



EXPERIENCE
JOMAMA
JONES

PAGE 23

WINDY CITY TIMES

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BI AND TRANS COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

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GILDA'S CLUB
CHICAGO

PAGE 9



SPOTLIGHTING
LGBT ISRAEL

PAGE 10



POLICE
OFFICER—
AND BOXER

PAGE 31

'Bully' director talks about film's impact

BY RICHARD KNIGHT JR.

Documentary filmmaker Lee Hirsch hoped to start a national movement dedicated to stopping the practice of bullying in the United States, but he never quite expected his documentary, *Bully*, to have such a galvanizing effect. However, he probably didn't anticipate the marketing skills of Harvey Weinstein, head of the Weinstein Company, the film's distributor whose brilliant campaign to combat the movie's "R" rating by the MPAA resulted in creating a national discourse on the film's subject before

it even opened.

Hirsch refused to cut graphic language hurled at the bullying victims portrayed in his movie ("Bullying isn't pretty and language is a part of it," he told me) and Weinstein backed him—eventually opting to release the film without a rating where it has quickly packed theaters.

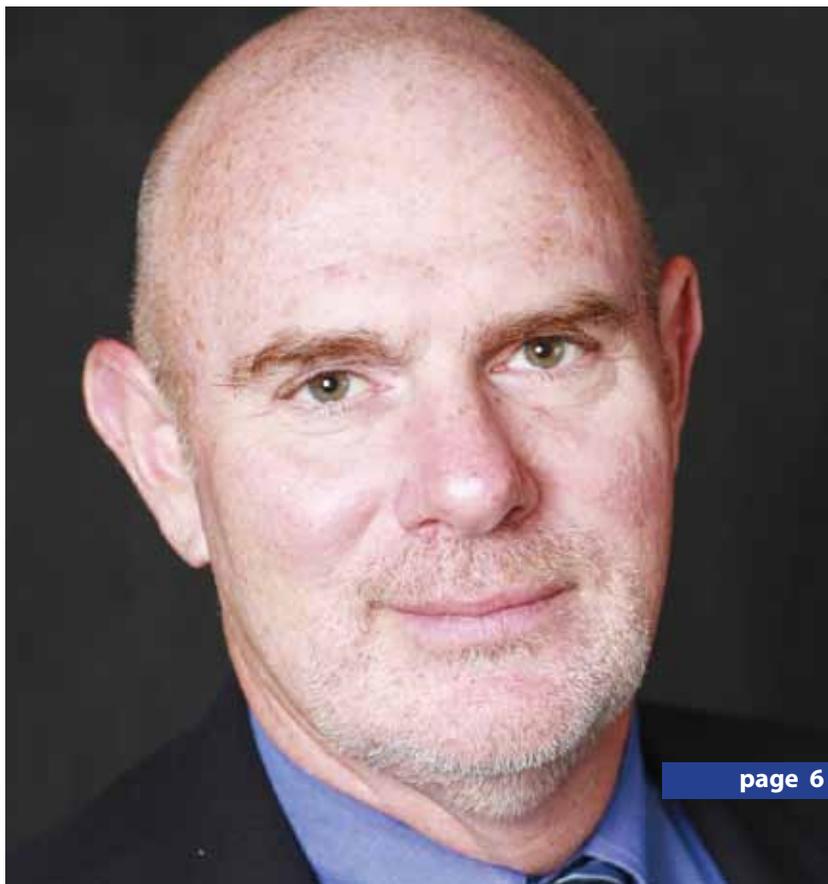
Although the movie may eventually appear in a PG-13 version (an announcement of which was said to be forthcoming as this interview went to press), Weinstein's righteous grandstanding and Hirsch's artistic stance have

granted *Bully* the attention one has hoped for it—and for the everyday heroes the movie spotlights. Said heroes include Alex, the 12-year-old outsider, Kelby; the 16-year-old lesbian, and the others—including the families of those who took their too young lives after the onslaught of bullying became too much.

Hirsch, not surprisingly, is articulate and passionate about his subject.

Windy City Times: I have to tell you that, as a middle-aged gay man and a victim of bullying myself, I

Turn to page 27



page 6

Bar none

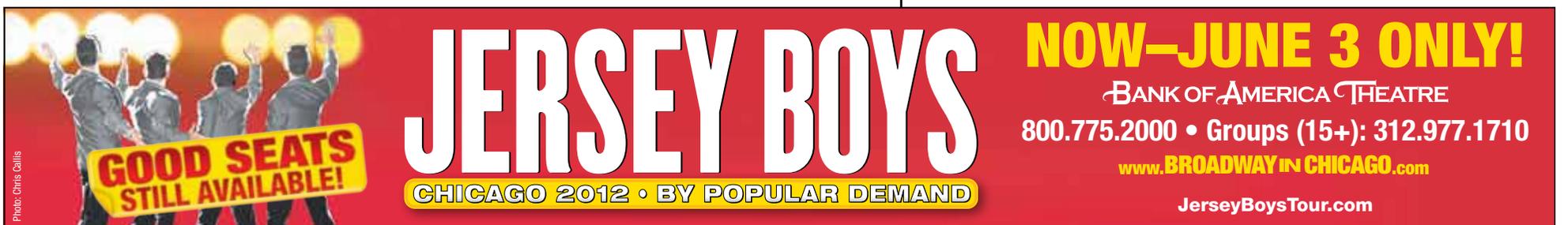
In advance of his appearance at Lambda Legal's annual Bon Foster event, Executive Director Kevin Cathcart talks with Windy City Times about leading the organization for two decades. See page 6. Photo courtesy of Lambda Legal



page 28

'Family' guy

Out gay actor Jesse Tyler Ferguson discusses the TV show *Modern Family* as well as his new film, *One Night Stand*, with Windy City Times. See page 28. Photo by Robert Mannis



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this week in WINDY CITY TIMES

NEWS		ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS	
DOMA drama	4	Dancin' Feats	19
Adoption program in Chicago	5	Jomama Jones interview	23
Lambda Legal's Kevin Cathcart	6	Knight: Bully	26
Lake County; Stina Rogal dies	8	Talking with Bully's director	27
Gilda's Club Chicago	9	Jesse Tyler Ferguson; Bechdel	28
Gay Israeli to receive award	10	Sister Spit; Fela! star	30
T in the Life; Stevenson	12	Dish: Glazed & Infused; Rockit	32
Gay in the Life	13	Billy Masters	37
AIDS @ 30	14		
Viewpoints: Monroe; letters	18	OUTLINES	
		Real estate; classifieds; pets	34
		Calendar Q	36
		Sports: Lesbian cop who boxes	46

Photos on cover (left, from top): Image of Jomama Jones courtesy of Jane Saks; photo of LauraJane Hyde from Gilda's Club Chicago; photo of Russell Lord courtesy of Lord; photo of Vickie Williams from Williams

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LGBTQA IN ISRAEL

Read more about Israel, including Uri Steinberg, a straight man who is part of the push for LGBT tourism.

Photo of Uri Steinberg by Ross Forman



Read a profile of Cellular Intelligence Luxury MedSpa—and see what his local spa really has to offer.

PR photo



New columnist RoiAnn Phillips shares her insight regarding LGBT parenting.

Photo by Flint Chaney

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'



See pictures of Real Housewives of Beverly Hills star Kyle Richards' recent visit to the Chicagoland area.

Photo by Jerry Nunn



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* Making any distinction, discrimination or restriction against any person in the price, terms, conditions or privileges relating to the sale, rental, lease or occupancy of any real estate used for a residence because of the sexual orientation of the prospective or actual tenant or buyer of the property.

This means that the property owner can't charge LGBT people higher rent than heterosexuals or prohibit two people of the same sex from sharing an apartment when that owner allows two people of different sex to occupy the same size of apartment.

* Publishing any advertisement, notice or sign concerning the sale, rental or leasing of any residential property that indicates or expresses any discrimination because of the sexual orientation of the prospective buyer or renter of the property.

This means that the owner or rental agent can't place an ad in the newspaper indicating that LGBT persons are not welcome to apply or limiting rentals to couples who are married.

* Refusing to sell, lease or rent any residential real estate because of the sexual orientation of the proposed buyer or renter. This means that an owner of an apartment building can't refuse to rent an apartment to someone because they are LGBT.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against in the City of Chicago because of your sexual orientation, your remedy is to file a complaint with the Chicago Commission on Human Relations. Their address is 740 North Sedgwick, telephone number 312-744-4111. You can also file a complaint with the Cook County Commission on Human Rights at 69 West Washington, Suite 3040, Chicago, telephone 312-603-1100 and the Illinois Department of Human Rights, 100 West Randolph, Suite 10-100, Chicago.

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The drama behind the DOMA argument

BY LISA KEEN
AND CHUCK COLBERT
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The seventh-floor courtroom of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Boston was packed to capacity. An overflow room equipped with closed circuit TV was provided for those not arriving early enough—shortly after 8 a.m.—for seating in the En Banc Hearing Room at the John Joseph Moakley U.S. Courthouse on the Boston waterfront.

The audience, most dressed in the dark business suits one normally associates with attorneys, was there to witness an historic event: The first argument against the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in a federal appeals court. It was the case everybody knows is heading to the U.S. Supreme Court and, perhaps, for the history books, along with the 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down laws against same-sex sexual relations.

Three of the four attorneys to argue that day were openly gay, and all three were arguing that DOMA should be struck down. The lone straight attorney before the bench would Paul Clement, a Republican legal celebrity, fresh off his high-profile challenge of President Obama's Affordable Care Act before the U.S. Supreme Court the week before.

The gathering had to sit, first, through a one-hour argument in an unrelated case, and when it was done, at 10 a.m., Chief Judge Sandra Lynch announced a brief recess to allow attorneys for the next case to move into place.

Clement, bespectacled and dressed in a gray suit, sat on the far left side of the attorneys' table, with one or two other associates.

To Clement's right was openly gay attorney Stuart Delery, recently promoted at the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) to acting assistant attorney general for the civil division—a step up after two years as senior counselor to Attorney General Eric Holder.

Legal gay icon Mary Bonauto of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, the group which championed the historic case that led to same-sex marriages in the United States being legally recognized for the first-time ever, in Massachusetts, sat near the center, in a dark navy business pantsuit. Bonauto sported fashionable reading glasses.

Bonauto sat next to Paul Smith, the tall, red-headed openly gay attorney who argued and won *Lawrence*. Smith had served as cooperating counsel with GLAD for the plaintiffs in the case. Smith is also working on a similar lawsuit with GLAD in the federal district court of Connecticut.

To Smith's right sat Maura Healey, an assistant attorney general for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Healey, like Bonauto, had argued against DOMA at the district court level, in the same courthouse on different days just 11 months earlier. And Healey had just been promoted, from chief of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Civil Rights Division to chief of the AG's Bureau of Public Protection and Advocacy, which oversees Civil Rights, Health Care, Antitrust, Environmental Protection, Consumer Protection, and Insurance and Financial Services.

To Healey's right was her successor as chief of the state civil rights division, Jonathan Miller, whose wife gave birth to their first child just a few months ago.

On the bench were the First Circuit's three most senior judges: 66-year-old Chief Judge Lynch in the center, 78-year-old Judge Juan Torruella to the left and 72-year-old Michael Boudin to the right.

Reporters were not permitted to bring tape



Marlin Nabors (right) and Jonathan Knight. Photo by Chuck Colbert

recorders, laptops, cell phones or any other electronic devices inside the courtroom, and many were kvetching with mock horror that they would have to be relying on pen and paper to take notes for the historic event. Courtroom artist Jane F. Collins was employing her pastels and paper in a remarkably accurate rendering of the three justices and the backs of Clement and Healey for the New England Cable News channel.

Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley was in the front row of the public section, behind Clement and in an animated discussion with people nearby. She was much in the news that day and the day before for indicting the former state treasurer on misuse of state resources. She would be back in front of microphones after this argument, explaining the state's opposition to DOMA to the public. Also in the public section was former state Supreme Judicial Court Justice Judith Cowin. Cowin, generally seen as a conservative, voted with the majority in 2003, saying the state constitution guarantee same-sex couples the right to marry.

The one-hour argument was divided up: Clement and Delery would each get 20 minutes, and Bonauto and Healey would each get 10.

A few minutes into Clement's 20 minutes, a court staffer walked from the back of the courtroom up to the bench and spoke quietly with Lynch while Clement continued responding to a question from Torruella. Boudin leaned in and listened, too. It is quite rare for court staff to interrupt a judge hearing oral arguments. Lynch made no comment about the interruption during the rest of the proceeding, but it was apparently news that the court's audio equipment was malfunctioning. The first 18 minutes of the one-hour argument were not recorded, the recording begins a few minutes into Delery's presentation, and what was recorded was somewhat low quality.

Lynch had two questions for Delery and one question for each of the other attorneys; Torruella had about a dozen for Clement and half that for Delery; Boudin asked Clement and Delery a couple of questions each.

Of the three judges, Lynch has had the most experience with gay-related cases. In 2008, she penned a panel decision (*Parker v. Hurley*) that upheld a district court dismissal of a lawsuit by

parents who sought to exempt their children from being in classrooms that discussed books that mentioned same-sex couples. Six months later, she became the first female Chief Justice of the circuit.

She asked Clement to expand upon his argument that it was perfectly rational for Congress to pass DOMA in order to wait for the consequences of recognizing same-sex marriages to "play out" first in the various states. She asked Delery whether DoJ's argument that laws disfavoring gays should be held as legally suspect (and thus have to meet a more difficult judicial review) requires showing both that the laws express animus toward gays and that gays are targeted by the laws. And during a discussion of what cases the DoJ was relying on to justify heightened scrutiny, Lynch interrupted Delery to ask, "Are you relying on *Romer*? Are you relying on *Lawrence*?"

Romer v. Evans is the 1996 U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down a Colorado initiative that sought to bar laws prohibiting discrimination against gays.

When a very hoarse Bonauto argued that Congress jettisoned its historic neutrality around the definition of marriage when it passed DOMA in 1996, Lynch asked her to address Clement's claim that the federal government did so because the Hawaii Supreme Court found, in January 1996, that its state constitutions required marriage equality.

And, finally, Lynch asked Healey to respond to Clement's argument that Section 2 of DOMA "preserves the right of Massachusetts to define marriage as it chooses to do and ensures there will be full faith and credit, and that the question is whether the Massachusetts decision can drive the federal government's decision about its benefits ... sort of reverse the way you are articulating this."

Section 2, which is not challenged by the litigation here, stipulates that no state shall be required to give legal recognition to "a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other State...."

Outside the courthouse following the argument, reporters pressed Bonauto, Healey, Coakley and plaintiff couples.

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NATIONAL NEWS



—U.S. Sen. Scott Brown (left) writes column for LGBT paper

—Don Lemon urges ceasing of tweets about Trayvon

—Man gets life for murder of gay teen

Coakley voiced confidence in the "legal arguments" against DOMA and their "common sense emotional appeal" to "fairness."

"This is about fairness, about what Massachusetts had already decided to good effect about families, keeping kids safe and giving kids opportunities," she explained. "As the arguments made very clear, all this statute does is discriminate against same-sex couples and their children and everyone else in Massachusetts who decided this should be the law." The federal government, she added, "has no business creating two sets of citizens, no good reason for it and plenty of illegal and unfair reasons. It's time for it to go."

Bonauto told reporters the lawsuit "is about equal treatment under the law and not singling out this one group of people to make them unequal to everyone else, which is what DOMA does."

"For more than 200 years the federal government [has] accepted states' definition of marriage and sometimes that has been controversial," said Bonauto, reiterating the very point Lynch had zeroed in on. "Nonetheless, every single time a state marries somebody, it has been accepted for federal purposes. The one and only exception ever made from that equal rule was for same-sex couples."

At a press availability following the argument, three sets of plaintiff couples spelled out details of how DOMA penalizes them in joint tax filing and social security spousal benefits.

Married for nearly eight years, Melba Abreu and Beatrice Hernandez cannot submit federal tax returns as "married filing jointly." Between 2004 and 2008, Hernandez said, "DOMA has resulted in our paying more than \$25,000 in excess federal taxes."

Marlin Nabors and Jonathan Knight are similarly situated. Married for five years, the couple moved to Boston from the Midwest.

"We had no idea how getting married would impact our financial situation," said Nabors, referring to the inability to file joint federal tax returns "Over the last couple of years, we have paid an additional \$1,000, enough to make a difference."

"In our day-to-day lives, we go about our business," said Knight. "We live in a very accepting world here in Massachusetts and Boston, with employers, friends, and families. We don't feel [the effect of DOMA] day to day, just once a year at tax time."

For plaintiff couple Bette Jo Green and Jo Ann Whitehead, social security spousal benefits are at issue. Green and Whitehead are retired but DOMA prevents Whitehead from receiving the higher spousal payment under the standard formula that would result in higher payments to the lower earning spouse.

"I was a labor delivery nurse," explained Green. "She was an educator."

The couple said DOMA costs them \$3,600 year. "It adds up," said Whitehead. But "beyond the financial issue," said Whitehead, "is the fairness one."

New HRC adoption campaign coming to Chicago

BY KATE SOSIN

LGBT prospective parents looking for an adoption agency with a Human Rights Campaign (HRC) seal of approval will not find one in Illinois.

Currently, the state does not have a single agency that has qualified for HRC's All Children-All Families Seal of Recognition.

That is about to change, however. In the coming months, four or five Illinois agencies could earn the seal.

That change will coincide with another important arrival in Chicago: an adoption/foster care marketing campaign aimed at LGBT people.

HRC has announced a new partnership with RaiseAChild.US, a non-profit that encourages LGBT people to foster and adopt children. The two organizations are teaming to market LGBT-friendly adoption and foster-care agencies to LGBT people.

The relationship will allow HRC to focus more on creating culturally competent agencies, said Ellen Kahn, director of HRC's Family Project.

"There are so many agencies that really are inclusive in their policies," said Kahn, adding that Illinois has several.

Often, she said, agencies already doing the work of creating LGBT-inclusive agencies are not doing outreach to the LGBT community itself. Agencies that are advertising to LGBT people often have yet to create truly LGBT-friendly spaces internally.

"This could be a misstep if you call the community to you, but you're not really ready for the community," Kahn said.

The result is often confusion for potential parents. Agencies believe they are inclusive, while families may report uncomfortable experiences at the agency.

Such has been the case for some Illinois agencies, said Kahn, but a number are also moving towards obtaining an HRC seal.

Among them is Little City Foundation, an organization that works specifically with children with special needs. Little City is close to earning its HRC seal, and it could become the first this year.

According to Little City Community Services Manager Emily Rawsky, approximately 10 percent of Little City's families are LGBTQ.

LGBT adoption has been a hot-button topic in Illinois in recent months, after a group of Catholic charities lost their foster care contracts because they refused to place children with same-sex civil-union couples. The charities sued the state over the contracts and lost.

Kahn said the lawsuit may have had the opposite intended effect, making agencies more LGBT-inclusive.

"I think it actually inspired a bit of motivation for agencies to say that [exclusion of LGBT parents] is just not where child welfare is," she said.

Earning an HRC seal is not an easy task. The process can take as long as four years for larger agencies. Agencies that do get seal will also now earn the benefit of marketing from RaiseAChild.US.

"It's a way to thank them," said Kahn.

In the coming months, HRC will be marketing such agencies in major cities, Chicago included. Advertising will take the form of print ads, social networking, community events, banners and billboards.

Chicago, however, will not likely see the campaign for 18-24 months. Before it comes to Illinois, Kahn said, Illinois agencies need to secure

seals so that prospective parents have LGBT-affirming places to look out for.

Chicago 'InstaGreeter' site now at Center

Chicago visitors can experience the communities of Lakeview, Wrigleyville and Boystown this summer when a new "InstaGreeter" neighborhood location opens Saturday, May 26, at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

This free visitor service offered by the Chicago Greeter program at the Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture (COTC) provides one-hour guided walks led by locals.

InstaGreeter returns this summer to the Pilsen neighborhood at the National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th St.; to Old Town at The Second City, 1616 N. Wells St.; and to Hyde Park,

departing from a new location: Smart Museum of Art, 5550 S. Greenwood Ave.

Neighborhood locations are open 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on alternating Saturdays May 26-Oct. 6. Walks are given on a first-come, first-served basis and are limited to six people or less with no pre-registration required.

The neighborhood InstaGreeter locations are an offshoot of the popular, year-round Loop InstaGreeter service, which offers visitors an opportunity to see the downtown area on a one-hour guided walk with a volunteer Greeter. Located at the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph Street, Loop InstaGreeter is available on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Occupy Festival May 12-13 in Union Park

The first ever Occupy Festival will take place May 12-13 at Union Park, at Ashland Avenue and Lake Street, according to a press release.

The focus of the event is to highlight the struggle of social and economic inequality through artistic performance.

SolidClarity, in conjunction with Occupy Chicago, is presenting this green event, which the City of Chicago and Chicago Park District are per-

mitting. Special Events Management is producing it.

The festival features two stages where organizers expect more than 25 top international, national and local musicians to perform. It will also feature a third area set aside for special musical guests and visual performing artists who stop by to show their support and share their passion for the cause.

Fest hours are 2-10 p.m. both days. Admission is \$35 for one day, and \$55 for both. VIP packages will also be available. Tickets can be purchased in advance at www.occupyfestival.com. Tickets can also be purchased on-site. General inquiries will be handled at 773-800-1070.

Cassidy, Steans part of Earth Day clean-up

State Rep. Kelly Cassidy, state Sen. Heather Steans and the Touhy Park Advisory Council will host an Earth Day park clean-up Saturday, April 21, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Touhy Park, 7348 N. Paulina Ave.

Residents will be able to help mulch trees, pick up trash and beautify Touhy Park. After the clean-up, participants can enjoy pizza, face-painting and other activities.

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Kevin Cathcart: Heading Lambda Legal for two decades

BY KATE SOSIN

For more than half the time that Lambda Legal has been battling for LGBT people, the organization has been headed by one man. Kevin Cathcart is celebrating his 20th year with Lambda Legal this spring, just shy of the organization's own 40th anniversary next year.

Cathcart has been working in LGBT legal advocacy for nearly three decades. He was executive director at Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders when the organization was so small that his tasks included answering phones and replacing copy machine toner.

Now, he oversees one of the largest LGBT organizations in the country.

In celebration of his two decades at Lambda Legal, Cathcart is attending Lambda events across the country this year, and he is Chicago-bound April 25 for the organization's gala.

Windy City Times caught up with Cathcart to talk about his history with the organization and the evolution of its strategies in fighting for LGBT rights.

Windy City Times: Tell me about your early days at Lambda Legal.

Kevin Cathcart: The landscape was incredibly different in 1992. One of the major things that make the landscape so different was the AIDS epidemic was in a very different posture then because this was still before the beginnings of any sort of successful treatments. It was taking a much greater toll on the community day in and day out.

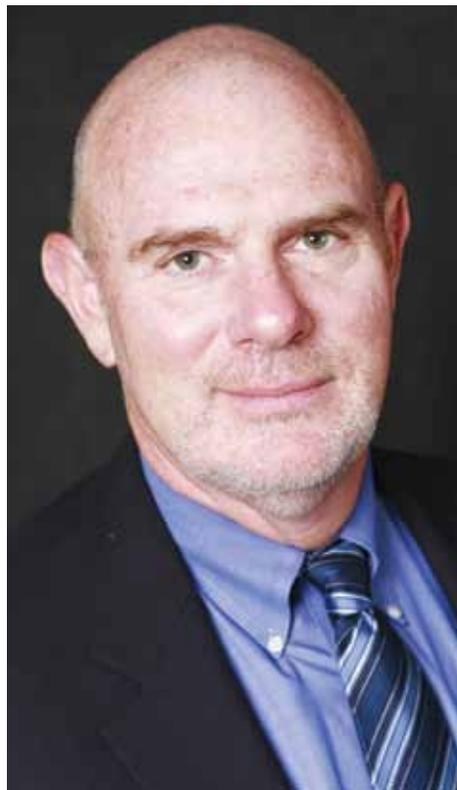
We were in the middle of a presidential election. That is when President Clinton was elected later that year, and there were great hopes for progress on a number of things. But unfortunately, within his first year, much of it within my first year here, we saw the signing into law of things like 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and DOMA [Defense of Marriage Act].

Keep in mind that this is pre-*Lawrence v. Texas*, which overturned sodomy laws, so sodomy laws are still on the books in a number of states...

Lambda Legal and all of our community organizations and institutions were much smaller then than they are today. Lambda Legal, for example, when I came, there were a total of 21 staff people. We now have just over 90.

WCT: So how did you get involved in the LGBT-rights movement?

KC: Well, I was in college in the early '70s, when the movement was very, very new. I went to school in a rural part of southern New Jersey and most of what I knew about the LGBT move-



Kevin Cathcart. Photo from Lambda Legal

ment I read in the Village Voice. I started by being one of the founders of my college's first gay students organization.

WCT: Where did you go to school?

KC: Stockton State College. It's a small school and not particularly known outside of its region. Then, I moved to Boston to go to graduate school and ultimately I went to law school there. There was a very active, politicized gay community in Boston. I was part of the Gay Community News Collective at one point. I decided to go to law school because I thought that would be a good way to do some kind of political work. I wasn't clear on what that work would be. It was not really possible at that point to imagine a career running an LGBT legal organization.

WCT: It sounds like you were out before it was common to be out.

KC: Yeah, that's probably true. I came out pretty early in my college days. It's almost impossible to describe the invisibility of gay people in the general culture in the 1970s. I graduated from high school in 1971, which was just two years after Stonewall. So the people who were out tended to be more political people because it was a decision that was perhaps fraught with far more consequences in those days than it is

QUOTELINES

COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN

"[L]et us not forget about what it meant when my husband appointed those two magnificent Supreme Court justices. And for the first time in history, our daughters and our sons watched three women take their seat on our nation's highest court... And let us not forget what their decisions—the impact those decisions will have on our lives for decades to come—on our privacy and security, on whether we can speak freely, worship openly, and, yes, love whomever we choose"—*First Lady Michelle Obama in Metro Weekly, March 20.*

"I sing songs about love, and just as people have a right to choose to listen to songs about love, I believe that people have a right to marry the person that they love. I won't give up until there's equality for all."—*Singer/songwriter Jason Mraz, in Human Rights Campaign Commercial, March 21.*

"Growing up in L.A., I can't say there is a typical gay guy. There are many different versions of gay men. Some have good style and some don't. It's not like just because you're gay you're fashionable. I would say to any man to just dress for themselves and be comfortable in their bodies and be confident no matter what."—*Reality TV star Nicole Richie to the Advocate, March 27.*

"Many bigots see you as being like a woman or wanting to be a woman, which gay men will internalize and see as negative. Feminism looks at that thought and says, 'What the f*ck is wrong with being a woman?' and pats you on the back, and even may give you a pair of heels to strut in. This part of feminism was and is to this day empowering. I needed to hear that message at 18, and I still need to hear it now."—*Activist Zach Stafford in the Huffington Post, April 3.*

"I'm a dummy about a lot of stuff, and I couldn't care less. And who I am is a laundry list of people, places, things, and random experiences I've collected in the 50 years I've been on the planet. I am undefinable. I am unattainable. I have found my voice, and I'm never again going to search for what I never really lost in the first place."—*Trans actress Alexandra Billings in the Huffington Post, April 2.*

"I want to see the president evolve because I believe that is right; marriage equality is morally right."—*U.S. Senate hopeful Elizabeth Warren, to the Washington Blade, March 21.*

today.

WCT: Tell me about your start at Lambda Legal. What was it like for you?

KC: When I came to Lambda Legal, it was to keep doing work that I was already doing. I had been, for eight years at that point, the executive director of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders. When the Lambda Legal position became available, I thought "well, it would be interesting to do this on a larger scale than New England."

So when I came here... there were two offices. Almost everyone was in New York. I think there were four people in Los Angeles. Our budget was much much smaller than it was today, although that didn't make it easy to raise.

WCT: Did you ever imagine it would take until 2003 to overturn sodomy laws?

KC: In the mid-'80s, I actually really believed that [*Bowers v. Hardwick* case was going to do it. Actually, after *Hardwick* was lost at the U.S. Supreme Court, I didn't believe that it would be done by 2003 because the U.S. Supreme Court traditionally is very slow to reverse itself. In Supreme Court time, 17 years is sort of like the blink of an eye. I think our strategy worked, which was to keep chipping away at them on a state-by-state basis.

WCT: What are some of the high points for you beyond Lambda Legal's litigation work?

KC: One of the ways that we have grown during my time here is that we've expanded our capacity beyond not only to do litigation, but to do public education and policy work. We now have an education and public affairs department, which I think is critically important because ... there's an enormous need for public education within the LGBT and HIV communities because a lot of people don't know what their rights are or what they are not. ... So part of it has been making ourselves more accessible.

WCT: Has Lambda legal's strategy changed as LGBT people make progress?

KC: I think we have changed, in many cases, the way that we go about things as we have

grown and been able to do more. For example, with certain kinds of cases, and what comes to mind most obviously, with our marriage work, we have educational components that go along with our lawsuits because we know that if we can change the climate on the ground, that that trickles up to the courts. We know that court victories can't be too far ahead where the public is.

WCT: A lot of people involved in other movements have wondered why the LGBT movement has been so successful. Do you have a theory there?

KC: It's an interesting thing because, inside the LGBT community, I often hear lots of complaints about how slowly things are moving. ... When I talk to people who do political work on other issues outside of the LGBT community, what I always hear is "How do you people do it? You're winning everything." I think it would be good for people in the community to hear from people working on other issues to get a sense of how much we really are accomplishing. And I don't believe we should be self-satisfied and complacent. I just wish we could have more people in the game.

WCT: What is the future of Lambda Legal at this point?

KC: I continue to believe that the courts will continue to be our strongest avenue for success. I believe that we're going to continue through our impact litigation to lead the way on a lot of the issues that face our community. I wish I could see some sort of sunset time where I could say, "well, look based on everything that we've done, I think in a couple of years we'll just be able to wrap up and go home." I don't see that. I believe that will happen someday, but we are so far from there right now.

See Kevin Cathcart at Lambda Legal's gala Wed., April 25, at the Art Institute of Chicago's modern wing, 159 E. Monroe St. Details are at www.lambdalegal.org/events/bon-foster.

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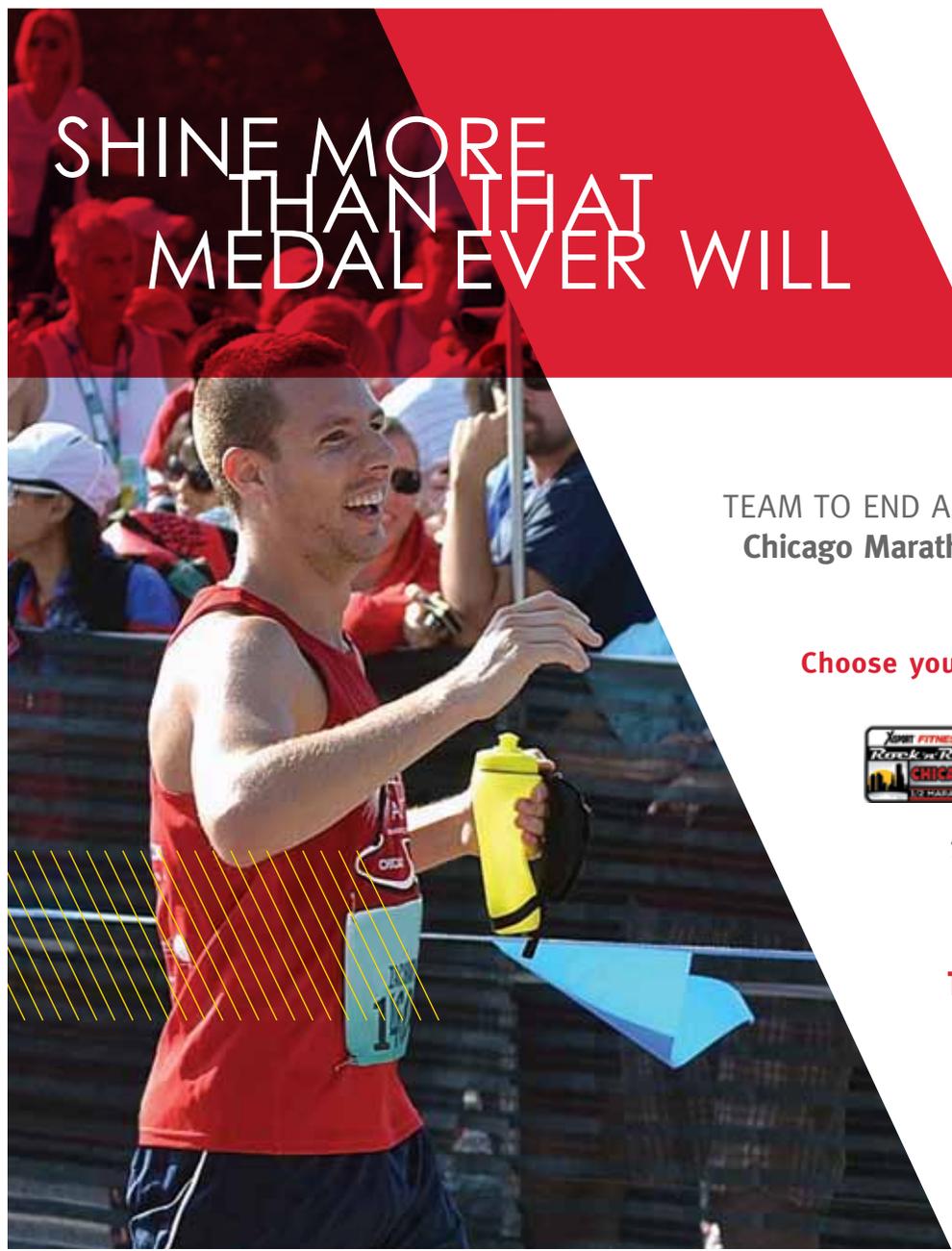
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Lake County reverses civil-union policy



Gina Osting-Riddle and Andrea Riddle. Photo courtesy of Dayle Roberts

BY KATE SOSIN

Lake County has reversed its policy of denying civil-union licenses to same-sex couples who travel from states that do not recognize the unions, just days after an Indiana couple reported they were turned away.

Gina Osting-Riddle and Andrea Riddle filed a complaint in Lake County March 30 because they were denied a civil-union license. According to Osting-Riddle, County Clerk employees told them that because their home state of Indiana prohibited civil unions, Lake County could not issue them a civil-union certificate.

Civil unions are not prohibited in Indiana. Rather, they are not recognized, and other Illinois counties have issued Indiana couples civil-union licenses.

Osting-Riddle and Riddle had told Windy City Times that they drove more than four hours to the Clerk's office in Waukegan, Ill., from their Fairmount, Ind., home. They brought with them their children and extended families in hopes of tying of the knot in Illinois and returning by April 2 when Osting-Riddle's father started chemotherapy treatments.

However, when they arrived in Lake County, they were turned away.

"I was crying after we left the courthouse," Osting-Riddle said. "It was like a Julia Roberts moment. ... We have one girl flipping her hair and telling me I'm below her standards."

The couple obtained a civil-union license in Cook County the following day.

Lake County Clerk Willard Helander confirmed that the couple was denied a license and that her county did have a policy of rejecting applications from states that did not recognize the unions.

"This is the first person that has come from another state that we have not served," Helander said.

According to Helander, the decision to deny applications from states like Indiana originated from another County policy regarding state rules and marriage. Lake County borders Wisconsin, a state that does not allow a person to remarry within six months of divorce. Helander said that her office denied Wisconsin residents marriage

licenses if they were in violation of that Wisconsin rule.

In similar fashion, Helander said, State's attorneys had determined that Lake County could not issue civil-union licenses to residents from states that did not recognize the unions.

But after turning away Osting-Riddle and Riddle, Helander said, her office received a call from Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov.

"From the very beginning, I got the sense that [Helander] was just trying to do what was right and follow the law," Cherkasov said.

Cherkasov told Helander that the intent of the Civil Union Act was to allow couples to obtain civil unions across state lines and that other counties had issued such licenses. Equality Illinois also sent Lake County a legal compliance letter.

Helander said that her attorneys agreed that Lake County could reverse the policy.

Asked about the perception that homophobia was the root cause of the measure, Helander said, "I can say unequivocally, no one in this office is homophobic."

Helander reported that, to date, Lake County has issued 143 civil-union licenses.

Cherkasov said this is the first instance in which someone has complained to Equality Illinois about civil-union licenses and Lake County.

"The important thing is that it was resolved very quickly and positively," he said.

Gerber/Hart book sale, wine-tasting in April

Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, 1127 W. Granville Ave., will have a special "Goodbye to Granville" book sale, as the library prepares to move to Rogers Park. The sale will take place through April 15. (Because of the move, the library is asking people to hold their new donations until after the transition.)

Also, the library will hold its annual wine-tasting Saturday, April 14, 4-6 p.m., at KAFKA Wine Co., 3325 N. Halsted St. Tickets are \$20 each; visit www.gerberhart.org or call 773-381-8030.



Stina Rogal. Photo courtesy of Kyle Burke

PASSAGES

Ann-Kirstine 'Stina' Rogal

BY KATE SOSIN

Ann-Kirstine "Stina" Rogal, a larger-than-life personality whose dance lessons at Charlie's bar kept Chicago's LGBT community two-stepping for 15 years, died April 3 after a battle with esophageal cancer. She was 55.

Rogal was a fixture at Charlie's and in Chicago's larger LGBT community through her years of involvement with community events. But most associate her with her Monday night dance lessons and her ability to coax even the most hesitant people onto the dance floor.

"It didn't matter who you were or what your orientation was, you could learn to dance," Jim Edminster, a dancer himself, remembered.

Rogal was born Oct. 23, 1956, in Chicago and grew up in Winnetka, Ill. She attended New Trier High School.

She took an early interest in figure skating from a young age and, at age 19, began coaching in the sport, training national and international athletes. She won a U.S. figure skating gold medal herself for ice dancing.

Rogal trained several athletes who competed in the 2006 Gay Games in Chicago and also co-directed the figure-skating competition.

In the LGBT community, Rogal also made a name for herself as a dance instructor, both in Chicago and beyond. She was a member of the Illinois Gay Rodeo Association and was chosen twice to serve as a grand marshal for the Windy City Rodeo. She helped gather the group of men that would become the Windy City Cowboys. She taught at The Sundance Stompede, an annual gay and lesbian country event in San Francisco.

Still, her most profound impact may have been on the dance floor at Charlie's, where she taught thousands of Charlie's patrons that anyone could dance.

"No one was ever allowed to make fun of a bad dancer," said Edminster.

She was professional and gracious but she had a strong sense of humor and deep insight into people, said friends.

It was that deep insight that led her to Kyle Burke, her longtime friend who recently took over her Monday night lessons.

Burke moved to Chicago from Wyoming 11 years ago and struggled to make friends until he stumbled upon Charlie's one night and met Rogal.

"It was the first time someone had engaged me in a conversation," Burke said. "I was

ready to move. I didn't think I could make it in the big city."

Rogal seemed to have a similar impact on hundreds of men who, often shyly, found themselves on the dance floor at Rogal's urging.

"She would get them to dance and engaged them in this community and keep them coming back," said Burke.

Rogal lectured that people of all genders and heights could lead and follow in dance, stating that it was "OK to be bi-dansual."

Such mantras became so familiar to Charlie's regulars that most could recite them on command, including her "quick, quick, slow, slow" count. But Rogal's quick wit also kept them on their toes.

According to Burke, it is not widely known how Rogal identified her sexual orientation. Edminster said she occasionally described herself as bisexual.

Last April, Rogal was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. She chose quality of life over quantity, Burke said. She gave dance lessons until she was unable to in recent months, and continued to remain upbeat until her passing.

She planned the details of her death arrangements down to the specific cake, said Burke with a chuckle, adding that she even gave him money to purchase the cake. The only task she had yet to complete was compiling the necessary information for her obituary in Windy City Times. She told friends she "wasn't dying this week" and would get to it soon.

Rogal passed away in hospice care in Skokie. She is survived by her mother, Ketty nee Nielsen, and her brother, Arthur Rogal. Her late father was Chester Rogal.

Friends will be hosting a celebration of her life on Monday, April 16, at Charlie's Chicago, 3726 N. Broadway, at 7:30 p.m.

Chicago LGBT groups live on CAN TV

CAN TV is launching a web-streaming service for Chicago nonprofits, enabling LGBT groups from across the city to provide advice and resources in real time. Viewers can tune in live to "LGBT Hotline" and call in with their questions every Friday at 6:30 p.m. on cable channel CAN TV21 in Chicago as well as online at www.cantv.org/live.

"The groups that work with CAN TV want to reach audiences wherever they are," explained Tiffany Bosley, nonprofit services manager at CAN TV. "Streaming these programs online also allows viewers to receive reliable information directly from an expert."

Several groups take turns hosting LGBT Hotline, including the Gay Liberation Network, the Association of Latino Men for Action (ALMA) and Illinois Gender Advocates. Live programming from a variety of local organizations is available weekdays 4-8 p.m. online at www.cantv.org/live. For a listing of programs, visit www.cantv.org/hotlineschedule.htm.

'Out in Chicago' at CHM hosting April 14 tag sale

The Chicago History Museum is hosting a tag sale of some of the items exhibited during the recent Out in Chicago exhibit.

The sale is Saturday, April 14, 1-4 p.m. Prices range from \$5 to \$200-plus. Proceeds benefit the "Out in Chicago" documentary project.

Sample items include sexicon words from the walls, gallery title graphics, prop bar, entry welcome graphic, printed labels and the prop bed.

It is a cash-only sale, but it is free to go. Mention "tag sale" at the front desk.

Chicago History Museum is at 1601 N. Clark St.

Gilda's Club provides outreach to LGBTQ community

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Gilda's Club Chicago is one of many groups worldwide that honor the memory of Gilda Radner, the comedienne who died from ovarian cancer and had a wish that "no one should face cancer alone." One way that Gilda's Club Chicago provides support is through its new LGBTQ group.

The LGBTQ support group had its first meeting in April 2011, according to Mark Petroelje, the group's facilitator. Petroelje explained that Gilda's Club Chicago had a desire to reach out to the LGBTQ community and contacted him to be the group's facilitator since he is a counselor and therapist at Live Oak (which has partnered with Gilda's Club Chicago to form the LGBTQ support group) as well as an openly gay man.

The seeds of the group started in late 2010 with Rebecca Fritz, the adult program manager at Gilda's Club Chicago, who saw a need for an LGBTQ group within the club, said Thom DeVries, program director at Gilda's Club Chicago.

The LGBTQ group (under the networking umbrella of support groups for men, women and children living with cancer and their families and friends) within Gilda's Club Chicago meets every first and third Wednesday 6-7 p.m.

"The intention of the LGBTQ cancer support group is to provide a safe space for LGBTQ people to talk about the impact that their cancer diagnosis and treatment have had on their sense of self, their relationships with others, and the goals or plans for their lives," said Petroelje. "The group is free of heterosexist bias and ex-

pectations, so participants can talk freely about sexual behaviors, dating/relationships, difficulties with medical professionals, family issues, coming out, and gender nonconforming behaviors and attitudes.

"The group is open to any person who self identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer and has been diagnosed with cancer. I believe that all people carry with them survival strategies and strengths—as well as the capacity to know what they need. My role as the facilitator is to foster and maintain a safe space. The group is here to support the participants and provide a time and a space for them to talk about and ask for what they need in the moment."

Speaking to one of the group's members, Janet Anne, an open lesbian with cancer, she said, "My fight is not a positive thing, but I do have a positive attitude. I refuse not to be happy. ... Without Gilda's Club, I'd be imprisoned at a homeless shelter or sitting in a library trying to keep warm. Gilda's Club is more than a place. It's a refuge. It's a resource. It's a social space. My LGBTQ support group is a place where I know I'm not alone, a place where I can cry, and a place I can get hugs."

Stephen Majsak is an openly gay man and director of development at Gilda's Club Chicago. He told Windy City Times, "When you are valued and supported, you bring all your best attributes to the community. That's what Gilda's Club is all about. We just do it for people when cancer is the common issue. ... It's a free, member-driven approach so you can find someone who can support you in a way that fits your situation—and then you can give the benefit of your experiences to someone else when they need it."

LauraJane Hyde, chief executive officer of Gilda's Club Chicago, said, "Gilda's Club Chicago is proud to serve the LGBTQ community by offering a networking group for LGBTQ people living with cancer. It is so important that all people have a place to go where they are welcome, and Gilda's Club is that place for our city."

"We are a very welcoming community and we encourage people to look us up and see what we have to offer because we have a lot to offer," said DeVries.

Jimmy Kays, a manager at the Boystown nightclub Sidetrack, said "I lost a dear friend of mine last August to cancer and learned of Gilda's Club shortly afterwards. I was so impressed with what the club had to offer that they will be the beneficiary for the second annual Over The Rainbow—a benefit of hope being held at Sidetrack Nov. 14, 2012, 7-10 p.m. Visit www.facebook.com/OverTheRainbow773.

See www.gildasclubchicago.org and www.liveoakchicago.com for more information.

Peoples Church has April 14 fundraiser

The Peoples Church of Chicago will hold a fundraiser Saturday, April 14, called "Baseball and Hot Dogs." The fundraiser will take place at Ollie's Lounge, 1064 W. Berwyn Ave.

The fundraiser is asking for a donation of \$25 and will begin at 11:30 a.m., with the baseball game beginning at 12:05 p.m. Old Style and hot dogs will be offered throughout the entire nine innings.

In addition, there will be a raffle of two tickets to a Cubs game, including free parking and four cocktails at a Wrigleyville establishment. Raffle tickets are \$5 each.

The Peoples Church is at 941 W. Lawrence Ave. The church is known for its progressive history, and acts as home to community and arts organizations that help enrich the culture of Uptown.

For more information about the fundraiser, call 773-784-6633. Tickets are available at the door or at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/234952.



LauraJane Hyde of Gilda's Club Chicago. Photo courtesy of the organization



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SPECIAL ON ISRAEL

Gay man part of Israel's tourism push, will receive award

BY ROSS FORMAN

Russell Lord went on a summer trip in 1981 from his native New York to Europe and Israel—and never went back.

He found a new life and new career—along with a life partner—and has grown into an award-winner as a marketing and tourism consultant for Kenes Tours, based in Tel Aviv, where he now lives.

“My career in tourism has given me the opportunity to meet great people, make wonderful friends, and to promote a country that I love, that I’ve made my home, and that has accepted me as one of them,” Russell said. “It’s been a great road and I hope for it to continue for a long time to come.”

Russell, 54, has been with his partner, Avi Ozeri, since 1982 and the two were married in 2005. He has worked in the tourism industry since 1983.

“In 1983-1984 I decided to put my B.A. in accounting in the drawer and make a career out of something I love,” Russell said. “I enrolled in the Israeli ministry of tourism’s two-year course of study and started my career in incoming tourism. I learned the sites of the country. Although Israel is about the size of New Jersey, there is a lot to see, and I started putting programs together.

“Here in Israel, ‘itinerary building’ involves knowing which sites are for which people. Each religion has its own set of footsteps to follow, each community has its own set of sites they are interested in seeing. I would say I specialize in building custom-made programs for tourists that not only want a ‘general program’ but have a specific field of interest.”

That includes the LGBT market, which Russell has mastered.

“As my closet door has been wide open since I was a kid, it didn’t take long for friends and colleagues in the tourism industry to consult with me for advice on where to take [LGBT tourists,]” Russell said.

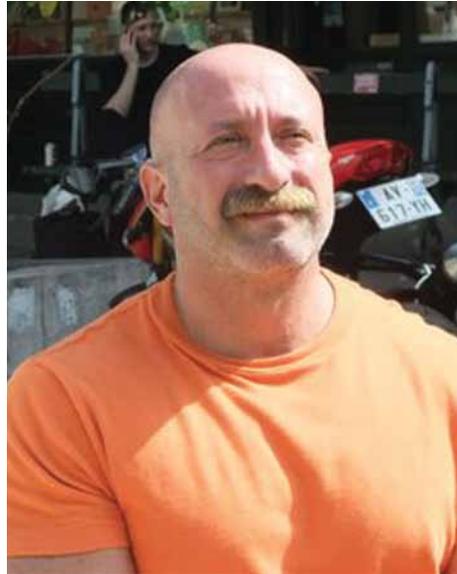
When others wanted to know where in Israel to take two gay guys, or what sites would be particularly interesting for a lesbian couple, or where were the best gay clubs, Russell was the go-to guy. He had the answers—and still does.

“It soon became apparent to me that there was a new trend in tourism and I could take it and run with it throughout the Middle East,” Russell said. “By 1995, a large percentage of the tourists coming to visit Israel were including [the nearby country of] Jordan into their touring program. Together with Jordanian colleagues, we built programs for both countries.

“What could be better than working in the field that I love with gay professionals for members of my own community, all of us making sure our guests get the best.

“It’s been [more than] 20 years since Kenes Tours made the decision to actively encourage gay and lesbian travelers to visit Israel. In the course of numerous sales trips to Europe, Canada and the U.S., I have visited and spoken at numerous gay/lesbian organizations, including travel companies from the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) that specializes in gay and lesbian travel, [as well as] MCC churches and LGBT synagogues. Before I knew it, we were on the international pink map of places to visit. Gay pastors and lesbian rabbis have been landing for years now with their flocks at Ben Gurion Airport [in Israel].

“The top travel companies that cater to the



Russell Lord. Photo courtesy of Lord

LGBT traveler added Israel and Jordan to their list of destinations and have made their Israel/Jordan trips an annual event.”

LGBT tourism to Israel certainly starts in Tel Aviv, which has developed into the “mecca” for LGBT travelers from around the world, Russell said. Located on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, Tel Aviv boasts great beaches, bars, clubs and restaurants in an overly gay-friendly environment. Jerusalem, known as the Holy City, is an easy 50-minute car ride from Tel Aviv.

“As the stream of LGBT tourists has increased [in recent years], instead of having to approach the restaurants, hotels, [and] tour guides for services, they are now calling me with a never-ending song of, ‘When is your next LGBT group coming to our hotel, to our restaurant, etc.’” Russell said.

Tel Aviv was the host city for the 2009 IGLTA Symposium, in which 20 IGLTA members toured the country, as well as Jordan. That Tel Aviv conference was widely covered by the local media, coverage which even gave more of a “shot in the arm” to local tourism, Russell said.

“A great deal of the credit for the success and buzz that this symposium caused is due to the support Tel Aviv’s municipality gives to the promotion of gay and lesbian tourism,” he said. “I don’t know how many IGLTA Symposiums in a major city have been welcomed by the Mayor of that city, which did happen in Tel Aviv.

“After the symposium, my phone rang off the hook from suppliers asking me to send our IGLTA tourists in their direction. We reached a goal—not only are we accepted, but sought after.

“As all tourism professionals know, I’ve also learned that our business is dynamic, always changing. If we don’t stay on our toes, we’ll be left behind. There is always the next ‘in and cool, new destination’—and each has its newest can’t-be-missed hotel, restaurant, club, etc. Israel is no different. We always have to be one step ahead. I’ve always believed that our community is blessed—and that we can do ‘it’ better. Doesn’t really matter what ‘it’ is—we can do it better. My IGLTA colleagues give me the opportunity to prove this every time they arrive in Israel.”

To that, IGLTA is honoring Russell. The 29th annual Global Convention of IGLTA is April 12-14 in Florianopolis, Brazil. Russell is being honored as a pioneer in the industry, part of annual awards selected by the IGLTA board of directors from the association’s membership of tourism

businesses in 89 countries.

Incidentally, Chicago will host the 2013 IGLTA conference.

“The board of IGLTA is so very pleased to recognize these honorees from around the world,” IGLTA Chair Tanya Churchmuch said in a statement. “Each and every one of them has played an important role in promoting LGBT travel in the most extraordinary of ways, from pioneering LGBT family travel to highlighting the plight of gays and lesbians in the Middle East to spearheading LGBT media in Brazil. It’s an honor to recognize each of them for the work they are doing every day.”

The other IGLTA honors are:

—The Hanns Ebensten Hall of Fame Award: Gregg Kaminsky, R Family Vacations, for his innovation in developing a successful tourism product for LGBT families;

—The Chair Award: Javier Blanco, director of UNWTO Affiliate Members, for bringing LGBT travel to the forefront of discussion among the United Nations World Tourism Organization membership;

—Community (based in the IGLTA convention host city/country): Andre Fischer, MiX Brasil, for his longstanding contributions to building queer visibility in Brazil through media; and

—Travel Writer: Michael Luongo, for his years of travel journalism, gay and straight, with a focus on the Middle East and Latin America.

“Winning an award from my peers/colleagues is the greatest honor,” Russell said. “I have great professional respect for IGLTA. Their strength demonstrates that the LGBT community is a force to be reckoned with; we’re not just a few travel agents booking a hotel here or there. The award speaks of ‘pioneering LGBT travel in the Middle East,’ and this is something I suppose I have really done. However, in the same breath, I must say that I have not been doing this alone.

“I’ve had the assistance and cooperation of plenty of people along the way. Before the mayor of Tel Aviv, the Tel Aviv tourism board and many other important forces were together with us, there were many individuals who joined forces with me in the belief that Tel Aviv in particular deserved a solid place on the listing of the LGBT traveler’s must-see destinations.”

Russell said about 30 percent of his work involves LGBT travelers, and that May and June are peak LGBT tourism months in Tel Aviv. He said travel to Israel also is heavy in December, during the spring around Easter/Passover, and in August (for the French).

“Twenty years ago, when LGBT tourists came to Israel, they did not think they were coming to a particularly LGBT-friendly destination,” Russell said. “Over the course of the years, Israel in general, and Tel Aviv in particular, has adopted a strategic position of reaching out to the LGBT traveler.

“Of course, the biggest misconception about Israel is that we are living in fear and in a constant state of conflict. Also, there are many people who do not know that Israel is an open-minded country, with laws regarding the LGBT community far ahead of those in Western Europe and the U.S.”

Russell said the average LGBT tourist coming to Israel ranges in age from 35 to 50. Most come from the United States, Canada and the U.K. He also has welcomed LGBT guests from Spain, Italy, Holland, Germany, Brazil and elsewhere around the world. The vast majority are gay men. However, most of the pro-LGBT groups, consisting of 15 to 30 participants, have been organized by lesbians. Russell said the number of trans guests is low, although it’s increasing annually.

“There are some sites [in Israel] that just do not have a ‘gay slant’ on them. Massada is Massada and the Sea of Galilee is the Sea of Galilee; there’s no way to paint these sites pink,” Russell said. “However wherever appropriate, my goal is to highlight the LGBT connection to our guests.”

For example, when visiting the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem, Russell said

his guides always discuss what happened to the LGBT communities under the Nazi regimes throughout Europe. When visiting the Israeli Supreme Court, they discuss the legal status of the LGBT community in Israel through laws that were passed in the Supreme Court. Then, in the Galilee, “we’ll plant trees in the Pride Forest that was established in one of the local kibbutzim,” he said. In Tel Aviv, they visit the gay community center that was established by the Tel Aviv Municipality.

“I’m very proud of the peace and understanding work that we’ve done through LGBT tourism,” Russell said. “With Amman as our venue, we’ve arranged meetings for our tourists with gay and lesbian Israelis, Egyptians, Iraqis, Jordanians, Syrians, Palestinians, and Lebanese to talk about the issues of the day, about life in each country, about gay/lesbian life. Of course after the serious talk, it’s out for a good meal. To see the dynamic exchange of ideas and knowledge and opinions between everyone is so heart-warming. After meetings like this, I really feel that I’ve done a little something in creating some understanding in the world.”

Russell said there are many tour guides in Israel who are more than happy to work with LGBT tourists, including some openly gay and lesbian guides, along with many straight, gay-friendly guides. “When I assign a guide to be with tourists, the most important thing to me is that they are a top-notch guide and an open-minded human being,” Russell said. “The guide’s sexual-orientation is of less importance to me. Of course, if a gay group of guides can have a top-notch gay guide, all the better.”

Russell Lord can be reached at rlord@kenes.com.

SPECIAL ON ISRAEL

Chicago filmmaker working in Jerusalem

BY ROSS FORMAN

JERUSALEM—Filmmaker Ronit Bezalel of Chicago spent two months here this year, visiting family that lives here and volunteering at the Jerusalem Open House (JOH), the local version of Center on Halsted in Chicago.

“I just wanted something to do while I was here, so I reached out to the Jerusalem Open House,” she said.

Bezalel, who lives in Chicago’s Edgewater neighborhood, worked here as a development intern/volunteer. Part of her work includes helping JOH officials prepare for a spring fundraising tour in California, including researching grants, inputting data and more.

She spends three days per week working at JOH.

“It’s fun, I really like it. I really like the people here, the mission of the organization,” said Bezalel, who is Jewish and an out lesbian/queer. “I hope to get a greater understand into Jerusalem’s LGBTQ culture,” while in Jerusalem.

“The JOH means a lot to the people who are here. For the population [in Jerusalem], I feel this is a life-saver. I just think JOH is a really important thing, an important location.

“Even though Jerusalem is a really conservative city, the queer people are not. I feel the LGBT community here could fit in in Chicago because I feel the people are current, up-to-date on the issues.”

When she returns to Chicago, Bezalel will put the final touches on an upcoming, 60-minute documentary about Cabrini Green. She is a co-director of the movie with Brenda Schumacher, also of Chicago.

The movie is called *Mixing It Up*, and Bezalel calls it “intense.”

Visit www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com to read more LGBT-related items regarding writer Ross Forman’s recent trip to Israel. Also be sure to read his piece on page 38 of this issue about running the Jerusalem Marathon.

BOYCOTT HERSHEY'S



A Hershey-funded school denied admission to a young boy because he was HIV positive. Hershey's blatant discrimination against this boy shows a shocking lack of knowledge of the basic facts about HIV.

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Hersheys-Boycott.org

AHF



COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN

Karen Elizabeth McReady

Identifies as

A pansexual, transsexual woman.

Pronouns

She, her, hers

Neighborhood

Edison Park

Life's work

"I have always been a dilettante. I like to find a variety of ways to use my skills."

Job

"Currently I work doing investigations for a company which coordinates benefits for multi party health insurance claims."

Hobbies

"I really enjoy doing karaoke. I also read extensively both fiction and non-fiction. I am very interested in history."

When did you start questioning gender?

"I think I suppressed my transsexual identity my whole life, but I always knew there was something different about myself. I really only became consciously aware of my female identity about eight years ago."

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

"For me it is the opportunity to understand traditional gender roles from both sides and be free to construct my own outside the traditional binary box."

Do you have a coming out story?

"I agonized over coming out to my son because I didn't want to lose my relationship with him."

It turned out that he already had found out. It turned into an anti-climax, and he was and is very supportive of my transition."

What issues outside of the queer community do you care about?

"Where do you start? Real equality for women, homelessness, separation of church and state, income inequality, civil rights, etc."

What do you think are the most important issues facing the trans/gender-variant community?

"Violence against transgender people, employment discrimination and lack of awareness of trans issues in the healthcare community."

What is the best thing about being trans?

"For me it is the opportunity to understand traditional gender roles from both sides and be free to construct my own outside the traditional binary box."

Whom do you admire most?

"To be honest, I can't think of a single celebrity I would walk across the street to get an autograph from. I admire my friends and family who have overcome adversity to make a difference in their own lives and others."

Do you consider yourself an activist?

"I have just started working with Illinois Gender Advocates, and I am the current president of Bisexual Queer Alliance Chicago. I have also been active in PFLAG and Chicago Gender Society as well as participating in support groups."



To nominate a person for T in the life, email: Kate Sosin
sosin@windycitytimes.com

WCT seeks nominations for 30 Under 30

CHICAGO—Windy City Times is seeking to recognize 30 more outstanding LGBT individuals (and allies) for its annual 30 Under 30 Awards.

Nominees should be 30 years or under as of June 30, 2012, and should have made some substantial contributions to the LGBT community, whether in the fields of entertainment, politics, health, activism, academics, sports or other areas.

The deadline to nominate individuals is Friday, April 20.

Individuals, organizations, co-workers, etc. can nominate a person by e-mailing Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com or faxing to Andrew Davis' attention to 773-871-7609. Self-nominations are welcome.

The nomination should be 100 words or fewer, and should state what achievements or contributions the nominee has made. Nominators should include their own names and contact information as well as the contact information and the age of the nominee.

Note: Following the policy instituted in 2005, individuals can only win once. Those have won the award since that year are ineligible for this year's awards.

Honorees will be notified in May and recognized at a free ceremony Thursday, June 28, at 5:30 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Stevenson's rainbow includes three transgender students

BY ROSS FORMAN

Cassidy Nordstrom clearly stands out at Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, even among about 4,000 other students.

Nordstrom went as Lady Gaga for Halloween during her junior year. Then there was the day last school year when Nordstrom wore a red, 1980s-style dress to school.

"It was a nice dress and I liked how I looked [on me,] for the most part," said Nordstrom, 17, one of three open transgender students at the school.

"[Being openly transgender] is not taboo, at least not as much as it used to be. At least not among my group of friends. It's not thought down upon," said Nordstrom, who, last November, had her name legally changed.

Nordstrom said most of her friends are female and many are part of, or very accepting of, the LGBT community. Among those people are many associated with the school's theater clubs and performances.

"I really have not had any issues, though sure, coming out is a problem for some," Nordstrom said. "I came out as bisexual as a freshman, and started to gravitate to a different group of friends, people who could understand me better. Sophomore [year, it was] more [new friends.]

"Now, almost all of my friends are different from those who I was friends with as a freshman. Sure, I can still talk to most of those [freshman-year] friends, but I'm more comfortable around people who understand me more.

"I'm very happy."

Nordstrom is single now, although she has dated.

Cameron Young, 14, a freshman who lives in Riverwoods, is "very new" to the transgender



Sarah Graves. Photo by Ross Forman

world, but said he has been accepted by those who know.

"When it has come up, I think people have been OK with it, though I'm not sure everyone completely understands. But at least they don't seem against it," said Young, who recently revealed his name to the cheers of Stevenson Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) members—and the tears of his girlfriend.

Nordstrom and Young are two of the three openly transgender students at Stevenson.

Both say it's not just a phase that they will

grow out of—a very common reaction from mothers and grandmothers, they said.

"Things are going well for me," said Young, who said he is now in his second "official relationship."

Stevenson's GSA has about 40 members, primarily females. "This [school] year, it's kind of surprising how few gay men we have" in the group, said Stevenson senior Sarah Graves, who is the co-president of the school's GSA.

"I really enjoy [the GSA]; we really have a lot of pride in who we are."

Graves said the GSA is an integral part of the student life, particularly for those who are still questioning their sexual orientation. The GSA, which meets every Monday in a closed-door English classroom, is accepting to all, including LGBT allies.

"There's so much energy, so much creative energy in the group," said Graves, who smiled when she admitted she's been to two Gay Pride Parades, quickly adding, "they're fun."

Graves, as a junior, was one of four LGBT students to speak to a group of about 200 teachers about student life from the LGBT perspective.

Now single, she previously dated a transgender student.

Stevenson plays host to its fourth annual GSA Valentine's Dance on Friday night, Feb. 10 at the school in Lincolnshire. The inaugural dance was attended by 60 students, then 90 the next year and 120 last year. Organizers are expecting at least that many this time, as invitations went out to the GSAs at high schools in other suburbs, including Vernon Hills, New Trier and Buffalo Grove.

Many Stevenson staff attend the event, including the school principal and school district board members, organizers said.

"The dance is a blast," said Graves, who noted that, as with past years, there also will be coloring books available for the non-dancers and those who just want a fun way to interact.

"The dance is a real open event. It's a hate-free dance, perhaps more than any event at the school. Everyone can be themselves, be open, and come [dressed] as they want.

"The dance, in reality, is just an extension of this room, of the GSA [meeting.]"

Augie & C.K.'s founders' reunion in May '12

Augie & Cary will hold their first-ever reunion May 12 at the L26 Restaurant and Lounge in the Chicago South Loop Hotel, 11 W. 26th St., 7 p.m.-3 a.m.

They started Augie & C.K.'s, a lesbian bar that ran during the 1970s and '80s. It was at 3726 N. Broadway, Charlie's present location.

All raffle proceeds will go to breast-cancer awareness.

Rooms are available at a discount; call 312-225-7000 and mention Augie & C.K.'s. For more information about lodging, call 773-507-6378 or email martinez-victoria@sbcglobal.net.

'Big Package Auction' April 14 at Sidetrack

The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus (CGMC) will present its 4th Annual "The Big Package Auction"—with special guest hostess, Miss Richfield 1981—Saturday, April 14, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., 5-8 p.m.

The event has raised more than \$60,000 and entertained more than 1,000 guests over the last three years.

Advance tickets are \$25 each, and include two drink tickets and hors d'oeuvres buffet from Entertaining Company; tickets are \$35 at the door. Visit www.cgmc.org for tickets.

Chicago House brunch/fashion show May 6

The 25th Annual Chicago House Spring Brunch and Fashion Show will take place Sunday, May 6, 12-3 p.m., in the Harold Washington Library's Winter Garden Ballroom.

A reception for table captions will be held Thursday, March 8, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Mark Shale, 900 N. Michigan Ave.

Tickets are \$200-\$250 each. Call 773-248-5200, ext. 303, or email snolte@chicagohouse.org for more information.



Melinda Suarez

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROSS FORMAN



Her mom is a singer, her dad plays multiple instruments. So being a diverse musician has come naturally for Melinda Suarez, who started playing the drums at age 10, the guitar at 16, and now also sings and writes songs, among her other musical talents.

"It's just something I have to do," she said. "I use [music] to deal with my own issues. I solve my own problems when writing music. It just feels good; it makes me happy."

That dates back to middle school, when she heard the cheers after a performance, "and I was hooked," she said.

Now a senior at Columbia College, she will graduate in the fall.

Suarez performed last summer during an open mic event in conjunction with the annual Michigan Womyn's Musical Festival. She will sing April 28 at the Halfway to Mich Fest event, held at the Holiday Club in Uptown. "I'm very excited for that. I haven't seen a lot of those women in a while," Suarez said.

Suarez is scheduled to perform April 12 at Goose Island in Wrigleyville, starting at 8 p.m.

"My big goal is, to continue to develop [my] Chicago fan base, and then hopefully tour nationally," said Suarez, who hopes to record a new album by the end of the summer.



Age
24

Neighborhood
North Center

Homeland
Venezuela

Hobbies
Poetry, reading, writing, bicycle riding

Job title
Student, musician

Relationship status
Partners with Momone Maley; they have been together for two and a half years.

Gigs
Plays guitar every Friday 12-2 p.m. at Potbelly Sandwich Shop (at LaSalle and Madison)

Favorite musicians
Nicole Reynolds and Mirah

Little-known fact
Can make dolphin sounds

Favorite concert attended
Feiste, in Chicago, about three years ago.

Thursday, April 12
7:30 p.m.
Michelle Gamble-Risley
California Girl Chronicles:
Brea and the City of Plastic

Wed., April 18
10:30 a.m.
Storytime Special
Guest: Toneal Jackson
Four Girls: A Lot of Choices



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Dan Anthon uses art in fight against AIDS

BY ROSS FORMAN

Dan Anthon took a skills inventory test on a computer back in 1984, and the result said that his strongest skills were in art and design.

He was shocked, to put it mildly, having never taken an art class in his life, short of a pottery class that he once took by accident after registering for what he thought was a poetry class.

"Since it was a computer telling me this, not a person, I decided I could believe it and decided to go to Columbia College," said Anthon, who started taking two art-related classes—and got A's in both.

Anthon went on to earn a second bachelor's degree in commercial and fine art.

Foodworks then hired him to do their graphic design and then he went to graduate school in art therapy.

"I saw graduate school in art therapy as a way to combine my social service work, my love of people and my new-found joy of art-making," Anthon said. "I was accepted at both the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), where Don Seiden, still my friend and mentor today, the founder of that program, gave me the confidence to apply to SAIC."

SAIC offered a scholarship, so that's where he went.

Anthon, in his 50s and living in Chicago's northern suburbs, is now a full-time art therapist with a private practice, called The Creative Arts Therapy Studio. He sees adults, adolescents and children with a wide range of issues, from HIV/AIDS, cancer, depression, divorce, ADD, and isolation, to those needing support, and others who love to make art in a supportive environment.



Carol Mendelson has volunteered with the group for nearly 15 years. This is a photo of Dan Anthon and Carol Mendelson enjoying a moment of success and the warmth they both feel for each other and the work they do with this group.

His studio is in Wilmette and he shares the space with Rachel Prendergast and Val Newman, both also art therapists. In addition, Anthon teaches Group Techniques for Art Therapists at SAIC, and has contracts as an art therapist at various agencies/outlets, such as Center on Halsted. He previously was at BEHIV [Better Existence with HIV].

Anthon is gay and has been together with his partner, Robert, for almost 28 years. They had a civil union ceremony last August.

"First, I am grateful that the Center on Halsted offered me the chance to create my studio group after BEHIV [closed]," Anthon said. "The Center has been incredibly sensitive to my needs and the needs of this group, allowing us to have a period of time to adjust to this big change [in venue], before advertising the group to add new members. Now that the advertising for the group has begun, we are slowly adding new and interesting people to our mix, with a minimum of adjustment."

Anthon's group has already had one exhibit, for World AIDS Day last December at the Cen-

ter. "Exhibiting has been extremely important to this studio process," Anthon said. "It is a bit strange to have to come into a conference room and transform it into a working studio. The energy has been subtly different from the BEHIV group in my studio. It seems that the group too has [gasped] a collective sigh of relief that we could regenerate ourselves. Quite possibly the gratitude of regrouping here has given new life to me and my fellow artists."

The group meets every Thursday for two hours in Room 202 at the Center, starting at 1:30 p.m.

"Every week is a high for me," Anthon said. "I love doing this group and being with my cohorts. All [of] the artists are really a pleasure to be with. I love their growth and their growing ability to own and accept their own stability, both as artists and as humans. I love our ability to laugh and cry and talk trash, [or talk] politics and religion, but at the same time keep our focus on the issues of people living with HIV."

"Carol Mendelson has been with me in this process almost from the beginning. Carol lost her son, Steve, in 1995, six months before the 'cocktail' [was available in treatment]. Carol is a trouper, working with me and the group as a volunteer, traveling from Highland Park every week. This past World AIDS Day was particularly poignant in that several of us looked over the diary of Carol's son, published in the Washington Post after his death. Steve was a brilliant political illustrator for the Post and they published four full pages of his diary. It was a powerful, tear-filled moment all of us taking turns reading Steve's words."

"In addition we are joined here at the Center by Amy Hahn and her infant daughter, Addie. Amy [attended] SAIC and is an art therapy graduate from Adler School of Psychology. She

created an internship with me several years ago and we have remained connected ever since. Amy now joins us every week as a volunteer and the fact of her daughter's presence in the group is a statement beyond words. Everyone feels the [close] bond and we all take turns hanging out with this special little girl."

Anthon said it truly has been a big-time change, moving from BEHIV to the Center on Halsted.

"We had a real store-front studio at BEHIV; it was my own studio and the BEHIV artists came to me," he said. "It was stocked with everything and more, and we had constant opportunities to exhibit in the front windows. It was a public enough, and private enough, but we were not hidden away by any means."

That same setting is not easy to re-create at the COH along Halsted Street.

Still, Anthon said, "we have deepened in our relationships, maybe because we had the thought that this group might have ended [when BEHIV closed] and we are all really grateful to be back together. The circumstances are



Art from the group Dan Anthon leads. Images courtesy Center on Halsted

not really the issue; we will always have changes and we as humans find ways to adapt. But just to be together for this long and still like each other and even have a growing respect is actually quite miraculous, and I think we don't always talk about it, but the presence of that in the room at COH is palpable."

The 15-year run at BEHIV was, "packed full of memories," Anthon said. Nick, for instance, was a member of the studio for several years and made small black-and-white pen-and-ink drawings, among other ways of working. He often talked about how HIV affected him physically. "He was adamant about his own regimen of treatment and fought with his doctor often, but was clear and strong in his own resolve about what worked for him and what did not. He remains healthy today," Anthon said. "He mentioned that he had, in his former life, danced with the Joffrey Ballet and that his body was just never going to be able to do that again."

"In the meantime, the American Art Therapy Association was having its annual conference and that year it was in the Palmer House Hotel in the Loop. I was invited to ask one or more of my clients to be a part of an opening ceremony in the ballroom, a performance before 1,000-plus art therapists from [across] the U.S. We would be performing, creating a large painting spontaneously while a small band played. It was an incredible experience for both of us, performing together, dancing in front of my peers, paint all over us, all the while we were creating a collaborative image together. By the time the event was over, we were both elevated beyond our normal state of being, clearly we were in a natural high."

"The regular studio group was still happening in Evanston that afternoon and we went to the studio. When we got there, it was obvious something special had happened to the two of us. We were dancing around the studio and he stripped down to his boxer [shorts, which] certainly was not a typical event in my studio, and [he] proceeded to finish painting his pants and shirt from the afternoon event, saying, never did I ever think I would have the chance to perform again. He wore that outfit to the studio often as a reminder of that day, but it was always a reminder to me, that event and many others,

that people who have been dealt the HIV blow, feel a new lease on life, understand the value of being alive, and enjoy and savor whatever life presents, and how lucky we all are to have the gift of life."

"That has been the constant lesson for me of working with individuals with HIV/AIDS."

Anthon said he started working in the HIV/AIDS world for multiple reasons, including losing two very close friends to the disease. One was his former lover, Dick, while the other was a dear friend, Philip. "Both of them still keep me doing this work from the inside out," Anthon said. "But I don't do it just for them any more; I do it for the joy it brings me and the joy I see in the faces around the studio and the faces of those who see the exhibits we mount every year. It is really quite a privilege to still be able to do this work."

Anthon admits he was a "nervous wreck" years ago heading into the first group. He managed; the group managed; and all have progressed in countless ways.

"We have had a few deaths [of group attendees over the years], but the majority of the people who leave move do so to go to other geographic locations," Anthon said. "The wonderful thing is, many of them [still] stay connected, sending me art they are currently working on, submit to our shows or just plain tell me how hard it is to keep up their art without the support. People have left for Montana, Colorado, Hawaii, Milwaukee, and [elsewhere]. One woman who moved to Los Angeles sends us letters with images of her current work and, the odd thing is, [her] letters often come on the very day the group meets. She periodically returns and visits whenever she comes back to Chicago."

Anthon said that, within the current group, there are no HIV-positive women.

So what's ahead?

"It would be great if we could have a real studio at COH," Anthon said. "I believe that an art studio can be a heart and maintain the pulse of any vital organization. That is a rather grandiose idea on my part; I know full well how finances dictate. But it is a dream, nonetheless."

Anthon said the biggest surprise over the years has been the group's critiques. "We don't

Authors write about HIV/AIDS

BY KERGAN EDWARDS-STOUT
AND GREGORY G. ALLEN

Authors Kergan Edwards-Stout (*Songs for the New Depression*) and Gregory G. Allen (*Well With My Soul*) both had their debut novels short-listed for the 2011 Independent Literary Awards. Recently, the writers met in person at the Rainbow Book Fair in New York City, where they greeted fans, performed readings, and signed copies of their novels. Though their books tell very different stories, both are set in the past, use musical cues to help tell their tales, and touch on many common themes: gay identity, HIV/AIDS, and how poor self-esteem can lead to unforeseen consequences. What follows is a conversation between the authors.

Gregory G. Allen: It was wonderful to see all the different LGBT authors at the Book Fair, as well as all the avid readers.

Kergan Edwards-Stout: To me, it showed that people are still hungry for stories that reflect their individual experiences.

Allen: I loved reading and recommending your book. The title alone was so clever, how you tied it in to the Divine Miss M.

Edwards-Stout: The lead character in my book, Gabriel, is a Bette Midler fanatic, and I use her 1976 album, *Songs for the New Depression*, to help chart his journey. Plus, as part of his story is his battle with AIDS, I loved how the title echoes that element. And music plays a role

in your book, *Well With My Soul*, also. How did that come about?

Allen: Music has always been a huge part of my life—the book title is based on a Christian hymn. To help set the 15-year span of the book, songs show up to take the reader to a particular moment in time or to aid in what is happening in that chapter. I set it in the ‘not-so-distant past’, to show what our country was going through in the late ‘70s through the ‘90s in New York City. What was your inspiration?

Edwards-Stout: Writing it was a way to honor my partner, Shane Sawick, who died in 1995, as well as other friends I lost. I tried to capture that moment in time as I remember it with a bit of their humanity, humor, sexuality, and longings on the page.

Allen: It wouldn't be honest to write about that time period without discussing AIDS. What I liked about your story is that it does not turn your protagonist into a martyr.

Edwards-Stout: Too often, the temptation is to write about those we've lost in sepia tones, but I think we both found interesting ways to create characters that are likable, yet still flawed—which makes them all the more interesting.

Allen: How do the locations dictate how you told your story?

Edwards-Stout: Coming of age in West Hollywood definitely informed my character's experience, but that experience is just as relevant in

other large cities, such as Chicago or New York. I think, for almost any gay person, you deal with the question of “How do I fit in? Where is my tribe?” It can be disorienting to live in such a big city and yet feel utterly alone.

Allen: My book starts in Tennessee, which captured a certain tone for the book, and then it shifted by taking the lead characters to a big city. I chose New York as I'd lived there since the late '80s and wanted to share parts of the city that I knew.

Edwards-Stout: That New York experience seemed very real and vivid on the page, which is very hard to do ...

Allen: Thank you! In your book, you use a really great technique, telling it out of sequence. Was there a reason for that?

Edwards-Stout: Well, in my book, it's no secret that the lead character of Gabriel dies. So the question became, how do you best tell a story where everyone knows how it ends? If you tell it chronologically, it becomes a TV movie of the week, with a sad ending. I wanted to peel back the layers, like an onion, to discover what was at his core, which leads to some dramatic choices. What led you to choose your structure?

Allen: I chose first person narrative, split between two characters, two brothers, so I could show different sides to the same issue.

Edwards-Stout: Your book was so interesting, tackling the lives of two very different brothers. It was hard, reading it, and hoping that they'd make different choices than they did. Especially with one character who believed being gay isn't the best path forward.

Allen: I was swept into your book and, while I wasn't Gabe, I could not help but see myself in him. He makes a devastating choice—

Edwards-Stout: Which comes down to how he feels about himself, just like your character.

Allen: It just goes to show how deeply homophobia and self-hatred can inform our decisions ...

Edwards-Stout: Making it all the more important that we help readers find some path forward.

Allen: Exactly. And that is the thing about art and literature—

Edwards-Stout: The stories we write can help others.

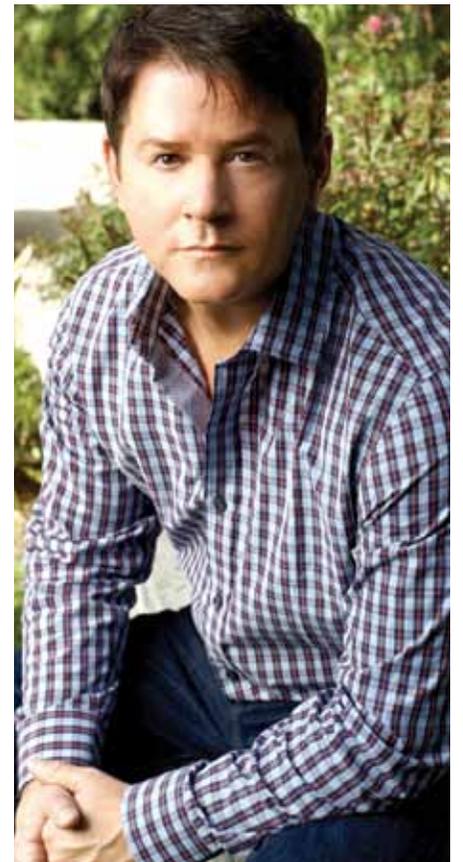
Allen: Opening hearts and changing minds. Makes you feel good about the possibilities, right?

Edwards-Stout: It certainly does.

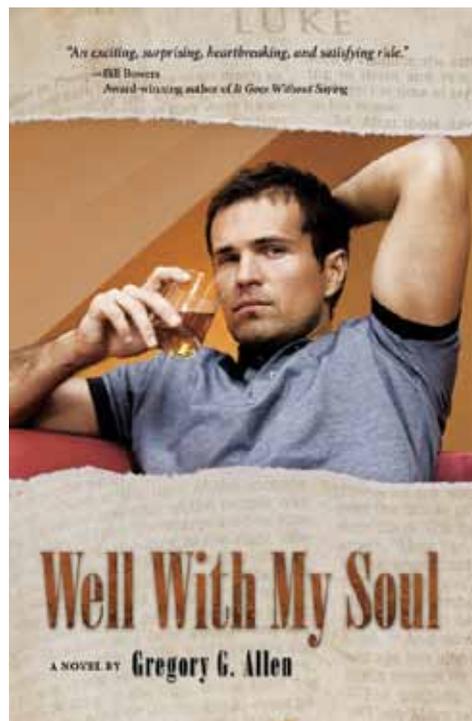
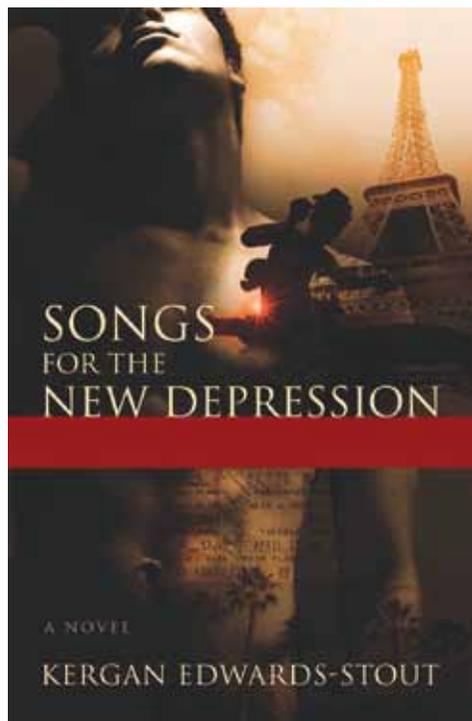
Both Gregory G. Allen's *Well With My Soul* and Kergan Edwards-Stout's *Songs for the New Depression* are available at Amazon.com.



Gregory G. Allen.



Kergan Edwards-Stout.



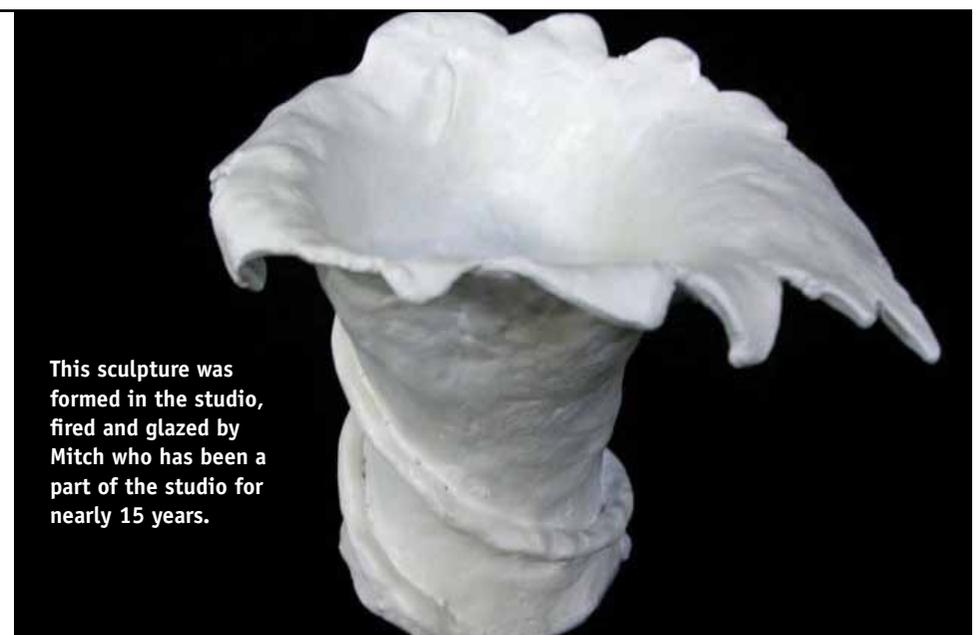
ART from page 14

do them every week, but often we put the art we are working on up," he said. "These are not like art school critiques. They are confrontational sometimes, helping people to better their skills, but are also a discussion of content and metaphor. People often want to know how others perceive their work and the critiques allow us to have that verbal dialogue. The art does speak for itself and we respect that, but having a respectful dialogue is also an extra added bonus."

One of Anthon's favorite stories from over the years centers on a woman who had not done art since she had been diagnosed, about 10 years earlier. She began tentatively at first in the group, Anthon said, but she came back with a real fervor. "Her images were so powerful; they were sought after in the shows and she was visibly stronger and stronger, in her art and in her life.

"She had two children and they often came to the group as well. Having her children around gave all of us a lift. The banter between this woman and the men in the group was precious and over the top at times, with laughter and tears. The other thing that has been so poignant is the diversity: men, women, straight men and women, all races all finding ways to live together around the art and to enjoy each others company and respect each others contributions."

The HIV+ Art Therapy Studio Group meets Thursdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Center on Halsted. No previous art skills are necessary. Materials are provided. Exhibition opportunities will be available. To participate, interested people must have an HIV diagnosis and complete a Center on Halsted intake. To register or receive more information, please contact Dan Anthon, Art Therapist directly at 847-491-1095 or danthon1@yahoo.com



This sculpture was formed in the studio, fired and glazed by Mitch who has been a part of the studio for nearly 15 years.

Mr. Friendly confronts AIDS fears

BY ROSS FORMAN

Dave Watt has a simple message: Be stigma-free of HIV.

"Having lived through the 1980s, I've seen people living with HIV being treated rudely, like second-class citizens. So I've always been passionate about HIV," said Watt, 48. "Now we have great medications, lots of knowledge about how HIV is spread and the importance of low/undetectable viral loads. Yet still, people living with HIV are stigmatized.

"Wanting to make a difference, I created a visual symbol to help people show that they were stigma-free of HIV. My husband, Ken, took my sketch of HIV-positive and HIV-negative signs with a smile and used his graphic design skills to create the face you see today."

Watt launched the Mr. Friendly symbol when he competed for Mr. Michigan Leather at The Dunes Resort in September, 2008.

"Everyone seemed to like the symbol," said Watt, 48, who lives in Kalamazoo, Mich. "I used the symbol to have

literally hundreds of conversations with people about [the] stigma of HIV. To freshen up [the] HIV messaging, I tried different phrases, such as, 'Know your status' or 'Knowledge is power.' But neither fit with a smiling face.

"Others suggested putting the round face on a condom packet. But Mr. Friendly is not really a safe-sex message. Mr. Friendly is unique because the message is for everyone, that we should all be having open, honest and educated conversation[s] about HIV with zero judgment.

"Mr. Friendly started in the leather community, expanded easily into the gay world and also works really well at straight and family events too. Mr. Friendly is not just for people who are living with HIV. With equal weight for both the positive and negative signs, the [face] does not disclose your own status. We all have a responsibility to the health of our community. Mr. Friendly helps people initiate conversations about HIV. The symbol is also an effective tool to promote testing for HIV."

Watt is an HIV Prevention Team Leader at Community AIDS Resource and Education Services (CARES).

"Mr. Friendly is turning out to be very adaptable," Watt said. "HIV knows no gender, race, age, orientation, etc., and the smiling face seems to be welcomed by just about everyone."

The colors of the face do coincidentally run with the leather pride flag (black, blue, white, red).

"I find that people often blame the HIV-positive community for the spread of HIV, while avoiding any level of personal responsibility for their own protection," Watt said. "My concern is that people use [someone's] HIV status as a main condition for dating or hooking up. Due to the window period of HIV and how the virus works, a person might test negative for HIV, yet

have a highly infectious viral load just weeks after contracting HIV. A person living with HIV who is properly taking effective medication may have an undetectable viral load and is much less likely to transmit the virus."

Watt and Mr. Friendly will be traveling the country this spring, promoting its message, including late-May in Chicago at International Mr. Leather [IML].

"I've had quite a few HIV-positive guys come up to me, hug me, and say, 'thank you' for the support," Watt said. "People are telling me that Mr. Friendly is working, that people are talking about HIV more using the symbol.

"A favorite 'success story' came at a Mr. Friendly event where HIV testing was being offered, and a group of guys convinced one of their friends to test for HIV. Fearing that he had contracted HIV, he had been afraid to [get] tested for over four years. His friends understood Mr. Friendly's message and let him know that they would be there for him no matter what his result [was.] With their support, he did get tested that day."

Watt has developed Team Friendly, which includes a four-hour training session to help fight the stigma of HIV, including, recruitment for HIV testing, finding people living with HIV that need support, and creating an atmosphere in your community that raises awareness about HIV.

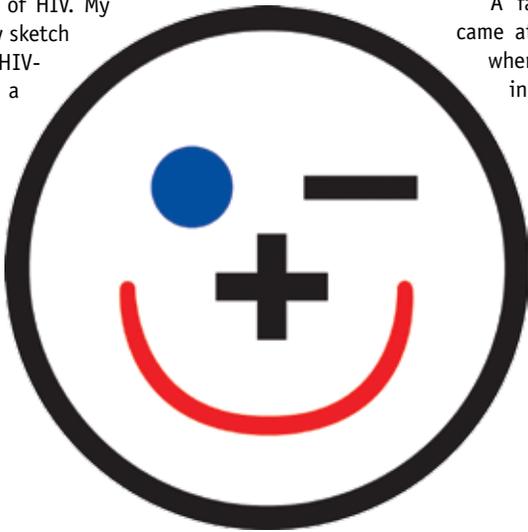
"After a few years of trial and error with messaging about stigma, I finally landed on a few basic concepts that I hold true," Watt said. "Best practices with regard to Mr. Friendly are pretty specific, and require some training. The concept of meeting people where they are at, no matter where they are at, even if you strongly disagree with their opinions or choices, are crucial to effective one-on-one conversations.

"The training emphasizes a 'support and progress' model where you first say a supporting comment like, 'Yes, testing for HIV can be scary: it is a life-changing diagnosis.' Then follow by progressing the conversation toward fewer stigmas, such as, 'But HIV is very treatable now and there is a lot of support here in Chicago for people living with HIV.'

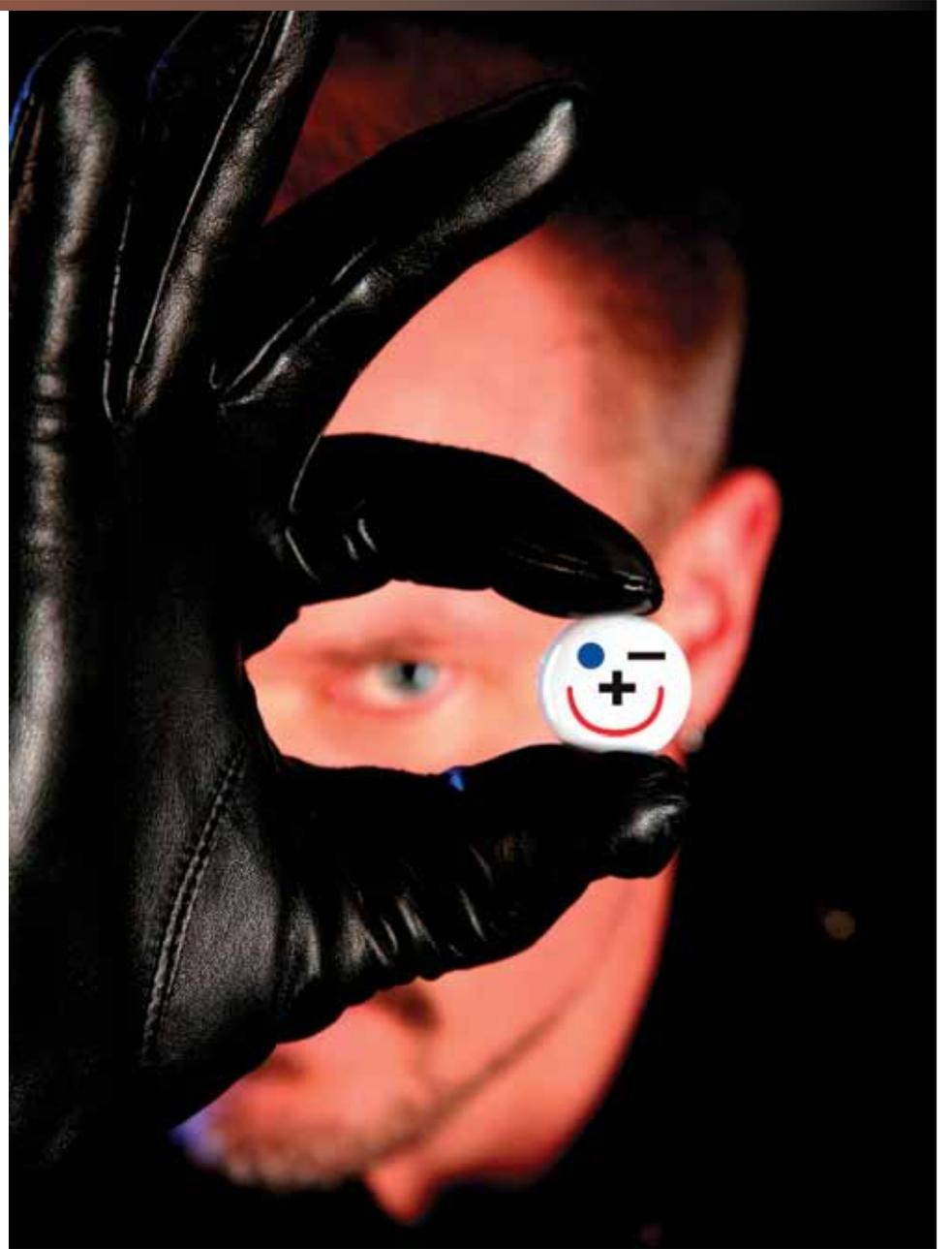
"I did the first training ever with a group of six guys in Chicago, at Touché [bar]. Since then, I've completed several trainings in Michigan and have two set up in South Florida and New Jersey."

Watt is expanding Mr. Friendly with two distinct programs. The first is: Disclosure of Status: Mr. Friendly Can Help, a workshop for people living with HIV. Next is: Friendly Chat about Unprotected Sex.

In the Disclosure program, "we first brainstorm on various situations where disclosure of status can be a challenge, and then we analyze each situation, discussing why/how/when to disclose—and how Mr. Friendly can help initiate conversation about HIV safely. The symbol



The Mr. Friendly logo.



Dave Watt promoting his Mr. Friendly project. Photos courtesy of Watt



can be used to initiate a conversation about HIV and gauge someone's readiness to discuss HIV. The symbol is a great tool for people to use in disclosure of their HIV status as well."

Regarding the Friendly Chat program, it focuses on how to discuss un-safe sex with friends who choose not to wear condoms, Watt said. "We break it down into three categories of risk: safe, safer and good luck. The idea is to give us tools how to discuss [un-safe sex] without judgment, to really look at how we can meet people where they are at and help them consider safer options."

Watt and Mr. Friendly will have a booth at the IML marketplace for the third year in a row, with giveaways of buttons, temporary tattoos, and more.

Plus, Watt will launch IML Gets Friendly—at-tendees can get their picture taken with a button for a video to be posted on YouTube.

Watt also will judge IML this year.

"The last two years at IML have been amazing," Watt said. "We have had over 1,000 people visit the booth each year from as far [away] as Australia and South Africa. I am continually inspired and motivated by just how many people

'get it.' People like the symbol, a visual expression of how they feel: we are all in this together, no matter your status.

"Mr. Friendly started simply as a picture on a clipboard at a leather contest. Chicago resident Dean Ogren was one of my Mr. Michigan Leather judges, and has mentored me over the years. He comments often that he was there at the beginning, and has seen it grow from a 90-second speech to an international campaign. Mr. Friendly seems to fill a need to freshen up our messaging about HIV."

Watt said he typically does not talk about his own HIV status. "Some people have gossiped that I must be HIV-positive because I started Mr. Friendly," he said. "My good friend Joe Arteaga [of Chicago] puts them quickly in their place, saying: 'You are missing the whole point of Mr. Friendly. He's a great advocate.'

"With regard to my status, I am open about my participation in the HIV vaccine trial through UIC called Project Wish. They are still accepting new participants. They are wonderful people, working hard at finding a vaccine for HIV."

For more information, go to: <http://www.mrfriendly.info>.

Black caucus hosts conversations on HIV

BY JAMIE ANNE ROYCE

HIV/AIDS researchers, service providers, public health advocates and community members gathered for Conversations on HIV Research March 28 at the University of Chicago.

Presented by the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus as part of a series of community conversations, the half-day summit featured speakers and forums on bridging the gap between HIV/AIDS research and Black men who have sex with men (MSM).

The event was produced in partnership with Rush University Medical Center, University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration, Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Developmental Center for AIDS Research, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

"Black MSM are an at-risk group we know has negative outcomes [with HIV contraction]. We need to see how we can intervene and prevent that," said Dr. Kimberly Smith, who presented on HIV treatment.

Smith discussed strategies to keep HIV-positive Black MSM in treatment to keep their viral load down. Typically, HIV-positive people who receive regular retroviral treatment have a decreased viral load and decreased risk of passing on the virus through unprotected sexual contact.

Smith also addressed the "down low," the notion that Black men have unprotected sex with other Black men in secret or on the "down low," contract HIV and then infect their Black female primary partners. To Smith, the "down low" perpetuates the incorrect assumption that there is a method or set of characteristics people can use to identify a potential partner who carries the virus.

"The whole 'down low' discussion is ridiculous. It blames Black men for the HIV infections of Black women," said Smith. "We should be teaching women that anyone they have sex with can infect them, puts them at risk."

Dr. John Schneider, assistant professor of medicine and epidemiology at the University of Chicago, presented on social networks and HIV elimination. Through his research, he found similar rates of condom use and substance use within different racial communities of MSM, but the Chicago Black MSM community has an infection rate nearly seven times that of white and Latino MSM communities.

Through studying social networks of these communities, Schneider discovered that someone with a high risk of contracting HIV is much more likely to come in contact with someone who has a low risk of contracting HIV in the Black MSM



The panelists. Photos by Jamie Anne Royce

community. These findings lead Schneider to recommend network or venue alerts when someone tests positive to prevent ongoing infections. The conversation then led to stigmatization of HIV-positive people within the Black MSM community.

"Many people viewed HIV as a punishment for same-sex sexual behavior," said Dexter Voisin of the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration.

Voisin, whose research indicates Black HIV-positive MSM are less likely than white MSM to disclose their status, highlighted the stigma of HIV within the Black community. He shared several survey respondents' answers, and many of them attributed the stigma to a lack of education on HIV within the community.

"The level of misinformation was astounding, alarming," said Voisin.

In regard to disclosing his HIV-positive status to his family, one respondent said, "It's like you told your family they're actually going be plan-

ning a funeral right then and there. And don't nobody like funerals at all."

Through his research, Voisin learned that some people in the community think HIV is contracted through any physical contact, outcasting HIV-positive people due to fear of contracting the virus. Others still view an HIV diagnosis as a death sentence, unaware of retroviral treatments that greatly extend the quality and length of life.

Stigma also keeps some Black MSMs from seeking treatment because they are afraid of community and family members discovering their HIV-positive status. A misplaced prescription bottle or side effects from medication could potentially out someone as HIV-positive.

But Voisin reports that many people who disclosed their HIV-positive status to family and community members reported positive outcomes. "After some disclosed their HIV status, they experienced lower rates of mental health issues and depression, as well as greater adherence to retroviral treatments," said Voisin.



Dr. Kimberly Smith.

AIDS@30
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TIMES
SPECIAL PROJECT

**Nominated for
a National GLAAD Award
and Peter Lisagor Media
Award in Chicago**

CONTINUING THROUGH APRIL 2012

VIEWPOINTS

WINDY CITY
TIMES

VOL. 27, No. 27, April 11, 2012

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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.

REV. IRENE
MONROE

We are Trayvon Martin: LGBTs, Blacks united by murder

What does Trayvon Martin's murder have to do with gay-rights protection?

The quick answer is the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act (mostly known by Matthew Shepard's name). And this might be the only option the Florida Justice Department has in moving forward to arrest George Zimmerman and charge him with murder.

The nation is outraged that in 2012 an unarmed, African-American, 17-year-old high school student can be shot dead by a neighborhood watch captain because his egregious offense was "walking while Black" in a gated community.

By now you are familiar with the story. On Feb. 26, Trayvon Martin left a 7-Eleven convenience store to head back home to his father's fiancée's gated community in the Retreat At Twin Lakes

in Sanford, Fla. George Zimmerman, 28, of mixed ethnic descent (mother's Peruvian, and father's Jewish—he identifies as Hispanic) began following Martin and called the Sanford Police Department. Although Zimmerman was advised by his superior not to pursue Martin, he shot Martin in self-defense after a physical altercation initiated supposedly by Martin.

Was Zimmerman motivated by racism, therefore, racially profiling Martin?

And was Zimmerman's act also a hate crime? Many politicians are throwing around the "H-word" concerning Martin's murder. Now many African-Americans are, too.

Renowned African-American filmmaker Tyler Perry told CNN.com that "Racial profiling should be a hate crime investigated by the FBI. That way, local government can't make the decision on whether or not these people get punished."

Perry recalled his experience when he was pulled by Atlanta police for making an illegal turn and having tinted windows. Then a Black officer pulled up at the scene, recognizing Perry. The arresting officers apologized and let him go. Perry stated that the incident, however, has stayed with him, opening his eyes to what type of treatment he might have endured if it wasn't for his celebrity status.

In 2009, President Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act in law. Many African Americans were irate that their protection under the law—which they argue they have fought for since being shipped to America in 1619—had to be associated with a white gay male who was killed in 1998.

Some African Americans, and, of course, heterosexual homophobes, wanted to know why

couldn't they have the James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act solely to protect them. Many further argued that the law would serve to solely protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender and queer Americans and would do precious little to protect them, particularly since the bill is commonly referred to as the Matthew Shepard Act.

"The more time I spend in the LGBT community's civil-rights movement the more I'm struck by the need for all the various human communities to support one another. ... Martin's death is as personal to me as any white lesbian's death. Martin is my brother, and whether one is Black, white, gay or straight, we are all human beings together in this struggle for human dignity. It's as simple as that," Carol Fischer, wrote me in an email. Fischer's a white lesbian and producer of *bloomingOUT*, a weekly queer radio show on WFHB Radio Station in Bloomington, Ind.

In 1998 both James Byrd Jr., and Matthew Shepard were victims of bias-motivated crimes. Byrd, an African American was murdered by three white supremacists who chained him to the back of their pick-up truck at his ankles and dragged along a three-mile asphalt road until he was dismembered. Shepard was tortured, tethered to a fence and left to die because he was gay.

With Florida's Stand Your Ground permitting Zimmerman to walk without charges, the Shepard-Byrd statute not only reminds us of how bias-motivated crimes links gays and Blacks, but that it's also the best hope for Trayvon Martin and his family seeking justice.

LETTERS

Wrong place for service

Dear Ald. Moore,

I read to day with great distress that the New Life Covenant Church, headed by the incredibly homophobic and bigoted Rev. Wilfredo de Jesus, will be holding services in the auditorium of the Gale Math and Science Academy on West Jonquil Terrace. Gale is a Chicago public school.

While de Jesus has the absolute right under the First Amendment to spew his bigoted bile as he chooses, we feel it is inappropriate for him and his hateful organization to be permitted to use taxpayer funded facilities. While they may be paying a fee to use those facilities, it begs the question as to whether Cassandra Washington, the principal, or the local school council would permit National Socialists or The KKK to access those facilities for a fee.

The First Amendment does not guarantee his access to our school facilities to promulgate hate.

It is particularly unfortunate that de Jesus has chosen the Easter and Passover season to deliver his and his organization's message of homophobic hate and intolerance in a Chicago Public School auditorium.

As a teacher, taxpayer, homeowner, gay man and person of faith, I wish to protest, in the strongest terms, the use of taxpayer-funded facilities devoted to learning and the formation of future citizens to be used to further the message of hate, bigotry and intolerance set forth by de Jesus and his hateful organization.

We hear of students being bullied and harassed, of being killed or committing suicide due to the hateful message of de Jesus, Fred Phelps and others, and now our schools are being opened to the very messengers of hate who create the atmosphere bigotry we fight through efforts to help and support these very students.

I will be writing the principal of the school and will also be submitting letters to the editor to the local gay press. We will be spreading the word to friends, family and neighbors.

We will also be contacting Lambda Legal to see if this is a violation of the separation of church and state. It certainly is a violation of the precepts of human dignity and the culture of our community.

John Jaffe
Chicago

Scale back, Boystown

Dear Editor:

The sad events in Florida leading up to and including the killing of Trayvon Martin should be a wake-up call to a group of Boystown residents who, last summer, ramped up their neighborhood watch efforts.

The leaders of the Take Back Boystown group and their followers have drawn lots of negative attention and criticism for some of their tactics, which include conducting safety marches and capturing/posting video online of people they deem suspicious. While the Halsted Street stabbing video, shot from the balcony of a residence, proved invaluable, numerous other videos shot by sticking cameras in the faces of passersby are unseemly.

The aggressive stance of the Take Back Boystown group (which is not only implied by its name but also displayed by the actions of some of the group's members) is extremely troubling. The group has attracted concerned residents and ardent racists alike, and its leaders have been irresponsible in their actions while attempting to maintain their anonymity. With the warm months already upon us, now is the time for those truly concerned about neighborhood safe-

ty to get involved in activities aimed at maintaining a welcoming and safe environment.

Clearly, the way to do that is not by implementing tactics aimed at keeping out those deemed suspicious based on their age and race.

Jay Gotlier
Lakeview

Big MACS

Dear Editor,

As a longtime volunteer in the MACS study (since 1984), I want to make sure that people know where they can transfer their participation if they are not satisfied with their current location. I moved my appointments to Northwestern University, and they were glad to have me.

—CORE Center, 2020 W. Harrison St., Chicago, Ill., 60612; Carmon Houston, 312-572-4552, CHouston@cookcountyhhs.org

—Northwestern University, Division of Infectious Diseases, 645 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 900, Chicago, Ill., 60611; Theresa Keeley, RN, 312-695-0186, t-keeley@northwestern.edu

Harlen Fleming

Send letters and viewpoints to
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 Items may be edited for length or clarity.

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo of Alex Hopkins from the Weinstein Company

NOT CHILD'S PLAY

The film *Bully* has been a topic across the nation for weeks. Read a review of the film on page 26.

DISH

Rockit man.
Page 32.

Photo of the Rockit Burger
by Andrew Davis



THEATER

'Trash' talking.
Page 24.

Photo by Steven Townshend



PERFORMANCE

Marshall law.
Page 30.

PR photo



DANCIN' FEATS

Fab collab(oration)

BY VICKI CRAIN

Collaboration, by definition, means to work together with others on a project or endeavor; to cooperate for a mutual cause or end. Dance, by nature, is a collaboration between artists—at its base is choreographer and dancer.

The relationship between the choreographer and the dancer varies with every work. Some choreographers set steps on the dancer, telling them what to do and how to execute. Others take a more collaborative approach asking the dancer to make choices that aid in the progressive creation of the piece. It is the latter approach where magic can happen, that ideal moment when artistic goals and ideas come together in a brilliant fusion of beauty, grace and talent.

This month, the Joffrey Ballet takes the stage in 10 performances of *Spring Desire*, a program of three neoclassical works representing different eras of romance and relationships. It is the new work by San Francisco-based choreographer Val Caniparoli, a true collaboration by any definition, that is the centerpiece of the show.

Caniparoli started dancing at age 20 (after claiming he was 17, thereby receiving a Ford Foundation scholarship) and eventually joined the San Francisco Ballet in 1973. Today, at 60, he is still performing with the company. Along the way, he began to make dances for Bay Area schools; now, 35 companies perform his choreography across the globe. Although this is the first time creating a work for the Joffrey dancers, he has worked with some of the dancers before. In 2009, Joffrey Artistic Director Ashley Wheater asked his friend and former co-worker at San Francisco Ballet (Caniparoli) to come set one of his pieces on a specific dancer.

Matthew Adamczyk had the honor of perform-

ing the solo "Aria" at the company's annual gala as well as that year's Dance For Life benefit, launching a fruitful artistic relationship and a friendship. "It was a great honor for me," said Adamczyk. "It was an amazing experience. Even though hundreds of gentlemen had performed this solo, he wanted me to make it my own."

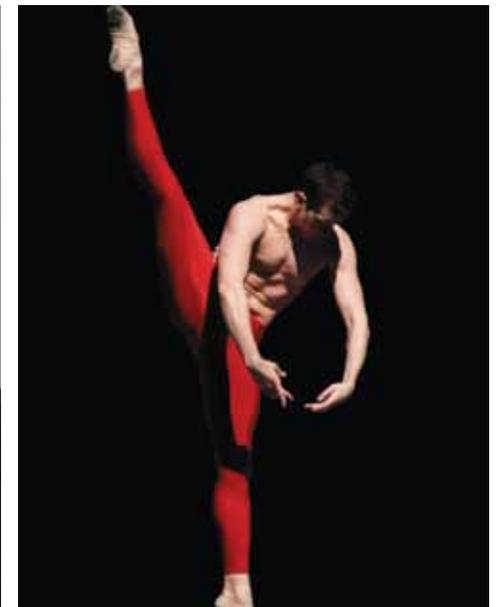
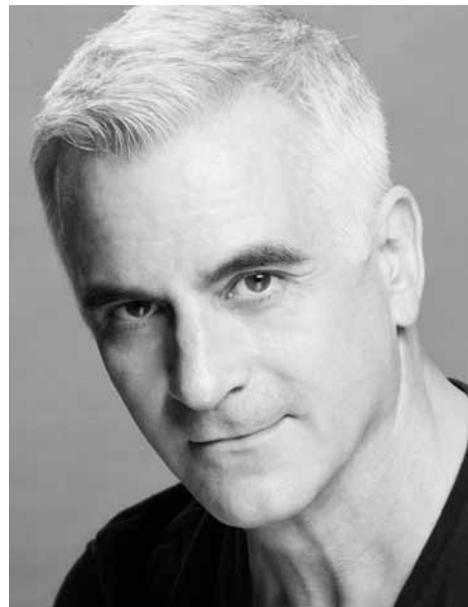
Adamczyk, now a nine-season Joffrey veteran, is also an established local artist (www.dancingpainter.com). He lives in Andersonville with his partner of six years. He is performing another of Caniparoli's works at this year's gala (information below).

Since they worked so well together previously, it was an easy choice to cast Adamczyk for the new premiere. "He's committed," Caniparoli said. "He's there for you, but not afraid to speak up. Matt is a very collaborative artist and is versatile. He's indicative of the company."

The new work, *Incantations*, is a 27-minute abstract dance for 10 dancers—five men and five women—set to a score of the same title by Russian minimalist composer Alexandre Rabinovitch-Barakovsky. The process of creating each new dance work is different, but Caniparoli prefers to be inspired by the music. "I have a large collection of music," he said. "I still have CDs from years ago. I like using composers that aren't being done to death. I just happened to pull this out and—bam!—I thought, 'This is it!'"

The music and the movement have one continuous arc reflecting the spiritual quality of a prayer. The zen-like spirals in the choreography, sets and costumes (Sandra Woodall) and lighting design (Lucy Carter) can be deceptive. "The dancing is non-stop," said Adamczyk. "It's like being shot out of a cannon."

While Caniparoli is providing the direction and steps, he relies on the dancers to help form



From left: Val Caniparoli and Matthew Adamczyk. Adamczyk photo by Michael Smith

the work. What people will see on the stage is a direct result of the collaborative effort with these Joffrey dancers. He created it for and on them. "When they feel part of the process they take ownership," he said. "The result is from the studio. I'm inspired by the dancers in the room, so let's see what they can do." It is this openness to input that earns him the respect and trust of the dancers. Adamczyk thinks this way of working is ideal: "Inevitably, we are the ones on stage. We need to be comfortable with what we do. This collaboration was a lot about exploration and is why the piece is still growing and changing. I think it will continue to grow for a long time. We'll always find something new to add to make it more daring."

Also on the program is Edwaard Liang's *Age of Innocence*, inspired by the novels of Jane Austen and Jerome Robbins *In the Night*, set to Chopin's piano nocturnes.

Joffrey Ballet presents *Spring Desire* at the

Auditorium Theatre at Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy., Wed., April 25-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. Tickets are also available at the Joffrey Tower Box Office, 10 E. Randolph St.

The women's board of the Joffrey Ballet celebrates its 10th anniversary by hosting an celebration gala. Evening attire is required for the pre-performance event. It will take place Sunday, May 6, at 6:30 p.m. at the Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Pkwy. Tickets are \$95-\$600; call 312-386-8921 or email gala@joffrey.org.

For a full list of April performances, check out the spring dance preview in the March 21 issue of *Windy City Times*.

Vicki Crain also writes a Chicago-based dance blog at www.rogueballerina.com.

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Please see Consumer Brief Summary of **EGRIFTA® on following page.**

Ask your healthcare provider if **EGRIFTA®, the first and only FDA-approved medicine for HIV-related excess belly fat, may be right for you. For more information, visit www.egrifta.com or call the AXIS Center at 1-877-714-AXIS (2947).**

EGRIFTA®
tesamorelin for injection

Consumer Brief Summary for *EGRIFTA*® (tesamorelin for injection)

EGRIFTA® (eh-GRIF-tuh)

(tesamorelin for injection) for subcutaneous use

Read the Patient Information that comes with *EGRIFTA*® before you start to take it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or your treatment.

What is *EGRIFTA*®?

- *EGRIFTA*® is an injectable prescription medicine to reduce the excess in abdominal fat in HIV-infected patients with lipodystrophy. *EGRIFTA*® contains a growth hormone-releasing factor (GRF)
- The impact and safety of *EGRIFTA*® on cardiovascular health has not been studied
- *EGRIFTA*® is not indicated for weight-loss management
- It is not known whether taking *EGRIFTA*® helps improve compliance with antiretroviral medications
- It is not known if *EGRIFTA*® is safe and effective in children. *EGRIFTA*® is not recommended to be used in children

Who should not use *EGRIFTA*®?

Do not use *EGRIFTA*® if you:

- have pituitary gland tumor, pituitary gland surgery, or other problems related to your pituitary gland
- have active cancer (either newly diagnosed or recurrent) or are receiving treatment for cancer
- are allergic to tesamorelin or any of the ingredients in *EGRIFTA*®. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients in *EGRIFTA*®
- are pregnant or become pregnant. If you become pregnant, stop using *EGRIFTA*® and talk with your healthcare provider. See "What should I tell my healthcare provider before using *EGRIFTA*®?"

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using *EGRIFTA*®?

Before using *EGRIFTA*®, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have or have had cancer
- have diabetes
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if *EGRIFTA*® passes into your breast milk. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that HIV-infected mothers not breastfeed to avoid the risk of passing HIV infection to your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby if you are taking *EGRIFTA*®
- have kidney or liver problems
- have any other medical condition

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. *EGRIFTA*® may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how *EGRIFTA*® works. Know the medicines you take. Keep a list with you to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I use *EGRIFTA*®?

- **Read the detailed "Instructions for Use"** that comes with *EGRIFTA*® before you start using *EGRIFTA*®. Your healthcare provider will show you how to inject *EGRIFTA*®
- Use *EGRIFTA*® exactly as prescribed by your healthcare provider
- Inject *EGRIFTA*® under the skin (subcutaneously) of your stomach area (abdomen)
- Change (rotate) the injection site on your stomach area (abdomen) with each dose. Do not inject *EGRIFTA*® into scar tissue, bruises, or your navel
- Do not share needles or syringes with other people. Sharing of needles can result in the transmission of infectious diseases, such as HIV

What are the possible side effects of *EGRIFTA*®?

EGRIFTA® may cause serious side effects including:

- Serious allergic reaction. Some people taking *EGRIFTA*® may have an allergic reaction. Stop using *EGRIFTA*® and get emergency help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
 - a rash over your body

- hives
- swelling of your face or throat
- shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- fast heartbeat
- feeling of faintness or fainting

- Swelling (fluid retention). *EGRIFTA*® can cause swelling in some parts of your body. Call your healthcare provider if you have an increase in joint pain, or pain or numbness in your hands or wrist (carpal tunnel syndrome)
- Increase in glucose (blood sugar) intolerance and diabetes. Your healthcare provider will measure your blood sugar periodically
- Injection-site reactions. Change (rotate) your injection site to help lower your risk for injection-site reactions. Call your healthcare provider for medical advice if you have the following symptoms around the area of the injection site:

- redness	- bleeding
- itching	- rash
- pain	- swelling
- irritation	

The most common side effects of *EGRIFTA*® include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| - joint pain | - nausea |
| - pain in legs and arms | - vomiting |
| - swelling in your legs | - rash |
| - muscle soreness | - itching |
| - tingling, numbness, and pricking | |

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of *EGRIFTA*®. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. To report side effects, contact EMD Serono toll-free at 1-800-283-8088, ext. 5563. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

Keep *EGRIFTA*® and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of *EGRIFTA*®:

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use *EGRIFTA*® for a condition for which it was not prescribed.

Do not give *EGRIFTA*® to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

Do not share your *EGRIFTA*® syringe with another person, even if the needle is changed.

Do not share your *EGRIFTA*® needles with another person.

This Patient Information leaflet summarizes the most important information about *EGRIFTA*®. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about *EGRIFTA*® that is written for healthcare professionals.

For more information about *EGRIFTA*®, go to www.EGRIFTA.com or contact the AXIS Center toll-free at 1-877-714-2947.

What are the ingredients in *EGRIFTA*®?

Active ingredient: tesamorelin

Inactive ingredients: mannitol and Sterile Water for Injection

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Jomama Jones.

Jomama Jones: A force of nature

BY JOE FRANCO

Chicagoans, brace yourselves, for a mighty force of nature is on our doorstep. This is not a “snow-pocalypse” that your shovels and North Face jackets provide comfort from. This is not a flood that your rubber boots and vented umbrellas can give your protection from. This is Jomama Jones—a living, breathing force of nature that floored audiences in New York City for years and has now returned to bring you an uncommon artistic experience.

Jomama is not a drag queen. She is not a female impersonator. “You could say she is my ‘altar ego [as opposed to ‘alter ego’],” said Daniel Alexander Jones, the conduit, playwright and songwriter for “*la force féminine*” of Jomama. “She comes in and works her magic. Jomama exists and is intended for the audience,” said Jones.

Jomama channels the energy of the stage divas of old in her Afro-puffed R&B glamour, according to Daniel: “Josephine Baker and Lena Horne are her fairy godmothers. They remind us, through beauty, joy, tenderness and wit, who we are capable of being. It is Jomama’s solemn wish that she stand as a particularized reminder of the purpose of human life and that, like Baker and Horne, we can each transcend the obstacles in our lives. I wanted others to be involved—together. It seems that our differences get more and more attention. Jomama wants those in her presence to take that risk in connecting in a more real way to those around them.”

According to Daniel, Jomama is less spectacle and more experience: “Jomama is a positive force for those who are there. If you have that opportunity—if you meet a stranger and in some way bonded, you can feel as if you’ve known them for a hundred years and walk away having had that deep engagement.”

“There is nothing idiotic about Jomama as she really exists. This is the presence of a woman who has a history,” said Jones. Daniel says that she represents not only her own diva self but also the inner divas of each one of her audience members: “Jomama doesn’t need to say she’s a diva. She’s a badass and she knows it.”

Jones credited Jane M. Saks and the Ellen

Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media at Columbia College Chicago as being “visionary.” “The programs and artists that [Saks] supports and those who are trying to be a different power in this world. It gives me hope that we aren’t going to hell in a handbasket,” laughed Jones.

Saks, the executive director of the institute, has brought the diva-swami back, thanks to a fellowship. “One of my most important priorities and greatest privileges as executive director of the institute is working closely with the fellows during the rich period of development and research with which all new artistic work and creative investigation begins,” said Saks. “The original creative voice always has the opportunity to be a ‘leadership voice’ and create paradigm shifts. That is why I encourage risk-taking, experimentation and innovation within the program.”

Jomama left the United States for Switzerland to raise goats. “Leaving America, for a Black American, is a profound experience. Racism is everyone but it is very different in most other countries. Traveling abroad offers hope and freedom that we spend a great deal of time here in this country talking about. That’s why Jomama went to Switzerland,” said Daniel. “We need to be reminded that we can overcome anything, while keeping our humanity and doing so with dignity. That is the lesson of Baker and Horne.”

Anyone wistful for the funk and soul created in the early ‘80s urban-contemporary scene by the likes of Stephanie Mills, Melba Moore and Angela Bofill will recognize some of their stage presence with the return of Jomama. The show, aptly called “Radiate,” is based on the eponymous song written by Jomama and her musical partner, Bobbie Halvorson. “It’s a lofty song. ‘I will radiate. You will radiate.’ Birth, death, life itself represent themselves here,” said Daniel. “Jomama takes sheer delight from the brilliance of the artists that she gets to work with. [Halvorson] and my fierce backup singers, the Sweet Peaches [Helga Davis and Sonya Perryman] as well as the other artists we’ve worked with are a family of artists.”

But what about the Chicago audience? What can it expect from Jomama? “Well, she’s curious

and she’s really not sure who is going to be there or how they will be. I can tell you that this will be a place you can be genuinely open and free with one other. Come to dance! Jomama knows that Chicagoans are not impressed with artifice. They seek a direct connection,” said Daniel.

“Radiate” is playing at the Victory Gardens,

2433 N. Lincoln Ave. Performances are scheduled for evenings at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 10- Saturday, April 21. Tickets are \$35 with student-discounted tickets of \$15 available. Visit www.victorygardens.org or call 773-871-3000.



Lili-Anne Brown. Photo courtesy of Bailiwick Chicago

Bailiwick has new artistic director

Bailiwick Chicago Executive Director Brian LaDuca announced that Lili-Anne Brown has been named the company’s new artistic director.

Due to recent career opportunities, current founding artistic director Kevin Mayes has tendered his formal resignation with the board of directors, but will remain a seated board member in a corporate development capacity. In his resignation, he strongly nominated Brown to take over his duties.

Brown is a native Chicagoan with local, regional and national credits who can soon be seen as Joanne in American Theatre Company/About Face Theatre’s production of RENT. Among the productions she’s directed are Sweet Charity and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.

“Kevin Mayes was the life-blood of our company, but Lili-Anne’s resume and understanding of Chicago’s dynamic theatre network will become an asset that has been relatively untapped by Bailiwick Chicago since its inception,” stated LaDuca.

Joffrey women’s board’s gala May 6

The women’s board of the Joffrey Ballet will present its 10th-anniversary gala Sunday, May 6, which coincides with the last performance

of the company’s 2011-2012 season.

The “evening attire” event will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy., with a performance. Trolleys will transport the guests to the Palmer House Hilton Ballroom, 17 E. Monroe St., for cocktails and dinner. From the ballroom, guests can proceed to the Empire Room for the grand finale.

Tickets are \$600 for the performance, gala dinner and finale, with tables ranging from \$6,000 to \$25,000. For those choosing the performance and finale, tickets are available for \$95 (\$110 at the door), and include general admission to the gala performance at 6:30 p.m. Call 312-386-8921 or email gala@joffrey.org.

MCA gets \$10M gift

Madeleine Grynstejn, Pritzker director of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago, announced the gift of \$10 million from Stefan Edlis and Gael Neeson to name the MCA Theater. The theater will be named the Edlis Neeson Theater in their honor.

In a statement, Mary Ittelson, chair of the MCA board of trustees, said, “Their gift is an affirmation of the quality of multidisciplinary programming at the MCA and ensures that it will continue to flourish in the theater and throughout the museum.”

The MCA Stage has presented a roster of art luminaries that has included Laurie Anderson, Philip Glass, the Martha Graham Dance Company and Bill T. Jones.

Steppenwolf’s ‘Red or White Ball’ April 13

Hundreds of Chicago’s young arts supporters will gather at Steppenwolf Auxiliary Council’s Red or White Ball Friday, April 13.

The event will take place at Architectural Artifacts, 4325 N. Ravenswood Ave., at 8 p.m. (VIP reception at 7:30 p.m.).

The 2012 Red or White Ball Honorary Chair is ensemble member and star of Law & Order: Criminal Intent, Kathryn Erbe. Actors Lily Mojekwu and Robert Schleifer are honorary co-chairs.

Tickets (which are \$135-\$250) are on sale now, and can be purchased online at www.steppenwolf.org/rowb, via e-mail at auxiliarycouncil@steppenwolf.org or at 312-654-5681.

GAY Weekend Play April 13-15
at Center on Halsted Hoover-Leppen Theater
3656 N. Halsted St. Chicago, IL

PRIDE Films & Plays

Lost in History by Adam Siegel
Fri April 13th. 7:30pm

Mr. Teddy by George Smart
Sat, April 14th. 4:30pm

Hello Norma Jeane by Dylan Costello
Sat, April 14th. 7:30pm

At the Flash by Sean Chandler & David Leeper
Sun, April 15th. 1:30pm

Under a Rainbow Flag by Leo Schwartz
Sun, April 15th. 4:30pm

Tickets \$10 per performance

CENTER ON HALSTED
For tickets please call 800-838-3006 or visit brownpapertickets.com

BROWN PAPER TICKETS



Tunnel Rat. Photo by Allison Tenn

THEATER REVIEW

Tunnel Rat

Playwright: Neil Cole
At: Genesis Theatrical Productions
 at Preston Bradley Auditorium,
 941 W. Lawrence Ave.
Tickets: 773-327-7707;
www.brownpapertickets.com; \$25
Runs through: April 29

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

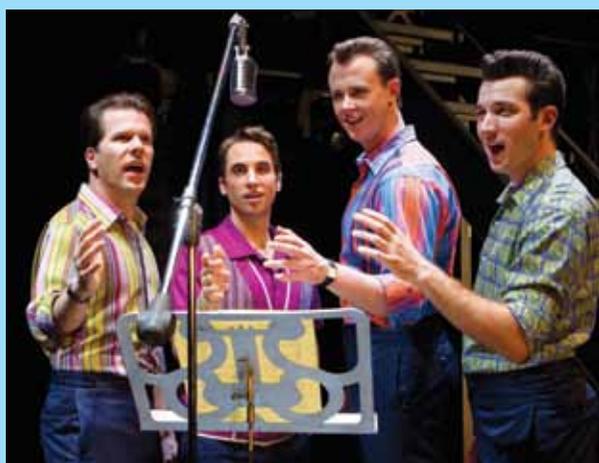
We know three things at the outset of this medical-mystery yarn: 1) During the Viet Nam war, the enemy operated from an interconnected network of underground bunkers, 2) When so-called "carpet bombing" failed to eradicate these hidden fortifications—you can still see them today on guided tours in Saigon—U.S. forces sent personnel into the subterranean fortresses to hunt them down, and 3) Since the conduits were sized to accommodate soldiers of smaller stature than your average Yank, the shortest GIs were steered toward these missions.

Ronnie Giles, the hero of our play, was one of these "tunnel rats" (as they were dubbed by their peers) and, 42 years later, it's still eating at him. This is manifested in hallucinations where the ring of his cell-phone triggers memories of the doomed convoy whose driver was his own last-minute replacement, where the ghost of a female guerrilla whom he had to shoot harasses him like a pesky kid sister, and his psychologist appears to be garbed in the black "pajamas" of a

Vietnamese sapper. Is Giles suffering from survivor's guilt or killer's remorse, or is he fabricating his symptoms in order to keep receiving his pension? Does he still wear his uniform (with all his medals carefully displayed) because it justifies his past actions, are his troubles actually rooted in self-consciousness over his lack of height—or does the source of his malaise matter less, in the end, than his need to accept what can't be changed and get on with his life?

Playwright Neil Cole's clinical approach to his topic is a welcome departure from the abstract emotionality too often adopted by civilian playwrights attempting vicarious replications of a singularly ill-documented war. The dramatic conceit of the aforementioned shrink and dead VC assuming the auxiliary roles in Giles' persistent recollections is kept from descending into precocity by the simplicity of Genesis Theatrical Productions' technical design and the unaffected tone imposed upon the text by Mark J. Shallow, Stefanie Johnson, and Joyce Hsieh under the direction of Brian LeTraunik. Although Andrew Dallas' score of incidental music occasionally slips into cliché—"For What It's Worth," again?—Cole's look back to traumas suffered nearly a half-century ago provides intriguing insights into what will soon almost certainly become a problem once again, in addition to serving as a sound-check on the freshly rehabbed stage in Uptown's Preston Bradley auditorium.

SPOTLIGHT



If you somehow missed the Tony Award-winning jukebox musical **Jersey Boys** during its multi-year run in Chicago, be thankful that this crowd-pleasing Broadway biography of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons is back in town. If you grew up with such pop hits like "Sherry," "Big Girls Don't Cry" or "Can't Take My Eyes Off You," then this show is definitely for you. Jersey Boys plays now through Sunday, June 3, at the Bank of America Theatre, 18 W. Monroe St. Tickets are \$35-\$100; call 800-775-2000 or visit www.broadwayinchicago.com. Photo courtesy of Joan Marcus



THEATER REVIEW

Trash

Playwright: Arthur M. Jolly
At: Babes with Blades Theatre Company
 at the Side Project, 1439 W. Jarvis Ave.
Tickets: 773-904-0391;
www.babeswithblades.org; \$20
Runs through: May 5

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

When the Babes with Blades (BWB) stage combat troupe launched its Joining Sword and Pen competition in 2005, skeptical audiences anticipated wholesome girlish romps on the order of the March sisters' Christmas pageant. No one suspected that six years later, the contest prize would go to a grim psychological drama (recently named a semifinalist at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center's National Playwrights Conference) with almost *no* fights in it at all.

Sword & Pen's agenda proposes a play written around a specified visual image of females waging battle against one another—in this instance, an eerily grotesque painting by Victoria Szilagy depicting two young women grappling amid the squalor of a moonlit municipal junkyard. Arthur M. Jolly's interpretation of this enigmatic scene invokes a pair of long-estranged siblings reunited at their mother's funeral. Becky, perversely clad for the occasion in a red dress, is the prodigal who fled home for a drifter's unstable life. Diane is the virtuous daughter who postponed her own career to care for their ailing parent. Just before dying, we learn, this matriarch mailed a letter to her long-lost offspring. The embittered Becky discarded it, unopened, spurring the search through piles of rotting debris.

The metaphor of objects abandoned and forgotten by their owners is not lost on the excavators. Gradually, it emerges that Mama Dearest—whether due to illness or natural bad temper—was an abusive harpy in her final years, selfishly exacerbating sororal rivalries so that Becky, now struggling to make a new

start, suffers under the guilt heaped upon her by the resentful Diane. While sometimes erupting into the physical violence born of childhood squabbles, now escalated to homicidal proportions with the ready availability of potentially lethal weapons, the conflict is mostly expressed verbally, progressing through layers of self-discovery as nightfall and the bulldozers draw ever nearer.

Sustaining this level of emotional intensity in the Side Project's close quarters over 80 minutes of wrestling with mountains of slippery detri-



Trash. Photo by Steven Townshend

tus—replicated by the technical team with an accuracy to discourage the tactually curious—demands a degree of stamina. Said stamina led to the double-casting of the show, Jennifer L. Mickelson and Elizabeth MacDougald, under the direction of Delia Ford, alternating in repertory with Alison Dornheggen and Megan Schemmel, the latter of whom (on the night that I attended) delivered riveting, inseparably connected performances to elevate the BWB company to the artistic legitimacy too long denied it by purists.

THEATER REVIEW

Beyond the Fringe

Playwrights: Alan Bennett, Peter Cook,
 Jonathan Miller, Dudley Moore
At: Oak Park Festival Theatre at
 Madison Street Theatre Studio,
 1010 W. Madison St., Oak Park.
Tickets: 708-445-4440;
www.oakparkfestival.com; \$20-\$25
Runs through: May 6

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

There are multiple reasons why Oak Park Festival Theatre's production of the 1960s British comedy revue *Beyond the Fringe* might not inspire much confidence at first. But if you stick it out, you'll be greatly rewarded by the end.

There are errors in David Mink's director's notes in the *Beyond the Fringe* program. Mink misspells the name of Jonathan Miller as "Jonathon," who was one of the show's four original performer/playwrights. Mink then states that Miller returned to a career in medicine after his initial brush with fame with *Beyond the Fringe*, omitting the fact that Miller is best known today as a theater and opera director (a career fate he bemoaned in a whiny 2005 interview on the BBC Radio 4 program *Desert Island Discs*.)

Set designer Andrew Hildner tries to create a hip 1960s abstract space with floating color panels in the tiny studio theater of Oak Park's Madison Street Theatre, but the materials look cheap and the placement makes the area feel cramped (and they were hazardous on opening night, when a couple performers stumbled into stage platforms.)

And then some might question the casting

for Oak Park's *Beyond the Fringe*, which deviates from the original, which featured four upstart college-aged men. In Oak Park, two of the four performers are middle-aged men (Jack Hickey and Mark Richard) while a woman (Maggie Graham) has also been brought into the mix alongside only one college-age male (Chris Ballou).

Yet, despite all these potential drawbacks, Oak Park Festival Theatre's *Beyond the Fringe* is a comic dream for Anglophiles. You can see how *Beyond the Fringe* inspired Monty Python's *Flying Circus* with great absurdist sketches with funny play-on-words writing. And it's also a treat to think of how this influential, if very 1960s period material, launched the showbiz careers of Miller alongside future famed actors Peter Cook, Dudley Moore and acclaimed out playwright/author Alan Bennett.

Mink's non-traditional casting for the show works, and the acting company all dazzle with their great comic timing and mastery of various British accents (particularly in the case of Hickey and Richard).

Richard and Ballou are particularly in fine form in the Act II sketch of a Bethlehem shepherd being interviewed by the Biblical roving reporter Matthew, while Hickey is hilariously understated as a stiff-upper-lipped patriarch having a bit of chat about his misguided notions of human reproduction. Although her roles were not written for a woman, Graham brings a great energy to the show with her exaggerated facial expressions and officious bearing.

So if you love British comedy, Oak Park Festival Theatre's *Beyond the Fringe* will definitely be your cup of tea. Just don't mind the initial missteps that give a negative first impression.

THEATER REVIEW

Chesapeake

Playwright: Lee Blessing

At: Remy Bumppo Theatre

Company at Greenhouse Theater,
2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Tickets: 773-404-7336;

www.remybumppo.org; \$30-\$40

Runs through: April 29

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Some audiences might question the relevancy of Remy Bumppo Theatre Company programming Lee Blessing's 1999 comedy Chesapeake at this particular juncture in history.

However, anyone who has seen "Animal Lovers for Obama" presidential fundraising ads (no doubt created in response to Mitt Romney's infamous family vacation trip when their dog was kept in a crate strapped atop the car) can see how Blessing's entrancing one-man show is still timely for today's polarized political landscape.

Blessing wrote Chesapeake in response to the 1998 Supreme Court decision that upheld the so-called "Decency Clause" when it came to government agencies awarding federal grants to artists and art organizations. It was a major loss for performance artists Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller and John Fleck (lumped together as the "NEA Four"), who banded together to challenge the Decency Clause in court after their arts grants from the National Endowment for the Arts were revoked in 1990 due to "indecent" in their work (some of which dealt with topics like homoeroticism and sadomasochism.)

This blow to freedom of expression and the nebulous notion of what constitutes art are items that Blessing delves into with plenty of relish and comic panache in Chesapeake. It's all about a bisexual performance artist who tries to undermine a bigoted Southern Congressman (who successfully pushed to have the artist's grant revoked) by kidnapping the politico's beloved dog, a Chesapeake Bay retriever called Lucky.

The question of how art can inexplicably move people is vividly expounded upon in Blessing's often-absurd and later magical realist scenarios in Chesapeake. Blessing's script offers deep



Greg Matthew Anderson in Chesapeake. Photo by Johnny Knight

insight and a plethora of laughs (particularly about dog behavior), and Remy Bumppo is more than up to the challenge of finessing every scrap of humor and pathos from the material.

It's a tour-de-force performance for Greg Matthew Anderson, as the artist Kerr (pronounced like "cur," literally meaning a mongrel dog or cowardly person.) Anderson is wonderfully sup-

ported by the smart pacing of director Shawn Douglass and the great sound design work of Rick Sims.

Although some people might assume that this one-man show is a cheaper alternative to other plays calling for larger ensembles and more elaborate scenery, Blessing's insistence on structuring Chesapeake as a solo turn neatly ties into

the tradition of many a famed performance artist who can command the stage with his or her skilled writing and delivery alone.

Remy Bumppo's Chesapeake is bound to gain even more historical insight with a special pre-show conversation with out performance artist Holly Hughes at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 14 (tickets are \$45 and include admission to the 2:30 p.m. performance). This melding of fact and fiction is undoubtedly a theatrical event that shouldn't be missed.

'All Girl Moby Dick' at Zoo Studios

The Chicago Mammals are presenting All Girl Moby Dick, an adaptation of Herman Melville's classic performed with an ensemble composed entirely of Chicago actresses.

The cast includes Erin Orr, Liz Chase and Christy Arington, among others.

The production will run at Zoo Studios, 4001 N. Ravenswood Ave., on April 21 and 28 as well as May 4-5, 11-12, 13-14 and 25-26. See www.chicagomammals.com.

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CRITICS' PICKS

Enron, Timeline Theatre at Baird Hall, through April 15. This true-life saga of corporate crime is recounted by Lucy Prebble as a grotesque fantasy-fable with Stef Tovar now playing an antihero as flawed as any found in Shakespeare. MSB

Fela!, Cadillac Palace Theatre, through April 15. Out choreographer/director Bill T. Jones has crafted an exuberantly colorful and theatrical tribute to the controversial Nigerian musician and activist Fela Kuti. The pulsing Afrobeat score is infectious. SCM

The Oxford Roof Climbers Rebellion, Caffeine Theatre at Lincoln Square Theatre, through April 14. "You're the most dangerous man I know," says poet Robert Graves, "Yes, isn't it frightening?" answers T.E. Lawrence before proceeding to show us why in Steven Massicote's pristine (but still oh-so-hot) history play. MSB

Pinocchio/Frankenstein, Neo-Futurists, through April 14. Frankenstein's nameless monster waxes profound relating the grotesque but bourgeois moral tale of another handmade creature, Pinocchio. Metaphysics meets the meta-theatrical in this clever (if overly long) adaptation. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge
and Morgan

KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT, JR.

Bully; The Cabin in the Woods; film notes

"I don't believe in luck but I believe in hope," 12-year-old Alex says at the conclusion of Lee Hirsch's devastating documentary, **Bully**. To hear that Alex, who we have witnessed enduring repeated verbal and psychological bullying for the duration of Hirsch's film, can still find a bright spot in the numbing, daily torture that has become life for him is to find inspiration—and heartbreak at the indifference and injustice to this easily overlooked practice. The same can be said of Kelby, a shy but quietly determined 16-year-old lesbian who has weathered three suicide attempts and other self-inflicted psychological damage as a response to prolonged bullying.

But several of the other kids in Hirsch's

film—from an 11-year-old boy to 17 year-old Tyler—died before the filmmaker began work on his documentary. Parents, friends and other family members are left to recall the heartbreaking events that led to the suicides of these disparate victims who seemed to only have the tag of being "different" in common. In a dumbed-down culture that increasingly feels no compunction or remorse about resorting to all manner of violence when faced with these societal "outcasts," these victims represent a lot of kids like themselves.

The young teenagers who form the basis for Hirsch's movie—with Alex its central focus—all faced their worse experiences of bullying during the junior high school years, when the need to conform seems to be at its psychological height. Kids with developmental problems, and cultural and religious variations, as well as those who are gay (or perceived as gay) are singled out for the worst treatment. Being perceived as different in an urban environment, one would suspect, probably doesn't have the same impact as it does in the rural and suburban communities (all proudly espousing their Christian values) where Hirsch's subjects live—or lived.

However, bullying is bullying no matter the location, and the shocking tolerance of the practice, the lazy response to it and the "hit back and it will stop" attitude from parents and authorities are endemic. Hirsch's movie observes all these behaviors, which quickly bring his audience to a boiling point. When he intervenes after he films Alex being physically hurt one day on the bus, the response of Alex's parents is tentative at first. There's a real blame-the-victim



Bully. Photo courtesy of the Weinstein Company

mentality behind it and a subsequent encounter with the sunny, "hear no evil/see no evil" assistant principal is as horribly frustrating for the audience as it must have been for Alex's parents.

This observational approach would seem to be the biggest drawback of the movie; rather than use the confrontational techniques of Michael Moore or Nick Broomfield, Hirsch simply watches. And while that method picks up fascinating details—we really find ourselves immersed in the outside culture these put-upon kids have formed—it's also maddening. Time and again, we wait for the filmmaker to train his camera on Alex's bus driver, who clearly witnesses the attacks but never intervenes (or even attempts to); or on that assistant principal, with her bland smile and band-aid solutions; the upper-echelon school officials; or the bullies themselves.

However, **Bully** does not go for the jugular—it's a movie that literally turns the other cheek and refuses to take up arms. When I first saw the movie I thought the final sequence—in which a large, mournful crowd silently observes the anniversary suicide of a victim of bullying—was powerful but wanting; I felt it sidestepped the anger and need for revenge on behalf of the movie's victims that I was feeling. I wanted Hirsch to bully the bullies and their *de facto* defenders with his camera. But, on reflection, I think Hirsch's portrait imbues his everyday heroes with a dignity and grace that their tormenters obviously are too short-sighted to see and which shines in every frame of the film.

Bringing the epidemic of this social cancer to the forefront is certainly one of the triumphs of **Bully**—a big one (and the ratings controversy surrounding the film has certainly kicked the social discourse up 10 notches). But it's Hirsch's innate gentleness and respect for Alex, Kelby and his other subjects that will hopefully be the movie's lasting legacy.

A quick, very positive shout-out to fans of the horror genre: You are highly encouraged to take a jaunt into the forest and visit **The Cabin in the Woods**, the truly scary, truly hilarious mash-up of horror and sci-fi from Drew Goddard (of *Cloverfield*, *Lost*, and *Alias* fame) and frequent collaborator Joss Whedon. The movie—in the vaults for nearly three years, tied up in MGM's bankruptcy—is finally seeing the light of day (or, rather, dark of night), and the wait has been worth it.

It follows the familiar path of dozens of similar horror movies—with *Evil Dead* being the most prominent—but then takes a turn in the road (literally) and never looks back. For sheer inventiveness and for spinning the tired genre on its head, this big funhouse of a movie with no exit in sight really rewards your attention—and welcomes your delighted screams.

Film notes:

—Patrick Wang, the openly gay writer-director-star of the LGBT custody-battle drama **In the Family**, will appear at a screening of his movie on Saturday, April 14, at 7:30 p.m. at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., as part of its 17th Annual Asian American Film Showcase. My full review of the film appears next week to coincide with the movie's theatrical run at the Music Box theatre. www.siskelfilmcenter.org

—A number of LGBT-themed films are playing at the **28th Annual Chicago Latino Film Festival**, which runs April 13-26. See my separate overview article on the fest in this week's issue of WCT and be sure to make time to see the Chicago premiere of *Mariachi Gringo*, from queer writer-director Tom Gustafson (again collaborating with his partner Corey James Krueckeberg) on Monday, April 16. This is the duo's follow-up to the delightful gay fantasia *Were the World Mine*. www.chicagolatinofilmfestival.org

—The Farrelly brothers' joint directorial attempt to revive the physical slapstick of **The Three Stooges** is opening in theaters this Friday. The film was not screened in time for WCT deadlines and, frankly, this kind of lowbrow stuff has never been my cinematic cup of tea. But for LGBT audiences, the presence of Sean Hayes in one of the leading roles and supporting turns by Jane Lynch, Jennifer Hudson, Sofia Vergara, et al, might be just enough to lure you into theatres.

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

Barrowman to be at C2E2

The Chicago Comic & Entertainment Expo (C2E2) has announced John Barrowman—the out gay actor best known as Captain Jack Harkness in the BBC's *Torchwood* and *Doctor Who*—will be appearing at this year's event as a spot-light guest.

C2E2, from the creators of New York Comic Con, is April 13-15 at McCormick Place in Chicago. The event is a pop-culture convention covering the worlds of comics, movies, television, toys, anime, manga and games.

Barrowman will appear April 14-15. Previously announced guests include actor Chad Michael Murray (TV's *One Tree Hill*), writer Anne Rice, actor John Cusack, actress Maggie Q, singer Tom Morello (*Rage Against the Machine*), local chef Stephanie Izard and Chris Hardwick (*Nerdist*).

See www.C2E2.com.

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BULLY from cover

wasn't sure that I could make it through your movie. It brought back the horror of junior high school—the worst time of my life. For gay kids, bullying is like a double whammy.

Lee Hirsch: Well, I'm really glad you made it through the movie. I think what's extraordinary about this film is that it's giving voice to a lot of people that haven't felt like they had license to talk about these experiences before and that's really awesome; that's something very special, and I'm really energized by what you just shared. That's meaningful and thousands of people are coming to this film from a similar perspective, and that's doubly meaningful.

WCT: I'm curious: You, too, have been the victim of bullying and you do carry those psychological scars throughout your life—so how do you sit through the movie over and over again? It must be so painful. Or is it cathartic to see people "get it?"

LH: Truth be told, I don't sit through it a lot anymore. I sit through the beginning and the end. I've seen it a lot but it is cathartic. The thing that's really interesting is that each time I do watch it I get something different from it and it's very personal and it has a lot to do with my relationships with the subjects in the film.

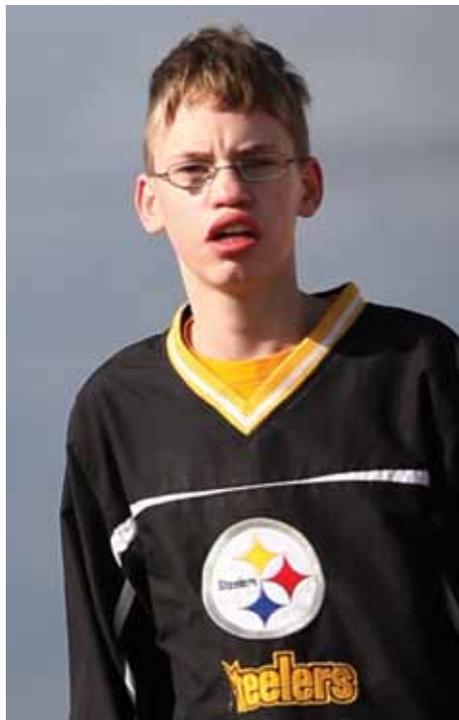
I notice something different and it informs my experience and makes it deeper. Or I think about where they were in terms of where they are now; particularly with Alex and Kelby and I get sort of emotional. It's like the little things that strike me now with the film. But it is always cathartic to be with an audience after the screening; I really appreciate those opportunities.

WCT: Obviously, you've been in all the urban cities with the movie but (and here's a stereotype coming into play) maybe they're a more enlightened audience, but what about these more rural areas—what's the response there?

LH: Well, we just showed it in two of the cities where it was made and we thought 400 people would come; 1,600 people turned out and we had the most robust conversation. Here's the thing: Bully is not a political film. It is not divisive. It is not a red-state or a blue-state film. Yes, it's possible—I made a documentary that doesn't cater to the left or the right. It's about something that's totally above that. In a time when our country is really divided I actually think this film has the potential to bring communities together without that being an issue and that's been my experience and I'm pretty psyched about that.

WCT: You're seeing all audiences have a change of heart after seeing the movie?

LH: I'm seeing the enthusiasm for the subject



Alex in the movie *Bully*. Photo courtesy of the Weinstein Company



Lee Hirsch. Photo courtesy of the Weinstein Company

and it's not just in New York and L.A. We're getting this response everywhere. It's a movie that everyone can come to and have a conversation around.

WCT: Let's talk a little bit about Kelby, the young lesbian featured in the movie. Talk about an amazing young person and her parents, equally, so. And yet, here again, she and her family are forced to move out of town to get away from the prejudice.

On one hand we seem to have more sensitivity about violence towards gays and lesbians, and less tolerance for those who perpetrate hate crimes. On the other hand, when you see something like this, it's obvious that bullying is where homophobia starts and maybe we haven't come so far.

LH: I think it certainly plays a role and I think when boys are bullied—regardless of their orientation—they're called fags. Girls are sluts and boys are called fags. It's designed to be as hurtful as possible and, absolutely, that's where it starts. And here again, this is why language matters, you know? Words matter.

I will tell you something that's inspiring. Kelby's whole thing when I met her was, "I want to make a stand; I want to make it so other kids don't have to go through what I went through" and she's no longer in that town but she probably wouldn't have been there, anyway. She's 19 now but at the end of my shooting period—this didn't make it into my film but I shot it—this eighth-grade boy came out in that town and wasn't being bullied and was doing really okay and had lots of friends and support, and Kelby and I talked a lot about how she had really paved the way for that and that her courage had paid off. So, I share that because I think that change is possible everywhere and that communities can be transformed and hopefully these stories will help along that way.

WCT: Thank you so much for sharing that, Lee. That truly is inspiring. I'm very curious about something—there's a point in the film with Alex where you decided to break the fourth wall and intercede when you filmed him being physically hurt by one of the bullies. What we don't see is the reaction when you showed the footage to the parents and to school officials. Why? I kept waiting for you to confront in that Michael Moore style.

LH: Well, I'm not Michael Moore!

WCT: No, of course not; of course not.

LH: But that's why this film is going to play in all kinds of communities and speak to all types of political persuasions. I feel like you just asked two questions. You know, like anything, when you're with a family and you're shooting them there's a trust and a relationship and there are things that you don't shoot. It's not in the film because I didn't shoot it because it wasn't appropriate. I wasn't working at that moment; I was being a friend.

WCT: I certainly get that, but what about the school officials or people who could have made a difference?

LH: Well, I did—I mean I shot the minute the parents walked in that morning and I revealed as much as I was able to.

WCT: Well, I guess that's just my wanting someone to call out that assistant principal or that bus driver, who both know damn well what's going on and do little or nothing. The indifference is frustrating.

LH: You're completing the stories now.

WCT: [Laughs] I am, I am—but isn't that what people do when presented with a subject like this? There's just a feeling of an overwhelming frustration that comes over you.

LH: Oh, it's infuriating and certainly very frustrating for that family and for those communities that those officials made those choices.

WCT: Well, did you talk to those officials, to the parents of some of those bullies? Or did

you make a choice not to?

LH: It's a big narrative you're asking me about and, in another school we shot in, there's a radically different culture and they're actually doing a great job. We just didn't have a story there and, ultimately, film is about story that you can sort of stand by.

We filmed lots of people that are doing great stuff and really great work and there are people in Alex's school that are trying really hard to make a difference; the whole district is trying to make a difference. But the reality is that this is how it happened and for me it was just much more powerful to tell really all of these stories from the perspective of the kids and families. That was my choice. That's what I knew and understood.

See www.thebullyproject.com.

Chicago Latino Film Festival: LGBT overview

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

The Chicago Latino Film Festival (CLFF) is back for its 28th year Friday, April 13 through Thursday, April 26. The International Latino Cultural Center is the presenting organization of the fest. More than 140 features and short films from Latin America, Spain, Portugal and the United States will be showcased during the fest. Aside from special events, screenings will be held at the Landmark Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark St., and the Instituto Cervantes, 31 E. Ohio St.

This year's CLFF festivities will include a host of LGBT-themed films with a special tribute (the Gloria Career Achievement Award) being given to the acclaimed gay filmmaker from Catalan, Ventura Pons. Pons will receive the honor in person opening-night special event that includes a screening of his latest movie, a comedy titled *Year of Grace*. The event, taking place at AMC River East, 322 E. Illinois St., will begin at 6 p.m. and includes a post-screening reception at the River East Arts Center, 435 E. Illinois St.

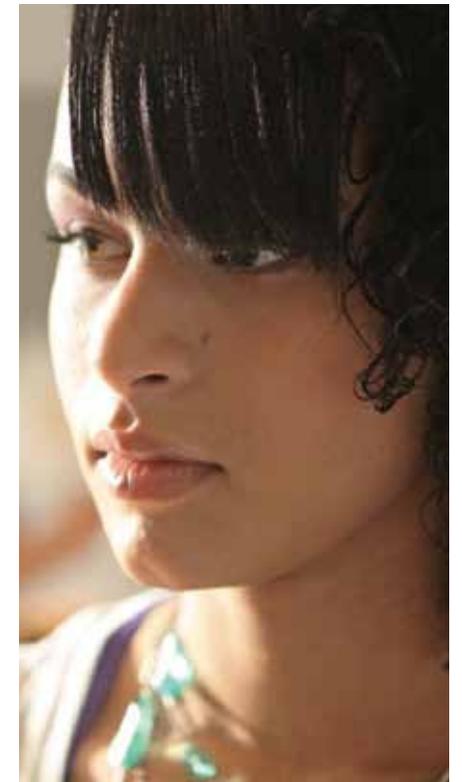
AMC River East is also the location for a 6 p.m. special screening Monday, April 16 of the highly anticipated *Mariachi Gringo*, the follow-up to the queer fantasia *Were the World Mine* from out writer-director Tom Gustafson and his partner, Corey James Krueckeborg. (Both will attend the screening, which includes a catered post-screening reception at River East Arts Center.)

Other LGBT-themed films in the CLFF fest include the following titles (Note: Descriptions come from CLFF press materials.) All foreign films include subtitles.

The Other Family (Mexico): It was never in the plans for Jean Paul and his partner Chema to have children, but when 7-year-old Hendrix, neglected and abandoned by drug-addict mother Nina, comes to them, they soon fall in love. Screens April 20, 23

To Die On My Feet (Mexico): We meet the child of Mexican communist militants, who promotes socialism and the Cuban revolution, with the ideological and physical resemblance to Che Guevara. When faced with a terminal illness he decides to start a life through a personal revolution. The unforeseen events will lead us to discover two distinct revolutionaries in their own right. Screens April 24

Lorca: The Sea Stops Moving (Spain): In an attempt to reconstruct the murder conspiracy of Federico García Lorca, Emilio Ruiz Barachina visits theories around his death and puts them together to rediscover both the brilliance of Lorca's art and the intricacies of his life. Most important was the missing piece found in the broken silence of the Lorca fam-



Harmony Santana in *Gun Hill Road*.

ily, who may have led the assassins straight to the hiding poet. Screens April 26

The Marriage (Uruguay/Argentina): This is a story of a couple, Julia and Ignacio, happily preparing for their wedding. The only idiosyncrasy is that Julia used to be named Oscar. After a short-lived same-sex experience, Oscar followed his true wishes and became Julia so that one day, she could live out her dream of certifying her love for Ignacio on paper. Screens April 13, 21

Gun Hill Road (USA): After three years in prison, Enrique (Esai Morales) returns to the Bronx to an unfamiliar family. He faces his estranged wife, Angela, and son, Michael, whose sexual transformation is not welcomed. We become witnesses as to how these characters confront their issues of machismo and sexual anxiety, and how they overcome the circumstances. Screens April 15, 18

Uniformed (Spain): Margaret is a lonely but very observant girl. Every day she is impacted by numerous code-of-conduct messages connected with fulfilling a concrete social role. Nevertheless, Margaret has a little secret. Screens April 15, 18

Shoobox (US): Mark and his best friend, Luis, are not happy with their single parents. Mark's mother seems more interested in meeting new men and Luis' father believes in old-fashioned tough love. Will they find an escape from their dysfunctional home life? Screens April 14, 15

Complete information on tickets, show times, special events is available at www.chicagolatinofilmfestival.com.

NUNN ON ONE

Jesse Tyler Ferguson on 'Modern Family,' film 'One Night Stand'



BY JERRY NUNN

The 4th Annual Chicago International Movies & Music Festival debuts this weekend, with a variety of events. One Night Stand is a feature documentary about the challenge of making four musicals in 24 hours for the Exchange, a non-profit theater company.

Modern Family's Jesse Tyler Ferguson, along with chanteuse Cheyenne Jackson, star in one of the segments (entitled "Dr. Williams"), where they play surgeons.

We talked with Ferguson about his role and the hope for an Emmy in his future.

Windy City Times: Hey, Jesse. This is perfect timing, I just watched you as a guest judge on RuPaul's Drag Race last night.

Jesse Tyler Ferguson: That worked out well. It was lots of fun to do.

WCT: I heard you are rooting for Sharon Needles or Latrice Royale.

JTF: We filmed it so long ago that I didn't have a point of reference for anyone. My only exposure to them was that runway at the end of the episode, so I couldn't get a feel to what anyone was. Sharon scared me a little bit, but now I have grown to love her after watching the episodes before it. I think she is great.

WCT: How did you get involved with this musical idea One Night Stand?

JTF: I had done other work with Ted Sperling, and he was one of the producers on it. I had always wanted to do it and it looked like a fun thing to do. I had friends who had done the 24 Hour Plays in the past and it seemed like a crazy, communal kind of experience. Being a musical-theater performer, I was one of the people that they wanted to work with. I got involved that way.

WCT: So this is something they had done with plays but not musicals?

JTF: They had done it with plays for years before they started doing it with musicals. It had been a big success and they were not sure if they would be able to do it with a musical because there were so many other elements involved.

WCT: Were you scared to death? This was casting, writing, practicing and performing for a live audience, so it looked crazy.

JTF: Honestly, to learn a song and the harmonies and then choreograph it would take—for me, not being the quickest learner—a week. To have a handful of hours to put something together was really scary. The great thing about it was that you are doing it with four or five other actors who are just as talented and just as scared.

You get to share that experience with them and help each other through it. It is terrifying and extremely liberating at the same time because you have to throw out choices. You don't

have time to really think about what are you going to do with this character and how to bring it to life. You have to throw yourself full throttle into it and do it. That is very liberating, actually.

WCT: Cheyenne sang so well.

JTF: He is amazing. He learns music so fast so he carried us through a lot of that stuff. He was very patient, specifically with me, who is not the quickest learner. I am so grateful that we had him in our piece because he was the backbone for us, at least vocally.

WCT: Was this the first time you have played a surgeon?

JTF: Yes, my first—and last, I think.

WCT: Rachel Dratch from Saturday Night Live was in the documentary as well.

JTF: She has done the 24 Hour Plays, so that is how she got involved. She has been working



Jesse Tyler Ferguson. Photo by Robert Mannis

with them for a few years. We were hoping we would get paired together, which didn't happen. She was also in a really fun piece. It was fun freaking out with her because she is not totally comfortable doing musical theater, in general. At least I had done a Broadway musical, but she was new to that. It was terrifying for her on a whole other level.

WCT: Have you read her new book, Girl Walks into a Bar?

JTF: I just ordered it on Amazon yesterday. She told me she would give me a copy but I wanted to pay for it.

WCT: Do you have a favorite musical of all time?

JTF: I love Into the Woods. I'm a big Sondheim fan. She Loves Me also is another one I like. It is very good.

WCT: What are you doing on your time off from Modern Family?

JTF: I am staying really busy. I am actually busier now than when I was working. At least when I was working I had a schedule of some places to be. Now, with weeks off, I am trying to catch up on all the stuff that I put off all year, everything from the dentist to getting tailoring done!

WCT: You recently did the Dustin Lance Black play, 8, for a stage reading.

JTF: Yes, I had very little to do in it because it was an ensemble piece. There were many amazing people taking small cameo roles. I was probably onstage for about 75 seconds, but it was a really great experience for such a great cause, too. It was to support the American Foundation

for Equal Rights that is fighting for marriage equality. It was a fantastic fundraiser. The play resonated in a way that I was not expecting it to. I was afraid it would be a little dry, being court transcripts and all, but it was actually extremely entertaining, moving and very funny.

WCT: Are you married currently?

JTF: No.

WCT: But you have a partner, Justin, so maybe one day...

JTF: Yeah, maybe one day.

WCT: You have won an Actors Guild Award but we want you to win an Emmy for playing Mitchell Pritchett.

JTF: Well, listen, we have only gone through two Emmy Award seasons so we can't be too upset right now. It's not like I am Susan Lucci or something!

WCT: No, but to me it was like giving Laverne the award and not Shirley.

JTF: Aw, that is very sweet. The first thing Eric told me was that the award was ours together. "I will take it home but I couldn't have done the role without Mitchell." I think that is true of any of the couples on our show. They are one half of

a pair. It is the partnership and the chemistry that make our cast work. You can't see those Emmys in half. Unfortunately, Eric can't be nominated for best actress when I am nominated for best actor, which is a bit of sexism if you ask me.

WCT: My favorite is when you were dressed as Spider-Man on the Halloween episode.

JTF: That was a lot of fun to do.

WCT: How long do you have before filming more Modern Family?

JTF: I am on hiatus until August then I begin filming again. I just plan on relaxing, catching up on reading, and enjoying my summer.

WCT: I wish you could come to Chicago for this film festival and the screening of the documentary.

JTF: I wish I could too, but tell everyone I said hi!

The Chicago premiere of One Night Stand is at the Logan Theatre, 2646 N. Milwaukee Ave., at 1 p.m. Sunday, April 15; admission is \$7. Also, don't miss live performances during the festival, such as group Sister Spit, which includes transgender rapper Katastrophe. For more information visit www.cimfest.org.

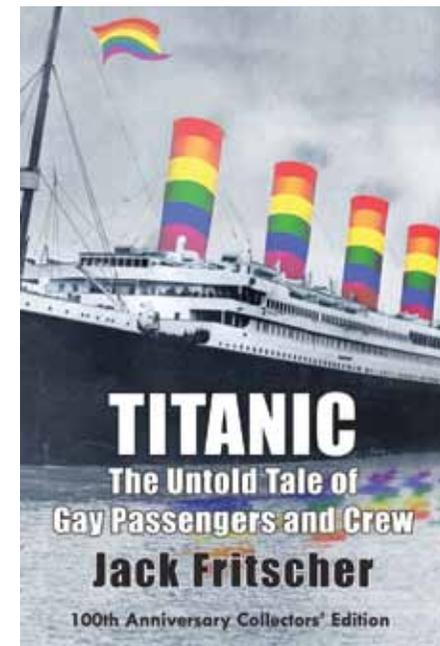
'Titanic: The Untold Tale of Gay Passengers and Crew' book out

San Francisco author Jack Fritscher has written Titanic: The Untold Tale of Gay Passengers and Crew, which is now being sold.

In mixing fictional and historical characters, the 68-page book "outs" the forbidden gay love story of the world's most famous cruise, featuring the Unsinkable Molly Brown; the posh lovers Michael Whitney and Edward Wedding; and the working crew, including Balkan Stoker, Royal Purser Felix Jones, second carpenter Michael Brice and Third Officer Sam Maxwell.

Titanic sank April 15, 1912, creating a media frenzy. Fritscher said, "In movie-newsreel footage shot three days later on the deck of the rescue ship Carpathia immediately after it docked at Chelsea Piers in New York, a dozen of the surviving Titanic crew, mostly sailor lads in tight white pants hiding little, showing lots, can be seen in very intimate horseplay, camping around and posing in life jackets, pretending to faint."

Of the 885 male crew on Titanic, 693 (or



78 percent) died. Altogether, 1,352 men perished. If, according to Kinsey, one out of six ordinary men is gay, 225 gay men died. If two out of six in the travel industry are gay, 450 gay men died, making Titanic an overlooked but essential chapter in gay history.



Alison Bechdel exhibit opens

Lesbian artist Alison Bechdel (left) with Chicagoan Riva Lehrer, also an acclaimed artist, at the opening of Bechdel's exhibit, "Fevered Archives: 30 years of comics from the not-so-mixed-up files of Alison Bechdel," April 5, at the University of Chicago Centers for Gender/Race Studies, 5733 S. University Ave., 1st Floor. The exhibit hours are Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., through May 18.

The opening was packed with students and Bechdel fans from throughout the area.

The exhibit is part of the Artists' Salon project, which brings artists whose work meditates on sexuality and gender to the Center to mount temporary exhibitions. The inaugural year of the Artists' Salon features this exhibit of comics work by the world-famous cartoonist Bechdel, creator of the long-running serial strip Dykes to Watch Out For and the graphic memoirs Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic (2006) and Are You My Mother? (Houghton Mifflin May 2012). Bechdel is in residence at the University of Chicago for spring quarter 2012 as a Mellon Fellow for Arts Practice and Scholarship at the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry.

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation in order to participate in this event should contact the event sponsor for assistance.

See gendersexuality.uchicago.edu for more information.

Photo by Tracy Baim

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Simply more.

Sister Spit bringing Dorothy Allison to Chicago

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

This month kicks off the national tour of Sister Spit, the self-described raucous, rowdy performance gang of queer poets, performers and filmmakers. The group of seven, including award-winning lesbian writer Dorothy Allison, will park its van in Chicago Saturday, April 14, to perform at the Chicago International Movie and Music Festival.

Begun in the 1990s by writer Michelle Tea, the Sister Spit tour was revived several years ago and has continued its popularity, drawing exciting new and well-known writers and performers to hop in the van and crisscross the country.

Tea is excited to have Allison join the tour this year. Allison has garnered accolades and numerous awards for her work during her nearly 30-year career. Her book *Bastard Out of Carolina* was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1992 and became a best-seller. It was also made into an award-winning film and, this year, the 20th-anniversary edition of the book was just released. Her 1998 book *Cavedweller* became a national best-seller and a New York Times Notable book of the year. She has also won several Lambda Literary Awards.

Allison, who has worked with Tea on other projects, said she has wanted to join the tour for several years, but due to a very full schedule of readings, teaching and events, this will be her first time climbing into the van. She will be on the first half of the tour, through April 15.

"I know what I am doing on Sunday," she said before the start of the tour. "The opening is on Sunday. I have prepared, because I am old; I have been on this rodeo before. I have three different sets designed, one is seven minutes and two are 10 minutes each."

She added, "One of the things that happens when you are doing this kind of program is a cross fertilization, and the work will change. I know this. I know there will be new work in the course of the program and I know that to a large extent we will start sparks off of one another. So I expect every program to be different."

Allison sees the Sister Spit tour as particularly important at this time because she said that even large universities are struggling to keep their arts programs intact and there is a growing need for low-cost, high-quality performances.

"I work a lot with Columbia College [where she was a writer in residence in 2006] and I am on the board of the media center there. ... One of the things that makes this tour and this kind of event even more important is that a lot of universities—not just small ones but big ones—have had drastic cuts in funding. So arts programming is becoming more and more embattled. One of the things that is happening at Columbia College has been a real budget struggle that is causing them to cut some programs and combine other programs. But what it means really is there is going to be a loss of programming all over the country."

Although times are tough, Allison sees a positive side to the struggle saying that hard times are great for writers. "When writers think they can make money, when they think they can make a killing and get a contract, they tend to actually start writing for an imaginary audience that might not be their best. But when you are hopeless, when things are just damn, damn bad your mind as well write what you really want to write. You mind as well take enormous risks, and I am seeing that in terms of young writers. ... It does encourage an enormous amount of experimentation and people striking sparks off of



Dorothy Allison. Photo by Andrew Davis

one another and doing the work they want to do instead of doing the work they think will sell."

The Sister Spit tour is always composed of artists taking chances and pushing boundaries with their work and CIMMFest is a great venue for the tour to plug into.

"It's such an amazing, visionary festival," Tea said. "Sister Spit has always been something of a mishmash, hybrid. We are literary, but we are performance, and we bring a lot of people who have multiple careers, like Brontez Purnell and Justin Bond, who both have music and performance careers in addition to being writers. I think we fit really well into a festival like CIMMFest that recognizes how genres and artists are multi-faceted and collaborative."

Tea had a special message to fans: "Beloved audience, we are going to blow your minds. Just like we always do."

In addition to Tea and Allison, this year's Sister Spit tour also includes Mx Justin Vivian Bond, Brontez Purnell, Erin Markey, Cassie J. Sneider and Kit Yan.

Sister Spit will perform at Wicker Park Art Center, 2215 W. North Ave., Saturday, April 14, at 8 p.m., followed by an afterparty at Beauty Bar, 1444 W. Chicago Ave., beginning at 10:30 p.m. Admission to the performance is \$12 and the afterparty offers a sliding-scale admission of \$5-\$10.

Fable Festival on North Side May 16-20

A newly established, community-based Fable Festival is taking place May 16-20 in non-traditional spaces throughout Edgewater/Andersonville.

"The festival is unique in that from the onset we set out to collaborate not only with arts organizations but also with businesses and the alderman's office to work together to create an exciting event for the community," said Julieanne Ehre, founder of the Edgewater Arts Center and co-producer of the festival, in a statement.

Events will take place in venues such as Women & Children First Bookstore, Senn High School, Burke's Public House and Kitchen Sink, among others.

Admission for one-time festival entry is \$5, and all shows are \$5. See www.fablefestival.org or call 773-828-9185.

NUNN ON ONE: PERFORMANCE

Melanie Marshall on the show 'Fela!'

BY JERRY NUNN

Melanie Marshall has crossed the pond to perform as Fela Kuti's mother Funmilayo in the touring production of *Fela!* Audiences now can witness the presence and operatic notes that Melanie brings to the role. Windy City Times learned all about her background after attending this eye-popping stellar show based on the Nigerian innovator's incredible life.

Windy City Times: Good morning, Melanie. So, you are British?

Melanie Marshall: I am British-born!

WCT: Did you study theater there?

MM: No, I studied classical singing at the Royal College of Music. I stumbled into musical theatre almost by accident—well, not by accident, but I was asked to audition for my first show, *Carmen Jones*, which is a Black version of *Carmen*. I understudied the role of Cindy Lou. I got to sing in that and quite liked it. Afterwards, I did the Glyndebourne's version of *Porgy and Bess*.

WCT: Did you see the newest version?

MM: No. I want to see that.

WCT: I heard it has been changed and is controversial.

MM: Since I did a version in London, it would be very interesting to see another side.

WCT: They are saying it will win several Tonys.

MM: Oh, for sure it will. Audra McDonald is a great singer.

WCT: So how did you wind up being a part of *Fela!*?

MM: A friend of mine in New York rang me and said, "I've just seen your next show. Look it up; it's called *Fela!*" At first I thought he said *Othello*. I looked it up on YouTube and only saw the beginning, nothing of my part. I am a bit funny like that. It needs to come from me as opposed to what I have seen.

So that was the show to audition for in 2010. Every Black actor, actress, dancer under the sun came from the corners of the world to be in it. It has been a rollercoaster ever since. It is a true story so you are not playing a character but a real life woman. People come to the show who knew him—be it a taxi driver or a family member, there is always somebody who knows *Fela*. I hold my hands up and say, "Before my friend called me I had never heard of him."

WCT: This has been a learning experience.

MM: Total new learning experience and I absolutely love it! His sons, Femi and Seun, come to the show. When we were in Detroit his eldest daughter, Yeni, came. There was an exhibition at the African American Museum and she went to that. She was very emotional because there were pictures she had never seen of her and her father.

WCT: Femi has his own career in music.

MM: Yes, and Seun. They go around, sing and carry on the message.

WCT: So you beat everyone out for this role.

MM: I did and it makes me quite humble. It makes me feel good that somebody can see my worth and potential.

WCT: How do you get in the frame of mind to be her? I saw you come out there being such a presence.

MM: I get in the theater and I do what I have to do. When I put on the glasses that is when I am her. I do Funmilayo after that. I am in that mode.

WCT: Your voice is very powerful in the show. How is that last solo? That has to be tough, it is so long.

MM: It is a long one but it is a pleasure. I am the fourth Funmilayo in America to do it. I do it in a completely different way. I am glad because Bill T. Jones is one of those directors that will



Melanie Marshall. PR photo

not say it has to always be this way. He takes your attributes and puts that into the production. I am always proud to say that man has given me another five notes on the top of my range. He is very subtle in bringing something out of you that you don't know you have.

WCT: He wrote the book for the show, and it is not a typical biography. Sahr Ngaujah, who plays *Fela*, is so talented.

MM: He is quite ridiculous.

WCT: He knew how to involve the audience and have a sense of humor.

MM: Sahr has been with the production since the offset as a workshop. He really is *Fela!* I want to give a shout-out to his alternate who plays him for two shows. You should come back and see him. He, too, is fantastic. You can imagine being onstage for two hours.

WCT: He is covered in sweat and needs a break.

MM: Yes. He is onstage for all of that time. There is no time to nip off and do what you need to do. I think he has a five-minute break, if that. Sahr runs like three miles around the neighborhood before the start of the show to get his energy going.

WCT: So that is how he gets in the zone!

MM: Yes, and he does it very well, as you see.

WCT: I wonder what *Fela* would do today with the current gay oppression that is in Nigeria. His message is still strong for audiences now.

MM: His main message is courage. If you have a dream or a goal, stick with it. This man was beaten, tortured, imprisoned [more than] 200 times. He still got up and wrote another song to get the government in this way. He never stopped. He got a lot of his political strength from his mother. She was a very strong feminist and political activist in her own right. She was the first woman to drive a car in Nigeria. How ridiculous is that?

WCT: Has the show been to Nigeria?

MM: I am hoping we can go, but the Broadway cast went last year. That was part of the promise made to them. They went for four weeks just before we started this tour. They had an amazing time.

WCT: I bet [there was] an outpouring of love.

MM: There was some reticence at first because it was an American company telling [Nigerians'] story. Then they realized this is a very true heartfelt production.

Run to see *Fela!* at the Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph St, before it moves on after April 15. Visit www.BroadwayInChicago.com for tickets and show times.

Police officer makes Golden Gloves debut

BY JULIA BORCHERTS

She's been a Chicago police officer for almost five years—in the Third District, no less, at 70th Street and Cottage Grove Avenue, an area of the city that contains sections which even she describes as “pretty bad”—so you'd think that her day job would be enough of a challenge, especially since she measures in at exactly five feet tall and weighs just over 100 pounds.

But then, in February, 2011, Vickie Williams took up boxing. And on Friday, April 13, she makes her Chicago Golden Gloves debut in the 114-pound senior novice division with her coach, Chicago Boxing Club's Rick Ramos, in her corner.

Williams will face Maurella Lambert, who represents the Fist Law Boxing Club out of Downers Grove. Because they are the only two entrants in this female weight-and-experience-level division, their first fight of the tournament will be for the championship.

“I had heard about [the Golden Gloves] just by watching boxing on TV, and they'd talk about professionals fighting in it when they were younger,” said the 29-year-old Williams about the renowned amateur tournament, which originated in Chicago in 1923. “And then Rick mentioned it and I was like, ‘I want to do it! I want to train for it; I want to at least try.’”

Williams, the only child of an African-American father and a Korean-American mother—who've been together nearly 30 years now—grew up in the Englewood area and developed an interest in boxing as a young girl, when she and her father watched televised boxing shows together.

“I've always been interested in it; I loved watching it,” she said. “But I never knew of a place like Chicago Boxing Club—places where they'll teach you from scratch to become a good fighter.

“But when I got on the job, I was interested in learning something different to help me on the street in case anything happened,” she continued. “Just something that would give me a little ‘up’ on the job on the streets—in case anybody tries to fight me or anything like that, I could have a little upper hand if I knew how to box and got stronger.”

You may have guessed that the majority of Williams' job does not involve sitting behind a desk.

“I work the streets so of course I'm plain-clothes,” she said. “I'm on the tactical team in the district so we go out and we deal with the gangs, the drugs, the guns. We're not like the uniformed officers—we don't have to respond to the domestic batteries and that sort of stuff. We deal with ‘shots fired’ and any calls about drug selling and kids hanging on the corners.”

And just in case you were wondering—yes, she does get compared to Kima Greggs, the fictional mixed-race lesbian detective from HBO's *The Wire*.

“[It happens] all the time,” she said, laughing. “When I first came around on the job, the guys on the street, they used to call me Kima. And then there's a guy at work calls me ‘Jump Street’—I guess for, like, 21 Jump Street.”

But despite the inherent danger in the job, Williams enjoys her work and has wanted to be a police officer since she was a young girl sharing her career dreams with her father.

“My dad, he always worked security,” she said. “He wanted to be Chicago police but he didn't go to school.”

So Williams applied when she heard that the department was hiring, and after a lengthy, 18-month process, was hired.

“I like to help people,” she said. “And I like to just go, go, go. I want to be outside and just interact with people.

“And I haven't had any bad situations thus far,” she continued. “My biggest problem, I guess, is having to prove myself somewhat. Because I'm small and a girl, you get the men on the corner—they want to call you baby, sweetie. And I can't let the men talk to me like that—no, I'm not your baby, I'm not your sweetie.

“But nothing too bad,” she said. “And it will hopefully stay that way.”

To that end, Williams did a little online research and discovered Chicago Boxing Club, a powerhouse Bridgeport gym known around the world for training top-notch professional boxers as well as amateurs. She took advantage of an offer to take a free one-on-one instructional class.

“I went and I loved it and I've been hooked since then,” she said, laughing.

Ramos, a former boxer himself who now both trains and manages boxers, remembers the day they met. “To be honest, I don't really [manage]



Vickie Williams. Photo courtesy of Williams

girl fighters nor do I really train them,” he said. “But I had no one to work with that day and I just said, ‘Hey, you want to hit the pads?’ just to see what she's got. And she threw three punches in a row.

“Her speed caught my attention. And then I said, ‘Okay, why don't you throw a left hook to the body?’ And then she showed me a left hook and that was it, I was in love. I'm like, ‘This girl has to be my fighter.’ Her left hook is dynamite.” Williams began working with Ramos—“I love him!” she said, laughing—and also takes tips from another widely respected Chicago Boxing Club coach, Rita Figueroa, herself a former Golden Gloves champion and professional boxer.

“Rita shows me things—about correcting things, and, I'm doing this good and to work on these things—so she's great, too,” Williams said.

Several months into her training, Williams agreed to take on her first bout, an exhibition match at a suburban country club.

“It was private, so no family or friends could come,” she said. “It was just me and the trainer and the other guy [from Chicago Boxing Club] that was fighting there and people from other gyms. The only fans there were the guests at the country club.”

As a veteran police officer who's relaxed when speaking about the dangers she faces every day, how did she feel about walking into the ring for her first fight?

Turn to page 38

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WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Glazed and Infused; Rokit Burger Bar

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Trying to prove that there's room for more sugary goodness in Chicago, the donut shop **Glazed and Infused** (love that name) is slated to open at three stops in April, including Francesca's Forno in Wicker Park.

In a press release, the owners stated that "[o]ur executive chefs felt it was time to bring back this iconic specialty with an artisan twist, focusing on quality, great flavors and a healthier approach."

I know what you're thinking: Healthy doughnuts? According to the people behind **Glazed and Infused**, the doughnuts will be "made fresh each hour, each day from whole and natural ingredients (butter, eggs, cream, fruit and local ingredients, when available)." In addition, the items will be free of trans fats—and most people know how damaging those fats can be.

However, there are also twists on the doughnuts. For example, the vanilla bean glazed doughnuts contain all natural real vanilla beans, and the chocolate is shipped directly from South American farmers.

In order to be more accessible to morning commuters, **Glazed and Infused** is partnering with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and placing its shops adjacent to busy public transportation locations—hence, the site in Wicker Park, at the intersection of North, Milwaukee and Damen.

Each location will open at 6:30 a.m. and serve fresh doughnuts (traditional and culinary-influenced cake and yeast items) as well as coffee.



From **Glazed and Infused**. Photos by Andrew Davis



The initial shops will open at Fulton Market in the West Loop; the aforementioned Francesca's (which will also offer the treats at 10 p.m.); and a spot near the Armitage Brown Line stop in Lincoln Park.

Megan Brown of **Glazed and Infused** said at a media event that "it's not like we're inventing anything new, but what we are doing is every different. ... We also want to provide curbside service.

"So let's say you're a pharmaceutical sales rep. The night before, you can order online. Guess what? It's ready for you the next morning, and we run it out to you. ... It's about having a one-on-one relationship with our customers."

Recounting the history of donuts, Brown said that "in the 1930s and '40s, donuts were given out as rewards. It was almost a sacred item. Over time, it became commoditized, and easier and cheaper to get. We're bringing that old-school feeling back."

As for joining forces with the CTA, Brown said that the transit authority "was wonderful to work with. They made it so easy to get into that space and get the lease done. ... They are all about enabling the experience for the rider."

(Note: Having buses come by more regularly would enable the experience as well, but I digress.)

I have to say that tasting is believing. For me, the best items were the maple-bacon long john (which has a long strip of bacon on a maple-frosted john) and the apple fritter. Patrons will be dazzled by the choices, which also include crème brulee, Bavarian cream, the old-fashioned, malted milk chocolate, red velvet and cinnamon crumb, among many others.

Brown added that there will be a new donut 52 weeks a year, with that flavor being on the menu for only a week. She also said that on the website there'll be a fan page, where people can post photos of themselves eating the items in various places; in addition, there'll be contests in which people can provide feedback and suggest new flavors.

See www.GlazedAndInfusedDoughnuts.com. Stay tuned for more news regarding the actual opening dates of the shops.

Rockit man

By its location alone, the **Rockit Burger Bar** should pull in the customers—at least during Cubs season. At 3700 N. Clark St., this cousin of the Rockit Bar & Grill is just steps away from Wrigley Field and, during home games, Wrigleyville is a sea of blue and white.

However, should patrons return to Rockit in the off-season? Absolutely. The décor is very

sports-friendly, the crushworthy staff is just friendly, period—and, then, there are the food and drinks. During a media preview, I got to sample a few items, and these were among the standouts:

—Truffle mushroom pizza: It's topped with a mix of wild mushrooms, gruyere, thyme and truffle crème fraiche—and the ingredients interact beautifully.

—Rockit Burger: It has the most basic name of any of the sandwiches on the menu, but its taste is anything but fundamental. It's kobe beef topped with melted brie, fried shallots and Medjool date aioli, and it's served on red onion brioche bun—with truffle fries. Is it possible to fall in love with a burger—or at least with Executive Chef Amanda Downing?

—The Macdaddy: Proceed at your own risk. It's a Black Angus patty with braised beef short rib, mac & cheese, and caramelized onions, served with Yukon waffle fries.

—The Hottie: A favorite of the staff, this spicy burger is a patty complete with breaded stuffed jalapeños, pepper jack and ghost pepper aioli—and I know about those ghost peppers.

—Rockit punch: I was initially a little leery of this concoction, which one bartender said was like "Hi-C with alcohol." However, I absolutely loved this drink (served in a mason jar) that contains three flavors of Bacardi.

See www.rockitbarandgrill.com.



From **Rockit Burger Bar**. Photos by Andrew Davis

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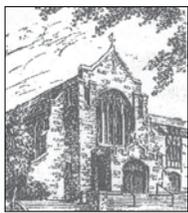
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calendar

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Wed., April 11

Dorothy Roberts, JD Throughout our 25th anniversary year, the Northwestern University Women's Center is recognizing the accomplishments of notable Northwestern University women for their work on behalf of women. Dorothy Roberts is a Professor of Law, African American Studies, and Sociology, and is a Faculty Fellow with the Institute for Policy Research. 12pm-1pm, Evanston Campus Women's Center, Harris Hall 108, 2000 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, www.northwestern.edu/womenscenter

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Experience the power of Ailey and see for yourself why this extraordinary company is hailed as America's cultural ambassador to the world. Through April 15. 7:30pm, Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Pkwy., www.auditoriumtheatre.org

Gleeks of Hydrag Watch the girls of the Hydrag revue perform some of your Glee favorites from the first three seasons. Hosted by Tajma Hall; featuring DiDa Ritz, Sorraya Dash, Aurora Sexton and Kenadie St. James. Followed by DJ Laura B. 8pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, Chicago, www.hydratechicago.com

Boyz 2 Women: Divas Live Edition Come check out the drag talents of Roscoe's amazing staff. All tips collected will be donated to the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance: Promoting safety, support and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing, and research. 10pm, Roscoe's, 3356 N Halsted St., www.roscoes.com

REMEMBRANCE Sunday, April 15

There will be a memorial event for Paul Varnell (right) at Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave.

Photo by Rex Wockner



Thursday, April 12

Chicago International Movies & Music Festival (CIMMFest) The four-day festival with more than 50 films from over 20 countries will be screened including features, documentaries, shorts, concert films, animation, and music videos, all of which have music at their center. Through Sunday, April 15. 12pm, Various venues around Wicker Park and Logan Square neighborhoods, www.cimmfest.org

Team Cheetah/Basta Birthday Bash Team Cheetah's Ride for Aids Chicago fundraising event. Celebrating valued crew/TPAN board member-Paula Basta's birthday. Suggested donation of \$10 includes one drink ticket and door prize entry. Two raffles: one for cold hard cash and one for fabulous prizes including a new iPad and gift cards to Calo, Pie Hole, Crew, Kincaids and more. All monies collected go to support the RFAC. Donations to the ride can be given at anytime even you cannot make the event at rideforaids.org. 6pm-

9pm, Big Chicks, 5024 N Sheridan Road, Chicago, www.rideforaids.org

AfterWork Karaoke Thursday AfterWork Karaoke every Thursday in Andersonville at The Call on Bryn Mawr. Always a secret song for \$25 bar tab! Hosted By Karaoke by Creagh. 7pm-11:30pm, 773-334-2525, The Call (Chicago), 1547 W Bryn Mawr

Windy City Gay Idol Now in its 10th year, Idol kicks off the 2012 search for the best amateur GLBT singers in the Chicago area. Singers sign up at 8pm. Learn more online. 8pm, The Closet, 3325 N. Broadway, www.windycitymediagroup.com

Liberal Arts: The Musical Five freshmen and one senior navigate their way through life, love, and deconstruction theory at Secular Liberal Arts College (SLAC), only to find that their expensive education has left them flush with student loans and short on, well, 8pm-10pm, 617-777-0364, Stage Left Theatre, 3408 N Sheffield Ave., www.liberalartsthemusical.com

Zebra Katz afterparty with JD Samson (Le Tigre/MEN) and a DJ set from Shuteye. 10pm, Berlin Nightclub, 954 W. Belmont Ave., www.berlinchicago.com

Friday, April 13

Happy Hour for The Civil Rights Agenda Cocktail hosts the Civil Rights Agenda for Guest Bartender Happy Hour! Featuring guest bartenders Rick Garcia and Lori Cannon. \$10 at the door gets you two drinks and a portion of the proceeds go to The Civil Rights Agenda. 6pm-8pm, Cocktail Chicago, 3359 N Halsted St., www.joint-cra.org

Tango Macho: Speed Dating for Gay Men The ULTIMATE Dating Experience. 6:30pm-8pm, 773-242-9344, 4203 N. Ravenswood Ave., www.instigaytor.com

Gay Play Weekend See site for other specific dates and times through April 15. Tonight: Lost in History. 7:30pm, 7732503117, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.pridefilmsandplays.com

Girl You Know It's True When Bixby, a 40-ish playwright, fails to get his work produced he conjures up a radical new identity for himself: an impostor. His stand-in—an African-American lesbian woman in a wheelchair—instantly shoots to fame. 7:30pm-9pm, 773-789-8093, Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division, Pavementgroup.org

Steppenwolf's Red or White Ball Steppenwolf Auxiliary Council presents a high-energy evening of music, dancing, cocktails, impressive local cuisine and a silent auction for active young professionals to benefit Steppenwolf for Young Adults, the theater's nationally recognized arts education program. Tickets \$135, or \$150 at door at auxiliarycouncil@steppenwolf.org

or by phone. 8:15pm, 312-654-5681, Architectural Artifacts, 4325 N Ravenswood Ave., www.steppenwolf.org/rowb

Alex In Wonderland Alex In Wonderland continues MidTangent's dedication to bringing original works with a familiar twist to the Chicago LGBTQ community, providing once again the chance to relive your childhood with stories that are close to your heart, told the way you've always wanted. 9pm-10:30pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com

Saturday, April 14

Angels in America, Part 1: Millennium Approaches and Part 2: Perestroika A portion of the opening night proceeds will benefit the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. 3pm Part 1: Millennium, 6pm Dinner (Included in ticket price), 8pm Part 2: Perestroika Tickets \$150 each. 3pm, 312-334-0935, Court Theatre, 5535 South Ellis Ave., www.afchicago.org

CGMC's Big Package Auction Get your tickets and join the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus for the fourth annual Big Package Auction with special guest hostess, P-Town and Atlantis Cruises favorite, Miss Richfield 1981. Featuring hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, sweets, and tons of laughs! 5pm-8pm, 773-296-0541, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., www.cgmc.org

Sister Spit Next Generation—Chicago Host Michelle Tea (Best Music Writing 2010, Chelsea Whistle, Valencia, Rent Girl), author Dorothy Allison (Bastard Out of Carolina, Two or Three Things I know for Sure, Cavedweller), and others; 7:30pm-9:30pm, 415-341-2859, CIMMFEST, Wicker Park Art Center, 2215 W. North Ave., www.radarproductions.org/tour

Disney in Concert: Magical Music from the Movies New Philharmonic caps their 2011-2012 season with "Disney in Concert: Magical Music from the Movies," Saturday, April 14 at 8pm and Sunday, April 15 at 3pm; 8pm-10pm, 630-942-4000, McAninch Arts Center at College of DuPage 425 Fawell Blvd., Glen Ellyn, IL, www.atthemac.org

CMSA Bruise-Hers Women's Flag Football Fundraiser A fundraiser to help send the Chicago Bruise-Hers to the 2012 Gay Bowl in Denver. Your \$10 cover charge will go directly to support sending two teams from Chicago to represent our fine city in the tournament. Entertainment by Katie Todd, Hot Mess Band with a special guest appearance by Amy Kelly. 8pm, Temptations Nightclub, 10235 W. Grand Ave, Franklin Park, www.sisters4lgbtq.org/cmsa-sports--social-events.html

Matt Alber LIVE In Concert See out singer-songwriter Matt Alber, celebrating the 6th anniversary of The Flesh Hungry Dog Show. Doors open at 9 pm, show starts at 10. Tickets available at www.fleshhungrydog.com. 9pm, Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St.

Sunday, April 15

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

Paul Varnell memorial event Short presentations from a number of Varnell's professional colleagues and close friends. Opportunity will be provided for extemporaneous presentations by attendees. Coffee, soft drinks, water and light refreshments will be served. 2pm, Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave., varnell.lionwood.com



MATT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Saturday, April 14

Matt Alber will sing at Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St.

PR photo

Cameron Carpenter in Concert! The incomparable Cameron Carpenter brings his prodigious virtuosity to Rockefeller's E.M. Skinner organ, with a program including selections from his own Visions of the Organ from Space and dazzling and unconventional arrangements of classics. 5pm-7pm, 773-702-2100, Rockefeller Chapel - University of Chicago 5850 S. Woodlawn Ave., rockefeller.uchicago.edu

Prime Timers Prime Timers are older gay or bisexual men (and younger men who admire mature men). Second Sunday of each month. 6pm, Ann Sather - Belmont, 909 W Belmont Avenue, Chicago, www.primetimersww.org/chicago/

Monday, April 16

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

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

Tuesday, April 17

Percussionist Matthew Coley at Center on Halsted Coley will appear as part of the Center on Halsted's SingOUT with three other well-known percussionists from the Midwest. Tickets are \$10 in advance (email Mross@centeronhalsted.org or call 773-472-6469, ext. 452) and \$12 at the door. Benefits the Center on Halsted. 7pm-9pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.hearthemattthewcoley.com

Sprung: A Live Hip-Hop Concert Event A concert event featuring Chicago's hottest queer hip-hop artists. Hosted by Dida Ritz. Featuring performances by Big Dipper, Audio Jack, Francis A.D., RoyAL and Déja K. Taylor. Special guests DJ Laura B and Rizki Crowley. Tickets are \$5 online and \$7 at the door. \$1 drinks all night long. 9pm-11pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, Chicago, www.hydratechicago.com

Wed., April 18

Fashion and Philanthropy Saks Fifth Avenue will host a benefit for Center on Halsted featuring a fashion presentation by Eric Jennings, Vice President, Fashion Director for Menswear. Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, latest fashion trends. Saks Fifth Avenue will donate 10 percent of the sales, up to \$5,000. Space is limited. R.S.V.P. a must: to jkiosior@centeronhalsted.org. 6pm-8pm, Saks Fifth Avenue Men's Store, 717 N. Michigan Ave., 2nd Floor



TEA FOR YOU

Saturday, April 14

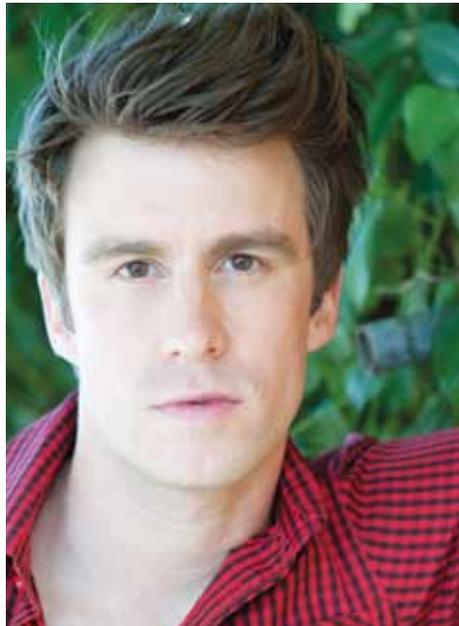
Michelle Tea (above) is part of Sister Spit: Next Generation, which is performing at the Wicker Park Art Center, 2215 W. North Ave.

Photo by Amos Mac

BILLY MASTERS

"He called me a fag 'cause I was wearing a scarf! Then he shoved my sister and I got behind him and I choked him out—put him to sleep."—Jeremy Renner lets people know he ain't putting up with any crap when it comes to those gay rumors. I was kinda excited when he said he choked the guy—until I realized he was behind him!

I really hate going to tapings of TV shows. That probably sounds surprising from someone who lives in Hollywood and loves television. But more than anything else, I hate sitting around ... and there's lots of that at a taping. Aside from award shows (which don't count), I can only think of two tapings I've gone to in my 15 years in California. One was when Madonna was on Will & Grace because ... well, it was Madonna. And the other was an episode of Reba. I wish I could give you a good reason for going to that one, but I just loves me my Reba. And, don't forget, she is the sixth lady of country (behind Tammy Wynette, Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline, Dolly Parton and I believe one of those Mandrell



After some effort, Gavin Creel (above) has been reunited with his iPad. Photo by Emily Sopha

sisters). I vowed that Reba episode would be my swan song—once you interrupt a taping and end up on the blooper reel, you're done.

And yet, there I was at Dancing with the Stars last week. With several friends on the show, I wanted to be supportive. Plus, I'm on the East Coast for the next few weeks. There's a good chance that one (or all) of them will be voted off by then! My first surprise of the night was bumping into Chi Chi La Rue and Doug Jeffries at the VIP check-in. (La Rue is friends with Bruno Tonioli.) Before the show starts, the judges and hosts are introduced to the audience. The person who generated the loudest applause was Bruno! Girlfriend knows how to work it.

I'm not accusing anyone of cheating, but I must tell you that the audience is encouraged to cheer more for certain stars than others. For instance, before William Levy's dance, we were instructed to be up on our feet and really get into his salsa (something I didn't need prompting for). I don't recall anyone asking us to get excited about Melissa Gilbert Brinkman Boxleitner.

I love watching how "celebrities" treat fans. Some are great, some try to avoid them, but most fall in between. I am surprised, nay shocked, to say that the most personable participant was Derek Hough. Everyone I've shared this information with is surprised—I guess people expect him to be a little aloof and cocky.

(They might be thinking of Ryan Seacrest, who I hear has a little ... well, never mind.) Derek was lovely to everyone who went up to him. Of course, my beloved Sherri Shepherd is just a girl who can't say no and was everyone's best friend by the end of the night. And I was impressed to see that sexy Levy remained remarkably composed and gracious when two girls ran down to the dance floor during a commercial to take a photo with him. Where, oh where, was security?

Did you hear about the dramatic week poor little Gavin Creel had? After signing some autographs for fans, he realized he had given one of them his iPad. How? He explained on Twitter: "2 that sweet man who asked 4 my autograph: remember how I used my iPad as a hard surface under your program while I signed? U still have it and I would really like it back...please don't make me sad." I'm sure the giddy guy (yes, I'm making an assumption that a guy who wants Gavin Creel's autograph is gay) was so elated after the meeting, he probably didn't realize it either. The next day, Gavin Tweeted again: "Still wanna hear from the man I accidentally gave my freakin' iPad to last night. Would be real nice if he would give it back." Alan Cumming jumped in with a different tone: "I'm mad as hell. Let's shame the guy who took Gavin Creel's iPad as he was giving him an autograph to return it. Twitter Power, people!" Somehow this went from Gavin mistakenly handing a guy his iPad to an armed robbery! All is now right with the world, judging from Creel's follow-up: "a) I love Alan Cumming b) I so appreciate everyone's support during my iPad debacle c) I'm going to tweet another tweet in 39 seconds.... My iPad hath been returned!!!!!! 2 the sweet man who made my day asking 4 an autograph & made my year by returning my iPad after babysitting it 4 a couple days: thank you!!!!" Awww. I'm a sucker for anyone who can use the word "hath" correctly in a sentence! Just for that, I would have returned the iPad—after cloning the disk, of course.

This is one of those stories that will upset those of you who believe we should always support the LGBT community. The problem with blind devotion is sometimes you're blind to other issues. A transgender woman fought the organizers of the Miss Canada Universe pageant for the right to compete. On one hand, good for her—she stood up for herself and succeeded. But I'm conflicted. I kinda think that it's great for any community to get to honor their own. But if we fight for this inclusion, it has to work both ways. Would we be OK with genetically born females competing in a Miss Transgender Pageant? I'd hate that. Although no white actor has won an NAACP Award, four white performers have been nominated. Why? Why can't people of color have their own award? And where will it end? Would Michael Phelps be allowed to compete in the Special Olympics even though he's not "special?" (Well, he's kinda special...)

Speaking of the Olympics, openly gay Aussie diver Matthew Mitcham just scored perfect 10s from all seven judges at a trial for the upcoming London Olympics. Congrats.

When Broadway stars are giving away iPads (it's only fair with the prices some shows charge), I hath come to the end of yet another column. As luck would have it, I'm in NYC this week catching up on some of the latest shows. So be sure to check out www.BillyMasters.com and I'll let you know if anyone hands me an iPad. If you've got a question, feel free to e-mail me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I check out the genitalia of some Olympic hopefuls! So, 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.

CHICAGO GAY MEN'S CHORUS

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Thursday, April 12
Zebra Katz Afterparty (LIVE encore)
JD Samson (Le Tigre / MEN)
Shuteye (DJ set)

Friday, April 13
COSMIX presents:
Single Release Party!
"D.I.S.C.O."
The brand-new single and slice of pop-heaven from The Young Professionals.
Win Remix CD singles with mixes by 7th Heaven, Yuksek and more while supplies last!
DJ Greg Haus

Saturday, April 14
Twisted Dance Party
DJ: Chester 'til 5am

Sunday, April 15
ROBYN
showcase

The Polar Music party

Featuring music & video from Robyn and electronic superstars of Scandinavia (Lykke Li, The Knife/Fever Ray, The Sounds, Röyksopp, & more)
DJ Greg Haus
NO COVER

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BOXER from page 31

"Oh! I was nervous!" she said. So nervous, in fact that her stomach was upset and she couldn't eat for most of the day. "And when I got there, I seen the young lady I was fighting and I was like, 'Oh, she looks tough. Oh, boy!'" she continued, laughing.

"She was taller than me—of course a lot of people are usually taller than me. But I'm like, 'Jeez, now I got to punch up!' When you train, you punch at eye level when you hit the bag. And I was tired, of course, through the whole fight—it was my first one and I hadn't gotten my lungs together. And this was even tougher on my arms 'cause she was taller than me and just from the looks of her, she was in great shape. I could feel the jitters in my legs, my stomach. I didn't know how the fight was going to end."

And how did it end? "I got lucky and I won." Williams had more confidence for her second fight, another amateur exhibition show, which took place in Orland Park—and which she also won. Since this fight was open to the public, Williams' friends from the gym, her partner from work, and her girlfriend LaToya were able to attend.

"I could hear her yelling," Williams said with a laugh. "She likes it! But she thinks I'm too nice; after my fight, she was like, 'You need to be much more aggressive.' I'm like, 'Oh, okay, you try it, then!'"

Williams and LaToya, who works in human resources at the University of Illinois at Chicago, have been together since their first date three years ago.

"I took her to get ice cream," Williams recalled. "There's a place on 95th and Western—Rainbow Cone."

The two have managed to create a partnership despite Williams' hectic schedule, which also in-



Vickie Williams. Photo courtesy of Williams

cludes classes at Calumet College of St. Joseph, where she'll graduate this spring with a Bachelor's Degree in Public Safety Management.

"I've got work, school, boxing, so pretty much my day is consumed with everything but sleep," she said. "I don't get none of that."

With their often-conflicting schedules, they spend weekends together if Williams is off work and always set aside Tuesday nights for a date night, which they usually spend with LaToya's 11-year-old daughter.

"We like movies—everybody," Williams said. "We go eat. Her birthday's on Valentine's Day, so we had a little pizza party. And we're trying to go to Disney World before she gets too old. I want to go there!"

And while the relationship is solid, Williams admits that there can be challenges in dating a police officer.

"I come home with stories," she said. "Sometimes she understands and sometimes her impression of the stories is different. And I get



Vickie Williams and Mayor Rahm Emanuel. Photo courtesy of Williams

that because she's not police.

"She doesn't know what we go through every day cause she's on the civilian aspect of the whole thing," Williams said. "And then sometimes we get into little disagreements. But it's good because I get to see her side and she gets to hear my side."

This easygoing attitude is evident to her Chicago Boxing Club colleagues as well.

"She walks around the gym smiling all the time," Ramos said. "She's a tremendous role model for the other fighters—guy or girl. No matter how tough a situation is, she always tries to put a smile on your face or help you figure it out, to make you feel better."

"You know," he continued, "she's twenty-nine, she's a police officer, but she doesn't walk around with a badge on her chest, by no means. She's very, very, very humble for having accomplished what she's accomplished. Her personality is king and everyone should get a chance to meet her."

Williams is just as relaxed when she discusses coming out to her mother during high school.

"My mama, she was a little bit like, 'Okay, I don't want to hear about it but I love you no matter what; you're my daughter.' And as time progressed, she was like, 'Just be careful, I'm here.' And then, it was just like a regular old thing."

"I never completely told my dad—I'm sure my mom told him—but he knows and everything's okay. And once my parents knew—if they don't judge me, then I could care less about anybody else judging me."

But when she gets into the ring at the Golden Gloves championships, can this nice girl finish first? Ramos thinks she can, but he wants to see her really turn on her power and her speed.

"The game plan is to come out and go explosive," he said. "Even though she's two-and-oh and she's scored several standing eight counts against her opponents, I think she's still too nice. This time around, I'm pushing her to be more aggressive and get her opponent out of there as fast as she can."

To accomplish this, Williams has been training rigorously for the competition.

"I work out at least two-and-a-half to three hours a day. I'm either at work or the gym," she said with a laugh. "I run at least three to five miles a day, five days out of the week. I do the pads with Rick. I do six rounds on the bags, six rounds of shadow boxing. I do stairs. I do 100 push-ups and about 800 various types of sit-ups. I do the skip rope. And I spar two to three times a week."

And with whom does a five-foot, 114-pound woman spar?

"In the beginning, it was a couple of guys there. Of course they were bigger than me but they never hit me; they just kind of let me hit them," Williams said. "As I progressed, I sparred with more girls, some of Rita's girls. And right now I'm sparring with a young kid—he's 13 or 14. He's tough, though."

"It's rare for her to spar with other women," Ramos said. "She has always sparred with boys—my young amateurs and my amateurs in the 20-35 [year-old age range]."

Her conditioning, along with her speed and power, should make for an exciting fight. "I think I'm more excited than she is," Ramos said. "She's tough, that's for sure," added Rita Figueroa. "Strong. It will be a good fight."

See Vickie Williams compete in the 114-pound

female senior novice division at the 2012 Chicago Golden Gloves championships Friday, April 13, at Gordon Tech High School, 3633 N. California Ave. The first bout begins at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$20-\$50; see www.chicagogoldengloves.com.

Running the Jerusalem Marathon

BY ROSS FORMAN

JERUSALEM—Running through 3,000 years of history isn't just the slogan of the Jerusalem Marathon—it's fact.

However, it also seemed as though there were about 3,000 inclines along the 26.2-mile course, which featured picturesque views, multiple emotional moments, a jaunt through the Old City and a truly amazing journey through the Holy City.

The Jerusalem Marathon, held March 16, was my 15th marathon since 2007, when I first started running marathons with the National AIDS Marathon Training Program, now known as the Team To End AIDS (T2), to support the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC). This was the most breath-taking, awe-inspiring, history-rich race I have ever run, without question.

It also was, unquestionably, the toughest.

The terrain in Jerusalem is relentless. Runners are thrilled with the Chicago Marathon, with the chance to set a personal record (PR)

to come and visit Jerusalem at least once in their lifetime. The Holy City is a city that goes deep into the heart of people all over the world," said Barkat who, for the second consecutive year, ran the half marathon. "Myself, and the Municipality of Jerusalem, are working to make Jerusalem more accessible, to make Jerusalem more attractive, more practical to come and visit."

"The brand Jerusalem is one of the strongest in the world. [There is] huge [growth] potential for the city of Jerusalem. I set a goal a few years ago to reach 10 million tourists a year. At the time, Jerusalem had just over 2 million tourists annually. Now it's at 3.5 million."

Barkat has run five full marathons, including the fabled New York City edition in 2009 at age 50. His best marathon time is 4:13, run in Berlin.

"I'm a big believer that spiritualism, sports and health go together," said Barkat, who, multiple times per week, runs in the morning. "When you invest some time in sports, you



Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat at the marathon. Photo by Ross Forman

time—and many annually do. This is not true with the Jerusalem Marathon, where survival is key.

"We know that people don't come to [run the] Jerusalem Marathon to break their [personal] record [time] since Jerusalem is a hilly city," Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat said. "[The course] poses a lot of [physical] challenges, however, there's no doubt in my mind that, in a short period of time, the Jerusalem Marathon is quickly [joining] that short list of marathons that people around the world have to run at least once."

I agree.

This year's Jerusalem Marathon was only the second ever, but clearly is catching on within the global running world—not just within Israel. More than 15,000 runners braved temperatures in the 40s, rain, stiff winds and even hail. Of those, 1,000 ran the full 26.2-mile marathon, 4,000 ran the 13.1-mile half marathon, and the remainder ran the 10K race.

There were about 1,500 runners in Jerusalem from abroad and more than 50 countries were represented along the course.

The 2012 race was 50 percent larger than the inaugural edition—and no doubt will just continue to expand.

"Half the population in the world, [that's about] 3.5 billion people of faith, would like

think better, you think sharper, you feel much better and it's an example to others. [Sports are] great for the spirit and the body."

"The Jerusalem Marathon is quite breath-taking. The marathon is very inspiring; it goes through amazing sights."

From my shoes, nothing compares with running through the Old City, entering at Jaffa Gate and exiting at Zion Gate. History engulfs you.

"The sights [and] the atmosphere [along the course] are second to none," Barkat said.

I agree, though the continual up and down terrain, often with steep inclines, can be quite a strain on the quads, and elsewhere.

The third annual Jerusalem Marathon is March 1, 2013, and the question lingers—alongside my throbbing legs: Will I be at the starting line?

The answer is "Most likely." Runners truly are gluttons for punishment, or we always want to beat our previous time.

When not running, or recovering from, the Jerusalem Marathon, Ross Forman spent time researching the LGBT scene in Jerusalem. In future issues, Ross will report on LGBT travel to the Holy Land, the Jerusalem Open House, several Chicagoans now in Jerusalem, and more.

Coming next: A profile on Havruta, a social organization for religious gay men.

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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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