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WINDY CITY TIMES

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BON FOSTER PICS
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Gerber/Hart on the move

BY KATE SOSIN

Chicago's LGBT library has completed most of the work on its move from Edgewater to Rogers Park.

The old home of Gerber/Hart Library and Archives now sits almost entirely empty and dark. The site of its new home at 6500 N. Clark St. is now the site of activity and work, after weeks of silence that caused some to worry that the space would not be ready in time.

It remains uncertain when Gerber/Hart will reopen to the public. Windy City Times has asked Board President Karen Sendziak to provide timelines for the move, infor-

mation on the cost, a description of where the archives will be stored until the library opens and the name of the library's moving company. Sendziak has indicated that she will provide answers within the week, once the move is completed.

Paper has been put up over windows on the second floor of the new building, where the library is to be installed. Work vehicles appear to be parked in the building's lot. A new planter has been installed in the lot, and an office tree has been placed in a downstairs window.

Community members have questioned how the library could complete such a large move in time for the April

30 expiration of its lease. Windy City Times first reported that the Edgewater space was for rent in late January. Sendziak indicated that Gerber/Hart is leaving the Edgewater space because the library outgrew the space while rent costs went up.

The library's new home does not appear to be close to ready for full occupation. The library is able to store its materials in the building until the space is completed. Still, it appears that it could be a long time before the new library is operational.

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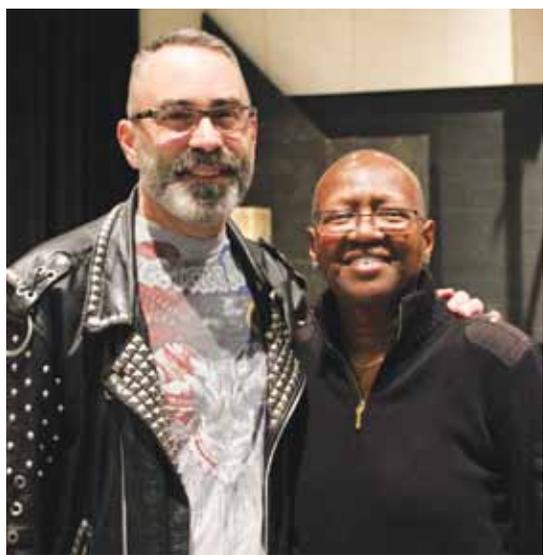
Vernita Gray talks history, racism in 'Fireside Chat'

BY ERICA DEMAREST

Longtime LGBT activist Vernita Gray spoke April 25 at the Center on Halsted as part of its 'Fireside Chat' series, designed to highlight local luminaries.

Known for her charismatic sense of humor and deadpan style, Gray regaled the audience with stories from her four decades of community service, which has included a stint in the state's attorney's office and trips to the White House.

Douglas O'Keeffe—an author, educator and the 2004 Cellblock Shel-don Chicago Leatherman—conducted an on-stage interview before opening the floor to questions. The taped interview will be viewable at the Leather Archives & Museum.



Douglas O'Keeffe and Vernita Gray at Gray's fireside chat. Photo by Erica Demarest

History, racism and contemporary politics were hot topics. Describing race as "the elephant in the room," Gray, a Black woman, recounted visits to gay bars in the 1960s.

"If I went to a bar, I'd have to have to have my driver's license, my passport, my baptismal certificate. ... I could never ever have enough ID," Gray said. "Now, what do you think that was about? Then there'd be white girls behind me—they'd [giggle] and walk right in."

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Mad about Melissa

Superstar musician Melissa Etheridge talks about equal rights, working with her girlfriend—and which aspect of performing still gives her chills. See page 22. Photo courtesy of Universal

AIDS @30
THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF OUR AIDS @ 30 SERIES
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Photos on cover (left, from top): Pic of Hank Mendheim from Jayme Nicholas; photo of Pat Logue and Jim Bennett by Kat Fitzgerald; Spider Saloff PR photo; Del Shores PR pic



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MODEL BEHAVIOR

Miami-based model/actor Christian Carabias (left) talked about what drew him to Chicago's Red Dress Ball and his link to Dancing with the Stars' William Levy.
PR photo



Read about Dr. Patrick Cheng's recent lecture on queer theology.

Photo from I Li Hsiao



Find out Vern Hester's views on shows by Perfume Genius (above) and Roberta Flack.

Photo by Vern Hester

GRAD INFLUENCE

See photos from UIC's the LGBT event known as Lavender Graduation.

BEING SOCIAL; DAN CLUB

See photos from the Equality Illinois women's spring social, held at the bridal salon Mignonette. Also, read about Dan Savage's talk at Elmhurst College.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Read entertainment news about Calvin Klein, Fran Drescher and Susan Boyle.

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More LGBT-related fallout at Notre Dame

BY CHUCK COLBERT

It still needs to get better for gays at the University of Notre Dame.

That's the overall reaction to news that school officials are not adding sexual orientation to the school's non-discrimination policy even after months of student and faculty advocacy for a policy change.

And yet, a university spokesperson said, Notre Dame will take "student suggestions" for "several new steps to better support of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning members of its community."

Specifically, Notre Dame will "make ally training more widely available" and offer "education to First-Year Orientation commissioners," at the same time "expanding" a "Safe Space initiative" and "improving hall staff training."

Apparently, administrators have not decided on whether to approve a self-governing gay-straight alliance (GSA) student organization.

For more than two decades, Notre Dame has refused to grant official status to a gay student group.

Meanwhile, news of the status quo in nondiscrimination came in an April 25 press statement April 25 issued by Dennis Brown, an assistant vice president of public information and communications.

The statement offered no reason or explanation for why sexual-orientation protections would not be added.

However, Brown said in e-mail correspondence, "We may have more to say on our rationale." Brown also said he "would check on the timing of the GSA decision."

The "It-Needs-to-Get-Better" meme has become a rallying cry for the 4 to 5 Movement, a student-led initiative (including some faculty) calling on Notre Dame to catch up with its top-ranked peer public and private schools, as well as other Catholic colleges and universities that already offer legal protections on the basis of sexual orientation in admissions and employment.

Last February the 4 to 5 Movement released an "It Needs To Get Better" video wherein students, faculty and staff call out the university for failing, year after year, to approve an official GSA and to include legal protections for LGBTQ community. The video has more than 20,000 hits on YouTube.

Currently, Notre Dame policy "does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, disability, veteran status or age."

As students held a candlelight vigil April 25 in response to the decision, 4 to 5 Movement leader Alex Coccia voiced disappointment that adding a sexual-orientation nondiscrimination clause would not be brought before university trustees who have final authority on the matter.

"It would be an enormous way to change the campus climate and allow people to feel safe in the classroom, on campus, and in the workplace," he said in e-mail correspondence.

"This change is so extremely important," Coccia added. "Until this change is made, we can never have full inclusion for the GLBTQ community on campus."

It was 15 years ago when Notre Dame trustees voted against adding sexual orientation to the non-discrimination clause.

Making sexual orientation a "protected category" could inhibit the school in its ability to "make decisions that are necessary to support Catholic Church teaching," according to a statement, released by the trustees on Feb. 5, 1977, the day of the vote.

At the time of the decision, Notre Dame issued a "Spirit of Inclusion" statement, which strongly

condemned anti-gay harassment but fell short of banning discriminatory practices.

"We choose not to change our legal nondiscrimination clause, but we call ourselves to act in accordance with what we regard as a higher standard—Christ's call to inclusiveness, coupled with the gospel's call to live chaste lives," wrote then university president the Rev. Edward A. Malloy, CSC, who strongly opposed changing the policy.

The "Spirit of Inclusion" supports gay students, faculty, and staff and condemns harassment and discrimination, stating, "We consciously create an environment of mutual respect, hospitality, and warmth in which none are strangers and all may flourish."

Fifteen years later, Coccia said, the "Spirit of Inclusion" does not go far enough. "We have always said that [it] not only calls but morally requires us to provide [legal] protections," he said.

Notre Dame's Peter Holland—a professor of film, television and theater—told Inside Higher Ed that faculty members also view the push for gay rights as a moral issue. The lack of a sexual orientation nondiscrimination policy, he said fosters "a climate of anxiety."

To make the university a more welcoming, in 1997 Notre Dame established the Core Council for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students, an administration-run group, including students and administrators, that addresses gay issues by providing resources and planning educational events. Core Council also advises the vice president for student affairs on LGBTQ needs.

"The university has made significant progress over the past 15 years in its support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and questioning students," said the Rev. Thomas P. Doyle, CSC, student affairs vice president, in a statement.

"But we've always emphasized the desire to continuously improve and to be responsive to student concerns. The conversations between students and the administration both recently and over the past several years have been very important," said Doyle.

For his part, university president the Rev. John I. Jenkins, CSC, said, "In all of our efforts, we seek within the context of Church teaching to better realize the ideals expressed in the university's 'Spirit of Inclusion' statement—to create an environment of mutual respect, hospitality and warmth.

Nonetheless, gay and lesbian alumni voiced frustration.

"President Jenkin's administration continues to deny the two central tenets that students, staff, and faculty have been asking for: Acceptance of a gay and lesbian student organization or gay/straight alliance and sexual orientation protection on the University's legally-binding non discrimination clause," said Liam Dacey, a former chair of Gay & Lesbian Alumni of Notre Dame & St. Mary's College (www.glandsmc.org).

Dacey added, "[The president's] advisers are continuing to advance the pattern of hostile discrimination to a significant portion of their community."

One measure of such hostility came in January 2010, when a student newspaper, The Observer, ran a cartoon that seemingly promoted violence against gays.

In the cartoon, two people are talking: "What's the easiest way to turn a fruit into a vegetable?"

"No idea."
"A baseball bat."

A subsequent Observer editorial apologized for the "offensive comic," saying, "There is no excuse that can be given and nothing that can be said to reverse the damage that has already been done by this egregious error in judgment."

Still, an initial online posting of the comic suggested "AIDS" as the punch line instead of "baseball bat."

The cartoonist, moreover, reported the paper preferred "not to make light of fatal diseases," according to the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), which monitored the incident.

Alumna Elizabeth M. Karle also voiced dissatisfaction with Notre Dame's decision.

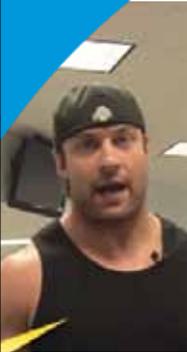
"While continued dialogue is certainly welcome, enhancing awareness of the 'Spirit of Inclusion' is an inadequate response to student concerns regarding a gay/straight alliance and an inclusive non-discrimination policy—both of which are fully compatible with Catholic social teaching and already realities at other Catholic colleges and universities," said Karle who is a former GALA-ND/SMC secretary.

Jack Bergen, the newly elected GALA vice-chair of programs, said, "The response from the University is not surprising given the current lack of support for GLBT students and is inadequate to meet their needs."

"While progress has been made, Notre Dame remains behind every other major institution we compare ourselves against. Once again Notre Dame will fall to the bottom of ladder when it comes to inclusion of GLBT students. What a shame," said Bergen.

Yet Notre Dame's press statement also said the

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NATIONAL NEWS



—GLAAD takes action against Cleveland DJ Dominic Dieter (left)

—Obama, Kimmel tackle gay issues at White House dinner

—Missouri's own "Don't Say Gay" bill

in their regard. A non-discrimination policy is the most basic way to put that teaching into practice, and it has been instituted in Catholic institutions, including colleges and universities, around the country," explained DeBernardo.

"Notre Dame's refusal to do so shows an absence of will to do so on the administration's



Notre Dame students hold candle light vigil in response to university administrators declining to add sexual orientation to the school's nondiscrimination policy. Photo by Dylan Parent

university would consider making the "Spirit of Inclusion" statement "more explicit and effective."

"Notre Dame will strive to enhance awareness of existing practices and protections among students, faculty, and staff. The avenues for reporting harassment and discrimination will be clarified, strengthened, and better publicized," the statement said.

What also raises eyebrows about the "Spirit of Inclusion" is its implicit assumption that gay students are somehow likely, perhaps, to be unchaste compared with non-gays.

"Notre Dame is making the same mistake that many church leaders make when dealing with lesbian/gay issues," said Francis DeBernardo, executive director of the gay-positive New Ways Ministry.

"They assume that the first and most important way to respond to lesbian/gay people is to focus on any potential sexual activity that might occur," he said.

"Sexualizing lesbian/gay people is discriminatory, demeaning, and dehumanizing," DeBernardo added.

Based in Mt. Rainier, Md., New Ways is a ministry of healing and reconciliation for LGBT Catholics and the Church.

DeBernardo added, "The Notre Dame administration does not treat heterosexual people in the same way, though they are equally as likely to be in violation of Catholic teaching on sexuality."

"Church teaching is clear that lesbian/gay people must be included in Catholic organizations and that no discrimination should occur

part, in spite of the fact that a clear Catholic rationale for doing so exists," he said.

A 1978 graduate of the University of Notre Dame, Chuck Colbert is a co-founder of GALA-ND/SMC and a former co-chair of the organization, which is not affiliated with the Notre Dame Alumni Association.

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SIDEBAR LGBT name game at Notre Dame Magazine BY CHUCK COLBERT

Even as advocates at Notre Dame pressed school officials to make the university gay friendly, a policy change at the Notre Dame Magazine signals a step backwards.

The magazine, which is distributed free of charge to tens of thousands of alumni worldwide, does not allow use of the word "marriage" in the classnotes section to acknowledge legal same-sex wedlock.

The new block-out policy came to light in the most recent issue of the magazine (Spring 2012) in a letter to the editor.

"When I was married in the District of Columbia on June 18, 2011, my friend and classmate Lorie Masters was kind enough to write about this joyous occasion in the classnotes section of the winter issue. You, however, saw fit to change

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Jack Bergen. Photo courtesy of Bergen

the word 'marriage' to 'united in a ceremony,'" wrote a 1981 law school alumnus, Allyn Amato of Alexandria, Va.

He continued, "Not only is your editorial policy intellectually and logically flawed, it is also downright insulting both to my husband and to me. We are married and have exactly the same legal status as any heterosexual couple married in the District of Columbia."

"The attitude evidenced by your editorial policy is, in my view, most decidedly hypocritical and anti-Christian. Please answer me this question: Had I married a Jewish or Muslim woman outside the Catholic Church, would you have edited the column in the same manner? I think not," wrote Amato.

News of the policy change disheartened at least one alumnus, Jack Bergen of Walpole, Mass., newly elected vice-chair of programs for the Gay & Lesbian Alumni Association of Notre Dame/ St. Mary's College (GALA-ND/SMC).

"I'm disappointed," he said over the telephone. "Marriage is a state issue," Bergen continued. "If a particular state recognizes the

union of same-sex couples as marriages, then I think it should be reflected as such."

Editor Kerry Temple explained how the change came about. "Until three or four maybe five years ago, the magazine's classnotes section carried news of same-sex unions and called them marriages," he said in e-mail correspondence.

"Then some very vocal alums protested and the result was a meeting of administrators during which it was decided not to use the word marriage, but to use other terminology, such as civil union or partnership ceremony," said Temple.

"The rationale was that for the vast majority of our readers the word marriage means the sacrament of matrimony," he added.

And yet the issue here is civil marriage and not sacramental marriage—civil rights, not sacred rites.

The magazine policy change comes at time when same-sex civil marriage is now legal in six states, including Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont and the District of Columbia.

This past summer, the Catholic governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, signed marriage equality into law. More recently, Catholic governors in Maryland and Washington signed similar legislation, although roll-back efforts in those two states by ballot measure referenda are likely to challenge the new laws.

For a short time gay couples could marry in California until the November 2008 passage of Proposition 8 banned same-sex marriage.

In fact, Notre Dame alumnus and a former GALA-ND/SMC (www.galandsmc.org) co-chair Tom O'Brien of Los Angeles married his partner Oct. 30, 2008, at the Beverly Hills Courthouse while same-sex marriage was still legal.

Asked about the magazine's new policy, he offered comments, taken from a letter written at the time to family and friends.

"Both of us have seen wonderful examples of love, honor, commitment and loyalty in our lives. We believe marriage to be a beautiful ex-

AIDS organization honors Pelosi

The National AIDS Memorial Grove honored U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi for "25 years in Congress as a national leader, champion and hero on the issue of HIV/AIDS and her avid support of the LGBT community during a special Community Volunteer Workday" at the Grove in San Francisco April 21.

Pelosi joined hundreds of volunteers—as she has done over the years—to plant trees, flowers and shrubs, helping maintain the grounds of the memorial she helped create in 1996 in memory and honor of those who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS.

The ceremony also featured a tribute by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. Photo of Pelosi hugging AIDS National Memorial Grove Executive Director John Cunningham courtesy of Kevin Herglotz



pression of that love and commitment; and are thrilled to be able to stand before you and publicly and legally confirm what we have shared together for 14 and-a-half years," O'Brien wrote.

"For both of us, the most powerful moment of the wedding came when we heard the words: 'By the power invested in me by the State of California...'" he added.

Nonetheless, O'Brien acknowledged the struggle same-sex marriage is for Catholics. "Some family members and friends whom we love and who love us dearly have struggled with the notion of gay marriage. We recognize that it represents a major shift for society and one that will occur fitfully," he wrote.

"But we hope that everyone can recognize that over the past 14 and a half years, we have

become better people for having found each other. We are happier and more fulfilled as a result."

Neither editor Temple nor university spokesperson Dennis Brown, an assistant vice president of Public Information and Communications, would say, when asked, if any gay alumni had been part of discussions about the policy change.

However, Temple said the objection to the policy "has prompted some discussion here," adding, "As more states have allowed same-sex marriages and as society changes, I would think further review is warranted."

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Senate vote keeps LGBT protections in domestic-abuse bill

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

A casual listener to U.S. Senate debate April 26 would not have heard the skirmish over protections for LGBT victims of domestic abuse. Despite reports that Republicans were upset over new language in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that would protect LGBT people, Republicans never said so on the floor of the Senate.

However, Republicans led an effort to replace the original VAWA reauthorization bill with a substitute bill that would have eliminated all protections for LGBT victims of domestic abuse.

That Republican substitute bill was defeated April 26 by a vote of 63-37.

The Senate then went on to approve the original VAWA reauthorization bill 68-31.

The votes seemed to usher in a new era of Democratic support for including protections and benefits for LGBT in legislation, as well as a quieter yet more menacing tactic by Republicans to stop such protections by pitting them against children.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, who introduced and co-authored the substitute bill with Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, couched the Republican substitute as one that kept the "most important" parts of the original legislation while strengthening protections for children against sexual predators.

The Hutchison-Grassley substitute form of VAWA removed the terms "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" from throughout the original VAWA reauthorization bill. Hutchison argued that the substitute still protected same-sex couples by "neutralizing" language referring to victims. She referred to "men who have been gang raped" as an example of such violence.

The original version of this year's VAWA reauthorization bill, approved only by Democrats on the Judiciary Committee and passed by the Senate April 26, includes language specifying that VAWA-funded programs not discriminate based on the sexual orientation or gender identity of a victim.

It also includes funding for "underserved" populations "who face barriers in accessing and using victim services because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, underserved racial and ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age), and any other population determined to be underserved by the attorney general or by the Secretary of Health and



Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas.

Human Services, as appropriate."

And it provides that certain grants under the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act can be used for "developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs and projects to provide services and responses targeting male and female victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, whose ability to access traditional services and responses is affected by their sexual orientation or gender identity."

The Hutchison-Grassley substitute bill's provision concerning non-discrimination included all categories of the original bill except for sexual orientation and gender identity. It defined "underserved populations" the same as the original bill except that it eliminated those who face barriers due to religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity. And it gutted a section concerning grants by deleting language concerning "male and female victims...whose ability to access traditional services and responses is affected by their sexual orientation or gender identity."

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, criticized the Republican substitute as undermining the "core principles" of the original bill. He said it "strips out key provisions to protect all victims ... including victims in same-sex relationships."

Leahy was one of only a few Democratic senators to talk about specifically about LGBT victims of domestic violence. Many others—including those with large LGBT constituencies—did not.

Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., complained about the Republican substitute bill for taking

out the word "women" and using the word "victim." Doing so, he noted, amounts to abolishing VAWA and starting a whole new program.

"No one here would argue that all violent crimes, all domestic crimes are tragic and serious, but this so-called substitute negates centuries of women's experience that proves that violence against women—especially from spouses, partners and family members—is a uniquely pernicious and entrenched practice."

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., mentioned "sexual orientation" but only in the context of noting that all people can be victims of high-tech stalking, such as placing hidden cameras in hotel rooms.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid described two roadblocks to reauthorization of the VAWA as "non-discrimination protection for all victims, regardless of what they look like or where they're from."

And Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., criticized Republicans for wanting to "exclude people" from protection, but her three examples of victims did not include an LGBT person.

But Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., did speak out strongly in support of language including LGBT victims of domestic abuse.

"Clearly, there's a real need to improve access and availability of services for this vulnerable population," said Blumenthal Thursday, "and I support measures in this act that ensure victims of domestic and sexual violence, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, can access those services they need."

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said he doesn't believe any of the "points of controversy" on the bill were important enough to vote against reauthorization of the law. He specifically mentioned protection should be available to all victims "regardless of gender."

VAWA (S. 1925) has been a popular piece of legislation since 1994, when it was first passed. But this year, it has become a battleground for the votes of women in the 2012 presidential campaign and a battle over protections for LGBT people, Native Americans, and immigrant women without documentation to be in this country.

Rita Smith, executive director of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, said the coalition "cannot support any bill that does not include language to protect vulnerable and under resources populations of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking."

"It is imperative that Native women, immigrant women, and the LGBTQ communities all have access to resources and support and S. 1925 includes critical services for these populations. No other bill or amendment addresses these necessary changes to provide services for all victims."

Democrats see the bill as a means of increasing protections for victims of domestic abuse; Republicans see it as an excuse to funnel federal funds to progressive groups, such as LGBT health clinics. They also claim the new provisions this year were added to make it hard for Republicans to support. Grassley said the tactic was pure pol-

itics and meant to deflect attention away from "health care reform, unemployment or high gas prices."

A study by the National Coalition indicated that, in 2010, programs serving LGBT people who were abused by their domestic partners or other intimate partners recorded 5,052 reports of such abuse. Almost 45 percent of these victims reported being turned away by other groups helping domestic violence victims.

The national coalition includes a large number of groups working to prevent domestic violence and help its victims, including the Community United Against Violence (San Francisco), the Center on Halsted (Chicago), the Resource Center Dallas, the Broward (Fla.) LGBT Domestic Violence Coalition, the San Diego LGBT Center, the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center, the Fenway Community Health Violence Recovery Program (Boston), Wingspan (Arizona), United4Safety (Atlanta) and GLOV (D.C.).

Human Rights Campaign official David Stacy said the Hutchison-Grassley substitute was "not a serious attempt" to find a resolution and would jeopardize important funding to groups that do serve LGBT victims.

Supporters of VAWA had 61 senators going into the debate this week, including both senators from Illinois, California and Massachusetts, as well as Bill Nelson of Florida, Carl Levin of Michigan and Bob Casey of Pennsylvania. Neither of Texas' Republican senators co-sponsored the legislation.

A spokeswoman for Republican presidential nominee-apparent Mitt Romney said last week that Romney supports the bill but did not clarify whether he objects to the new language prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The VAWA in the House (HR 4271) has 52 co-sponsors, including openly gay Reps. Barney Frank, D-Mass., and Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., but not openly gay Reps. Jared Polis, D-Colo., and David Cicilline, D-R.I. Debate in the House is also expected to be contentious, with House Majority Leader Eric Cantor reportedly pushing for a Republican version of the reauthorization measure there.

R. Clarke Cooper, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans, issued a statement, saying, "Nobody should be able to get away with domestic abuse just because their victim is gay, transgender, an immigrant or Native American, and nobody should be denied help in recovering from abuse. Standing in the way of passing this legislation is unconscionable. Log Cabin Republicans are proud of our allies in the Senate who have cosponsored this bill, including Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, who introduced the bill, and Sens. Ayotte, R-N.H.; Brown, R-Mass.; Collins, R-Maine; Heller, R-Nev.; Kirk, R-ILL., Murkowski, R-Alaska; and Snowe, R-Maine. Passage of S. 1925 should move forward swiftly, and any effort to water down the Violence Against Women Act should be roundly condemned."

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Study: Latinos supportive of LGBT issues

BY KATE SOSIN

New research could debunk media portrayals of Latinos as homophobic.

According to a new study released by the National Council of La Raza and Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS), Latinos are as or more likely to support LGBT people and causes than the general population.

The study, which surveyed 1,001 Latinos throughout the United States, found that 54 percent of Latinos support same-sex marriage, compared with 53 percent in the general population.

Dr. David Dutwin, the vice president of SSRS who authored the study, noted that media reports have suggested that Latinos are less likely to back LGBT causes.

"The anecdotal evidence out there was that Hispanics were less accepting of LGBT than the general population," he said.

Not so, the study found.

The study discovered "widespread support" for pro-LGBT policies among Latinos, said Dutwin, at rates comparable to or slightly better than findings in the general population.

Three out of four Latinos surveyed supported open military service, while 83 percent supported legal protections and benefits for LGBT people. Sixty-four percent said they supported civil unions.

Adoption was the exception in the study, said Dutwin. Just 32 percent of respondents favored policies for allowing LGBT adoption.

Like the general population, Latinos were far more likely to support LGBT people and causes if they personally knew LGBT people. Eighty-one percent of Latinos who knew many LGBT people supported legal adoption, compared with 43

percent who knew no LGBT people.

Those numbers also had strong correlation with religious backgrounds, the study found. Fifty-five percent of non-religious respondents supported same-sex marriage. Just 20 percent of Protestants supported marriage equality, and 28 percent of Catholics said they were supportive.

The study also found that clergy views had a deep impact on views, with respondents noting similar sentiments toward LGBT issues as their church leaders.

Latinos who voted in elections also tended to favor LGBT rights at higher rates, the study found. Seventy-six percent of Latinos who voted in 2008 and 2010 reporting feeling comfortable with LGBT people in their lives, compared with 47 percent of non-voting citizens. Non-citizens reported comfort with LGBT peers at 61 percent.

Acculturation into U.S. society also impacted views. The concept of "acculturated" Latinos vs. "traditional" Latinos is often debated and problematic, said Dutwin, but he said that various factors suggest that more acculturated Latinos tended towards more pro-LGBT responses. Just 28 percent of "acculturated" viewed sexual orientation as changeable compared with 64 percent of "traditional" Latinos.

Overall, said Dutwin, the numbers suggest that Latinos are on par with the general popu-

lation, if not slightly more accepting in some areas.

Dutwin said the study was created with consultation from Latino organizations, some who worried the findings would show higher rates of homophobia among Latinos.

"Whatever the truth was going to be, it was going to be," Dutwin said, who added that the survey was intentionally unbiased.

The report comes shortly after court documents revealed that the anti-gay National Organization for Marriage sought Latino support by presenting marriage equality as antithetical to traditional Latino values.

A copy of the report is at www.nclr.org/images/uploads/publications/LGBTAS_HispanicPerspective.pdf.

Baldwin launches Senate candidacy

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., launched the circulation of nomination papers for her candidacy for the U.S. Senate April 21.

Baldwin had signature-collecting celebrations in Madison, Milwaukee and Green Bay. Should she win the Senate race, she would be the first openly LGBT person in that legislative body. Pics by Tim Carroll Photography; more at www.WindyCity-MediaGroup.com



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Lobby Day focuses on marriage equality

BY KATE SOSIN

The fight for marriage equality in Illinois may be over for this legislative session, but for a group of Equality Illinois supporters it was alive April 25.

Three busloads of LGBT people and allies headed to Springfield to ask their legislators to start thinking about marriage equality.

The lobby day is an annual Equality Illinois event, but this year was the first that looked promising for marriage equality, after civil unions went into effect last June.

Gay state Reps. Greg Harris, Kelly Cassidy and Deb Mell and others put forth a marriage bill earlier this year, but most believed it had little chance of passing. The lawmakers later said they would not move the bill forward.

Harris has introduced a marriage bill every year, and some argue that now is the time to gain support for future efforts.

Randy Hannig, public policy director for Equality Illinois, urged the group at Lobby Day to focus on lawmakers who were on the fence on the issue, especially downstate politicians who might be less likely to vote in favor of marriage equality.

Overall, those lobbying reported positive interactions with their lawmakers, including downstate Republicans who had never been approached on the issue but might support marriage equality and representatives like Rita Mayfield who declined to vote either way on civil unions.

The group had the opportunity to meet Harris, Mell and Cassidy in addition to Lt. Gov. Shei-



State Rep. Kelly Cassidy addresses a reception state Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka hosted. Photo by Kate Sosin



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la Simon and state Treasurer Dan Rutherford. Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka hosted a reception with rainbow cookies for the group, but was not in attendance.

"I love it when you guys are here," Mell told the group. "The capital is just a little more fabulous."

Other LGBT-related bills could still become a reality in the near future, including an amendment that would add gender identity into the Illinois hate-crimes statute.

Services planned for slain trans woman

BY KATE SOSIN

Funeral arrangements for Paige Clay, a transgender woman who was apparently murdered in Chicago's West Side last week, have been announced.

Services will be held Friday, May 4, at Acklin Funeral Home, 1325 W. 87th St. A wake will be held 3-4 p.m. that day, and a funeral will follow at 4-5 p.m.

In addition, community members held a rally in Clay's honor at TaskForce Prevention Services, 9 N. Cicero Ave., on May 1.

Going-away fundraiser for Kat Fitzgerald May 9 at Center

There will be a going-away fundraiser, "Kit Kat Kalamity and Farewell Extravaganza! (And COH Fundraiser!)," for Kat Fitzgerald Wed., May 9, at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., at 6-9:30 p.m.

It will be a musical extravaganza, including performers such as Monica del Castillo, Jeanie Tanner, Jeff Brown, Jeff Churchwell, Heather

Styka and the Jess Godwin Band, among others.

Sponsors include J and L Catering, Sidetrack, Polo Cafe, Hamburger Mary's and Amy Bloom Inc.

The requested donation is \$25.

Corrections

It has come to our attention that some items in the April 25 article "Survey of local non-profits" were unclear or misrepresented.

Under the category "AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC)," President/CEO David Ernesto Munar's salary was listed as \$166,521. This figure includes health benefits, disability coverage, dental and life insurance plans, unemployment and FICA. Munar's actual salary is \$140,000.

Windy City Times (WCT) requested comprehensive salary and benefit figures from each nonprofit. Since responses varied (and many NGOs failed to include benefits numbers), WCT attempted to list only the base salary for each executive director; there was some confusion regarding Munar's base salary.

Additionally, Munar's salary was mistakenly included twice in the "Top Five Salaries" category. Some participating nonprofits provided the executive director's salary in addition to the five highest-paid employees' salaries (which is how Form 990 lists salaries); others rolled the executive director salary into other numbers. For the sake of uniformity, WCT included executive directors' salaries in the "Top Five" category.

Changes have been reflected in updated charts and graphs at www.windycitymediagroup.com.

Some questions have been raised about how groups were chosen for the survey. The goal was to take a close look at the city's largest organizations and how they spend their budgets. Many smaller groups—though incredibly important to the community—were not in an economic position to participate.

Windy City Times regrets the errors.

GERBER from cover

The downstairs level of the building remains unfinished, with pipes exposed. It is not possible to view the upstairs level where the library will reside, but it appears that the building was left largely unfinished while it remained empty.

The City of Chicago website indicates that recent construction permits on the building have been denied. The last permits for work appear to be five years old. Windy City Times has asked Sendziak about the permits about will update as information becomes available.

Gerber/Hart's old home now sits empty of books. A sign on the door indicates that the library is moving as planned.

It has been a controversial few months for Gerber/Hart. Most recently, the organization released a new set of bylaws that removed the voting rights of its members, after WCT raised questions about the organization's lack of annual meetings and whether Sendziak's nine-year term violated the old bylaws. Some members have objected to the changes. Sendziak believes the change was completed legally.



The interior of Gerber-Hart Library at its now-former Granville location. Photo by Kate Sosin

Tours to shed light on LGBT history

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

If you think Chicago's LGBT neighborhood history consists of Boystown and Andersonville, you might be especially qualified for a new tour being offered this summer by Chicago Neighborhood Tours through the Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture.

"Out and Proud: LGBT Chicago" will allow Chicago natives and visitors both gay and straight to experience the city's rich LGBT history and culture past and present. In addition to stops in Lakeview, Boystown and Andersonville, the bus tour will also venture to South Side neighborhoods and spots such as Bronzeville and the Jeffrey Pub in South Shore, where the early roots of Chicago gay history were formed.

Windy City Times editor and Chicago LGBT historian Tracy Baim, author of *Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community*, will lead each of the three four-and-a-half-hour tours on Saturdays May 26, June 16 and Aug. 4.

"I want to give a historical context to where we are today," Baim said. "I'm not going to assume they're straight or gay or if they know a lot about history. It's another thing going out and seeing these locations, even for someone who is a semi-expert on Chicago gay history—to see these places and make them more real."

Baim said the emphasis of the tours will be on the extensive geography of the LGBT community and its history, a reminder that Boystown is a new phenomenon.

"I'm concerned about the surface knowledge that gets relayed to our community," she said. "We don't have a sense that we truly are every-



The 1970s Anita Bryant protest in Chicago will be discussed during the tour. Image: M. Kuda Archives

where. We say that, but we don't always believe it."

This is not the first time LGBT history and community tours have been offered in Chicago. Baim previously ran a touring operation in the '90s with writer and historian Sukie de la Croix.

Chicago Neighborhood Tours manager Patricia Sullivan had heard of these tours being offered in the past and felt it was time to revive them, which many of her LGBT friends had suggested and encouraged.

"I thought it was just about time [the idea of LGBT tours] was revisited," Sullivan said. "With



The history of Chicago's Pride Parade is part of the tour. Photo by Tracy Baim

the gay community being a vibrant and important part of the city, this is something we need to offer."

The two main walking stops on the tour will be the Center on Halsted and the Leather Archives and Museum. Sullivan said she sees the center as vital to what's current in LGBT history with the extensive amount of services they offer.

Beyond this summer, Baim and Sullivan said they hope to make this tour available to any groups looking charter a tour, from schools and youth groups to organizations such as PFLAG

chapters or corporations with LGBT employee groups.

"Chicago is a destination point for people not born here," Baim said. "They are often thrown into the middle of a city they have no context for. ... This would be a terrific tour to use as an induction to Chicago."

The tour costs \$35 for adults and \$30 for seniors, students and children 8-18 year old. Spots can be booked by calling 312-742-1190. Walk-ons will be taken based on availability. For more information, visit www.explorechicago.org.

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Panel discusses violence in gay male communities

BY TERENCE CHAPPELL

Warning: This article contains graphic information about a nonconsensual sexual encounter.

Community activists, university officials, students, and LGBTQ advocates all gathered at DePaul's Munroe Hall April 25 for "Asking For It"—a panel discussion that focused on the social stigmas of sexual and domestic violence in gay male communities.



bang" with one of his foster sisters, who was around 10.

Aaron also remembers one of his brothers pushing him down while Aaron was trying to get his doll—while his other brothers were still in the act. After pushing him down the stairs, his older brother walked in front of Aaron and removed the condom from his penis, according to Aaron. Panel discussion guest John Garver found the image of Aaron going to retrieve his doll while his older brothers engage in such a sexual

"I'm definitely having a hard time with the past clip in a different way in regards to common language," Brooks said. "I just wanted Aaron to say the word 'rape.' I kept watching it and watching it and watching it, and I needed him to say it. I couldn't believe he was talking about it and not saying it in a way that I needed him to say it—it was rape."

Attendee Ryan Conrad shared with guests his personal experience of domestic violence when he was thrown into a wall while breaking up

From left: Randall Jenson, executive director of SocialScope Productions and founder of 50 Faggots; Lara Brooks, director of the Broadway Youth Center; Inc.; John Garver, anti-violence therapist and training delivery manager at Center on Halsted; Jeff Levy, co-founder and CEO of Live Oak; and Sebastian Torres, coordinator of the office of LGBTQ student services at DePaul University. Photo by Terrence Chappell

Moderated by Randall Jenson, executive director of SocialScope Productions and founder of 50 Faggots, the panel included Lara Brooks, director of the Broadway Youth Center; Inc.; John Garver, anti-violence therapist and training delivery manager at Center on Halsted; Jeff Levy, co-founder and CEO of Live Oak; and Sebastian Torres, coordinator of the office of LGBTQ student services at DePaul University.

Jenson streamed clips from his 50 Faggots film, a documentary that follows and showcases effeminate gay men in their queer, professional and personal lives. The 50 Faggots clips provided a visual and tangible complement for the overall panel discussion for guest Zachary Stafford.

"I think having visual tools in discussions as hard and complicated as sexual assault is really important. It allows for assault to take a tangible form, and no longer be abstract," said Stafford.

In particular, other topics addressed and explored by the panel and audience were the stigma and shame sometimes associated with victims of sexual and domestic violence in gay male communities, and as those factors relate to sexual roles and attached gender norms. Jenson talked about how his preferred sexual role as a bottom is sometimes associated with femininity—making him a potential target for domestic and sexual abuse, he said.

"One of the things that I think that happens a lot in sexual violence movements is that men are directly related to their penises," Jenson said. "Therefore, we rape. We penetrate. One of the things that I've always struggled with on a personal level is that being someone who is a bottom; my relationship with my penis is secondary. But in many discussions about sexual violence, I 'should' be thinking with my penis. I 'should' be operating in terms of wanting to penetrate something. So, I feel like I'm always sort of at risk of being at violence."

Torres plugged into Jenson's correlation of sexual roles and violence in gay male communities. Torres reaffirmed that it could be argued that gay males who identify as a bottom and/or effeminate could be more susceptible to domestic and sexual violence.

One of the clips from the 50 Faggots documentary included an interview with a young man named Aaron. During the interview, Aaron shared with viewers his experiences of moving around a lot with his mother and how she would take in foster children. Aaron recounts witnessing (at the age of 3) his older brothers, teenagers at the time, engaging in a sexual "gang

act especially intriguing.

"I find it interesting of how he merits the story of what was going on—not just that what could be conceived of as a gang bang going on but that he was on his way up to his room to get his doll and then his brother came down and pulled off a condom off his erect penis," said Garver. "There are so many messages in that one clip: this whole idea of witness and then his experience of survivorship and then the levels of direct contact. There's no question in my mind that he is a survivor."

Brooks provided another perspective of the clip and revealed to guests her need and want for Aaron to express what he witnessed under what really happened.

with his ex. Conrad said that he actually used humor to deal with the situation afterwards, referring to himself as just another domestic violence statistic.

"In the end I think this kind of event is really important because it's about building larger networks of people who really engage in these kind of questions and topics that I didn't necessarily have when I experienced my moment of domestic violence when I was breaking up with my partner. I had to deal with a lot of it on my own," said Conrad.

Jenson urged guests to openly discuss the issues of consent, accountability and problematic social stigmas of violence in gay male communities with others.

GRAY from cover

Gray said she still sees that type of racism in the community.

"Racism is in our community [because] racism is in our country. There's no escaping it," she said. "Last year, one of the sadder events I went to was a community meeting about the kids and the [stabblings] here on Halsted Street." [Nearly 800 people attended a vitriolic CAPS meeting July 6, 2011, after several high-profile stabblings.]

"There were a good 400 men in that room that were so hostile about these young, African-American kids that it brought tears to my eyes," Gray said. "These are not serial killers. These are kids who want to hang out and came down here because they're afraid to be out in their community. So they come to what they see as a safe area, and then when they get to the safe area, people don't want them because of the color of their skin or because they don't have that kind of money—because they don't look Sidetrack enough."

"Here we are in the 21st century," Gray continued, "and we're still dealing with the issue of race. Whether you're a gay kid here on Halsted Street or you're Trayvon Martin, the race thing is intense."

Despite persistent race issues, Gray said she was proud of the work the LGBT community has done to date.

"Our revolution is rolling," Gray said, noting that she was particularly pleased with the 2011 Pride parade turnout. (An estimated 750,000 people attended.) "More and more gay people are going to be coming out, and our parade in Chicago will hit well over a mil-

lion. ... Our community is really going to grow in leaps and bounds, and 'closet' will be as antiquated as 'negro.'"

When asked about LGBT political progress, Gray voiced hope about Obama [whom she supported in Illinois years ago] but said the community still has a long way to go.

"I certainly feel Barack Obama is the best president we've had when it comes to LGBT issues," she said. "Bill Clinton ... gave us 'don't ask, don't tell'... . Once you're cleaning up someone else's [mess], you don't have time to create your own [policy]."

"And then there's this whole way, where as an African-American, [Obama] doesn't even get to be president," Gray said. "He is in a constant state of fighting racism. ... Barack could walk the water right now and pass out hundred-dollar bills, and people would still complain. Those complaints come from the color of his skin. ... To be the first Black [anything], that's a very hard role. My heart goes out to him."

Gray—whose longtime partner, Pat Ewert, was in the audience—pushed for marriage equality.

"If it's marriage, it's marriage. Why do I have to have a civil union?" Gray asked. "It's like: If it's a water fountain, it's a water fountain. Why do you have to have a white one and a Black one? Do you have to have a Chinese one and a Mexican one, too? If it's marriage, it's marriage for everyone. Why do I have to have less? Anybody in here want less? Who wants less? Anybody want less money? Less benefits? I want it all. ... I want everything my tax dollar is paying for."

Although Gray spent most of the evening



From the 2010 Chicago House Spring Brunch and Fashion Show. Photo by John Fenoglio

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.

talking about weighty topics, such as her "hard-as-hell" career in the Cook County court system or her current battle with breast cancer, the local legend kept things light, constantly cracking jokes.

When she referenced SAGE [Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders], Gray said, "I never remember what the letters stand for, so I just call it 'sexy and gay elders.'"

And when O'Keeffe asked Gray what she misses most about her activism days, the retiree quipped, "I miss being able to stay up past midnight. We used to close bars. Now if [somebody] called me to do that, we'd have to call the senior abuse hotline."

Gray said that despite the slow speed of progress, she'd been incredibly happy watching her community flourish over the past 40 years.

"Seeing my community come to fruition [has been my greatest achievement]," she said. "Seeing gay papers, seeing gay events, seeing Lambda [Legal], seeing HRC, seeing gay and lesbian people have children and having those children be a part of their family. ... That has been incredible. Seeing us go to the White House [has been incredible]. I remember [when I went there the first time] seeing everybody else go in, and there I was, the old colored lady, with my eyes filling up with tears."

Windy City Times publisher Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnen have co-authored a book titled Vernita Gray: From Woodstock to the White House. Gray is overseeing final edits on the book, which will be released by this summer.

Harold Washington hosts gay-rights activist/writer

BY JAMIE ANNE ROYCE

Harold Washington College (HWC) hosted writer/civil-rights activist Terry Angel Mason April 25.

HWC Pride and Inspired Creative Expression (ICE) performing arts club organized the author reading.

"The purpose of this event is to shine a spotlight on the horrific atrocities committed against LGBT people not only in America, but also in Africa," said Asim Allakim, master of ceremonies and president of ICE.

Allakim and Mason both spoke of anti-gay fervor in Africa, citing the Uganda "kill the gays" bill, a legislative proposal that would make same-sex relations punishable by death. There's also the Malawi gay couple sentenced to 14 years in prison for having homosexual sex.

"No matter [the] race, age, gender, sexual orientation or ethnic background, we are all connected," said Mason. "When Uganda proposes killing every same-gender-loving person, it will affect us here in ways we never imagined."

Mason spoke of intersecting oppressions and the similarities between anti-oppression movements, including those involving African-American, women's and LGBT rights, saying they cannot be separated.

"The only way injustice and discrimination and homophobia can play out here and in Africa is if we idly sit by and do nothing," said Mason. "We must boldly step up to the plate and take aggressive action."

He also touted equal protection and love for all people regardless of identity.

"The power of love will always prevail over injustice," said Mason.

Allakim recognized unsung LGBT heroes, including Bayard Rustin, Dr. Martin Luther King



Terry Angel Mason. Photo by Jamie Anne Royce

Jr.'s top advisor and organizer of the 1963 March on Washington. He cited homophobia with keeping important historical figures in the closet and in the shadows. He urged audience members to recognize and fight against injustice wherever they see it.

"If we do not select political leaders who will step in the gap, we will definitely fail. What happens an ocean away, can easily happen here," said Allakim. "Vote. Exercise the rights we fought so hard for."

Charles Washington read Mason's poem, "Uganda My Heart Weeps For You," chronicling the injustices perpetuated against Uganda by other nations as well as the injustices happening within the country.

The event also featured performances from the ICE choir, who sang gospel selections "All You Need Is Christ" and "Make a Wave."

Center hosts federal homelessness deputy director

BY KATE SOSIN

Jennifer Ho, deputy director of the U.S. Inter-agency Council on Homelessness, met with local homeless service providers and advocates April 26 at the Center on Halsted for a conversation on issues facing LGBTQ youth and adults.

The group discussed everything from funding needs to strategies for combating homelessness long-term.

Service providers spoke on the need to expand the definition of "youth" from 21 years of age to 24, an age used by many organizations in Chicago already. Many young people who cannot access mental health services by the time they reach 21 are at greater risk for homelessness, they said.

Ho said she is interested in focusing on a systemic fix rather than piecemeal revisions to the current system. Ho also wants to focus on adults in addition to youth, many of whom age out of youth programs before they are able to establish residence.

Advocates stressed the need for sustaining different kinds of housing models for homeless people, from transition homes to shelters.

"It's a cafeteria, and we need the tray," said Bonnie Wade, who runs the LGBTQ Host Home Program.

In addition, they asked Ho to think critically about how the federal government judges success of programs that serve homeless people, and they questioned Ho about the government's role in counting homeless people.

Ho said those issues are on her mind, but that she wants to focus on counting sub-groups of homeless people, "mindful that whoever we count there are groups that we don't."

Subgroups could provide a more accurate count, she said, in addition to providing a more specific picture of what services are needed. Counting homeless transgender people, however, will present a challenge, Ho said, because transgender identity can be so fluid.

CDPH launches new HIV council

BY KATE SOSIN

In a move that will sew together two historically disparate efforts, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has announced a new HIV planning council that combines HIV service and prevention.

The Chicago Area HIV Integrated Services Council (CAHISC) held its first meeting April 26, according to a CDPH statement.

The council combines the Chicago Area HIV Services Council, which focused on HIV care, and the HIV Prevention Planning Group, which worked on combatting the spread of HIV.

The two groups previously worked separately. According to CDPH Public Health Commission Bechara Choucair, the new council will help focus the city's approach to HIV.

"With an integrated planning body, the full spectrum of needs to somebody who has HIV will be addressed in one conversation," Choucair said in a statement.

According to CDPH, the volunteer council will be made up of a maximum 47 members, including representation from organizations that serve LGBT people. Members will serve staggered terms up to three years.

The group will consult on \$39 million for HIV prevention and services to be delivered to Chicago and its surrounding counties.

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Windy City LIVE producer talks about being bullied

BY JERRY NUNN

Windy City LIVE Senior Producer Hank Mendheim, who is openly gay, recently spoke about being bullied during a special episode of the show that focused on bullying.

Windy City Times was in attendance for the taping, where expert Karin Stortz spoke about ways to prevent and deal with the current issue. Hosts Val Warner and Ryan Chiaverini answered questions and witnessed testimonies from the audience.

Backstage, Mendheim talked some more with WCT about his story.

Windy City Times: Hello, Hank. What inspired you to approach this topic on Windy City LIVE?

Hank Mendheim: I saw Lady Gaga talking about it on OVN and literally came in the next day to put a date on the calendar. We had been talking about it, so I was ready to do it. We picked this date because we knew the movie *Bully* was opening. We knew people would get a chance to see it and there would be a lot of press around that.



Hank Mendheim. Photo by Jerry Nunn

WCT: What is your background?

HM: I was born and raised in New Orleans. I am a Southern boy. I have literally worked and lived all over the country. I went to school in Mobile, Ala. It was a very small school. My first job in television was in Alabama and then I went to New York doing a ton of things for NBC. This was all producing so I have never done on camera work so this is the first time. It is a transition.

WCT: Being from the South and now living more in certain regions?

HM: My only bullying experiences come from the South. We were talking about it today that the bullying experience in small-town America is probably much different than it is in big cities.

In the movie *Bully*, there are scenes with children on buses. In Chicago many kids are not on buses. They are taking the trains or walking to school so I think it is a different experience. Out in the suburbs it is a different story, though.

WCT: You mentioned you that you received a piece of hate mail where you were picked on for being gay on the show today. How does that affect you?

HM: I can look at it now and laugh about it because I know who I am and what I do. It is a form of bullying. I am not going to let it define me. I won't let it affect me but I put it on my bulletin board because I am not going to forget it. I am not going to let it bother me or dwell upon it though. Twenty years ago it would have really bothered me. Because I am comfortable

now being a gay man and being an on-air personality, I just roll with it.

WCT: Did you respond to it?

HM: There was no way to respond. They didn't sign it and there was no address. I didn't want to respond and give them too much credit.

WCT: Sometimes they are going for a reaction so you didn't give them one and they have no power of you.

HM: Definitely.

WCT: What was the biggest goal of the show today?

HM: To reach those kids and their parents who are in similar situations as our guests were today. *Bully* the movie really raised awareness into the forefront of the media. What it didn't do was to provide answers. It's not its job to do this so we tried to. Our goal was to provide some of those answers and guide people to find answers. I think we were pretty successful today.

WCT: What did you think of the movie *Bully* overall?

HM: You know, it was really hard for me to sit through that movie. The only reason I went was because we were doing the show today. I understand those kids. I know what they are going through. One of the girls in it is bullied so much that she steals her mother's handgun and brandishes the gun on the school bus. She wanted to scare everyone, not realizing that she is committing 20 felonies in the process. I don't condone what she did but I completely understand where she was when she got to that point. When you are bullied you all get to that point. I can see where these young kids are pushed to the edge.

I would be lying to say that suicide never crossed my mind when I was kid. It absolutely did. For me, I knew that wasn't the way out. I knew I would get over this. As cliché as it is, I knew it would get better.

WCT: Has it gotten better?

HM: Absolutely. For me it was all about being gay. When you are in the closet you are scared how the world will react to you. I think for the majority of people when you come out then you realize that no one cares. "We love you for you and we don't care that you are gay." I have had that experience from friends and families.

I went to my 20-year high school reunion. I saw the people I wanted to see and the people I didn't care about I ignored because I am an adult and can do that now.

WCT: I think we were raised to not tell our parents something was wrong. We wanted to be the perfect popular kid in school.

HM: I think it is so much worse today because we didn't have Twitter and Facebook. We didn't even have e-mail. I have to monitor our Facebook page everyday now with the show. Sometimes I am absolutely appalled about what people will write on our Facebook pages. I have told people that I don't mind being criticized but there is a constructive way to do it and there's a mean way to do it. It amazes me what people will think out there because they can.

WCT: When we were kids we would get home and the bullying would stop now it's a different story.

HM: It is around the clock now. Cyberbullying is worse than what happens at school these days. They can't escape it. Even if it is deleted then it stays forever.

WCT: There is a lot of adult bullying going on also, whether someone is overweight or too skinny or whatever.

HM: That is one thing our executive producer ingrained in us. There are people being bullied whether they are anorexic or their hair was different. We really tried to keep that in mind that this was a variety of issues. Hopefully we conveyed that today.

For sources on where to go if you are bullied or if you missed this episode, visit www.windycitylive.com.

PFLAG seeks to create bigger impact

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

After attending a play at Redtwist Theater in Edgewater recently, Toni Weaver was surprised to find that her openly gay server at a nearby restaurant had never heard of PFLAG, otherwise known as Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

PFLAG might be best known in Chicago as an annual staple of the Pride parade for the 30 years and counting. However, in that time, the organization's presence in the greater Chicago area has grown, as have the ways it supports the relationships between openly LGBT individuals and their families and friends.

PFLAG now boasts 13 chapters in northern Illinois. (Only four existed in the area as of 2000.) These branches include Metro Chicago, Chicago South Side, Aurora/Fox Valley, Deerfield, DeKalb County, Hinsdale, Joliet, Kankakee, Oak Park, Palatine and Woodstock/McHenry County, as well as Chicago programs Parents of Transgender and Entre Familia.

To coordinate these chapters and provide more unified resources, the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois was formed. Weaver—who has been involved since 2002, when her son came out—leads the Woodstock/McHenry County chapter and is the council's president.

The progress made with regards to LGBT acceptance in recent years might be considered a triumph for PFLAG, but as acceptance grows, so do two contradictory notions: there's a greater need for funds and resources to reach those people and a perception that PFLAG is less vital than it once was.

"The fact that people are much more accepting is a negative as far as maintaining our organization is concerned," said John Larson, PFLAG's Illinois state coordinator. "A lot of people feel like they come once and they don't need PFLAG anymore. We give them all they need in one meeting."

As such, the people PFLAG needs to reach are not currently the people it depends on to sustain it. The organization would like to be able to focus on extending that reach as it creates the biggest impact.

"Our more important work comes when we march in community parades," Weaver said. "That's where PFLAG is really powerful, when it's out in the community, not preaching to the choir."

Weaver said PFLAG's vocalinity and visibility throughout Illinois has improved the most over the years. The organization has been involved in all the major equality in the state and reacting to events impacting the LGBT community. Members wrote letters to Cardinal George, for example, after inflammatory comments back in December.

At the same time, Weaver recognized continuing to be seen and heard is one of the organization's biggest challenges.

"We have a need for greater publicity," she said. "We need to get the word out to parents that they have a place to go. Visibility is a huge issue and we don't have a big operating budget or the fundraising capability of Equality Illinois or LAMBDA."

Part of that comes with changing current misconceptions about PFLAG and the people who comprise it.

"I think people picture a bunch of parents gathered together crying in some church basement," Weaver said. "That's not who we are."

Also, depending on the chapter, a number of the people who attending PFLAG meetings are in fact openly LGBT—it's not strictly for straight friends and relatives.



Toni Weaver. Photo courtesy of Weaver

At the same time, the reason PFLAG endures has to do with the resources it offers and the support it provides. The council runs a helpline as well as a website with direct email contact and links to helpful materials. Then there's the key: personal sharing, stories and advice at monthly chapter meetings.

Larson told Windy City Times that what he gets most from being involved with PFLAG is being able to impart the wisdom of his experience unto others. He found out his son was gay back in the late '80s, when the son was arrested for soliciting sex from an undercover police officer.

"I get most satisfaction out of being able to help people understand what homosexuality is and accepting it," Larson said.

Weaver says PFLAG will remain necessary so long as parents of LGBT individuals need that support.

"As long as there are mothers and fathers who struggle with their children's sexual orientation or gender identity there will be a need for PFLAG," she said. "As long as there are laws on the books discriminating against LGBT people, churches placing burdens of guilt on LGBT people, there will be a need for PFLAG. Who better than parents to fight for their children? Parents' voices are louder and clearer."

PFLAG has a couple major events in the coming months. In May, the council will host its annual Mother's Day fundraiser at Sidetrack. Then, on Wed., June 6, PFLAG National is hosting its second annual "PFLAG National Celebrates the Heartland" cocktail reception at the Center on Halsted.

For details on "PFLAG National Celebrates the Heartland," visit <http://community.pflag.org/chicago>.

For more information on the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois, including resources and a list of chapters and meeting times, visit www.pflagillinois.org.

GAY in the **LIFE**
Cara Thaxton
 TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROSS FORMAN



Age
34

Neighborhood
Andersonville

Job title
Development associate at the Shiver Center

Hobbies
Reading, woodworking, whittling and softball

Relationship status
Partners with Jen Valles

Favorite TV show
Roseanne

Favorite restaurant
Francesca's on Bryn Mawr

Family tree
Is the youngest of five; brother Jim, 37, is gay

Little-known fact
Sleeps with a blanket that was given to her mom as a baby shower present.



Cara Thaxton was about 5, living on Chicago's Northwest Side, when she first learned of her parents' giving ways.

She was with her mom, Linda, and they came across a homeless woman and her two children. Linda invited the three into her home since they had no where else to go. And during Christmas time, Linda often took Cara to area food pantries, so her daughter would appreciate what she had, understand that others are less fortunate.

"That [memory] stayed with me; it definitely impacted me," Thaxton said.

Linda died in 2009, but helping others was "her nature," Cara said.

The same was true of Cara's dad, James, who died in 2008. He regularly brought dinner to their elderly neighbors.

"Both of my parents were always about making sure others were taken care of; they always went that extra step; they always gave back," Cara said.

Now it's Cara who's always helping others.

"Cara is, without question, the nicest person I've ever met. Ask anyone who knows her, and they will say the same thing. She is the most generous person I've ever met," said Jen Valles, Thaxton's partner for the past seven years.

Thaxton, in January 2011, joined the nonprofit Shriver Center, which aims to improve the lives of people living in poverty.

"I work with the data base, the mailing list and just a lot of computer stuff," Thaxton said. "It's a fun job, especially since I get to see the most generous side of folks."

The 2012 Shriver Center Benefit Performance, featuring Sarah Jones, is Friday, May 4, at the Thorne Auditorium and Atrium of Northwestern's School of Law, 375 E. Chicago Ave., 5-8 p.m. Jones is a Tony- and Obie Award-winning playwright and performer.

"The Shriver Center is not [primarily] an LGBT center, but we know that poverty definitely affects the queer community; we know that there are a lot of LGBT people living in poverty, especially [from the] trans [community]," Thaxton said. "Everyone is impacted by poverty, and I'm just trying to help others"—just as her parents did.



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T in the **LIFE**
 COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN



Jesse Nelson

Pronouns
Miss

Identifies as
"Two-spirit, which is a Native American term equivalent to transgender."

Neighborhood
Albany Park

Life's work:
"Art and music and health and fitness. Also, more importantly, to try to educate everyone, even Native Americans ... of the two-spirit person. I'm trying to step back in and say that we're still here. Some Native American circles have totally forgotten that due to assimilation."

Do you consider yourself an activist?
"It's kind of a double responsibility, just in being Native American and also in the two-spirit Native American. So that's where my main activities of being an activist come in, on those grounds."

When did you start questioning gender?
"Around age five. I got very angry with the so-called Christian God, and I was a believer. I was always told that God makes everything perfect, and he makes no mistakes. And when he makes people, he makes them perfect just the way they are. And I was like 'wait a minute, if that's what

he is supposed to do, then why didn't he do that too when I was supposed to be a girl?' And I was ridiculed at that age for doing very girl things."

Do you have a coming out story?
I came out in 1995. In 1995, I told my family. I told my wife. I told my family, and my family rejected me. I was disowned, and I was torn apart by it. But one aunt took pity on me, and she gave me place to reside in where I am residing right now. Otherwise, I'd be on the street. So, I'm very grateful for her."

What is the best thing about being trans/gender-variant?
"It's so wonderful because it's a sense of freedom of not lying to yourself, being true to yourself."

How do you explain the way you feel about gender to others?
"I tell them that sex is between the legs, gender is between the ears and sexual orientation is between the sheets."

What do you think are the most important issues facing the trans/ gender-variant community?
"I think the education is there and the acceptance is somewhat there, but we need it to be more so."

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

Wed., May 9
7:30 p.m.
Jac Jemc
My Only Wife

Thursday, May 10
7:30 p.m.
Alice Kessler-Harris
A Difficult Woman: The Challenging Life and Times of Lillian Hellman

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AIDS @ 30: The final installment

This week marks the end of our special 13-month Windy City Times AIDS @ 30 series. It started the first week of April 2011. Initially it was expected to be nine months, then we kept expanding it with articles submitted by a range of Windy City Times reporters. While we will of course continue to cover AIDS issues in Windy City Times, as we have since our founding in 1985, this special section will come to an end this week.

The series has been nominated for a national Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation Award, alongside The New York Times and the Boston Globe, which eventually received the award. It is also nominated for a Peter Lisagor Award, which will be awarded this week by the Chicago Headline Club.

We will be collecting the best of the more timeless pieces

for a book out later this year. The past articles are also online at www.windycitymediagroup.com, under the archives or AIDS sections.

The purpose of this series was to look back at three decades of the impact of HIV and AIDS in Chicago and worldwide. Another purpose was to look at the more personal devastation of this disease, as well as the hope and support that thousands of people have felt in the city. The real heroes of the AIDS movement are the volunteers, healthcare providers, friends and family who stand by people living with HIV/AIDS, who protest for funding and medical treatments, and who continue to march and run and fight for a cure.

AIDS is not over, but the goal of an "AIDS-Free Generation"

is admirable and attainable. It will take both personal and community responsibility to get there. That means a personal choice to be safe when having sex or sharing needles, and a community responsibility to fight for a cure and to stand by those who have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.

We at Windy City Times have been honored to share the stories of so many people part of the AIDS movement locally and nationally. We are thankful to those who allowed us to share their stories—and to those who are no longer with us—for their fight for justice and equal treatment.

— Tracy Baim, Publisher

CORE Center working on HIV/AIDS healthcare

BY ERICA DEMAREST

In the mid-1990s, HIV/AIDS treatment in Cook County could best be described as disjointed. Medical, mental health, pharmaceutical and case management services were housed in different locations; and Chicago's thousands of HIV-positive residents were bounced among city hospitals with limited to no HIV-dedicated space. Privacy concerns were common in cramped corridors, and long walks between services left patients exhausted.

Doctors, city officials and patients began kicking around ideas for an AIDS-specific facility, and concept for the CORE Center was born.

"The goal was to provide comprehensive medical and support services in a single location," said Associate Director Chet Kelly, who joined CORE in 2000 after a long stint with the Illinois Dept. of Public Health (and prior to that with the Chicago Dept. of Public Health).

Operated by the Cook County Health and Hospitals System (HHS) and founded by the Cook County Bureau of Health Services and Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, the CORE Center was the first comprehensive outpatient facility in the Midwest for people living with AIDS.

It provides a one-stop shop, where clients have

access to dental care, medical care, a pharmacy, research trials and case managers. All payments are made on a sliding-scale basis.

In 1994, the fledgling health center set a \$25 million fundraising goal and enlisted former Playboy Enterprises CEO Christie Hefner as a project director.

"In the early '80s, [Playboy] started to write about AIDS with the goal of countering the scare tactics that were out there about transmission," Hefner told TimeOut Chicago in 2005. "[Playboy] historically has been an important force as far as issues related to health and particularly issues that also touch on human sexuality."

Under Hefner's guidance, the CORE Center far surpassed its goal, raising more than \$30 million by 1998.

"I'd never really been that involved in a capital campaign, and I think I said yes because I didn't really know how hard it was going to be," Hefner told TimeOut.

"But I did say yes," she continued, "and I was able to put together a board representing people in the business community, the arts community, the public sector and the medical sector. Also, we did something quite innovative, which is put together a community action council ... the idea was that the people who were actually going to be the patients ought to have input into how



Kathi Braswell, executive director of CORE since 1998 (when CORE opened its doors).

the facility was designed and the kind of programs it would run."

The CORE Center, later renamed the Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center, opened its doors to the public in October 1998. The four-story, 60,000-square-foot building proved to be as innovative as the facility's programming.

Designed by Ralph Johnson and health architect Jocelyn Lum Frederick, the building was largely a collaborative effort. Members of the community, including doctors and HIV-positive patients, contributed complaints and suggestions.

The result was a sunny, welcoming facility devoid of the meandering hallways and dreary colors often associated with medical centers. Clients had complained about navigation difficulties and privacy concerns; color-coded departments and private enclaves were worked into the design.

"The concept was to provide a light, airy and positive environment," Kelly said.

That environment has changed over the years, constantly adapting to meet the needs of an evolving virus.

When construction on the CORE Center began, Executive Director Kathi Braswell said, bronchoscopies were such a common treatment that an entire room was devoted to the procedure. But by the time CORE opened its doors in 1998, highly active antiretroviral therapies had all but eliminated the need for bronchoscopies. The space was repurposed.

"Over the years, we've done extensive renovations to the building," Kelly said.

These renovations have offered new facilities, greater privacy and additional programming. Recent structural and organizational additions have included a Hepatitis clinic, bilingual clinic and dental center.

One of the most innovative programs the CORE Center has developed is the Continuity Clinic, which targets recently released detainees and

prisoners. Clinic physicians work at both the CORE Center and in facilities operated by the Cook County Dept. of Corrections, so that people who are incarcerated can see the same doctors once they've been released from jail.

The transitional assistance makes it easier for patients to adhere to medications and remain in treatment, which could reduce the community viral load.

Today, the CORE Center provides counseling and support services to more than 15,000 people annually. Clients are charged on a sliding-scale basis, and the majority of patients are un- or underinsured.

"We're a safety net facility," Kelly explained.

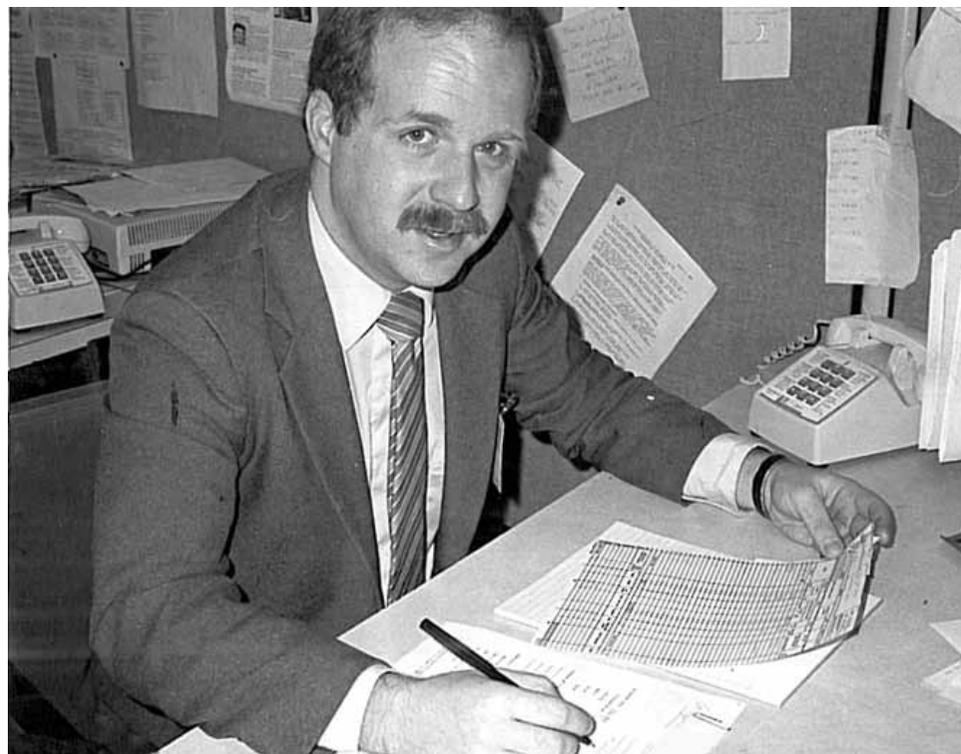
In 2010, according to HHS data, about 60 percent of patients had no insurance and 37 percent were covered by Medicaid or Medicare.

That same year, 62 percent of clients were Black, 17 percent were Latino and 15 percent were white. The overwhelming majority (more than 70 percent) was male. All clients have access to medical care, a pharmacy, peer support, research trials and case managers.

Aurora Pineda, a longtime LGBT activist and CORE Center employee, said case managers provide a necessary link for an often complex web of services.

"We're somewhere in between a mental health provider and an advocate for the client," Pineda said. "The client tells you the truth. He tells you [in regard to medication], 'I'm not taking that crap.' Or, 'Oh I forgot to take this pill.' Or, 'I don't get sick with this pill, so I'll only take this one.' We're like: No, you can't be doing that. Talk to the pharmacist. We tell them where to go ... [Do you need] food stamps? Then go talk to this caseworker. We point them to the right direction."

For clients who face homelessness, poverty,



Chet Kelly, working on AIDS issues in the late 1980s. From the Outlines/WCT archives

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transportation issues and language barriers, staying on top of healthcare can be especially challenging.

"I have a lot of clients who can't read well," said the bilingual Pineda, who regularly works with native Spanish speakers. "They'll maybe have a third- or fourth-grade reading level, and then they get those papers from SSI [Supplemental Security Income] that are very intimidating."

Helping clients stay connected to care is a chief priority for the CORE Center. It participates in Project IN-CARE, which links men of color to care, and is one of 12 sites across the country to participate in a federally funded project that links, engages and retains HIV-positive women of color to care.

In addition to regular programming for those who are already HIV-positive, the CORE Center offers a weekday walk-in clinic for free HIV testing. Roughly 7,000 to 8,000 people are tested on-site annually.

"Because we do rapid tests," Kelly said, "we're able to directly link people who test positive into follow-up care at the time they get their results."

Clients are able to set up appointments with case managers and doctors.

"We also have peers and mental health professionals available to provide psychological and emotional support," Kelly said, noting that few



Aurora Pineda. Photos by Erica Demarest

people request such services. "It doesn't come up a lot, actually. People take bad news quite well, usually."

Moving forward, the CORE Center will continue to focus on meeting clients' needs and participating in research trials.

The medical center participates in the Chicago D-CFAR, a collaboration between Rush University Medical Center, the University of Illinois at Chicago and Cook County Health & Hospitals System.

"It's designed to support early research and various research projects that can then be expanded," Kelly explained. "We support researchers with small grants, so they can start research that they can then use to apply for larger and broader grants [including those from the National Institutes of Health]."

An important push for 2012 will be to further develop the center's state-of-the-art dental facility, which was renovated in mid-2011.

"Access to dental care is very important for persons with HIV," Kelly said. "We recently renovated our dental facility to have the physical space to be able to provide those health services on-site ... Now, we're in the process of securing resources to adequately staff the facility."

To learn more about the CORE Center, visit www.cookcountyhhs.org or www.corecenter.org.

Dr. Garner helps people with AIDS at CORE Center

BY ROSS FORMAN

Though he has not been personally impacted by HIV/AIDS in terms of close friends or family, Dr. Grady L. Garner, Jr., has certainly been impacted directly—through the lives of those who he has treated as their psychotherapist during his post-doctoral clinic year at the Ruth M. Rothstein Core Center.

"I could see firsthand how devastating managing HIV/AIDS can be, in that it can take quite a toll on the body but also the spirit and soul," Garner said. "In ancient Africa, psychology was defined as the study of the soul and spirit. The souls and spirits of those affected by HIV/AIDS are precious indeed. Their bodies and spirits are under attack by a rather aggressive virus. I learned so much from my clients. I learned about their strength, their resilience, about their sweet, sweet souls."

Garner, 47, who lives in Chicago's Jefferson Park neighborhood, is an assistant professor, Clinical Psy.D. Program at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. His husband of three years is Dr. Kevin A. Osten, director, The Adler School's LGBT Mental Health and Inclusion Center and a licensed clinical psychologist. "Kevin's role is to illuminate LGBTQ issues of the most underserved and underrepresented in our community through education, research, community engagement and training," Garner said.

The two were married on a sunny day in May three years ago. "He is indeed the love of my life. We had a holy wedding with close friends and family here in Chicago, then, about [two] months later, we secured a civil union."

They have been together for 10 years—after meeting at a coffee shop.

"It was quite serendipitous really," how we met, Garner said. "I had expected to take a long break from dating, as I enjoyed my tea while grading papers from courses I was teaching at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). I've told this story many times, so I apologize in advance if sounds rehearsed. [Still,] it was one of the most important events in my life; and I'm happy to tell it again. The bell to the front door of Café Boost, currently the location of Hamburger Mary's in Andersonville rang, calling for attention. I looked up and laid eyes on the most beautiful soul of a man, with the most beautiful eyes and smile. The rest is history, as they say."

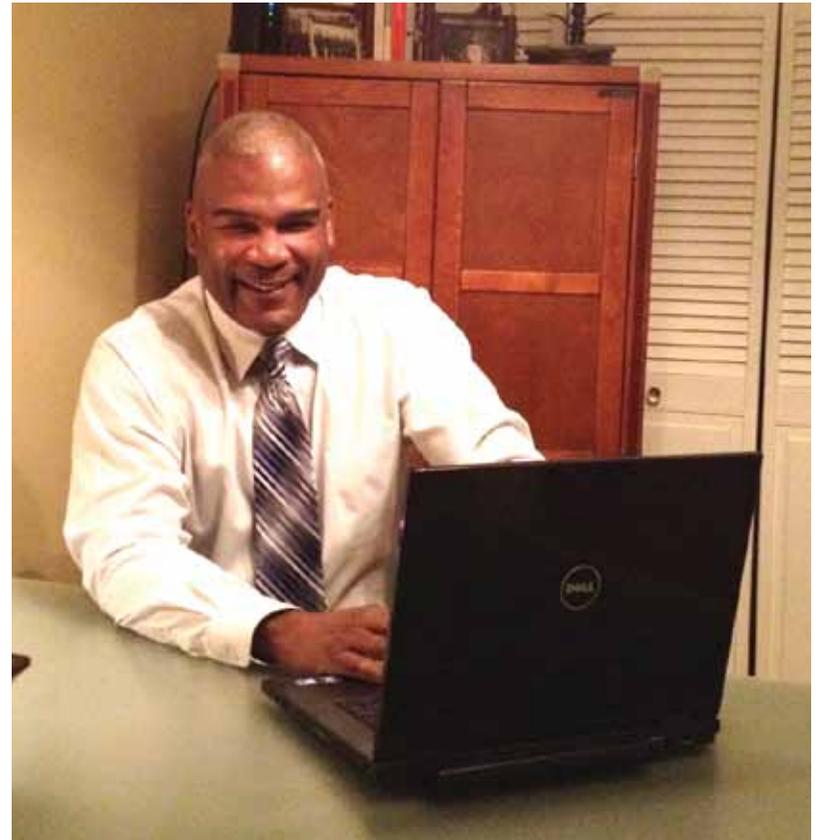
Both work in the field of psychology.

"We deeply respect and love each other," Garner said. "We also truly value communication, giving each other space to feel what we feel, when we feel it; then coming back together to talk about it. We take ownership for our shortcomings. The most important thing is that we have a lot of fun and laugh together. We also enjoy reading the Sunday morning newspaper together. We enjoy doing little projects around the house together, including caring for our gardens and lawn."

Professionally, though, Garner has seen plenty over the past 30 years in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"I have truly been blessed to do what little I have done, relative to the many [who] have and continue to soldier on in this fight for equitable services, treatment, and care," Garner said. "I am quite saddened by the fact that some 30 years later, we have yet to come up with a cure. It is so troubling to see so many suffer. Most should know that African-Americans and, more specifically, African American women and men who have sex with men are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS. This is truly disheartening."

Dr. Garner helps people with AIDS at CORE Center. Photo courtesy of Garner



"Although we have a long way to go, the HIV/AIDS world has come a long way since the early-1980s. The reality, however, is that the disease has been around since [at least] the late 1950s. ... [We] have made many strides since 1981, including life-sustaining treatment, medication, and care. Locally, so many amazing people and institutions have engaged in the fight for HIV prevention and helping those with HIV/AIDS



Dr. Grady L. Garner, Jr., (left) at a February 2009 Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus event. Next to him is Boris Thomas; Jensen Atwood, actor from TV's Noah's Arc; and Keith Green. Photo by Andrew Davis

live longer, more vibrant lives. Among those institutions and the amazing people who staff them are the Illinois and Chicago Departments of Public Health, the AIDS Foundation Chicago, the Ruth M. Rothstein Core Center, Rush University Medical Center, the Howard Brown Health Center, the Center on Halsted, TPAN, the South Side Help Center and The South Suburban HIV/AIDS Regional Clinics to name a few.

"I see their efforts yielding promising outcomes, including increased testing and linkages to treatment and care, the development of new medications like Atripla, clinical vaccination and treatment trials including PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and microbicide interventions, and increasingly placing emphasis on mental health interventions (before, during, and after transmission); as well as innovative community-level interventions among the incarcerated, and other populations hardest hit by HIV/AIDS, especially among African Americans."

So, where will HIV/AIDS be in 10 years?

"I'd like to say that I will see the threat and deleterious effect of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as

a barely visible image in my rearview mirror," Garner said. "Sadly, though, I'm not sure that I can say that with great confidence. I can say that I see all boats lifted by the rising tide of continued domestic and international collaborations to develop a vaccine, even better pharmacological and medical treatment, more targeted education, innovative behavior modifications, and changes in attitude and policy and the increased funding to support them. With these unified efforts, solutions are inevitable."

Garner is a member of AFC's Board of Directors.

"As a psychotherapist, my work centers on appreciating the whole person uniquely in the context of their biological, cultural, spiritual, and personal history," Garner said. "I am a firm believer that we are equipped with and develop strengths that help us effectively take on the challenges before us. In fact, I believe that many of our psychological reactions to life stressors are opportunities to learn more about and highlight those strengths that better prepare us for the next challenge. In addition, there are some of us with brain chemical configurations that may benefit from a combination of medication and psychotherapy. In cases like these, the goal is to reduce dependence on medication by adopting more effective management strategies."

Garner added: "I've dedicated a number of professional activities to understanding and treating LGBT mental health and well being through research, teaching, and psychotherapy. I've found that dealing with what social scientists refer to as micro-aggressions of power and privilege, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and especially transgender people are disproportionately burdened with psychological distress compared to our heterosexual contemporaries. Similarly, African-Americans, and particularly African-American LGBT people, have the additional burden of grappling with racism. Internal or intra-psychic development is a crucial element in forming a positive, healthy sense of self. Negative external messages that are, at times internalized, can horribly disrupt what would be an otherwise normative developmental process."

"The good news is that many, through personal strengths and support from loved ones, more effectively manage racism and heterosexism. We just need to be in a place where we are all less and less burdened by all forms of oppression."

VIEWPOINTS

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 Community Marketing, Inc.

BLAIR
MISHLEAU

The ex-gay community: Why it's still relevant

The term "ex-gay" causes many gay folks bodies to tense and their ready hearing to narrow—ready to duke it out in an all-out culture war.

It's understandable: The at-large ex-gay community implies that being a self-affirming gay person is undesirable, unnatural and unhealthy. Why would you want to talk about—let alone interact—with a population with such beliefs?

This was the question I ran into again and again as I started a series on ex-gays, ex-ex-gays and those who defy categorization but have struggled with reconciling same-sex attractions with their faith.

"Examining the Ex-Gay Community," the series I'm working on, is intended to document, from an objective standpoint, the lives of ex-gays and others touched by the ex-gay community through video interviews, photographs and a written piece.

Such a concept came while at a workshop led

by PFLAG staffers at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's equality conference, Creating Change. The two PFLAG employees had gone undercover to a day-long ex-gay program, and their story made me cry. There seemed to be such a strong wall between ex-gays and gays, and I knew that the only way to break down this wall was by starting conversations.

Through the project, I've broken many assumptions—mostly my own. The main one is that this ex-gay therapy is something that only middle-age single adults with internalized homophobia deal with.

After a series of interviews with folks both young and old who are currently in or have been involved with ex-gay programs, I can disprove this assumption. Ex-gays and ex-ex-gays are young and old, venomously religious and agnostic, college educated and street smart. They live on the East and West coasts, and in Chicago.

The end goal is to look beyond the political issue and see real people: gay, straight, ex-gay, ex-ex-gay, etc., as they form a concrete identity on an atypical path. Before any healing between communities can take place, a dialog must be started. Such a transformative dialogue rarely occurs.

Such a topic is potentially dangerous territory for an out gay man; I've had a few less-than-positive responses, but I find it to be a vital endeavour. I've also sought to befriend and, as a journalist, report upon, communities that make me uncomfortable or angry.

Without stepping into uncomfortable territory—stepping out of my bubble—I don't feel that I'm making progress to better understand my world and those who inhabit it. In my opinion, projects like this are vital to allow the LGBT

community to do what it so often asks for from others: show compassion, humility and maturity in the face of varying opinions, perspectives and places in their journey of life.

Shedding a gay light on this project, and the likewise conversations it will spark (both positive and negative), are the only way great understanding can happen between LGBT folks and the ex-gay community.

I decided that the best avenue to start such exchanges is straight from the mouth of those directly tied to the community: in the form of video interviews with ex-gays and ex-ex-gays. The final product will manifest itself as an art installation shown at my college, an academic presentation and, ultimately, a website devoted to the project.

With all judgements aside (on both sides), I encourage folks to look at this project, the stories it tells, and start a loving and significant channel that doesn't pick sides (we already know that the gay community is against ex-gay therapy, anyway), but, rather, pushes for what everyone wants, no matter who you are or what your beliefs are: unconditional love. Through it all, no matter how different we think our beliefs are or how angry something makes us, this is truly what everyone is searching for.

"Examining the Ex-Gay Community" officially launches Friday, May 4, with an art installation and a presentation at Columbia College Chicago, and will be ongoing from there.

If you'd like to learn more about the project, or donate to it, visit www.exgay.blair-blur.com. You can also contact Blair at blair@blairblur.com.

REV. IRENE
MONROE

Obama and Romney can't fence-sit on marriage equality

While President Obama's attitude concerning same-sex marriage is evolving, and presidential hopeful Mitt Romney's attitude is an unequivocal denouncement, the American people seem to be moving solidly toward an acceptance of marriage equality. Both Obama and Romney need to get with the program.

Simply put: In the last presidential election, it would have been political suicide to support marriage equality. This November, it may be a risk not to.

If Romney too vociferously denounces same-sex marriage, or attempts to employ it as a wedge issue (as candidate George W. Bush successfully did in 2004), he'll risk not only Republican donations, but also Republican voters—and not just moderate ones.

"As they look past a dwindling anti-gay slice of their base, smart Republicans know they need to get in step with their own professed values—freedom, responsibility, small government—not to mention America's majority for marriage," Evan Wolfson wrote in a recent New York Times op-ed *The Anti-Gay Base Is Shrinking*. Wolfson is the founder and president of *Marry*, and is the author of *Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality, and Gay People's Right to Marry*.

Obama may attempt to shrewdly fence sit on the issue while winking a stealth nod our way. Or he may play a game of "go away closer" and

hold support until after his re-election. Either option is a game of Russian roulette and some LGBTQ Americans may hold onto their pink dollars this time around.

"Meanwhile, Freedom to Marry's call on the president and the Democratic Party to embrace a 'freedom to marry' platform plank has won support from numerous party leaders, elected officials and tens of thousands of Democrats online," Wolfson writes.

For both of these politicians—Obama and Romney, whose words are always measured and whose political game strategy is always cautiously safe—a full support of same-sex marriage would help not only their political aspirations to the 2012 White House, but it would help in positively supporting the millions of children in same-sex families to know that they, too, are part of the American dream.

With exposure to LGBTQ people, and with more Americans wanting LGBTQ members in their families to receive the same state and federal protections as every heterosexual American, a seismic shift has occurred. The increase acceptance of same-sex marriage has a lot to do with public acceptance of LGBTQ people. A 2011 survey by the Pew Research Center disclosed that 58 percent of the American populace accepts LGBTQ people. The latest Pew survey revealed a "47-to-43-percent plurality favoring gay marriage, with as many Americans saying they strongly favor (22 percent) as saying they strongly oppose (22 percent)." Much of this change in attitude toward LGBTQ Americans is both generational as well as cultural.

The culture of many faith communities and denominations (that were once upon a time helplessly homophobic) has also changed. While many have changed their views of LGBTQ people based on both spiritual repentance and theological awakening, those who haven't are at least not spewing religious vitriol from the pulpit.

But then, of course, there's my faith tradition—the Black church.

A homophobic faith tradition that Obama—in his first presidential run to the White House—

unabashedly wooed and won votes from. With right wing organizations like National Organization for Marriage (NOM) courting Black churches for their strategic 2012 election game plan to drive a wedge between LGBTQ voters and African-American voters Obama will need to stay clear of these churches and clerics.

And while a preponderance of these Black churches have not changed (and sadly to say they won't in my lifetime), there is a growing number in this faith tradition who don't want a constitutional amendment on gay marriage and want LGBTQ civil rights to be addressed as a theological issue.

Josef Sorett, an assistant professor of religion and African-American studies at Columbia University, wrote in his response to the recent New York Times question "Is Support for Gay Rights Still Controversial?" that "...many Black Christians are now having more nuanced conversations about the significance of sexual identity and expression in determining the measure of full citizenship. Some Black churches are seeing shared commitments with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists, even as these churches affirm that the African-American struggles of the 1960s were unique."

While the own-ness of homophobic cleric is skewed toward African-American ministers, let's not forget the white homophobic evangelical clerics Obama also wooed and won over. On the day Obama was sworn in, Pastor Rich Warren—founder of the evangelical megachurch, Saddleback Church, in Lake Forest, Calif., and supporter of California Proposition 8, which amended the California Supreme Court's ruling that marriage equality is constitutionally permissible—gave the invocation at his inauguration, with many LGBTQ Americans who voted for Obama feeling like they were thrown under the bus.

But this election year, the tables are turned. Both Obama and Romney have much to lose should they ignore the important civil-rights topic of marriage equality on their runs to the White House.

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



THOR PRIZE

Chris Hemsworth (right, with Clark Gregg) stars as Thor in the blockbuster film *The Avengers*. See page 22.

DISH

Holy crepe.
Page 24.

Photo of Frog n Snail's mushroom crepe
by Meghan Streit



MUSIC

Along came Spider.
Page 21.

PR photo of Spider Saloff



THEATER

Royal brew.
Page 18.

Photo from *The Duchess of Malfi* by Chris Ocken



SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Two to tango: Gay couple's works showing in Chicagoland

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

When partners of a longtime gay couple both have similar careers in the arts, their relationship can benefit since they both can understand the distinct stresses and demands of each other's work. Yet both have to be careful that they don't step on each others' toes.

Take, for instance, Frank Galati and Peter Amster, two longtime Chicago-area theater artists now based in Sarasota, Fla. One of the two could conceivably risk being hired for a job that the other covets.

"As professional theater directors," Galati said during a joint telephone interview with Amster, "One would imagine a very competitive kind of relationship."

"But it's very fortunate that we not only love each other, we admire each other as artists and cheer each other on," Amster said.

Currently Chicago-area audiences have a chance to compare and contrast both Galati and Amster's directing work this month since both are represented in high profile premiere productions.

Galati, a member of the Steppenwolf Ensemble since 1986, is the major creative force behind the epic world premiere of *The March* at Steppenwolf Theatre. He not only directs, but Galati also adapted E.L. Doctorow's historical fiction novel of the same name about Union Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's destructive drive through the South during the Civil War. (Galati previously collaborated with Doctorow from 1996-98 as the director to the critically acclaimed musical ad-

aptation of his novel *Ragtime*.)

As for Amster, he's directing the Chicago-area premiere of the 2008 Broadway musical [title of show] at Northlight Theatre in Skokie. [title of show] (Note: This is its actual title) is about two gay friends who rush to write a musical about the process of writing a musical for a competition in three weeks time.

Often Galati and Amster are separated due to work, but they're happy that their respective schedules allowed each other to be back in the Windy City at about the same time. And though arts-rich Sarasota is now their main address, don't assume that their loyalties have fully transferred to the Sunshine State.

"I love Chicago with all my heart and I think of myself as a Chicagoan," Galati said. "Just because I don't have an address here, it doesn't mean I'm not a son of the Windy City."

Indeed, the majority of Galati and Amster's decades-long theater careers have been based around Chicago. The two first met in 1970 while they were at Northwestern University in Evanston.

"We've pretty much been together since the birth of both of our careers," Amster said.

Although both have become best known as theater directors and educators, Galati is also respected for his stage adaptations of novels and acting prowess, while Amster also worked as a choreographer earlier in his career. That's when the two had more chances to work together, notably on 1970s productions of the Gertrude Stein/Virgil Thompson operas *The Mother of Us All* and *Four Saints in Three Acts* for Chicago



Frank Galati.
Photo by
Joel Moorman

Opera Theater when Galati directed and Amster choreographed.

But nowadays, the two directors bounce around to major regional theaters across North America. Galati's next major directing gig is a revival of the musical *1776* at the Sarasota-based Asolo Repertory Theatre in the fall, while Amster next heads to the Utah Shakespearean Festival in Cedar City to direct *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (which Galati also directed last season at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada).

Amster admitted that he hasn't been as celebrated or acclaimed in his theater career as Galati, who has been Tony-nominated for directing *Ragtime* on Broadway in 1998 and winning for adapting and directing *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1990. Yet Amster has also seen first hand how disappointing things can be when major Broadway productions don't work out, notably Galati's involvement in troubled shows like *Seussical: The Musical* and *The Pirate Queen*.

"His career has a much higher profile and a higher range than mine and I'm perfectly happy with that," Amster said, noting that he largely focuses on mid-weight American and British comedies he personally labels as "the sorbet course." "What I saw what Frank had to go

through, the pressures on him doing a Broadway show was enormous."

"He will say that he does the sorbet course, but the fact is that he's fully capable of a main course meal, a banquet," Galati said. "I adore him, I love him, I have learned a tremendous amount about myself and my work from him, and I would like to think it's gone the other way as well."

Northlight Theatre's Chicago-area premiere of [title of show] begins previews Friday, May 4, before an official press opening on at 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 11, at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. Performances then continue through Sunday, June 10, at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays (May 8 and 29 only), 1 and 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays (no matinee May 23 and no evening show May 30), 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, 8 p.m. Fridays (7:30 p.m. on May 11), 2:30 and 8 p.m. Saturdays (no matinee May 5), 2:30 and 7 p.m. Sundays (no evening shows May 13, 20 or June 10). Tickets are \$25-\$60. Call 847-673-6300 or visit www.northlight.org.

The March, adapted and directed by Frank Galati, continues through Sunday, June 10, at Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St. Tickets are \$20-\$78. Call 312-335-1650 or visit www.steppenwolf.org.



The Duchess of Malfi.
Photo by
Chris Ocken

THEATER REVIEW

The Duchess of Malfi

Playwright: John Webster
At: Strawdog Theatre, 3829 N. Broadway
Tickets: 866-811-4111;
www.strawdog.org; \$28
Runs through: May 26

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

An ambitious concept, however flawed, is still worthy of scrutiny, if only for its lofty intentions. Before Arthur Miller introduced the “tragedy of the common man,” an inflexible tenet of the genre was its focus on ruling-class citizens surrendering to base instincts leading them to behave badly. The lesson thus conveyed to audiences of similar social status was that privilege offers no protection from the consequences of irresponsible judgment—one of them being the discovery by their subordinates that those above them were prey to the same temptations as all human beings.

John Webster’s 16th-century hankie-twister is

perfectly geared to this disparate market: Our title noblewoman is a young widow who persuades the household steward to marry her in secret and father her children. This reckless act does not please her brothers, each of whom has his own dishonorable reasons for ensuring their sister’s celibacy. Duke Ferdinand even goes so far as to hire a mercenary, first as a spy, then as an assassin, to thwart the Duchess’ stubborn disobedience. In the meantime, her other sibling—a cardinal in the Roman church—finds his worldly lifestyle threatened by the public scandal arising from his sister’s wanton conduct.

It’s not uncommon for a theater company’s newly installed artistic director to pull out the stops for his first in-house production, but Brandon Bruce’s attempt to impose the conventions of classical tragedy on its Jacobean descendant neglects to consider the crucial factor of violence—and its mirror-opposite, lust—occurring always *offstage* in the former. Instead, Bruce goes Webster one better in his display of lurid spectacle: Ferdinand, for example, all but drools with incestuous desire, and later, after he succumbs to lycanthropic madness, he roams the night amid ruined chapels, snarling and gnawing at bones.

This extravagant physicality isn’t shocking to modern theatergoers acclimated to graphic imagery—especially since the principal actors keep a firm grip on their text, never allowing their passions to spill over into excess—but Bruce also incorporates such Attic motifs as live musicians playing period instruments and a speaking chorus garbed as androgynous quasi-Peter Brook grotesques.

Although these ghostly attendants facilitate swift introduction of furniture and auxiliary personnel, their keening vocalizations and korymbanting group-movement escalate the emotional intensity in Strawdog Theatre’s intimate space to Dionysiac proportions beyond the comfort level of opening-night playgoers, who sought respite in nervous giggles—not the response you want when striving for Aristotelian catharsis.

CRITICS’ PICKS

After the Revolution, Next Theatre, through May 19. Amy Herzog’s intelligent play is less the political tale it seems and more a family “dramedy” of how we react when our idols turn out to have feet-of-clay. It’s a top-notch cast with a delicious steely turn by veteran Mary Ann Thebus. JA

Fish Men, Teatro Vista at the Goodman Theatre, through May 6. Chess is a non-violent war game—so we’re told—but for the hustler-sharks and gullible “fish” who gather in the park to spar over the boards, the battle is as furious and bloody as the carnage it represents. MSB

Girl You Know it’s True, Pavement Group at Chopin Theatre, through May 13. The Milli Vanilli scandal is told in reverse while Bixby Elliot’s gay playwright concocts a phony persona to get his work produced in this dark and funny new comedy. It’s an incisive examination at what is real and phony in the entertainment world and how far people will lie to become rich and famous. SCM

ReSpiced: A Silk Road Cabaret, Silk Road Rising at Chicago Temple, through May 6. This musical revue presenting Western representations of Asia and the Middle East in song is an entertaining and thought-provoking ride through the cultural labeling (or misidentification) of whole groups of people. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

‘My Asian Mom’ at Stage 773 May 4

A-Squared Theatre Workshop, Chicago’s only pan-Asian dramatic theater company, presents My Asian Mom, an evening of eight 10-minute, one-act plays.

Performances will be held Fridays and Saturdays, May 4-26, at 8 p.m. at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets are \$15 general admission, and \$13 for students; call 773-327-5252 or visit www.stage773.com.

See www.a-stw.org for more info on the company.

THEATER REVIEW

In a Forest, Dark And Deep

Playwright: Neil LaBute
At: Profiles Theatre at the Main Stage, 4139 N. Broadway
(fka National Pastime’s Old Speakeasy)
Tickets: 773-549-1815;
www.profiles theatre.org; \$35-\$40
Runs through: June 3

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Every time Betty opens her mouth, what emerges is a lie. Bobby blurts out whatever happens to be on his mind, under the impression that this constitutes “being honest.” She is a conniver, he is a bully—even when they are not at odds, she connives and he bullies. This incendiary dynamic is what allows playwright Neil LaBute to craft 95 minutes of performance time from Betty attempting to conceal the truth and Bobby determined to browbeat it out of her.

The scene of their confrontation is a rustic cabin on a rainy night, where Betty has summoned her estranged brother to assist in cleaning out the detritus of its former tenant. No sooner does the drenched, half-drunk Bobby arrive than the two proceed to vilify one another with accusations and recriminations based in times long gone by: Betty, we learn, was a teenage slut but is now a college dean, as well as a model wife and mother. Bobby, twice-divorced by spouses weary of his abuse, resents her good fortune. At their ages (unspecified, but looking thirtysomething), real-life siblings have usually forged defensive counter-strategies to deter this kind of button-pushing—but not Betty and Bobby, who rise to each attack with the impulsive candor of squabbling children.

This locked-room drama could easily be played as a British-style thriller, all twitchy silences and sideways glances, but without Darrell W. Cox and Natasha Lowe emoting a storm as noisily volatile as the thunderclaps and electrical failures that

Jeffrey Levin injects at well-timed intervals, we might miss an almost invisible moment that introduces the possibility of this entire convoluted scenario being a Who’s-Afraid-of-Virginia-Woolf-meets-House-of-Yes charade—thus rendering its theme a debate on moral tolerance, as director Joe Jahraus’ playbill note proclaims it.

None of this matters a bluejay’s patootie to unreconstructed LaBute fans prepared to revel in polemics on the battle of the sexes (a war rapidly becoming as antiquated as apartheid). For those not falling into that camp, however, this scene-study exercise nevertheless deserves attention, if only as a promising glimpse of the enhanced technical opportunities offered by Profiles Theatre’s expansion of its real-estate holdings to include a third, considerably larger, auditorium.



In a Forest, Dark and Deep. Photo by Wayne Karl

THEATER REVIEW

Who Do We Think We Are?

Playwright: The Company
At: The Second City, 1616 N. Wells St.
Tickets: 312-337-3992;
www.secondcity.com; \$23-\$28
Runs through: Open run

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

It’s more of the same for The Second City’s 100th comedy revue, and that’s good and bad. The cast is sharp, fast and young, and the sell-out audience roars with laughter. The troupe’s ability continually to reproduce itself and draw crowds are signs of institutional success (even beyond Chicago in outposts across North America). The Second City remains the Mecca of improvised comedy theater and, through its vast alumni network, the greatest influence on American comedy (theater, movies, TV) in the last half-century. That’s all good.

The bad—and some would not regard it as such—is that there’s nothing innovative about this landmark show. It’s fast and funny but follows the tried-and-true format of long scenes followed by short blackouts with an occasional song or improvisation thrown in. Most of the scenes and blackouts are scattershot: This is no Harold, the long-form improvisation pioneered by Del Close which The Second City has created successfully on occasion.

Frankly, this one *should* be a Harold because it’s more complex structure shows off not only the comedy chops of the cast, but also their acting chops (which seem to be considerable

with the present crew). In a Harold, characters and situations are established to which the company returns several times, creating storylines around a theme. It leaves plenty of room for standalone scenes and blackouts, but it gives the show a spine.

The very title, Who Do We Think We Are? suggests a central idea, and several early scenes appear to be set-ups for later extension, particularly one about scientifically induced amnesia, but the show never goes there again. The thematic title is addressed only sporadically, albeit often effectively as in a scene where a man changes from black to white and back again several times. Two brief scenes of Barack Obama and Mitt Romney hint at larger opportunities for the cast to develop material pertinent to the title, as the political season heats up.

There are, of course, observable changes across 53 years of Second City history. The company once was five men and two women and now it’s three and three, among them African-American and Asian-American performers, making the cast more multicultural than it once was. The ubiquitous piano punctuation of scenes now roars to much greater life through digital keyboards and sampling (Julie B. Nichols, music director). The scenic design by Sarah Ross retains the basic three-door stage plan as always, but is far more stylish and urban-looking with hints of Indiana limestone and frame construction building facades.

The cast of well-matched and gifted comedic actors includes Tim Baltz, Edgar Blackmon, Holly Laurent, Katie Rich, Mary Sohn and Steve Waltier. Remember them. They and sure-handed director Matt Hovde serve each other well.

DOUBLE REVIEW

Rise of the Numberless

Playwrights: Andrew Hobgood, Patriac Coakley, Evan Linder; Composers: Chris Gingrich, Julie B. Nichols; Lyricists: Gingrich and Hobgood
 At: Bailiwick Chicago and The New Colony at Flat Iron Arts Building, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave.
 Tickets: www.numberless.org; \$20-\$25
 Runs through: May 26

Sixty Miles to Silver Lake

Playwright: Dan LeFranc
 At: Collaboraction at Flat Iron Arts Building, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave.
 Tickets: www.collaboraction.org; \$15-\$25
 Runs through: May 27



Sixty Miles to Silver Lake. Photo by Saverio Truglia

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Collaboraction recently moved its headquarters to the historic Flat Iron Arts Building in Wicker Park. Some saw it as a risk for the once-itinerant company to stake a claim on just one location, but two recent back-to-back premieres of *Sixty Miles to Silver Lake* and *Rise of the Numberless* show that Collaboraction's bet on the Flat Iron Arts Building as its home and as a rental venue might very well pay off.

Numberless is making the most noise (literally) of the two shows as a world-premiere rock musical created by the combined forces of The New Colony and Bailiwick Chicago. It's an immersive play-within-a-play experience where the audience is whisked away to a futuristic dystopian America where a persecuted minority group known as "The Numberless" rise up in secret to counter government propaganda in an angry rock musical of tragic Greek proportions. (Note:

You may want to tote some ear plugs along.) On one hand, the dramatic premise to *Numberless* is laughable. Why would these rebels hiding from government forces choose to draw so much attention to themselves with glam-rock face paint and blaringly loud music?

Yet, by raising the stakes of an impending government attack, *Numberless* ratchets up the suspense and makes you ponder the message of its heroes expressing themselves, their truth and exposing hypocrisy via theatrical rock songs. The cast and crew, under Andrew Hobgood's direction, really throw themselves into the material—even if it is sketchily laid out at times.

Although the reality of its premise is shaky, *Numberless* is definitely a lively and stylized show designed to appeal to both sci-fi fans and frequent denizens of the nearby Double Door.

Collaboraction's *Sixty Miles to Silver Lake* deserves attention in its Chicago premiere since it's an earlier work of Dan LeFranc, who is best

known nowadays for his critically acclaimed drama *The Big Meal* which had its world premiere at Chicago's American Theater Company last year and just finished an extended off-Broadway run in New York.

Sixty Miles is a compressed-time drama showing divorced father Ky (Sean Bolger), and his teenage son, Denny (Ethan Dubin), on multiple drives to his L.A.-area home for weekend visits. Mixed among the mundane spats, LeFranc adds in much more dramatic revelations that ultimately shape how Denny becomes an adult and how he deals with relationships.

Director Sarah Moeller elicits great back-and-forth responses from both Bolger and Dubin during the tedious father-son squabbling and their reactions to more confrontational and shocking news. Though it all, you get a great sense of what LeFranc was aiming for dramatically by showing the micro and major moments of a father-son relationship happening now and across the course of a lifetime.

SPOTLIGHT



T.S. Eliot's poetry collection *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* hit the big time when composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and director Trevor Nunn transformed it in the early 1980s into the mega-musical *Cats*. A national tour of *Cats* is still mewing around, so if you don't have any "Memory" of the show, now's your chance to see it. *Cats* continues at the Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph St., through Sunday, May 6. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. May 2-4; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturday, May 5; and 2 and 7:30 p.m. Sunday, May 6. Tickets are \$25-\$75; call 800-775-2000 or visit www.broadwayinchicago.com. Photo by Joan Marcus

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CHICAGO'S MOST COLORFUL CHORUS

MOVIE REVIEWS

Marvel's The Avengers; ...Marigold Hotel; film notes

BY SAWYER J. LAHR

Beware of 9/11 anxiety in the latter half of Marvel's *The Avengers*, the ultimate Marvel/Disney Motion Pictures Studios franchise built on franchises that Joss Whedon (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*) helms.

The gross destruction and families posting missing-person fliers edge uncomfortably close to events in our recent national memory, but the fight choreography and special effects set some pretty high standards for the summer movie season. The beautiful and historic Grand Central

Station in Manhattan takes a heavy beating for the good of humanity as the place where the non-flying Avengers stake out against Kree-Skrull-like aliens who look like *The Federation* from *Star Wars Episode I* crossed with the dementors from the *Harry Potter* series. The aliens aren't the most original bunch but supervillain Loki—the brother of Norse god/superhero Thor played by the gorgeous and talented Tom Hiddleston (star of gay director Terrence Davies' *The Deep Blue Sea*)—makes up for the unimaginative alien army.

The defunct Avengers initiative, brainchild of



Chris Evans portrays Captain America in *The Avengers*.

S.H.I.E.L.D. director Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson), is reinvigorated by tragedy when Loki kills agent Phil Coulson. Mark Ruffalo (*The Kids Are All Right*) channels Marlon Brando as Dr. Bruce Banner, the laboratory scientist-turned-green reckless monster The Hulk, whose knowledge of gamma radiation is supposed to help stop Loki from making a portal for invading aliens using the explosive source of infinite energy, Tesseract, a metaphorical Pandora's box.

Cleverly and without the help of gadgets, Russian spy Natasha Romanoff (Scarlett Johansson), AKA Black Widow, tricks Loki into divulging his plans, yet as the loosely reunited team wastes time bickering among one another, their hovering aircraft carrier is getting ransacked. Assisted by the deductive powers of Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr. of the *Iron Man* series), the team tracks down the lost Tesseract cube to a shiny new phallus in Manhattan known as Stark Tower—a testament to the self-titled billionaire, playboy, philanthropist's charming ego.

At the last minute, these seemingly anarchistic misfits somehow pull together their oversized egos and set aside their righteous superhero attitudes. Stark is as slick as ever, jetting circles around the alien chariots that are hammered down by Thor (sexy Aussie Chris Hemsworth, of *Star Trek* and *Cabin in the Woods*) or trampled by The Hulk, who generously assists, albeit haphazardly.

At one moment, The Hulk stands and shakes off the rubble he created crash-landing through the windows of Grand Central Station. Just for laughs, he nonchalantly punches Thor clear across the hall. The script, by Zak Penn and Whedon, aims for comedy in the many one-liners sprinkled throughout, but I'd be hard-pressed to figure out what these characters would say to each other if not for their common enemy. "Too bad I lost my good eye," says patch-eyed Fury (Jackson), one of his many signature lines of sarcasm. If the hull of the S.H.I.E.L.D. aircraft carrier is a riff on the *Death Star*, then Fury is like a reformed Darth Vader.

The host of characters with their own comic legacies have never before been together on screen in one film according to a studio interview with Whedon. Of the six Avengers, three are derived from the original 1963 volume by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. Present time in these comic franchises feels oddly like a science-fiction world that has finally caught up with a much more technologically advanced civilization envisioned in past movies of the genre. *The Avengers* opens nationwide May 4.

Preview: Retiring at half the cost of living in the Third World is many a westerner's dream, hence the premise of John Madden's *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, based on Deborah Moggach's novel *These Foolish Things*, about retirees forced to outsource their retirement. *Marigold Hotel* stars Dame Judi Dench (*J. Edgar*, *My Week with Marilyn*, *Notes on a Scandal*), Maggie Smith (*Harry Potter*), Tom Wilkinson (*The Debt*, *Shake-*

speare in *Love*) as solo-flying retirees and Billy Nighy and Penelope Wilton as a quarrelsome couple. *AARP* will likely relish in this dramedy about a group of retired Brits' failed expectations of a resort advertised as newly restored accommodations in India. Madden continues his long-time collaboration with both Dench and Wilkinson in this retirement farce.

I'm reminded of *Hyacinth* and Richard, the perfectly mismatched couple in BBC's *Keeping Up Appearances* series. Among the seven cash-strapped strangers lost in translation at the mercy of the Westernized Sonny Kapoor (Dev Patel, *Slumdog Millionaire*) is the widowed Evelyn (Dench) who inherits her husband's debt, High Court Judge Graham (Tom Wilkinson), and Muriel (Smith) who plans to have her hip replaced before leaving India permanently. Also co-starring are Ronald Pickup and Celia Imrie as love-seeking Brits. Participant Media executives Graham Broadbent and Peter Czernin produce *Marigold Hotel*. Music is composed by Thomas Newman (*The Help*, *The Iron Lady*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*), who is also responsible for the music in HBO's acclaimed six-hour miniseries *Angels in America*.

Film notes:

—**Albert Nobbs**, the Oscar-nominated queer film directed and starring Glenn Close as an Irish lesbian who disguises herself as a man to survive in 19th-century Ireland, comes to DVD and VOD May 15.

—White Light Cinema presents **Naughty and Nice Boys: The Pioneering Physique Films of Bob Mizer (1922-1992)**, a two-night "illustrated lecture/screening series" Saturday-Sunday, May 5-6, at 8 p.m. at Nightingale Theatre, 1084 N. Milwaukee Ave. Mizer was a radical photographer and filmmaker who served a nine-month prison sentence for distributing illegal images of nude men by mail as early as 1942.

He went on to found an influential studio Athletic Model Guild (AMG) in 1945 and photographed thousands of men with the help of his mother and brother, which were then published in *Physique Pictorial*. Lecture/screenings are curated by Billy Miller, New York City Editor and Publisher of *Straight To Hell* (a.k.a. "The Manhattan Review of Unnatural Acts"). Miller will be in person to present photographs and film clips courtesy of The Bob Mizer Foundation. See www.WhiteLightCinema.com.

—Chicago lesbian producer, editor and owner of Black Cat Productions announced the Chicago premiere of **A Mind in Quicksand: Life with Huntington's**. In time for Huntington's Disease Awareness Month, this is an award-winning documentary that traces director Kim Lile through her experience as a newly diagnosed patient. Prominent experts in the field are featured, including Deborah Boyd and Charlotte Rybarczyk, representatives of the Huntington's Disease Society of America; and Huntington's experts Kathleen Shannon, M.D., and Stephen Clingerman, Ph.D. The film will have a limited run of three showings at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., May 5-7. Director Kim Lile, Producer Sharon Zurek and executive producer Jesse Ewing will be on hand for the Q&A. Tickets are \$11; see www.siskelfilmcenter.org.

—Look for two screenings of gay interest at Gene Siskel Film Center this weekend. First, Patty Schemel, lesbian drummer for Courtney Love's recently reunited grunge band Hole, is the subject of **Hit So Hard**, a documentary by David Ebersole, which has its Chicago premiere May 4. Second, Rogue director Guy Maddin (*My Winnipeg*, *The Saddest Music in the World*) continues his tradition of outsider art films with **Keyhole**, starring muse Isabella Rossellini, daughter of Ingrid Bergman (*Casablanca*) and neo-realist master Roberto Rossellini (*Rome, Open City*); Udo Kier, the memorable cult actor who played a gay john in *My Own Private Idaho*; and Jason Patric (*The Lost Boys*). Both films run for one week, May 4-10. Showtimes vary; see www.siskelfilmcenter.org.

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NUNN ON ONE: PERFORMANCE

Spider Saloff spins new show, 'Roar of the Butterfly'

BY JERRY NUNN

There's a jazzy Spider in town, and she's ready to weave a web of a story for her audience at Victory Gardens. Spider Saloff has spun an original script—with lyrics and song all composed by her—entitled *Roar of the Butterfly*, which focuses on the funeral of a drag queen.

Known in the Chicago cabaret scene, Saloff sang with the Chicago Jazz Orchestra in a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald. When she sang Gershwin she toured the United States and even headlined the St. Petersburg Gershwin Festival in Russia.

From New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center to Chicago's Green Mill her nightclub act has been one to witness throughout the years. A five-time winner of the MAC Award, including Best Jazz Vocalist, Saloff has released eight albums on Ko-paesthetics Records.

Along came this Spider for a recent Nunn on One interview.

Windy City Times: Hi, Spider! Is that your real name? I have to ask...

Spider Saloff: It is now! [Laughs] I was born with it. It was a nickname that wouldn't leave. People will always remember it. It found me. I didn't choose it. It has worked out beautifully.

WCT: It is a good stage name, like Chita Rivera. Where are you from?

SS: I was born in Philadelphia, then I lived in New York City a good chunk of my adulthood. I moved to Chicago and fell in love with it. I am here forever!

WCT: How did you get started performing a cabaret act?

SS: I was formally trained as an actress then I was in musicals a lot because I could sing. I did a lot of theater but when I was in New York I started to be attracted to the nightclub thing. I certainly loved the whole personal approach to entertaining an audience, the intimacy of it. I loved jazz so I started working in cabaret and jazz clubs in New York. After some acclaim I was moved to Chicago by the Gold Star Sardine Bar for a long-term engagement. I was here for a year, fell in love with Chicago and never left.

WCT: That's a big compliment to Chicago.

SS: I love Chicago. I still live like New York. I still don't own a car. I can take buses and trains everywhere. It is sophisticated but livable and, geographically, has more space than New York. It has a great vibe to it.

WCT: You can still travel. I saw you did *Roar of the Butterfly* in L.A. and Australia.

SS: I'm always traveling. That was a blast.

WCT: How were audiences there?

SS: Delightful. Frankly, [on] opening night in Melbourne I was quite terrified. I wasn't sure if they would get any of the jokes. It takes place in a bar in New York. It has all of these outrageous characters. I didn't know if there would be a cultural separation. They got every joke and people cried. People came back twice to see the show. It was astounding how the audiences loved the show. I was thrilled.

WCT: So you wrote the lyrics, this show is all you...

SS: Yes, and I play eight characters in it.

WCT: That is crazy.

SS: You've got my number—okay!



Spider Saloff.

WCT: It is based on a true story. These are people you knew?

SS: Yes; it takes place at a memorial service for an Asian drag queen named Butterfly. He was a real person in New York. That memorial service actually did take place. The characters are all based on real people. Some of them actually knew Butterfly and some of them didn't. I have woven the story a bit fictionally so that some of them knew him.

WCT: So this is a tribute to this drag queen?

SS: Yes; it is about how one person's life changes so many others even though he is an outrageous character he is embraced by all of these unlikely people.

WCT: When did you first start singing jazz music?

SS: When I was a child I used to sneak and listen to my dad's Billie Holiday albums instead of listening to The Monkees. I always loved jazz and worked in musical theatre. When I was in New York I started to work with some jazz musicians and the styling. I developed my improvisational skills. One thing led to another and it has just been a life long love affair.

The music in the show is not a jazz score per say. It has a couple of songs that have a jazz

feeling to them but the songs are all radically different in the show because they were written for different characters to sing.

WCT: Do you ever get stage fright?

SS: No, not really. The day of the show I get very excited. I feel like my tail is wagging! I do anticipate and wish it would start. I can't stand waiting backstage for another minute. It is like a horse at the gate waiting to get out.

WCT: Since this is a memorial of a drag queen, are any of the eight characters LGBT?

SS: Yes; there is a bisexual character in the show.

WCT: Are you hoping to bring the show to Broadway after this run?

SS: This is the first major production of the show. It is the first time I am working with Natalija Nogulich, who is a fantastic film and stage actress as well as director. She is coming in from L.A. to do it. Dennis Mae is doing the set and David Miller is doing the lighting. It is very exciting to have a full production of the show. Our next plan is to take it to an off-Broadway theatre. Those plans are still in the works. We are hoping for a limited run or special engagement in the fall.

WCT: Are you a big Cole Porter fan?

SS: Oh, yes. I did a Cole Porter CD and I performing that next spring. It has been to Chicago a couple of times. We have done numerous Cole Porter concerts including one with a full symphony. I am told I am one of the best interpreters of his music. The CD Cole Porter Live at Maxine's was recorded here in Chicago with Jeremy Kahn, who will be playing for *Roar of the Butterfly* as well. He is a monster pianist. He played for the entire production of *Wicked* while they were here, and the *Lion King*.

The *Roar of the Butterfly* lands at Victory Gardens's Richard Christiansen Theatre May 2-20. Visit victorygardens.org for ticket information. Catch Spider at www.spiderjazz.com.

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Melissa Etheridge (kind of) opens up

Rocker talks life after ex, getting remarried and upcoming album

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Come to her window, but Melissa Etheridge won't be around. Why? Because she's everywhere else—on tour through the summer and in the studio laying down tracks for her first album since 2010's *Fearless Love*.

And, in the midst of a heated custody battle with her ex, she dished on both during our recent interview: what to expect from the new music (songs about her split, of course), tentatively due in September; how, despite her breakup, "it's not as heartbroken" as past albums; and, of course, getting underwear-bombed onstage.

Windy City Times: How's life treating you these days?

Melissa Etheridge: It's pretty incredible. Very full and very fun. There's always a new adventure around the corner. I have four kids and I'm very happy.

WCT: What's it like raising teens?

Etheridge: My kids are 13 and 15, and I have two 5-year-olds; surprisingly, it's very similar. [Laughs] They require all of your attention and they don't remember anything you've told them.

WCT: What's inspiring this upcoming album?

Etheridge: Life has always inspired whatever I'm singing about, so events in my life in the last couple of years: new love, saying goodbye to an old love, and my kids and my hopes and my dealings of life are all there.

WCT: So Lucky meets Skin?

Etheridge: [Laughs] That's funny, but no actually. Better than that. I was pretty down and out during *Skin*—that was hard! I'm in a much better place and I feel much better, so I think it's more up. It's hard for me to tell when I'm just starting, when I'm just making it, but I feel like it's not as heartbroken as *Skin* was. We're never going back there.

WCT: But some fans miss sad Melissa.

Etheridge: I know! Some people say *Skin* is their favorite and I'm like, "Aww, I'm sorry." [Laughs]

WCT: On your last album, *Fearless Love*, you started writing from other people's perspective. Will there be more of that on the upcoming album?

Etheridge: I found that I'm writing from another point of view as if it were my own. They're memories, like, "What if I was still there, what would this be like?" I've written a couple of those.

WCT: It's been a couple of years since you and Tammy Lynn Michaels split, though it's still making headlines. What's been the hardest part about going through a public breakup?

Etheridge: That it was public. [Laughs] Some private pains and anger and heartache gets out there and no one understands, nobody except who is in the relationship knows what's going on, and there's always two sides to everything. I don't ever like to do anything public; whereas she might take things public, I keep very quiet about it, so that's hard. You can't win that, ever.

WCT: People naturally make assumptions and start rumors. Is it better not to say anything or clear the air?

Etheridge: You know, I wish it was possible to just go on and say, "Hey, this is my truth, this is it," but it never stops. When you engage in that then you're in it and it gets all mucky and you can't win. You can't change what people think. Some people are just out there assuming away and I can't change that. So I accept it. It'll all

be in the past soon.

WCT: Except you'll be reliving it on this album.

Etheridge: [Laughs] Yes, that's the thing. And that I can control. I can control my art, and I can control what I say and how I say it.

WCT: Do songs that you're performing from decades ago bring you back in time? Like, how do you feel when you're performing "Bring Me Some Water" now?

Etheridge: Well, certainly the feelings aren't the same. I'm not in that place anymore, yet it's a blast; it's so much fun to play ("Bring Me Some Water"). The song rocks and the people enjoy it and I have such a good time. It's easy to get right back into that moment. I imagine it's like acting: You're just truthful in the moment when you're singing it, but you don't have to live it.

WCT: Do you relate to songs you were singing 20 or 30 years ago?

Etheridge: I wouldn't say I would relate to them in that I'm in that place right now, but there's always some bit of truth—it's a part of me that I understand. I find new meaning in them and I find new ways of approaching them. It's actually kind of fun.

WCT: What about performing still gives you goose bumps?

Etheridge: The audience. Whenever I can find a place, an audience that is receptive, is listening, is there to enjoy themselves and have a good



time, and they came with an expectation, that can really move me.

WCT: Your shows lure lots of lesbians. Before settling down into motherhood, you... um... had a lot of options.

Etheridge: [Laughs] It's rock 'n' roll, you know!

WCT: Do you have fond memories of those days?

Etheridge: Fond? Yes! I have many fond memories of that, of my wild and wicked days. [Laughs] But I'm a family girl now. I can sing about it, though. I've been writing, and on some songs I reminisce about those... certain things.

WCT: Do fans still toss panties onstage?

Etheridge: Oh yeah, they tend to do that. I'm not fond of that, but you know, it's an expression, I suppose.

WCT: What's the oddest fan "gift" you've received?

Etheridge: Oh lord. Besides undergarments? Hmm. People throw all kinds of things, and of course the minute you ask me I blank on any of the funny stuff.



Melissa Etheridge. Photos courtesy of Universal

WCT: Bras and underwear are weird enough.

Etheridge: And I'm still getting those. I'm like, "Really? Don't you want that for later?"

WCT: How do you put together your set lists?

Etheridge: I use kind of a spine. There are a handful of songs that I'll do every single night for the fans and the people who are just coming for the first time: "Like the Way I Do," "Bring Me Some Water," "I'm the Only One," "Come to My Window." Then after that, I try to mix it up with songs from all different albums, tunes that hardcore fans would be really excited to hear, and I try to play from the newest album.

WCT: Is there a certain song in your catalog that's still the closest to you?

Etheridge: They really are like children; you can't pick one. So many of them have parts of me in them and I wouldn't say there's one. I feel like that about all of them.

WCT: Do you feel the same way about your albums?

Etheridge: Well, usually the latest album is the one I'm closest to because, well, it's the one that I'm closest to. [Laughs] But I'm proud of them all. I can stand by them and enjoy them and still enjoy playing the music.

WCT: How's the musical you're working on with your girlfriend, Linda Wallem, coming along?

Etheridge: I hope soon we'll have something out there, once she finishes with *Nurse Jackie* (Wallem is the series' showrunner) and I finish with my album—but yes, when we have the spare time we're working on it. It's very close. We've worked on it for a while now.

WCT: More like *Les Misérables* or *Hairspray*?

Etheridge: It's more like ... like nothing you've ever seen. [Laughs] It's an original script with original songs. I'd rather it be more like *Jesus Christ Superstar* meets *Bye Bye Birdie* or *American Idiot*. It's a real hybrid thing.

WCT: How did you get interested in that?

Etheridge: I've always loved musicals and Broadway. I mean, I am gay! Come on. [Laughs] But when I was much younger I loved *Godspell* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I loved the drama in them and I always thought that was the ultimate, so that's still my dream.

WCT: Where do you think we're headed on the path to equal rights?

Etheridge: It's absolutely going to the Supreme Court, because there's no place in the

Constitution that says "everyone except those gays." This is America for everyone, and every time this sort of challenge comes up, the Supreme Court—no matter how conservative—has to put their own personal bigotry aside. I believe it's going to pass the Supreme Court and that's going to change a lot of things.

That means the fight won't have to go all the way to the Supreme Court anymore, and that's where we're going to start seeing big changes. And then that's when we'll all sink into the ocean and the world will end. [Laughs]

WCT: Is marriage in your near future?

Etheridge: You know, three's a charm! That's what they say. But this time I'd be getting married because she has a job and I wanna marry her because she makes lots of money [laughs]—no, she's a wonderful gal. She's just amazing, and if and when we do it, it would be for my family and really for the reasons that you get married when you're older.

WCT: With more celebrities being public about their sexuality nowadays, how do you reflect on your coming out? How does it compare to now?

Etheridge: Now it can be just a part of someone, not the definition. Still, if there's a gay joke, it's me at the end of it. [Laughs] You know, it defined me for a long time. In a weird way, my cancer kind of knocked that out, but for a long time that's what I was known as, so I think now you can come out and still rely on your work. I know now that it's about my work; it's no longer, "How unusual that you're gay!"

WCT: How does it feel knowing that being out in your life and in your music changed so many LGBT people over the last couple of decades?

Etheridge: It's just really starting to come back to me now. Recently I did interviews with Australia, because I'm going down there this summer, and [a reporter] said when she was 18 and I came to Melbourne it meant so much to her and it helped her come out. It was just a beautiful thank you. It's really coming back to me right now that what I did 20 years ago really made a difference in the world, and that's a really nice feeling to go to sleep with at night. To have people come up and say, "Thank you, that made my life better"—what more can a gal ask for?

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. Reach him at www.chris-azzopardi.com.

DVD

Del Shores' 'Sordid Life': Loving family and Rue, hating Perez

BY ANDREW DAVIS

In the acclaimed one-man show *Del Shores: My Sordid Life*, Shores discusses the family members in Texas who were the inspiration of the characters seen by many in *Sordid Lives* and other projects. However, he also lets loose about celebrity encounters, detailing those he's not particularly fond of (including *Queer As Folk*'s Randy Harrison and actor Thomas Haden Church).

Shores was similarly candid in a recent interview with *Windy City Times* as he talked about home, Perez Hilton and his split from husband Jason Dottley.

Windy City Times: I saw *My Sordid Life*, and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Del Shores: Thank you! It's been a nice little change for me, this standing up and talking. I'm going to go on tour once again. I'm designing my life, where I can leave L.A. during the summer.

It's interesting: San Francisco, Chicago and Los Angeles—the bigger items—have so much going on. You're more of a novelty item when you get to Birmingham [Ala.] and Baton Rouge [La.]. I do plan to return to Chicago.

WCT: Do you think your family is more interesting than most, or do you feel every family has people similar to yours?

DS: I think my family is more interesting—at least my mother's side. It's like I said on the show: My dad's side of the family were these really good Christians, but they were really boring. But my mother's side—I didn't know they were eccentric growing up. I thought they were normal. I didn't think it was odd that my Aunt Sissy killed the neighbor's goat because it was uprooting her grandmother's violets. I just remember

my mother washing the dishes and always have a .22 [gun] by the door. If she saw a squirrel in a tree or saw a rattlesnake in the backyard, she'd shoot it.

I go back a lot these days to get material, though. My family's kind of odd to me now. [Laughs] I just have to rely on my memory now. Before I would carry a pen and paper and they would say, "He's writin'!" [Interviewer laughs.] It was certainly fun to put that show together.

When I put that show together and when I'm writing all that, you don't think about it. Yeah, my Aunt Mary married a man with two wooden legs.

WCT: I almost felt guilty cracking up in some of those spots. Part of me was like, "Oh, poor guy," in reference to the uncle with the wooden legs.

DS: [Laughs] Yes, there's a fine line—that I rarely draw. [Both laugh.] It works for the show, but not necessarily for family and friendships.

WCT: Have you lost friendships over your work?

DS: I don't feel like any friendships that I care about. I certainly have probably alienated a few actors with this last show. I don't think Judge Reinhold and I will ever work again. The ones I really like—like Thomas Haden Church—I say, "He's an asshole, but he's a really talented asshole." [Laughs]

With my family, I've really patched up things. My Aunt Rita [the real Evalita from *Daddy's Dyin' ... Who's Got the Will?*] was the one who was so angry at me for so many years. She sent me an email that her new husband has kidney cancer, and I said, "She can smell a terminal illness..." [Interviewer laughs.]

WCT: There was another person who was on



Del Shores. Photo by Bryan Putnam

your hit list: Perez Hilton.

DS: Oh, he's still on [that] list. There's no way he'll come off that list. I can't stand that motherfucker.

WCT: There's nothing he can do?

DS: I don't think so. He went on this whole thing when bullying started. He went on talk shows saying he was going to be nice—but that was because there was this huge backlash. This is not him wanting to be nicer; it's about him losing income. I have no love for him. I think his heart is just dark; he's done so much damage to so many people.

I don't think he's that smart, you know what I mean? I think he just got lucky. We can't control our intelligence but we can control our actions—and his have been despicable.

WCT: Someone you speak about glowingly in your show is the late, great Rue McClanahan. Could you talk a little about what it was like working with her?

DS: It's interesting that you ask that today, because I went to an event last night where

they were auctioning off some of her items. Her Emmy was there; I don't know if they can auction that but I got to hold it.

Rue was just one of the highlights of my life; it wasn't just about working with her, but it was being with her. We remained friends after the series [*Sordid Lives*]. The great thing about Rue McClanahan was that she was a consummate professional. At age 76, when she worked with me, she came prepared. When an actor sings my song, I fall in love—and I immediately fell in love with Rue McClanahan. I love her spirit, her acting, her timing—and that she was so twisted. [Interviewer laughs.] It was like being with a relative, and she appreciated my humor because we had the same sense of humor.

Rue was as funny in real life as she was in her roles. In an interview, she actually compared me to Norman Lear [the man behind such shows as *All in the Family*], saying, "He doesn't write jokes. He writes characters." I guess she's right about that; the lines come out of the characters. She also loved that I just didn't put older women in wheelchairs and rest homes.

WCT: Regarding TV shows, what are your thoughts about [the ABC show] *GCB*, which is set in Texas?

DS: Well, I'm a little bitter because I actually met with the writers and producers; [executive producer] Darren Star is a fan of *Sordid Lives*. I thought I was going to be on that show, but things just didn't go my way. The network brought a team of some other writers.

I really loved the pilot, and Kristin [Chenoweth] is a comedic genius—and I love the hypocrisy of the church. I felt they were on a good path. I haven't seen any other episodes. I'm circling a lot of projects right now, so I'll see where I land. Hopefully, we can do another *Sordid [Lives]* movie or two.

I'm also did a movie in Atlanta last year based on my play *The Trials and Tribulations of a Trailer*

Turn to page 25

COME MEET THE CAST AND CREW OF

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the **DISH**

WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN **WINDY CITY TIMES**



Frog n Snail

BY MEGHAN STREET

Frog n Snail debuted a few weeks ago amid much excitement—and with good reason. The man behind the new Boystown eatery is Dale Levitski, the chef at Lincoln Park's Sprout and a former Top Chef contender.

Before taking over at Sprout, Levitski logged time at Blackbird, La Tache and Trio. Last year, he was selected as a semifinalist for "Best Chef: Great Lakes Region" by the James Beard Foundation, according to the restaurant's website. There is simply no denying that this man knows his way around a kitchen. That's why I have high hopes that Frog n Snail will soon find its footing, but my first visit left a lot to be desired.

The Broadway Avenue restaurant is decorated in grassy greens and woody browns that evoke a sense of being in nature (perhaps in a swamp



Sturgeon with spring vegetables at Nellcote.
Photo by Meghan Streit

with frogs and snails). The space is soothing, but like the food, it's also a tad confusing. You look in one direction and you'll see sleek metal sculptures of the restaurant's eponymous frogs and snails, but then you turn around and there are booths upholstered in fabric that would be more at home in a worn-out diner than a new urban eatery. Frog n Snail is BYOB for the moment, so you can test Levitski's latest culinary experiments without racking up a huge bill.

There were some high points, to be sure, but most of the admittedly interesting dishes that I tried just fell flat. There are about 10 small

plates, half of which are meant for sharing and the rest portioned for one person. Don't expect any of the tired usual suspects you'll find on a lot of appetizer menus. Instead, you'll find unique offerings like ricotta dip with bacon and broccoli and unexpected twists like mussels flavored with absinthe and fennel.

I tried the truffle chignon, even though I had no idea what it was (even after reading the menu description and inquiring to my waiter). The dish was billed by my waiter as a "savory crème brulee without the brulee" with artichoke, braised red onion and pistachios. The texture of this sad little dish bore no resemblance to crème brulee. It had the consistency of cream cheese, and barely as much flavor. I didn't detect a note of truffle anywhere, and the artichokes, braised onions and pistachios just couldn't compensate for the flavorless mush beneath them.

Thankfully, the French onion soup was far better. I can't say it's the best version I've ever eaten, but it is made with super-tender and flavorful short rib meat—a definite upgrade from the inferior cuts of beef you might find in other French onion soups. It's covered with Fontina rather than the traditional Gruyere, which was a nice twist. For no apparent reason, the soup also included peas. They didn't ruin it for me, but I definitely could have done without them.

The main courses include a short list of meat and fish dishes, each with some experimental addition to or unique twist on a classic. The chicken Kiev, for example, includes lima beans and kale succotash. The beef Stroganoff starts with homemade pappardelle and is upgraded with a petite filet au poivre and tarragon Madeira cream.

The curry-braised lamb shank has potential, but doesn't knock it out of the park. The meat was expertly flavored and melt-in-your-mouth tender, which is why I was so disappointed that it was served at room temperature. I'll chalk that misstep to the kitchen staff working out some kinks. I will say that the mint French gnocchi that accompanied the lamb were close to perfect. They were sautéed to a golden crispness on the outside, and soft and delicate on the inside.

Vegetarians will find one entrée in the form of mushroom and peach buckwheat crepes. Until the menu changes to include some additional vegetarian dishes, non-meat eaters will be leaving Frog n Snail quite hungry because the crepes are lackluster, at best. Like the lamb, they were served nearly cold. The crepes themselves were fine, but completely forgettable. The mushroom filling was flavorless, and the menu promised goat cheese and cauliflower, but my crepes only seemed to include the latter. Unfortunately, small bits of cauliflower look strangely like crumbled goat cheese, so every time I thought I was stabbing a bit of goat cheese to add some flavor to my bite, it turned out to be more tasteless cauliflower. Sigh—at least the dish probably contained fewer calories than I was planning on eating.

There were three dessert offerings on the night I visited Frog n Snail. I chose the profiteroles, which were a tremendous disappointment. They were filled with vanilla gelato, which was tasty enough, but the profiteroles themselves—which should be light and airy—were hard as rocks. My waiter had given me and my dining companion a knife with our dessert, "just in case," he said. He clearly knew what we were about to be served because a sharp knife was indeed the only way to get through these things. The only redeeming quality about this dessert was the tart marinated cherries served on top.

With such a talented chef behind the scenes at Frog n Snail, I wish I had better news to report about this restaurant. Nothing here is lacking in imagination, and the creative flavor combinations have huge potential. So, perhaps in time Frog n Snail will start churning out dishes that inspire diners to come back for more.

Frog n Snail is located at 3124 N. Broadway Ave.; call 773-661-9166 or visit www.frognsnail.com.

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Attendees get 'Skinny' at museum

BY TERRENCE CHAPPELL

Blue Print Film Festival as well as local community leaders and organizations hosted "The Director's Cut" a night that honored writer/director Patrik-Ian Polk and showcased a pre-screening of his new film, *The Skinny*, at the National Hellenic Museum April 26.

Following the pre-screening, Craig Johnson of Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus moderated a Q&A with Polk. During the Q&A, Polk, who is also behind films and TV series such as *Punks* and *Noah's Arc*, revealed to guests his motivations behind directing *The Skinny*, his personal ties to the film and his overall creative direction as a writer and a director. *The Skinny* focuses on five Brown University graduates who reconnect a year after graduation for a gay-pride weekend in New York City.

"I'm a filmmaker and that's what I set out to do; it's what I set out to become," Polk said. "I remember when I wrote *Punks*, it was this script that just got everybody's attention. I'm an artist, and I just try to tell stories. I focus on the character. Who are they? What are they going to do? And how I'm going to tell their story."

Polk was also presented with the Marlon Riggs Director's Cut Award by Northwestern University professor E. Patrick Johnson.

Community partners for the event included Brother's Health Collective, Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, Black Treatment Advocates Network, Howard Brown Health Clinic, Task Force Prevention Services, South Side Help Center, Rocks Coordinating Committee and Black AIDS Network.

The film runs at Landmark Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark St., through May 3.



Patrik-Ian Polk (left) and Craig Johnson at a pre-screening for *The Skinny*. Photo by Terrence Chappell

Meet-and-greet with 'Scrooge & Marley' cast May 6

CHICAGO—There will be a meet-and-greet with the cast and crew of *Scrooge & Marley*, a new kind of Christmas movie being filmed in Chicago this May.

Several stars and behind-the-scenes personalities will be greeting the public Sunday, May 6, at Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St. (upstairs from Hamburger Mary's), 3-5 p.m. A \$20 entry fee includes hors d'oeuvres, half-priced drinks, and a chance to win some fun prizes.

Among the cast and crew that will be on hand for this spectacular event are:

David Pevsner (*Law and Order: LA, Criminal Minds*), Rusty Schwimmer (*North Country, The Perfect Storm*), David Moretti (*Dante's Cove, Shut Up and Kiss Me*), Ronnie Kroell (*Eating Out: Drama Camp, BRAVO's Make Me a Supermodel*), plus Drew Anderson, Nicholas Bailey, Scott Duff, Amy Matheny, Fawzia Mirza, Becca Kaufman, Diana Simonzadeh, Tommy Beardmore and Colin Sphar.

Co-directors Richard Knight, Jr. and Peter Neville will also be present. The event will be hosted by *Nightspots Magazine's* Kirk Williamson.

Scrooge & Marley is a modern-day variation on Charles Dickens' classic story of the holidays, *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens' timeless tale of a man's redemption at the holidays is recounted from a gay sensibility. The screenplay is written by Ellen Stoneking, Knight and the late Timothy Imse.

For information on the upcoming film, visit www.scroogeandmarleymovie.com.

Tickets are available at the door.

SORDID from page 23

Trash Housewife—and it stars Beth Grant and [Oscar winner] Octavia Spencer. It was so wonderful watching that happening with Octavia; she's been my friend for many, many years.

WCT: When you taped *My Sordid Life*, you were still married to Jason Dottley. When you go on the road, will you mention him or the marriage?

DS: Well, yeah! I'm a stand-up comic—"Don't fuck with me."

I'm not going to make [the marriage] my entire show but the new show is called *My Sordid Reality*. I'm going to try to find the humor. It's been a really difficult time for me, quite frankly. But I'm coming out of it, and I've found clarity. No, I will not be close-mouthed about it.

I've been guarded. I'm certainly not going to tell everything, but I'll tell you this: We went on the road together and we toured 39 cities. He opened for me in Portland and in Seattle. He filmed his video for his dance single on Sunday, and left me on Monday.

WCT: What? There was no "Dear John" or "Dear Del" letter?

DS: There was no negotiation or no clue: "I'm done. I've been thinking about this for a long time." Yet, I was never told. It wasn't the best departure so, no, I won't be working with him. But once you get out of the situation, there's more clarity.

At a recent meeting, someone said something that was very powerful: "Sometimes your dark periods become your blessings." I believe that.

Del Shores: *My Sordid Life* is available at many retailers, including Amazon.com.



Photos by Kat Fitzgerald, www.MysticImagesPhotography.com. See more online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



Cathcart honored at record-breaking Bon Foster

BY ALEX LUBISCHER

Approximately 500 supporters came out for Bon Foster—Lambda Legal's annual benefit gala in Chicago—which was held April 25 at the Art Institute of Chicago's Modern Wing. The gala, titled "A Modern Bon Foster," celebrated the progress of "our modern civil-rights movement" and honored Executive Director Kevin M. Cathcart for his 20th year with the organization. The event was made possible through the support of Northern Trust.

Lambda's Midwest Regional Manager Jim Bennett announced that the benefit raised a record-breaking \$415,000. Bon Foster Co-Chair Gail Morse said the crowd was one of the biggest in the event's history.

Following a welcome by Morse and John McGowan, Northern Trust's national Leader of LGBT and non-traditional family practice, a video highlighting Cathcart's 20 years at Lambda was projected on the Modern Wing's wall. As the last

slide dimmed, Cathcart stepped forward to address the soirée's attendants.

"There is nothing like watching yourself age 20 years in two and a half minutes with 500 other people [watching]," said Cathcart to laughter and applause.

Cathcart went on to recount Lambda's legal achievements of the past 20 years. "Think of some of the victories: *Lawrence v. Texas*, marriage in Iowa ... hospital visitation ... I could go on and on. But as you think of these, please fill in your own favorites. There are literally hundreds to choose from."

Cathcart also cited current cases, including a brief Lambda filed at the U.S. Supreme Court, on behalf of a 145 HIV/AIDS organizations, defending the Affordable Care Act from the perspective of people with HIV. He also spoke of his "new favorite case in the Midwest," that of Maverick Couch, an Ohio student who, on April 3, was threatened with suspension if he wore a T-shirt to school bearing the slogan

"Jesus Is Not A Homophobe."

After he thanked the audience for making "this work and this organization possible," board member Karen Dixon took the stage. Dixon presented Cathcart with a Chicago Cubs baseball jersey on behalf of "all those who consider the Midwest our home and in recognition of the wisdom you showed when you decided to go ahead and open that Midwest office."

Shortly after, the gala's reception commenced and continued into the evening. Bon Appetit catered it, and the reception featured DJ Sadie Woods.

Lambda Legal is the nation's oldest and largest legal organization working for the civil rights of LGBTQ people. Its annual Bon Foster gala is named after Robert Bonvouloir Foster, the principal founder of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago, who died in 1991 of AIDS complications. His bequest helped open Lambda's Chicago office.



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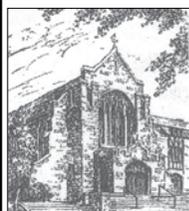
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JACKHAMMER TUE., APRIL 17

Another great preliminary round of Windy City Gay Idol brings us two talented new finalists: Sylviette and D'Angelo. Photos by Dave Ouano. More photos at facebook.com/windycitygayidol.

T'S SUN., APRIL 29

Out of a remarkable 17 contestants, Lexi and Rob emerged victorious and will move on to the semifinals in June. Photos by Kirk Williamson. More photos at facebook.com/windycitygayidol.

Look for photos from Windy City Gay Idol at Touche in next week's Windy City Times.

BOOKS

Gay dean's book offers 'New Way' to spirituality

BY ALEX LUBISCHER

In his new book, *A New Way to Be Human: 7 Spiritual Pathways to Becoming Fully Alive*, Robert V. Taylor—the first openly gay Episcopal dean in the United States—shares how he “moved from fear into a place of enormous love and impact.” The book weaves lessons of spiritual guidance with personal anecdotes, using the tapestry of Taylor’s own life story as a template for spiritual evolution.

In the book’s forward, Desmond M. Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Taylor’s own spiritual mentor, writes, “In a time when some people invoke the mantle of religion to divide and destroy, this book is a reminder of the God of Love who existed before religion.”

In a recent interview with *Windy City Times*, Taylor, a nationally known speaker, writer and social-justice activist, voiced his inspiration for writing *A New Way to Be Human*. “The book is essentially about how to be happy and how to change the world. And by happiness I mean really caring about your own well-being,” he said. “When you care about your own well-being, you start to care about the well-being of other people. And that leads you into actions that help to make the world a more inclusive and loving place.”

Taylor delves into his spiritual kinship with Tutu within the first of the book’s seven chapters, or “Pathways,” titled “Connecting Stories.” He cites their shared passion for ending apartheid in South Africa as the common ground that “became holy terrain.” Here, Taylor recounts how Tutu helped him escape to the United States as a way of avoiding imprisonment upon Taylor’s refusal to enlist in South Africa’s army.

In this first pathway, Taylor illustrates how his willingness to overcome fear and share his own story with Tutu transformed his life. Next, he invites the reader to do the same. The proceeding six pathways (“Hairpin Curves of Life,” “Becoming Fully Alive,” etc.) encourage the reader, in different ways, to choose openness and honesty over fear and enclosure.

“The book presents the seven pathways to people as a way to create a spiritual positioning system for their lives,” said Taylor.

The author acknowledged, however, that even he sometimes struggles with one of the pathways: “I think the ‘Hairpin Curves of Life’ are always a cutting edge for me. I like a certain degree of familiarity and certainty about my life. And then you get a complete curveball and it changes everything. ... For me, the challenge in that is always to be grounded enough to see what that moment might be beckoning me towards.”

Following his immigration to the United States in his early 20s, Taylor devoted much of his adult ministry to helping others overcome unexpected adversity. Notably, Taylor served in the Diocese of New York from 1983 to 1999, where he helped to build a community social service center offering HIV/AIDS programs to veterans and people of color. “We conjured up doing an educational series (on AIDS) for religious leaders throughout Westchester County,” said Taylor, of his ministry in the mid-’80s. “We did mailings to [more than] a thousand religious leaders of many different traditions. Helping to spread awareness in the larger community was, I thought, absolutely critical.”

Taylor continues to be a fervent advocate for the equality and dignity of LGBT people. When asked if he had any advice for Queer people seeking spiritual fulfillment in a church that might not be accepting of their sexuality, Taylor said, “First, know that you are loved for who you are. Be compassionate about yourself and



Robert Taylor.

celebrate who you are. I don’t believe there are any mistakes with any of us.

“If you are judged for the magnificence of who you are as a gay or a lesbian or transgender person, if you have the courage to have a conversation with that [religious] community, they will only then begin to engage in a richer, more truthful conversation when dealing with the reality of you as a member of that community. Now, I say that knowing that takes a certain amount of courage and risk. ... But if you can’t be loved and accepted in all your magnificence, I would suggest looking for a community where you are welcome and can do the real work you need to do on your own journey to a new way to be human as an LGBT person.”

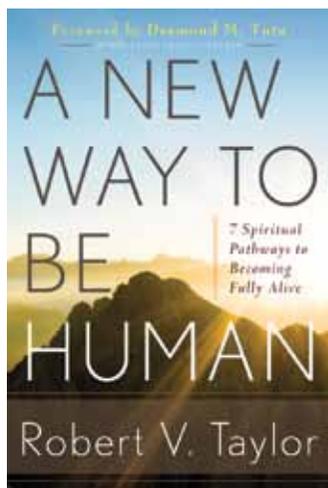
Taylor will spend most of this next year on the road, speaking across the country and spreading the book’s message.

As he reflected on the message of his book, Taylor recalled a “singular image” from his first days as Dean at St. Mark’s Cathedral. A group of 40 newcomers had gathered to share stories of their individual journeys. Their combined spiritual experiences encompassed Christianity, Judaism, Sufi and Hindu traditions, among many others. “So many of us in this time of an emergence of a new consciousness are realizing that no one religion has the hold on truth,” said Taylor. “But there is wisdom to be found and to be used in our practices for the journey on the new way to be human.”

Taylor will speak at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., 2-4 p.m., on Sunday, May 6. See www.CenterOnHalsted.org.

A *New Way to Be Human: 7 Spiritual Pathways to Becoming Fully Alive*, by Robert Taylor, is available for purchase at www.Amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com.

Also, visit www.robertvtaylor.com or his blog at www.wakeupforlife.com.



Cover of Taylor’s book, *A New Way to Be Human*.



LGBT housing protections focus on forum

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

About 15 people attended a forum called “The LGBT Community and Emerging Fair Housing Rights” to discuss new housing protections for the LGBT community at the Maze Branch of the Oak Park Public Library April 26.

Speakers included Rob Breymaier of the Oak Park Regional Housing Center; Susan Greenberg of the Berwyn Community Relations Commission; and Donna Karpavicius of Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association (OPALGA) and Weichert Realtors.

Breymaier outlined what the center does before explaining what the new regulations mean for the LGBT community. He noted that in January, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) added new regulations that forbid discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and marital status.

Breymaier explained that these regulations extend to housing developments funded all or in



Rob Breymaier, Mayor Robert Lovero (standing, from left), and Donna Karpavicius and Susan Greenberg (sitting, from left). Photo by Carrie Maxwell

part from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME investment partnership programs, or other HUD funds; the facilitation of housing choice vouchers (section 8); public housing; shelters and transitional housing; and Federal Housing Administration (FHA)-insured mortgages.

These new regulations do not change the rules with regard to any housing without HUD support or insurance and enforcement of this regulation is not referred to the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Breymaier emphasized.

Breymaier also told the attendees that Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., has introduced an amendment to the Fair Housing Act (Housing Opportunities Made Equal or HOME Act of 2011 S. 1605). This would add sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or source of income to the list of current protected classes; race, color, national origin, religion, sex/gender, disability and familial status.

Other ways in which the proposed bill would protect individuals from discrimination include strengthening anti-discrimination protections for persons with disabilities and LGBT parents with custody of a child; outlawing housing discrimination both before and after a housing unit is acquired; and providing the attorney general with appropriate pre-litigation investigative power to enforce the law. This law, Breymaier said, would ensure that people are treated fairly and aren’t discriminated against for any reason when they apply for housing assistance.

The bill currently has seven co-sponsors, however, neither Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., nor Sen. Mark Kirk, R-Ill., have signed on as co-sponsors. A companion bill (H.R. 3030), introduced by Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., in the House of Representatives, currently has 10 co-sponsors—none of which are from the Illinois delegation. Breymaier closed by urging attendees to contact their representatives and both Illinois senators to ask them to sign on as co-sponsors.

Greenberg explained what her role is within Berwyn city government and talked about the history of the community relations commission. Commission members are appointed by the mayor and they meet once a month to review complaints about housing discrimination.

“A couple of years ago I applied to the mayor’s office to be on the community relations commission figuring that as a lesbian and as someone who understood discrimination but had not been discriminated against I could bring some wisdom to the commission in addition to what was already there,” said Greenberg.

Greenberg noted that there had only been two discrimination complaints in the last two years, one of which was due to the person’s sexual orientation. One goal of the commission, Greenberg said, was to tone down or resolve these cases before other actors get involved and she said that the commission has been very effective in achieving its goals.

Lastly, Karpavicius spoke about her role as a real estate agent and how it relates to LGBT people seeking housing. She said that she sees less discrimination these days, and when she does see it she is shocked to see it still happening in the Chicagoland area.

Also in attendance were Oak Park Trustee Collette Lueck and Berwyn Mayor Robert Lovero. Lovero stated his support for the new protections. Breymaier said he spoke to Lovero about coordinating support in the future.

OPALGA, the Oak Park Regional Housing Center, Berwyn United Neighborhood Gay and Lesbian Organization (BUNGALO), the Village of Oak Park, the city of Berwyn and Weichert Realtors expressed support for the outreach.

See www.liveinoakpark.com and portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2012/HUDNo.12-014 for more information.

Real estate news:

—**Pritzker purchase:** A venture of James Pritzker paid \$1.2 million last month for an Evanston house he will rent to another family, according to a Crain’s item. Pritzker, president and CEO of Tawani Enterprises Inc., lives in the neighborhood and paid \$2.25 million in January for a nearby house he plans to convert into a bed-and-breakfast.

—**Theft case:** Prominent local real-estate executive Michael Sato was charged last Nov. 26 with trying to steal three Burberry neckties (valued at \$145 each) from Bloomingdale’s at 900 N. Michigan Ave., according to the Chicago Tribune. Sato, 44, is president of Jameson-Sotheby’s international realty.

The Cook County state’s attorney’s office emailed *Windy City Times* that, on March 7, Sato was assigned to the state’s attorney’s deferred prosecution program, which includes a one-year commitment. If all requirements of the program are met, which includes the consent of the victim, then the charges will be dropped.

The next court date for this case is Wed., June 6, at 26th Street and California Avenue (room 100) at 1:30 p.m.

—Andrew Davis

calendar

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WINDY CITY
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nightspots

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Wed., May 2

Vital Nights: Cinco de Mayo Escape the daily grind and join the Vital Bridges Center on Chronic Care's Junior Networking Committee in celebrating Cinco de Mayo. Tickets are \$20 online or \$25 at the door. Reserve your place now as space is limited. 6pm-9pm, J Bar, 610 N Rush St., www.heartlandalliance.org

Gay Liberation Network organizing meeting Join with Chicago's LGBT direct action group at their monthly organizing meeting—new members welcome! 7pm-9pm, 773-209-1187, Berger Park Cultural Center 6205 N. Sheridan Rd., www.gayliberation.net

Spider Saloff's "The Roar of the Butterfly" Preview: KMP Artists proudly presents acclaimed vocalist, actor and songwriter Spider Saloff and her highly entertaining one-woman musical through May 20. In the tradition of Lily Tomlin and Tracey Ullman, Saloff portrays eight different characters in this new musical comedy. 7:30pm-10pm, 773-871-3000, Victory Gardens' Richard Christiansen Theater, www.victorygardens.org

The Encyclopedia Show, Vol. 10: Alan Turing Cast of characters includes the Fact Checker, Patrick the Intern, Jilted Emily Rose and house band The Encartagans, will be powdering their finest wigs for you! Featuring Hava Spiegelman, a leading AI expert and HBO Def Poet Kristiana Colon. 7:30pm, Vittum Theater. 1012 N. Noble St., www.encyclopediaashow.com

Jersey Shore: The Musical Join the cast of 'Jersey Shore: The Musical' as they perform live at The Call. Catch all your favorite show tune videos! 9pm, The Call (Chicago), 1547 W Bryn Mawr, Chicago

HELLO GOODBYE Wed., May 9

Chicago will say "until later" to photographer Kat Fitzgerald (right) at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.



go), 1547 W Bryn Mawr, Chicago
Windy City Gay Idol Windy City Gay Idol continues the search for the best amateur gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) singers in the Chicago area. 9pm singer sign up. 10pm, Touche, 6412 N Clark St, Chicago, http://www.windy-citymediagroup.com/lgbt/windy-city-gay-idol-kicks-off-10th-year-/36745.html

Thursday, May 3

Queering the Airwaves: Webinar on Community Radio Opportunity Opportunity for LGBTQ groups to start their own radio stations. 1000+ new licenses will be available in most cities in the U.S. including urban areas where their signal can reach up to a half million people. 2pm, online, http://prometheusradio.org/want_to_start_a_station

American Veterans for Equal Rights (GLBT veterans) Monthly meeting first Thursday of each month. 7pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., www.averchicago.org
A Streetcar Named Desire Tennessee Wil-

liam's play with an all womyn of color cast set in modern day Chicago. This queer interpretation explores the complexities of lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships with an emphasis on same-sex intimate partner violence and its realities/secretcy in communities of color. This play contains strong language and adult situations. Fundraiser. 7:30pm, Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N Southport Ave., Tickets: https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pe/9668031

Drag Idol Hydrate Nightclub presents season two of Drag Idol! A winner is chosen every week to take home a cash prize of \$100 and secure a spot to compete in the Drag Idol Finals to win a prize package worth over \$10,000! 9pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com/home/

Steampunk Thursdays Elate is taking its eco-friendly philosophy to new heights, on Thursdays, by re-inventing itself as the Steampunk center of Chicago. 9:30pm, 312-202-9900, Elate, 111 W Huron St., www.elatechicago.com

Friday, May 4

Manifest Urban Arts Festival Columbia College Chicago celebrates the work of its more than 2,000 graduating students with its annual urban arts festival. From art exhibitions to readings, from original designs to singer showcases, the talent will spill out from Columbia's South Loop Campus and onto the streets, with main stage performances from student bands creating the musical backdrop; 12pm-10:45pm, Festival Lots - 1001 S. Wabash Ave, http://www.colum.edu/manifest

Living Single, building the African American Community House of Avant Garde Inc., School of Opulence, Tommy Avant. Leadership, Advocacy, and HIV Prevention Programming. Hot topics, food and refreshments. 6:30pm, School of Opulence, South Shore, 1857 E. 71st St., http://theschoolofopulence.webs.com/

Meet author Robert Taylor In his new book A New Way to Be Human: 7 Spiritual Pathways to Becoming Fully Alive, Robert Taylor speaks to looking for a life of bold compassion and feeling. Part memoir and part spiritual guidebook, it's divided into seven chapters of spiritual pathways with three items of practice at each section's end to guide the reader's journey. 7pm-9pm, 773-293-2665, The Book Cellar, 4736 N. Lincoln Ave., www.robertvtaylor.com

Jackleg Press reading Jackleg magazine is becoming Jackleg Press, an independent publisher of poetry and fiction. 7pm, Women & Children First Books, 5233 N.

Clark St. www.womenandchildrenfirst.com
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-11pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com/

The Flesh Hungry Dog Show Says Goodbye After 7 years of monthly GLBT-centric rock and variety, The Flesh Hungry Dog Show's final installment with an all-star lineup of the show's most popular performers: The Joans, Jinx Titanic (who chose the Flesh Hungry Dog Show for his return to the stage after a several year break from performing) and The Handcuffs. 9pm, 773-743-5772, Jackhammer, 6406 N Clark Street, Chicago, Tickets: http://www.fleshhungrydog.com

Jennifer Lopez single release party The new single "Dance Again" from Epic Records. Win copies of the single and other swag. Featuring a Jennifer Lopez video showcase. 9pm, The Call (Chicago), 1547 W Bryn Mawr Ave.

Saturday, May 5

Women & Children First at the Chicago Green Festival Women & Children First is the official bookseller and free admission tickets for the Chicago Green Festival are available at the bookstore on a first-come basis. 12pm-8pm, Navy Pier, 600 E Grand Ave., www.greenfestivals.org/chicago

Cinco de Mayo with SHHH...OUT! Jazz Band Spend Cinco de Mayo with Lakeside Pride's SHHH...OUT! Jazz Band. This program features three 30-minute sets including many Latin favorites. 7pm-9pm, The Call (Chicago), 1547 W Bryn Mawr Ave., www.lakesidepride.org

Screening: A Mind in Quicksand: Life with Huntington's Poignant, timely documentary traces a woman's experience living with Huntington's disease (HD) and its impact on her friends and family. It will have a limited run of three showings only through May 7. The film's creators—director Kim Lile, producer Sharon Zurek, and executive producer Jesse Ewing—will appear for Q&A. Tickets are \$11. 7:45pm, 800-982-2787, Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N State St., www.ticketmaster.com

Pioneering physique films of Bob Mizer Two nights, two programs of rare work (from the 1940s-90s) by pioneering gay physique and erotica photographer and filmmaker Bob Mizer. Concludes May 6. 8pm, Nightingale Theatre, 1084 N. Milwaukee Ave., www.WhiteLightCinema.com
Nurse Education About LGBT elders Howard Brown Health Center cultural competency course for nurses on the concerns of the older LGBT patient, barriers to care, health disparities that LGBT elders face, insight into the roles that gender and sexuality play, how HIV is affecting the older adult and how effectively communicate withpatients. 6.0 contact hours, provided by Rush University College of Nursing. Bring your lunch. 9pm, 773-572-5123, Chamberlain College of Nursing, 3300 N. Campbell Ave. www.howardbrown.org

Sunday, May 6

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

Chicago House 25th Annual Spring Brunch and Fashion Show 11:30am-3pm, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State



RIDING THE TITANIC

Friday, May 4

Jinx Titanic (above) will be part of the final Flesh Hungry Dog Show. It will take place at Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St. PR photo

St. www.chicagohouse.org
Meet the cast and crew of the movie Scrooge and Marley Scrooge and Marley is a modern-day variation on Dickens' classic story, coming from a gay sensibility with heart, comedy and music. 3pm-5pm, Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark St., www.scroogeamarleymovie.com

Ride for AIDS Fundraiser featuring Bull-Fighter and The Locals Join BullFighter and the Locals for an evening of music benefiting Ride for AIDS Chicago. 6pm-10pm, Beat Kitchen 2100 W. Belmont Ave., www.facebook.com/events/159707370818430/

Monday, May 7

Fk Yeah, Anxiety!** An autobiographical solo sketch comedy show dealing with crazy moms, musical theatre, bad dates, auditions, and lesbianism. Mondays at 7pm through May 14 with a different opening act every night. 7:30pm-8:30pm, Gorilla Tango Theatre Bucktown, http://www.facebook.com/pages/fya-erica-slutskys-one-woman-show/129493840465183

Mr. and Miss Heart of America Continental Featuring current Miss and Mr. Continental Alexis Gabrielle Sherrington and Philip Alexander, and the current reigning Mr. and Miss Heart of America Jol D. Principle and Tiffany T. Hunter. \$20 for both pageants plus the infamous Stella buffet. 8pm, Baton Show Lounge, 436 N. Clark St., www.stellaproductions2.com

Tuesday, May 8

Screening of Miss Representation Documentary by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, exposing how mainstream media contribute to the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America. 6pm, Music Box Theatre, 3733 N Southport Ave., www.missrepresentation.org/screenings/

Wed., May 9

Kit Kat Kalamity and Farewell Extravaganza and COH Fundraiser LIVE MUSIC from the likes of (but not limited to) Jeff Brown, David Kav, Monica del Castillo, Ashleigh Ashton, Dawn Xiana Moon, Matt Ryd, Jeannie Tanner, Jeff Churchwell, Heather Styka, Jess Godwin and more to be announced; 5:30pm-9:30pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St.

Equality IL Spring Wine Tasting Join Equality IL and Sidetrack for their fabulous Spring Wine Tasting event. Tickets are available for just a \$20 donation to Equality Illinois PAC. You'll have access to over 100 wines from around the world and hors d'oeuvres provided by J&L Catering! This super-popular event caters to all palates and budgets. 6pm-9pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St, Chicago, www.eqil.org



TIE ONE ON

Sunday, May 6

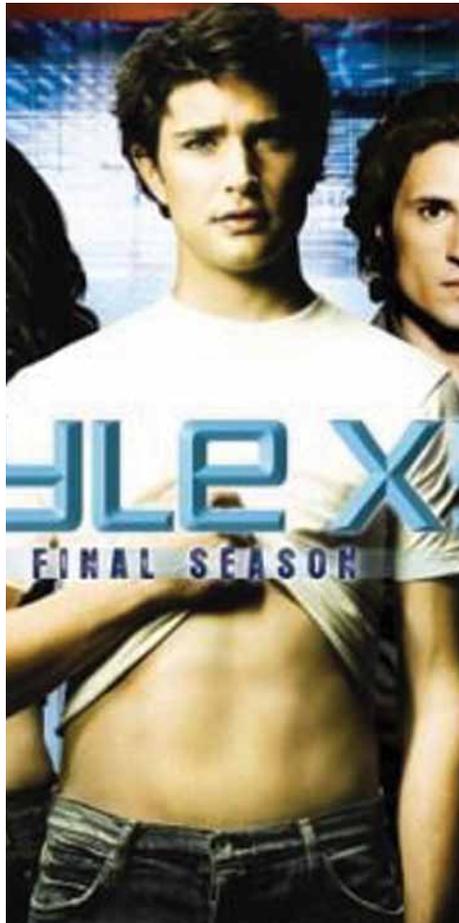
The 25th annual Chicago House Spring Brunch and Fashion Show will take place at Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State St.

Photo from 2011 by Kat Fitzgerald

BILLY MASTERS

"I like freedom. I don't like bullies. And I love a good airbrushing."—James Van Der Beek reveals why he joined the NOH8 campaign. I don't mean to criticize, but his photo has so much airbrushing, it almost looks like an artist's rendering!

I could be dead by the end of this column. Or the end of the month. Or decade. That's the kind of medical prognosis I got after undergoing a battery of tests at my annual physical. One test came back slightly abnormal and my doctor gave me this news via e-mail—welcome to the electronic age! The exact quote was: "This does not mean that you have cancer." Once I regained consciousness, I read the follow-up: "80% of these test results come back with a false positive, so don't worry too much about



Matt Dallas (formerly of Kyle XY) is in the nudes, er, news—allegedly.

it." Talk about burying the lead!! I wonder if it's now possible to procure a medical degree through those online colleges—like the University of Phoenix School of Medicine and Auto Repair! So I guess there's a 20-percent chance that I could drop dead any minute—which is better odds than I usually have!

Remember Nick Gruber, the former gay-for-pay porn star who hooked up with Calvin Klein in return for some alleged reconstructive surgery? His body of work is quite extensive, as you'll see by the photos and videos on BillyMasters.com. Alas, his romance with the designer has been less than stable. They were on; they were off. Calvin threw him a 21st birthday party. Then they were off. Then they were spotted having lunch. Then they were kaput. This week, we got a break from the on-again/off-again dating status with a new story—Nick was ARRESTED! Apparently, he threw a late night party in his West Village penthouse (an odd term for a building that only has 10 floors). One of the people at the party was a 20-year-old named Calvin Swint.

The two were having a private talk on the balcony and then, unprovoked, Gruber punched him in the face. Swint quickly left, which I suppose is what you do after the host punches you in the face. The doorman saw he was bleeding and called the police at 4:58 a.m. When they arrived, Gruber apparently tried to resist arrest by

(and I'm quoting here) "flailing his arms in the air to avoid getting handcuffed." I'm surprised he's that resistant to handcuffs. One of the cops spotted him shoving something into his pants, so they conducted a strip search—again, something I'd think he'd welcome. The cops found a stash of cocaine—also two sets of car keys, a cell phone, an avocado and a life-size replica of the Venus de Milo. OK, I made up everything except for the cocaine.

But the gold is in the details. When writing up the report, the prosecutor said that Nick "did grab [Swint's] genitals and did seem jealous of him." I'm gonna add in a seemingly irrelevant detail—Calvin is Black. I hate to stereotype, but maybe he has something to be jealous of! Anyway, the story doesn't end there. Since Nick's arrest and release on \$1,000 bail, Calvin (Swint, not Klein) announced that he's not pressing charges. Why? Because Nick is his good friend. "I'm absolutely not in a relationship with him," Swint said. "He's like my brother, so if he was angry, I could understand why he could take it out on me." I have no idea what that means, but maybe it's because I don't have a brother. Nick's lawyer says he's confident that the charges will be dismissed.

The next day, Gruber was on Calvin's (Klein, not Swint) G4 jet, zipping off to The Meadows rehab in Arizona—the \$35K bill being footed by his former/current paramour, Mr. Klein (who, incidentally, also paid two years' rent in advance for that "penthouse"). According to a source, Gruber was "talking really fast and sniffing" when he left NYC with his rolling suitcase. Well, it is allergy season. He was overheard saying there would probably be a lot of paparazzi waiting to get photos of him entering rehab. Because, you know, he's a big star and all.

A battle is brewing for control of Zsa Zsa Gabor—well, what's left of her. Daughter Francesca Hilton has filed to get conservatorship away from her stepfather, Prince Fredric von Anhalt. She questions some of the decisions he's made, his ability to care for Zsa Zsa, and notes that when she's been allowed to visit, Gabor has been "heavily sedated" and isolated (I guess she wasn't invited to that 95th birthday party). Freddie is fighting back, citing Frannie's "past conduct" as just cause why she can't be trusted (she allegedly assaulted him). Stay tuned.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Casey in Milwaukee: "Have you seen this nude photo of Matt Dallas [formerly "Kyle XY"]? People say it's his penis, but how do we know??"

We don't. And that's the problem with photos where the penis is cropped (so to speak). While I appreciate you sending me this "post-coital" shot ("shot" being an appropriate term given the amount of liquid), I can't confirm or deny its veracity. But perhaps it will look familiar to someone who sees it on BillyMasters.com.

When Zsa Zsa has a better prognosis than *moi*, it's definitely time to end yet another column. That alleged photo of Matt Dallas reminds me of one last story—the Good Vibrations' Antique Vibrator Museum in San Francisco had its grand opening (so to speak) April 12. The collection includes sexual devices from as far back as the 1800s—so perhaps one of them will jog Zsa Zsa's memory! I'll post some pics on www.BillyMasters.com, in case Zsa Zsa or Francesca wanna stop by. (Prince Fredric already has a membership.) If you have a question, feel free to write me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I find out what brand of underwear Gruber was wearing. (I'm sure you're all wondering the same thing!) So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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FRIDAY MAY 4 + 9PM : THIS AIN'T YOUR DADDY'S GAY BAR

Gay British powerlifter on Olympics, history

BY ROSS FORMAN

When the Olympic flame shines in London, there will be a Pride House to welcome the LGBT community for the first time ever at a Summer Olympics.

"The [UK] gay sports community is well established and has been growing since our first clubs formed back in the 1980s and 1990s," said Chris Morgan, arguably England's most accomplished LGBT athlete. He not only has won six gold medals at the quadrennial Gay Games, but also is a multi-time medal-winner in the World Drug-Free Powerlifting Federation, has won seven British Championships, and much more.

"Soccer, rugby [and] swimming appear to be the most popular [within the U.K. LGBT community,] with many smaller clubs now forming



Chris Morgan. Photo by Steve Becker

nationwide. LGBT sports [in the United Kingdom are] even represented outside of major cities, [such as] soccer teams in remote places like Devon, where I live."

Morgan, 39, lives in Exeter, Devon. The openly gay athlete manages a firm of financial advisers.

"I retired from full powerlifting competitions at [the] Gay Games in Cologne, [Germany in] 2010," said Morgan, who has participated in such events as squat, bench press and deadlift.

"I now only compete in single-event deadlift competitions. I'm training in a different way, having fun with it and enjoying winning some big titles while my body still allows."

Last year, Morgan won the overall "best lifter" title at the British Deadlift Championships, as well as in 2010. In addition, in 2011 he won the overall "best lifter" at the European Deadlift Championships in Estonia.

In early 2012, Morgan defended his British deadlift title, and will participate in the World "Single Event" Championships in France (June) and the European "Single Event" Championships in Switzerland (September).

"It would be nice to regain my world deadlift title after illness and injury prevented me from competing in the World [Championships] last year," Morgan said. "I'm really looking forward to the Olympics and have tickets for my own weight class in weightlifting, which is a related sport to my own."

Morgan will simply be a spectator at the Summer Olympics, but already is pumped—with tickets to several events already in hand.

"I have tickets for [a] Great Britain soccer game at Wembley [Stadium], the women's 69-kilo class weightlifting and [the] men's 77-kilo



From left: Dave Kopay and Chris Morgan. Photo by Ross Forman

class weightlifting," he said.

Morgan, in February, published a history of British LGBT Sport in celebration of LGBT History Month.

"LGBT History Month asked me to help launch their 2012 campaign, and as part of this they wanted to document the history of British sport in a timeline," he said. "I realized that I was one of the few people [who] have been involved long enough to remember things as they happened and offer an independent view of what happened. As with all my work for charities and good causes, my work is always linked with my role as a global ambassador for the Federation of Gay Games."

"I'm currently supporting LGBT History Month, The Justin Campaign and the UK Government's Charter against Homophobia and Transphobia in Sport."

Through his research, Morgan said he learned how many of the UK sports clubs started to form in the 1980s after returning from the first two Gay Games in 1982 and 1986.

"Gay sports [have] grown from tiny acorns in the 1980s to the visibility and voice we have today," Morgan said. "I'm proud to be part of the

Gay Games movement that formed the foundations of what gay sports people have today."

Morgan said he doesn't know if he will compete in the 2014 Gay Games in Cleveland.

"It really depends on the powerlifting events that are offered in Cleveland and whether I can be of use helping the Federation of Gay Games," he said.

Morgan is active with The UK Governments Charter against Homophobia and Transphobia in Sport, which already has signed the English Football Association, the Rugby Football Union, the Lawn Tennis Association, the Rugby Football League, Premiership Soccer, and the England and Wales Cricket Board.

"The Sports Charter is making a huge difference to LGBT sports by engaging with governing bodies and team management on our behalf."

Morgan's role within the Federation of Gay Games is to inspire and motivate young gay athletes worldwide, he said. His Gay Games profile is at www.gaygames.com/index.php?id=45

To view the UK LGBT History Month Sports Timeline, from 1976-2012, go to www.lgbthis-toryuk.org/wiki/index.php?title=Timeline_of_LGBT_Sport.

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BURIED IN DEBT - PART I

Q. I was laid off from my job over two years ago and used my credit cards to pay my bills and groceries. I haven't been able to find a job since. Last month I started collecting my social security to get by. The stress of worrying about my credit card bills is keeping me awake at night. What should I do?

A. To the individual in the question, the answer maybe to do nothing. Many individuals who worry about debts are, in fact, judgment-proof. If someone is unemployed and owns only personal property such as household furnishings, a car with a low market value and a small amount of money in the bank they are probably judgment-proof. Same applies if they are receiving social security and social security disability benefits.

Judgment-proof means that even if a creditor sues you in court and obtains a judgment, the creditor will be unable to collect on the debt because your assets are exempt from seizure under state law. In Illinois the following personal property is exempt from attachment or judgment (which means no one can take the following property no matter how many lawsuits or judgments there are):

- Your clothing, schoolbooks and family pictures;
- Equity in a car up to \$2,400.
- Equity in professional books or tools of the trade (for example craftsman tools, etc.)
- \$4,000 in equity in any other personal property.
- \$15,000 equity in your home.

This means that if someone obtained a judgment against you and you only had \$2,000 in the bank, furniture with a value of \$2,000 and a car with equity of \$2,400 or less, your creditor would obtain nothing because the value of what you own is within the exemptions created by Illinois law. Your property is exempt and you are judgment-proof.

Although a creditor may turn your debt over to a collection agency the agency will usually write off the debt if you are judgment-proof. You will need to tell the collection agency of this fact and may need assistance from a lawyer who will so advise the collection agency. Taxes and secured debts (house mortgage or car loan) cause special problems which may lead to forfeiture of your property even if you are otherwise judgment-proof. You may require the remedies that bankruptcy affords.

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Chicago Force routs Indy Crash

The Chicago Force stayed undefeated April 28 by demolishing the Indy Crash (in Indianapolis) 72-0.

The Force defense recorded 13 tackles for a loss as well as four interceptions, four forced fumbles and three sacks, resulting in three defensive TDs and a safety.

As for the offense, it scored three touchdowns in the second quarter alone as the Force took at 28-0 halftime lead.

The Force's next game is Saturday, May 5, against the St. Louis Slam. Kickoff is at 5 p.m. at Evanston Township High School.

LGBT, HIV/AIDS groups among Cubs grantees

Local LGBT and HIV/AIDS agencies such as Center on Halsted, Alexian Brothers Bonaventure House and Chicago House are among the local nonprofit organizations receiving more than \$1 million in grants from Cubs Care and Chicago Cubs Charities.

The Chicago Cubs teamed with the Robert R. McCormick Foundation to make the recent announcement. This marks the eighth consecutive year more than \$1 million has been donated to Chicago communities through Cubs

Care, a McCormick Foundation Fund.

"Today's Cubs Care grant luncheon is about empowering non-profit organizations in Chicago and providing the necessary resources to help communities in need," said Cubs owner and board member Laura Ricketts, who serves as chair of the board of Chicago Cubs Charities.

Among the other 49 groups receiving grants are the Black Ensemble Theater, YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago, the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Children's Memorial Hospital, Night Ministry, the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic and *Mujeres Latinas en Acción*.

'Battle the Pedal' fundraiser May 12

Lakeshore Sport and Fitness, 1320 W. Fullerton Ave., is hosting its first annual fundraiser Saturday, May 12, beginning at 8 a.m.

Battle the Pedal Cycling Competition is an eight-hour competitive cycling event to support the Never Coast for Cancer Foundation, which raises money for cancer care and treatment for patients at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

To participate, teams of up to four members commit to raising \$1,000 and teams with more than four members commit to raising \$1,500. To register, visit www.battlethepedal.org.

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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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