff merchandise, concert and theatre tickets, new DVD & CD releases and much more.

The finals feature big prizes for audience members as well as the top three contestants, including weekend stays at downtown hotels, vacation trips and tickets to top Chicago theaters and concert venues.

The finals winner crowned at Sidetrack is awarded \$1,000 in cash, a dream vacation trip, Smirnoff premium gifts, theater and concert tickets, plus the coveted title of Windy City Gay Idol 2012.

The event is open to all amateur singers age 21 and above, regardless of sexual orientation. There is a \$10 signup fee for singers, and a \$5 fee for audience members at all preliminary events. There is a \$10 cover at the semifinals and finals at Sidetrack.

The Windy City Gay Idol 2011 schedule:

—Wed., April 4: The Glenwood, 6962 N. Glenwood Ave., 8 p.m. sign up, 9 p.m. start.

—Thursday, April 12: The Closet, 3325 N. Broadway, 8 p.m. sign up, 9 p.m. start.

—Tuesday, April 17: Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St., 9 p.m. sign up, 10 p.m. start.

—Thursday, April 19: Crew, 4804 N. Broadway, 8 p.m. sign up, 9 p.m. start.

—Sunday, April 29: T's bar, 5025 N. Clark St., 5 p.m. sign up, 6 p.m. start.

—Wed., May 2: Touche, 6412 N. Clark St., 9 p.m. sign up, 10 p.m. start.

—Thursday, May 10: DS Tequila, 3352 N. Halsted St., 9 p.m. sign up, 10 p.m. start.

—Monday, May 14: Spin, 800 W. Belmont Ave., 9 p.m. sign up, 10 p.m. start.

—Thursday, May 17: The Call, 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., 7 p.m. sign up, 8 p.m. start.

—Monday, May 21: WILD CARD, Roscoe's, 3356 N. Halsted St., 8 p.m. door opens, 9 p.m. start.

Invited guests plus open slots for new singers

—Saturday, June 2: SEMIFINALS, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., 2 p.m. door opens, 3 p.m. start.

—Saturday, June 16: FINALS, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., 2 p.m. door, 3 p.m. start.

Complete rules and regulations at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com; send questions to WCMG-promotions@gmail.com

Windy City Media Group (WCMG) produces Windy City Times, Nightspots, OUT! Resource Guide, and WindyCityQueercast.com. WCMG is the producer of these events: Windy City Gay Idol, Gays Got Talent, 30 Under 30 and the Windy City Times Theater Series. To download all of our products visit www.windycitymediagroup.com. Email questions to publisher@windycitymediagroup.com or call 773-871-7610.

for the public and \$20 for museum members.

See www.chicagohistory.org for more information.

Dance-music superstar at The Mid March 23

DFA Records owner and LCD Soundsystem creator James Murphy will perform at The Mid, 306 N. Halsted St., on Friday, March 23, 10 p.m.-4 a.m.

Murphy is a musician, producer, DJ and co-founder of dance-punk label DFA Records. His most well-known musical project is LCD Soundsystem, which first gained attention with its first single, "Losing My Edge," in 2002 before releasing an eponymous debut album in February 2005 to critical acclaim and top 20 success in the UK. Murphy's second LCD Soundsystem album, *Sound of Silver*, was released in 2007.

He announced his retirement from LCD Soundsystem with the release of *This Is Happening*, and made his last TV appearance under that name Feb. 14, 2011, on *The Colbert Report*.

DJ LA Jesus, Mister Joshua and Kool Hersh will also perform.

See www.clubtix.com for tickets.

Baton marks 43rd



The Baton Show Lounge, 436 N. Clark St., celebrated its 43rd anniversary last week with a brand-new show from the Top of the Nation review, featuring such longtime Baton favorites as Chilli Pepper, Ginger Grant, Mimi Marks, Sheri Payne, Maya Douglas, Victoria La Paige, Sasha Kolby and special guest Tajma Hall.

Owner Jim Flint took time on stage to personally thank most everybody in the audience at this special debut performance, which was the first of three shows that night in the first of five consecutive nights celebrating this milestone.

It was announced during the show that performer Sheri Payne has been selected to take part in an upcoming Whitney Houston tribute performance at the Apollo Theater in Harlem.

Flint also promoted the biography out now about him, *Jim Flint: The Boy From Peoria*, written by Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnen.

Photos by Hal Baim, Windy City Times. See more on page 34, in next week's Nightspots, and online at www.WindyCityTimes.com.



CHM holding music series

The Chicago History Museum (CHM), 1601 N. Clark St., will explore various musical genres for the next few weeks.

—On Thursday, March 22, CHM will host "People Get Ready! Chicago Soul of the 60s and 70s." The lecture explores why Chicago is in the same category as Memphis or Detroit when it comes to influencing soul and R&B music. The lecture starts at 6:30 p.m. and the performance at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$35 for the public and \$30 for museum members.

—On Thursday, March 29, the museum will host "Come Sail Away: Chicago Rock in the 1970s," which will look at acts like Styx and Cheap Trick. The lecture starts at 6:30 p.m. and the performance at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for the public and \$20 for museum members.

—On Thursday, April 5, CHM will host "Chicago Rocks: The Honorable Story of 'The Indie City.'" The lecture starts at 6:30 p.m. and the performance at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$45 for the public and \$40 for museum members.

—Lastly, "Our House: A Retrospective of Chicago's Dance Music" will take place Thursday, April 12. CHM will invite visitors to Smart Bar, 3730 N. Clark St. The lecture starts at 7:30 p.m. and the performance at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$25

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ARTISTS

CALL FOR ARTISTS: SKOKIE ART GUILD'S 51st ANNUAL ART FAIR. July 14th & 15th, 2012. Fine art. Prizes and awards. Held on the Village Green, 5211 W. Oakton St., downtown Skokie, IL. apply now. **For applications or information: skokieart@aol.com or 847-677-8163. www.skokieartguild.org (6/27/12)**

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was filed by the undersigned with

the County Clerk of Cook County. File No. D12129379 on March 6, 2012, Under the Assumed Name of "Sunset Beach Spa" with the business located at 5615 W. 79th St., Burbank, IL 60459. The true name(s) and residence address of the owner(s) are: Edyta Krol, 7318 S. Octavia, Bridgeview, IL 60455. (3/28/12-3)

LEGAL SERVICES

NEED LEGAL HELP? Pride Law, Andersonville's legal aid clinic for the LGBT community can help. Clinic hours every Wednesday, 5-8:00 p.m. by appointment only. **Call 1-866-703-5509 or send us an email at prideslaw@tsamislaw.com.**

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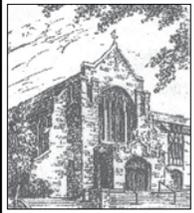
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More from **Baton marks 43rd**



Photos by Hal Baim, Windy City Times. See more in next week's Nightspots, and online at www.WindyCityTimes.com.



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NUNN ON ONE

Jason Dottley of 'Sordid Lives' on Del Shores and meeting Madonna

BY JERRY NUNN

Openly gay performer Jason Dottley is bringing his "XXX: My First 30 Years" act to Hamburger Marys in Andersonville. The Sordid Lives actor is bringing his costar from the series Allison Tolman, who played Tink, along with him for the ride.

Jason has been delivering Top 20 Billboard dance songs such as "Hit Play" and "Pop It." He has also been with the national tour of Southern Baptist Sissies.

Dottley talked about his visit to Chicago and what life has been like for him recently.

Windy City Times: Hi, Jason. Tell me about your background and where you grew up.

Jason Dottley: I am from Mississippi. I studied pop culture and that is what I have my non-legitimate degree in. I went to college for about six months and then I left to move to Los Angeles. I knew what I wanted to do was in en-



Jason Dottley. Photo courtesy of Dottley

tainment. The plan B that I was told to have was a way of telling myself that I wasn't going to make it so I refused to have one.

WCT: You were in a gay/straight alliance [GSA] in 11th grade, so you came out very young.

JD: I was. My mom remarried and we moved from Mississippi to Florida. My third day there I asked about auditions at the community theatre, it was for Hello, Dolly! After being cast and being around this crew they gave me the strength to come out my first month there. I came out with a vengeance. I bought a whole new wardrobe. I had platforms with a big heel. I was about as gay as a goose! There was something about coming out so loudly that all the teasing I faced in Mississippi went away. I was in the A clique and I think it was because of how unashamed I was. I think that was the key part of keeping bullies at bay. I think bullies look for people that are weak and vulnerable.

WCT: Is that alliance still going on there today?

JD: I hope there is no need for it now. I graduated 12 years ago so that was pretty progressive for the late '90s. Maybe now there is no need for one.

WCT: You have a new single out called "Pop It," correct?

JD: Yes, it is called "Pop It." Last week I was the number-two break out on Billboard, which was kind of cool because Madonna was number four. She is my idol and my icon. She will fly right past me on the charts but for one moment in time I actually landed on the chart higher than Madonna. I printed out the screen shot. It is on my wall. I might get it tattooed on my body.

My new record is out and it is silly, funny, and I love it.

WCT: You have met Madonna, right?

JD: I have. It was at the release party of Music. It was in the heart of L.A. in the ghetto at her favorite club, called Catch One. They spent 2 million dollars on the party. Hugh Hefner, Gwen Stefani and Sheryl Crow were all there. [Madonna] had at least 10 bodyguards around her at all times. She danced two songs on the dance floor and her ice-blue eyes caught mine. I did say "hi" to her and I nearly came in my pants. It was the greatest moment of my life.

WCT: That was your Madonna moment. How did you audition for Sordid Lives in the first place?

JD: I was married to Del Shores, who created Sordid Lives. He was launching one of his plays called Southern Baptist Sissies and I wanted to audition for the lead in that one called Mark. Del was blunt and told me that I was not ready yet. Two months later, he asked me to read the role of Ty. This was when it was just a movie playing Palm Springs.

I read it and wound up producing the revival of the play in L.A. I auditioned for the role and being married to the playwright gave me an unfair advantage that was undeniable. We ran for nine months and I got fantastic reviews there. We then went on tour and played two thousand seat theatres all over the country. The producers saw the show in Dallas and when it became a television show they remembered me in the role.

WCT: Have you spoken to Leslie Jordan recently?

JD: No; I haven't spoken to many people from the Sordid Lives camp since my divorce. We were a tight-knit family and most of them went back with Del for about 20 years, so they are going to stick with him. I spoke with Leslie about six months ago, though.

WCT: What will the show be like—comedy or singing?

JD: No, I am not singing at all. It will be a funnier version of my show than usual because I have less time in Chicago than in other venues. It is usually a mixture of drama and comedy but this show will be more of the comedic highlights. I talk about growing up gay in the South and the massive dichotomy of living gay in Hollywood. They are polar opposites of an experience.

Also, I talk about dating now. When I grew up there was no Grindr or Facebook. All this technology has erupted now. I have a cybercrush on someone and it is very invasive to see what they are doing all the time. Dating is so weird now!

Dottley will perform at Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St., on Friday, March 23, at 8 p.m.. Visit www.nationofjason.com or www.hamburgermarys.com/chicago for more information.

BUSINESS

Local hardware store all about diversity

BY ROSS FORMAN

About three years ago, Matt Kollar started looking at the holes in his business, Left Wing Scenic, a scene shop for theatres. He realized that he spent a lot of time online shopping or driving from store to store to find some of the theatre hardware and paint that are, at times, difficult to find in Chicago.

So he started stockpiling those needed supplies, and then looked into what it would take to open a small hardware store. He even talked with executives at Ace Hardware about options, but nothing materialized.

Kollar, 31, who lives in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood, spotted all of the empty car lots along Western Avenue on the north side, including the Z-Frank property, and con-

far has been the requests for different types of street-salts to melt ice. "I had normal salt when we opened, but the requests [for different types of salt] came quickly, such as, pet-safe, eco-safe, etc., etc., etc."

He now carries three different types of salt, and is planning to add a fourth.

"The store has been better than I expected," Kollar said. "The store truly has been embraced by the neighborhood."

However, the store also embraces the neighborhood. It has a loyalty-reward program that benefits area nonprofits.

Kollar, a Chicago-area native, is married (wife Laura) with a 15-month old daughter, Darlene. However, he said he's very supportive of the LGBT community.

"I'm hugely supportive of the gay com-



Matty Kollar. Photo by Ross Forman

sidered those as options to open a hardware store.

Then he flashed back a few years to the Ace Hardware in Lincoln Square—which has been closed and vacant for about three years.

That was the case until this past November, when Kollar opened Matty K's Hardware Store, 4874 N. Lincoln Ave., a diverse—and diversity-accepting—facility that has a 7,500-square-foot showroom and another 1,000-square-foot storage area.

The store has 10 full-time employees and the store is open during the week at 6 a.m., 8 a.m. on the weekend.

Matty K's carries paint, electrical items, plumbing supplies, housewares, pet supplies and much more.

"My sisters live in the area and they were constantly complaining that there wasn't a hardware store in the area," Kollar said. "It just made sense to bring a full neighborhood hardware store back.

"I'm very, very excited and extremely happy to have opened. I think the store came out great. The store is constantly changing, constantly growing, constantly adapting to the neighborhood.

"We did our best guess [before opening] as to what the neighborhood needs. Sure, we have a wide selection, but now we're listening to the neighbors, to carry what they want, what they need.

"It's a great, wonderful, but exhausting, experience."

One of the most popular areas of the store is its large section of nuts, bolts and screws, Kollar said. One of the biggest surprises so

munity, and this store is very gay-friendly," said Kollar, who noted that he comes from a theatre background and has numerous gay friends. "I want this store to always be a welcoming store, and if anyone ever feels unwelcome, please, please let me know ASAP."

Kollar has attended past Gay Pride Parades and even helped float-builders with their supplies and needs.

"I made sure that I hired a tolerant crew," he said.

In addition, Matty K's has an extensive theater section, in keeping with the owner's past.

The store is located near the Brown Line stop, plus Western and Lawrence bus stops. Kollar wants to have bicycle racks installed in the spring.

"It's really important to me that everyone has a pleasant shopping experience," he said.

Wedding expo March 25

The LGBT Wedding Expo will be held Sunday, March 25, 1-4 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 W. Mart Center Dr.

Equality Illinois is the community partner and co-presenter for the annual event, which RainbowWeddingNetwork.com is presenting.

This year's expo will show new planning trends; fresh giveaways and samples; and more than 30 select LGBT-friendly exhibitors.

The first 100 tickets are free; a \$5 donation per person at the door is suggested. Advance reservations are recommended and can be made at <http://tinyurl.com/7v7uowp>.

calendar

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WINDY CITY
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spots

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Wed., March 21

Cinema Q II presents: I Killed My Mother Critically hailed dramedy of a gay 16-year-old *enfant terrible* and the daily battles with his single mother. Queer Film Society, the Center on Halsted, Chicago Filmmakers (the presenting organization of Reeling: The Chicago Lesbian & Gay International Film Festival) and The Legacy Project present the second annual free LGBT film series. Q&A follows. 6:30pm, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St., www.explorechicago.org

Asians and Friends Chicago Dining Club New Irish Pub in Andersonville. 7pm, 312-409-1573, Lady Gregory's, 5254 N. Clark St., www.ladygregorys.com

Las Hermanas Padilla Chicago Fusion Theater, in association with DCA Theater, presents the Chicago premiere of the award-winning work, *Las Hermanas Padilla*, by New York playwright Tony Meneses. 7:30pm-10:15pm, DCA Storefront Theater 66 E. Randolph St., www.dcatheater.org

Mini University Chicago's hottest new college night, loaded with THE hottest bartenders, barbacks and boys! 9pm, Minibar, 3341 N Halsted St., www.minibarchicago.com

\$1 Drink Night Join SPIN every Wednesday for \$1 Cocktails, featuring 42 Below Vodka, Wine & Beer and \$5 Bacardi Bombs! DJ's Riley York, Bryan, Dominic and Chester SPIN their two dance floors until 2am; 9pm, Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave., www.spin-nightclub.com

Thursday, March 22

Pillars of Justice Awards Appleseed and Chicago Appleseed will host a cocktail

'ANGEL' OF MERCY Tuesday, March 27

Angels in America playwright Tony Kushner will be at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago Spring Dinner at Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 S. Michigan.

Photo by Joan Marcus



reception and brief program highlighting the efforts and achievements of those working to improve the quality of justice in the legal system. Contact Lisa Stoller at 312-988-6599 or lstoller@chicagocouncil.org; 6pm-9pm, Paris Club, 59 W. Hubbard St., www.chicagocouncil.org

Chicago Chefs Spring Into Action The Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network hosts Alpana Singh, master sommelier and host of the WTTW show Check Please, will be mistress of ceremonies. \$125, 6pm-9pm, Renaissance Blackstone Hotel, 636 S. Michigan Ave., www.batteredwomensnetwork.org/chicagochefs.php

18th annual Advocates of the Year Awards The AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC) and Windy City Times recognize several outstanding men and women who are working locally to make a difference in the lives of people with HIV. Ticket \$50 by phone or online. 6pm-8:30pm, 312-427-8990, Sidley Austin LLP, One S. Dearborn St., www.aidslegal.com

Anne Laughlin, Runaway, and Special Guest Kathie Bergquist With her life as a private investigator in Chicago firmly established, Jan Roberts can often forget where she came from--a backwoods survivalist camp run by her paranoid, dictatorial father. 7:30pm, Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Dollhouse Drag Revue Join The Princess, Phi Phi O'Hara and different guest stars each week for a fresh, creative and exciting drag show unlike any other that you've seen before! Featuring up-and-coming talent with lots of energy! 10pm, Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave., www.spin-nightclub.com

Friday, March 23

Affinity CAN-TV Show: A Celebration of Bayard Rustin Megan Carney, Director of the Gender & Sexuality Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago and one of the organizers of the "Bayard Rustin Centennial Conference at UIC," and show hostess, Aisha Truss, Affinity's youth program associate, will discuss Bayard's life and work and the conference. This is a live, call in show. Dial 312-738-1060 during the broadcast to join the conversation. 6:30pm-7pm, CAN-TV, Channel 21

MORE for Gay Men Theatre Night The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later is a sequel to The Laramie Project - an internationally lauded play about the murder of gay student, Matthew Shepard, and how that tragedy captured the nation's attention, raising awareness of homophobia, bullying, and the lack of desperately needed hate crime legislation. 7:30pm-10pm, 312645-8300, Redtwist Theatre 1044 W. Bryn Mawr, www.redtwist.org/ticketsmfgm.html

Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex Editor Eric A. Stanley and contributor Yasmin Nair will hold a book-reading, signing and discussion of the recently released anthology. The first collection of its kind brings together current and former prisoners, activists, and academics to offer new ways for understanding how race, gender, ability, and sexuality are lived under the crushing weight of captivity. 7:30pm-9pm, Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St., www.captivegenders.net/about/
Zander Mander's 50th Birthday Bash Hosted by Tori Sass. 9-10 hosted bar, 10:30 tribute show and party. Zander look-a-like contest and surprises. 9pm, Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave, Chicago, www.spin-nightclub.com

Saturday, March 24

This Will Have Been: Art, Love, & Politics in the 1980s The years shaped by two phenomena that frame the 1980s: feminism and the AIDS crisis. Within these larger outlines, the exhibition finds desire - rather than cynicism or irony - to be the real tenor of the decade. Through June 3, 2012. 12pm, Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave., www.mcachicago.org/media

Women's History Month Program Featuring the authors and editor of *Chicanas*. Hear about the struggles for social change of Latina activists in Chicago during the 1960s and 70s. Register online or by phone. 10am-12:30pm, 773-227-0093, Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton St., www.cawhc.org

Lakeside Pride Ensemble Spring Concert The theme is a "Salute to Uptown," featuring a wide mix of compilations that reflect a diverse neighborhood. Tickets for the concert are \$20 (which goes straight to the band), and you can go online to www.lakesidepride.com not only to purchase tickets, but to learn about the band itself. Please join us afterwards at Sidecar Bar, Rogers Park's newest cocktail lounge in the arts district, around 10 pm. Peoples Church of Chicago, 941 W. Lawrence Ave. 8pm-9:30pm, www.lakesidepride.org

American Ballet Theatre presents "Giselle" Quintessential romantic ballet epitomizes the transcendent power of love and forgiveness. American Ballet Theatre's unrivaled roster of international ballet stars brings Giselle's mystery and ethereal beauty vividly to life in this universally acclaimed production, performed with the Chicago Sinfonietta. Tickets \$32 - \$127. 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., 800-982-2787, Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E Congress Pkwy., www.auditoriumtheatre.org

GAM-TV Viewing Party Angel Abcede and GAM-TV will be having a viewing party of its 2012 winter season. \$6 donation to AIDS-awareness charity School Street Arts Movement gets admission and a free drink. www.gamtvusa.com. 8pm-11pm, @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St.

Third and Delaware: The Ultimate Roseanne Dance Party Hosted by Xandra Fairlawn. DJ Reaganomix (FKA). Performances by DJuana Cyber. Free lottery tickets for the first 50 people to show up in Roseanne-themed costume. Photobooth. No cover. 11pm, Parlour on Clark, 6341 N Clark St., www.parlouronclark.com

Sunday, March 25

Urban Village Church: Andersonville service Andersonville is a neighborhood full of passion, art, diversity, and eclectic energy, all which makes Urban Village Church thrilled to be joining the community! 10:30am-11:45am, 1602 W. Ainslie (at Ashland), www.newchicagochurch.com

Urban Village Church Spiritual worship is about coming together as community to make space for God to move in us. 10:15am-11:30am, Urban Village Church, Spertus Institute, 610 S. Michigan Ave., www.urbanvillagechurch.org

Dignity Chicago Progressive, inclusive and welcoming Catholic Community. Mass each Sunday evening. dignitychicago@gmail.com; 5pm, 3338 N. Broadway, www.dignity-chicago.org

Chicago LGBT Wedding Expo New Planning Trends, Fresh Giveaways & Samples, and over 30 select gay-friendly exhibitors to help create the ceremony of your dreams. This event is free to attend; \$5.00 donation per person is suggested, but we do ask that you pre-register for free tickets. Sponsored in part by Equality IL (www.EQIL.org); 1pm-4pm, Holiday Inn, Merchandise Mart, 350 W. Mart Center Dr., www.samelovesamerights.com

Dolls and Murder film narrated by John Waters The documentary *Of Dolls and Murder* explores a haunting collection of



'KILL'-TEMPERED

Wed., March 21

The gay-themed film *I Killed My Mother* will be shown at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St.

dollhouse crime scenes created by Chicagoan Frances Glessner Lee (1878-1962), a respected pioneer in the field of homicide investigation and the first female state police captain in the country. 7pm, Glessner House Museum, 1800 S. Prairie Ave., www.ofdollsandmurder.com

Taverna 750 First Call Brunch Come sample the amazing food and drink of Taverna 750. Spruce up your Sunday as Taverna 750 unveils its tasty creations and wonderful libations. \$20 packages to meet your Sunday Brunch goals! 11am-2pm, Taverna 750, 750 W. Cornelia Ave.

Monday, March 26

LGBT Grief Support Group Monthly Support group for members of the LGBTQ community who have experienced a loss through death and are seeking support in the grieving process. Pre-registration is required. 7pm-8:30pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, www.centeronhalsted.org

Live Band Karaoke with Amy Armstrong Every Monday night at 10PM in the Front Bar, hosted by the one and only Amy Armstrong; 10pm, Roscoe's, 3356 N. Halsted St., www.roscoes.com

Tuesday, March 27

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner An Angel Among Us: Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner will be the guest of honor at AIDS Foundation of Chicago Spring Dinner, a night of inspiration and reflection on HIV/AIDS in America. General admission: \$22. Also see April 14 for *Angels in America* at the Court Theatre; 5:30pm-9:30pm, Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 S. Michigan Ave., www.aidschicago.org

Gay-Themed German Films of the Silent Era Screenings at Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, 7pm-9:30pm, 773-271-2148, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives 1127 West Granville Ave., www.orchadash.org/

Wed., March 28

Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin Out writer-director-producer Bennett Singer will attend this screening of the documentary portrait of openly gay Civil Rights activist Bayard Rustin (in honor of the 100th anniversary of Rustin's birth date) followed by a complimentary dessert reception in the G.A.R. Rotunda (courtesy of Ann Sather). Co-sponsored by Affinity Community Services. 6:30pm, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E Washington St., www.explorechicago.org

Planning for LGBT and HIV+ Older Adults Lambda Legal teleconference on aging and the LGBT community with Lambda Legal staff attorney Natalie Chin. This call is open to the public. RSVP online. 7pm, Teleconference, www.lambdalegal.org



MATTA OF FACT

Thursday, March 22

Matthildur "Matta" Kelley is one of the people who will be recognized at the AIDS Legal Council and Windy City Times Advocates of the Year Awards at Sidley Austin LLP.

Photo from the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago

BILLY MASTERS

"I was bullied. It was awful. But I learned a lot. I learned how to cope. It taught me things: people are cruel, the world sucks. I grew up. Bullying=Suicide? Personally, I blame parents and an entire culture that indulges a childproof world where pain and losing doesn't exist."—Author Bret Easton Ellis sums up my feelings quite well.

I think most of my readers would agree that Darren Criss is a pretty sexy guy. So needless to say, many people were thrilled when I posted some outtakes from his photo shoot for People magazine's "Sexiest Man Alive" issue, which included quite a number of shirtless pics. Amongst the drooling, one of my thousands of Facebook friends said, "Darren Criss is skinny-fat." I had to look that up in the urban dictionary, and it means exactly what you'd expect: "When some-



Annette Bening (above) and Warren Beatty are telling their child, "The buck stops here," according to Billy.

one is thin and looks great in clothes, but is all flabby underneath." Well, that seems a bit harsh for little Darren. He may not be toned within an inch of his life, but I'd hardly call him flabby. I, on the other hand, could probably be the poster child for "skinny-fat"—and I'm damn proud of it!

Speaking of pride, we just celebrated it here in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Pride South Florida bucks the June trend by having its gay pride in March. One of the hosts was SiriusXM personality Derek Hartley, who I always enjoy cavorting with. One of his weekend duties was hosting a swimsuit fashion show and auction at The Depot to benefit the Pride committee. The models were furnished by FabScout—which meant local strippers and porn pups. And that's where the problems began. When I got there, the show was delayed because of a kerfuffle. One of the models was a very sexy guy named LG. As it happens, he's also the boyfriend of former cop/porn star Mikey Verdugo, who now owns Bodytek Fitness in Davie, Fla. (new location opening in Wilton Manors any day now). Oh, did I mention LG is one of the trainers at Mikey's gym? Needless to say, they're a mighty hot couple.

Depending on who you ask, either LG or his beau felt it wasn't appropriate for a legit trainer to be lumped in with the porn stars ... which is, at the very least, ironic, given Mikey's past. To be fair, Verdugo has tried hard to put his porn behind him ... but people like me keep bringing it up (what can I say—he's really hot in it). After the other boys were done, LG took to the stage alone. He was, how shall we say, less "interactive" than the other models. But his swimsuit still raised \$100. And who was the high bidder? Gasp—it was Verdugo himself! Mikey got to go home with the swimsuit and what was inside of it! Seeing the two of them together

was great advertisement for the gym. Next time I'm in town, I'll definitely do a workout session with one (or both) of them. Check them out at BodyTekFitness.com. For Mikey's earlier work, go to BillyMasters.com and get comfy—it's endless.

John Travolta has once again been linked with yet another gentleman in the skin trade. On the cover of The National Enquirer (so take it from whence it comes): "Travolta Caught in Prostitution Scandal! 'John paid me to have sex'—shocking tell-all." Let me share what I remember from reading it in the checkout line. Travolta allegedly booked a "male masseur" that he found on Craigslist. Instead of giving the guy an address, he arranged to pick him up on the side of a road in his Lexus SUV. The gent says that Travolta brought him to the Beverly Hilton (you know, Merv's old place) and offered him \$200 for sex. The guy refused ... which makes me think maybe he was a legit masseur—or perhaps he got a good look at Johnny in fluorescent lighting! Anyway, the best part of the whole story is that John allegedly tried to sweeten the pot by saying he could call another guy and make it a three-way—presumably with someone who wasn't fat-fat and possibly had his own hair!

The tabloids are also talking about Warren Beatty and Annette Bening's daughter Kathlyn, who wants to undergo gender-reassignment surgery and become Stephen. According to this latest report, the parents are supportive of their child, are paying for school and everything else. They even accept the whole sex-change thing and had a celebratory family dinner. But, allegedly, they will not give Kathlyn/Stephen any money for the surgery. Normally I'd be happy to bash Warren and Annette for pretty much anything, but I dunno. I think perhaps this is expecting a bit too much from a parent. Something tells me Cher didn't pay for Chaz's surgery (although I'm still not sure how Chaz makes a living).

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Harlen in New Orleans: "Are you watching GCB? It's SO fabulous. Is the sexy ranch hand coming back? Or will the hot gay husband get gang-banged at a rodeo?"

I think you've got GCB confused with GHB! Let's start with Denton Everett, who played Booth Becker, the hot ranch foreman. It was revealed in the second episode that he's been in a three-year relationship with Blake Reilly, played by the gorgeous Mark Deklin (who is even hotter here than in his recurring role on Hawaii Five-0). Alas, at the end of that episode they broke up. I guess the chance of Blake being gang-banged is still out there—especially given his fantastic physique. Did you know that this was a reunion for Denton and Mark? They were both on the series Lone Star. Denton only shot the first two episodes, but he's hoping for more. Of Deklin, he told a reporter, "He's as nice as he is good-looking. I could kiss uglier people, I'll tell you that." Tell me more...

When the Beatty family could star in a remake of I Know My First Name Is Stephen, it's definitely time to end yet another column. I'm headed back to Hollywood ... and I'm a little nervous. Between Travolta, Bening and Beatty, there could be a fatwa on my head. For a few days, I'll limit my socializing to www.BillyMasters.com, a site for sore eyes. If you've got a question that simply needs the attention of the Master, send a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Travolta books LG for a "training session." (Maybe he can sweeten the pot and ask Mikey to join in.) Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

Note: The views expressed in this column are not necessarily those of Windy City Times.

Saturday, March 24th

2-6pm at Sidetrack

JACK DANIEL'S
THIRTEENTH ANNUAL

13

CHILI COOK OFF

SIDETRACK

You be Judge & Jury
for more than a dozen entries!

312
URBAN WHEAT ALL
BREAD BAKERY

YOUR \$10
DONATION BENEFITS:

Chicago Area Gay & Lesbian
NUMBER OF COMMERCES

Then if that's not hot enough, we're heading back to the beach!

Wednesday, March 28

Swimsuits.
Hawaiian Shirts.
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No Cover.

The heat
goes UP at
Sidetrack.
Wear a swimsuit. Smile.
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Book featuring gay wrestler out

BY ROSS FORMAN

By Christmas 2009, Chris Klucsaritis and Ryan Clark had finished writing the autobiography of Klucsaritis' alter ego, pro wrestler Chris Kanyon.

The book detailed the highs and lows of Kanyon's personal and professional lives, which certainly intertwined since Kanyon was gay (but not openly) as he won multiple world championship belts for World Championship Wrestling (WCW) and World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE).

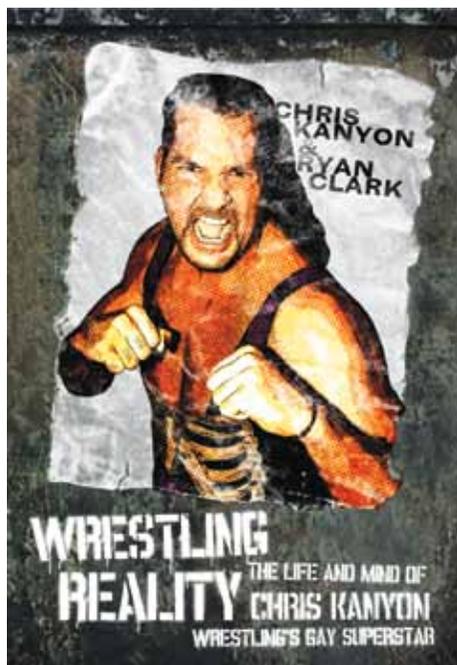
He struggled deeply with his sexual orientation and also reportedly suffered from bipolar disorder, according to Fox News.

The glory of stardom as a pro wrestler couldn't win over his real-life struggles. He was found dead in his Queens, N.Y., apartment April 2, 2010, after committing suicide.

The book *Wrestling Reality: The Life and Mind of Chris Kanyon, Wrestling's Gay Superstar* (ECW Press) was released last November, offering a rare, behind-the-curtain look at Kanyon's wild world of wrestling. Ryan Clark, who is straight and admittedly "not a huge wrestling fan," co-authored the book. Clark is an editor and instructor at Northern Kentucky University and a writer for *The Cincinnati Enquirer* newspaper. The two met when Kanyon spoke to about 200 college students at Northern Kentucky for National Coming Out Day in October 2006.

Also in 2006, Kanyon made appearances in Chicago in conjunction with the quadrennial Gay Games.

"Sadly, once a wrestler dies, he becomes more marketable, and that was the case for Kanyon for well," Clark said. "Kanyon saw this as the first of a couple of books that he wanted to do." The



others would have been self-help books, Clark said.

After Kanyon's death, Clark said he had to rewrite the ending, changing the tone to a certain extent. Then, he reshipped the book to publishers. "Sad thing, [after his death, the book] wasn't too hard to sell," Clark said.

The book features a preface from former wrestler Jim Mitchell, who was one of the first wrestlers Kanyon came out to. Mitchell wrote his introduction after Kanyon's death.

"I had to change the beginning and the ending a bit, but I don't think that changed the

message that Chris wanted to relay," Clark said.

The book, Clark admitted, has as much impact as a steel chair to the head. "It's not an easy read, by any means," Clark said. "That said, in some ways I still view it as somewhat of an inspirational story. There are several things that I think Kanyon wanted to get out there, such as, for those who are struggling with their own reality, their own sexuality, you can be honest with yourself and with everyone else and hopefully, if you are.

"I think it's a tough book to read, but I think there's a lot to be learned from it, and a lot of really positive things to be taken away from it."

The book is being marketed to both the wrestling and gay communities, Clark said, which, on the surface, are two seemingly opposite groups of people. "It's a book that can alienate both markets, or it can draw in both," he said.

So far, the responses from both demographics have been very favorable.



Martina Navratilova with Tony Dovolani. Photo from ABC

Navratilova hopes for net gain with 'Dancing'

AARP announced that its fitness ambassador, lesbian tennis legend Martina Navratilova, has joined the cast of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*.

The two-hour season premiere of *Dancing with the Stars* took place March 19 on ABC-TV. Navratilova teams with Tony Dovolani, who returns for a 13th season.

She scored 20 out of a possible 30 points in her debut, tying for last. The first contestant will be eliminated next week.

"Whether you're 55 or 85, I hope to demonstrate that it's never too late to learn something new or step outside of your comfort zone," said Navratilova. "Going from the tennis court to the dance floor is going to be tough but I want to show my generation that staying active and challenging yourself can provide opportunities to learn new things and have fun."

'Strike Out Hunger' March 31 at River Rand

Vital Bridges Center on Chronic Care and the 9-12 Bowling League will hold the 15th Annual "Strike Out Hunger" bowling fundraiser at River Rand Bowl, Des Plaines.

The event will take place Saturday, March 31, 7-10 p.m.

The cost is \$35 per bowler, and \$180 per team (up to six bowlers). Visit www.vitalbridges.org to RSVP.

'Bike the Drive' May 27

The 2012 Bike the Drive—when people can cycle the length of Lake Shore Drive and auto traffic is closed off—will take place Sunday, May 27.

The event begins at 5:30 a.m., and organizers recommend starting no later than 7:30 a.m.

The route begins at Columbus Drive and Jackson Drive; the round-trip distance is 30 miles, with the northern turnaround point at Bryn Mar Avenue and the southern turnaround at 57th Street. There will be rest stops along the way.

See www.BikeTheDrive.org.

Real Ryder hosting cycling event

Real Ryder Revolution (R3), a cycling studio at 108 W. Hubbard St., hosts the second in a series of teaser events Thursday, March 22, 7-9 p.m., in support of Fab Fest 2012.

This free event begins with a fitness sampler of two classes: a 30-minute Real Ryder Revolution Class and a 30-minute yoga class, followed by refreshments and wine.

Real Ryder Revolution integrates a five-in-one workout that focuses on the whole body, not simply legs and cardio. The core-focused ride engages upper body and balance.

Fab Fest 2012, featuring Giuliana Rancic, raises money to fund Bright Pink's work supporting and empowering young women to take control of their breast and ovarian health, in turn allowing them to prevent cancer or detect it at an early, non-life-threatening stage.

See www.realryderrevolution.com/chicago.

Disability awareness run/walk April 29

The "Celebrate Differences" Disability Awareness 5K Run/Walk will take place Sunday, April 29, at 61 Franklin St., Oswego.

The run start time is 9 a.m.; registration is 7:30-8:30 a.m.

All participants will receive a reusable drawstring gear bag and a high-performance tech shirt. Pre-register at www.ItsRaceTime.com.

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COMING OUT A WINNER WHEN SELLING YOUR HOUSE

With the real estate market glutted with properties, the three biggest mistakes I see sellers make are the following:

Overpricing. The greatest mistake that sellers of real estate make is overpricing. The problem with pricing a house is that no house is worth a specific dollar amount. Accept the reality that the market has changed and your house is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it.

The way the price is set can determine several factors about the sale: How quickly the house will sell; how difficult it will be to find a qualified buyer; and how much you will stand to gain from the proceeds. Some owners feel that they can get away with overpricing their property at the start and then lowering the price if they have a negative response from the market. Unfortunately, by that time the house has been on the market a long time; it has become "shopworn."

Every potential buyer asks two questions: "What's the price?" and "How long has it been on the market?" The longer the house has been on the market, the more the seller loses his or her ability to negotiate from a position of strength. The buyer smells blood. The seller and the price immediately become vulnerable. A buyer will not pay a premium price if he or she believes the property is hard to sell or not in demand.

Slow Lawyers. Real estate brokers often call lawyers "the deal-breakers." Most often lawyers foul up deals by their lack of a sense of urgency. They're not at the office, they can't be found and they don't return your phone calls. Every day the lawyer delays, the less likely that the deal will proceed to a closing.

Disclose, Disclose, Disclose. Sellers should make a complete disclosure of everything known about your house. Remember the point in selling a home is to end the seller's financial obligation for the property. That's why it's best for the seller to make a full disclosure to their buyer so the seller won't have to worry if they will be sued after the closing. And insist that the buyer have the house inspected. If the buyer knows about a defect and there is written evidence such as an inspection report, the chances of a lawsuit decrease.

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

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