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PAGE 34

WINDY CITY TIMES

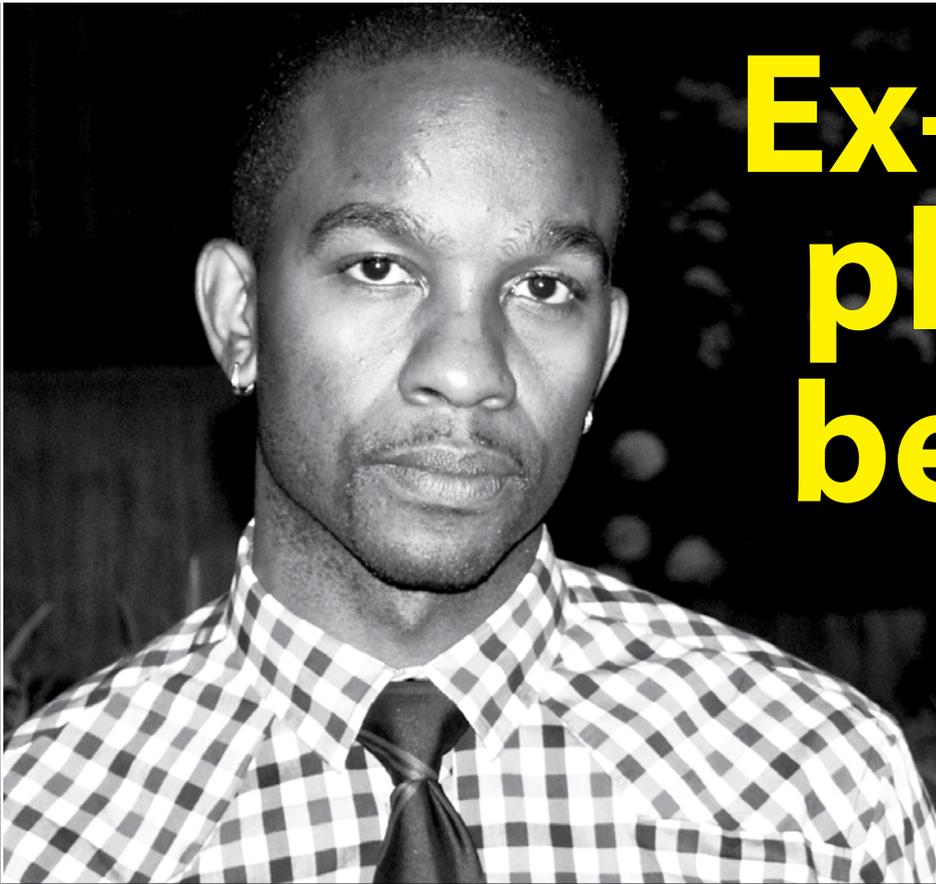
THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN,
BI AND TRANS COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

AUG. 8, 2012
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BETTY
DEGENERES
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Ex-football player on being out

BY ROSS FORMAN

Wade Davis wasn't expecting much response to his coming out. Maybe an interview or two, nothing major, and then quickly on with the rest of his life.

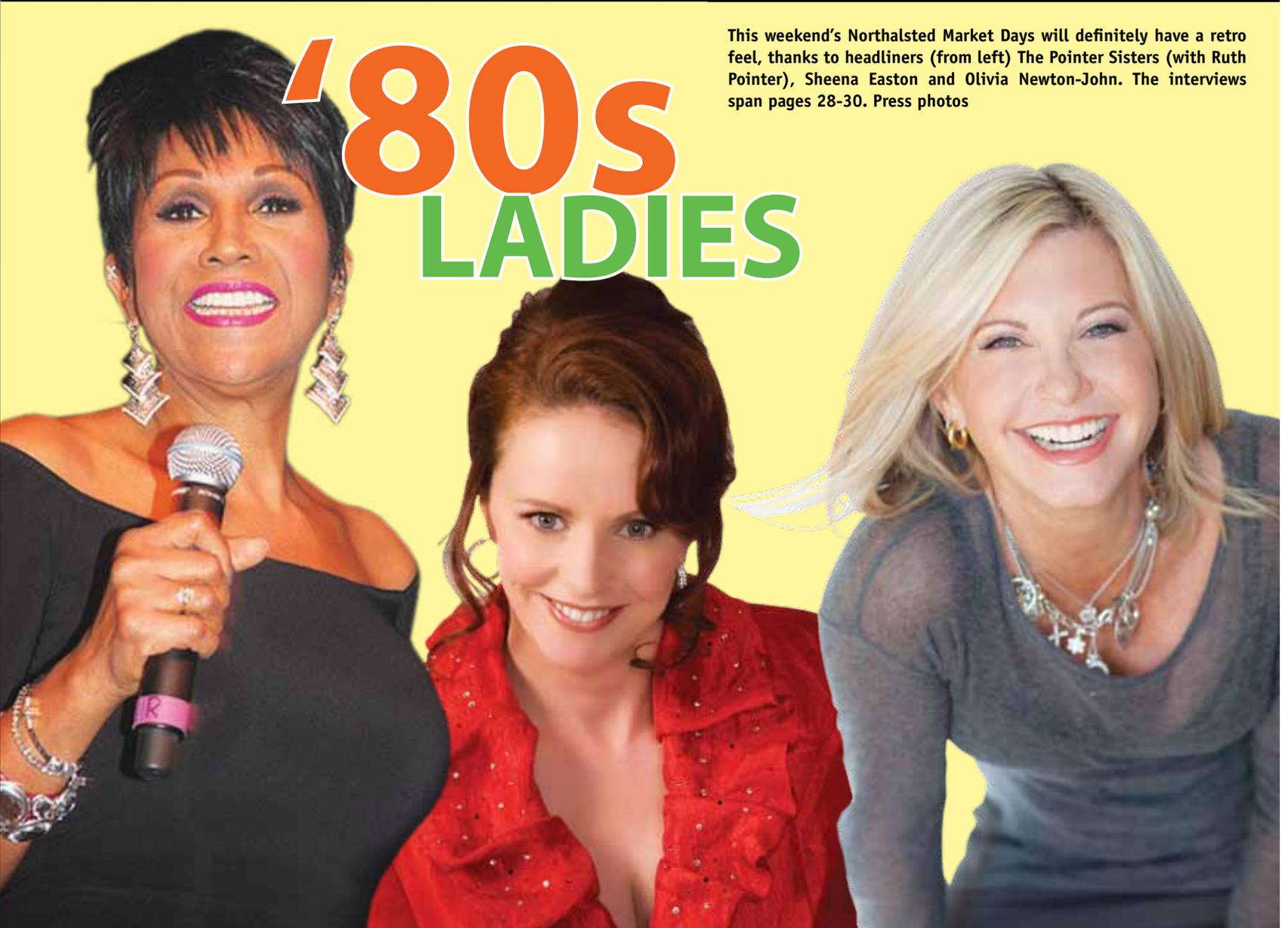
Well, it was—and is—news when a former professional athlete reveals he is gay, especially one with ties to one of the big-four male team sports.

Thus, Davis celebrated Pride Month by coming out to Outsports.com, and has followed that with an appearance on CNN with Soledad O'Brien, coverage on ESPN, and stories in The New York Times and other high-profile media outlets.

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DANCE FOR
LIFE'S RANDY
DUNCAN
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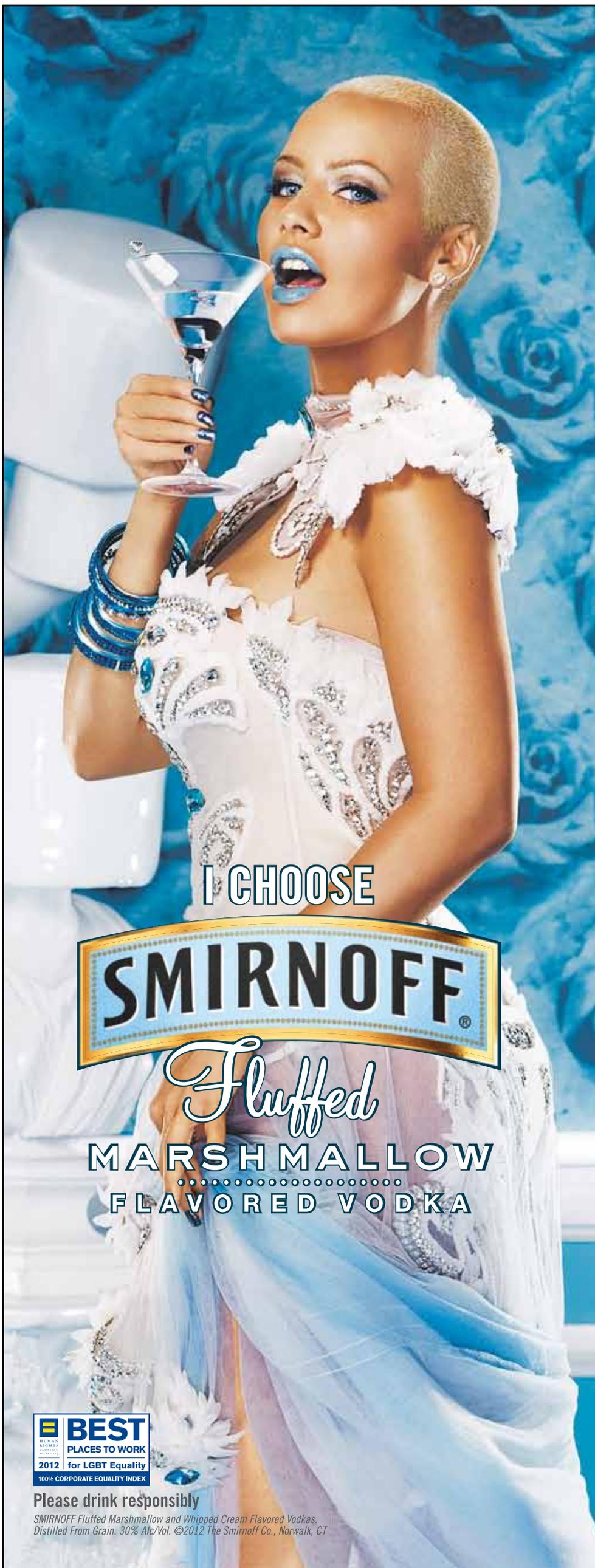


'80s LADIES

This weekend's Northalsted Market Days will definitely have a retro feel, thanks to headliners (from left) The Pointer Sisters (with Ruth Pointer), Sheena Easton and Olivia Newton-John. The interviews span pages 28-30. Press photos



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CHICK-FIL-A
PAGE 12



I CHOOSE

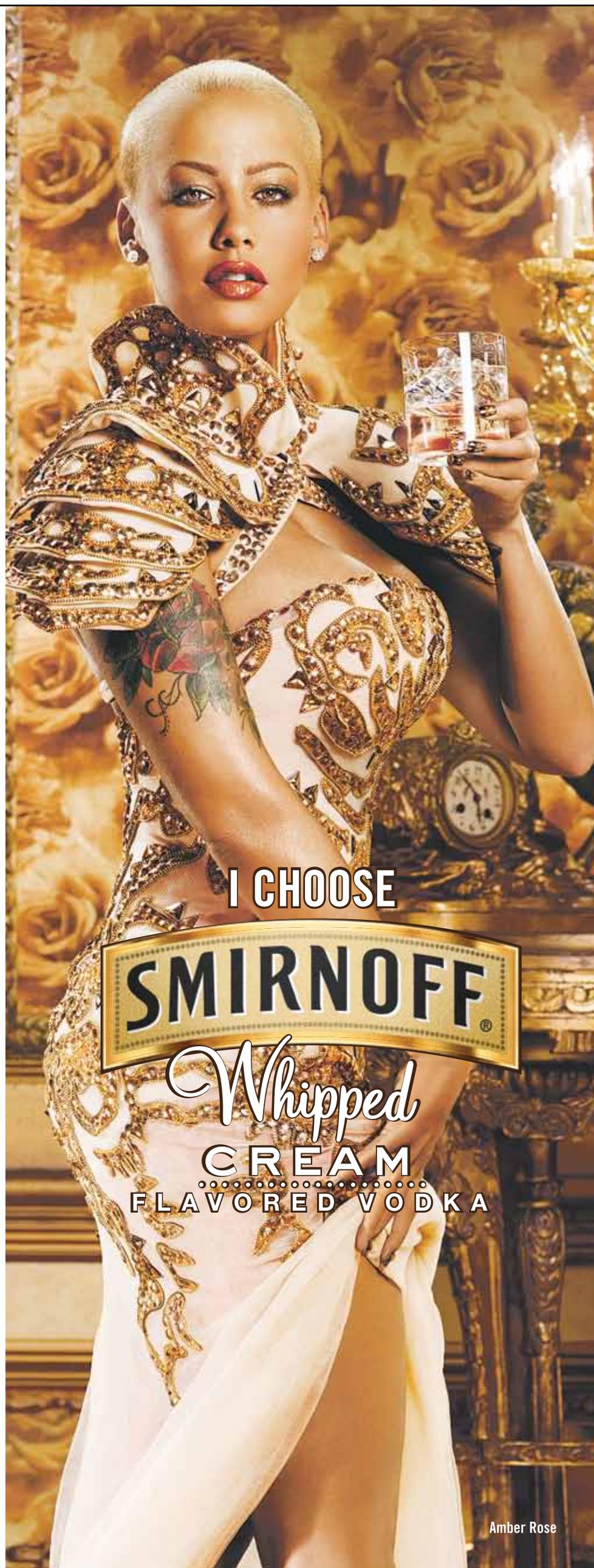
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this week in WINDY CITY TIMES

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Photos on cover (left, from top): Photo of Art Smith from Bravo; PR photo of Betty DeGeneres; photo of Randy Duncan courtesy of Duncan; photo from "Chick-fil-Gay" protest by Jamie Anne Royce

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COMMON SENSE

See photos from a show hip-hop artist Common did to benefit the Night Ministry, which helps homeless teens.

Photo courtesy of Sunshine Sachs



See photos from the J. Toor and Shah Riaz fashion show that benefited EdgeAlliance.

Photo by Jerry Nunn



Take a look at Jim Edminster's new column, "The Fairy Gardener."

Press photo

TAKING A GAMBLE

Read a travel profile of Las Vegas and being "gay while traveling."

THE EAT BEAT

Find out the latest local dining news and read about upcoming events.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Read entertainment news about Elton John, Lady Gaga and Sarah Jessica Parker.

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

FEST FRIENDS



Get the lowdown on Lollapalooza, with a review and pics. Also, read a Bent Nights review of concerts by Weezer and Foxy Shazam.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

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Countdown underway toward open and inclusive DNC

BY MATT COMER OF QNOTES

CHARLOTTE—Walk into Steve Kerrigan's office on the 13th floor of the old Wachovia Center in uptown Charlotte and you'll get a sense that this is a man on the move. He has no choice. The countdown clock mounted firmly across from his desk says it all. The 2012 Democratic National Convention (DNC) used to be months away, but time is ticking.

Nine months after QNotes first spoke with Kerrigan, the openly gay CEO of the Democratic National Convention Committee, we sat down with him again on Tuesday, just 37 days from when President Barack Obama will take the stage at Bank of America Stadium to give his acceptance speech for a shot at another four years in the White House.

When that time comes, Kerrigan said, he'll consider his job done.

What a job it has been.

Kerrigan has lived and worked in Charlotte since last June. It's long enough, he says, to make Charlotte feel like home.

"I travel an awful lot for work and you get one of those 'it's nice to be back home' feelings when you touch down at the airport and you're driving back into Uptown which is where I live," Kerrigan said.

Uptown is also where he works, managing more than 150 staff members and working with partners like the local Charlotte in 2012 host committee and local police.

"There really isn't a typical day," Kerrigan said. "My days are really working with the staff both here in Charlotte, our team in Chicago with the campaign and our team in D.C. to make sure we fulfill the president's vision in making this the most open and accessible convention ever."

That vision calls for some special touches and Kerrigan said his planners are working to make this convention unique. It's the first time convention organizers have placed limits on corporate, lobbyist and political-action committee contributions. Kerrigan said the goal is to engage more Americans and the grassroots of the Democratic Party.

More convention activities will also be open to the public.

"This is the first convention ever where our number-one focus has been to engage more Americans in convention planning and what we're doing here," he said. "It's the first convention in history to open and close the convention with events that are open to the public that provide tens of thousands more Americans an opportunity to get involved and get engaged."

The openness is a departure from past conventions. The 2008 convention in Denver was one of the first to use its presence in a state to actively organize voters and volunteers for a candidate's campaign. Charlotte—the largest city in a battleground state the Obama campaign hopes to keep in their column—will be no different.

"In the past, we hadn't really used conventions for organizing tools and for engaging Americans," Kerrigan said. "You can't just put a convention in a state and expect to impact the election in that state just by physically being there. It's how you use the convention and how you engage them."

Kerrigan is quick to point out just how much his party's convention will differ from his political opponents' gathering in Tampa, Fla., one week prior to the DNC.

"Our friends down further south ... chose to put their convention in a battleground state as well and instead have chosen to do the exact same convention they do every four years—closed-door sessions, political elite [and] attendees, nothing open to the public," he said.



Steve Kerrigan. Photo by Jimmie Cobb/JC DigitalPhotographyWorks

Party of inclusion

The DNC will differ from the Republican National Convention in other ways as well. The previous weekend, members of the Democratic Party's platform drafting committee included proposed language for a marriage-equality plank. The exact wording isn't known, but should be finalized in a second meeting in Detroit this week.

Some pundits have said the plank could cause rifts. Debates on marriage equality and anti-gay state constitutional amendments have ripped through communities across the nation for a decade. In North Carolina, the LGBT community is still feeling the sting after voters decided to adopt their own anti-gay amendment in May.

Movement leaders on convention committees say this year's convention will highlight progressive and LGBT caucuses like never before. As for division or controversy? Kerrigan and others think it won't be an issue.

"In this party, I don't think that it will be divisive," Kerrigan said of the new marriage plank. "Certainly, it's something I support. The president supports it. It's another step for this party to really prove that it is the party of equality and inclusiveness and, frankly, civil rights."

Obama announced his position on full marriage equality for same-sex couples one day after North Carolina's amendment vote. Kerrigan said that election was the first time he voted outside of his native Boston.

"The next day, I was touring the Time Warner Cable Arena when the president came out in support of marriage equality," he said. "I think those moments, as hard as that Tuesday, May 8 vote was, those moments when the leader of a country, the leader of a party and a people stand up and said, 'Enough, this is about equality and everyone should have the right to marry the person they love'—that's a moment that I think, this year, will always go down in history as a significant moment."

In an election season where other presidential candidates and conservative leaders took the opposite position, Kerrigan said the president's position draws distinct contrasts.

"I'm thrilled to have that president come here to accept our party's nomination for a second term because his brand of leadership and his brand of courage in standing up and saying what others might not say in an election year is really what makes me proud to be a Democrat and proud to work for the president," he said.

A welcoming city

The May amendment vote attracted national attention. When it passed, LGBT activists across the country began to call for boycotts of the state. Some asked DNC organizers to pull out of Charlotte.

Those calls urged a response from openly gay Chapel Hill, N.C., Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt, an at-large convention delegate for the state, who said talk of boycotts should be set aside.

"End this talk of boycott," Kleinschmidt wrote at The Huffington Post, drawing attention to progressive areas of the state where the amendment failed, his town and Charlotte included. "Visit North Carolina, and help us have the conversations necessary to move this state forward. None of us can do this alone."

The notion that North Carolina is unfriendly to LGBT people doesn't reflect reality. When LGBT delegates and guests show up in Charlotte, Kerrigan said they will have nothing to fear.

"It's an incredibly warm place," Kerrigan said. "The hospitality is great. I've really enjoyed every aspect of it."

Kerrigan also notes the local LGBT community's active role in helping bring the convention to their city.

"From the very beginning during the bid, the community was very involved with pushing for the bid," he said.

The local community has also stepped up during the planning process. Several openly gay locals either work for the Charlotte in 2012 host committee or are planning welcome events and other activities for convention guests.

"I think the delegates and guests will find it as I did which is very warm and welcoming and diverse," Kerrigan said. "The LGBT community here is just as diverse as every other aspect of community life here. And, so I think that is what will be really surprising to people but wonderful as well."

Security and protests

Despite promises of openness and accessibility, convention organizing has attracted criticism from some who plan on coming to Charlotte to demonstrate during the event.

Charlotte City Council adopted a new "extraordinary event" ordinance in January. It gives City Manager Curt Walton unilateral control over tightening security procedures and banning certain items that could be used as weapons or carrying backpacks or using scarves and masks with the "intent" to conceal weapons or identities.

The American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina has objected to the ordinance's vague wording and has urged law enforcement to rely on their traditional policing standards of probable cause and reasonable suspicion.

The ordinance has been used in some local events already, and city leaders have announced they will declare the DNC one of their "extraordinary" events.

Kerrigan said he's "very confident" that law enforcement agencies will be able to balance security needs with the rights of demonstrators, which some have estimated could rival the 35,000 or more delegates, guests and media expected to visit the city.

"The security plan is something that has been being developed for over a year now by a lot of great and hardworking folks in public safety, both the federal Secret Service [the Charlotte-

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NATIONAL NEWS

—Miss. gov. (left) against same-sex marriage

—Troopers allegedly attack queer activist

—Gay man suing Library of Congress

Mecklenburg Police Department] and others," he said.

The plans, he said, will ensure that demonstrators and convention attendees have a safe and secure experience while giving people the ability to speak out and protest.

"That's really what a Democratic convention should be about is that folks should have the opportunity to come here and express their views whether they are supportive of our party or not," Kerrigan said. "This is the Democratic Party and this is a part of the Democratic process in our country."

Some security plans for Tampa have already been released, but organizers in Charlotte have yet to announce details. Kerrigan said information will be released soon.

"It will be done in a way that will allow everybody who needs to do appropriate planning for themselves and to make sure they can get in and around," he said. "Our goal has been from the very beginning to create as little disruption on the average, everyday Charlottean's life and we think we'll be able to do that with these plans."

Get involved

Kerrigan said he hopes the DNC will provide local citizens and members of the LGBT community opportunities to get involved. He encouraged people to follow the convention on Twitter and other digital platforms. One of 13 caucus and council meetings open to the public will be an LGBT caucus held during the first two days of the event. The local host committee's "Carolina Fest" on Labor Day offers more opportunities for engagement.

"I would encourage folks ... to get involved in Carolina Fest and work with our host committee partners to get involved with that and show folks the great opportunities we have here in Charlotte and to attend the caucus meetings and really become a part of the process and a part of this convention," Kerrigan said.

Community members also have the chance to sign up at www.DemConvention.com/community-credentials to volunteer and receive community credentials to attend Obama's speech Sept. 6.

"There are lots of opportunities for the entire community to get involved in what we're doing here in Charlotte," Kerrigan said.

When they do, they'll be fulfilling what Kerrigan said has been the convention's most important focus since planning began: "Engaging Americans and Americans coming together toward the single purpose of moving our country in the right direction."

Matt Comer is the current editor of QNotes, serving in the role from Oct. 1, 2007, to Jan. 20, 2012, and from June 18, 2012, to the present. He can be reached via email at editor@gonotes.com or via phone at 704-531-9988, ext. 202. Follow him online at facebook.com/matthew.mh.comer or at twitter.com/interstateq.

Minn. campaign aims to raise awareness about marriage equality

BY TYLER GILLESPIE

The Great Minnesota Outing is an online video campaign to increase LGBT visibility and raise awareness about the upcoming same-sex marriage amendment vote in the state Nov. 6.

The proposed amendment states "only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Minnesota."

The Great Minnesota Outing comes from "statistics showing that people who know a LGBT person are more likely to support gay rights, but many people do not know that they already know a gay or lesbian Minnesotan," as stated in the press release.

The viral strategy of The Great Minnesota Outing is an effort to inform Minnesotans to vote against the amendment and show communities how many people would be affected by the marriage ban.

"The idea was initially a sort-of personal 'letter to the editor' letting people from my home-



Jon Staff. Photo from the Great Minnesota Outing

town know that this [amendment] affects me," founder Jon Staff, a commercial and social entrepreneur originally from Bemidji, told Windy City Times. "The 21st-century version of the 'letter to the editor' is YouTube."

In the campaign, LGBT Minnesotans record their stories and upload a video, effectively outing themselves to their neighbors.

"The most impactful thing that I could do isn't really time or money, it's just tell people that this affects me personally, it isn't just about people in Minneapolis, it's about people in every town across the state," said Staff.

The Great Minnesota Outing website allows visitors to search by zip code, helping people find LGBT Minnesotans that are close to them.

The customized search enables people to have a more personalized experience with the community.

"As a gay person, your parents are sort-of the pinnacle—once you come out to your parents you think you've kind-of done it all, but in fact there are a whole bunch of other people," said Staff. "It's important for people to remember that this is really about your neighbors and your family members, whether you know it or not."

The videos follow a simple format—the participant tells why they love living in Minnesota and go on to say why marriage equality is important to them. The video participants are instructed to end their submission by saying "for my benefit and the benefit of Minnesotans like me, please vote NO on Nov. 6."

Along with asking for submissions, some of the videos were shot at different events, mainly

Twin Cities Pride. The focus is a digital campaign and the website has already received many video submissions by Minnesotans.

"I've been here in the Twin Cities in Minneapolis for almost 10 years, and I am gay," says "Jules" in a video. "There's so much that I love about Minnesota—I love the people that are here, having the parks system, the outdoors, the ability to be out and open, and the four seasons. [Marriage equality] matters because we're all one in this world and for all of us to be able to have a partner should be a rite of passage for anybody."

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the current U.S. states that issues marriage licenses to same-sex couples are Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York and the District of Columbia.

Civil unions giving state-level spousal rights to same-sex couples are granted in Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey and Rhode Island.

Viral videos such as Dan Savage's "It Gets Better" campaign and others have started to change the way people talk about LGBT issues. Now, helping someone get more informed and exposed to a subject can be as easy as sending a link or updating a Facebook message.

"We try to communicate to [our participants] that [submitting a video] is great, but that is the first step. The second step is what we're trying to do with social media; the way that we are communicating with our participants is that you have to continue that conversation," said Staff. "We're trying to make sure that the website and the videos make an appeal for marriage and that's done by recording the video but it's also done by posting it online and sharing it with friends... hopefully one of their friends will bring it up or [they'll] bring it up and it can continue the conversation however they can before November."

Along with the viral video campaign, The Great Minnesota Outing also spearheads a mentorship program, offers volunteer opportunities, and directs website goers to LGBT resources.

"So far we've had a lot of super positive feedback—I had an English teacher write to me and say 'thank you for sharing this story, it will make a difference... We're really encouraging people to share their stories on the website.'"

For more information about The Great Minnesota Outing or to help share participant's videos, visit www.greatminnesotaouting.com.

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Betty DeGeneres weighs in on 'Care with Pride'

BY JOE FRANCO

In a unique and unprecedented move, Johnson & Johnson has teamed with Walgreens to create "Care with Pride." The program offers coupons for products manufactured by Johnson & Johnson and redeemed at Walgreens. The brands represented by Johnson & Johnson are extensive, from Tylenol to Band-Aid and KY to Aveeno, products that consumers use everyday are part of the program.

Betty DeGeneres—mother of Ellen DeGeneres and frequent PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) spokesperson—was chosen as the program's spokesperson. "This is a wonderful program and goes to a great cause," DeGeneres told Windy City Times. "A portion of each coupon redeemed will go to PFLAG, which then will use it for its 'Cultivating Respect: Safe Schools for All' initiative. Johnson and Johnson will donate up to \$300,000."

The coupons are at various Pride events all over the country. "Here in West Hollywood, Walgreens had a huge booth set up giving away the coupon books, sunscreen and other goodies. I think the plan is the same for you in Chicago," said DeGeneres. Those who did not get a coupon book during the recent Chicago Pride Fest can go online and print out coupons.

DeGeneres has been involved with PFLAG since 1997. "I wanted to get involved sooner, but I couldn't have joined then or I would have outed Ellen and that would not have been good. So



Betty DeGeneres. Press photo

as soon as she came out of the closet, I joined PFLAG," she said. "This is a wonderful organization, full of loving and caring family and friends. These folks come in shaken, disturbed or whatever other adjective you could use to describe their feelings when they find out someone they love is gay. Then, they hear our stories, calm down and most return finding the support they needed."

Following the reports of bullying in school and the highly publicized suicides of dozens of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth, PFLAG began the "Safe Schools for All" initiative. "Bullying has always been with us, and sadly, probably always will be, but we can help," DeGeneres said. "Bullies are nothing more than cowards in disguise. These are insecure people who think they need to 'act tough' so they pick on the smaller, weaker person. I'm not a professional so goodness knows why they do it. Maybe they had a hard home life. Maybe they were bullied at some point," DeGeneres said.

"Now with the Internet, it's just gotten worse," she said. "The bullying is always up there for anyone and everyone to see. Thank goodness for the 'It Gets Better' campaign because it really does 'get better.' As part of the kick-off for the 'Care with Pride' program, they flew us out to New York City to see an advanced screen of *Bully*. Yes, the movie is disturbing but everyone should see this film."

PFLAG approached DeGeneres to represent the "Care with Pride" program. "I think this is an important issue and any organization that represents unconditional love—well, that just has to be the best, don't you think?" asked DeGeneres.

This year, PFLAG announced the creation of "The Betty DeGeneres Advocate Award" to those who work towards advocacy, education and the achievement of a world of equal rights regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

"Do you know who they gave that first award to?" joked DeGeneres. "Me. It would be kind of funny if the very first Betty DeGeneres Award went to someone else. I was deeply touched. I've been slowing down on the speaking engagements. But the invitations are just too good to pass up!"

However, DeGeneres was very serious when it

came to the issue of young LGBT individuals and bullying: "As the bullying gets worse, we see these young people committing suicide. I'm not sure it has ever been like this before. That's why PFLAG, through its 'Safe Schools for All' initiative, is seeking to put a bright spotlight on this issue. We need to teach schools, administrators and teachers how to recognize bullying and combat it."

Recently, DeGeneres was involved with the ACLU and its efforts to pass an anti-bullying law in California. "I worked closely with the ACLU in Los Angeles and helped announce the efforts," she said. "The law, here in California, which I think is to take effect in July will actually penalize schools that fail to take action against reports of bullying. The parents will have the right to remove their children from the school where the bullying is taking place, unless the school takes action. It's at least a start."

"I'm not sure what to do about bullying once the children become adults. I don't even want to comment since I'm not an expert. But I do think about what Ellen always says at the end of her show, reminding us to be kind to one another. I think that's so important, just remembering to be kind to one another."

As for parents of LGBT youth, Betty DeGeneres had words of support and advice: "Be sure you are thinking for yourself and not relying on the opinions of others. We don't each come out of the cookie cutter mold the same way. I have heard awful stories of parents abandoning their own children when they come out. There is no excuse for that."

For more information on Johnson & Johnson and Walgreens "Care With Pride" program, go to www.carewithpride.com. For more information on PFLAG's "Safe Schools for All" initiative, visit <http://community.pflag.org/safeschools>.

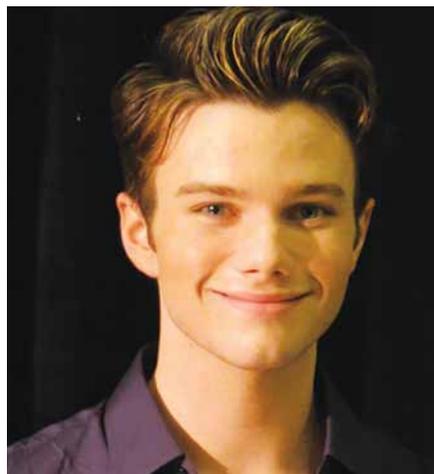
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Chris Colfer. Photo by Jerry Nunn

Equality Forum announces LGBT History Icons

Equality Forum has announced the 31 icons for LGBT History Month 2012 in October.

The individuals selected are: Roberta Achtenberg (government), author Gloria Anzaldua, writer Ann Bannon, songwriter Katherine Lee Bates ("America the Beautiful"), attorney Mary Bonauto, athlete Glenn Burke, artist Paul Cadmus, novelist Truman Capote and actor Chris Colfer (from TV's *Glee*).

The list continues with comedian Kate Clinton, educator Ramon Cortines, actor Marlene Dietrich, actor/director Jodie Foster, designer Jean Paul Gaultier, activist Henry Gerber, actor Billy Haines, activist Mary Kay Henry, Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes, transgender pioneer Christine Jorgensen, playwright/director Arthur Laurents and news anchor Don Lemon.

Rounding out the list of icons are poet Federico Garcia Lorca, Muslim reformist Irshad Manji, activist Katherine Miller, singer Holly

Near, entertainer RuPaul, Holocaust hero Pierre Seel, composer Billy Strayhorn, philanthropist Jon Stryker, Gay Games founder Tom Waddell and pioneer Rev. Robert Wood.

Each day in October (Gay History Month), an icon will be featured with a video, biography, bibliography, downloadable images and other educational resources. These resources will be available at www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com.

Icons are chosen for their accomplishments in their field of endeavor, their status as a national hero or their significant contributions to LGBT equality.

Gerber/Hart aiming to reopen in October

BY KATE SOSIN

The Gerber/Hart Library and Archives is hoping to re-open in October, after months of construction on the organization's new home.

Gerber/Hart has been at the center of a Windy City Times investigation since January when news broke that the library was moving amid questions surrounding its compliance with non-profit laws. Since, the organization has elected a new president and board members to serve alongside past board members that include past President Karen Sendziak.

Current Gerber/Hart Board President Brad Tucker said the library is making progress on construction. According to Tucker, drywall is in place and the organization is waiting on city inspections.

Tucker had previously stated that the library could be open as soon as August. Now, he said, he hopes the doors will be unlocked on Oct. 1.

"It's a guess," he said. "Nothing at Gerber/Hart goes fast."

The organization is planning a re-opening gala for the fall, the details of which have yet to be announced.

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LGBT business conference taking place in Chicago

BY ROSS FORMAN

The 9th annual Business & Leadership Conference, presented by the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC), which is being held in Chicago through Aug. 10 at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel.

The conference connects local and national LGBT businesses with NGLCC's corporate partners, including IBM, American Airlines, Ernst & Young, Wells Fargo, Aetna, UPS and others—all committed to developing a positive environment for the LGBT business community.

The yearly conference, held in Las Vegas last year, includes a series of business symposia, keynote speakers, panel discussions and special events designed to educate and connect attendees. Various tracks of programming are designed to meet the interests and needs of LGBT business owners and entrepreneurs, allied companies and NGLCC affiliate chambers from around the country.

More than 500 people are expected to attend. "The NGLCC's annual Business & Leadership Conference will connect LGBT business owners, affiliate chamber leaders, and national corporate partners to learn more about certification and opportunities for LGBT business owners to grow their companies," said Victoria Fulkerson, NGLCC vice president of corporate relations and supplier diversity.

"The conference's primary focus is to provide a forum for LGBT entrepreneurs to expand their networks and gain insight on new opportunities.

The conference also provides a forum for corporate representative to benchmark and compare best practices for engaging the LGBT business community, while affiliate chamber leaders strategize on how they will lead their community's LGBT business organizations to new heights.

"The NGLCC brings together our members to exchange ideas, strategies, and results as well as celebrate their successes. Over three days, attendees can expect meaningful and substantive seminars, extended networking connections, and practical expert advice from leading entrepreneurs, corporate representatives, and community leaders."

There were about 420 registered attendees at the 2011 conference, held at the Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino, and, for the first time, organizers integrated social media into the conference. This included a designated social media lounge on site with scrolling Twitter feeds.

"The social media lounge generated a new component of meaningful interaction happening in real-time," Fulkerson said. "In addition, the NGLCC team and leadership challenged attendees to connect via social media in a way that has truly strengthened the interconnectivity of our member network beyond the conference and into 2012."

Also new in 2011 was the debut of the popular "Roll the Dice" contest, similar in concept to the ABC-TV show Shark Tank. (Incidentally, Barbara Corcoran—one of the entrepreneur "sharks" featured on that show—is slated to speak at this conference.) During this general

plenary session, three competitive and unique LGBT business owners took to the stage to pitch their business expansion ideas to four venture capitalists and financial experts. The experts judged the pitches and opened up dialogue on specific business challenges faced by entrepreneurs searching for capital.

"Chicago has a robust LGBT community with many excellent LGBT-owned companies," Fulkerson said. "The city and surrounding area is also home to many of the NGLCC's corporate partners and companies that are making significant efforts to connect with the LGBT business community. We are excited to work in partnership with our affiliate chamber in the area, the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, to engage local LGBT entrepreneurs as attendees, participants and our local partners in producing this event."

Organizers are hoping for at least 25 percent of the attendees to be from Chicago and the surrounding area.

"Our conference excels at fostering business relationships and developing new opportunities," Fulkerson said. "Attendees will no doubt walk away with strong new and renewed connections as well as potential customers. We expect to have a high number of certified LGBT-owned business enterprises (LGBTBEs) that will be attending our conference for the first time this year. They will have the chance to cultivate long-lasting relationships with fellow entrepreneurs, corporate representatives, and community leaders alongside our members that attend year after year."

Fulkerson said Chicago was chosen as the host city because it is, "the nexus and heart of the American Midwest." Plus, she added, "Chicago's allure is born from its diverse community and hub for global enterprise. Our affiliate, the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, has been a huge advocate for bringing the conference to Chicago."

The conference is geared toward LGBT business owners looking to strengthen their com-

pany and access new customers, educational resources, and a strong network of advocates for their future growth and success, Fulkerson said. "The conference unites affiliate leaders, business owners, and corporate representatives to share best business practices and participating in an ongoing dialogue about LGBT inclusion and diversity."

"The NGLCC's National Business & Leadership Conference aims at highlighting and showcasing remarkable LGBT business talent from across the nation. [Since] the Chicago region is a strong business center, the conference will draw upon our constituents locally as well as nationally. We hope to raise awareness about issues the LGBT business community faces and the unique talent it has to offer. Not only will the conference feature extraordinary leaders in the business world, it will be a forum for the exchange of innovative ideas ranging from solutions to best practices—in the streets of Chicago and around the globe."

For more information about the conference, visit www.nglcc.org/2012conference.

Hall of Fame nomination deadline extended

The 2012 deadline to nominate individuals, friends of the community and organizations for induction into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame has been extended to Monday, Aug. 13.

Nomination forms can be downloaded or printed from the Hall of Fame's Web site (www.GLHollofFame.org) or requested by calling 312-401-8893 and leaving a mailing address.

Completed nominations should be sent to The Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame, 3712 N. Broadway, Unit 637, Chicago, Ill., 60613-4235.

The 2012 Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame induction ceremony and reception are scheduled for early November.

For more information, call Israel Wright at 312-401-8893.

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GOP reps call for bipartisan support of anti-violence act

BY JAMIE ANNE ROYCE

Republican U.S. Reps. Judy Biggert and Robert Dold met with community leaders, advocates and social-service providers July 31 to call for bipartisan support of an LGBT-inclusive reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

In May, the House of Representatives passed a version of the VAWA reauthorization bill that cut protections and programs for same-sex couples, college campuses, indigenous tribes and undocumented immigrants. The Senate previously approved those protections in April.

"We want to serve everyone who enters the door, that's why we are calling for bipartisan support of [an inclusive] VAWA," said Biggert. "The law must clarify policies for victims who are LGBT ... There is simply no excuse to allow VAWA to fall to election year gridlock."

The LGBT-inclusive VAWA would provide funding for programs serving LGBT people experiencing domestic violence, and prohibit discrimination in VAWA funding based on gender.

VAWA—enacted in 1994 to provide grant money for police departments and agencies to aid victims and prosecute domestic violence offenders—has received bipartisan support every time it has needed reauthorization. But this go around, the fight is falling mostly along party lines, with many GOP Congress members objecting to LGBT and undocumented immigrant protections.

"All victims deserve justice," said Vickie Smith, CEO/executive director of the Illinois Coalition

Against Domestic Violence. "I urge Congress to support the end of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in all corners of our country."

Forty-four percent of LGBT and HIV-positive survivors of intimate partner violence were turned away from shelters, and 55 percent of LGBT survivors who went to police were denied protection orders, according to National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs reports.

"An inclusive VAWA would change all of this and it would send a clear signal to our courts, to our state governments, to our social service providers that we are here for all people regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity," said Brian Richardson, director of public affairs for the Center on Halsted.

The Center on Halsted provides support to approximately 200 survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Chicago, according to Richardson.

"LGBT people face the same rates of domestic and sexual violence as our straight counterparts," said Richardson. "Unfortunately, we do not have the same access to shelters, to social service providers, to programs that our straight counterparts do."

House Speaker John Boehner appointed eight Republican Congress members to an unformed conference committee July 30, but the Senate has yet to name committee members. Once both committees have been selected, they will workshop a bipartisan version of the bill.

Biggert is confident an agreement can be reached. "Any claims that the bills are too far apart are simply not true," she said.

Until then, VAWA funding and guidelines will



U.S. Rep. Judy Biggert talks while other speakers look on. Photo by Jamie Anne Royce

continue under the latest reauthorization from 2005.

"I, for one, believe that the more inclusive bill is the right path," said Dold. "Frankly this is about protecting individuals all across the country, and we should pass this bill and pass it quickly."

President Barack Obama has threatened to veto an uninclusive version of VAWA.

"This is not about campaigns or the next election—for our community, this is life and death," said Richardson. "It is time to stop politicking and start saving lives."

ALCC 'Planet J-Pop' event Aug. 15

AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC) is holding its annual summer benefit Wed., Aug. 15, 6-9 p.m. at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

Building on a history of travel-related themes, this year's benefit is "Planet J-Pop: From Tokyo with Love." Among other things, there will be a silent auction with more than 150 items from Chicagoland business as well raffle prizes that include round-trip tickets to Japan courtesy of Orbitz.

Tickets start at \$50; see www.AIDSLegal.com.

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Talking with trans Fla. commissioner candidate Gina Duncan

BY DERRICK JOHNSON II

Political candidates often want to show voters they are common, everyday people. Gina Duncan, who is running for Commissioner of Orange County, Florida was president of her high school, homecoming king and captain of an undefeated state championship football team. She is also an alumna of East Carolina University where she played football on a scholarship. Duncan wants people to know that she is the average citizen who simply happens to be transgender.

Windy City Times: What spurred you to run for Orange County commissioner?

Gina Duncan: Well, I've had a very fortunate and amazing life. I was in banking for 30 years. The last 13 years I was with Wells Fargo. I was their regional manager. I retired from banking and opened my own small business, a travel agency. I was also committed to the Orange County Chamber of Commerce. I felt it was time to give back to my community and after working with the chamber I realized how much wasn't being done on the county level.

WCT: What do you hope to accomplish if elected?

GD: The main thing I hope to accomplish if elected is to return county government back to the people of district five. My opponent has been in office for 10 years and has had to abstain from voting 102 times due to conflict of interest. Our current commissioner represents special interest, big business and not the citizens of District 5.

WCT: Has your visibility as a member of the LGBT community affected your campaign at all?

GD: I've been very pleased that we have stepped past the sensational issue of a transgender candidate running in Central Florida and we have stayed focused on the issues of the citizens of Orange County.

WCT: What's your opinion on the visibility of the trans community in general?

GD: Obviously, it's important in this race because it's another step forward for the transgender community. When I'm successful in this campaign it will be historic in that I'm the first transgender elected official in Florida. If in doing so it normalizes the transgender experience and enables other transgender individuals to achieve their goals, then all the better.

WCT: How did you come to the decision to transition?

GD: As with most transgender people you have no choice. I could no longer live a life that I



Gina Duncan. Photo by Leigh Thor of Thunderclap Photography

knew was so wrong that I made the very difficult decision to transition. As you might know, the suicide rate in the transgender community is alarmingly high. For many, the circumstances of daily torment—of not being able to be their true self—becomes intolerable. This is why I believe it is so important for transgender people to be out and visible and hopefully successful—so that others will see that you can succeed in life as you transition to become your authentic self.

WCT: What reactions did you receive after deciding to transition?

GD: I was very fortunate to have positive circumstances framing my transition. I worked for a very progressive corporation, Wells Fargo, who completely supported my decision and helped educate my 26 branch managers and 250 employees who, at that time, reported to me. I also was fortunate in that my large and supportive family were with me every step of the way.

Now does this mean it was all smooth sailing? No. At Wells Fargo, the competition used my circumstances to recruit my top salespeople, and many employees who remained had a difficult time understanding my situation. Many external clients also were reluctant to understand my situation and elected to take their business elsewhere. Over time, however, the pushback

from employees and clients diminished and, to this day, both business and personal relationships have endured.

WCT: Some proponents of radical feminism have argued against the inclusion of transgender women in the fight for gender equality. They disqualify transgender women as men pretending to be women. How have you dealt with anti-trans misogyny?

GD: Frankly, I have not had to deal with a lot of it in central Florida. However, people who have that mindset are ignorant of transgender issues. It's important to understand that people who are transgender seek to align their physical being with their soul. Personally, I see myself as a woman, pure and simple. I am a woman running for an elected position.

WCT: What do you think about the portrayal of transgender people in the media—or the lack thereof?

GD: I think that the media often portrays transgender individuals to the extreme. For ratings or to sell newspapers, media often sensationalizes transgender stories. Media tends to lean towards the drag queen image versus normal transgender men and women living a normal life and trying to achieve their dreams.

I think over the last five years there has been a market improvement in the portrayal of transgender people on television, in print media and social media, and a great deal of progress has been made because of brave people stepping forward to tell their story and normalize the experience. People like Chaz Bono and the Miss Universe contestant [Jenna Talackova] have been great examples of the positive image that should be portrayed of transgender people.

WCT: Aside from transgender men and women, the trans community includes agender,

bigender and intersex individuals. With this in mind, what do you think it would take for American society to move away from the gender binary towards a more inclusive method of gender recognition?

GD: That is already occurring. I do a great deal of public speaking to universities and colleges in central Florida, and it is very clear that future generations do not see the world in terms of a binary perspective. Our college kids and young people are embracing gender diversity in ways like never before. I recently spoke to a diverse group of students at the University of Central Florida and, in many cases, it was very difficult to identify a specific gender; the great thing about that is these young people were totally comfortable in their own skill and living authentic lives.

WCT: What needs to be done to end workplace discrimination against trans people?

GD: Well, besides legal remedies that need to be in place that include human-rights ordinances and other non-discrimination legislation, the most important thing that needs to be done is continued education and awareness of the transgender experience. As president of the LGBT chamber of commerce, I interact with many international corporations who are our corporate partners. These corporations believe that their business success hinges on creating a welcoming and diverse, friendly environment where their employees can bring their best and their brightest to their jobs every day. It is critical that our social environment aligns with these positive steps being made by enlightened corporations.

For more on Duncan, visit www.ElectGina-Duncan.com.

HHS: Anti-bias law protects trans patients

BY KATE SOSIN

In a move applauded by several LGBT organizations, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has declared that all federally funded healthcare facilities are banned from discriminating against patients on the basis of gender identity or expression.

In a letter to a group of national LGBT organizations, HHS issued its view that an anti-discrimination law enacted in 2010 as part of the Affordable Care Act covers LGBT people.

"We [HHS] agree that sex discrimination prohibition extends to claims of discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity and will accept such complaints for investigation," wrote HHS Civil Rights Director Leon Rodriguez.

The letter comes on the heels of a ruling from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission earlier this year that stated that

sex discrimination laws covered transgender workers.

The letter means that healthcare facilities that accept Medicare, Medicaid or other federal dollars cannot discriminate against transgender or gender-variant patients. LGBT patients who experience sex discrimination in federally funded clinics, hospitals and doctors' offices can file complaints with HHS.

Transgender people report high rates of discrimination in healthcare settings, a reality that has made many trans people hesitant to seek needed medical care.

Mara Keisling, director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, said in a statement that the letter is an important new tool but not the end goal.

"HHS affirms our position that these abuses are now clearly illegal," said Keisling in a statement. "But a law explicitly banning health care discrimination based on gender identity is the next step. Our community needs medical providers to know what their obligations are and passing a law is the strongest and clearest way to do that."

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Chick-fil-A fallout results in lawsuits

BY KATE SOSIN

The continued fallout over Chick-fil-A head Dan Cathy's anti-gay remarks continued to embroil Chicagoans for a third week that ended in two lawsuits and a standoff of between local restaurants in what some have jokingly named "the chicken wars."

Chicago Republicans hit Ald. Proco Joe Moreno with a formal complaint, alleging that the 1st Ward alderman abused his position when he vowed to block the opening of a Chick-fil-A in his ward because Cathy said his company was "guilty as charged" of opposing same-sex marriage.

The Chicago Republican Party announced the complaint at an Aug. 1 press conference at City Hall.

The complaint, filed with Attorney General

Lisa Madigan and the Illinois Department of Human Rights argues that Moreno violated the Illinois Human Rights Act when he promised to deny Chick-fil-A a building permit. Moreno's declaration came in the wake of CEO Dan Cathy's statement that he was "guilty as charged" of opposing same-sex marriage and operated the company on "Biblical" principles.

"Not only has he used his power over zoning to punish someone with whom he disagrees politically," said Chris Cleveland, vice chairman of the Chicago Republican Party. "He has used government power to engage in overt religious discrimination against a person who merely expressed a sincerely held religious belief."

Republicans have also criticized Mayor Emanuel, who backed Moreno, but the Aug. 1 complaint only names the alderman.

The complaint asks Madigan to investigate the

matter. A spokesperson for Madigan said her office was not yet commenting on the complaint.

Madigan has been supportive of LGBT causes in the past and recently filed to intervene in support of two lawsuits that seek marriage equality in the state.

Reporters hammered Cleveland and Chicago Republican Party Chairman Adam Robinson on the legal standing of the complaint, stating the complaint addressed Moreno's statements and not his actions.

Cleveland and Robinson said they believe that Moreno's statements are enough to constitute a violation of the act.

"The statement was a criminal action," said Robinson.

TCRA files complaint

But also on hand were representatives from LGBT policy organization The Civil Rights Agenda (TCRA).

TCRA Executive Director Anthony Martinez called the GOP complaint "baseless."

"I don't think it's an issue of free speech," said Martinez. "We're not talking about an individual. We're talking about a corporation. ... He was speaking on behalf of the company and stated company policy."

The organization has filed complaints against Chick-fil-A, alleging that the franchise violated the Illinois Human Rights Act when its chief operating officer, Dan Cathy, made statements against gay marriage.

The complaint came a day after Chicago Republicans filed their complaint.

The TCRA complaints have been filed on behalf of one LGBT family, according to a statement released by the organization.

"In our current high speed media and social media environment, Chick-fil-A has announced and caused to be published, to hundreds of millions of people, that LGBT people are unacceptable and objectionable," said TCRA Board President Jacob Meister, in the statement. "They have made it clear the lives of LGBT individuals are unacceptable to them and that same-gender families are unwelcome at Chick-fil-A."

The complaint claims that because Cathy's statements were made about company values, were anti-gay in nature and were not denounced by local chains, the company violated state law that allows for equal access to public accommodations.

TCRA submitted the documents to Illinois Department of Human Rights Aug. 2.

Cardinal George wades into the fight

Also joining the battle was Catholic Archbishop Francis George, who enraged Chicago's LGBT community last year when he said the Pride Parade was at risk of morphing into something like a Ku Klux Klan gathering, protesting against Christianity.

George criticized Moreno and Mayor Emanuel, who previously stated that Chick-fil-A was unwelcome in the city because its values were not

Chicago values.

"I was born and raised here, and my understanding of being a Chicagoan never included submitting my value system to the government for approval," wrote George in a statement on the Archdiocese of Chicago website. "Must those whose personal values do not conform to those of the government of the day move from the city?"

The statement goes on to argue that marriage is a union between a man and woman.

PFLAG responds to the controversy

PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) National released a statement in support of Cathy's right to free speech and to donate to anti-gay groups.

"But let's be clear," the statement said. "It is also the right of millions of LGBT people and their families, friends, and allies to use this same right to free speech to protest that position, and to educate the public as to just where the revenue from Mr. Cathy's business is going."

Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day

Chick-fil-A supporters flooded restaurants in Orland Park and Chicago Aug. 1 as part of a national demonstration of support for chain and Cathy's comments. LGBT activists countered the demonstration with kiss-ins at chains across the country Aug. 3, but according to the L.A. Times, the kiss-ins drew much smaller crowds.

Chicago did not have an official kiss-in event, although Windy City Times received reports that a handful of LGBT advocates had gone and kissed in front of the restaurant regardless.

Local LGBT organization Gay Liberation Network is planning a demonstration Aug. 8 at the Chicago franchise, 30 E. Chicago Ave. A statement from the organization said the demonstration will not support government censorship of Chick-fil-A but will launch a boycott of the chain. The picket will take place 4-6 p.m. More information is available at www.gayliberation.net.

Activists to protest Chick-fil-A Aug. 8

Chicago LGBT-rights activists will re-launch a boycott of the Chick-fil-A chain with a protest Wed., Aug. 8, 4:30-6 p.m., at the chain's only outlet in the city, at 30 E. Chicago Ave.

Since Chick-fil-A President Dan Cathy made his views against marriage equality known, the controversy has become national, with opponents and supporters of same-sex marriage holding protests and counterprotests.

In a statement, Andy Thayer of the Gay Liberation Network—the group organizing the boycott—said, "As our movement against Anita Bryant showed a generation ago, even very entrenched bigots can be defeated by smart and effective use of boycotts, demonstrations and other direct mobilizations of LGBTI's and our allies."



The Chick-fil-A restaurant at 30 E. Chicago Ave. Photo by Andrew Davis



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Chicago Chick-fil-A owner goes on record about gay rights

BY KATE SOSIN

Lauren Silich may not be a household Chicago name, but her restaurant has made headlines in every major media outlet this week. Silich is the owner of Chicago's only Chick-fil-A, 30 E. Chicago Ave.

The franchise has come under intense scrutiny in recent days after the corporation's CEO made statements against same-sex marriage.

That controversy has spread to Chicago where Ald. Proco Joe Moreno has vowed to block the chain from moving into his ward (Silich is not associated with that deal). Windy City Times caught up with Silich to ask her views on gay rights and to confirm media reports that her store donated to LGBT groups this year.

Windy City Times: So how did you come to open a Chick-fil-A in Chicago?

Lauren Silich: I'm from Chicago, my husband is from Chicago. I was in marketing for about



Lauren Silich. Photo courtesy of Silich

10 years here in Chicago. ... Chick-fil-A was actually my client. So that's how I got to know Chick-fil-A. We opened last year, June 16. We have about 97 employees now.

WCT: I saw reports that you've donated to LGBT groups. Who have you donated to?

LS: It's been two years in a row, even though we've only been open for a year, I think their event happened to be right when we opened, and just recently we did it again. They asked for a raffle prize and the event made sense for us because it was in the city. The Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame. (Windy City Times confirmed this with the Hall of Fame. According to a Hall of Fame spokesperson, Chick-fil-A has donated bags of prizes twice, including a coupon for free Chick-fil-A for a year.)

They asked. They've been the only one that has asked. We haven't really gone out and asked 'hey, can we donate to you?' We just look at the ones that ask.

WCT: So what is your stance on same-sex marriage?

LS: I think that given the whole recent event, it doesn't really matter what I believe—it matters how I run my restaurant. And obviously, we don't have any discriminatory policies in place in any way, shape or form. I mean that's the law. I run my restaurant so that we serve everybody, regardless of belief or orientation or lifestyle.

I have several gay and lesbian employees that have been with me for a long time, and it's never been an issue... And a lot of my employees aren't that familiar with the brand because they're Chicagoans. So to them, I'm the Chick-fil-A brand. When this whole thing exploded, they're like, "This is crazy. You would never."

WCT: So, weighing in on the marriage issue is a bomb for you either way?

LS: You have an issue that quite possibly is one of the most controversial, talked-about and passionate issue of our lifetime. What I find interesting is how people have taken the personal views of our CEO and have translated that into discriminatory policy. It hurts my heart that people would think I would run my restaurant in any way that was discriminatory. ... The fact is that Dan Cathy's comments are his personal

views, and every CEO in the country has personal views. That doesn't necessarily mean that their stores on a local level, or their employees believe that.

WCT: But Chick-fil-A has also donated to anti-gay causes. There is also a lot of concern that spending money at Chick-fil-A locally fuels a company that opposes gay rights nationally.

LS: I absolutely understand that people have that concern, and I think that that's a valid point. If people choose not to eat here because a percentage of my profits going to corporate, then that's definitely their choice. I think it's great that we live in a country where we can vote with our wallets. The only thing that I would challenge people, is that let's make sure on a holistic level that we're voting fairly.

WCT: Okay, so you're not going to answer the gay marriage question, but do you consider yourself a friend of the LGBT community?

LS: Absolutely.

WCT: Do you consider yourself a supporter of LGBT rights?

LS: Absolutely. Without a doubt. I really believe, quite honestly, that we all, everyone who is a citizen of the United States, deserves to have the same freedoms. I believe that if we have healthy homes and love for our kids, and

we're raising kids or no kids or whatever, if we all just... my answer to that question is yes. I am a huge supporter. I'm a Chicagoan, I have friends in the gay community, and I know that love exists anywhere.

When I opened this restaurant, I knew that the CEO, that the family was very conservative. And just like they have a right to believe what they believe, so do I and so do you and so does everybody else.

WCT: Have you taken a hit financially from this controversy?

LS: We haven't. We're actually up. I'm not going to lie, I didn't know what to expect. So it's been interesting to see, but we are up.

WCT: Is there anything you want to add?

LS: I would just challenge anybody who is super passionate about it to come into the restaurant and ask for me. I'm always here. Come in and just talk to me about it. If at the end of the conversation, you decide not to come in here and spend your money, I think that's fine. ... I would just challenge the LGBT community to get to know me and be well-rounded about all the things that Chick-fil-A does and then make a decision. If that decision means not coming here or never going to a Chick-fil-A again, I have to support that. That's America. That's our right.



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The meal at Hearty Aug. 1. Photo by Jamie Anne Royce

Boystown eatery hosts 'Chick-fil-Gay'

BY JAMIE ANNE ROYCE

In response to Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day, hundreds gathered Aug. 1 at Hearty restaurant in Boystown for a "Chick-fil-Gay" counter-fund-raiser to support Equality Illinois.

Conservative politician Mike Huckabee called for traditional marriage supporters to patronize Chick-fil-A amid the backlash from the LGBT community after Chick-fil-A President/COO Dan Cathy publicly said, "I think we are inviting God's judgment on our nation when we shake our fist at Him and say, 'We know better than you as to what constitutes a marriage.'"

Hearty restaurant owners and partners Steve McDonagh and Dan Smith decided to fight back, offering a breaded chicken breast sandwich on a toasted buttered bun with pickles and a side of waffle fries, a la Chick-fil-A's classic. All of the proceeds went to Equality Illinois.

"We decided to make lemons out of lemons," said McDonagh.

McDonagh and Smith, who have a son together, previously battled Huckabee in 2010 when he came out against gay couples adopting, saying

"Children are not puppies." The couple publicly invited Huckabee to dinner in their home so he could get to know their family.

"We wanted [Huckabee] to know who he was hurting with his language," said McDonagh.

Huckabee did not respond to the invitation.

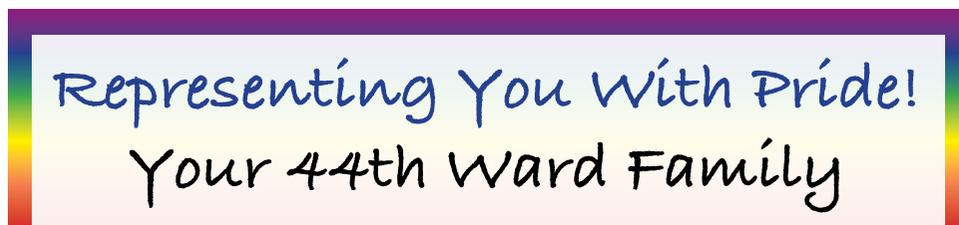
Local politicians, including openly gay officials state Rep. Greg Harris and Ald. James Cappleman, also stopped in for a Hearty chicken sandwich.

"I'm getting married in September to my partner of 20 plus years, and I want to send a message to Mr. Cathy that we don't tolerate bigotry," said Cappleman.

Patrons were waiting outside when the Hearty restaurant opened at 5 p.m. McDonagh expected to raise at least \$2,500 for Equality Illinois from sandwich sales and donations.

"I've had people calling me from across the country to donate," said McDonagh. A New York man bought 25 sandwiches over the phone, all of which were donated to the Lakeview Pantry.

"This is a really fun night. It's amazing, the response," said McDonagh.



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Oak Park man returns scout badge over anti-gay policy

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

An Oak Park resident has returned his Eagle Scout badge to the Boy Scouts of America in response to the national organization's decision to uphold its long-standing policy that excludes the involvement of gay scouts, leaders and parents.

Rob Breymaier, who works as the executive director for the Oak Park Regional Housing Center, said he has always opposed to the policy. As an adult leader for nearly 12 years in his native Toledo, he knew of gay Scouts and leaders, yet he kept quiet about it. Ultimately, it played a huge factor in his choice to leave Boy Scouts in 2000.

Breymaier even considered sending back his Eagle Scout badge as early as 2002, but he held onto it in hopes that the policy would change. He even enrolled his 8-year-old son in Cub Scouts last year.

So in the wake of the July 17 vote to affirm the discriminatory policy, Breymaier decided to pull his son out of Cub Scouts, turn in his badge, write a letter of complaint and cut all ties with the 102-year-old organization that gave him what he describes as "the most important thing I did as a teenager to grow into an adult."

"I felt like I'd be a hypocrite if I continued," he told Windy City Times. "That vote was maddening. I was upset about it; I felt embarrassed about it."

Breymaier is just one of many Eagle Scouts in a movement that has grown rapidly in reaction to the decision, which came after a quiet two-year internal investigation into the policy.

"We are definitely the folks that have reached the pinnacle of Scouting and have lived our lives according to Scout values," Breymaier said, "and the fact that we're in disagreement with this policy is a good indication that maybe Scouting is heading in the wrong direction."

Burke Stansbury, a former Eagle Scout from resident of Seattle, Wash., started to collect letters and images of returned medals about a week after the decision on eaglebadges.tumblr.com. In the last few days alone, the site has gone from 15 letters to nearly 60.

Like Breymaier, Stansbury had also heard of others sending back their Eagle Scout badge 10 years ago but "never got around to it."

According to the official Boy Scouts site, making Eagle requires 21 additional merit badges, six months in a leadership position, organizing a service project and passing a board of review, so it's reasonable to believe that it would be hard to give it up.

"For me, I think it would be a lot harder and a lot more painful to hold onto it at this point," Stansbury said.

Yet while more Eagle Scouts are sending back pins, they're not all in agreement about whether Boy Scouts will ever abolish its 21-year-old policy.

"My position is that it's not going to change," Stansbury said. "It's time to cut our ties and no longer participate or have anything to do with a bigoted organization."

Breymaier, meanwhile, has begun to develop an inclusive, informal group with friends and neighbors as an alternative to Boy Scouts. He says depriving Scouts of membership and volunteer numbers will place a strain on the organization and get executives to listen.

"We have an optimistic view that change will come and that we won't have to do this for long," Breymaier said.

Scouts for Equality is one organization that has been attempting to create change within Boy Scouts for a number of years, but both Breymaier and Stansbury agree that at this point more external measures need to be taken.

LAGBAC to stage mock gay weddings at Market Days

The Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago (LAGBAC) is inviting people to participate in mock same-sex marriages at Northalsted Market Days Aug. 11 and 12.

All couples, same-sex or otherwise, are welcome to participate in the "ceremonies" which will be held at 3 p.m. on both days at the LAGBAC booth at the festival. The booth is expected to be on the 3300 block of North Halsted Street; participants are urged to arrive early.

For further information, contact Cecilia Horan at choran@hinshawlaw.com or James Nawrocki at jnawrocki@gwclaw.com.

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Former Congressman Patrick Murphy at the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" panel. Photo by Kate Sosin

ABA confab panel looks at DADT repeal

BY KATE SOSIN

A panel at this year's American Bar Association meeting examined the success and shortcomings of the repeal of the military's ban on openly gay service members Aug. 3.

The panel, "LGBT Service Members and the Armed Forces One Year After the End of Don't Ask, Don't Tell" explored both the remaining burdens on LGBT military families and the persistent ban on transgender services members.

While the repeal of DADT was significant, said panelists, the military has not mandated LGBT anti-discrimination protections, and the Defense of Marriage Act continues to prevent many military families from receiving equal benefits.

Moreover, the repeal did not remove the ban on transgender service members. A strictly gendered military means a lack of space for transgender service members, said veteran and LGBT-rights advocate Denise Brogan-Kator.

"My personal view is that there isn't a reason [for keeping it gendered]," said Brogan-Kator.

Panelists argued that President Obama could issue executive orders extending protections to LGBT military members. But former Congressman Patrick Murphy said it is unlikely to happen before November elections.

Still, said Murphy, the outcome of the presi-

dential race could truly determine the fate of DADT.

"It is likely if Mr. Romney is the next president of the United States, it could go back to how it was before [the DADT repeal]," said Murphy. "I don't think it is campaign rhetoric. I do think he will do it."

The panel was presented by the American Bar Association Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Other panelists included Servicemembers Legal Defense Network Legal Director David McKean and U.S. Army Judge Advocate General Major Shannon McLaughlin. Jackie Gardina, professor at Vermont Law School moderated.

LGBT bar association honors straight ally

BY ERICA DEMAREST

The National LGBT Bar Association honored Equality California Executive Director Laurie Hasencamp at its annual Allies for Justice awards ceremony on Aug. 3.

"Laurie's work epitomizes the strength of our

straight allies working in the community," said D'Arcy Kemnitz, executive director of the bar association.

A retired attorney, Hasencamp has served as Equality California's interim executive director since February. She also sits on Lambda Legal's board of directors and the GLSEN National Leadership Council.

"Huge amounts of work need to be done—especially considering that the size of the LGBT community is relatively small compared to the task at hand," Hasencamp said in a statement. "We lose ground if we're not ever vigilant."

Hasencamp fell ill and was unable to attend the awards ceremony. Longtime friend and fellow attorney Bill Barrett accepted on her behalf.

The event was conducted as part of the American Bar Association's annual conference, which was held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

Up next for the National LGBT Bar Association is its annual Lavender Law Conference and Career Fair, which will be conducted in Washington D.C. Aug. 23-25 at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

For more information, visit www.lgbtbar.org.

Five local LGBT attorneys receive national honor

Five local attorneys have been named to the The National LGBT Bar Association's Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40 Class of 2012. (Forty attorneys across the country compose this year's class.) The local honorees are:

—Anneke Diem (Quarles & Brady LLP): Diem practices in the firm's corporate-services group. Among other things, her practice focuses on representation of clients in the sale and acquisition of businesses as well as the raising of capital by clients in private-securities offerings.

—Michael Jarecki (Law Office of Michael Jarecki): Jarecki is an active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), a professional immigration bar of nearly 11,000 attorneys and law professors. He also chairs AILA's national working group for LGBT immigration issues. Additionally, Jarecki founded the AILA Chicago Chapter's LGBT Committee, in which he co-chaired 2007-2009.



Jeremy Protas. Photo courtesy of Thomas Ciesielka

—Givonna L. Long (Ulner & Berne LLP): Long's practice areas involve complex business litigation; consumer and commercial litigation; and broker-dealer and investment litigation. She has represented a wide range of clients in disputes involving breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, tortious interference, unfair competition, misappropriation of trade secrets, securities fraud and breaches of non-competition, non-solicitation and non-disclosure agreements.

—Joseph M. Manicki (Sidley Austin LLP): Manicki is a partner in the firm's employee-benefits group. Among other things, he counsels clients in a wide variety of industries with respect to the design, implementation and administration of employee benefit plans and executive compensation arrangements.

—Jeremy Protas (Marshall, Gerstein & Borun LLP): At this law firm, Protas prosecutes and secures patents in diverse technologies including process control, wireless communication, software development and retail systems. He also has a scholarship in his name that awards \$1,000 to an LGBT law student interested in a career in patent law.

Law Project offers forums for nonprofits

The Law Project (TLP)—a project of The Chicago Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights under Law—is offering a series of five workshops for individuals looking to form nonprofit organizations.

Participants can register for each workshop individually or—for a significant discount—for the entire five-course series at once. Workshop titles include "Nonprofit Board Basics," "Business Planning for New Nonprofits," "Developing a Budget for a New Nonprofit," "Funding a New Nonprofit" and "Legal Steps to Create a 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization."

The first series of workshops will be held at The Law Project, 100 N. LaSalle St., Aug. 23, Aug. 30 and Sept. 6; advance registration is required. Visit www.thelawproject.org.

ABA honors AIDS Legal Council of Chicago

AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC) was among 10 recipients of the inaugural Alexander D. Forger Award, which recognizes outstanding attorneys and organizations around the country committed to delivering legal assistance to people with HIV.

Given by the AIDS Coordinating Committee of the American Bar Association, the award is named for Alexander D. Forger, a New York attorney who provided leadership during the early years of the epidemic to ensure that people with HIV had greater access to *pro bono* legal help.

Other award recipients of the Forger Award included the HIV Law Project of New York, Whitman-Walker Health Legal Services from Washington D.C., AIDS Law of Louisiana in New Orleans, and the AIDS Legal Referral Panel in San Francisco.



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Kate Bornstein talks gender politics, Scientology at event

BY KATE SOSIN

Kate Bornstein has been a lot of things to a lot of people, but at a special Aug. 4 appearance at the Center on Halsted, the iconic transgender writer and performer was more family to the audience than she was performer.

Bornstein, whose candor is as famous as her work, shared an emotional two and a half hours with attendees.

She presented her signature piece, "On Men, Women and the Rest of Us," before taking questions and much praise from audience members.

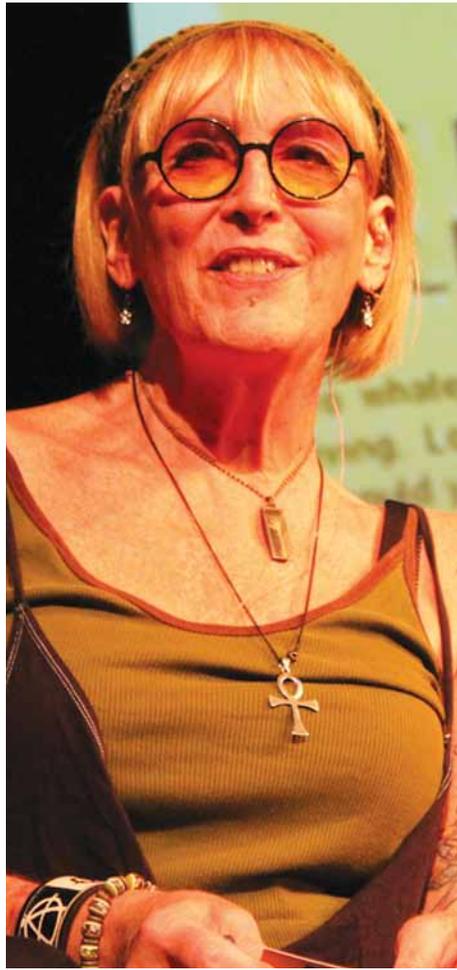
"On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us" is an exploration of gender and sexuality as well as a complicated homage to Bornstein's family, including her daughter from whom she is estranged.

It is a narrative that has had many talking since May when Bornstein released her memoir, *A Queer and Pleasant Danger*. The book documents Bornstein's 12 years as a Scientologist, a time she discussed in a tear-filled question-and-answer session at the center.

"Twelve years in the Church of Scientology... that's still more embarrassing than saying, 'Hi, I'm a transsexual,'" Bornstein joked.

Bornstein's 39-year-old daughter remains a Scientologist and has been taught that Bornstein is evil, she said. Her memoir is dedicated to her daughter, but the two have not spoken in decades.

Two audience members identified themselves as excommunicates from the Church of Scientology. One woman explained through tears that leaving the church allowed her to love LGBT people.



Kate Bornstein at the Center on Halsted event. Photo by Kate Sosin

"I think there's hope for us; there's hope for your daughter," she told Bornstein, who also welled up.

Other audience members sought Bornstein's opinion on trans issues, language and community.

Bornstein said she believes new identity categories are emerging in the United States around gender and sexuality, specifically around the identities of "queer" and "straight." She believes, she said, that an increasing number of

LGBT people are "straight" and an increasing number of heterosexual people are "queer."

"'Straight' would be the right wing of sex and gender politics," said Bornstein. "'Queer' would be the left wing of sex and gender politics."

Finally, Bornstein advocated for unity across identities, which she said are largely binary and arbitrary.

"We need to stop building barriers between ourselves," she said.

Chicago Spirit Brigade's 'Starry Night' Aug. 25

The Chicago Spirit Brigade (CSB) will host its third annual "Starry Night" fundraiser reception Saturday, Aug. 25, 7-10 p.m., at 3323 N. Paulina St.

Starry Night is the CSB's annual "Spread the Cheer" cocktail party. This event supports CSB's Plus 25% Matching Program, which allows the organization to donate 125 percent of every dollar raised for its beneficiaries. Last year, CSB donated more than \$16,000 to local charities such as Lakeview Pantry, Housing Opportunities for Women and the Families' & Children's AIDS Network.

Tickets are \$50; see www.ChicagoSpiritBrigade.org.

'Upstanders' exhibition to honor Chicagoans

The Chicago office of international educational nonprofit Facing History and Ourselves announced the 12 individuals and groups honored in "Upstanders: Portraits of Courage"—a featured local component of the organization's multimedia exhibition "Choosing to

Participate." The exhibition will be shown at the Harold Washington Public Library's Winter Garden, 400 S. State St., Aug. 27-Nov. 11.

Among those being honored are Jacques Agboby, Diamond Lenoir and Elizabeth Adebisi of Stockton Elementary School. According to a press release, they "were the backbone of an entire eighth grade class that was dedicated to building tolerance and fighting injustice. The three were actively involved in creating an anti-bullying and LGBTQ awareness assembly at Stockton last winter.

Great Lakes Leather Weekend Aug. 23-26

The Great Lakes Leather Alliance will hold its GLLA XI Weekend Aug. 23-26 in Indianapolis, Ind.

Events will include the kissing booth, workshops, book signings, bootblack ice-cream social, master/slave interviews and a vendor fair, among many other items.

Highlights include a "Fireside Chat" with Chicago leather activist Doug O'Keeffe and entertainer/activist Queen Cougar; an "Indiana Younger Kink Pool Party"; and a performance by Sir Jim Ellison.

Registration is now \$129; for more info, see www.GreatLakesLeather.org.

Evenings

The Garden is open until 9 p.m.



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Foster mother becomes advocate for homeless children

BY JAMIE ANNE ROYCE

Listening to Lauri Burns' story, it's hard to believe the technology manager at a defense firm in California and foster mother to 31 children was once herself a troubled teen.

Raised in an abusive environment and saying she felt like her "dad's punching bag," Burns was a ward of the state, growing up in group homes, detention centers and mental institutions.

"The girls in the group homes when I was growing up were 90 percent gay girls. I'm just more comfortable with them," said Burns.

She began using intravenous drugs and engaging in sex work by the age of 19. Soon thereafter, she gave birth to a daughter, who was taken in by family members.

"Most people say, 'God, her kids have been taken away. Why doesn't she get sober?,' but addiction is a vicious cycle," said Burns.

While working as a prostitute one night, Burns was picked up by two men. They drove her to the woods with the intention to kill her, raping and beating her for hours.

"I had been suicidal for years. I thought, 'This is an opportunity, Lauri, to get it over with,'" said Burns.

The men were scared someone had heard her screaming, beating her unconscious and abandoning her in the woods. A man found her lying there, and took her to get help. Burns saw it as a sign to get sober.

"This guy, who I call an angel, just showed up in the woods and saved my life," said Burns. "I really believe my life was saved that night for a reason."

Burns entered recovery at 23, and began hosting a meeting for women in recovery out of her home. One of the women showed up to the meeting and told the group she had left her daughter in a crack house. Burns intervened, of-



Lauri Burns. PR photo

fering to take care of her daughter while the mother got help for substance abuse, beginning her foray into foster care.

"I seemed like a magnet for teenagers and at-risk, abused kids," said Burns. "After a few more kids came into my house, I decided I would be a foster parent."

Foster children age out of the system at the age of 18, at the rate of 25,000 per year. Sixty-five percent of youth leaving foster care are in need of housing, according to the Children's Advocacy Institute of the University of San Diego Law School.

"I was a foster mom to 18 kids before I realized kids were leaving the foster system to homelessness. I had no clue, because my kids just stay my kids forever," said Burns. "I had no idea that there were other foster parents who were just saying, 'OK, 18 is here. You gotta go.' And the reason is, obviously, because the check stops."

Burns takes on foster children who have been turned out of other foster homes and/or have experienced intense trauma and abuse.

"You call a normal person and tell them, 'OK, we have a kid. She's been shooting up, involved in sex trafficking and she steals. Would you like to take custody?' They'll say no," said Burns. "Call me and tell me the same story, and I'll say 'Yes, definitely. Where can I get her?' because

I know exactly what these kids need because I was one of these kids."

Burns opened the Teen Project in 2007, after marathon fundraising and community support, as transitional housing for six homeless youths, committed to supporting them through college. While not an LGBT specific service, Burns estimates approximately 80 percent of the youth she works with are members of the LGBT community.

Five girls live in Burns's home now, and only one is still in foster care. Those who age out, stay with Burns and go to college.

"I feel like these kids are my family. I grew up with these kids," said Burns. "They feel like family to me. I don't feel like I'm doing anything special."



Fun at Latin@ Pride Picnic

Fun was the name of the game (at least before the rains came) as Orgullo en Accion hosted the Latin@ Pride Picnic Aug. 4 in Humboldt Park near the corner of Division Street and Luis Munoz Marin Drive.

The event was free and intended for all, including allies, family and children. There were sports and entertainment; however, there were also booths that aimed to educate attendees about issues such as HIV/AIDS. Photos by Ed Negron; more online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



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Age
24

Relationship status
Single

Job title
Associate artistic director, Red Tape Theatre in Chicago

Hobbies
Movies

Favorite movie
Love Actually and Hotel Rwanda

Favorite TV show
Dr. Who

Favorite local bar
Bad Apple in North Center

Little-known fact
Minored in American Sign Language at DePaul University



"I enjoy [the job]; it's a change of pace from what I'm normally doing, which is directing," Rooney said. "In this case, I'm specifically working with the playwright and the stage managers on a more managerial level to make sure that everything is up to date, everyone has what they need."

"What I enjoy the most is, I get to be a part of the Steppenwolf process. Most of the time when I'm freelancing, I'm working with store-front theatres and while it's more hands-on, it is not always of the same caliber that nationally recognized Steppenwolf is. I get to work with amazing artists [at Steppenwolf.]"

Rooney said his role as associate artistic director for Red Tape Theatre is more of an administrative position, pushing forward for the artistic vision of the company rather than an individual project.

Three Sisters is Rooney's fourth show that he's been involved with at Steppenwolf. Each is a little different, he said, "but it's a fantastic opportunity and a great insight to original theatre."

Rooney got connected with Steppenwolf while in college, when he was the stage manager for The Twins Would Like To Say.



"Things are going really well for me, and hopefully there are opportunities for other work at Steppenwolf in the future," said Rooney, who also serves as the interim executive assistant to the dean at DePaul's theater school.

"The exciting part of being a freelancer is that I get to work with all of these companies and get to meet all of these people," Rooney said. "It may not be as steady as some other jobs, but it provides me with great connections and insights into theatres of different sizes."



John Rooney is at home in the theater; it's just his current gig at Steppenwolf Theatre Company is a change from his normal role as director or producer.

He is a script supervisor at Steppenwolf, hired on a show-by-show basis, and recently has been working on Three Sisters, which runs through Aug. 19.

Rooney's role involves working with the stage manager and the playwright, processing all changes and updates.

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



Rev. Sean Parker Dennison

Pronouns
He/his/him

Identifies as
Transgender

Life's work
Unitarian Universalist Minister

When did you start questioning gender?
 "I remember questioning around age five. I cut my hair off and wanted to wear boys' clothes. It was definitely not allowed, so I tried to find ways to make 'female' work for me. I discovered the trans community at age 30."

Hobbies
 "Computers, writing, art, my three dogs and cat, social media, justice."

What is the best thing about being trans/gender-variant?
 "The amazing strength and beauty of the trans people I've come to know and love as family. It's also been part of a journey to uncover and heal from the consequences of having privilege in many ways, helping me overcome divisions that I was taught and become aware of the gifts of so many amazing, daring, loving, strong, complex people. And of course, I've been able to learn to love all the complex parts of myself along the way."

When did you start questioning gender?
 "I remember questioning around age five. I cut

my hair off and wanted to wear boys' clothes. It was definitely not allowed, so I tried to find ways to make 'female' work for me. I discovered the trans community at age 30."

Do you have any coming out stories that you want to share?

"I came out in seminary, which was an amazingly supportive place. I was scared to death to come out and tried to cover it with bluster. I told the president of the school, 'You and this seminary are going to have the privilege of watching me transition from female to male.' I totally didn't believe it myself and thought I would be kicked out. To her credit, the president, Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, leaned forward and said, 'How wonderful! Tell me about it!' She then invited the entire faculty, staff and student body to her home for the showing of a trans-positive documentary and Q&A with Jamison Green. When I expressed gratitude for all she was doing she said, 'It's not your job to educate this school, it's mine.'"

What do you think is the most pressing issues facing trans people?

"I'm very concerned about the amount of conflict I see among the parts of the trans/gender-variant community ourselves. We can't afford to be fooled into acting as gatekeepers or engaging in infighting. We need each other and we need to learn from each other. We need to nurture connections among the various "sub-groups" in our community and let those connections strengthen our movement."

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

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VIEWPOINTS

WINDY CITY
TIMES

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TRACY
BAIMChick-fil-A:
Losing chickens,
winning wars

"Growth of Overt Homosexuality in City Provokes Wide Concern." That was the headline on the front page of The New York Times Dec. 17, 1963.

We've come a long way, gaybies, and the Chick-fil-A insanity of last week is not going to send us back to the dark ages of human sexuality and gender identity.

In the midst of the chicken slaughter of 2012, I have been plowing through hundreds of pre-Stonewall articles about the "homophile" movement. I'm finishing a book about gay newspaper history, *Gay Press, Gay Power*. The straight media victimized, criminalized, medicalized and demonized us—and if we were lucky, they just left us alone.

The positive coverage was so few and far between that generations of LGBTs grew up thinking they were alone, without role models—except those fired as "perverts" by our federal government, or those arrested in bar raids.

Well, you can't say the media is ignoring us any more. And very few of them demonize us.

The mainstream media coverage of the gay community started to really shift during the early years of the AIDS crisis. Many gays were fed up with the homophobia and AIDSphobia, and fought back in huge protests against the media. Anti-media protests really started in the 1960s and 1970s, but by the 1980s the community was much stronger. AIDS was a final straw, and out of that anger many new groups were formed to fight media bias.

By the 1990s, with more journalists coming out of the closet, thanks in part to the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, the mainstream media kept moving along to better coverage.

The media is now produced by a new generation of reporters and talking heads that actually include some openly LGBT people. They know homophobia when they see it, and most of them are on our side. Yes, there are some outliers, those who simply choose to stereotype and present biased views of who gay people are.

What happened last week is our community lost the message because our allies spoke on our behalf (seeking a ban on the restaurants in Chicago and elsewhere). That was a tactical mistake from well-meaning supporters. I can't blame them for this, and it did do some damage. But that damage is offset by our momentum.

What was more disappointing than our allies making a mistake was our lack of leadership on this issue by those paid to "run" the official national gay movement. There was mostly silence

from the top, and this created a vacuum to be filled by a wide range of responses, most of them uncoordinated and ineffective. But some responses were deliciously fun, and humor proved to be the best medicine to those of us watching in horror at the lines of homophobia.

The good news is that it doesn't really matter that we have no true leaders. In fact, the lack of leadership in our movement means that we are like "Whack-a-Mole." You can go after one of us, but we are ready with thousands more ready to fight back.

Finally, to my friends who were so depressed at the rare outward display of bigotry—the pride these anti-gays showed in kill-a-chicken-for-hate-day—I would say that this is simply the manifestation of the hate we all know exists beneath the surface.

This was a chance for our allies, those who are that silent majority who do not see and experience this hate against us as much as we do, to see it for what it is. It is a chance to put a face to the hate we talk about over Thanksgiving dinner, the hate we allude to when we fear for our homeless LGBT youth, the hate that is so theoretical and unreal to our allies—until they see it on CNN and MSNBC, manifested in the lines for a chicken sandwich.

It's the same thing I say when Fred Phelps and his Westboro Baptist Church clan show up at pride events and funerals. The hate is real, and sometimes it is very helpful to put a face to it, so that our allies will work harder to keep the arc of justice moving in our favor.

Tracy Baim is publisher of Windy City Times.

DANA
RUDOLPH

MOMBIAN

13 myths about
LGBT parents

My son is going through a Pokémon phase, spending hours playing the collectable-card game and reading about the mythical characters. Not all myths are fun and games, however. Below are a baker's dozen of myths about LGBT parents and our children, all harmful in various ways.

—**LGBT parents are a new phenomenon.** Fact: Openly lesbian and gay parents have been around since the early 1970s, as evidenced by the first custody cases involving lesbian moms and their ex-husbands.

—**"Same-sex parents" are the same as "LGBT parents."** Fact: Some of us are single. Some of us are transgender or bisexual, and in opposite-sex couples.

—**We all had our kids after coming out.** Fact: The earliest known gay and lesbian parents had their children in opposite-sex relationships before coming out. Even today, according to Gary Gates, a demographer at UCLA's Williams Institute, many LGB parents are raising children from prior opposite-sex relationships, although the number is dropping somewhat as people are tending to come out earlier. (There is less data to confirm this for transgender parents.)

—**We're all white.** Fact: UCLA's Gates has also found, using data from the U.S. Census, that child-rearing is "substantially higher" among African-American, Latino and Native American/Alaskan native individuals in same-sex couples. (The census only gives insight into same-sex couples, not other parts of the LGBT community.)



Gary Gates. Photo courtesy of Cathy Renna

—**We're all educated and middle-class.** Fact: Childrearing is "substantially more common" among same-sex couples with lower levels of education, according to Gates. Children of same-sex couples also have poverty rates twice those of children in heterosexual married couple households.

—**All our kids will be LGBT.** Fact: This myth has driven much of the fear from the right-wing. More than 40 years of legitimate social science research, however, has shown that our children are no more likely to be LGBT than children of non-LGBT parents.

—**None of our kids will be LGBT.** Fact: Some LGBT parents will indeed have LGBT children—not because we caused them to be so, but because, statistically speaking, it's bound to happen. As a community, we must make sure not to deny them their identities and visibility because we are afraid of the myth above.

—**Having LGBT parents negatively impacts children's adjustment.** Fact: Cambridge University psychologist Dr. Michael Lamb, one of the world's leading experts on child adjustment, recently published an article summarizing over 40 years of research. He concluded that child

adjustment is explained by factors other than family structure and parents' sexual orientation. Ongoing results from Dr. Nanette Gartrell's long-running U.S. National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study have also shown that children of lesbian parents are just as happy as those of non-LGBT parents. And a 2010 study by Dr. Charlotte Patterson of the University of Virginia found that adopted children of same-sex couples were well adjusted and developing in positive ways unrelated to their adoptive parents' sexual orientation.

—**Our kids won't be affected at all by having LGBT parents.** This is a tricky one. Zach Wahls, who became a YouTube sensation last year when he spoke at an Iowa House hearing on marriage equality, famously said that the sexual orientation of his moms has had no impact on his character. They influenced his character in ways unrelated to their sexual orientation, he explained. That's his experience, and it is a valid one. In other families, I suspect, the obstacles parents have been forced to overcome in order to live authentic lives—and the desire for social justice this creates in many of us—have shaped our characters in ways we pass on to our children. A few studies have also shown that children of lesbian and gay parents have a broader conception of gender roles than children of non-LGBT parents.

Children of LGBT parents can also be teased or bullied about their parents' LGBT status. Their families may face legal, social, and financial obstacles. While these may be considered ways that having LGBT parents affects children, we must remember that the root cause here is not the parents' sexual orientation or gender identity per se, but rather biased attitudes and unfair laws.

—**We're completely different from any other type of family.** Fact: Diapers. Laundry. Sports practice. Homework. Family dinners. Occasionally we get wild and go to the park or play checkers.

—**We're just the same as any other type of family.** Fact: We still do not have full equality

Turn to page 24

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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

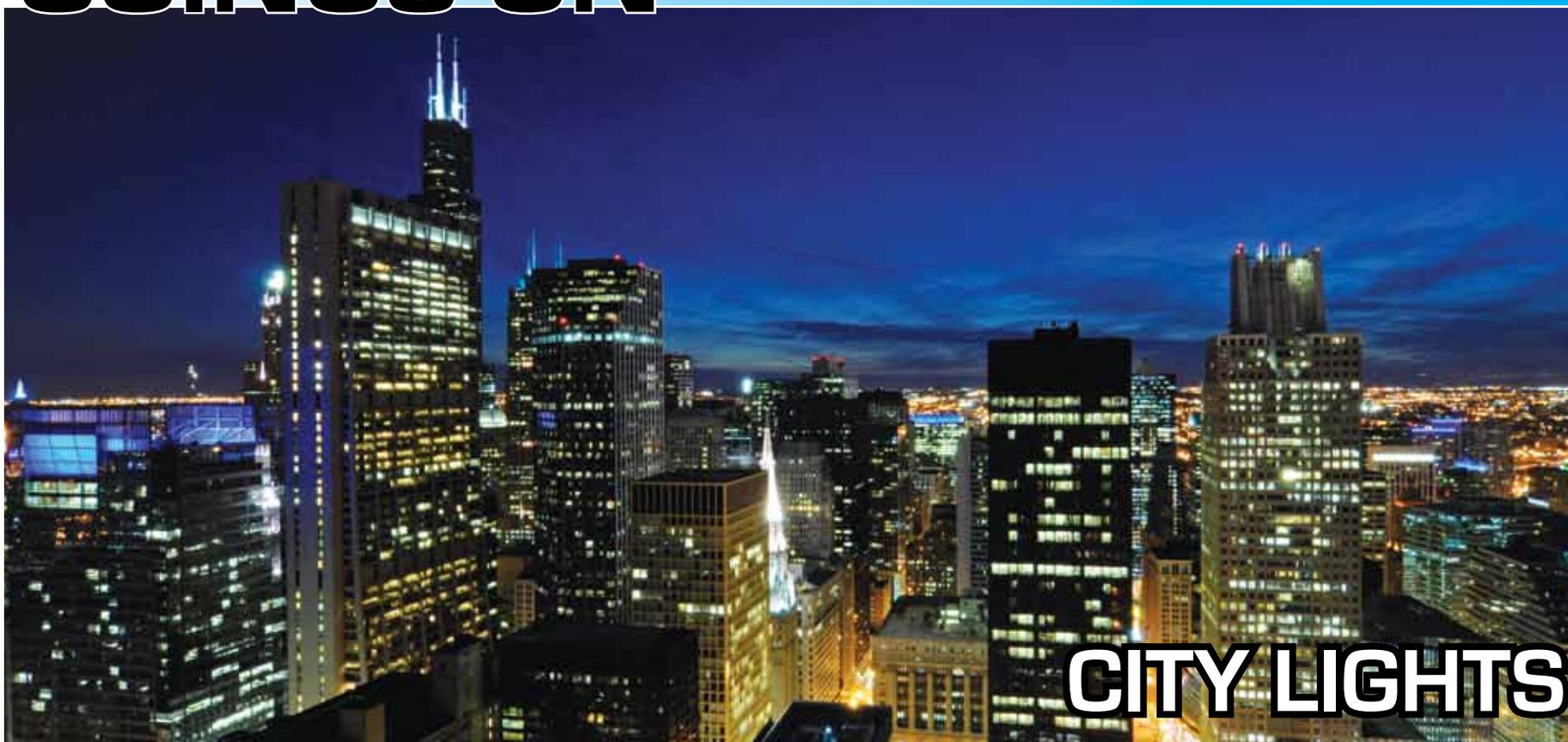


Photo courtesy of Baird & Warner

CITY LIGHTS

This is just part of the view from the residence featured in WCT's real-estate section this week. See page 39.

DISH

A movie and dinner.
Page 40.

Photo from *Step Up Revolution*
by Sam Emerson



THEATER

'Park' adaptation.
Page 24.

Photo from *The Great Trailer Park Musical*
by Joshua Albanese Photography



TELEVISION

'Move' and groove.
Page 38.

Photo from *All the Right Moves*
by Oxygen Media/Neil Jacobs



Dance for Life and the Chicago Dancing Festival

BY VICKI CRAIN

In numerous speeches since taking office in May 2011, Mayor Rahm Emanuel has declared his desire to make Chicago "an international destination for dance." With two highly anticipated major dance events this month, we're 'off to a great start.

Dance For Life, an annual dance concert that brings local companies together on the same stage for a one-night-only show to raise funds for HIV/AIDS prevention and services, and the **Chicago Dancing Festival**, a week-long fest of free dance events featuring performers from around the world, hit city stages in late August. One brings community together for a great cause; the other provides access for all Chicagoans to see world-class dance without the big-ticket price.

Now in its 21st year, Dance For Life has raised almost \$4 million to directly benefit people living with HIV/AIDS. The 2012 beneficiaries are AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago Women's AIDS Project and The Dancers' Fund. Local heavy hitters Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Joffrey Ballet, Luna Negra Dance Theater, River North Dance Chicago and Ron de Jesus Dance will perform in this year's show along with world premieres from two prominent gay Chicago choreographers. Randy Duncan and Harrison McEldowney will create brand-new works to close each act of the performance.

Both men have a long history working with

Dance For Life and their show-stopping numbers have become highlights of this unique evening of entertainment. Duncan, 53, has been choreographing the finale since 1995, only missing one year while he was in Singapore helping to open an arts school. McEldowney, 50, took over choreography duties for the finale that year after many stints utilizing his trademark wit and style to set a humorous dance for the raffle held during intermission. The format adopted last year for the 20th anniversary will be repeated, with McEldowney creating a finale for the first half of the show and Duncan back as the closer.

Area dancers are handpicked for these prestigious finale spots as they donate their time and talent for the rehearsals and the Aug. 18 performance. "They throw their hearts and souls into this," said Duncan. "Most of them have never worked together before, so there's a feeling of community. The energy in the studio is so great! It's like molding clay until you have a sculpture."

Duncan's piece will be set to original music by Emmy Award-winning musician/composer Andy Mitran with costumes by Chicago artist Jeff Hancock. McEldowney will collaborate once again with long-time creative partner Jeremy Plummer of C5, a local creative company that blends dance with aerial acrobatics, for an all men's piece that's sure to take the audience by surprise. Works from past years have incorporated cubes, silks and nets with music from acts ranging from Annie Lennox to Queen.



Randy Duncan. Photo courtesy of Duncan

Participating in Dance For Life was never really a question for these two choreographers. Having lived through the early days of the AIDS crisis, the cause is near and dear to them. "I was living in New York City in the '80s at the start of it," McEldowney said. "So many friends died. Nobody knew what it was; nobody talked about it. There was a lack of understanding, a questioning of why them and not me? I'll do anything I can do to help people and keep the memory alive."

Duncan lost many friends as well, including his mentor Joseph Holmes, who gave him his first dancing job when he was 15. "In the early days, we had so many dancers falling, dying from AIDS," he said. "To be a part of something that was going to help these dancers live ... I wanted to do anything I could. My one way of giving and sharing my support was to lend my own gift."

In an interesting sidebar this year, one of Duncan's former students at Chicago Academy for the Arts—Joffrey Ballet dancer Michael Smith, 30—makes his debut as a Dance For Life choreographer. His work, "Knowest Not," was originally created for six Joffrey dancers in 2011

and was presented at a benefit for EMBARC Chicago. As a frequent Dance For Life participant who has worked with Duncan and McEldowney, he's excited for this opportunity. "It's weird to be able to share the stage with them," said the out, up-and-coming choreographer.

Less than 48 hours after the Dance For Life performance, the Chicago Dancing Festival kicks off six days of free programming with the Chicago Now performance at the Harris Theater for music and Dance at Millennium Park. This new program features all Chicago companies, including festival newcomer Giordano Dance Chicago in a commissioned piece by Swedish choreographer Alexander Ekman along with two world premieres.

Programming for the rest of the week includes a day of dance films, an evening of outdoor dance including a free lesson, a discussion on the state of dance in Chicago moderated by dance writer Zac Whittenburg and a performance looking at dance outside of Chicago. The festival finishes with a "Celebration of Dance" on the outdoor stage at the Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park. (This event is free and open to the public.)

According to festival co-founder Jay Franke, Chicago's dance-loving mayor has been a huge help. "The mayor has been one of our most supportive fans," said Franke. "I think we are very lucky to live in a city where not only are the arts important to our mayor, but especially dance. Don't be surprised if you see him at almost all of our performances."

Dance For Life will be presented at The Auditorium Theatre at Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy. on Saturday, Aug. 18, at 8 p.m. A pre-performance gala will be held at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave. Tickets are \$175-\$500; call 312-922-5812 or visit www.danceforlifechicago.com.

The Chicago Dancing Festival will take place Monday-Saturday, Aug. 20-25 at multiple venues. See www.chicagodancingfestival.com.



Airline Miles. Photo courtesy of Hank Perritt

THEATER REVIEW Airline Miles

Playwright: Hank Perritt
At: Modofac Productions at the Second Stage, 3408 N. Sheffield Ave.
Tickets: 773-549-1815;
www.airlinemilesplay.com; \$20
Runs through: Aug. 12

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The name of the airline that abruptly canceled Richard Ginsburg's Frequent Flyer privileges doesn't really matter. What matters is that the retired manufacturer isn't taking their decision lying down—no, siree! He's hired Brendan Scope, a young attorney specializing in litigation of this kind, to sue the company for their loyal customer's untimely rejection. Initially, Brendan's only misgiving is his client's dithering about a troubled son while searching for evidence of his own blamelessness—until the conference where the two men discover that they have something in common.

Don't be fooled by the photos promoting Hank Perritt's play: Our story is not about Brendan and his former boyfriend, Bobby—who turns out to be Richard's volatile offspring—but focuses instead on the estranged father and forlorn lover. Each is prepared to accuse the other of abandoning the boy they both miss terribly, but as both come to recognize the role that squabbling over corporate injustice plays in forestalling confrontation of their pain, an understanding arises between them. Despite their hostilities and suspicions, both gradually offer one another what comfort they are willing to give, and to accept.

With its intensely personal conflicts, intimate universe, brief one or two-person scenes and incidental music supplied by Myron Silberstein and the actors, Perritt's play seems better suited to film or, more accurately, television than to live performance. Although Brendan's wily negotiations with the airlines' legal representative provide humor mitigating the potential soapiness of Bobby's progress through his wasted life, it would be easy for Richard to come off a blustering helicopter-dad, for Bobby to be reduced to a pretty-boy slacker and for Brendan to emerge the self-serving deceiver his increasingly unstable paramour declares him to be.

Director Peter Connor refuses to allow this minor, but capably crafted, drama to succumb

to vanity-production carelessness, however. Veteran Chicago trouper Gary Houston lends our self-made industrialist an avuncular presence contrasting with the youthful impatience of Brandon Thompson's likewise independent-minded go-getter, making for repartee generating the requisite tension. If the object of their contention is written as little more than a McGuffin (though Jordan Phelps struggles to render Bobby worthy of the fuss expended upon him), and if the plot complications are resolved a bit too tidily, the dynamic of the two principal actors transform the 95 minutes of this short-running play into time well spent.

CRITICS' PICKS

Crowns, Goodman Theatre, extended through Aug. 12. The way to hold your head high is to wear a hat on it—so goes the gospel in this roof-raising revival of Regina Taylor's homage to African-American women. MSB

Steamwerkz the Musical, Annoyance Theatre, extended through Oct. 5 (no show Aug. 17). Gay bathhouse culture gets cleverly mixed together with Alice's Adventures in Wonderland in this zany musical that spoofs the similarly named and notorious North Halsted male sauna with plenty of gross-out humor. SCM

The Merchant of Venice, First Folio, Mayslake Forest Preserve, through Aug. 19. Cooler near the lake by day, but not at night. Chill in Oak Brook with this no-nonsense, handsomely staged version of the great classic about intolerance, selective justice and love. Picnics welcome. JA

WTC View, Project 891 at Chemically Imbalanced Theatre, through Aug. 12. Any play connected with the events of 9/11 risks being overwhelmed by hankie-wringing, but Brian Sloan's practical instruction in how to cope with disaster is more timely than ever nowadays. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Ah, Wilderness!

Playwright: Eugene O'Neill
At: Eclipse Theatre Company at The Athenaeum, 2936 N. Southport
Tickets: 1-773-93506875;
www.eclipsetheatre.com; \$28
Runs through: Sept. 2

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Here's a sweet, warm, satisfying show splendidly embraced by Eclipse Theatre—right down to its proudly sentimental heart. First produced in 1933, *Ah, Wilderness!* (the title quotes Persian poet Omar Khayyam) is the only comedy by America's dour greatest playwright, Eugene O'Neill. It's the autobiography he didn't have, the daylight flip side of his monumental *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the writing of which brought O'Neill to tears as he wrestled with his family ghosts.

Ah, Wilderness! takes place July 4, 1906, in New London, Conn.—the same as *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (set in 1912)—and revolves around 17-year-old Richard Miller. (O'Neill was 17 in 1906.) This time, O'Neill provides a wonderful imaginary family to support Richard's adolescent romantic, poetic and political ideas. What if O'Neill's dad had been tolerant and caring instead of an egocentric skinflint? What if his older brother had been a frat boy instead of an alcoholic whoremonger? What if his mother had been the warm-hearted soul of the household instead of a morphine addict? Alcoholism, ubiquitous in O'Neill plays, is confined to a sympathetic supporting character, Uncle Sid.

THEATER REVIEW

The Monument

Playwright: Colleen Wagner
At: Idle Muse Theatre Company at the Side Project, 1439 W. Jarvis Ave.
Tickets: 773-340-9438;
www.idlemuse.org; \$20
Runs through: Aug. 26

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Matthew Nischan's funereal prelude as we enter the room is our first hint that we are not in for a light-hearted summer comedy, but Dennis Mae's scenic design ensures our participation right up to the final curtain: playgoers are seated on minimally-accessible risers, elevating them some three feet above a floor covered in a springy substance called "rubber mulch." Oh, and the show's running time is two hours with no intermission. Those willing to endure these discomforts will be recompensed, however.

Our story begins with a soldier named Stetko, condemned for raping and murdering 23 female prisoners in the line of duty. On the brink of his execution, a mysterious lady offers him his life if he agrees to be her slave. She brings him to her home in the country, chains him like a dog and proceeds to beat him severely. This abusive humiliation continues for many days, while her captive stubbornly clings to his bravado. Finally, she takes him to the forest where his victims are buried, where all is revealed.

Colleen Wagner has written more of a Platonic dialogue than a play, as we define that term. We are not told our locale (hints point to Bosnia, though Stetko exhibits American preferences in pop-music and beer), nor how Mejra, his dubious benefactor, arranged his release into her custody. Early on, we are given unmistakable clues to her purpose in torturing him, so suspense is clearly not Wagner's goal. Likewise undisclosed is whether this unlikely pair's lengthy discussions—of topics such as the nature of love and hate, self-preservation vs. individual responsibility, and the value/futility of vengeance—occur

Ah, Wilderness! could be a model for a family sitcom written with wit, style and a sense of the theatrical. Long for a comedy and written in three acts (played by Eclipse in about two-and-a-half hours with one intermission), the play is filled with brilliant set pieces: the family dinner, the scene where Richard meets a prostitute, the father-son talk on the facts of life, the love scene on the beach. Along the way O'Neill provides lively period-accurate comments on then-radical literature by Wilde, Shaw, Swinburne and Ibsen. It's not simply a valentine to the family O'Neill never had, but a valentine to a way of life already vanished in 1933 (territory explored again by Thornton Wilder in *Our Town* in 1938).

Director Kevin Hagan and company have captured the spirit and attitude of the play with unfussy honesty and heartfelt playing, suitably aided by period-perfect design elements. Hagan's sepia-toned set design is inspired by old-fashioned wing-and-drop scenery, with some references to the actual O'Neill home in New London. Rachel Lambert's period-accurate clothing is attractive without being formal and has an air of summer about it. It's an eye-pleasing show altogether (Mike Winkelman, lighting design). The 13-person cast is a rock-solid ensemble right down to the cameo roles, but first among equals are Brian Parry's pitch-perfect portrayal of Nat Miller—Robert Young, eat your heart out—and trimmed-down Alex Weisman's Richard, whose innocence always remains obvious despite his brash tongue, and Cheri Chenoweth's Essie Miller deliciously alternating between *Mother Hen* and *tack-sharp* comedy.

Ah, Wilderness! is rarely produced; don't pass up this excellent staging.

over a period of weeks, months or years before arriving at their wholly-foreseeable conclusion.

"We'll build a monument that will tell the truth about war!" cries Mejra, as she gathers up the symbolically-fashioned corpses of the dead. The "truth about war" is territory already well-traveled, rendering indispensable the ponderous pace adopted by director Evan Jackson, which succeeds in maintaining a gravity sufficient to camouflage the fundamental absurdity of Wagner's premise. Our patience is also rewarded by the intensely-focused performances of Amy Harmon and Brian Bengtson, who provide respite from the lugubrious polemics with stage business ranging from back-breaking labor recreated so convincingly, you can almost smell the sweat, to the most brutal violence since the Rodney King tapes, courtesy of Greg Poljacik.



The Monument. Photo from Lenny Wahlberg

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The Great American Trailer Park Musical. Image by Joshua Albanese Photography

DOUBLE REVIEW

The Great American Trailer Park Musical

Score: David Nehls; Script: Betsy Kelso
At: Kokandy Productions at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.
Tickets: 773-975-8150 or www.kokandyproductions.com; \$30
Runs through: Aug. 26

Sordid Lives

Playwright: Del Shores
At: Ludicrous Theatre Company at Boho Theatre Heartland Studio, 7016 N. Glenwood Ave.
Tickets: www.brownpapertickets.com or www.ludicroustheatre.com; \$15
Runs through: Aug. 11

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Chicago audiences are in luck if they have a hankering for campy shows about Southerners derisively labeled as “white trash.” Not only is Kokandy Productions staging the Chicago premiere of the 2005 off-Broadway show *The Great American Trailer Park Musical*, but Ludicrous Theatre Company is dishing up a revival of Del Shores’ 1996 comedy *Sordid Lives*.

Now from a critical standpoint, let’s just say up front that neither of these shows would be held up as examples of great writing.

Trailer Park composer/lyricist David Nehls and playwright Betsy Kelso fill their musical with self-aware Southern camp stereotypes, derivative songs that ape preexisting pop hits (like “Proud Mary” and “It’s Raining Men”) and a melodramatic plot twist resolution that feels tacked on.

As for *Sordid Lives*, it may be beloved by the gay community as a starry camp classic film and a Logo sitcom series, but the original play is structurally disjointed and not all of the characters’ motivations are believably justified or fleshed out. Its message of gay acceptance is still vitally needed in certain parts of the country, but the preachy nature of *Sordid Lives* may date itself in the future.

Yet on the plus side, both shows offer guilty pleasure chances for actors to come up with out-

rageous characterizations to deliver line after line of quotable campy dialogue. On this level, Kokandy’s Trailer Park offers a more assured and vocally strong cast that play their stereotypical characters with a degree of grounded reality while also pushing things to the hilt.

Trailer Park leads off with a great Greek Chorus-like trio of Betty (Danni Smith), Donna (Jennifer Wisegarver) and Linoleum (Ashley Braxton) who know all the ins and outs of the Armadillo Acres trailer park in Starke, Fla. These three comment on and play many other roles to help tell the love-quadrangle of toll collector Norbert Garstecki (Jonathan Hickerson); his agoraphobic wife, Jeanie (Christina Hall); his stripper mistress, Pippi (Bri Schumacher); and her murderous ex-boyfriend, Duke (Alex Grelle).

Trailer Park director John D. Glover keeps the show moving at a clip pace with plenty of flash when called for, and he guides his cast to win plenty of laughs.

As for Ludicrous’ *Sordid Lives*, there are many times that you feel that director Wayne Shaw and his ensemble aren’t garnering as many laughs as Shores’ humorous lines would suggest. And only a few actors believably inhabit their wacky Texas characters (in particular: Caitlin Jackson as the homophobic mother Latrelle; Suzanne Bracken as Latrelle’s plus-size sister, LaVonda; and Michelle McKenzie-Voigt as their trying-to-quit-smoking aunt, Sissy).

So if laughing at Southern white trash stereotypes is a favorite comedy brew for you, both Trailer Park and *Sordid Lives* offer up refreshing cold ones this August.

Women’s Work winners named

Playwright Kari Morris and screenwriter Jenny Hagel were named the winners of Pride Films and Plays’ 2012 Women’s Work contest.

Morris wrote the one-act drama *Into the Blue*; Hagel penned the comedic screenplay *Product Placement*.

Finalists included Lynne S. Brandon, Olivia Briggs, Trish Cole, Ilene A. Fischer, Carolyn Gage, Hagel and Morris.

SPOTLIGHT



Tanya Saracho’s *Enfrascada (A Hoodoo Comedy of Jarring Proportions)*, returns to the Chicago area in a special suburban revival of 16th Street Theater’s recent production at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre in Arlington Heights. It’s all about a newly jilted Latina who decides to turn to friends and folk magic for solace. *Enfrascada (A Hoodoo Comedy of Jarring Proportions)* runs Aug. 13-15 and Aug. 19-22 at 7:30 p.m. at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, 111 W. Campbell St., Arlington Heights. Tickets are \$25; call 847-577-2121 or visit www.metropolisarts.com or www.16thstreettheater.com for more information. Photo courtesy of 16th Street Theater.

Judy Fabjance’s ‘Cancer’ now at Stage 773

Originally at Second City’s Donny’s Skybox, Judy Fabjance returns with her one-person show, “Are You There, Judy? It’s Me, Cancer.” It runs at 8 p.m. Aug. 17, 24 and 31 at Stage 773’s Cabaret Theatre, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

In 2008, at the age of 34, Fabjance was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had a mastectomy on Christmas Eve; a week later her lymph nodes removed. She received four rounds of chemotherapy and has been cancer-free since.

General admission is \$17; student and survivor tickets are \$12. Visit www.stage773.com, call 773-327-5252 or purchase at the door.

NEA awards Writers’ Theatre

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) announced that Writers’ Theatre and the Village of Glencoe will receive an “Our Town grant” of \$100,000 to support the design of a new theatre center in the village.

The Writers’ Theatre/Village of Glencoe grant is one of 80 to be awarded across the country during the 2012 grant cycle; the theater the only recipient in the Chicago area this year.

Writers’ Theatre and the Village of Glencoe worked with U.S. Sens. Dick Durbin and Mark

Kirk; U.S. Reps. Robert Dold (R-10th District) and Jan Schakowsky (D-9th District); and state Sen. Susan Garrett, all of whom provided endorsements of the project.

Transgender performer at Fringe Festival

“Storms Beneath Her Skin”—a one-woman show by transgender performer Rebecca Kling—will be part of the Chicago Fringe Festival.

“Storms” explores Kling’s identity and experience as a transgender woman, while examining the nature of apologies, the necessity of surgery, the equations of sex, the weather (metaphorically speaking), breasts and more.

The show runs at Both Sides, 1838 S. Halsted St., Aug. 30-31 and Sept. 2, 3, 6, 8 and 9. The festival itself is Aug. 30-Sept. 9.

Chicago is one of many cities around the world that is part of the Fringe Festival movement. See RebeccaKling.com and ChicagoFringe.org for more info.



Rebecca Kling. Photo from Kling

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under the law, and we still struggle for acceptance and understanding. We may include more people under our family umbrellas, such as donors, surrogates, and birth parents (although LGBT people are not unique in that). We are part of a long history of LGBT people and their accomplishments.

—**Being LGBT is the most important way in which we define ourselves.** Fact: We are parents, neighbors, relatives, and friends; teachers, coaches, scientists, farmers, doctors, cashiers, politicians; musicians, athletes, authors, and more. We are all colors, ages, and physical abilities. Not all of us put

our LGBT identities first.

—**We are redefining family.** Fact: The definition of family has evolved throughout history. In the 20th century, changing divorce laws, more open attitudes towards adoption, and advances in reproductive technologies are only a few of the factors that are continuing this evolution, along with LGBT parents.

Myths, like all good stories, have the power to enthrall. We must live in the real world, however, and dispel the myths that keep us from seeing it.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (www.mombian.com), an award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBT parents.

THEATER

Scot Kokandy's theatrical journey to 'Trailer Park'

BY JASON CARSON WILSON

For openly gay producer Scot Kokandy, show business isn't just business. The 32-year-old Kokandy, a PNC banker, fused his financial prowess and passion for theater together—forming Kokandy Productions.

"There are great actors in this city," he said. "I wanted to put something together."

Kokandy's passion and perseverance brought from the Windy City to Broadway and back, where the company's set to launch its latest work, **Great Trailer Park Musical**.

However, it was *Good Boys and True* that launched Kokandy's theatrical adventure. The play depicts a sex-tape scandal at a prep school involving a star football player, Brandon Hardy, and a poor girl. Hardy tapes their tryst and distributes the tape, in order to keep a secret—he's gay. Kokandy co-produced it with the Towle Theater in 2011.

Participating in a *Godspell* revival took Kokandy and fellow producers straight to the Great White Way. Before becoming a banker and producer, he grew up in Hammond, Ind.

"The first recollection of theater that sticks in my mind was *Starlight Express*," Kokandy said. "It was really something that the family had done as a family activity."

Kokandy found himself on stage, doing high school plays and musicals. Performances included playing Charlie's grandfather in *Willy Wonka* and the Chocolate Factory and the lead—Conrad Birdie—in *Bye Bye Birdie*.

"That was a very interesting experience," Kokandy said of his starring role.

Kokandy performed two shows—with a broken ankle—before heading to the doctor. Miraculously, the doctor and his mother allowed him to do three more shows before getting a cast.

Getting a taste of entertainment took Kokandy back to the stage, on a University of Illinois at Chicago stage. He studied business, but took theater classes. So, he spent more time in the audience than on stage. Musicals strike more of a chord with Kokandy.

"Telling the story through music [and] choreography...I appreciate that extra element," he said. "I really like to see the story told with those elements. It really heightens the experience."

Once Kokandy acknowledged he possessed a producer's best traits, having the best of both worlds was the only option.

"It's really rewarding to see what I was able to organize...all the people. I know what's needed," Kokandy said.

Seeing projects come to fruition left him feeling like a proud papa.

"It's rewarding; it's enjoyable," Kokandy said. "It keeps the energy inside me very high. I never really planned for this."

The newest chapter of his unplanned adventure into show business, of course, has culminated with the premiere of *Great Trailer Park Musical*. Kokandy likes the production's different layers.

"It wasn't just comedy from start to finish," he said, regarding its selection.

"Trailer Park" chronicles the story of Norbert and Jeannie, high school sweethearts who've been married 20 years. Their union is tested when Norbert cheats on his agoraphobic wife with Pippi.

Duke, Pippi's boyfriend, shows up in Starke, Fla.—fresh from Oklahoma City—to fetch Pippi. Betty, Linoleum "Lin" and Donna "Pickles" are also characters caught up in the unfolding drama at Armadillo Acres Trailer Park.

Kokandy said he wants all productions to inspire audiences and cited the message he hoped they gleaned.

"Everything isn't as it appears," he said. "I want them to walk away challenged. Don't make assumptions."

The "fun" production, according to Kokandy, explores a lot of stereotypes. He believes "Trailer Park" drives another message home: Understand really people are coming from.

"Through these characters, there's a lot of heart," Kokandy said. "[Audiences] will be opened to the people."

The presence of that heart in the characters prompted Kokandy to ultimately pick the production.

When he's not guiding his own projects, Kokandy has provided guidance to playwright and producer Mark Blane. Blane, a fellow Indiana native, sought Kokandy's advice on producing his play, *The Rock and the Ripe*.

"Rock" showcases the obstacles the nation's bullied gay youth face—through the eyes of high school students. Blane, according to his website, drew from personal experience.



Scot Kokandy. Photo courtesy of Kokandy

"For most of my life, I only remember being brutally taunted by students, teachers, and people in my community in Indiana," Blane wrote. "Being different, being 'the gay kid,' and sticking out were what caused me to suffer throughout my youth."

Kokandy was happy to give Blane some guidance. "It was really great to help him," Kokandy said.

Kokandy hopes to collaborate with many other Chicago artists, wanting to do his part to keep

Chicago theater at the forefront. Both he and partner Steven Spanopoulos are making—and hitting—their marks. Spanopoulos, a dancer/actor, was last seen in 42nd Street at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire.

"**Great Trailer Park Musical**" runs through Sunday, Aug. 26, at the Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. For tickets, visit www.kokandyproductions.com or call the box office at 773-975-8150.

OSCAR NOMINEE DIANE LANE AND BROADWAY'S FINN WITTROCK DAZZLE IN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' MESMERIZING, SUMPTUOUS CLASSIC.

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DIRECTED BY DAVID CROMER

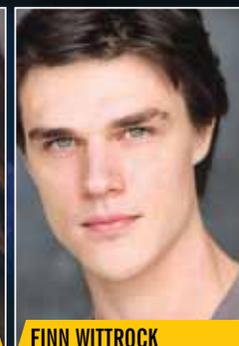
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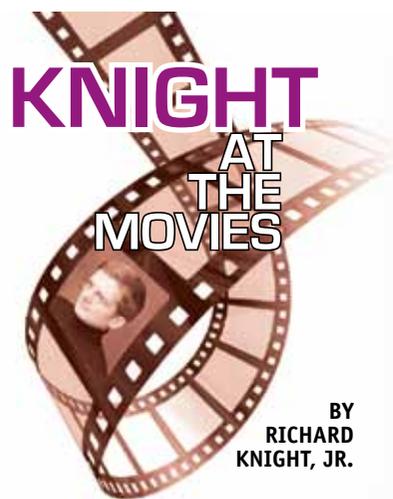
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BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT, JR.

Hope Springs; DVD note

Meryl Streep and Tommy Lee Jones pair up beautifully in **Hope Springs**, a drama with just enough laughs to qualify for the film's "romantic comedy" label. But the strong acting of the two leads is in service to a well-intentioned but very talky script by first-time feature writer Vanessa Taylor and isn't nearly as entertaining as it would like to be. Certainly, it pales next to *The Devil Wears Prada*, the 2006 movie that was the first collaboration between Streep and director David Frankel.

Not that the subject matter—which focuses on an upper-middle-aged housewife trying to put the zing back into her marriage by visiting a sex therapist with her reluctant husband—would suggest otherwise. We are far from the glitzy world of high fashion in *Prada*. Instead, we find ourselves stuck in the nicely decorated though blandly familiar home of Kay, a wife and mother with a part-time job who yearns for intimacy and, better yet, a hot time under the sheets from her dry-as-dust husband of 31 years, Arnold (Jones' character).

After sketching out in the first few moments the emotional downturn of the couple's marriage, Kay makes a sudden decision to shake up the relationship by enrolling the pair in an intensive week with a nationally renowned couple's therapist, Dr. Bernie Feld (Steve Carell, who is restrained in a nothing role). She heads for picturesque Hope Springs, Maine, where the doctor lives; at the last minute, Arnold unwillingly goes along.

Basically, the rest of the movie veers back and forth between the couple's cramped motel room and the doctor's office, as Kay and Dr. Feld struggle to get Arnold to participate in the therapy.

Kicking and screaming, this feisty crabby pants gradually, finally does. Late one night, Arnold gets up from the pull-out sofa and climbs into bed at last with Kay and awkwardly, tentatively holds her as instructed. This breakthrough, however, is only the beginning of the long road back to intimacy and a fulfilling sexual life—for Kay and Arnold as well as viewers, who are forced to endure all the icky, painfully uncomfortable moments right along with the couple.

We mostly get Kay and Arnold engaging in the "assignments" from Dr. Feld—stuff like Kay secretly devouring the best-seller *Sex Tips for Straight Women from a Gay Man*, complete with a peeled banana clutched in her hand at the ready and later trying to spice things up by giving Arnold a blow job in a darkened movie theatre. This admittedly low comedy scene is brought off with expected finesse by the actors; however, as it unreels part of you also can't help thinking about 17,000 other things you'd rather do than watch than Meryl Streep trying to give Tommy Lee Jones head.

Jones, who has spent practically his entire career playing crusty characters who reveal glimmers of emotional depth at just the right moment, expertly does it again here. Streep, too, has been down this path before, playing the desperately lonely Kay, whose body language and pleading eyes telegraph her feelings. And although hope does eventually spring and blossom for Kay and Arnold, as noted, it's as long a haul for the audience as, apparently, it is for them. As the layers are peeled away, a lot of humiliating stuff comes out—but these things never really get resolved or fully addressed, as the goal of the couple getting their mojo back seems to be the doctor's primary ambition. Ironically, the movie, too, has intimacy issues that it never takes the time or seems to have the inclination to address.

Of related interest: *Unforgivable*, the latest from openly gay French writer-director Andre Techine, is a romantic mystery thriller that also focuses on a middle-aged couple. Crime writer Francis improbably finds love with Judith, a one-time model turned realtor he meets when he moves to Venice. After the two marry, he becomes obsessed with his wife's activities and eventually hires an ex-con to follow her whereupon, of course, the plot thickens. The subtitled movie opens exclusively at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave. www.musicboxtheatre.com

DVD note:

Former soap star Murray Bartlett stars in the gay indie film **August** as hunky Troy, who is thinking of moving back to Los Angeles after living in Spain for several years. One of his first

calls is to his ex-boyfriend, Jonathan (Daniel Dugan), who has been happily involved with Raul (Adrian Gonzalez) for years. But apparently, contentment is not a many-splendored thing as a steamy triangle soon forms, with each of the characters re-evaluating his commitment. Although the film comes up short in the plot department (we've been down this road many times before in queer cinema), it's beauti-

fully filmed and scored, nicely acted and is far enough away from the usual queer-relationship drama to make it worth noting. On DVD from Wolfe Video

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

Jason Stuart: Laugh Factory vet is out and proud

BY JOE FRANCO

Before Ellen made the cover of *Time*, before Neil Patrick Harris came out and before Anderson Cooper finally publicly confirmed that he is, indeed, a friend of Dorothy, there was Jason Stuart.

Stuart came out in 1993. He told *Windy City Times* that he "came out on the *Geraldo Show*. They were doing a segment on unconventional comedians and apparently I made the list."

"I found being in the closet exhausting," said Stuart. "It was just so exhausting. The fear of being discovered for who I was became overwhelming and it seemed crazy to remain quiet—so, I wasn't."

Stuart's very first gay-themed show happened to be right here in Chicago, so it is fitting that he returns to The Laugh Factory Aug. 16-18—this time in a new show called "I'm the Daddy and I have the Candy." He said, "The show is about getting older, politics, dating younger guys. I once went out with a guy who had no idea who Barbara Streisand was! Can you imagine? He asked me, 'Wait, doesn't she sing or something?' At this point the KFC spork stabbing should have commenced."

Stuart was the first openly gay headliner for The Laugh Factory and found support from Jamie Masada, its founder and owner. "Jamie [Masada] has always supported me and has always been there for me. I could not do what I do without that support and I am eternally grateful for it," said Stuart.

Still, despite his early success as an openly gay comedian, Stuart encountered the "boys' club attitude" of many comedy clubs and venues across the country. "Gay men were not treated the same way as their straight counterparts," he said. The feat that I am able to work is a grace of God and I am grateful for it." Stuart also found that "people don't see gay men as headliners or even their own spokesman. We see Kathy Griffin and Margaret Cho on RSVP cruises. Even Lady Gaga is speaking for gay men. I am grateful for it, but what about *our* voice?"

Stuart found the sexualizing of men to be omnipresent in television and film, particularly for certain types of men. "If you were under 35, looked white and were chiseled, there'd be something for you," he said. "I play mostly ambiguous roles. I am not the twink. I am not skimpy." It was after more than a decade of seeking work as an out comedian and actor that the Screen Actors' Guild (SAG) approached Stuart to head the committee for LGBT actors.

"In 2006, when the committee was organized, it was just me," Stuart said. "Then, I started to meet other gay and lesbian actors. These men and women were scared and not about to come out. They were afraid of being pigeonholed." Stuart explained that every kind of person has a certain kind of role that is "perfect" for him or her: "If you're a Black



Jason Stuart. Photo by Shannon Youngclaus

woman you'll be cast as a nurse or a mom. For gay men over 35, you're getting cast as a manager of something. It gives you the illusion of power but without having any real power. This happens to everyone, not just gay men and Black women. Every type of person has a pigeonholed role."

Other actors have come out in overwhelming support of Stuart. Billy Cliff—director of *Baby Jane?*, *I Want to Get Married and Hush Up Sweet Charlotte*—said that "[Jason] Stuart is one of the hardest working actors in the business. He's dedicated, funny and a good friend. He shows up genuine and has been an important role model for our community."

John Fleck—from *Weeds*, *Starship: Enterprise and Carnivale*—said, "Jason [Stuart] is one of the nicest gay entertainers I know. Always there with a helping hand to support his fellow actor." Wilson Cruz, known for roles in the TV cult classic *My So Called Life* and the film *Party Monster*, found Stuart to be "Hilarious! He's been an incredible ambassador for us."

Through his involvement with the SAG LGBT Committee, Stuart has made major headway into minimizing the divide between gay and straight actors. New language has been added in contracts that is more inclusive of gay men. Gay men and women now get health-insurance benefits similar to their heterosexual counterparts.

"We're even doing seminars, movies and film festivals, like 'Out Fest' in Los Angeles," said Stuart. "We still have a long way to go, though. The running joke is that if you're straight and play gay in a movie, what will you wear to the Oscars." Recently, Stuart became involved in the Williams Institute of UCLA's survey on openly gay actors. "I'm extremely excited to be a part of this," he said. "Some gay actors don't view themselves as activists but just showing up to an audition as an out gay actor is activism."

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Meryl Streep in *Hope Springs*. Photo by Barry Wetcher

DVD REVIEW

Leave It on the Floor

BY STEVE WARREN

Despite the recent focus on bullying in schools, the worst bullying many LGBT kids face is at home, from parents and siblings.

Old-school meets new in **Leave It on the Floor**, a refreshing musical set in the ball scene immortalized by Jennie Livingston in *Paris Is Burning*, or at least its West Coast equivalent.

It begins when the mother of the teenaged protagonist, Brad (Ephraim Sykes), finds out he's gay and does the worst thing a mother can do—she throws him out of the house. (It's OK. He steals her car.) Brad lands on his feet and discovers another kind of house in the ball scene, where his guide is Princess Eminence (Phillip Evelyn) of the House of Eminence.

The initially hostile house mother, Queef La-



Leave It on the Floor.

tina (Barbie-Q), whose husband is about to get out of prison, says Brad can stay if he learns to walk for the house in an upcoming competition. Brad gets tutored by Carter (Andre Myers), who stole his wallet when they "met cute." (It's OK. He stole Carter's purse.)

It's no wonder Eminence is a house of perpetual losers, when Mama Queef drives everyone away. She adds Princess to the list but it's OK; he steals Brad and takes him along to the competing House of Allure.

A tragedy leads to a scene in which the gay and transgender outcasts and runaways confront the homophobic families that rejected them. Despite dealing with such heavy issues, the film maintains a sweet innocence I associate with Hollywood musicals of the '40s and '50s. People can—and do—burst into song at any moment, with original songs with lyrics by screenwriter Glenn Gaylord.

Dancing is less important an element. The ball competitions, a relatively minor part of the film that provides major eye candy, are more about strutting in character than dancing, so don't expect anyone to get seriously served. *Leave It on the Floor* is more about Brad coming of age and coming into his own, discovering who he is and who he loves.

'Be Good Johnny Weir' on Logo Sept. 17

Outspoken three-time U.S. national figure skating champion and world medalist Johnny Weir will return for the second season of his docuseries, *Be Good Johnny Weir*. It will premiere Monday, Sept. 17, at 10 p.m. ET on Logo.

In this season, "Be Good" will go beyond the ice rink and look at Weir's work and personal life as he balances his drive for the ultimate prize in the skating world with his growing ambition to branch out into various entertainment endeavors.

Visit www.logotv.com/shows/be_good_johnny_weir/series.jhtml; join the "Be Good Johnny Weir" Facebook page; and follow the series on Twitter at LogoTV and #JohnnyWeir for up-to-date news and exclusives.

Johnny Weir.
Photo courtesy of Cyd Zeigler



STUART from page 26

Stuart emphasized the importance of the gay community supporting one another: "We need to buy each other's books, see each other's plays, go and see each other in our movies. I have a great life, but our goal should be to support one another the way straight people do." Stuart himself has a lot to be thankful for and noted some of his upcoming roles this year: "I'm playing a laundry trustee in a prison in *K-11*, I'm in *Bear City 2: The Proposal* and *Hush Up Sweet Charlotte*, [which is] in

pre-production now."

Stuart waxed sentimental about his continued presence and advocacy for out gay actors. "I'm still here and have the passion," he said. "My work is like a lover that just won't stop ... and the sex has gotten even better."

Jason Stuart is scheduled to appear at the Laugh Factory in Lakeview Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 16-18. The Laugh Factory is at 3175 N. Broadway. For tickets or info, call 847-331-5862 or visit www.laughfactory.com. Proceeds from the Aug. 16 event will benefit Test Positive Aware Network.

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NUNN ON ONE: MARKET DAYS

Olivia Newton-John:

On country music, recipes and the Gibbs



BY JERRY NUNN

Australian singer Olivia Newton-John has won four Grammys, sung five number-one singles and crossed genres from country to pop.

As an actress, she first made her mark playing Sandy in *Grease*, then followed that with memorable roles in *Xanadu* and *Twist of Fate*. Olivia even played on our team as a lesbian in *Del Shores' Sordid Lives* and in the AIDS drama *It's My Party*. She appeared on *Glee* and, most recently, as mother in the movie *A Few Best Men*, where she sings on the soundtrack.

She brings a new cookbook project with her and will perform at Market Days in Chicago to get the crowds going this summer.

Windy City Times: Hi, Olivia. I just read that you wanted to be a country singer in the beginning.

Olivia Newton-John: Well, I was a country singer but I didn't plan on being a country singer at all. What happened was my manager and my producer thought my voice suited that kind of music. John Ralston wrote me some country music; in fact, "If Not For You" that was my very first hit. Then I found myself being a country singer but it is not something I planned at all.

WCT: It must be so rewarding to have new generations of fans watching *Grease*.

ONJ: It's fantastic. Every seven years a new crop comes up! [Laughs] They discover the movie through their parents or grandparents. When I do my concerts, there is every age group there.

WCT: You performed in *Sordid Lives*, cementing your gay following.

ONJ: *Sordid Lives* was fantastic. *Del Shores* is a good friend of mine. He is a very talented man.

WCT: You have had some wild fans over the years. What has the craziest thing a fan has asked of you?

ONJ: I once had a fan ask to marry me on-stage. He had a ring and came to the front of the stage. I thought he was joking at first; then I realized he wasn't.

WCT: Oh no! What did you say?

ONJ: I was very touched by it but it was little over the top. It was definitely memorable.

WCT: How was working on the set of *Glee* with Jane Lynch?

ONJ: Fun. I had a good laugh.

WCT: Your new movie is *A Few Best Men*. Will this be released in the States this year?

ONJ: I hope so. It is doing real well in Europe, Russia and Asia. It has not been generally released yet. I am hoping it will be released in August in London after the Olympics. I'm excited because it is a really funny, crazy movie. Have you seen it?

WCT: No, not yet. I listened to the soundtrack today. There are some tracks on it that you could perform at Market Days.

ONJ: Yes, I know. The soundtrack is a lot of fun.

WCT: The *Love Boat* theme was on there.

ONJ: It is really funny in the movie when it plays, and then I did it in a different way.

WCT: The Monkees' "Daydream Believer" was a track as well. It was so sad that Davy Jones passed away.

ONJ: I know! It was really just a short time after we put that out that we lost Davy Jones. It was really sad.

WCT: Tell me about this new cookbook you have out.

ONJ: It is called *Livwise: Easy Recipes for a Healthy, Happy Life*. It will raise money for my Cancer and Wellness Center in Australia. It will make some money. I can't believe it.

WCT: What kinds of recipes? Is it Australian cuisine?

ONJ: The recipes are written from my spa in Australia. We have amazing chefs that cook from our organic garden that is doing really well. We have a lot of recipes from there. We have recipes from my nutritionist in Melbourne, who is a lady who healed herself with greens. There are also my own recipes with an introduction about food. I wrote the introduction about how my mother brought me up and I was conscious of food and eating well. It is a lovely book. The pictures are very pretty, too, from my health retreat, Gaia.

WCT: So healthy eating?

ONJ: Yes, and the fact that you can enjoy it, too.

WCT: Do you have houses all over the place?

ONJ: I live in Florida with my husband and I have a home in Australia.

WCT: That is a huge flight to go to Australia.

ONJ: Yeah but I am used to it from flying back and forth.

WCT: Did you see *Xanadu* the musical?

ONJ: I saw it. I went to the opening night. I thought it was really funny. I laughed probably more than anybody else.

WCT: It was campy but the music still was so good.

ONJ: The music is great. I thought it was pretty fun.

WCT: One of the Gibb brothers died recently. You must have been very close with the family.

ONJ: Barry was a really good friend of mine. We were close to each other. It was really sad about Robin Gibb. It gave me more drive to find the cure for cancer, which I believe we are close to. I really do. I think it will be found in the next five to 10 years. We have seen the end of TB. We thought TB would never go and now you don't hear about it anymore. People were dying of that. We will find a cure for it.

WCT: You have dedicated your life to helping with that and done incredible work.

ONJ: Thank you.

WCT: Do you still talk to John Travolta?

ONJ: I do. He is a good friend.

WCT: There will be tons of people at Market Days. What songs will you be singing?

ONJ: I will do the best known hits. Because it is a Market Days thing it will probably be pretty lively. Maybe I will do one or two off the new soundtrack because that would be fun and they are kind of dancy things. Does the crowd like dancing?

WCT: Oh, yeah! They will go crazy.

ONJ: Are they standing?

WCT: Yes, and it should be packed.



Olivia Newton-John. Press photo

ONJ: Then I will do a couple from the soundtrack. That will be good.

WCT: What do you do to take care of your voice?

ONJ: I do exercises and Stevie Real, who sings with me, is my singing coach. We have lessons to keep it in shape. She showed me how to work it. I pay more attention now than when I was young and took it for granted.

WCT: You have some really high notes to sing.

ONJ: Yeah, it's amazing we can still get there.

WCT: I went to your Koala Blue store in Nashville one time. It was ahead of its time.

ONJ: [Laughs] Yes it was. We had a really cool store and we enjoyed it for a really long time.

WCT: What do you think of Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman that have done so well and are also from Australia?

ONJ: It's terrible. Of course I'm thrilled! [Both laugh.]

WCT: Are they stealing your thunder from down under?

ONJ: Of course not. I have always advocated that we have more talent in our country than anywhere else in the world and now it is proven to be so. It is probably because the number of people we have in Australia per capita compared to other places in the world have more successful actors and musicians than anywhere else even in Hollywood now. We have so many. It is fantastic.

WCT: Would you ever want to do another musical?

ONJ: It really depends, you know. I just did this new movie and it has music in it and a bunch of stuff. I just can't fit it all in. I would like to do more but just didn't have time. Life is amazing and very rich and full. I just want to have more downtime if I can, at least next year anyway.

Olivia Newton-John performs Sunday, Aug. 12, at 9 p.m. at the North Stage Rivers Casino on Halsted Street near Addison. Visit www.northhalsted.com for a complete schedule.

In case you miss it or want to beat the heat, head over to her show at The Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Blvd, on Saturday, Nov. 10, at 8 p.m.

Pet Shop Boys' new CD out Sept. 18

Pet Shop Boys' new album, *Elysium*, will be released Tuesday, Sept. 18, via Astralwerks.

The single "Winner" will be available Tuesday, Aug. 7. However, the track is available to download from iTunes now.

Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe recorded *Elysium* earlier this year in Los Angeles, the first time they have recorded an album in the United States. They co-produced the record with U.S. producer Andrew Dawson, who has won three Grammys for his work with Kanye West.

For more info, see www.petshopboys.co.uk.

North Coast to feature Oakenfold, Big Boi

Legendary DJ Paul Oakenfold and Big Boi—known as one-half of the duo Outkast ("Hey Ya")—are among the scheduled headliners at this year's North Coast Music Festival.

The event, nicknamed "summer's last stand," will take place Friday-Sunday, Aug. 31-Sept. 2, in Union Park, 1501 W. Randolph St.

Among the dozens of other acts slated to appear are Steve Aoki, rapper Yelawolf, Felix da Housecat, Digital Tape Machine, Atmosphere and Knife Party.

See www.NorthCoastFestival.com for tickets and info.

Marc Anthony in Chicago Aug. 20

Local music/event promoter Henry Cardenas is bringing in singer Marc Anthony as part of a series of fundraisers to benefit the Maestro Cares Foundation, according to ChicagoBusiness.com.

The foundation provides children in developing Latin American countries with housing and food and offers academic and recreational programs.

Anthony's Chicago appearance will take place at the Sofitel Chicago Water Tower Hotel, 20 E. Chestnut St., on Monday, Aug. 20. Tickets are \$1,000 each; see www.maestrocares.org.

'Singing to End AIDS' Aug. 14 and 23

The fundraiser "Singing to End AIDS" will take place at two venues this month.

The events will feature baritone Peter Ruger—who is running the 2012 Chicago Marathon with the organization Team to End AIDS, which donates funds to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago—and Bill Marsland on piano.

The concerts will take place Tuesday, Aug. 14, at Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church, 744 Fair Oaks Ave., Oak Park; and Thursday, Aug. 23, at Chicago's Lakeview Presbyterian Church, 716 W. Addison St. Each starts at 7:30 p.m.

Admission is free, but there is a suggested donation of \$10; proceeds will go to Team to End AIDS. Email baritonebaker@gmail.com for more info.

NUNN ON ONE: MARKET DAYS

Ruth Pointer keeps music in the family

BY JERRY NUNN

For over three decades The Pointer Sisters have been entertaining and making hits, including "I'm So Excited" "He's So Shy" and "Automatic." From the beginning, Bonnie and June Pointer began the group with Anita and Ruth joining soon after.

The sister act has really turned into a family affair over the years with Ruth, her daughter Issa and granddaughter Sadako forming the current lineup.

Whether the crossover artists are singing country music from their first hit "Fairytale" or doing the "Neutron Dance" to the Beverly Hills Cop Soundtrack, the Pointers keep their listeners on their toes and having a good time.

They plan on "jumping for our love" at Market Days this year. Windy City Times talked with Ruth before her trip to Chicago.

Windy City Times: Hi, Ruth. When is the last time you have been to Chicago?

Ruth Pointer: We haven't been to Chicago in a while. We love Chicago!

WCT: Who is in the current line-up?

RP: It is Anita and myself; we alternate between my daughter and my granddaughter. Anita has had some health issues recently so we try to give her a break when she needs it. When that happens we bring my daughter in to fill in for her. I am not sure what the line-up is for Chicago at this moment. My daughter has been with us for almost 10 years, anyway.

WCT: That is great.

RP: Yeah, she stopped to have a baby then my grandmother stepped in for her so we just work it out.

WCT: This has been a family project from the beginning.

RP: It still is!

WCT: You have been the glue to hold it together all of these years.

RP: Yes, I guess I am. You know it is a miracle that I ended up in that position. I was the last one to come into the group and I have more children than anybody does, oh Jesus Lord! But the older I get the more I love it. I realized traveling is not what it used to be. That part is not fun anymore. The actual show itself is my lifeline. I just love being up there.

WCT: How do you pick the songs?

RP: We try to sing what people want to hear, which are the hits like "He's So Shy," "Fire," "So Excited" and "Neutron Dance." Those are the songs that people have related to throughout our career. These are songs they have come to love, and have brought back memories from '80s and '90s. We would really like to put more of our older things in the show. Anita and I were just talking about it lately. It just takes time to put it all together.

WCT: There is such a variety of genres. How long has it been in the game?

RP: Next year will be 40 years.

WCT: You have to throw a big party.

RP: We are trying to do that. We want to put something together. It has really been a great ride for us. We have no regrets. I can't say that

I wouldn't do something differently if I had to do it again, of course I would but so far I can't complain. It has been beautiful and I love it. I love our material and I love singing with my family.

WCT: Well, Market Days will be fun but, hopefully, not too hot.

RP: There would have to be a lot of heat to make it too hot for us!

WCT: Hilarious—well, expect big gay crowds.

RP: Hey, the more the merrier. We have always had a huge gay following from San Francisco. I was just watching *Unsung* the other day and

Bootsie Collins was on. I was just interested in his career; then they had Sylvester on and all of a sudden they flashed our picture. I thought, "Well all right," because that was the first person I did professional singing with in San Francisco. That was with Sylvester, myself and my sisters. He dressed me up in all of his garb and I was having so much fun. I think I made \$15 that night and I was the happiest bitch on the planet!

WCT: That is funny. Do you have time to write new music or just mainly stick to playing the hits?

RP: It is mainly the hits. I guess you could say life takes over. Because we are not all up and coming and don't live in the same location, it is a little more difficult to do the things that we used to do. I live in Massachusetts, Anita is in Beverly Hills, my daughter lives close to me and my granddaughter lives in Atlanta.

We have to organize and get ourselves in one place in order to accomplish new material if that is what we are going to do. We would have to get someone to help us out with that. We would love to get some new material out there. My oldest son, Malik, has a band and is an incredible songwriter. I would love to perform some of my son's material. We have been talking about that lately. So there is a possibility that I could get some things from him and we will wind up doing something together.

WCT: Your family has such good genes!

RP: If they can't sing then they can write. Bonnie is still performing. She is an incredible songwriter as well.

WCT: Who sings the low range in the group?

RP: That would be me.

WCT: I was hoping that was you, because that is favorite part!

Jump on over to Market Days, where the Pointer Sisters perform at the North Stage Rivers Casino (close to Addison Street) at 9:05 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 11. For the complete line-up, visit www.northhalsted.com.



Ruth Pointer. PR image

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MARKET DAYS

Sheena Easton: Looking back at her musical history

BY MARC 'MOOSE' MODER

Unless you're living under a rock with no WiFi, you've got to know by now that this year's Northalsted Market Days music line-up hit it out of the park this year with a huge triple headline: Olivia Newtown-John, the Pointer Sisters and the Scottish songbird Sheena Easton. We had the privilege of chatting with new (now American) singer on the juiciest parts of her 30-year-plus career, her biggest hits ("Morning Train," "For Your Eyes Only," "Strut," "Sugar Walls"), her time with Prince and her start on a precursor to the modern reality show.

Easton first came into public consciousness in the late '70s on the British documentary *The Big Time* as a young singer trying to make it in the industry as cameras followed her path; this led her to audition for singer Lulu and a team at EMI, to mixed results. "Lulu thought I was quite cute, sweet and nice," Easton said. "Lulu's manager thought I sucked, though. She said I was quite lovely, but she just didn't see 'it—which is kinda cruel. I would hate to be that person who has to say if someone's going to make it or not on these new reality shows. What if you say that and that person's the next Justin Beiber? You're going to look like an ass!"

Well, Easton certainly showed Lulu's manager she was wrong, with 15 top-40 singles over the next decade, peaking and taking her from cutie to hottie with her collaborations with Prince. When asked about working with the Purple One, she brought up a favorite track: "101" from *The Lover In Me*. She said, "You know what's interesting is I never do '101' live. No one ever asks about it, but of all my songs I've ever done, that's my favorite. And I'm not just saying that because you said you loved it. I love that track. It was one of those great in the studio moments of my life."

"When you work with Prince, he's one of those kind of guys that likes to keep you off guard. You'd get the phone call saying 'Hey, come down to the studio. There's something I'd want you to hear.' Then you'd get down there, like with '101,' and he'd play it and I'd be like, 'I don't know' and he'd say, 'Well, just go and sit and listen to it a little bit.' I'd go and he'd come right in and say, 'Let's go.' 'But I don't know it completely,' [I'd say]. 'Well just sing what you know, then,' [he'd say]."

"There's this part in there where I kinda go off-melody and I just start taking higher and higher and he says, 'Well, that's not the right melody but we're keeping that and we're gonna work with that.' And so it's one of those things that's really organic—just a great moment in the studio. Plus I like the production. I love the subway doors opening and closing. He wanted it to be very haunting, and to just be about the desperation in the voice—[and] about the concept of you being away from this person for forever, it seems, and you just can't bear it for one more night."

When asked what made their professional relationship so fruitful when so many of the ladies he worked with saw just one hit at best, she said, "You know, I didn't know him as well as people would make it out to be. People thought, 'Sheena Easton and Prince—they must be having an affair.' But I did know him well enough to know he loved to write and produce. He's very prolific. God forbid, when that man passes and they go in there. He's got quite a vault."

"When he'd write a song, he'd just go down to



Sheena Easton. Press photo

the studio and record it. A lot of writers would record stuff on a little two-track and then put it away, and if they were going to use it then they would pull it out and fully record it. He owned his own studio, so he just go down there and write and doodle on a 48-track. He'd sit around and noodle on full studio equipment. So we had stuff there that was great stuff. And he'd play it and I'd go, 'That's great'—and he wouldn't use it.

"I think he knew it wasn't for him, so he would send to the artist he believed would do it best. Like when I first did 'Sugar Walls,' I came into the studio. David Leonard, who was also his engineer, and we were working in separate studios. He said, 'Prince sent over a track for you. We saw you on *The Tonight Show* the night before and Prince said 'Ya, I gotta write something for that girl.' And so he sent over 'Sugar Walls,' and it was one of those things where it was like, 'Here it is. If you want to do it, here's my number. Then when we worked in the studio, we got along really well. We cracked each other up, we made each other laugh."

"[After that], he really liked my voice and thought we should do more stuff. Then occasionally he'd ask if I wanted to come in and listen to stuff. That's how we did 'U Got The Look.' 'U Got The Look' was a track he'd basically finished for himself. It was just a Prince track. He said, 'Do you want to just come in and sing some backup vocals on the choruses?' So I went into the studio, and because I didn't know I was singing against him (sings parts!), I was all over the place—and he said he kind of liked that, so he expanded it into a duet."

"He was a very flexible person, very open to the creative process. He's one of the people that encouraged me to write songs, too. I'd be that girl walking around with a little notepad writing down ideas and notes. He'd always grab it out of my hand and ruthlessly make fun of me and say, 'That's crap,' 'That's a good chorus,' or 'That verse

sucked,' or 'You should finish that one.' We ended up writing a few things that way. I sent him the lyrics to 'The Arms of Orion.' He really liked it, put music to it and it ended up being on the Batman soundtrack. I'm totally into the stars. Right outside my bedroom window, right over my front guest house, you looked right into Orion. I loved the concept of two lovers apart, looking up at the same stars and wishing they could be together."

"'La La La, He He He He' (b-side to 'Sign O' the Times'), that was something I was writing, just a stupid little thing. See, I have six cats. It was about a cat up in a tree teasing a dog. I was actually being sarcastic. He said, 'Ya, that could be a song,' and I was like 'Oh ya, like what do you want me to sing? La La La, He He He—I love you, you love me? That's how talented I am?' He said, 'Actually, that'd be kind of cute! Go ahead and write it.' I don't really write any more as I'm out of the game now, but back then, that was my thing. Then, all my songs were little stories. I liked storytelling songs. He used to think they were amusing. I don't think other people did but he used to think they were."

Her last album, more than a decade ago, was the fan favorite *Fabulous*, a disco tribute album. "It was an album that was specifically done for the British and European dance market," Easton said. "It was done with British producers, and

it was released there, but didn't do really well. It wasn't a commercial success. It was the kind of thing where I used to get a lot of correspondence from fans who really liked it and were surprised it didn't really do well, but there my fans so they're going to be a bit biased anyway. The general public just sort of went, 'Eh.' It was a fun, fun album to do. Singing those songs was a blast. Maybe I'll work one or two back into my set, but not now."

When asked about her upcoming Market Days gig, the mother of two said, "You said the keyword—'couple of weeks.' Not thought about it yet. I'm the mother of two teenagers. It's summer break so I'm worn out being the entertainment provide for my two!"

Easton also talked about another Market Days headliner: Olivia Newton-John. "Besides Michael McDonald, Olivia may be the nicest person I've ever met," Easton said. "When I started out, she invited me to her home in Malibu to a party and really took me in. I haven't seen her in years. I hope we connect."

Sheena Easton performs at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 12, at the Roscoe Stage as part of Northalsted Market Days.

Preview all the Market Days' acts at Downtown Bar, 440 N. State St., on Thursday, Aug. 9, when Moder spins his Market Days showcase at 5 p.m.

Northalsted Market Days schedule

Olivia Newton-John will headline this year's Northalsted Market Days Aug. 12.

The four-time Grammy winner will perform on the North Stage. Other legends slated to sing include The Pointer Sisters ("I'm So Excited") and Sheena Easton ("Strut"). Former American Idol finalist Paris Bennett is also scheduled to sing.

LGBT acts on the bill include Eric Himan, Tony winner Levi Kreis and Matt Zarley. There will also be local acts, such as the Chicago Spirit Brigade and

The 31st annual Northalsted Market Days (which will take place Aug. 11-12, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.) will take up six blocks on Halsted between Belmont and Addison, and feature three music stages.

Full line-up:

Saturday, Aug. 11

Rivers Casino Stage
3:30 p.m. Levi Kreis
5:45 p.m. Jessica Sutta
9:05 p.m. The Pointer Sisters

Roscoe Stage
12:30 & 2 p.m. He Said, She Said
3:45 p.m. Isaiah Grass
5:30 p.m. Abba Salute
7:40 p.m. Eric Himan
9:10 p.m. Jessie and the Toy Boys

Belmont
12:30 p.m. Comasoft
2:15 p.m. The Wanton Looks
3:30 p.m. Chicago Spirit Brigade
4 p.m. The Handcuffs
5:30 p.m. Dot Dot Dot
8:15 p.m. Lez Zeppelin

Jazz Stage
1:30 p.m. Lucy Smith Quartet
3:45 p.m. Red Hot Riot
6 p.m. BMR4

Sunday, Aug. 12

North Stage
3 p.m. Mia Martina

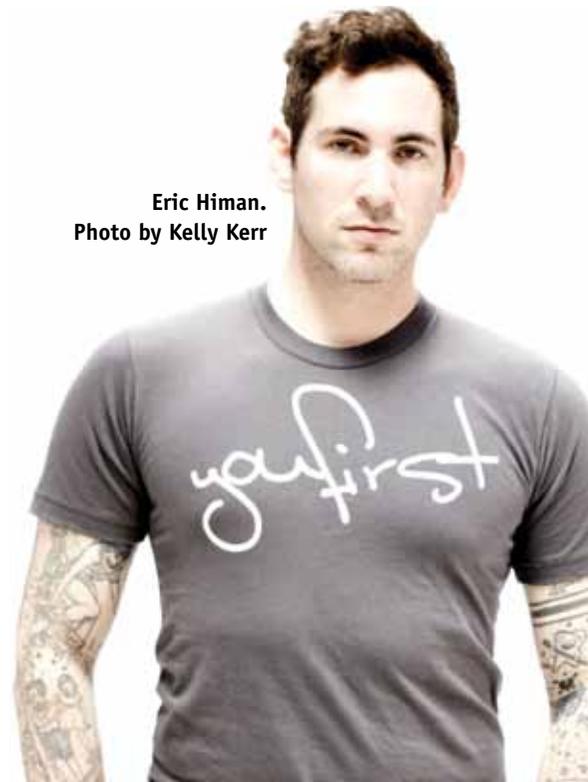
5 p.m. Adam Barta/Matt Zarley
7:15 p.m. Karmin
9:05 p.m. Olivia Newton-John

Roscoe Stage
12:15 p.m. A Thousand Julys
2:15 p.m. Windy City Cowboys
2:50 p.m. The Personnel
4:30 p.m. Chicago Spirit Brigade
5:30 p.m. Sheena Easton
7:45 p.m. 16 Candles

Belmont
12:30 & 1:50 p.m. Almost Famous
3:30 p.m. Kimi Hayes
5:15 p.m. Planet Claire (B-52s' Tribune Band)
7:30 p.m. Don't Speak (No Doubt Tribute Band)
9:10 p.m. Paris Bennett

Yoshi Stage
1:30 p.m. Soulio
3:50 p.m. Stache
6 p.m. Lil Ricki and The Licorice Sticks

Eric Himan.
Photo by Kelly Kerr



MOVIES

David Moretti on the upcoming film 'Scrooge & Marley'

BY SAWYER J. LAHR

David Moretti plays Bob Cratchit in the Chicago-made independent film *Scrooge & Marley*, which is expected to come out this holiday season.

Moretti is best known as Thom Etherton, the intrepid reporter on here!TV's vampire series *The Lair*. Moretti led the series for three seasons between 2007 and 2010. His character also crossed over into the network's sister show, *Dante's Cove*. Most recently, David starred as Andrew, the reluctant groom, in *My Big Gay Italian Wedding* off-Broadway. Upon returning to Los Angeles from New York, he filmed the romantic comedy *Finding Mr. Wright*, playing the title character of Pearce Wright. He also made an appearance on the classic soap *All My Children*.

There is one final "Christmas in July" benefit for *Scrooge & Marley*, plus an Indiegogo campaign at <http://igg.me/p/124360?a=396864>. The party is Wed., Aug. 15, at Katerina's, 1920 W. Irving Park Rd. Doors open 6 p.m., show starts 7 p.m., \$10 cover donation. Performers include the Jeannie Tanner Quartet featuring *Scrooge & Marley* film composer Lisa McQueen; Jenny Dragon; and Sarah Marie Young. Richard Knight, Jr. will emcee. There will also be lots of raffle prizes, and food available for purchase.

See www.scroogeandmarleymovie.com for full details on the film, which Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim and David Strzepek are executive-producing. The directors are Richard Knight, Jr. (who is also Windy City Times' film critic) and Peter Neville; the writers are Ellen Stoneking, Knight and the late Timothy Imse.

Windy City Times: How was the shoot?

DM: Fantastic! I haven't had this much fun on a shoot in a long time. The days were long but we shot such a great film. I really think everyone is going to love it.

WCT: What were Peter Neville and Richard Knight Jr. like as directors?

DM: They were remarkably apt at directing. I haven't worked with such hands-on actor's directors in forever. They really knew exactly what they wanted to accomplish with each scene and they knew each and every character inside and out. As an actor, I love working with writer/directors because they really "get it."

Sometimes, when directors aren't as personally connected to the script, they focus on only technical aspects of the film and just leave the actors to do their own thing. In that scenario, the performances often wind up being disjointed and inconsistent. That is definitely not the case with *Scrooge & Marley*. Peter and Richard were on top of every detail and we created a well-paced, well-done piece of cinema.

WCT: How were you introduced to *Scrooge & Marley*? How were you cast?

DM: Interestingly enough, probably a month or so ago now [in April], one of my friends with a crush on Ronnie Kroell randomly posted an article about his involvement in the film on Facebook. I clicked on the article, read it and noticed there was an email address at the end of the piece. I'm not really one to pass up an opportunity so I literally wrote them an email saying "Hey, I want to be in your movie."

There weren't any characters written for my age/type, but they said if I wanted to, I could make a video of my interpretation of Bob Cratchit, and if it worked, they would consider aging him down. I made my little video with Brian Nolan, my co-star from *The Lair*, and the rest is history. And a Christmas movie was definitely a bucket-list item, so I was super-excited when I got cast.

WCT: Coming from *The Lair*, a gay vampire series, what's it like to play the lowly clerk in a gay spin-off of the Christmas Carol?

DM: Refreshing! In *The Lair*, Thom basically had to look puzzled a lot and then take off his shirt. He was the main storyteller of the series, so he didn't often get to do much outside the box. Even though Cratchit was but a lowly employee of Scrooge, he had a ton of meaty actor levels to hit throughout the film. And as actors we love these kinds of roles ... we get to show the world what we can do! I got to laugh, I got to cry, I got to be the coward and I got to be a father all in the same film. For a minute I felt like the Meryl Streep of gay cinema.

WCT: What did you think of these beloved characters being portrayed as gay after seeing other versions of the story?

DM: I like how it's not the point of the story at all. They just happen to be gay and the same story of redemption is told at the end of the day.



David Moretti. Photo by Dexter Brown

Both gays and straights will have their heartstrings tugged by the end of the movie.

WCT: Besides *Scrooge*, who else did you

share scenes with?

DM: I worked with Ronnie Kroell; Scott Duff, who played my husband; Megan Cavanagh, who I was most personally excited to work with as she was the utterly amazing scene stealer in *A League of Their Own* (Marla Hooch); and Rusty Schwimmer, whose resume is ridiculous. I was really fortunate to work with such talent. I wish I [would have] got to meet Tim [Kazurinsky], who was a *Saturday Night Live* cast member back in the day! That would be a dream job of mine, and I really just want to pick his brain, but alas we worked different days.

WCT: Do you have a favorite line from the film, yours or another character's?

DM: "Action!" The directors say it before every scene. I love that word.

WCT: What are you doing between now and when *Scrooge & Marley* premieres?

DM: I'm looking for one more summer movie to get behind so I'm reading a few scripts right now. TV doesn't really get going again until late summer so now is the time to do a movie. Hopefully, I find another script as special as *Scrooge & Marley*. They don't come around that often.

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BOOKS

Lesley Ann Jones on Freddie Mercury, 'Bohemian Rhapsody'

BY THOMAS BATEMAN

Award-winning music journalist Lesley Ann Jones, author of *Mercury: An Intimate Biography of Freddie Mercury*, recently spoke with *Windy City Times* about the process of writing her latest book.

Speaking to us from her home in England, Jones illuminated the process of collecting hundreds of interviews, reinterpreting famous lyrics, assessing Queen's newfound popularity and providing a broad perspective on Mercury's life more than 20 years after his untimely death.

Windy City Times: First of all, I've just finished reading *Mercury*, and was very impressed. I'm wondering when and how you conceived the project and subsequently how long it took you?

Lesley Ann Jones: What happened was in 1991, a book was written by Jim Hutton, Freddie's lover, after Freddie died; I was then approached by my literary agent at the time, who said, "I think there's a market here for a wider book about Freddie—not a personal point of view, but an overview. Do you know anyone who might be interested in writing that?" And I said, "Well, obviously, I would!"

WCT: Of course!

LAJ: I had seen Queen four times by then, so we did a proposal, and my original book about Freddie was published in 1997 (*Freddie Mercury: The Definitive Biography*); it did very well. After all these years, I was called by Peter Morgan, the scriptwriter, and he was writing a movie about Freddie Mercury. He'd read my book, which had been recommended to him by Jim Beach, Queen's manager. I was very surprised about [this] because Jim is always a little disdainful of anything written about Queen that isn't by him!

I spoke to my manager about re-publication because of the movie, and I suggested that old book was a bit of out of date. Freddie's still dead, of course, but Queen has a career in America now, which they never had when Freddie was alive.

Americans at that time didn't get Queen's music at all; it was a bit too strange. Your market was about heavy rock, and we were in a glam phase. Queen just fell on deaf ears, you couldn't give it away. But that's not the case anymore; I think that's largely because of "We Will Rock You" and because a number of Queen songs have been picked up as sports anthems in your stadia—America football and basketball and so on.

So I decided I needed new material and I ran around. It was very interesting because quite a few of the people had refused to speak to me for the original book; I guess because they were still too grief-stricken. But 20 years down the line, people saw the point of talking about him. That made a massive difference and, suddenly, I had over a hundred new interviews.

WCT: Fascinating, so with over a hundred new interviews, who did you talk to who provided the most illuminating insights into Freddie's life?

LAJ: One in particular—I'm sure you've heard of Tim Rice? [Note: Rice is a British lyricist and author noted for his work with Andrew Lloyd Webber and Disney.]

WCT: Of course.

LAJ: Well, he's a close personal friend of mine and he had worked with Freddie on the *Barcelona* album and he had been elusive the first time around, but this time we had a number of sessions talking about Freddie. He gave me a revelation about the meaning of "Bohemian Rhapsody," Queen's most famous song. It had never occurred to me, but "Bohemian Rhapsody" was Freddie's coming-out song, written in a time when he wasn't able to be honest and open about his sexuality.

It was a very covert statement about who he was as a gay man, which he couldn't come out directly and say because of the lifestyle he was leading. His parents brought him up with a very rigid Zoroastrian lifestyle and he didn't want to offend them. Homosexuality is still outlawed by the religion and in Zanzibar, where he was born. [Note: Zanzibar is now part of Tanzania.]

Freddie never came out during his lifetime to whom he loved very much, Mary Austin—in fact, he adored her. They had a sexual relationship, as well as a loving and emotional relationship, that lasted about six years. Deep within himself, though, that wasn't who he was and he was being drawn in another



Freddie Mercury in 1978. Photo by Carl Lender

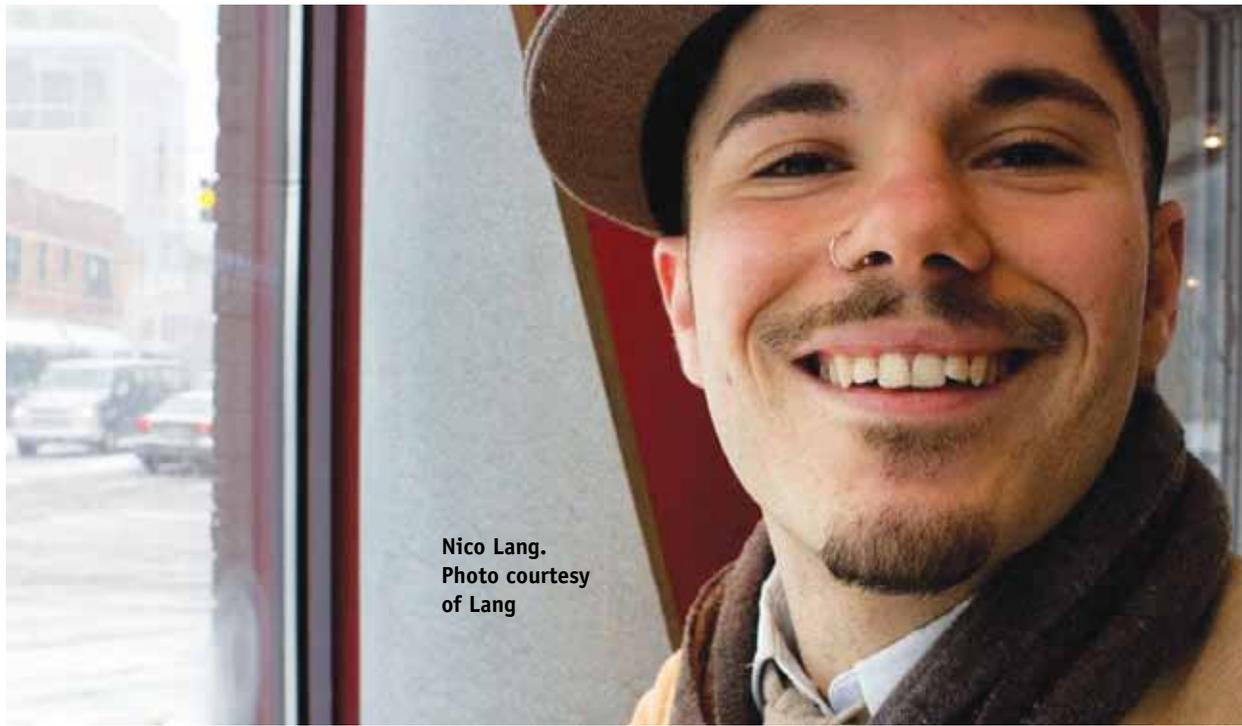
direction. "Bohemian Rhapsody" expressed all of that anxiety.

When Tim said that, everything fell into place and I went back and read the lyrics and everything fell into place. "I see a little silhouette of a man"—that was the old Freddie leaning over his shoulder and saying, "There's going to come a time when you have to be open with yourself or you're going to explode." And this was very frightening; he even said that, "Thunder bolts and lightning, very, very frightening."

Galileo, Figaro, Scaramouche—all of those classical references that he loved [actually] represented the other members of the band. They were surrounding him—protecting him from the outside world, but also from himself, as he was a very fragile creature. In interviews, whenever they were asked, "What do the lyrics mean?" they would never say. Freddie himself, whenever you asked him, would say, "It means whatever you want, darling. If you see it, it's there."

WCT: That's intriguing, because it would essentially mean that what is arguably the greatest song of the 20th century is, in fact, a coming-out song. You mentioned in *Mercury* that there was considerable tabloid controversy after his death. How did his family cope with his status as a publicly gay or bisexual figure?

LAJ: I think the really tragic thing is that they would've accepted it. I've met his mother and father; in fact, I talked with his mother recently at a party given at the Savoy Hotel for Freddie's 65th birthday, with quite a few prominent gay figures in London getting up and speaking about the politics of homosexuality and how far we've come. It's such a tragedy that Freddie couldn't enjoy his sexuality openly. He could've helped gay people and the fight against AIDS so much, had he been allowed to. His mother said that attitudes have changed, and had we known we might've been able to accept. But we didn't know.



Nico Lang.
Photo courtesy
of Lang

'In Our Words' aims to be integral part of the queer writing scene

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

The Internet has been a powerful, if not essential, medium for the queer voice, especially in terms of expression. For the last 10 months, a group of current and former DePaul students has begun to harness that voice in and for Chicago.

In Our Words is a self-described "queer activist and literary salon" co-created by Nico Lang and Patrick Gill. Since launching in October 2011, the site—www.inourwordsblog.com—has accumulated a list of more than 200 writers, of which approximately 70 contribute on a consistent basis, all of whom contribute mostly personal essays or editorials that reflect on socially relevant and sometimes deeply personal issues.

"We want to get different types of expression," Gill said, "and I think one of things we've really honed in on is taking issues that are larger and how they're clarified through a personal lens, how they're experienced by a particular people."

At the same time, to try and frame the writing that can be found on In Our Words would be to defeat its entire purpose. Pieces range from pop-culture editorials to deep reflections on the relationship between religion and being queer to dating advice and light-hearted collections of quips such as "12 Presidents That Would Make Great Strippers" or even Lang's own "Hello Kitty" feminist poetry.

"We liked the idea of being a community register that accepts all voices; we don't turn anyone away," Lang said. "We feature pretty much everything that comes our way. We like that; we don't want to change that, ever."

Lang and Gill work with writers of all experience levels, beliefs, identities and orientations, and say they make it a point to avoid exclusivity and seek the highest level of diversity in the writers they recruit and the pieces they publish.

"We are very intentional about reaching out to a lot of different types of people," Gill said. "We don't want to pretend we're the representation for the queer community, we focus on being a space for the queer community to represent itself."

In fact, often times they will run pieces they don't agree with. Lang once wrote a piece on sexual assault and a friend left a comment on it in which he referred to himself as an "MRA," or a men's rights activist. Although initially perplexed at the concept, Lang contacted him and asked if he would write something for In Our Words. He agreed, and despite finding much of it contentious, Lang ran the piece.

"I was glad that he wrote it," Lang said. "I was glad that we could have this kind of discussion, because there are difficult discussions that I feel like people usually don't have, that we don't have a dialogue about. It led to a lot of shouting on message board, but sometimes I feel like we need that, we need to hear perspectives that are outside of our own to remember those exist."

Lang said they will draw the line at pieces that are over-the-

line offensive, overtly racist or advocate violence.

"In general, we're interested in creating this environment, a welcoming space for anyone in the community who's interested in writing, who's interested in sharing their thoughts," said Mark Nott, In Our Words' community outreach coordinator.

Nott is a longtime friend of Lang and Gill whom they approached about becoming involved, as is the case with much of the In Our Words team.

Lang and Gill worked together on a number of projects at DePaul, and started In Our Words (which they wanted to call "The Muffington Post," except it had already been claimed by a lesbian blogger) with some encouragement and help from The Civil Rights Agenda, LGBT Change and Queer Intercollegiate Alliance. They began to reach out to their combined vast network of writers, and it took off from there. Just a few weeks ago, they signed a contract to become a project of SocialScope Productions, the local non-profit production company behind the 50Faggots web series.

"I feel like they (SocialScope) jive with us really well," Gill said. "A lot of their focus is on queer identities and doing oral history and documentary and visual whereas we do a lot of written and personal narrative, so it makes sense to team up business-wise."

Moving forward, In Our Words is focused on finding ways to expand beyond the Internet and social media word-of-mouth and into Chicago and the Midwest.

"We are interested in being able to have physical space for our writers to come and engage in," Nott said.

In Our Words is already involved with Chicago's fast-growing live lit scene, putting on "Word is Out," a monthly live reading event at Town Hall Pub, with OutLoud Chicago. Lang also records "Broad Shoulders," a podcast available on the In Our Words website that features readers from live lit events throughout the North Side.

Lang says he also hopes to make T-shirts and stickers as well as utilize other means of do-it-yourself advertising.

"Making more of a mark to claim Chicago as a queer space is important," he said.

In Our Words has grown so much in a short time that Lang, Gill and Nott all say they've been caught off guard by it. Despite having paying jobs or being full-time students, they all remain dedicated to their mission and the impact they believe it can have on the community.

"When we first started out somebody called us a community therapy resource," Lang said. "I know this has been that for a lot of people, for our readers and the people who write for us. Maybe it hasn't been for everyone, but I hope everyone who reads it can find a measure of solace somewhere."

In Our Words accepts submissions from writers of all experiences, lifestyles and backgrounds. To enquire about contributing, email inourwordsblog@gmail.com.

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NUNN ON ONE: TELEVISION

Art Smith talks 'Top Chef Masters'

BY JERRY NUNN

Southern chef Art Smith was briefly back on Bravo in a new season of Top Chef Masters. The local fave and James Beard Award winner owns the Chicago restaurant Table Fifty-Two as well as LYFE Kitchen (in Palo Alto, Calif.), Art and Soul (in Washington, D.C.) and Southern Art and Bourbon Bar (in Atlanta). Smith has published two cookbooks and cooked for such notables as President Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey and the Dalai Lama.

He competed for Common Threads, a charity he co-founded that teaches children about cultures through food. In season one of Masters, he raised \$10,000 for the agency. (Smith was eliminated last week.) Windy City Times talked with Smith before that episode aired.

Windy City Times: Hi, Art.

Art Smith: Darling, how are you? It just seems like yesterday that you caught me chasing a Scissor Sister and I was just a big old puddle next to Ben Cohen!

WCT: That was a fun night at Berlin Night-club.

AS: I was just texting him and was hoping to meet up. I am calling you from Southern Art and Bourbon Bar in Atlanta.

WCT: You are all over the place. When did you have time to be in Vegas and film this show?

AS: Honey, I want to tell you something—you make time! When Hollywood calls, you jump to the spot because very few people have this opportunity [and] many audition. It is the world's best chef competition. What it does for you, as a brand, is more than what you would spend millions of dollars with some PR agency in New York.

Ms. Winfrey introduced me to America and Top Chef introduced me to the world. What it allowed me to do was be far more open than I have ever been. I never thought of myself being in the closet. You know I have only been in the restaurant business five years?

WCT: No way! Look at all of your accomplishments.

AS: For twenty-something years I was a private chef. I was there to provide a service. They are the star. I had done that for many years, from the governor to Oprah. Top Chef was the first time I was on my own and didn't have to worry about the person I was representing. I felt empowered to do that, I believe because I was so authentic and so myself. That is what created this buzz and I became a huge fan favorite. People loved me when I laughed. They loved

me when I cried. I was larger than life. Lord have mercy, I took up the whole screen—I was 325 pounds! People would be making all of this fancy stuff and I would be making fried chicken, hello!

WCT: Well, it is some good fried chicken. I have tasted it!

AS: It was about the delivery. Anybody can fry chicken, but the delivery with charm and Southern hospitality makes it work!

WCT: So this show has changed your life.

AS: It has opened up a whole world to me. With Opra, I had mainly a female audience, but Top Chef Masters is younger, more foodie audience. Remember when we were kids and MTV was on all the time? Top Chef Masters has the same power these days. Chefs are as big as rock stars.

WCT: How is this season different that the last time you were on the show?

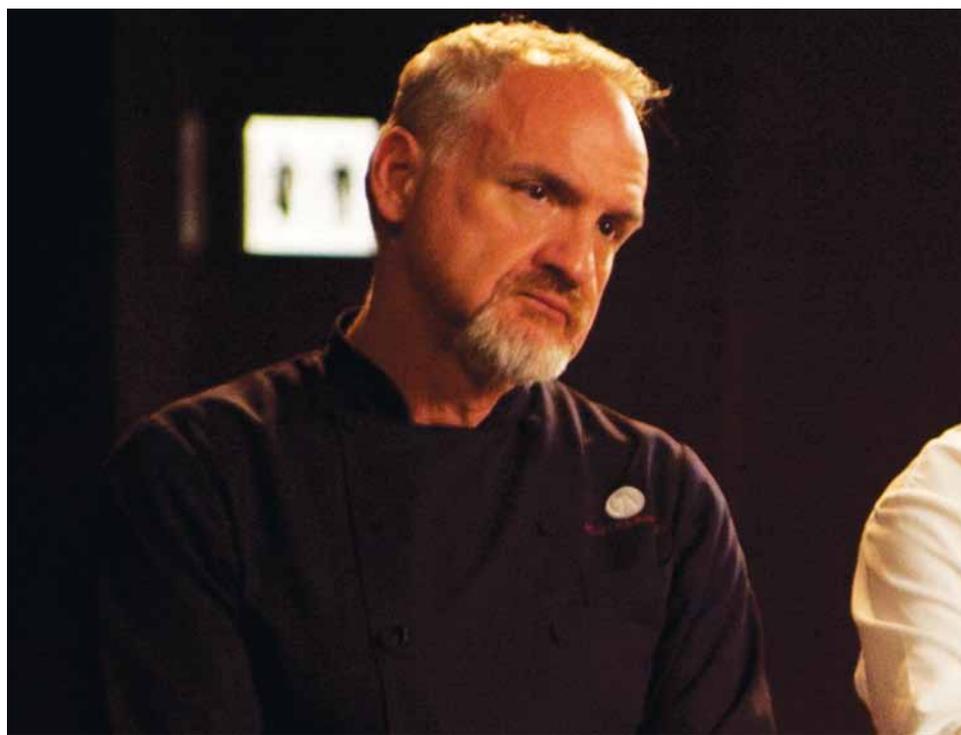
AS: There is a big difference. I have lost weight. I found my sexy and I am all fashioned out.

WCT: You have been hanging out with Lady Gaga so I am sure she is dressing you up.

AS: I was in hot-ass Las Vegas so I had to be in tip-top shape! I had my Nikes on and I was zipping around that kitchen. Every time you do a challenge it is always a new one. You never know what the challenge may be. In the first round we



Art Smith. Photo courtesy of Bravo



Art Smith on Top Chef Masters. Photo courtesy of Bravo

all knew each other, but in the second round I only knew a few.

One thing I have found is that chefs are far more TV-savvy than they were four years ago. For many chefs the focus is on that food, but for TV that is boring. People will flip the channel. You have to be able to be an artist in the crowd. There may be a camera above you, below you and beside you.

WCT: Every angle.

AS: Sometimes the director will want to talk to you and you are busy. Sometimes they even make you do it again.

WCT: There are 12 chefs this time and two of them are gay, Clark and Mark.

AS: They are a couple on the show; then there is me, so three. There are three gay folks on Top Chef Masters. Everyone loves a funny gay chef, hello!

WCT: Representing!

AS: Poor old Dale Levitski proved that theory, right? He was the first gay chef in your face on national television. He's adorable. I love his little Frog N Snail. I thought it was delicious. I know I am married to Jesus but burn, baby, burn!

WCT: I have to go try that place.

AS: I went with the new commissioner of the public library, him and his partner. It was really nice. He makes this thing with potato chips and pretzel in chocolate.

WCT: Sounds healthy.

AS: It was worth it. I will tell you the first time I did Top Chef I was dropping everything, like chocolate, on the floor. People like to see things not be so perfect. The days of Martha Stewart are gone with the wind! That is the se-

cret of reality TV: People want to see people just being people, making mistakes. We like to laugh at each other. I don't know what is better having a great meal or laughing. They are both very good for you.

WCT: It must be rewarding to raise money for your own charity, Common Threads, on the show.

AS: That is the best part about being on Top Chef Masters: We are able to select our charity. Common Threads was first introduced to America on Top Chef. We will be celebrating ten years this year. It was my partner Jesus' idea and we started out of a church basement. The kids from Common Threads went and cooked for the chefs of Top Chef, which was cool.

WCT: I see Curtis Stone is back as host.

AS: What a tall drink of deliciousness. How do you think I lost a hundred pounds with an Aussie trainer! An Australian can just take me over the edge.

WCT: Did you watch Around the World in 80 Plates?

AS: I did. I was very proud of my John Vermiglio. When he was sent home I told him it's not about winning; it's about being remembered. He will be remembered for being a professional, young charming man. I had already taken him halfway around the world, cooking from Hong Kong to South Africa. I loved the show because it showed young chefs interacting and cooking in exotic locations. Sadly, so many people don't even have passports. I just got back from Italy and took my mom there. That would be a good reality show: Drag Momma Around the World!

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BOOK REVIEW

Dropped Names

by Frank Langella

\$25.99; Harper; 356 pages

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Admit it. You're kind of klutzy sometimes.

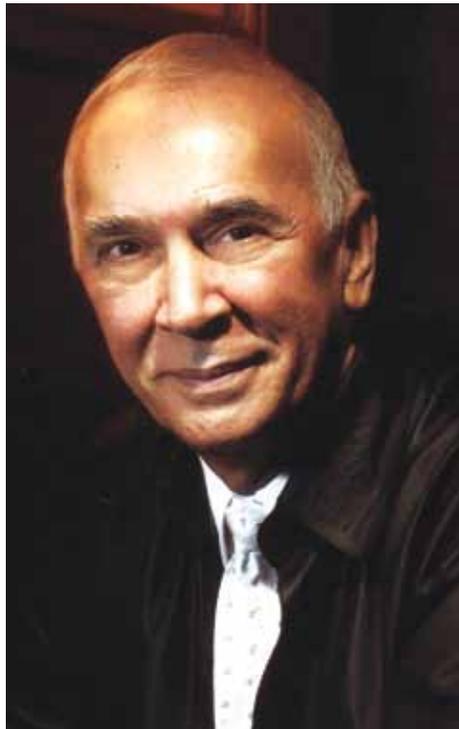
You're clumsy, as well. That's you, as pillows are tossed, furniture bumped, frames go askew, nerves are shattered and so is glassware. You're Molly McMussy, as knees are skinned, bruises erupt, and moods drop, busted next to belongings on the sidewalk.

Ooops. Butterfingers.

But dropping things isn't always bad; just ask author and actor Frank Langella. In his new book, *Dropped Names*, he lets go of a few tales and things as he writes about the stars he knew, hated, and loved.

It all started with one word from Marilyn Monroe.

Frank Langella was a 15-year-old New Jersey boy on a bus trip to New York when a limousine happened to pull up in front of him while he



Frank Langella. Photo by Joe Fornabaio

stood in Times Square. The driver pushed Langella aside and when the limo door opened, a vision in white emerged.

Marilyn Monroe smiled and said "Hi," and Langella was instantly smitten.

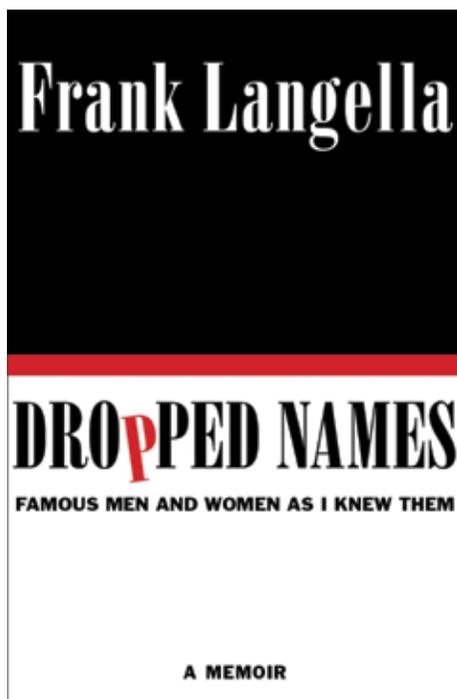
He never forgot that whispered word, even through his long career in Hollywood and on Broadway allowed him to meet all kinds of famous characters.

Because he was friends with their daughter, for instance, Langella spent long summers at the various homes of Paul and Bunny Mellon, and their luncheons were filled with the rich and famous. Langella remembers how everyone was greatly entertained by Noel Coward, and how Jackie Kennedy was rarely far away.

While playing in the Poconos, Langella had the pleasure to work with Billie Burke, far from her Good Witch role but not a bit less than charming.

He writes of seductions: Elsa Lanchester's breezy explanation of the swimming-pool habits of her late husband, Charles Laughton; clumsy attempts at amour from Anthony Perkins; a sweet love affair with Dinah Shore; and an "unconsummated" man-crush on Raul Julia.

He writes of Rita Hayworth's illness, when nobody knew much about Alzheimer's. He tells of a "stupid thing" he did to Jackie Kennedy. He writes of a down-and-out Montgomery Clift, Richard Burton as a "crashing bore," feuds with Lee Strasberg, bawdy jokes with Elizabeth Taylor, pranks with Robert Mitchum, and....



"Fame is... fleeting," says Langella. So, unfortunately, is this book.

Dropped Names is one of those Hollywood tell-(almost)-alls that you never want to end. It's like discovering a box of old movie magazines

in Grandma's attic, or like a movie-marathon on paper. It's the best kind of fluff, if you're a film buff.

Readers will be happy to know that there's enough snark in this book to satisfy the most fierce gossip lovers, but Langella also writes poignantly of Hollywood's tortured souls and those who seemed too fragile for fame. What's nice is that he does this while calling only the barest amount of attention to himself. He tells the stories as he remembers them, without getting in the way.

If you love old movies, or if you miss the glamour and glitz of old Hollywood, then grab the popcorn and settle in; for a fan like you, *Dropped Names* is a book you won't want to end.

Want more? Look for *Full Service: My Adventures in Hollywood and the Secret Sex Lives of the Stars* by Scotty Bowers and Lionel Friedberg; or *Open Secret: Gay Hollywood 1928-2000* by David Ehrenstein.

Book-release party at Jackhammer Aug. 22

Oeishik Moitra-Goel Chowdhury will release his first collection of prose, poetry and photography—Tribute to Sam Steward—Wed., Aug. 22,

at Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St., at 6:30 p.m.

According to a press release, "The book hinges on the experiences of Samuel Steward, subject of Justin Spring's award-winning biography *Secret Historian: The life and times of Samuel Steward*, professor, tattoo artist, and sexual renegade."

The book chronicles the journey of Chowdhury, who describes himself in the release as "a dyslexic, gay immigrant." Despite his challenges, he eventually graduated from college and law school.

At the event, Chowdhury will also introduce the concept for his second book, *The Alice Project*, a culinary-artistic collaboration.

Chicago House's 'One Night Stand' Sept. 15

HIV/AIDS agency Chicago House will host the all-new fundraiser "One Night Stand" Saturday, Sept. 15, at 8 p.m. at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave.

Disco icon Linda Clifford will be the featured performer. There will also be everything from go-go boys to DJ Matthew Harvat.

For tickets (which are \$35-\$200), see www.ChicagoHouse.org/event_onenightstand.html.

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NFL from cover

"It's been exciting, but, at the same time, it's been trying because of all the attention this story has gotten," Davis said in an interview with Windy City Times. "I didn't think this story would get this big. I just thought it'd be, OK, another athlete is coming out ... but never to the extent that I have [experienced]."

"So many friends, teammates, high school buddies, etc., have reached out to me—to just offer their support. That's been great. I didn't expect so much positive feedback."

Davis never expected he'd be trending on Google.

"If I had known [before coming out] that I'd be on CNN, I may have had more trepidation about coming out," he said, laughing.

Davis played cornerback and spent four pre-seasons with three NFL teams, and also played in NFL Europe. He played at Weber State University and then spent the 2000 and 2002 pre-seasons with the Tennessee Titans, which featured such stars at the time as Jevon Kearse and Eddie George.

Davis' football career ended in 2003 after he got hurt in training camp.

"One of the biggest goals I had [for coming out] was to create a conversation," said Davis, who has since heard from former friends, including teammates and classmates, he hung with 10 and 15 years ago.

A few weeks after coming out, Davis said he had already heard from about 15 former teammates, most from his collegiate days. Only two former NFL players have sent emails, both supporting him.

Davis has not received any direct response from the NFL, "though I have some friends who work closely with the NFL and they have said that the NFL has been very positive" about Davis' coming out, he said.

Davis also has not heard from his dad about his coming out, which he admitted "is kind of shocking."

The two have long had issues about Davis' sexual orientation.

"I'm really shocked that he hasn't reached out," Davis said of his dad. "Not that he has to be OK with my sexuality, but, us just having a conversation around it and him offering some resemblance of support. I [have been] very shocked by that."

Davis is now a staff member at the Hetrick-Martin Institute in New York, working with LGBT youth.

"The work I am now doing is so important to me and actually was the catalyst for me to come out," Davis said. "I really wanted the world to know that I not only am a gay athlete, but I'm also one who spends his daily life really trying to understand what our youth are going through and to just let them know that I'm really doing grassroots work to support these youth, whether they are athletes or not, in as many ways as possible."

Davis' post-football path to HMI went through the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), where he did outreach work. "I quickly realized it was a passion of mine, that I was really enjoying it," he said.

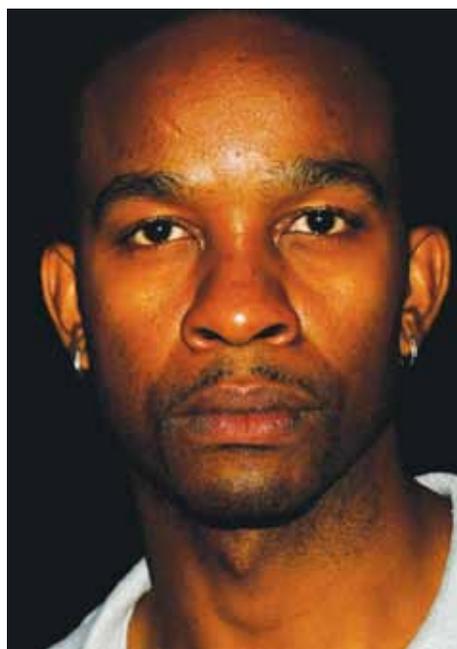
That led Davis to HMI and a full-time job, leaving his past position in advertising and marketing.

"This may sound crazy, but, this [work] may be a bigger deal in my life than playing in the NFL was, just because of the impact I'm able to have with these youths and to see their lives change right in front of you; that's a little different than playing in the NFL. Sure, playing in the NFL was a lifelong dream of mine, but I never dreamed I would be able to change the lives of youths."

When Davis started at HMI, he intentionally did not reveal his football days—or much else from his past.

"I wanted them to know that I chose this job because it was/is something that I really wanted to do," he said. "What I've found is, they've become more my heroes."

"What I've learned and seen is, these kids



Wade Davis. Photos courtesy of Davis

sacrifice everything, including, at times, family and friends, shelter and safety, to be whom they want to be. I didn't have that strength. So, for me to be able to interact with them and see what real strength looks like, it is so empowering for me—and it truly pushes me to work harder for them.

"I would hope that I've had some impact on them, but I think they've had an even more profound impact on me. If I'm having a bad day, they can sense that—and they're then more worried about me than themselves, and that's just true love because these are youth who may not have a place to stay, or may not have eaten the day before, yet they're still worried about someone else, and they're happy. That makes me want to do more and more for them."

HMI works with LGBTQ New Yorkers, ranging in age from 12 to 24, and their families, and offers a variety of direct services and referrals.

"I think, initially, they were shocked that I didn't tell them that I played in the NFL," said Davis, who has always been out at work. "Thing is, I have always wanted them to see me as a gay, professional Black man because, often, a lot of our youth who are Black and brown don't often see other professionals who look like them, who talk like them, act like them in a professional setting. But the thing I love is, they treat me the exact same—they don't care if I was on CNN; they don't care if I was in The New York Times. All they care is, for instance, 'Is Wade still going to show up [to work] every day for me, now that he's this so-called celebrity?' Or, 'Is he still going to show up Monday through Friday, like he's always been. Is he going to get my resume done on time? Is he going to make sure

I have a Subway token?' Their lives are so different from mine; they can't even fathom what I'm going through every day, and I actually really appreciate that. So they look at me the exact same way," as before coming out.

The younger generation is much different from the days Davis was their age. It's called social media—and that often means bullying a teen is a 24/7 experience.

"For my generation, a place like HMI might not have been as vital, but it definitely is now," Davis said. "The way I relate [to the youngsters] is, I listen because the world I relate to is completely different [than theirs], so yes, I can't truly relate to a certain point. So I listen at least twice as much as I talk, and I really try to look at the world through their eyes."

"Instead of putting my preconceived notions about what's best for them in life, I really try to understand what this person's circumstances are—and then offer alternatives, but also teach them how to think and think critically about every decision that they make. Instead of having to understand their world, my goal is to better prepare them for the world that they are going to live in because I cannot prepare them for a world that I have not existed in or that I've never really seen, especially at their age."

Davis saw first-hand what youngsters endure while on a New York Subway, heading in to work. He was less than a month into the job at HMI when he spotted one of his youth on the train as well, though she didn't see him. "I watched so many people violate her with their eyes, just because of the way she presented herself which, to some, may be different from others. They looked at her as if she was an alien; that broke my heart and it let me know that I have a lot of work to do, not to just get our youth to be confident in themselves, but also to bring the message out to others about what humanity means and how to be each other's brother and care for each other," Davis said.

He also recalled a youth's poem, including a line in it that said: "I've been hurt so much in my past that the past is all that I know."

"[That poem] got me thinking about how so many of our youth are a little afraid of success, or the idea of success," Davis said. "Though my role at HMI is to teach youth how to get jobs and maintain jobs, one of my biggest jobs at HMI is to let youth experience success and to understand that, what success may mean for me may not be success for them—and to not put my ideas of what success is on them. But to really let them experience peace, joy and happiness. Although a youth's past may be filled with pain and agony, I can give them a glimpse of safety and success, so they can remember what it feels like to be successful."

Davis admitted that his celebrity status has also briefly impacted his work in a near-neg-

ative way with some students. One youth, for instance, came to HMI wearing an inappropriate shirt. Davis told the youngster to change his shirt. The student then replied, "What will it look like if the big football celebrity kicked a kid out [of HMI] for wearing a certain shirt?"

Davis replied, "Well, what they'll find out is [that] this big football celebrity cares dearly about you and he has rules and protocol that he has to follow, just like you."

Sure enough, the youngster changed his shirt—and he hasn't worn it since.

"I know I'm making a difference," Davis said. "When I get a kid a job that offers a competitive salary, benefits and 401(k), and they know what that means ... or when a kid joyfully says that he got a job, thanks to interview skills that I taught him ... or a kid says that I inspired him to get his GED ... yes, I know I'm making a difference."

"Plus, I see the change in myself; I see that I have a different level of compassion toward my fellow man that may have existed before, but I didn't know how to tap into it or use that for the greater good—but I know now."

Davis said there definitely are similarities between his HMI job and his NFL life.

"The time I played football that I enjoyed the most was when I was in NFL Europe, playing for the Berlin Thunder," he said. "We really bonded, and that's the same experience I have at HMI. There was a great sense of family and unity [with the Thunder], and when things go well at HMI, it's because of that same reason."

Davis said he did not come out earlier because he was not ready.

"Coming out is one of the most individual experiences that a person can ever have—and they have to be ready," he said. "If I had come out, say, 10 years ago, I probably would have said a lot of things that may have set a lot of younger gay youths back, instead of helping them. I lived with so much fear in high school and college and early on in the NFL; I just wasn't strong enough."

In fact, he said coming out while still wearing pads "never even crossed my mind, not even [for] one day."

Well it did, for one day, but just for a brief moment—while in NFL Europe, playing for a team in Barcelona.

"I was playing so horribly, and there were so many physical [male] attractions around me but [I] could never experience them, so it made me think if it was really worth it," Davis said. "I was playing horribly; I was affected personally; I was really beating myself up. That was one time I thought about coming out, but I thought I have too much to risk."

Turn to page 37



Wade Davis at the White House. Photo by Tracy Baim

NFL from page 36

Risk battles reward, and more, for pro athletes contemplating coming out.

No male has yet risked it all to come out while active in one of the five top men's pro sports in the United States.

"I think the risks are twofold," Davis explained. "If you make it to the NFL, you probably have been playing the game since you were 5 or 6 [years old]; football is your way of life; it becomes who you are. So, the thought of losing that is one of the most terrifying things in the world. You put in so much blood, sweat and tears, and you think of what your future could look like if you come out—and that future looks like you living without the game of football. So, the fear of losing something that you truly love, more than your own mother at times, is the scariest thing on earth. Personally, I could not even fathom giving up the sport I grew up playing.

"Second, there's camaraderie, a family that you create when you play sports. And there's that fear that you will get kicked out of the family because you are gay.

"Those two risks are so monumental in your mind, and you cannot see the positives in your mind, if you come out. It's hard to imagine that the impact I would have [if I came out while playing] on a kid would be great, but instead just the impact it would have on you."

Still, Davis is convinced that the pioneer to come out while active, and playing in one of the big four male sports (football, baseball, basketball or hockey), is going to happen—probably within three to five years.

Perhaps it'll be an out college athlete who makes it to the pros, or someone is outed—and that's something I never would wish on anyone," Davis said.

The first out male active pro likely will be a hockey player, Davis speculated, mostly because of the large amount of European players in the NHL.

"I don't think [the first] will be as historic as Jackie Robinson [who was the first African-American to play Major League Baseball], but damn close," Davis said. "That player's impact will be great."

Davis has been dating Steven Brister for six years. They met online and had their first date years back on Christmas eve.

"I knew instantly that I would marry [Brister]. There was never a question, and we had only seen each other for an hour at that point," Davis recalls of that holiday date. "I call him, 'My Little Hero,' because Steven is one of the most passionate and driven people I have ever met. It was very easy for me to be very driven on the football field, because that's all I knew. Steven is a successful businessman, and watching him work hard inspires me to work hard as well."

More Wade Davis:

—**On being President Obama's LGBT surrogate:** "It's like a dream. It's so far beyond a dream, it's a pipe dream. For me, to have the privilege to have written a story for his blog, and to be able to speak around the country on behalf of someone who I truly believe in and truly look up to and who I truly find strength in, that is yet another caveat that adds to the dream that I'm allowed to live in. For me to be able to show my youth that these opportunities are available, it's monumental."

—Periodically writes for The Huffington Post
—**On Obama's stance on same-sex marriage:** "You just smile. You can't really explain the feeling of euphoria that you have. I know it's going to have such a huge impact on people's lives and it's going to create a conversation for a lot of people who may not have wanted to address the issues of marriage equality."

—**On marrying Steven Brister:** "I've been ready to marry Steven for about the past two years. He's taking it a bit slower. But, I think within one to three years, [it will happen]."

—**On having kids:** Yes. In fact, they want to name the first Jackson, regardless of the baby's sex.

—**On playing gay flag football:** "Playing in the gay flag football [league in New York City] has been so empowering. To meet guys who like football and identify as gay, it is something that I never thought would happen. It's been a great experience."

—**Quoting Cyd Zeigler of Outsports.com:** "What makes Wade so special isn't his athleticism, but his sportsmanship. The guy is a champion in every sense of the word. He lifts up people around him and is so warm and inclusive. He's a real leader, and he has been a wonderful friend for many years. His participation in the Gay Bowl since 2006 has been one of the real highlights for me.

"He has played at an MVP level, but it's off the field [where] he's done his best work. His smile is contagious, and the fact that he's a former player [at the NFL level] helps elevate gay flag football to another level. [Fellow former NFL player] Esera Tuaolo did the same thing in the Gay Games in 2006. Other players relish the notion of playing against a former NFL player. It's a badge of honor."

Davis can be reached at doingmywork28@gmail.com and the Twitter handle [wade_davis28](https://twitter.com/wade_davis28).

Comic Con Aug. 9-12

The pop-culture extravaganza known as Wizard World Comic Con will touch down at Rosemont's Donald E. Stephens Convention Center Aug. 9-12.

Loads of special guests are expected, including iconic illustrator Stan Lee; and actors William Shatner, Bruce Campbell, Scott Bakula, Sam Trammell (True Blood), Holly-Marie Combs (Charmed), Luke Perry, Joey Lawrence and Dean Cain, to name a few.

Show hours are Thursday, Aug. 9, 12-8 p.m.; Friday, Aug. 10, 12-8 p.m.; Saturday, Aug. 11, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; and Sunday, Aug. 12, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

See www.wizardworld.com/home-ch.html for more information.

Glamorama's 'British Invasion' Aug. 10

The theme of Macy's Glamorama 2012 is "British Invasion: The Music Then. The Fashion Now!"

From The Beatles to The Rolling Stones, Ma-

cy's Glamorama 2012 will pay homage to some of the world's most well-known and respected British pop icons from the past 50 years.

Singer Robin Thicke and the duo Karmin will be the featured performers.

The event will take place Friday, Aug. 10, at 8 p.m. at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St.

Ticket prices are \$50 and \$75 for the show only; \$175 and \$285 for show and after-party (also at Harris); and \$1,000 for the VIP show and after-party. For more information, visit www.macys.com/glamtickets or www.HarrisTheaterChicago.org.



Glamorama in 2011. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald



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TELEVISION

Dancing guys the focus of the show 'All the Right Moves'

BY JERRY NUNN

The Oxygen Channel's *All the Right Moves* has launched with an eight-episode run. The new series surrounds the lives of four dancers—two straight and two gay—as they learn to build a business and life together.

Emmy-nominated Travis Wall and Nick Lazzarini from *So You Think You Can Dance*, along with Teddy Forance and Kyle Robinson from *Dancing With the Stars*, make up the cast.

Watch out for drama as the boys launch Shaping Sound and learn the ins and outs of running their own dance company.

Windy City Times: Hi, guys. Congrats on the exciting project.

All: Thank you.

WCT: Travis, can you talk about some of the challenges with starting your own business?

Travis Wall: When I thought I wanted to dance with my friends, I thought that was pretty much it. I thought I was just starting a dance company and didn't really realize I was actually starting a business with my friends. I did not understand that there is so much that goes into that.

We started with this \$20,000 budget and we actually ended up spending, like, 300 times that. We were very naive walking in the situation, but I think we've all learned a hell of a lot through the process.

WCT: What did you learn after living with each other?

Nick Lazzarini: Well, there's not much more I could learn about Travis. We pretty much know each other like the back of our hand because we've known each other for so long. With Kyle, I learned that he's quite the ladies' man and he's very clean and handy. The first week he moved into our house, he literally fixed everything that was wrong in it. It was incredible. It was awesome. It was like having Tim "The Tool Man" Taylor [from the '90s show *Home Improvement*] in our house.

WCT: What did you learn about each other in terms of dancing?

Teddy Forance: I've just been inspired by Travis' vision and his persistence in a single piece, all the way to his full career. With Kyle he's just a stoic dancer. I remember seeing him do a performance at Juilliard and he just stood there for two minutes before he even started dancing and I felt so much from that. So his power in subtlety, I think, is really loud in the group.

With Nick, he's just an all-around amazing entertainer and person as well as a friend. So I've learned so much from all of them, it's really incredible.

Kyle Robinson: Just moving into the house and living with Nick, Teddy and Travis, I've just learned to just trust in what we do. It's been an anxious process for me moving out to L.A. I'm kind of new to the L.A. scene. So moving in with these guys, I've learned that I can really rely on them. I know that we're going to get the work done and it's going to be good, even when we're under the gun and pressed for time.

NL: Which is most of the time!

WCT: It was interesting the dynamic of two straight men and two gay men living and working together.

TW: We don't even think about it because it's our life and it's been our lives. I guess if you're just putting it out there in public, people are like, "Wow. Two gay and two straight living together," but our sexuality has never ever been a factor in our relationship.

I think it's cool that Nick and I are so comfortable about it to open up about my relationship and the boys he likes and stuff like that. I never thought to ever hide myself. We are who are and you get to see all of that.

WCT: Do you find that most dancers are straight?

TW: They say they are all straight until they meet me and Nick!

KR: Yes, I would say in my experience. In my class at school there were like 12 guys and maybe three of us were straight. I've danced with a lot of gay men. I have an amazing number of friends that are gay men. They know that I'm straight and they respect that. Do they make jokes and crack jokes and everything? Yes, all the time. They grab at me but you fend them off and then you're like, "All right, come on."

NL: Kyle. I've never grabbed you before.

KR: No, never, but I am comfortable with my sexuality. It's not anything that I ever am concerned with or have any problems with living with Nick and the cast. Actually they're hilarious and I'm laughing, like, 100 percent of the time that I'm at my house.

WCT: What are some difficult things about making this series?

NL: I think, for me, the most difficult was definitely the time crunch of the choreography and some of the dance performances that we were doing. Also music clearance is really hard, too.

WCT: How about the best part?

TF: I think one of the best parts of the process is being in the studio. Any second that I could get them in the studio with me, I cherish it. I see a piece as they're seeing a piece. At the same time I think we're starting to really join together our ideas and our forces of movement and it's really powerful.

WCT: In the first episode when you had to audition, Kyle, what was going through your head?

KR: I was a little surprised for sure, and I think that you can see that in my face. I think it was just because of the way that the whole thing was presented to me.

Ted called me up and asked me to more to L.A. I came out here because I believed in the passion and the drive and their artistic integrity fully and because they're my friends. I wanted to make this thing be the best that it could be. If that meant that I had to get my audition uniform on I was willing to do that. Because I love and respect them so much that I really just wanted to make this as good as it could possibly be.

WCT: What advice would you give to aspiring dancers?

TW: Train, train, train. Train your bodies. Take your ballet seriously. Take everything technically that you can do to make your body better.

We love really strong technical dancers, but we also look for that really special thing. And I think all the girls that dance in our company especially, they all technical dancers, but there's something about them too that's special. They sparkle. They're really cool girls. They're really nice girls. So I think that really comes across in their dancing.

TF: I also think having your own voice as a dancer in the studio as well. I think each of our dancers could do a solo, take the stage and be amazing.

WCT: Have you had a special moment from this whole process?

TF: When we were on stage and we were



From left: Kyle Robinson, Travis Wall, Nick Lazzarini and Teddy Forance in *All the Right Moves*. Photo by Oxygen Media/Neil Jacobs

all holding hands doing a bow and there was a standing ovation, just a thousand people screaming our name it L.A. It was like unbelievable. Nick was crying for the first time I've ever seen him cry. So that was cool.

TW: That was our premiere show in May and it was definitely the most rewarding. I think what also is going to be really rewarding is that people are going to be watching our lives and our dance company as a TV show. It really has consumed our lives in the past five months.

We were in the middle of Times Square this past month and our huge billboard went up to promote the TV show. We're just so proud of each other and we are so proud of the process. So we're very excited for all this.

WCT: Well, come visit Chicago.

TW: We will. We are supposed to go on tour there!

All the Right Moves runs every Tuesday on the Oxygen Channel. Visit www.oxygen.com for details and listings.

Writer Gore Vidal dies

Literary legend and political activist Gore Vidal has died at age 86 of complications of pneumonia, according to Deadline.com.

Vidal wrote 25 novels, including *The City and the Pillar*, which featured openly gay characters, and *Myra Breckinridge*; he also penned the Tony-nominated play *The Best Man*. Vidal also made two unsuccessful political runs, for the Senate in California and Congress in New York.

He appeared in the LGBT film documentary *The Celluloid Closet*. However, Vidal—who never married and had no children—wrote in his memoirs about sexual contacts with men, including Beat poet Jack Kerouac, the L.A. Times noted. Vidal once stated that "there are not homosexual people, only homosexual acts," as he refused to be put in a sexual category.

Howard Auster was Vidal's companion of 53 years. Vidal described their relationship as platonic and said "no sex" was the reason it lasted so long.

Anita Baker releasing new album, single

Songwriter, performer, producer and R&B icon Anita Baker ("Sweet Love," "Giving You the Best That I Got") is set to release seventh studio album, *Only Forever*, which will be re-

leased on Blue Note Records/EMI.

According to a press release, "The 10-track offering lives up to its title, featuring the same classic music that Baker is known for, but with a modern twist."

On Aug. 6, Baker premiered on urban adult contemporary radio for all Clear Channel stations as they played her single, "Lately," every hour on the hour. Only *Forever* is due Tuesday, Oct. 23.



Anita Baker. Press photo



A site to behold

—**Address:** 130 N. Garland St. (The Heritage at Millennium Park), penthouse residence 5702—it's a half-block off Michigan Ave., next to the Chicago Cultural Center

—**Market price:** \$5.25 million (mostly furnished)

—**Details:** This stunning 5,200-square-foot unit offers unobstructed views of Grant Park, the lake and basically the city. (Realtor Kim Jones called it “our own New York City right here in Chicago.”)

The ceilings are more than 10 feet high (with custom lighting, a sound system and motorized drapery), and there are four bedrooms, three bathrooms and one half-bath—perfect for family living, if necessary. (The television in the master bedroom is behind the mirror.)

The bathrooms have, among other things, marble baths, heated floors and towel bars.



One of the sights at the unit. Photo by Andrew Davis

(The master bath has a dual steam shower and bathtub with jets. Moreover, you can look over the city while taking a bath—an enviable position.) The large open kitchen has double ovens, two dishwashers and wine cabinets. Oh, and one should not forget the private elevator.

The Heritage was built in 2006 and houses 356 condos within its 57 stories. The building offers numerous amenities, such as access to the Chicago Pedway, an exercise room, indoor pool, whirlpool, party room, sundeck, high-speed Internet and a dog run. (Regarding pets, there is a limit of two and a weight limit of 35 pounds each.)

Of course, being in the Loop, the building's extremely close to public transportation, restaurants and events/venues that specialize in the arts.

A husband and wife own the unit. The wife, in talking with Windy City Times, engagingly detailed how she literally built the unit from nothing. “It was just raw concrete,” she said. She put her unmistakable and global touch throughout the residence, with everything from art pieces (including a samovar) to the piano in the living area to the onyx wall that greets visitors upon entering to the dining table that “easily seats 16,” the wife said.

When asked why she would give up this unit, the wife said, “I want to start a new project. I love projects. I love to play.” Judging by this residence, she definitely has a future in design.

Interested persons should contact Baird & Warner's Kim Jones at 312-640-7010 and kim.jones@bairdwarner.com.

—Andrew Davis



The dining area (top) and bathroom at 130 N. Garland Ct., unit 5702. Photo courtesy of Baird & Warner

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the **DISH** WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN **WINDY CITY TIMES**



BY MEGHAN STREIT

WHAT TO WATCH

Farewell My Queen

While the French Revolution is brewing outside, a lesbian love triangle is developing inside the gilded halls of Versailles. Marie Antoinette has a dalliance with another aristocratic lady. Meanwhile, one of the queen's servants develops an intense infatuation with the monarch. I haven't seen this movie yet, but it promises 18th-century lesbian love scenes and what I've read is some pretty spectacular acting, so it's on the top of my must-see list.

WHERE TO EAT

Bistronomic

Dine on French bistro classics (with some modern updates) in an atmosphere that is elegant and feels authentically European. Rehash Marie Antoinette's not-so-secret lesbian love life over a bottle of Burgundy and pan roasted duck. Bistronomic is located at 840 N. Wabash Ave.; call 312-944-8400 or visit www.bistronomic.net. (<http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/SUGAR-SPICE-Bistronomic/30691.html>)

Dinner and a Movie: Where to eat after you watch this summer's blockbusters

WHAT TO WATCH



Step Up Revolution

An aspiring dancer lands in Miami, with dreams of becoming a member of an elite dance company. Instead, she joins forces with a dancing flash mob that struts their stuff to save their beachside hang out from being taken over by a luxury hotel developer.

WHERE TO EAT



The Dock at Montrose Beach

Duh! Head straight to Chicago's own waterfront bar and restaurant, where you can wash down some fish tacos with a couple of mojitos. If watching Step Up Revolution inspires you to get up and dance, you're all set because The Dock hosts live music several nights a week (http://www.thedockatmontrosebeach.com/#!/live_music/ctr7). The Dock at Montrose Beach is located at 200 W. Montrose Harbor Dr.; call 773-704-8435 or visit www.thedockatmontrosebeach.com/#!/home/mainPage.

I'm a sucker for a good theme and my appetite can be easily influenced, so when I see a movie that has any sort of discernable theme, I immediately want to indulge in foods that go along with that theme. For instance, I recently wrote in this column about Raj Darbar (<http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Sugar-Spice-Raj-Darbar/38563.html>), an Indian restaurant in Lakeview. My visit was immediately preceded by a viewing of *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, a charming movie about a group of older Brits who travel to India—no coincidence there.

Themed movie-and-dinner outings are a ton of fun (and a clever way to show a new love interest that you've put some thought into planning your date). To help out, here are some recommendations of restaurants that would pair nicely with some of this summer's biggest movies.

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

WHAT TO WATCH

To Rome With Love

Woody Allen has assembled an all-star cast, including Ellen Page, Roberto Benigni, Penelope Cruz and Alec Baldwin. In Allen's classic style, the lives of his characters intersect and are cleverly woven together. This time the backdrop for the characters' love affairs, existential crises and entertaining follies is, as the movie's title makes clear, Rome.

WHERE TO EAT

Quartino

Like Rome, Quartino is always bustling and offers a reliable selection of authentic Italian eats. Plus, the touristy location of the restaurant makes for prime people watching that could make you feel like you're actually on the set of a Woody Allen film. Sip some Chianti from an old-school juice glass, nibble on some sopressata and Taleggio, and sit back and enjoy your second show of the evening. Quartino is located at 626 N. State St.; call 312-698-5000 or visit www.quartinochicago.com.

WHAT TO WATCH



Moonrise Kingdom

Set on an island off the coast of New England in 1965, this quirky flick chronicles two 12-year-olds who fall in love. After the young pair runs away together, their dysfunctional families and the eccentric members of the community organize an entertaining search party.

WHERE TO EAT



Glenn's Diner

This kitschy and fun seafood joint is the perfect spot to deconstruct Wes Anderson's latest film. The lobster fettuccine alfredo is deliciously decadent. If you're looking for a good value, Glenn's diner offers all-you-can-eat crab legs on Tuesdays and all-you-can-eat shrimp on Thursdays. Or, make like a couple of 12-year-olds in love and just share the chocolate chip waffles. You can because Glenn's serves breakfast all day. Glenn's Diner is located at 1820 W. Montrose Ave.; call 773-506-1720 or visit www.glenns-diner.com/seafood.html.



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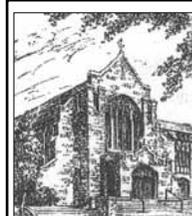
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Lisa McQueen



with special guests
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Wed., Aug. 15

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calendar

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Wed., Aug. 8

2012 NGLCC National Business & Leadership Conference continues through Aug. 10. Local and national LGBT businesses and partners such as IBM, American Airlines, Ernst & Young, Wells Fargo, Aetna and UPS as well as many other national and international companies who are committed to developing a positive environment for the LGBT business community. 8am, 221 N. Columbus Dr., www.nglcc.org

General support group Ten-week support group for all genders and orientations who identify as members of the LGBTQ community who are seeking general support in a group environment. Pre-registration is required. \$5 per week. Register or learn more from Rachel Gershenson-Gates, PhD, at rgershensongates@centeronhalsted.org. 5:15pm-6:30pm, 773-472-6469, x498, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Point Foundation's Chicago Cornerstone Event Meet with scholars and alumni and hear their stories, enjoy cocktails and appetizers. \$100. 6:30pm, James Hotel, 55 E. Ontario St., www.pointfoundation.org/chicago

Sidetrack Tattoo Project Check out the state of skin art on Halsted Street. Show your ink as Sidetrack prepares a new video to hit screens this summer. If you want to add a Sidetrack Market Days temporary tattoo, they've got those too. Special thanks to Sailor Jerry Rum (who will have a great tattoo "app" to play with) and to Guinness Black Lager. No cover. 8pm-11pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St., www.sidetrackchicago.com

GLAM-PACKED Friday, Aug. 10

Macy's Glamorama is switching venues this year, taking place at .

Photo from 2011
by Kat Fitzgerald



Curtains Up! Showtune Video Night Come and enjoy the music of the Great White Way and the Silver Screen, 9pm, The Call, 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival A woman-only, diverse, intergenerational roster of performers, plus music and art, workshops, films, crafts, dances, and Michigan-style uninhibited pageantry and play. Continues through Aug. 12; 231-757-4766, between Hart and Ludington, Mich., www.michfest.com

Thursday, Aug. 9

Cirque Shanghai: Year of the Dragon Running through Sept. 3, rain or shine, at the Pepsi Skyline Stage, the 1,500-seat, canopied, open-air theater on Navy Pier. 2pm-4pm, Navy Pier, 600 E Grand Ave., www.navypier.com

Bisexual Women's Support Bisexual women's Support Group is for women looking to better understand what it means to be bisexual, or are questioning their identity; 6pm-7:30pm, 773-388-1600X3319, How-

ard Brown, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., www.howardbrown.org/lccp

Whitney Houston's Birthday Tribute Diva Aurora Sexton will perform as Whitney; Whitney Houston movies and videos will play on Kit Kat's seven jumbo screens all night. 7:30pm, Kit Kat Lounge 3700 N. Halsted St., www.kitkatchicago.com

Night of Motown and Soul Music - Live A special night of live music from the Hard Rock Cafe/Chicago. Motown, R/B and Soul music from Essance Project Band; 9pm-10pm, 312-943-2252, Hard Rock Cafe/Chicago, <http://www.hardrock.com/chicago>

Wizard World Comic Con Pop-culture extravaganza at Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont. Featuring Stan Lee, William Shatner and others. Through Aug. 12. www.wizardworld.com

Friday, Aug. 10

Poetry Reading Daniela Olszewska, Stephanie Anderson, and Melissa Severin. 7:30pm, Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Macy's Glamorama 2012 celebrates British Invasion: The Music Then. The Fashion Now! Macy's Glamorama is an hour-long high-end fashion show and musical production that not only unveils Macy's latest fashions but also showcases heart-stopping dance, lush visuals, staging as well as incredible musical performances by chart-topping artists. \$50 & \$75 for show only; \$175 & \$285 for show and after-party; \$1,000 for VIP show and after-party. 8pm, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St., Tickets: www.thechicagotheatre.com

The FunHouse with DJ Chris Cox Kick off Market Days weekend with The FunHouse, an attraction that features various devices intended to surprise, frighten, bewilder, and amuse. Grammy-nominated producer/master mixer DJ Chris Cox will be taking over the DJ booth. 9pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com

Carmen Carrera & The Princess RuPaul's Drag Race stars with two performances at 11 pm and midnight. \$5 advance; \$10 door; \$20 VIP includes hosted bar package 9-10 pm and a meet & greet after the show. Also, see the shower contest at 12:30 am, with a \$100 cash first prize. 9pm, Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave., www.spin-nightclub.com

Juicy Fridays Juicy Will Hydrate You! Featuring great music and Go-Go's until 4am. No cover until 11pm; 10pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, www.hydratechicago.com

11th annual HRC SWING Chicago Women's golf event The tournament is played in a scramble format, so you get to use your best shots. Golf is followed by a BBQ. Con-

tact Suzy Hall, hall_suzanne@yahoo.com, 773-620-3535; or Fran Daly, frandy@rcn.com, 773-841-9099. 11pm, Sunset Valley Golf Course, Highland Park, www.hrc.org/swing2012

Saturday, Aug. 11

Northalsted Market Days The Midwest's largest two-day outdoor street festival. With 150,000+ visitors, it's one of the largest outdoor events in the country and extremely popular with gays and lesbians. \$7 donation benefits the Northalsted Business Alliance. 11am-10pm, concludes Aug. 12. Between Addison and Belmont on Halsted St., www.chicagoevents.com, 773-584-6631

"Summer Lovin'" Brunch Party Diva Madame X will perform as Olivia Newton-John. 11am-3pm, Kit Kat Lounge, 3700 N Halsted St., www.kitkatchicago.com

Mock same-sex marriages at Northalsted Market Days The Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago invites festival-goers to participate in mock same-sex marriages celebrated by politicians. James Nawrocki at jnawrocki@gwclaw.com. 3pm, Halsted St., www.lagbac.org

Market Days Sideshow with DJ Alyson Calagna A carné celebration with DJ Alyson Calagna. Freaks, clowns and strange things from beyond take over Hydrate. Party 'til 5am with hot beats and freaky gogo boys all night. All hosted by Ruby Dee. 8pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, Chicago, <http://www.hydratechicago.com>

SuperHero Revolution-Market Days CircuitMOM Productions Presents "SuperHero Revolution" Market Days Saturday night. Get your best cape ready, your sexiast mask shined and your invisible plane fueled up. This will be the epic party of Chicago's summer. 10pm, House of Blues, 329 N Dearborn St., www.circuitmom.com/; Tickets: <http://www.houseofblues.com>

Sunday, Aug. 12

Urban Village Church Spiritual worship is about coming together as community to make space for God to move in us. It's a place to receive God's grace and love and to give of ourselves, as well. 10am-11:15pm, Spertus Institute 610 S. Michigan Ave., www.urbanvillagechurch.org

Urban Village Church: Andersonville service Andersonville is a neighborhood full of passion, art, diversity, and eclectic energy, all which makes Urban Village Church thrilled to be joining the community! 10:30am-11:45am, 1602 W. Ainslie (at Ashland), www.newchicagochurch.com

Urban Village Church: Wicker Park evening service Wicker Park is a neighborhood full of passion, art, diversity, and eclectic energy, all which make Urban Village Church thrilled to be in the community! 5pm-7pm, 1502 N. Hoynes (At LeMoynes), www.newchicagochurch.com

Northalsted Market Days The Midwest's largest two-day outdoor street festival. \$7 donation benefits the Northalsted Business Alliance. 11am-10pm. Between Addison and Belmont on Halsted, www.chicagoevents.com, 773-584-6631

Summer PRIDE Film Festival The Gay and Straight Together Ministry of United in Faith Lutheran Church, a welcoming and affirming congregation, invites you to Summer PRIDE, a film festival dealing with different aspects of homosexuality and our faith. 2pm-7pm, 773-283-2326, United in Faith Lutheran church 6525 W. Irving Park Rd., www.unitedinfaith.org

DuPage Young Democrats 2nd Annual Summer Grill Out Grill out with Tammy Duckworth and other DuPage County candidates and learn how to become more involved this November, or just hang out, eat, and play some bags. We encourage bringing between \$10-\$20 in supplies (such as personal items or cleaning supplies) that can be donated to Family Shelter Services on behalf of DYD. 630-296-4393 for info; 11pm, Lilacia Park, 27 W.



VISION QUEST

Thurs.-Sun., Aug. 9-12

Wizard World Comic Con returns to Rosemont.

Photo of a 2011 attendee dressed as The Vision by Andrew Davis

Parkside Ave., Lombard

Monday, Aug. 13

LGBT Narcotics Anonymous LGBT meetings take place Mondays. For more info, call Anthony Oltean at 312-208-4021. 8pm-9pm, Haymarket Center, 20 N. Sangamon St.

NACC 35th National Child Welfare, Juvenile, and Family Law Conference Families Matter: Advocacy for All Parties in the Child's Best Interests. Discussing children in the child welfare system. Through August 16. Info from Taylor Stockdell taylor.stockdell@childrenscolorado.org or register online. 8am, Hilton Palmer House, 17 E Monroe St., www.naccchildlaw.org

Job Club The Center on Halsted has set aside time in the Cyber Center for folks who are looking for work. Patrons are welcome to stop by and work on their resumes and cover letters, search for jobs, and work on any other job related tasks. FREE; 10am-12pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St.

LGBT grief support group Monthly support group for members of the LGBTQ community who have experienced a loss through death and are seeking support in the grieving process. Pre-registration is required. This group is offered in collaboration with Rainbow Hospice. Register or learn more from Melisa B. Bailey, PsyD, at mab Bailey@centeronhalsted.org. 7pm-8:30pm, 773-472-6469, x466, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Tuesday, Aug. 14

Women's Empower Hour Luncheon & Workshop Metropolitan Capital Bank presents Ellen Rogin, Metropolitan Capital Bank's Director of Financial Planning, Marketing and Strategy, will present a system to live a life of success and prosperity at a complimentary luncheon and workshop, Money Thinking Turned Inside Out. 11:30am-1pm, 312-640-2377, 9 E. Ontario St.

Wed., Aug. 15

ALCC 25th Anniversary Summer Party ALCC is going to take you out of this world! Join them at Sidetrack on Wednesday, August 15th as they blast off to Planet J-Pop to see the world of Japan as you've never seen it before. 6pm-9pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St, Chicago, <http://jpop2012-autohome.eventbrite.com>; Tickets: <http://jpop2012-autohome.eventbrite.com>

Scrooge & Marley movie—Christmas in July party Featuring Jeannie Tanner and Lisa McQueen, and other musical guests. 6pm-9pm, Katerina's, 1920 W. Irving Park Rd., <http://gopride.com/z798>



MARKET DAZE

Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 11-12

Thousands are expected to attend Northalsted Market Days this weekend in Boystown.

Photo from 2011 by Susan Mattes

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calendar
online

WindyCityMediaGroup.com
ChicagoPride.com

BILLY MASTERS

"I like gays. I'm not a homophobic and I'm so sick of people saying that."—Bristol Palin tells the critics her feelings about gay people at the announcement of the all-star edition of Dancing with the Stars. I'm glad she cleared this up—I don't know how many times I've wondered if she is "a homophobic!"

Am I the only one who doesn't have Olympic fever? Since I'm in the midst of my world tour, I simply can't justify staying inside to watch TV ... even for hot guys in Lycra. But I have found it in my heart to catch up with some of the highlights each night before bed—which has contributed to even more dreams about Ryan Lochte than usual. One of my favorite clips was when Ryan's mom told Matt Lauer that her little boy doesn't have time for a relationship. "He goes out on one-night stands," says Mrs. Lochte proudly.

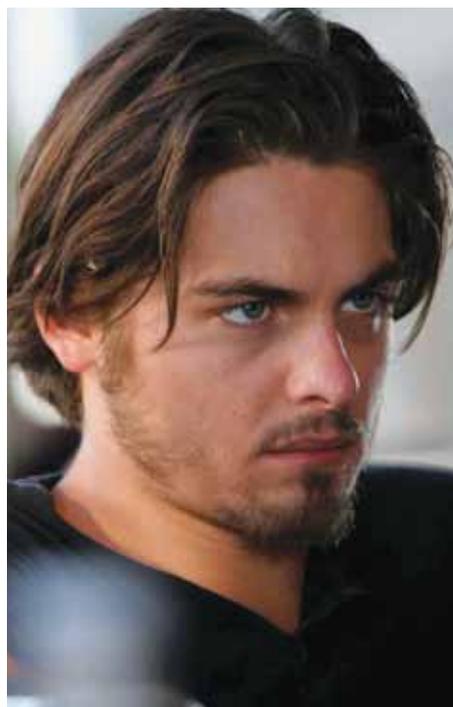
Within a day, mom tried to clarify the situation: "All I wanted to say is that he's so sensitive about not wanting to hurt a girl dating, so he just goes and dates and takes out a girl for maybe one or two dates and doesn't have a relationship because he doesn't have time and it's not fair to the women." I'm not sure if she helped called her son a ho. Ryan tried to clear everything up by saying, "I knew how the media was going to take it, and I knew what my mom really meant. She is so oblivious to everything." Well, that clears it up. And it also shows us the difference between Lochte and Michael Phelps. Ryan may be mega-hot, but Mikey would never throw the Widow Phelps under the bus.

We globetrotters have various issues that don't plague the average person. I remember once rushing off a plane for a much-anticipated date, and taking a decongestant ... or so I thought. Apparently, I mistakenly took an Ambien. While

I'm not exactly sure what happened during that date, I woke up in a suite that had been pre-paid for a week. Jeremy Renner recently found himself in the exact opposite situation. He was flying from London to Los Angeles and wanted to make sure he slept the whole way. He asked a friend for a pill, which he took as he boarded. The flight departed and he waited to feel drowsy, but nothing happened. Then he started to get a tingly feeling in his nether regions. And, as he told Jimmy Kimmel, "I realized very quickly that the 'A' was actually a little 'V' on the pill!" At this point, Kimmel quipped, "Somebody gave you a Viagra instead of Ambien? First of all, you need a new doctor ... or new friends." Renner added that the in-flight crew was aware of the situation and asked if they could be of any assistance. Flight attendants can be very accommodating, something I know first hand—literally.

I'm sure you all are acquainted with Hedwig and the Angry Inch, which chronicles the story of Hansel, an East German boy who falls in love with a U.S. soldier. In order to marry, Hansel gets a sex-change operation that, alas, goes awry. The show, written by John Cameron Mitchell with music and lyrics by Stephen Trask, went on to become a cult hit and was later made into a film. Mitchell has revealed that he is working on a sequel to the material that he will try out during the Afterglow Festival at the Crown & Anchor in Provincetown, Mass., Sept. 16. Mitchell will once again play Hedwig.

What if you woke up in a world where being gay was considered normal and being heterosexual was considered deviant? That's the premise of Love Is All You Need?, an independent film that will begin shooting this fall. In final negotiations for the lead is Kellan Lutz, who would



Kevin Zegers had some adult education, Billy says.

play a quarterback with a secret—he's straight! He has to hide his heterosexuality from the world or else face discrimination. I believe the original script was less inventive and was simply called The Ryan Seacrest Story.

Many of you fell in love with actor Kevin Zegers when he appeared as the son in Transamerica. Did you know that he's a Method actor? To prepare for the role of a hustler, he went to a neighborhood frequented by rent boys and negotiated a "date." The man in question offered \$200, Kevin wanted \$500 and they settled on \$350. At that point, Zegers felt his education was complete, went to freshen up in the bathroom and bolted—alas, another missed opportunity. Anyway, he'll once again be playing gay in The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones,

the first in yet another trilogy of films based on books. Zegers' character is the gay brother of the female lead. They don't get along because the man he loves is in love with her. And he probably doesn't have \$500.

There are some people who use nudity solely to get a bit of attention—like Austin Armacost, who was constantly naked on The A-List: New York. When we last saw Armacost, he got some test shots done in order to rekindle his modeling career. That was when he discovered that his increased avoirdupois had not only added attention to his asset, but also to his waist ... and, as we all know, the camera adds five pounds (which means Armacost was shot by more cameras than the JFK assassination). What to do, what to do? Why, shoot an advertisement for PETA imploring people not to wear fur. Did PETA implore him to do this ad? I'm not sure if PETA even knew who he was. The ad shows him on a catwalk *au naturale*, turning his moneymaker towards the camera, and holding a sign that says, "Turn Your Back On Fur." The rather sparsely populated audience includes gossip columnist Michael Musto (who refuses to look down) and some other guy who looks at Austin's crotch in horror. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, I'll stop writing and simply direct you to check out BillyMasters.com.

When Kevin Zegers can be had for \$350, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Thankfully, it'll cost you much less to see every inch of him on www.BillyMasters.com, the site that shares Ryan Lochte's "hit-it-and-quit-it" philosophy (except Big Mama Masters would never say that on TV). If you've got a question you'd like me to tackle, just send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I take an Ambien/Viagra cocktail (which sounds like it would go nicely with Tequila—but what doesn't?). So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

at the heart of the action

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Force comes up short in championship thriller

BY ROSS FORMAN

The San Diego Surge scored two touchdowns in the final four minutes Aug. 4, then hung on to defeat the Chicago Force 40-36 in a thrilling, back-and-forth Women's Football Alliance (WFA) national championship game played at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh.

The Force finished the season 11-1. This was the team's second championship game loss in its 10-year existence. San Diego finished 12-0.

Casey Brick scored the game-winning touchdown with 1:49 remaining when she returned Tricia Charbonneau's punt 66 yards for the TD.

The Force had a chance in the final minutes of regulation time. Force quarterback Sami Grisafe connected with Trish Harper for a 30-yard completion to the Surge 15 yard-line and the Chicago first down.

But then disaster struck the Force.

On the next play, Grisafe's pass was intercepted by Cilena Mosley at the Surge 6-yard line. Mosley returned it 28 yards and San Diego took over at its 24-yard line after a penalty on the play.

Brick was named the MVP in front of 2,307 fans in what was the first women's football game ever played in an NFL stadium.

"While this loss is extremely disappointing, I am so incredibly proud of this team," Force owner/GM Linda Bache said. "It was clear that we played a better game than our opponent, as the stats clearly show, and as even their own fans and players acknowledged. But we gave up a few big plays. If you remove those four [or] five plays, we completely dominated them."

"This was an amazing season, and this championship was hugely important to the sport. It was the first time a women's championship [game] has been played in an NFL stadium, and it was



Sami Grisafe. Photo by Ross Forman

broadcast live on ESPN3. The fans, the media, everyone is talking about what a fantastic game this was. We are committed to returning to the championship game next year and claiming the title that we deserve."

Grisafe was 21 for 32 passing for 269 yards and four touchdowns. Her prime target was Brandy Hatcher, who caught a team-high seven passes for 45 yards, including two touchdowns. Albi Zhubi had five receptions for 99 yards and one touchdown. Brandi Srda also had a touchdown among her three receptions.

Grisafe was named Chicago's MVP.

Melissa Smith was Chicago's main running weapon; she carried 26 times for 111 yards.

Darcy Leslie led the Force defense with a team-high seven tackles, while Emma Finestone and Kim Marks each added six.

Chicago's Amber Burns, a middle linebacker in her fourth season on the team, highlighted by an All-Star season in 2009, posted on Facebook after the loss: "Total bummer, especially since it's my last season."

Konesha Rhea, a defensive lineman for the Force, posted on Facebook: "Great championship game, but unfortunately we did not win. I love my band of sisters and am SO proud of you!"

Liz Okey, an offensive lineman, added her commentary on Facebook, too. She wrote: "Some of us spend our life striving towards a goal, a ring,

a trophy, a perfect season. We chase this dream knowing that the odds, in the end, will always be against us. That perfection is nearly impossible. But we keep chasing. [Saturday], we fell short. We lost the national championship in the last 90 seconds of the game. It hurts, it's more painful than I could even predict.

"But at the end of the day, I'm grateful. I was a part of something great, something truly amazing. These experiences are the stories that will be told to my grand kids, engrained in sports history, benchmarks to reach towards. Even though it wasn't the outcome we wanted. [Saturday], I was a part of something amazing and no one can ever take that away."

Gay Softball World Series makes an impact—financially

BY ROSS FORMAN

The 2011 Gay Softball World Series, held in Chicago, has had a lasting impact locally off the fields of play.

Local organizers raised more than \$225,000 for the five-day event held last August at three suburban, multifield complexes.

"Being a 501(c)(3) organization, we were bound by law to distribute any of our excess funds to other non-profit/501(c)(3) entities," said Ted Cappas, president of the eight-member local organizing committee. "The board wanted to use those funds to reinvest in our community and to build off of the anti-bullying theme we promoted all week in conjunction with Ben Cohen and his Stand-UpFoundation." Cohen's charity received more than \$10,000 during the week of the Series.

In addition, three local charities—Howard Brown Broadway Youth Center, Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and The Families' & Children's AIDS Network—each received close to \$7,000 from funds raised at the Talent Show, held during the Series.

Organizers also issued a \$10,000 grant to the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) to implement an LGBT youth sports program, "to provide awareness and [a] safe haven for our youth," Cappas said.

In addition, a \$17,500 grant was given to Imagination Theater to perform several anti-bullying prevention workshops in front of 3,930 children, from kindergarten through high school, in Chicago Public Schools. Training sessions also were performed for 405 camp counselors on how to deal with bullying this summer at the various summer camps.

"The numbers from the anti-bullying programs are very exciting," Cappas said. "Even if they were successful in reaching only 5 percent of their audience, we potentially prevented 200 bullying situations. That alone was worth all the work and effort in organizing the Gay Softball World Series."

Local organizers also provided a small amount of money to the next two host cities of the Series: Minneapolis and Washington, D.C.

"Besides the softball, we knew hosting the Gay Softball World Series was an opportunity to leave a bigger impact on our community," Cappas said.

Chicago-based Hunden Strategic Partners reported the Series had a \$5 million impact on the city and the surrounding communities.

"Our primary goal as a Board was to host a well-organized softball tournament," Cappas said. "Players and teams came here to compete in a softball tournament—and we always made a point to remind ourselves of that. Nothing else would have mattered if we didn't successfully host a well-run tournament."

The 2011 Series featured 150 teams, playing more than 600 games, with more than 2,000 visitors.

"Our board made the decision very early to be conservative in our budgeting," Cappas said. "We tried to account for any realistic costs that we could incur in addition to having a small contingency line item for any unexpected expenses. Under no circumstances did we want to be in a position where we had to continue to fund raise after the event to cover our expenses, or have to ask any of our vendors for discounts. We were absolutely going to be a financial success."

"Remarkably, we had no rain the entire week. That alone saved us a considerable amount of money in our budget as we didn't have to pay for additional hours at the fields and the corresponding costs to making the fields playable. In addition, we had no material unexpected costs."

Woman will officiate NFL game for first time

A woman was set to be part of an NFL officiating crew for the first time ever Aug. 9, according to ESPN.com.

Shannon Eastin, who has been a referee in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, will work the preseason game between the Green Bay Packers and San Diego Chargers.

A resident of Tempe, Ariz., Eastin also has won six national judo championships.

Red Stars wins first U.S. National Cup title

The women's soccer team the Chicago Red Stars recently defeated former champ New York Athletic Club (NYAC) 3-2 to take the Women's National Cup final.

Amanda Cinali led the way with a goal and an assist, while Ashlee Elliott and Georgia Waddle each added a goal for the winners.

"Any time you win a Championship it is special, and this is the first National Championship for the Chicago Red Stars club," stated team owner Annim Whisler. "NYAC has won this competition in the past."

City building 34 miles of new bicycle lanes

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced that the city is building 34 miles of new bicycle lanes in neighborhoods across Chicago this year, according to a press release.

This is part of a planned nearly 650-mile network of biking facilities to be in place by 2020 to provide a bicycle accommodation within half-mile of every Chicagoan.

Rapinoe, U.S. women's soccer play for gold

The U.S. women's soccer team—which includes openly lesbian player Megan Rapinoe—will play for gold Thursday, Aug. 9, against Japan at the London Olympics after defeating Canada 4-3 in overtime Aug. 6. (Rapinoe scored twice.)

At last year's World Cup final, the U.S. lost to Japan on penalty kicks.

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LOVERS WITHOUT WILLS: A PERILOUS SITUATION

Q. My lover passed away last month in an automobile accident. We were together for 18 years and, unfortunately, neither of us had a will and we didn't become Civil Union partners. Because my lover made a lot more money than I did, she wanted everything to be in her name alone: the house; the car; and the bank accounts. The problem is that my lover's parents are now saying that they own the house and everything else. What are my legal rights?

A. Married couples and LGBT couples with a Civil Union who buy real estate together have divorce and probate laws to provide protection to them in case they should split up or die. Same-sex couples who are not in a Civil Union, however, have to create for themselves their own safeguards.

If you should die without a will, the state in which you live has a very simple solution, they will write a will for you. The state will write a will to protect your Civil Union partner, your husband, your wife, your children and related family members. The state will not make any provision to provide for your LGBT lover, your favorite charities or friends. If you fail to have a will, your lover could receive nothing.

A pair of relatively uncomplicated wills for each member of an LGBT couple may require only one consultation with an attorney and may cost a total of only \$300 to \$500, a small price considering what can happen without a will.

There may also be times when you will want the same protection of a will deciding to whom your property shall go, but in the event of death have title to the property transfer directly to your lover without the expense of probate court proceedings.

In Illinois, real estate can be owned by the device of an Illinois land trust. As a solution to the problem at hand, the lover that paid all the money could have held title to the house in a land trust and provide in the document creating the land trust that in the event of death the house would go to the surviving lover. That way the deceased lover could have total control over the property while she was alive and provide for her lover in the case of death.

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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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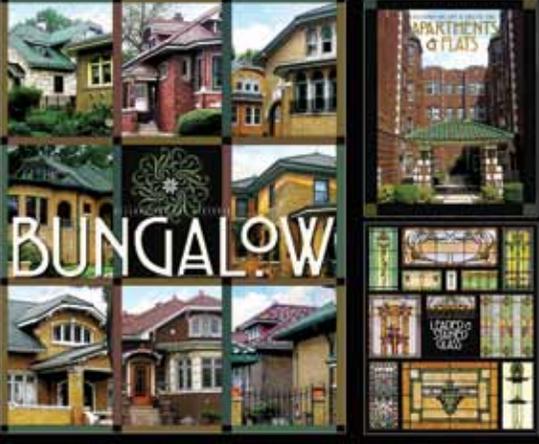
I see individuals, couples, children & families for crisis and ongoing work.

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