



ELLEN BARKIN
INTERVIEW

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



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DNC
HIGHLIGHTS
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Police adopt trans policy

BY KATE SOSIN

After more than two years of pushing by transgender-rights advocates, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) has quietly adopted a general order that mandates the respectful treatment of transgender detainees.

The policy has been a major goal of more than 30 community groups, which pushed for the order both within CPD and through a proposed city ordinance.

According to the CPD website, the policy went into effect Aug. 22.

"This general order is a huge step forward in a couple of ways," said Jennifer Ritter, executive director of Lakeview Action Coalition (LAC), which began work on the order in 2010.

The order mandates that police not search transgender people in an attempt to determine their gender, that officers respect preferred names and pronouns for transgender detainees and that they not use someone's gender identity as assumed cause for a crime. It further bans derogatory language against trans people.

The policy comes after years of complaints from

transgender women who report that police stop them for walking at night on the assumption that they are engaged in sex work.

The order, which Superintendent Garry McCarthy signed, will result in trainings for CPD officers.

LAC began working on the order under the Daley administration after a transgender woman was allegedly harassed by police and charged with solicitation on her way home from a Lakeview grocery store in February

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BRUNCH
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FALL 2012 MUSIC & MOVIES



Get ready for the season with music news from Linda Clifford (far left, PR photo), Ladyhawke (lower left, PR photo), and Madonna (lower right, photo by Mert + Marcus). Meanwhile, fall's silver-screen treats include How To Survive a Plague (upper left, photo by William Lucas Walker) and The Paperboy.

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MARY POWERS
OF CITIZENS
ALERT
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Photos on cover (left, from top): Photo of Ellen Barkin courtesy of NBC; photo of Michelle and President Obama by David Lari/QNotes; photo of Chuck Wolfe by Erica Demarest; photo of Mary Powers by Bill Kelley

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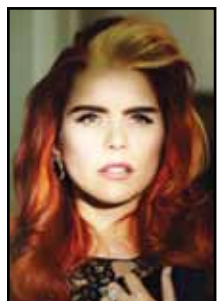
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THE RIGHTS STUFF

Read about lawyer Alyx S. Pattison (left), an attorney who has fought for the rights of LGBT citizens.

Photo by m.c. clark



Read an interview with singer Paloma Faith.

Photo by Rebecca Pierce



See images from Fashion's Night Out, which was part of the Mag Mile Shopping Festival.

Photo by Steve Starr

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Obama, gay Democrats pitch four more years for the president at DNC

BY CHUCK COLBERT

The role of government and that of change top priorities—come Election Day, Nov. 6—for LGBT voters trekking the road to full gay equality. And President Barack Obama left little doubt on those two scores during his acceptance speech Sept. 6 in the Time Warner Cable Arena in Charlotte, N.C..

"We don't think government can solve all our problems," the president told adoring delegates. "But we don't think that government is the source of all our problems—any more than are welfare recipients, or corporations, or unions, or immigrants, or gays, or any other group we're told to blame for our troubles."

There is a positive role for government in the lives of all Americans, Obama insisted. Sound government policies affect peoples lives for the better. And change is about the people who make it happen, said Obama.

"So you see, the election four years ago wasn't about me. It was about you. My fellow citizens—you were the change," the president explained.

"You're the reason there's a little girl with a heart disorder in Phoenix who'll get the surgery she needs because an insurance company can't limit her coverage."

"You did that."

"You're the reason a young man in Colorado who never thought he'd be able to afford his dream of earning a medical degree is about to get that chance. You made that possible."

Sure enough, Obama highlighted the change that he, his administration, and Democratic Party have now fully embraced—and accomplished.

"You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home; why selfless soldiers won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love; why thousands of families have finally been able to say to the loved ones who served us so bravely: 'Welcome home,'" said Obama.

The president spoke to marriage equality, which the Democrats have now endorsed in a historic first for a major U.S. political party.

"If you turn away now—if you buy into the cynicism that the change we fought for isn't possible...well, change will not happen. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then other voices will fill the void: lobbyists and special interests; the people with the \$10 million checks who are trying to buy this election and those who are making it harder for you to vote; Washington politicians who want to decide who you can marry, or control health care choices that women should make for themselves," the president said.

"Only you can make sure that doesn't happen. Only you have the power to move us forward," Obama added.

Forward, indeed—it was only eight years ago that Calif. Sen. Dianne Feinstein said advocacy of same-sex marriage was "too much, too fast, too soon."

Eight years before that (1996), then President Bill Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) into law.

But that was then and this is now. The Department of Justice is no longer defending DOMA in federal court.

Earlier this spring, the president himself had fully "evolved."

Leaving Charlotte, LGBT delegates—nearly 8



The president and first lady at the Democratic National Convention. Photo by David Lari/QNotes

percent and a record high—to the Democratic National Convention could not be happier or energized.

"The pursuit of LGBT equality was on full display on the last night of our 2012 Democratic National Convention," said Clark Williams of San Jose, Calif., a delegate and co-chair of the LGBT Caucus of the California Democratic Party.

"Speaker after speaker pledged their support for the freedom-to-marry plank in the party platform, praised the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and called for the end of the Defense of Marriage Act," he emailed.

"For LGBT Americans, President Obama's enthralling and electric speech was the last and greatest show of support for LGBT equality," said Williams. "Our President highlighted his efforts to end discrimination in our armed forces and cited the appeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' as one of his proudest legislative accomplishments."

Williams also spoke in personal terms about the effects of a toxic political climate where right-wing religious extremists and similarly predisposed GOP partisans rely on gay equality as a wedge issue.

He said, "President Obama's appeals for a more cooperative and conciliatory political culture in Washington included chastising the GOP for unfairly marginalizing LGBT families."

"For me—a gay man and a father to a nine-year-old little girl—I was humbled and warmed by the President's understanding of how prejudice and scapegoating represents the very worst of America. The president and the First Lady are champions of our community and they are committed to furthering the cause of equality for all."

"Without question, LGBT Americans have a committed and vigorous ally in the White House. As [the president] framed what is at stake in this election, [Obama] made it crystal clear that Americans who believe in moving the nation forward cannot sit this election out."

Accordingly, Williams affirmed a commitment to get out the LGBT vote for Obama. "As LGBT families will continue to benefit tremendously from this president and his administration,

LGBT Americans everywhere must become active participants in the 60 days remaining of this presidential campaign," Williams said. "A Romney-Ryan win would threaten all of our LGBT achievements and dramatically set back the march towards full LGBT equality."

National Stonewall Democrats Executive Director Jerame Davis could not contain his enthusiasm for the Obama-Biden ticket: "I'm fired up and ready to go! Last night was the culmination of a week-long case for another term for President Obama and there is no doubt this president has more to offer America—LGBT Americans and otherwise—than the Romney-Ryan ticket."

"I spent a lot of time with LGBT delegates throughout the convention. Last night, I ran into a number of them after the president's speech. They were energized, enthusiastic, and ready to go to the ends of the Earth to re-elect the most LGBT-inclusive President in history. Our community will be out in force between now and in November, and we will turn out in droves at the ballot box, too."

With all eyes on Election Day, he continued, "The Obama team has an amazing LGBT outreach program that has already launched in all 50 states. In addition, Stonewall Democrats will be knocking on doors, making phone calls, and raising money to ensure that we don't lose the momentum now. The energy of our community is electrifying and the next 60 days are going to be critical to continuing to build on the unprecedented progress we've accomplished under this President."

"This is our time. This is our election. And we cannot afford to go back now. Four more years!" exclaimed Davis.

Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov voiced similar sentiments. "The approach to LGBT equality by the two candidates could not be any more different. On the one hand, we had President Obama express and reaffirm his commitment to LGBT equality, including marriage equality. On the other hand, we had Mitt Romney express and reaffirm his opposition to LGBT right, including his party's call for a constitutional amendment,

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—Meredith Baxter (left) to host Black Tie Dinner



—Obama names gay man to key post

—Google unblocks the term 'bisexual'

which would enshrine this bigotry into our founding document, said Cherkasov.

"The choice for President—for those who care about LGBT rights—could not be easier this election cycle," Cherkasov added.

"I believe that supporting full LGBT equality is a winning issue, and the president's reelection, coming on the heels of full-throttle support for marriage, would be a wake-up call for those on the sidelines and a huge boost of energy for those of us fighting on the ground," said Cherkasov.

As Democrats convened in convention for three days, speaker after speaker spoke out for gay rights, affirming full LGBT equality.

First Lady Michelle Obama went so far as to position same-sex civil marriage as all-American as apple pie.

"If proud Americans can be who they are and boldly stand at the altar with who they love, then surely, surely we can give everyone in this country a fair chance at that great American Dream," she said on Tuesday night during her prime-time, televised speech.

For his part, convention keynoter Julián Castro, the mayor of San Antonio, Texas—the first Latino in such a role—stuck it to the marriage-equality naysaying GOP and its nominee, "When it comes to letting people marry whomever they love, Mitt Romney says, 'No,'" Castro said.

And Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the convention chair, told the delegates, "For the first time, a major party platform recognizes marriage equality as a basic human right!"

Sixth-generation Iowan Zach Wahls, an activist who was raised by two moms, put his same-sex marriage advocacy to the GOP nominee in certain, heartfelt terms.

Wahls told delegates, "Gov. Romney says he's against same-sex marriage because every child deserves a mother and a father."

"I think every child deserves a family as loving and committed as mine. Because the sense of family comes from the commitment we make to each other to work through the hard times so we can enjoy the good ones. It comes from the love that binds us; that's what makes a family. Mr. Romney, my family is just as real as yours."

Two nights earlier, an openly gay congressman spoke in equally eloquent terms about his love and life:

"My name is Jared Polis. My great-grandparents were immigrants. I am Jewish. I am gay. I am a father. I am a son. I am an entrepreneur. I am a congressman from Colorado. I am always an optimist. But first and foremost, I am an American."

Continuing, Polis made a pitch for common ground and mutual respect among a diversity of views and personal experiences.

"That is why we must continue bringing America together."

"I don't just ask my fellow Americans to respect my relationship with my partner Marlon and my role as a father to our son. I also ask them to respect the Christian family concerned



Scene at the DNC. Photo by David Lari/QNotes

about decaying moral values and crass commercialism. I ask them to respect the difficult decision of a single mother to bring a child into this world, because of her heartfelt beliefs."

There was no red-white-and-blue balloon drop—only tricolor confetti—as the curtain came down on the 2012 Democratic National Convention shortly before midnight.

And yet, just as he prayed over Republicans gathered in Tampa, Fla., a week ago, so New York's cardinal archbishop, the Most Rev. Timothy M. Dolan, offer a benediction for the Democrats.

There were three main appeals he made: right to life, religious liberty and an affirmation of traditional marriage.

He said, "We beseech you, almighty God to shed your grace on this noble experiment in ordered liberty, which began with the confident assertion of inalienable rights bestowed upon us by you: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

"Thus do we praise you for the gift of life. Grant us the courage to defend it, life, without which no other rights are secure. We ask your benediction on those waiting to be born, that they may be welcomed and protected.

"We praise and thank you for the gift of liberty. May this land of the free never lack those brave enough to defend our basic freedoms. Renew in all our people a profound respect for religious liberty: the first, most cherished freedom bequeathed upon us at our founding.

"We praise and thank you for granting us the life and the liberty by which we can pursue happiness. Show us anew that happiness is found only in respecting the laws of nature and of nature's God. Empower us with your grace so that we might resist the temptation to replace the moral law with idols of our own making, or to remake those institutions you have given us for the nurturing of life and community."

And just as his appearance in Tampa raised eyebrows, so Dolan's praying in Charlotte

prompted sharp responses from gay Catholics and LGBT activists.

"Cardinal Dolan chose again to characterize same-sex marriage equality as 'the temptation to replace the moral law with idols of our own,'" said Charles Martel, president of New England-based Catholics for Marriage Equality.

"[Dolan] further went on to pray, 'Or to remake those institutions you have given us for the nurturing of life and community,'" said Martel.

However, "same-sex marriage is not about re-making the institution of marriage, but rather as evidence that same sex couples also value it, and believe that it does nurture not only themselves, but also the community," Martel explained. "Civil same-sex marriage does not threaten the institution of marriage, but adds to it through loving couples, the kinds of couples Catholic laity know, but apparently the hierarchy has never met."

In offering his assessment, Wayne Besen, founding executive director of Burlington, Vermont-based Truth Wins Out, was more pointed.

"Cardinal Dolan unnecessarily and inappropriately politicized his remarks," he said. "He appeared more partisan than prayerful and more animated by wedge issues than worship. It was hard to tell whether he was a Republican member of the House of Representatives or a representative from a house of worship."

But Chicago's Joe Murray of the Rainbow Sash Movement noted a more nuanced political landscape among Catholic voters.

"Clearly," Dolan "is opposed to both gay marriage and abortion, and some would say that his coded language points to that in the closing prayer. So what's going on here?" asked Murray.

"We can view this strictly from a political perspective or we can recognize it as more complex," he added. "The cardinal's presence at both conventions sends the message to those faithful Catholics that they can vote for either presidential candidate and remain faithful Catholics. In my opinion, this is why the Democrats revisited

their original position not to let Dolan say the closing Benediction at their convention, and invite him."

Murray went on to say that while he doubted the cardinal will change his position on either same-sex marriage or abortion, "I do believe [Dolan] recognizes a change in strategy with 'the sky is falling' approach [towards marriage equality] requires re-evaluation.

"While the cardinal spoke about his pro-life views without mentioning abortion, he did not say anything whatsoever about gay marriage and that is a very good thing.

"His closing benediction shows, in my opinion, his continuing effort to moderate his position by moving towards the middle.

"Many Obama administration policies have alienated faithful Catholics and their bishops. I think the Democrats recognized that, and I believe that promoted their wise response to invite Dolan to the Democratic National Convention."

Quite simply, "that is probably good politics," he added. "With Ohio, Wisconsin and even Michigan and Pennsylvania now in play, attracting Catholic votes could prove critical.

"In recent years, Catholics have emerged as an important swing vote. Long predominantly Democratic, Catholics have increasingly shifted to the Republican Party, drawn by conservative positions on social issues."

Meanwhile, a May 2012 Gallup poll showed half of all U.S. residents support legal same-sex marriage, affording gay couples the same status and benefits as traditionally married couples.

In addition, 65 percent of Democrats support gay marriage, with 57 percent of Independents and 22 percent of Republicans favoring it.

Gallup also found that 51 percent of Catholics support legal same-sex marriage, with 38 percent of Protestants and 88 percent of people with no religious affiliation favoring it.

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DNC 2012

Historic DNC a continued call for full inclusion

ANALYSIS BY JAMES NICHOLS

This week's 2012 Democratic National Convention proved to be a monumentally historic event for the LGBT community and the Democratic Party itself. The party platform, approved Sept. 4, includes a marriage equality plank that reaffirms President Barack Obama's commitment to legalize same-sex marriage and combat employment discrimination against LGBT individuals. This comes almost a year after the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and several months after Obama became the first president to publicly state that he is in support of same-sex marriage.

The inclusion of LGBT delegates from each state in the convention, including individuals identifying as transgender, proved to be one of the most thrilling and crucial components of the week. Following the 2008 convention, organizers passed new affirmative action rules for delegate selection in order to foster a diverse and accurate reflection of the American population.

The new rules resulted in the largest LGBT delegation any convention has ever seen.

North Carolina sent its first transgender delegate in history, Janice Covington, to represent the state at this year's convention. A victory of this magnitude cannot be overstated, particularly after North Carolinians voted to approve Amendment One in May. This legislation prohibited same-sex couples from receiving full marriage rights, restricting marriage between a man and a woman as the only legal union recognized in the state. In all, 14 transgender individuals served as delegates for their respective states at this convention.

Due largely to the progress gained by the gay and lesbian movement over the past decades, transgender individuals are slowly beginning to gain visibility as citizens are educated about non-socially normative ways of being and knowing. We can understand the extreme marginalization and social stigmas attached to transgender individuals by considering the less-than-human

perception of gays and lesbians throughout the early and mid-20th century. Transgender people, too, share a history of marginalization with gays and lesbians that place them as one of the most vulnerable groups in our country.

However, individuals within the framework of the gay and lesbian movement often discount this shared disenfranchisement. In fact, I've had many friends that identify as gay and lesbian but embody a blatant transphobia, claiming that "our" movement is distinct and separate from "theirs." This is extremely problematic and troubling.

So much of the rhetoric within the DNC has constructed distinct images of the "American Dream" between political parties. That is, Republicans build themselves to the "top" purely for themselves, abandoning everyone once they accomplish their personal vision of success. Democrats are portrayed as not forgetting the shoulders they stood on to get to the "top," and helping others build themselves up after achieving success.

This metaphor, while problematic, fits well within the context of inclusion of transgender individuals in the gay and lesbian movement. That is, individuals within normative society have come to understand transgender people through the lens of non-normative sexualities. While identifying as transgender doesn't neces-

sarily have anything to do with sexuality, the extreme marginalization gays and lesbians experienced in the past from the privileged dominant comes from the same place and the same frame of mind as transphobia.

"Transcending gender" is a very personal and complicated experience, and yet transgender individuals constantly find themselves having to put their identity into discourse for others. They are expected to compartmentalize who they are and why they are into categories, when their identity itself is a transcendence of rigid identity categories. After all, if lesbian, gay, and bisexual people don't expect to validate why they live their lives differently than the dominant majority, why should we ever demand that explanation from anyone else?

The visibility of transgender individuals within the political process is one of the most important steps to imagining a world where "equality" is a real and attainable ideal. The 14 transgender delegates who attended the DNC embodied a historic moment and laid the foundation for what will be a long road to social inclusion and full legal protection. It is indeed a cause for celebration. However, it is also a reminder for gays and lesbian to not forget our fight for full inclusion and legal protection of transgender individuals merely because we are finally beginning to experience legal inclusion ourselves.

Illinois delegates find LGBT inclusion encouraging

BY JAMES NICHOLS

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Democrats from Illinois held a delegation breakfast Sept. 5, the second day of the Democratic National Convention. The event took place at the Omni Hotel, where many of Illinois' delegates are staying this week, including the 10 LGBT representatives from the state.

Thousands, including the Illinois delegates, packed into Time Warner Cable Arena in downtown Charlotte for Tuesday's opening remarks. Among the speakers were First Lady Michelle Obama and openly gay Colorado Representative Jared Polis.

Delegate Modesto "Tico" Valle is executive director of Chicago's Center on Halsted and an Illinois LGBT delegate. He reflected on the experience the morning after Obama's rousing speech.

"I sat there and I saw a rainbow of people throughout the stadium," Valle said. "But most importantly, in all the remarks that were made there was no one that was left behind. And that was pretty powerful—that the LGBT community was brought along."

Debra Shore, the openly LGBT commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, echoed Valle's sentiments about the visual impact of human diversity in the arena.

"I think when we see the picture—the delegates from all over our country in the convention hall and arena...you'll see a picture of America," said Shore. "I'm proud. I'm happy. Included in that picture will be many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who, by appearance, may not show our diversity, and yet we're there too. We're part of the fabric of the country."

For Chicago delegate Gail Morse—attending the convention with her partner, Lauren Verdich—Tuesday's convention proceedings were especially important. Delegates approved the party's platform, complete with a plank supporting marriage equality.

The party's careful and deliberate inclusion touched Morse.

"[On Sept. 4], the first night of the conven-



Gail Morse. Photo by David Lari/QNotes

tion, the first of three nights, it was almost every speaker who affirmed LGBT rights and for me that was huge and important," she said.

Morse also highlighted the stark contrast in rhetoric surrounding LGBT issues between the 2008 and current conventions. Her passion for marriage equality largely motivated her desire to become a delegate.

The marriage plank and LGBT inclusion in the Democratic Party platform proved to be a unifying issue among delegates, not merely LGBT-specific individuals. Illinois Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky fully attributed the success of the marriage plank to years of work by LGBT activists.

"I think that the community can take full credit for that," she said. "The community has really pressed forward, challenging the status quo, demanding the kinds of changes. I mean, if you really think about progress on the human rights front, there's nothing to compare to what has happened in the queer community. Nothing."

Several delegates expressed a belief that the intentional inclusion, both in the party platform and the convention itself, will be important in helping mobilize LGBT voters in November.



Chris Boyster (left) and partner Matt Berry. Photo by Andrew Davis

Out downstate candidate holds Boystown reception

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Out Sangamon County auditor candidate Chris Boyster held a "celebration of diversity" Sept. 8 at the Boystown spot Cocktail.

Among those attending were Jacob Meister and Rick Garcia (both members of The Civil Rights Agenda) as well as Sam Yingling, an openly gay candidate for the state House (62nd District).

Talking with Windy City Times, Boyster (who is already a member of the Sangamon County Board) said, "It's about getting out the vote," adding that "we've locked about 3,500 votes." He also indicated he has bipartisan support in his bid; regarding his chances, Boyster said that he's "confident but not cocky."

Addressing the audience, Boyster said, "I must be winning this race because my opponent sent a spy on us tonight."

"This is a celebration of diversity, so I'll say this: I became Springfield's first openly gay elected official when I won my county board seat. It's not about a gay candidate; it's about supporting something that matters."

"Those of you who are over the age of 30 and members of the LGBT community probably know what it's like to grow up as a young person wondering who you are."

"I'm running this race because, yes, I want to support the taxpayers of Sangamon County; they have a right to know where their money is going and who's spending what. But this race is also about that young kid who [wonders who he is]. I was taunted at; I was teased. If someone can see that I did it, they can come through it—and that's why this race matters."

Meister pointed out to WCT that if Boyster wins, he'd be the openly gay individual in the state to hold a county-wide seat; Debra Shore of Cook County's Metropolitan Water Reclamation District is currently the only out LGBT individual in that category.

Shore, state Senate President John Cullerton and state House Majority Leader Barbara Flynn Currie were among those on the host committee.

Sangamon County has Springfield as its seat; among the many other townships in the area are Auburn, Island Grove, Woodside, Rochester and New Berlin.

Lurie Children's opening late-night HIV-testing site in Lakeview

BY KATE SOSIN

The Center for Gender, Sexuality and HIV Prevention based out of the Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago (formerly Children's Memorial Hospital) is opening a late-night HIV testing site in Lakeview.

According to Peter Freeman, a research coordinator at the center, the new satellite office is expected to open this fall.

The facility, located at 608 W. Briar St., will provide HIV testing, STI screenings and linkage

to care during the hours when other neighborhood service providers are closed. The site is expected to operate from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., with outreach workers walking the neighborhood at night.

Freeman said the site is an opportunity for the center to provide services mandated in three Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) grants without competing with the Lakeview's many service providers.

"I think we're just trying to fill in the gaps that are happening," said Freeman. "Of the test-

ing programs that do happen, there are very few that happen into the later hours of the evening."

It remains unclear exactly when the storefront will open and when it will begin STI testing. The site is ready for HIV testing, said Freeman, but is aiming to start such testing alongside HIV services in the future.

Lurie has had the Briar Street storefront for about a year, said Freeman. Previously, it was used for research.

The site will be working off a portion of three CDPH HIV grants totaling \$200,000; one for linking young HIV-positive people to care, another for trans women ages 16-29 and a third for young men who have sex with men on the North Side of Chicago.

Outreach staffers have already hit the streets in Lakeview, spreading the word about the late-night testing services. The site will have drop-in testing hours in the coming months and employ three staffers and a group of volunteers.

News of the Briar Street site comes alongside the center's anticipated move to Uptown. The center, headed by Dr. Rob Garofalo houses major HIV research projects based out of Children's. It is currently housed in Children's old Lincoln Park building but announced in the spring it was relocating to a space at 4707-4711 N. Broadway. Freeman could not confirm when the Center would relocate, although it is also expected to move this fall.

In addition to operating in Lakeview and Uptown, the center is also expanding some its services to Edgewater. Garofalo and others will be administering health services at Chicago House's future transgender housing project in Edgewater.

Freeman said the Center has recognized a growing population of LGBT people in North Side neighborhoods and that it is hoping to expand its reach to more direct services.

"We, as a center—we're really excited to start building a presence in different neighborhoods in the city," he said.



The site of the HIV-testing facility. Photo by Kate Sosin

Photos wanted for 'A Day with HIV'

In order to mark A Day with HIV, Sept. 21, Positively Aware is asking people to take digital photographs to record a moment of their day that will focus the world's attention on the daily trials and triumphs of people living with HIV.

Photos need to be submitted by Sept. 25 on the A Day with HIV website (www adaywithhiv.com). People can follow A Day with HIV's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ADayWithHIV) or on Twitter @A_Day_With_HIV (https://twitter.com/a_day_with_hiv) to see updates and selected photographs.

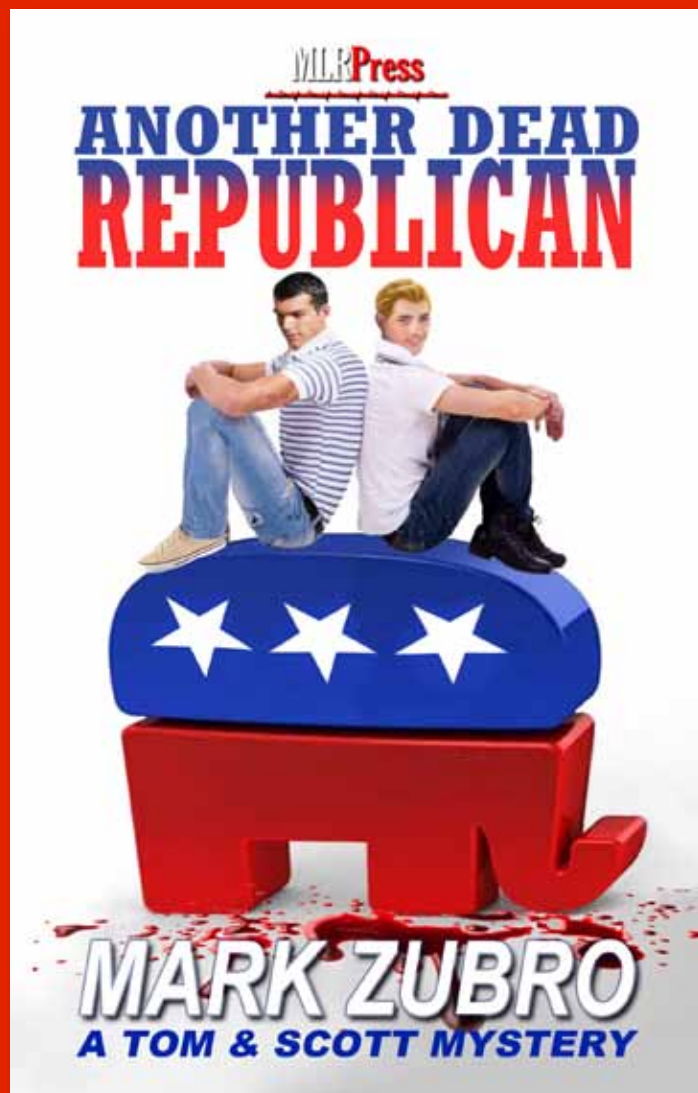
Lambda Legal's 'Into the Woods' Sept. 15 in Mich.

Lambda Legal's 16th annual celebration of summer and civil rights will take place at the home of Keith Stolte and Brian Ortiz in Union Pier, Mich.

The event will take place Saturday, Sept. 15, 6-9:30 p.m. CT, and will feature the Elaine Dame Jazz Quartet.

Tickets are \$150-\$250; see www.lambda-legal.org/intothewoods. Lambda Legal offers round-trip motorcoach transportation from Chicago to Into the Woods for \$25 per person (in addition to your ticket or sponsorship purchase).

Reservations are first come, first serve; contact Jeff Souva at jsouva@lambdalegal.org or 312-663-4413, ext. 335.



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BY

MARK ZUBRO

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Citizens Alert's Mary Powers on advocacy and the power of individuals

BY SEAN PYLES

Mary Powers has been butting heads with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) for more than 40 years. In her work with Citizens Alert, a police-accountability activist group started in 1967, Powers has been directly involved in policy changes within the CPD. She has also been active in the fight for LGBT rights.

The Michigan native graduated from the University of Wisconsin and eventually moved to Chicago. She worked briefly at the American Red Cross before taking a position at Western Electric as an employee counselor in the late 1940s. It was there she first felt a pull towards activism.

"In that counseling role, I was fortunate enough to build enough confidence in the people I was working with that they confided in me their personal problems," said Powers, 90. "At that point, people were losing their jobs [because of their sexual orientation]. This was such a moving and compelling situation, I began to feel involved in the issues of this community right then."

Later, this work inspired Powers to support the formation of the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force, an activist group that fought for equal rights for LGBT citizens in Chicago.

Her involvement with Citizens Alert began shortly after the 1969 raid on the Black Panthers' apartment on Chicago's West Side. Powers and a few of her neighbors from Winnetka walked through the raided Panther apartment after the raid and were appalled at the destruction.

"We were all so shocked that we decided to get involved and do something," said Powers.

Powers saw a flier from the Alliance to End Repression, a coalition of social-activist task forces, advertising an open meeting at DePaul University to galvanize citizens against the structures that lead to their own repression. Powers chose to join a board directly involved in monitoring and fighting what activists felt were overreaches of power in the criminal justice system. Shortly after the meeting, the group became a part of Citizens Alert in an attempt to



Mary Powers. Photo by Bill Kelley

tackle perceived abuses of power in the CPD.

"It was really challenging, but at the same time empowering," Powers said. "Because at first, it really felt like the public had no place, so that really gave us the impetus to say 'Oh yes we do!'"

Part of asserting themselves in the criminal justice system included directly confronting the structure of the CPD. This included monitoring meetings of the Chicago Police Board.

Powers said, "These meetings were a totally closed operation when we discovered them. After going to our first meeting, we let them know we were coming back."

After Citizens Alert became involved in these meetings the Chicago Police Department moved them to an auditorium at the Police Station. This move was the first of many tangible changes

in how the CPD interacted with the public.

"For years we organized people to go to the police with their problems and challenge policies and practices and question the budget," said Powers. "In the beginning, they ignored us, but they began to recognize the public's right to attend these meetings...We were able to make the police force recognize the value of interacting with the public through those police board meetings."

Over the next four decades, Powers and Citizens Alert had a significant impact on a number of police policies in Chicago. Beyond publicizing the monthly meeting of the Chicago Police Board, Citizens Alert spearheaded an accountability campaign in the Cook County Medical Examiner's office. Powers said the office was perceived as a tool of the CPD for whitewashing deaths related to police brutality.

To combat this, Citizens Alert organized a two-year public education program on the Medical Examiner, which led to a successful referendum to replace those in the coroner's office. In order to continue accountability after the campaign ended, Citizens Alert received notification from the CPD of every death in custody to monitor the autopsy and assure the families were notified.

Citizens Alert also fought to mandate videotaping of police interrogations.

"As the years went on, we had really good, supportive relationships with the police where they recognized that public cooperation was important to their success," said Powers. "That was a major change."

While Citizens Alert functioned independently,

the organization worked under the broader umbrella of the Alliance to End Repression and its partner advocacy groups. It was through the Alliance that Powers became involved with the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Powers volunteered for the Alliance's Observer Program where she monitored the police at the early Pride parades.

"For many years when it was really necessary to demonstrate on the street about gay and lesbian issues, the police were always there with heavy surveillance, so the Observer Program would appear at many of those occasions when asked to do so by the community, wearing our Citizens Alert volunteer armbands and recording every bit of interaction between demonstrators, the police and the public," Powers said.

In 1992, Powers was inducted into the Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame as a friend of the community. She was honored for her work advocating formal training for Chicago police officers on LGBT issues and developing training materials for the CPD.

"Receiving the award was wonderful," said Powers. "I believed firmly in what I was doing, so I didn't expect anything [in return]. I just needed to do that."

Powers is still active in Citizens Alert. The organization recently celebrated its 45th anniversary and moved to an office at the Jane Addams College of Social Work on the UIC campus. Powers continues to advocate for open communication and supportive relationships between the CPD and Chicagoans.

Personal PAC luncheon to feature Gloria Allred

Personal PAC—a bipartisan group aimed at electing pro-choice candidates to state and local offices in Illinois—is featuring famed attorney Gloria Allred at its 19th Annual Awards Luncheon.

Allred, an active feminist, founded and is currently serving as president of the Women's Equal Rights Legal Defense and Education Fund.

In addition, Personal PAC will honor Marjorie Craig Benton, who co-founded the Chicago Foundation for Women, the Women's Issues Network and The Peace Museum. Jon O'Brien—the president of Catholics for Choice, a pro-choice organization advocating for sexual and reproductive rights from a standpoint of culture, faith, justice and morality—will also be honored.

The event will take place at 12 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 30, at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

Ticket prices start at \$150; call 312-422-0005 or visit www.PersonalPac.org.

Sept. 27 LGBT reception to feature Michelle Obama

The LGBT Leadership Council and event co-chairs Fred Eychaner, Laura Ricketts, Wally Brewster and Bob Satawake will welcome First Lady Michelle Obama to Eychaner's home Thursday, Sept. 27, at 6 p.m. (Eychaner's address is provided upon the RSVP.)

The donation levels include Gen44 (\$250; limited availability), Reception (write \$1,000 or raise \$5,000—per person), Host (write \$10,000 or raise \$15,000—per couple) and Chair (write \$15,000 or raise \$30,000—per couple). Those who donate at the Host and Chair levels will be able to take photos with the first lady.

Visit <https://donate.barackobama.com/page/contribute/o2012-September27ChicagoReception?custom1=4794995>. For more info, email AHardikar@BarackObama.com or call 312-841-6869.



Christine Quinn at the Victory Fund brunch. Photo by Erica Demarest

Victory Fund hosts inaugural Chicago brunch

BY ERICA DEMAREST

The Victory Fund hosted its largest fundraising brunch to date Sept. 9, as more than 450 guests joined the national LGBT political-action committee for its inaugural Chicago Champagne Brunch at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel.

Headliner Christine Quinn—the New York City Council speaker and presumptive 2013 mayoral candidate—was welcomed with a rousing standing ovation. Speaking candidly, she shared stories from the Democratic National Convention and impressed the importance of electing openly LGBT legislators.

"It's not sexy work, but at the end of the day, it's work that gets cities and states to pass domestic partnerships, to pass civil unions, to pass marriage equality, and to create a drumbeat so loud that the Democratic Party doesn't worry about us as a wedge issue anymore," Quinn said.

As guests sat down to eggs Benedict, pastries and mimosas, three openly LGBT legislators—Wisconsin Rep. Mark Pocan, Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh and Cook County Metropolitan Water Reclamation Commissioner Debra Shore—took to the stage to share anecdotes from their time in office.

In 2012, the Victory Fund has backed 170 candidates with a year-to-date success rate of 81 percent, said CEO Chuck Wolfe, who personally greeted each table.

Shore, Gary Metzner, Wally Brewster and Craig Andree co-chaired the two-and-a-half-hour event. Guests included: Illinois Rep. Sara Feigenholtz and AIDS Foundation of Chicago President and CEO David Ernesto Munar. More photos online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



Phill Wilson at the BTAN event. Photo by Kate Sosin

BTAN recaps Internat'l AIDS Conference for Chicagoans

BY KATE SOSIN

Local and national AIDS advocates brought the 2012 International AIDS Conference home to Chicago Sept. 6-7.

The Black Treatment AIDS Network (BTAN), in partnership with local service providers, recapped parts of the conference in two evening conversations about the future of HIV/AIDS advocacy and Black communities.

The Chicago presentation was one of 15 hosted by the Black AIDS Institute across the United States.

Phill Wilson, founder of the Black AIDS Institute and a former Chicagoan, presented at the Sept. 6 event at the Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center.

Wilson told a room of 35 attendees that the fight against HIV has changed and that service providers who fail to adapt will fail to curb the virus.

"We have the tools to end AIDS in America today," he said. "The question is not, 'Can we?' The question is, 'Will we be using the tools that we have today?'"

Wilson called on attendees to support the Affordable Care Act; back Medicaid expansion; encourage HIV-positive people to come out if they

can; fight stigma; re-educate themselves about HIV; and combat the virus with both scientific and behavioral interventions.

Wilson said the effort to end AIDS in Black communities must come from Black communities themselves—from churches and businesses to organizations and individuals.

"If we are going to save our people from HIV, we have to be the ones doing the saving," he said.

Louis Spraggins—regional care coordinator for South Side Help Center and one of about 30 "Black AIDS Delegates" to represent the Black AIDS Institute at the International AIDS Conference this year—led the room in a discussion on deep impacts of stigma on HIV/AIDS communities.

Spraggins screened talks by conference speakers who laid out the forms stigma can take against HIV-positive people and service providers and how advocates might combat it.

The bottom line, said Spraggins, is that everyone needs to work to end AIDS.

"Everything that we do has a far-reaching effect beyond ourselves," he said.

Attendees concluded the evening with a group discussion about local efforts to end stigma and mobilize communities against AIDS.

HHS, Action Alliance announce plan for suicide prevention

BY KATE SOSIN

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Action Alliance for Suicide prevention announced a new strategy for preventing suicides nationally Sept. 10.

The revised National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (NSSP), released on World Suicide Prevention Day, contains interventions specific to LGBT people.

According to an Action Alliance statement, the plan aims to save 20,000 lives and contains 13 goals for the next decade.

U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin and HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius were among a group of high-profile officials to present the new strategy at a Washington D.C. press conference.

"Our message today is one of hope," said Sebelius in a statement. "The national strategy will bring together the nation's resources, both public and private, in an organized effort to provide life saving services and improve the ability of individuals, friends and family members to recognize the warning signs of despair and take action to save lives."

Others announcing the plan included Gordon Smith, president of the National Association of Broadcasters; Scott Gould, deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; John McHugh, secretary of the Army; Marne Levine, global vice president of public policy for Facebook; Heyward Donigan, CEO of ValueOptions; and Pamela Hyde, administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

The strategy identifies LGBT people as an at-risk group but notes that rates of suicide among LGBT people remain unknown, in part because death certificates do not include such information.

Still NSSP points to numbers that suggest LGBT people are at greater risk of suicide than the general population. The strategy notes that 12-19 percent of LGB adults report suicide attempts, compared with just five percent in the general population. Similarly 30 percent of LGB adolescents report suicide attempts compared with 8-10 percent of their age group.

Suicide rates among LGB people are especially high among African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and Asian Americans, the strategy notes.

According to the plan, LGBT people are



Kathleen Sebelius. Official headshot

at a greater risk of suicidal behavior due to discrimination, family rejection, harassment, violence and victimization.

NSSP advocates for increasing access to LGBT-affirming healthcare and combatting prejudice and bullying. It notes that LGBT groups and suicide prevention organizations need to collaborate to create prevention resources and improve access to prevention care for LGBT people.

It goes on state that the federal government is trying to create procedures for identifying suicide victims who are LGBT.

The new strategy, which builds off a prevention plan launched in 2001, comes alongside the announcement of \$55.6 million in suicide prevention grants to be distributed nationally, in part through the Affordable Care Act.

The strategy is two years in the making. Sebelius and former Defense Secretary Robert Gates called for the plan in September 2010 when the Action Alliance launched.



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Valeo at Chicago Lakeshore Hospital provides comprehensive psychiatric and addiction-related treatment for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals. The program offers a safe, affirming therapeutic environment for members of the LGBTQ community. The Valeo staff is comprised of well-trained, experienced gay and gay-sensitive behavioral health professionals from a wide variety of disciplines.

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New CPD training includes LGBT directives

BY KATE SOSIN

The Chicago Police Department (CPD) has adopted a new plan for educating its officers around hate crime response, and the measure includes LGBT directives.

Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy announced the new training at a Sept. 7 press conference.

The training, developed in partnership with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), is similar to past trainings conducted by ADL for CPD. But according to Miriam Lieberman of ADL, the new trainings will happen online rather than in person, so that officers can go back and review them.

Lieberman said the training covers Illinois hate-crime protections, noting that hate crimes can occur based on someone's perceived sexual orientation in addition to their actual orientation.

"For example, if a perpetrator waits outside an LGBT bar and assaults a person who walks out because the perpetrator believes he is gay, that would still constitute a hate crime under Illinois law even if the victim was actually straight," said Lieberman in a statement to Windy City Times. "The 'perceived' language in the statute is important because if a perpetrator selects his or her victim because of that person's perceived sexual orientation, national origin, race, religion, etc., even if the perpetrator 'gets it wrong,' it still has the same harmful, damaging, and intimidating effect on the community of people who share that perceived characteristic and the community at large."

The revised training emphasizes the problem of underreporting of hate crimes because groups targeted by violence, including LGBT people, of-

ten fear reprisal or are distrustful of law enforcement, said Lieberman.

ADL said the training DVD was not available for Windy City Times to view.

The new training includes a video message from McCarthy and a segment on how CPD investigates hate crimes, according to Lieberman.

Expungement of criminal records Sept. 25 at Center

Free attorney assistance for the expungement and sealing of criminal records will take place Tuesday, Sept. 25, 5-9 p.m., at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Cook County Circuit Court Clerk Dorothy Brown is presenting the event. An RSVP is required by Sept. 21; call 773-472-6469, ext. 436, or email legal@centeronhalsted.org.

Cardona VP at Polk Bros.

Local lesbian activist Evette Cardona has been promoted to vice president of programs at Polk Bros. Foundation. She started Sept. 1.

Cardona's promotion from senior program officer comes at a time of transition for the foundation, as CEO Sandra P. Guthman and Executive Director Nikki Will Stein will both retire at the end of the year.

Since it was founded in 1988, the foundation has given more than \$300 million to Chicago's nonprofit community through approximately 6,000 grants.

CPD from cover

2010. But turnover within CPD brought by the change in mayoral administrations slowed talks.

In an effort to push the order forward, Ald. Proco Joe Moreno introduced a city ordinance that would mandate the policy. That effort was headed by LGBT-policy organization The Civil Rights Agenda (TCRA), with the backing of a large coalition of LGBT groups.

Some LGBT groups, however, criticized that ordinance, stating that it was unenforceable because it placed oversight of the policy in the city council and not in the transgender community.

A similar policy has been in place in Washington D.C., but transgender advocates have said the policy failed, in large part because it left enforcement up to the police and not to the community impacted.

The ordinance has not moved since the Spring, but Moreno recently stated that he hoped it would come to fruition in the coming weeks.

LGBT groups largely supported the policy. The mayor's office had also been in talks with LAC and TCRA and was seen as supportive of the effort.

It remains unclear why CPD adopted the policy without announcement. LAC had been drafting the policy with CPD for more than two years, but first heard of its adoption through a request to comment from Windy City Times.

CPD published the policy four days after an unrelated WCT request on CPD interactions with transgender youth. The order was published Aug. 21. CPD responded to the media inquiry Aug. 22.

Despite praise for the new order, Ritter said sticking points remain. Chief among them,

she said, is that the policy is overly-reliant on government-issued identification. Transgender people will be classified as male or female based on their IDs, unless an individual is "post operative" and has transitioned to another gender. If IDs are not available, detainees will be classified based on their genitalia.

Such classifications can be problematic for trans people, who often do not desire or cannot afford gender-related surgeries. That classification can mean that transgender women are jailed alongside men, where they are subjected to violence and harassment at higher rates.

Still, the order requires that police transport and jail trans people alone when possible. It also states that trans detainees will have access to hormones they are taking. Lastly, the policy states that trans people carrying needles, often used for hormone injections, will not be taken as evidence of a crime.

Ritter said she is confident that the new order will improve CPD's treatment of trans people, but that it remains unclear if a city ordinance will be necessary in addition.

"If it ends up that this is not effective, then the aldermen are going to dig back in, would be my expectation," Ritter said. Right now, she said, the challenge will be getting the word out about the new policy and keeping the pressure on CPD to follow through.

Windy City Times will continue to update.

The general order can be viewed at: <http://directives.chicagopolice.org/directives/data/a7a57b38-1394a4ae-75313-94a4-b606a68cfab99615.html?hl=true>

—Contributed reporting: Bill Healy

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The poster features a large, stylized 'L' logo on the left side, with the words 'LEGACY WALK' written vertically inside it. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color. The text is arranged in a central column, with event details and ticket information. At the bottom, there are logos for sponsors: Levi's, ORBITZ, SIDETRACK, HALSTED, and WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP.



Age
25

Neighborhood
East Lakeview

Favorite movie
Boogie Nights

Job title
Bartender at Scarlet

Hobbies
"Trying new restaurants, going to concerts, and traveling as much as I can"

Relationship status
Single

Favorite TV show
The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills, "or basically any reality show where I can live vicariously through some sort of housewife"

Favorite cocktail
The Moscow Mule from Luxbar in the Gold Coast

Little-known fact
Was the geography bee winner in 7th grade and competed in the Illinois state competition



The girl was, perhaps, a wee bit drunk, but was convinced Justin Bieber was actually working at Scarlet in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood.

In reality, it was Kevin Neal, with longer hair that he now sports.

Neal, naturally, posed for photos and signed autographs.

Neal still laughs at the tale years later.

"The best part of my job is that I get to meet tons of new people every single night and listen to awesome DJs," Neal said. "I was working in sales after college and I hated the 9-to-5 schedule, so I decided to pick up a shift bartending in Wrigleyville. I ended up building a regular customer-base fairly quickly and was offered a full-time bartending position shortly thereafter."

Neal will celebrate his third anniversary serving 40s and slinging shots at Scarlet in September.

"I don't think the funniest stories I have are appropriate to print, but come into Scarlet and see for yourself how crazy it can get," he said, laughing.

Neal said his long-term career goal is to get involved in hospitality management and possibly own a bar or club. He also eyes a potential foray into professional poker. "I love Vegas and I love poker," he said.

"I have fun at my job, so it's kind of like being part of the party. Also, even though I sacrifice all my weekends for work, there is so much to do in Chicago, Sunday through Wednesday, that I still have plenty of fun on my days off."

Neal said the most difficult part of his job is the "crazy hours." Normal sleep patterns don't exist for those living—or working—the bar life.



Saturday, Sept. 15
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Featuring Sarah Terez
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Kai with DJ SpinNikki
7:30 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 21
Poetry Reading
CM Burroughs
The Vital System and
Kristina Maria Darling
The Moon and Other
Inventions: Poems
After Joseph Cornell
7:30 p.m.

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Elizabeth Erma Savage

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Feminine

Identifies as
Transsexual, male to female

Neighborhood
River North

Career
"I am retired from the work world, but I used to do social casework, customer service and retail sales."

Hobbies
"Photography, interior decorating, gardening, watching TV and writing in my journal and my blog at defianttransgothgirl.wordpress.com. My interests are most anything related to transsexual life, my transition and my children."

Do you have a coming out story?
"My coming out was a gradual process that started with me telling a good friend, then strangers I encountered who were important to me in some professional capacity. Then, I started living as a woman full-time about a year ago and taking hormones about eight months ago. Lastly, [I told] my family. The most emotional moment in my coming out was when I told my four daughters one evening. I had gotten them all together to tell them that I had prostate cancer and that I was transsexual. I was very surprised because no one freaked out, and they took the cancer harder than my being trans. They actually embraced my new identity and have been very supportive all in all."

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

"I am very concerned about climate change and human rights. I am Goth and that is another issue that I find I have to clarify and defend to some people."

When did you start questioning gender?

"I'm not really clear on when I started questioning my gender because it has been something that I have been wrestling with for as long as I can remember. Interestingly enough, I never knew of the existence of transsexuals until a few years ago when I discovered them online while searching for interesting porn sites. I studied the pictures of the beautiful girls there and after some time I realized that my fascination with them was not sexual, but rather I found that I identified with them. It was then that I realized that I was transsexual."

How do you explain the way you feel about gender to others?

"It is difficult to explain gender to others because most people think of gender and sex as one in the same. To my knowledge gender is derived from a part of us that is beyond the physical. It comes from the soul and has very little to do with the sex of a person. It is possible there is some chromosomal or genetic link that allows one's gender to come through from the soul to the physical. That is how you can end up with gender incongruence."

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

"Achieving worldwide human rights legally is, in my opinion, the most important issue facing the trans/gender-variant community."

VIEWPOINTS

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

 Community Marketing, Inc.

SCOTT SEITZ



The Internet prepares for .gay

Armed with my first laptop and a dream back in 1996, I entered uncharted space by starting an LGBT marketing company. Gay rights were charging forward, diversity was growing inside of corporations and AOL had realized the gay community attributed to a significant portion of the Internet's early adaptors. Not only did the gay community play a hand in the success of AOL programming, but the gay community was leading the way for the Internet revolution. This was all very important information I would soon recognize to have a connection, and one that would help shape the future of the gay community.

There is arguably no bigger benefactor of the Internet than the gay community. Through use of this new-fangled invention, the gay community found benefit through connection and access to people and information in ways never before possible. We were one of the largest groups online and it was a quantum leap forward for our community as we discovered, learned and grew in the .com namespace. The Internet proved remarkable in many ways, and now even

greater opportunities are on the horizon as new top-level domains (TLD) are about to enter the existing namespace.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names & Numbers (ICANN), the global governing body of the web, recently introduced a new program that will soon result in new words appearing to the right of the "dot" on domain names. This could include cities, brands or generic words other than the familiar .com, .net or .org. Among the almost 2,000 applications received by ICANN, dotgay LLC has submitted a community-based approach to create a ".gay" TLD. This will be an exclusive namespace for our community online where under one powerful umbrella we can work together to create change, and through visibility gain equality.

This is a game-changing moment on the Internet, with more than a thousand new TLDs expected in the coming years. Many of the new TLD ideas stem from Standard applications, which businesses and investors submit, hoping to lay claim to multiple or even hundreds of TLDs and new domain space they can develop and grow interest for once approved by ICANN. The other types of applications are Community, like dotgay LLC, and must uniquely represent a designated community while providing a clear value and benefit proposition for that community. dotgay LLC's application is the only Community application for a TLD that would represent our community.

The goal of dotgay LLC is to evolve beyond a simple namespace to one that provides value to the global community while addressing important issues around safety, visibility and support for all LGBTQIA+ individuals. dotgay LLC's application for ".gay" is our sole submission to ICANN and if approved it would be the first and only

TLD managed by a certified LGBT business enterprise. With an innovative business model that understands the community and gives a minimum of 67 percent of domain registration profits back to the community, dotgay LLC is prioritizing accountability and transparency over profits and politics.

Merging the wisdom of the community with the speed of small business, dotgay LLC will be a for-profit business, managed by a registry advisory board made up of all aspects of the global community. dotgay LLC provides a clear connection to the community, and guidance to the growth of what promises to be one of the most exciting new TLDs. Truly global, the plan includes support from nine of only 12 United Nations-accredited LGBT organizations that are part of ECOSOC, and has earned community endorsements representing 110 different countries from all segments of the community.

To learn more about the dotgay LLC plan, get involved or stay connected, visit us online at www.dotgay.com and join our email list to stay part of the conversation.

See www.facebook.com/dotgaycom and www.twitter.com/dotgay.

Scott Seitz is CEO and co-founder of dotgay LLC, as well as founder and owner of SPI Marketing, a leading LGBT agency with over 16 years of service on behalf of corporate and not-for-profit clients. Active in community service, Seitz has served on the board of governors of Bread & Roses, a Connecticut AIDS-service organization, as well as Stonewall Speakers, and is a founding board member of Honoring Our Journey, a men's spiritual group. Scott is a member of NGLCCNY and IGLTA, with past honors from OUT100, GLAAD and Instinct Magazine.

SARAH TOCE



Playing the blame game: A look at modern civilities

Recently, we posted a story on The Seattle Lesbian titled, "A Day with HIV." The concept of the project chronicled was straightforward, leaving nothing to interpretation: a photographic illustration of one day in the life in 2012 while living with HIV.

The news release our office received stated, "Each day across the globe almost 7,000 people, including 900 children, will contract HIV, joining an estimated 34.2 million people already living with HIV. During any 24 hours more than 4,600 people around the world will die of an AIDS-related cause.

"But on one day, Friday, Sept. 21, people everywhere, both HIV-positive and -negative, can share an image of coping and care through the lens of a camera. On that day, Positively Aware is asking people to take a digital photograph to record a moment of their day that will focus the world's attention on the daily trials and triumphs of people living with HIV. For the third year A Day with HIV will help remove the stigma of HIV and to advance an international community of care through this collective photographic portrait."

Inspiring. Captivating. Breathtakingly honest. Right? Not so much, according to one reader.

While delving through the comments for review following the post, this one circulated to

the top like a glaring cannonball on the battlefield, striking everything wholesome in its path: "Yes, and let us remember the negroe gave America and the world HIV!!!!!!" The comment was signed, simply, "RW."

The Seattle Lesbian did not approve this comment, for obvious reasons.

Flabbergasted is not really the appropriate word for the amount of disbelief present due to that sorrowful comment. All I could think was that a collaboration that should've brought the world together in the face of an epidemic that has destroyed numerous lives was instead bringing out the worst in someone with an iron pen. Was this person a critic hiding studiously behind his or her computer screen deflecting obvious internal issues that were stunting his or her growth as a human being?

Webster defines compassion as "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it." What RW lacked in his or her comment and thought processes going into that comment was compassion. Instead of attempting to alleviate someone else's pain, he or she decided to throw salt into the wounds of more than 34.2 million people already infected with the epidemic and the 7,000 newly-infected individuals, some children, joining the aforementioned bunch every single day.

It's curious to me as someone who tries ex-

tremely hard on a consistent basis to recognize the plight of others to wrap my head around the lack of compassion we offer to our friends, colleagues and complete strangers. A negative tongue like a knife to the back, a battle royale because of communication breakdown, becoming mired in one's own distractions that we no longer have the resources to give of our time to those who have given of theirs freely without asking for anything in return. We take. Quite honestly, we're good at taking. We've become an extremely greedy and indifferent society.

But when do we stop the cycle of "give me more" to "here, let me help" and actually, 100 percent, mean it? When do we stop trying to please ourselves and offer a hand to someone else? When do we take our noses away from our computer screens where we are safely anonymous and actually foray into the world of sickness and death head-on?

Accountability is described by Webster as "an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions."

RW, this is your moment for growth. May you earnestly find compassion for others and may others, likewise, find compassion for you.

Sarah Toce is editor-in-chief of The Seattle Lesbian.

Send letters and viewpoints
to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo by Anthony Aicardi

MAKING A SPLASH

Read a review of the theatrical production pool (no water) on page 14.

DISH

A taste of Cuba.
Page 26.

Photo by Andrew Davis



BOOKS

'Missing' person.
Page 25.

Photo of Sarah Terez Rosenblum



SPORTS

Dire straits.
Page 30.Photo of rugby player Leslie Johnson
from Lisa Gartner

DANCIN' FEATS

Chicago's new ballet company

BY VICKI CRAIN

"I'm a whole-hog kind of person," he said. "If you're going to do it—do it." Wade Schaaf, founder and director of the new Chicago Repertory Ballet (CRB), is certainly doing it. With the debut of his company later this month quickly approaching, he's wearing a lot of hats: director, choreographer, bookkeeper, marketing specialist, fundraiser and webmaster, just to name a few. The shows on Sept. 21-22 reflect a year's worth of planning, preparation and passion. From filing 501(c)(3) paperwork to scheduling rehearsals to piecing together a group of dancers, he's doing it all.

An Elgin native, Schaaf performed in community musical-theater shows as a child and thought that dance lessons would help him get more parts. At 15, he started taking tap class and quickly added on ballet, jazz, hip-hop and tumbling. After receiving a bachelor's degree in theater arts from Northern Illinois University, his dance career immediately took off. He has performed with Ohio Ballet, State Street Ballet in California and Omaha Theatre Ballet, and spent almost a year touring the Baltic Sea dancing for Norwegian Cruise Lines. In Chicago, he danced for a season with River North Dance Chicago and, most recently, for three years with Thodos Dance Chicago.

Among the highlights in his time at Thodos are being able to choreograph on the company for the New Dances program and working with Broadway legend Ann Reinking, who created the role of Mayor Carter Henry Harrison in The White

City for Schaaf. "It was absolutely amazing," he said. "Even as an understudy, I learned every single thing I could in rehearsals. I wanted to be a sponge with her. I wanted to hear what she had to say. She added the Mayor's Strut section at the end of the process. It's all Fosse. I was in heaven. I would watch videos of her doing these steps and I'd just try to be Ann Reinking. I feel like I poured myself into that ballet."

Injuries to his lower back slowed his performing career and he retired from concert dancing in 2011 (although he has one more round of Nutcracker performances this winter in Schaumburg as a guest artist and then hopes to hang up his white tights). He began to shop around his choreography, but soon he realized to be able to present the kind of work he really wanted, he would have to do it himself.

"I want to do repertory shows, but I also want to hone in on the heart of ballet and the tradition of ballet, which is telling stories," he said. "Not necessarily using ballet as the vocabulary, but I telling stories from a new or contemporary perspective through dance. So, I started asking around and talking to people and most of them encouraged me to absolutely not open a company."

"I understand that. It's very intense. It's a huge challenge, but I think there's something in me that's built to tackle these huge challenges."

Building on relationships with dancers he'd worked with previously, Schaaf assembled an impressive line-up of performers. He describes his handpicked company members as "kick-ass." The roster includes former dancers from favor-



Wade Schaaf. Photo by Cheryl Mann

ite local companies like Joffrey Ballet, Giordano Dance Chicago, River North Dance Chicago, Ina-side Chicago Dance and Thodos. "They were all super-willing to donate their time. They aren't getting paid for rehearsals," Schaaf said. "I have a small budget for the performances, but everyone is just excited to be working on a new project."

The September performances will include four world premieres, three by Schaaf himself. "Peoplescape: juxtaposition" tackles the many juxtapositions in life, "Lent et Dououreux" is set to the music of Eric Satie and there's a duet to Edith Piaf's "La Vie En Rose." The other world premiere, Of Alice, comes from local choreographic phenom Autumn Eckman (also director of Giordano Dance Chicago's second company and CRB dancer). The show is rounded out with two of Schaaf's earlier works—"Shostakovich Piano Concerto" and "Tres Hip: a love story," which was made for Dance in the Parks—and Jackie Stewart's The A.W.A.R.D. Show!-winning piece "It's not enough to close your eyes."

Schaaf is engaged to his partner of three

years, CRB costume designer Nathan Rohrer. The couple lives in the Sheridan Park neighborhood in Uptown.

Chicago Repertory Ballet performs at The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St., Friday-Saturday, Sept 21-22 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20-\$25; visit www.brownpapertickets.com/event/260866.

Other area performances this month:

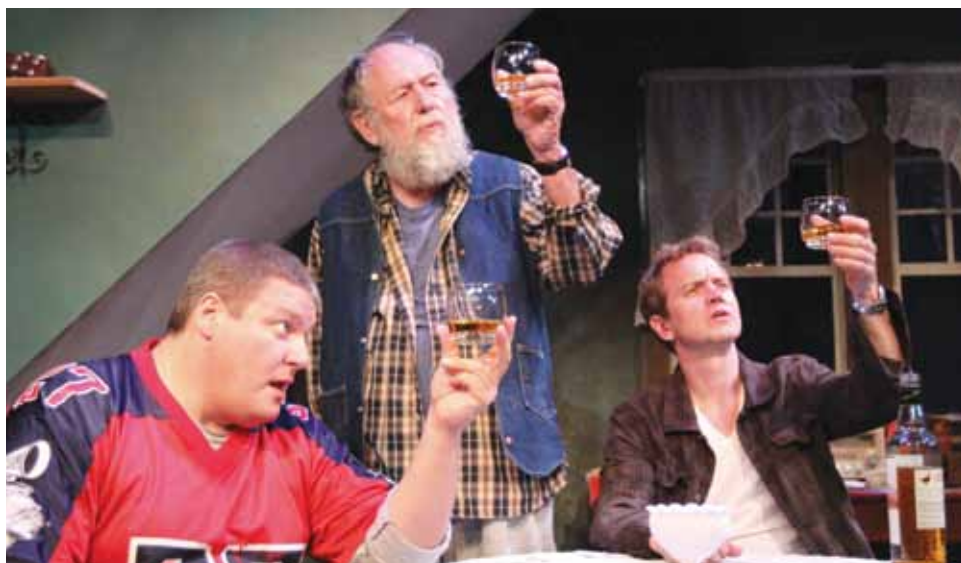
Common Threads, a collaboration of six different artists and companies perform at Links Hall, 3435 N. Sheffield Ave., Suite 207; Friday-Saturday, Sept 7-8, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Sept 9, at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 online at www.linkshall.org or \$15 at the door.

Voices of Strength: Two Programs of Contemporary Dance and Theater by Women from Africa will take place at The Dance Center of Columbia College, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Thursday-Friday, Sept 13-14, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Sept 15, at 3 and 8 p.m. Tickets are \$26-\$30; call 312-369-8330 or visit www.colum.edu/dancecenter.

Kate Corby & Dancers will present In Whole or in Part at the Fasseas White Box Theatre at the Drucker Center, 1535 N. Dayton St., Friday-Saturday, Sept 14-15, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Sept 16, at 7 p.m. Tickets at the door are \$10-\$15, while pre-sale tickets are \$12 and can be purchased at www.fanfueled.com/Event/Details/3553-kate-corby-and-dancers-present-in-whole-or-in-part-91412.

Cover Band features five local choreographers recreating works from the Chicago Moving Company at Hamlin Park Fieldhouse Theater, 3035 N. Hoyne Ave., Thursday-Friday, Sept 20-21, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12-\$15; visit www.brownpapertickets.com/event/260329.

Kota Yamazaki/Fluid hug-hug will be at The Dance Center of Columbia College, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Thursday-Saturday, Sept 27-29, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$26-\$30; call 312-369-8330 or visit www.colum.edu/dancecenter.



Illegal Use of Hands. Photo by Johnny Knight

THEATER REVIEW

Illegal Use of Hands

Playwright: James Still

At: American Blues Theater at

Victory Gardens, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

Tickets: 773-871-3000;

www.americanbluestheater.com; \$19-\$39

Runs through: Sept. 30

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The fiction requires a small agrarian community where high school still figures as prominently as church and family in its young citizens' upbringing. Ex-varsity football star Roy recalls fondly when he and his fellow teammates were heroes, when girls were princesses to be courted, when his best friend wasn't queer (that anyone knew), when their futures stretched ahead of them in a highway with no road signs. In short, before that fatal day when an erroneous call at the homecoming game scuttled their destinies for all eternity.

Who says tragic myth doesn't encroach on real life? Trouble is, that's not how it happened, except in Roy's fabrications. They lost the game 70-0, former quarterback Cody reminds him. Nevertheless, on this homecoming night decades later, a stalled-out truck brings an incensed Roy and a reluctant Cody to the door of aged ex-referee Wallace, whose decision Roy blames for the contagion condemning their team to defeat, the town to inertia and himself to failure. Will this confrontation inspire justice, vengeance or a long-delayed exorcism?

James Still's scenario lends itself to cheap grunt-and-guffaw gags leading up to bearish male-bonding hugs, but director Sandy Shinner refuses to reduce her text to a beer commercial. Roy is not a TV-sitcom musclehead—he holds down a job, he accepts Cody's homosexuality and his reaction to this significant date will likely pass. What we come to understand, however, is that the frustration spurring him to seek a scapegoat for his own unfulfilled life is not far removed from the reasons behind Cody's return to his boyhood environs after having ventured out into wider realms, or Wallace's retreat to rural solitude from a universe too big for comfort.

Much of this emerges so subtly in this American Blues Theater production as to be undetectable by any but the most alert playgoers, while other questions remain unanswered, even after an undeniably sentimental dawn arrives for our trio. As the story's chief instigator, Howie Johnson's Roy sometimes fumbles a role demanding greater stamina than was evidenced on opening night, leaving veteran troupier Dennis Zacek's Wallace to steer our sympathies toward his hog-gish nemesis. Ultimately, it is lost-American-boy Cody, which Steve Key plays with quiet stoicism, who wins our hearts—when he storms out to continue his flight from a past delivering only sorrow and disappointment, we long to follow him.

'Metamorphoses' marks 25th anniv. of Lookingglass

In celebration of its 25th anniversary, Lookingglass Theatre Company will present *Metamorphoses*, based on the myths of Ovid from a translation by David Slavitt, and written and directed by ensemble member Mary Zimmerman.

The revival production, coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the Broadway production, runs Sept. 19-Nov. 18 at Lookingglass Theatre Company, 821 N. Michigan Ave.

Preview tickets (Sept. 19-28) are \$28-\$38; regular run tickets (starting Sept. 30) are \$36-\$70; see www.lookingglasstheatre.org or call 312-337-0665.

CRITICS' PICKS

Dreamgirls, Marriott Theatre, Lincolnshire, through Oct. 28. If you only know *Dreamgirls* from its 2006 movie adaptation, now's your chance to see the show in its original 1981 Broadway musical form in director/choreographer Marc Robin's stunningly sung and super-slick in-the-round staging. SCM

Idomeneus, Sideshow Theatre Company at Storefront Theater, through Sept. 23. German author Roland Schimmelpfennig riffs on classical mythology in this modern words and movement piece about sacrifice, war, honor and vow-breaking that a Greek chorus of 15 tells in a lively hour. JA

Princes of Waco, Signal Ensemble Theatre, through Sept. 22. This panhandle-noir yarn is bitter as chicory coffee and gritty as a Johnny Cash song, but star-watchers should take note of a fresh-from-the-classroom actress named Carolyn Braver, playing Texas angel with an angle. MSB

Susan Swayne and the Bewildered Bride, Babes With Blades Theatre Company at Lincoln Square, through Sept. 22. The adventures of a Victorian "lady detective" include the athletic spectacle you'd expect from an all-female fight troupe, but Reina Hardy's play also exercises our brains with its commentary on gender issues and the evil of intolerance. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Sweet and Sad

Playwright: Richard Nelson

At: Profiles Theatre Main

Stage, 4139 N. Broadway

Tickets: 1-773-549-1815;

www.profiles theatre.org; \$35

Runs through Oct. 7

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Despite winning a Tony Award, Richard Nelson isn't a household name, even among dedicated theatergoers. Although several Nelson plays have been produced here—Some Americans Abroad, Principia Scriptoriae and The Return of Pinocchio—his career has flourished largely on the East Coast, in Europe and at several regional theaters beyond Chicago. It's our loss as Nelson is one of this country's most political and intellectual playwrights.

Sweet and Sad premiered in New York Sept. 11, 2011, the 10th anniversary of the World Trade Center disaster, and takes place on that anniversary. It's one of four plays in a projected cycle about a U.S. family, the Apples, before and after 9/11/01.

There's nothing more American than Mom and apple pie, so Nelson's chosen family name provides obvious imagery. The six characters we meet over brunch, in a well-to-do Hudson River town north of New York City, consist of an aging uncle dealing with early-stage Alzheimer's disease, four adult siblings (three sisters and a brother) and one sister's boyfriend. The 95-minute play takes place in real time (that is, the passage of time for the characters also is a con-

tinuous 95 minutes), and it's a meander more than a story.

While all are solicitous of the admired uncle (a professional actor), the siblings bicker among themselves, picking up conflicts exactly where they left off last time they gathered. Nelson provides a great deal of factual and emotional exposition—the brother's status as a wealthy corporate attorney is attacked, sister Marian and her husband have split after the suicide of their adolescent daughter, and sister Jane and her actor boyfriend have had an on-again/off-again relationship—but there's no plot or finality. *Sweet and Sad* is a series of character arcs without a story arc. True to the title, there are moments both sweet and sad, funny and touching, and angry and nurturing without anything conclusive. There's a healthy dose of comedy of manners aimed at the comfortable upper middle class Nelson portrays but there is darker matter, too, as they recall 9/11. Even so, it's impossible to clearly discern Nelson's politics (to what degree liberal or conservative?), suggesting it will be necessary to see the entire cycle of plays to weave his threads into whole cloth.

Written as a true ensemble piece with no dominant role, the play employs a totally life-like method of overlapping dialogue, a difficult acting technique. Nelson may specify the overlaps, or it may be as director Joe Jahraus and company have interpreted the work. Whichever, it brings convincing realism to the performances although sometimes actors are not audible when they speak in hushed tones, facing away from you in the in-the-round stage (which benefits from Shaun Renfro's simple-but-handsome blond wood setting).

THEATER REVIEW

pool (no water)

Playwright: Mark Ravenhill

At: Vitalist Theatre at the

Greenhouse, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Tickets: 773-404-7336;

www.greenhousetheater.org; \$25

Runs through: Sept. 30

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Unlike most people (who perceive the world around them as something to be consumed—mentally, if not corporally), artists view their surroundings as raw material waiting to be recorded, explained, delved, enhanced or, in some way, crafted into an idealized form offering a sense of control over a chaotic universe. Art, in short, constitutes the artist's protest against the disorderliness of life, re-fashioning it into a comforting facsimile of reality.

This is the ethical crisis the four struggling artists in Mark Ravenhill's gritty-edged morality play actually confront. It starts innocently enough: A former peer from the neighborhood invites them to a house party at the luxury estate purchased from the profits of her art-trouvée collages incorporating relics of fallen comrades. During the course of a midnight skinny-dip, the hostess swan-dives into the recently drained swimming pool. Her friends are distraught, but as they view their comatose companion in the hospital, the desire to *create* something from the disaster—a defensive measure born of shock and genuine grief, but gradually distorted by unspoken envy—leads them to impose their corrective visions on her inert body in increasingly grotesque ways.

The monologue that Ravenhill wrote could be performed in under 40 minutes—divided among several voices, maybe an hour. Vitalist Theatre is all about multi-disciplinary spectacle, however, and so not only do all four characters narrate the events (with the shamefaced candor of children determined to "own up"), but their recollections are bridged



pool (no water). Photo by Anthony Aicardi

with wordless episodes of manic music and frenzied acrobatics (which director Liz Carlin Metz dubs "contact improvisation"). These work best when reflecting the inner turmoil of sensitive youths suffering jealousy of their broken comrade clashing with guilt over the petty reprisals engendered thereby. At other times, the kinetic interludes reveal themselves as little more than studio exercises—even a brief 82-minute running time can feel protracted when EVERYBODY has to have their turn in the solo spotlight.

Ravenhill's characteristic humans-are-slimeballs aesthetic differs from his previous diatribes in that he acknowledges his pilgrims' confusion (Are they preserving, or exploiting, their friend's final days, and where is the line drawn?) to reward them with a moment of cleansing insight that allows them to atone for their sins and move on, finding new inspiration free of corrupting selfishness. In the end, it's art, not acclaim, that endures, and the muse, being divine, may be sought anywhere.



Cast of A Class Act with music director Beckie Menzie at the piano. Photo by Jeremy Rill

MUSICAL REVIEW

A Class Act

Score: Edward Kleban; Script: Linda Kline and Lonny Price

At: Porchlight Music Theatre at

Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: 773-975-8150 or

www.porchlightmusictheatre.org; \$39

Runs through: Oct. 7

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It's odd that it took so long for the 2001 Broadway musical A Class Act to finally get a Chicago production. However, when you see Porchlight Music Theatre's superlative staging of A Class Act starring an effervescent leading man like Bill Larkin, it's easy to guess why local theater companies shied away from it.

A Class Act is a warts-and-all tribute to master songwriter Edward Kleban (1939-1987), best remembered as the lyricist (with composer Marvin Hamlisch) on the Tony- and Pulitzer Prize-winning Broadway blockbuster A Chorus Line. Yet the rest of Kleban's songwriting output was largely unknown until collaborators Linda Kline and Lonny Price fashioned A Class Act into a biographical flashback utilizing his songs.

Understandably, the niche musical-theater subject matter of A Class Act might not attract general audiences. And then there's the leading man playing Kleban, who was a very neurotic New Yorker, a sometime womanizer, a chain smoker and someone who didn't have the common sense to know when to shut up.

Cast the wrong guy as Kleban and then audiences can be easily turned off. And not only must this actor charismatically command the stage—he also must be able to masterfully play the piano like a composer.

Luckily, director/choreographer Stacey Flaster had the foresight to cast Larkin as Kleban. Larkin can be simultaneously lovable and despicable when necessary, and you really do come to care for the guy despite actions that could easily get on your nerves. (For disclosure's sake, I once performed with Larkin in the 2007 Chicago Gay Men's Chorus show Sidetrack V: With a Twist.)

Flaster surrounds Larkin with an extremely vocally strong and versatile ensemble. Each performer gets a moment to shine singing out Kleban's soaring storytelling songs, while Chicago cabaret pro Beckie Menzie backs the whole cast up as a great musical director and onstage accompanist. (Doug Peck fills in for Menzie on Oct. 14.)

The women in the company get some compelling emotional acting moments with Larkin, especially Tina Gluschenko as the songwriter's childhood love, Sophie; Dana Tretta as Kleban's settled-on wife, Lucy; Sharriese Hamilton as the impatient record executive, Felicia; and Jessica Joy as the talent-loving temptress, Mona.

John Francisco makes for a masterfully manipulative take on director/choreographer Michael Bennett, while Michael Glenn offers an amusingly haughty take on songwriting mentor Lehman Engel. Zach Spound also gets laughs as

composer Marvin Hamlisch (especially in costume designer Bill Morey's very-1970s get-up).

A Class Act insightfully shows the agony of collaboration and how the neuroses of a genius can affect the people he loves. Thank heaven for Porchlight taking a chance on A Class Act, for their production truly shines.

SPOTLIGHT



Often ridiculed as a weird 1980 cult film musical that incorporates Greek mythology amid a roller disco, **Xanadu** has since gained some redemption in a critically acclaimed 2007 Broadway musical adaptation. Out playwright Douglas Carter Beane found a wry way for Xanadu as a stage musical to lovingly mock its source material while also allowing the pop hits that Olivia Newton-John and the Electric Light Orchestra originally popularized to sparkle anew. Xanadu continues through Sunday, Oct. 28, at Drury Lane Theatre, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace. Performances are 1:30 p.m. Wednesdays, 1:30 and 8 p.m. Thursdays, 8:30 p.m. Fridays, 5 and 8:30 p.m. Saturdays, and 2 and 6 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$35-\$46, with dinner-theater packages ranging from \$49.75 to \$68. Call 630-530-0111 or visit www.drurylaneoakbrook.com for more information. Photo by Brett Beiner

“HEAVEN ON WHEELS!” - *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT, JR.

Wildness; Beloved; film notes

With **Wildness**, transgender performance artist and filmmaker Wu Tsang has created a stunningly evocative portrait of a location at the epicenter of gay culture, past, present and, one presumes, future.

That would be the local gay bar, which (in the case of Tsang) was the Silver Platter, a tiny bar situated in the Silver Lake district of Los Angeles. For more than 40 years, this has been the sanctuary for the Latino transgender and immigrant gay community. Tsang's movie, which the bars literally narrates itself (a very canny device), is his love letter to a place where the brutal realities of life for the otherwise disenfranchised queer community can momentarily be replaced by a safe haven, and where one can find new families along with a kind of temporary magic.

At the outset, we meet many of the regulars at the bar as they primp and strut in front of the curtained stage area. Several of these transgender performers relate bits of their stories, and are seen performing or just socializing at the bar. (More backstory would have been welcomed and wouldn't have hurt, as the film's running time is only 75 minutes.)

Tsang, a former Chicagoan, and his hipster friends Asma, Daniel and Ashland so loved the tacky yet fabulous atmosphere of the place—with its gold drapery, checkerboard dance floor, hot pink lights and fascinating clientele—that they created a weekly nightclub event called "Wildness" in 2008 to celebrate it. But as the popularity of the night grew—which is vividly illustrated with snippets of outrageous and creative performance footage inside the club—the original denizens of the bar increasingly felt shunted aside or mocked.

The soft-spoken Tsang was sensitive to this



Beloved.

troublesome development, which reached a pinnacle when a freelance writer's cynical endorsement of the bar appeared in the LA Weekly that dubbed the Silver Platter "Best Tranny Bar." Tsang and his friends targeted the writer, who eventually cried "uncle" and appears on camera recanting his review and apologizing for his thoughtlessness.

The film momentarily shifts tone as it next delves into issues of deportation and violence against the Latino transgender community, but then reverts to chronicling more of the performance footage—a commingling of gender bending, queer punks and outsider artists. The bar's patrons honor the 2010 death of Gonzalo Ramirez, one of the co-owners of the bar, but this leads to trouble and the eventual end of Tsang's night at the bar when Ramirez's family disputes his will, which left his portion of the bar to his ex-lover. Although things eventually got resolved and the owners asked Tsang to bring "Wildness" back, the moment, as Tsang notes—recognizing the fleeting nature of bar culture—had passed. But while it lasted (by all appearances), it was sensational.

Wildness has the same feistiness of other queer art/nightclub documentaries like *Sissyboy* and *The Cockettes*—and shares their exuberant, youthful vitality and jaw-dropping creativity. It's a great affirmation of the power of the cre-

ative spirit. The film is screening Thursday, Sept. 13, at 6 p.m. at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., and Tsang will be present for a post-screening discussion. See www.siskelfilm-center.org.

With **Beloved**, gay French director Christophe Honoré continues his backhanded homage to the '60s French quasi-musicals of Jacques Demy, like *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* and *The Young Girls of Rochefort*. But where Demy's touch was light as a feather, Honoré's is a bit heavy-handed when the tone of the piece isn't wavering uneasily between light and dark. Honoré shows a surer hand as he moves his action back and forth between the 1960s to a middle section in the 1980s, ending up in 1997, but the stories he tells are not particularly involving or, worse, feel particularly passionate. Also, for a film about romance, things certainly take a dark turn for all the characters.

His heroine, Madeline (played as a young, saucy minx by Ludvine Sagnier and as an older and definitely wiser one by Catherine Deneuve), is a part-time sales clerk who prostitutes herself, seemingly on a whim, with a series of men until she falls hard for a handsome Czech doc-

tor whom she ends up marrying and temporarily moving to his country. Thirty years later, the now divorced couple finds each other again—though she's since remarried and back in London. In-between, the couple's daughter (played by Chiara Mastroianni, Deneuve's real life off-spring) becomes improbably involved in an intense love triangle between her hot tempered boyfriend and a gay man she meets in passing. Though a ménage à trois seems to momentarily diffuse the competition between the two men, it instead leads to unexpected tragedy.

The characters sing lyrically introspective, musically bittersweet songs (they're more like vignettes) that comment on the action and while entertaining enough, disappear from memory the second they're over (a duet between Deneuve and Mastroianni is a nice exception). Considering the film's dark approach to romance (and its often sobering consequences) these pretty, though meandering melodies would find a better home elsewhere. There's nothing here as melodramatically over the top or zesty as the songs found in *8 Women*, another Deneuve film (and one much superior) from another French queer auteur Francois Ozon who might have taken this dark material and given it the decided lift it needs. Plays exclusively at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave. www.musicbox-theatre.com

Film notes:

—**Finding Nemo**, the delightful Pixar hit from 2003, is back in theaters, this time in a 3-D version. Ellen DeGeneres shines as Dory the ditzzy friend of Nemo's nervous clown fish dad (voiced by Albert Brooks) who befriends him and joins him on a series of adventures in Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

—**Brink of Survival** is a documentary set in a small rural hospital in southeast Africa charged with the care of more than 120,000 people and staffed by one doctor. The film also documents the impact of HIV/AIDS, poverty and the status of women in one of the world's poorest countries. It is showing Friday, Sept. 21, at the Chicago Cultural Center, Claudia Cassidy Theatre, 77 E. Randolph St., at 6:30 p.m. (A one-hour reception precedes the screening.) An audience discussion with Dr. Martha Sommers, who is featured in the film, and filmmaker Salome Chasnoff follows the screening. Admission is free. More information is at www.facebook.com/events/402604356466653.

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

'Circus in the Parks' throughout late Oct.

Circus In The Parks, featuring Chicago's Midnight Circus—a high-flying assortment of acrobats, aerialists, clowns, contortionists and even a dog—will tour seven Chicago parks in September and October under an intimate big-top tent.

The tour is covering (in order) Hamlin, Welles, Holstein, Independence, Commercial, Mt. Greenwood and Chase parks; the tour runs through late October. Tickets are \$15 (children under 2 free); see www.CircusInTheParks.org.

First season of 'Revenge' on DVD

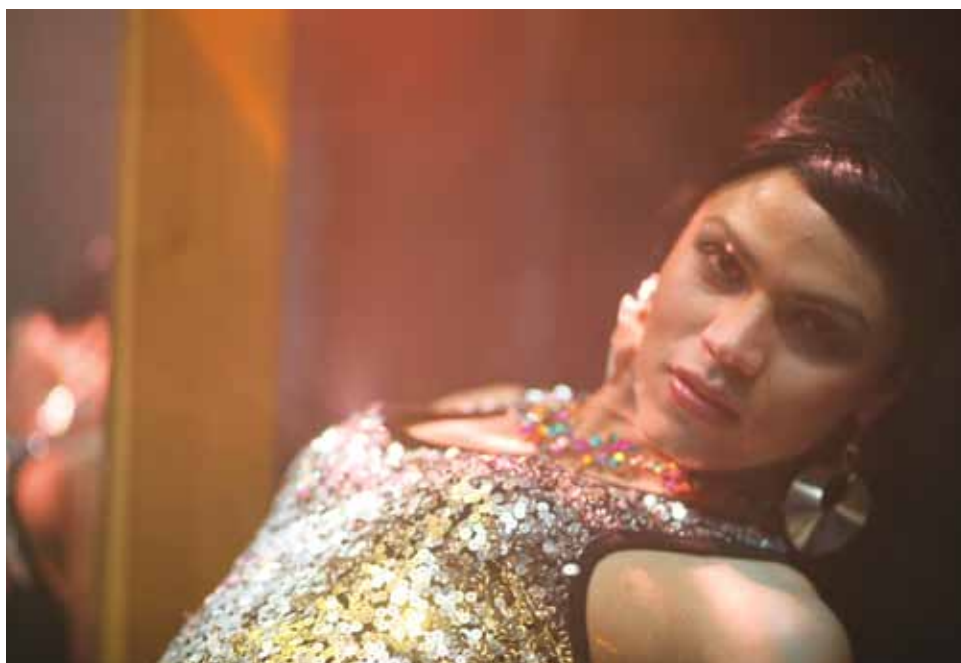
The ABC series *Revenge: The Complete First Season* is out on DVD.

In the show, Emily Thorne (played by Emily VanCamp) secretly wreaks havoc on members of the Hamptons' wealthy elite whom she believes destroyed her life when she was a

child. Sexually ambiguous billionaire Nolan Ross (Gabriel Mann) helps her in her quest.

Among the co-stars are Madeleine Stowe (the matriarch of the clan Emily believes wrong her) and Josh Bowman (Stowe's son, who becomes Emily's boyfriend).

The five-disc set retails for \$45.99, and includes bonus features such as "Nolan Ross Exposed," "At Home in 'The Hamptons'" and "Haute Hamptons: Femme Fatale Fashion."



Wildness.



Ian Parks (top) and Ben Zook in *Where the Bears Are*. Image by JayPGPhotography

WEB

Ben Zook talks about 'Where the Bears Are,' Bea Arthur and Chicago

BY TONY PEREGRIN

Part *Golden Girls* and part *Murder, She Wrote*, *Where the Bears Are* is a mystery-comedy web series that follows the exploits of three bear roommates living together in Los Angeles as they attempt to solve the murder of a party guest who has turned up dead in their bathroom.

Created by and starring former Chicagoan and Second City alum Ben Zook; his partner of 18 years, Joe Dietl; and Rick Copp, a former writer for the popular *Golden Girls* series, *Where the Bears Are* has become a hit with bears, cubs, otters and every other creature on the preserve. Not a fan of web-based programming? Bear in the mind the comedy-mystery web series featuring 26, four-minute episodes has racked up nearly 1 million hits since its Aug. 1 debut.

Windy City Times chatted with Zook about casting the show's sexiest member, "Hot Toddy," working with Jane Lynch at *The Annoyance Theatre*; and his favorite spots in Chicago to "bear" down.

Windy City Times: You are a graduate of Second City in Chicago. Did your improv training come into play on the set of *Where the Bears Are*?

Ben Zook: Rick has written several mystery novels, so the script was pretty tight—but we played around with it a little bit. We're all a little bit like our characters: I'm the "Dorothy" in the group, as I am sort of a neurotic in real life, and Rick, with his sexual exploits and a man in every port, is "Blanche." And Joe is "Rose"—although he's not as dumb as his character [laughs], but the sweetness of his character definitely applies to Joe.

WCT: I'm guessing your *Where the Bears Are* co-creator Rick Copp has some hilarious stories from his days as a writer for the *Golden Girls*. Pretend it's just you and me out on the lanai—tell me your favorite Rick-*Golden Girls* story.

BZ: [Whispers to someone else in the room, asking for approval] Okay—Rick has a story about Bea Arthur and this security guard. Bea Arthur would drive in her car every day to the studio, and she'd [allegedly] have a big bottle of booze in the passenger seat next to her. So, every day she'd drive in and out of the studio, and one day as she is leaving a concerned guard says to her, "You can't have an open bottle in your car! What if you get pulled over and arrested and

put in jail—the show is depending on you!" And she apparently responded, "You're right. Thank you." And she pulled away. The very next day she pulled up to the studio ... with tinted windows. [Laughs]

WCT: True or false: The idea for *Where the Bears Are* bubbled to the surface around Thanksgiving last year while the three of you were hanging out drinking in a Jacuzzi in Palm Springs?

BZ: Yes! The three of us have always wanted to do something together. Rick had always had the title "Where the Bears Are" rolling around in his head, and whenever we are together we talk about the *Golden Girls*, and somebody asked, "I think it was Rick—" "What if *Golden Girls* was a mystery?"

WCT: Talk about the decision to feature the series on the web.

BZ: Since the financial crash in '08, it's been tough to get anything financed, so we thought, "Let's just do it on the web!" We put a lot of pressure on Rick to put out the script pretty quickly, and he basically wrote the script over Christmas. We were in production by March first. There was no pre-production work at all. We said, "Fuck it, let's just do this!" Everyone works for free—the biggest cost is feeding people. [That] is the one thing I won't skimp on—food. [Laughs]

WCT: Do you find that people still resist getting invested in web-based programming?

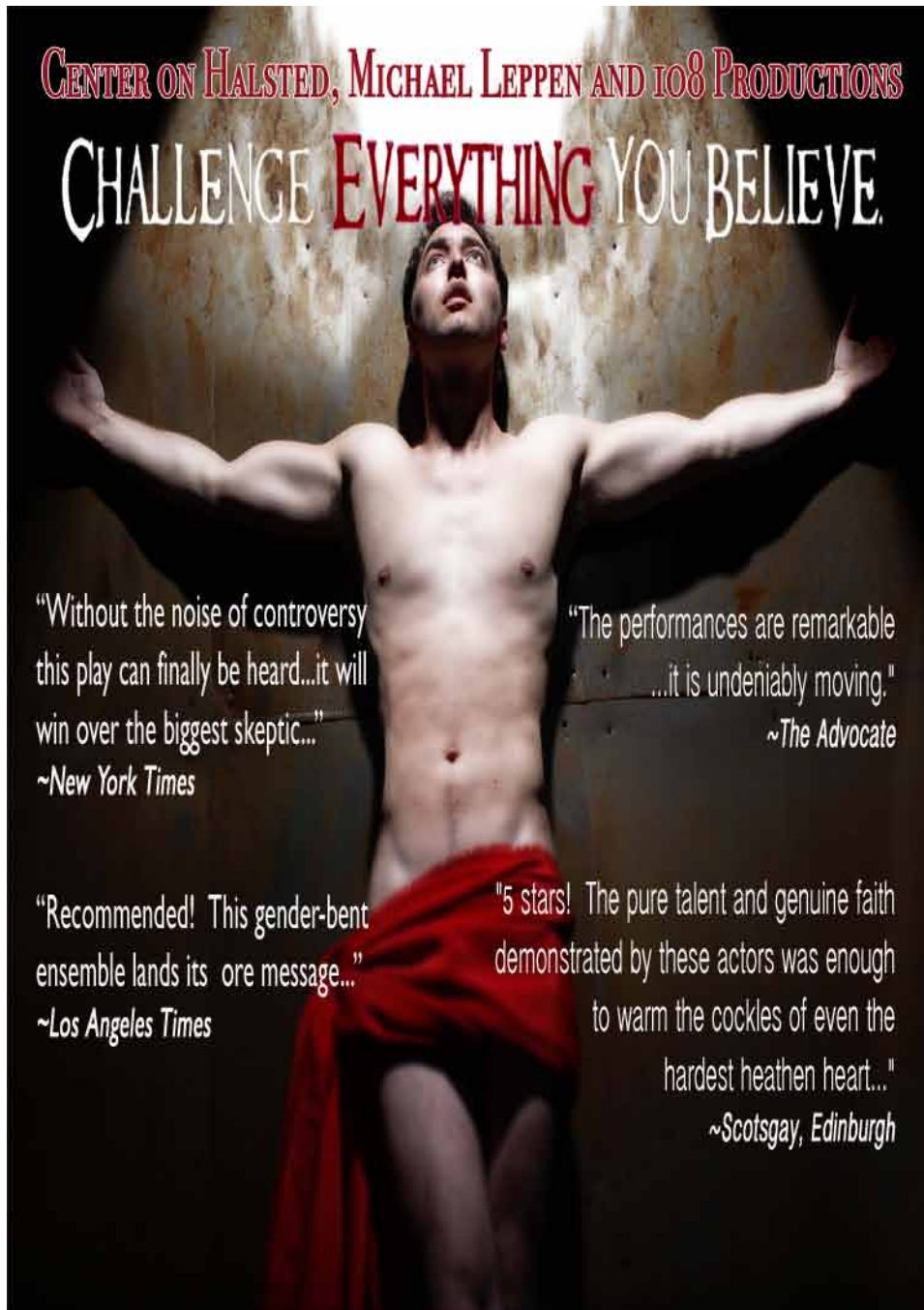
BZ: You know what, it's weird, it's actually the opposite! Everyone seems nuts about it, and we're sort of overwhelmed by it all. We're creeping up to a million views and we just launched on August 1.

WCT: Part of the reason *Where the Bears Are* is such a monster hit is the cast. How in the world did you find your "Hot Toddy?"

BZ: We didn't want to get a casting director. We couldn't pay them, first of all, and we really didn't have time to wait for them to make decisions. We put an ad on Craigslist, and Ian Parks, who plays "Hot Toddy," was the first person who got back to us. Joe and I were like, "This guy is hot! God, please let him be able to act." He blew us away in the audition. He has a lot of experience, and he knows how to play to the camera.

We were sure to be very clear with Ian—we told him this would be gay material and that he was going to be in his underwear, and he

Turn to page 23



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Fall queer movie preview

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Now that the blockbuster/comic-book/superhero season has passed, some of the year's most exciting, challenging and emotionally rewarding movies—plenty with LGBT themes—are just over the horizon. As usual, the advent of fall brings with it the kickoff for awards season. Locally, queer-film audiences have much to anticipate between now and the end of the year.

September

What promises to be the year's most powerful documentary, **How to Survive a Plague**, arrives in Chicago Sept. 21 at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave. David France's film offers an insider's perspective as it focuses on the innovative tactics and bravery of the queer activist groups ACT-UP and TAG (Treatment Action Group) in the mid-to-late '80s. Faced with indifference, scorn and heinous prejudice on all sides (not to mention an almost sure death sentence), scores of U.S. residents with HIV/AIDS and their compatriots fought back in a series of celebrated "actions" that changed the face of activism and ultimately the fate of millions.

The award-winning lesbian romantic drama **Mosquita y Mari**, from out writer-director Aurora Guerrero, is making its Midwest debut as part of the Mexican Film Festival Wed., Sept. 26 at the Logan Square Theater, 2646 N. Milwaukee Ave. It will be preceded by the short documentary **Gay Latino Los Angeles: Coming of Age**. The Queer Film Society is co-sponsoring the event. Sept. 26. Complete festival line-up (Sept. 20-28) at www.mexicanfilmfestival.org

The Perks of Being a Wallflower is being touted as a *Breakfast Club* for a new generation, and director Stephen Chbosky's insightful feature debut of the pitfalls and triumphs of adolescence (based on his best-selling novel) is all that and more. The movie follows the slow blossoming of the geeky Charlie (Logan Lerman) as he carefully navigates his way through his freshman high school year in the early '90s with the aid of two seniors, Emma Watson's free-spirited Sam and out actor Ezra Miller as her defiantly gay brother, Patrick. Sept. 28

A slew of fashion documentaries have led, at long last, to the inevitable High Empress of fashion whose outré life and unique style are chronicled in **Diana Vreeland: The Eye Has to Travel**, which will show at the Music Box Sept. 28.

Broadway's Avenue Q director Jason Moore heads to the multiplex with the comedic **Pitch Perfect**, which should certainly interest fans of *Glee*. It stars Anna Kendrick as a college freshman cajoled into joining an all-female singing group that competes with an all-male one. Sept. 28.

October

The **48th Chicago International Film Festival** runs Oct. 11-25. Each year, the fest screens hundreds of films from around the world, mixing all styles and genres, and all making their Chicago debuts. Only a few of the fest titles were announced at press time but they include several prominent LGBT-related movies such as *The Jeffrey Dahmer Files*, *Out in the Dark* and *Keep the Lights On*. As the fest's opening draws nearer, there are sure to be others. Check www.chicagofilmfestival.com.

Queer director Lee Daniels—whose challenging *Precious* won Mo'Nique a much-deserved Oscar—returns with **The Paperboy**, which sounds like another envelope-pusher. Set in the 1950s, the cast includes Nicole Kidman, Matthew McConaughey, John Cusack and Zac Efron prancing around in his underwear. Oct. 5.

One-time Chicago resident and sex worker-turned-queer author Stephen Elliott's feature debut, **About Cherry**, is based on his provocative book about San Francisco's porn industry. The movie (which will run at the Music Box) is about a teenage girl (played by newcomer Ashley Hinshaw) who becomes a porn star. Heather Graham plays Cherry's lesbian director; the film also co-stars James Franco as her wealthy, sometime boyfriend. Oct. 5

Tim Burton returns to his roots by fleshing out his original short film **Frankenweenie** in which a lonely boy brings his late, lamented dog back from the great beyond and inadvertently wreaks havoc on his freaked out neighborhood. Several



Tom Hanks and Halle Berry in *Cloud Atlas*. Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.

Burton regulars—minus Johnny Depp, for once, but including Catherine O'Hara, Winona Ryder and Martin Landau, among others—voice the characters in this black-and-white stop-motion animated adventure. This will be a must-see for fans of the recent *ParaNorman* and Burton's earlier work. Oct. 5

Get started on your Halloween celebrations Oct. 13-14 with **The Music Box of Horrors**, the Music Box's annual 24-hour marathon of cinematic gore galore. The fest partially benefits *Vital Bridges*. Oct. 13-14

Film-fest darling **Keep the Lights On**, the latest from queer writer-director Ira Sachs, arrives Oct. 26 (also at the Music Box). The movie follows the rocky (to say the least) course of the relationship between a gay couple in Manhattan after a chance first-night encounter surprisingly leads to more. However, drug addiction and worse interrupt the once-promising affair and emotionally gut-wrenching problems between the two men ensue. Oct. 26.

German-based director Tom Tykwer, who made last year's bisexual triangle drama *3* (and previously helmed one of my favorite overlooked movies, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*) teams with Chicago-based directors Lana Wachowski (who recently transitioned from male to female) and her brother, Andy, for **Cloud Atlas**. Based on a science-fiction novel, the movie covers past, present and future, and has a cast taking on unusual roles. (For example, Susan Sarandon plays a man and Hugh Grant is a killer.) Tom Hanks, Halle Berry and Hugo Weaving (*The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*) are also on board. Oct. 26

October concludes on a high note with out writer-director-actor Steven Cone's **The Wise Kids**. The film has won critical raves around the country but hasn't been seen in Chicago since it was year's opening-night selection at Reeling. Now the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., is giving the movie its overdue run. The contemplative drama centers on three teenage best friends at a key transition point in their young lives—raised as evangelical Christians, the trio are about to graduate from high school and head for college. But questions of faith and the boundaries of love are tested when one of the friends reveals that he is gay. Oct. 26

November

Writer/director Bradley Rust Gray's story of the budding romance between two teenage girls—the **Jack and Diane** of the title—sounds fairly typical on the surface, except that Diane's awakening lesbian sexuality is accompanied by "werewolf-like visions." Now that's a complication on the road to love. Juno Temple and Riley Keough (the eldest granddaughter of Elvis and Priscilla Presley) star, and gay fave Kylie Minogue is in the cast as well. On Demand in late

October and in theaters Nov. 2

A host of queer-friendly and openly gay stars—including John C. Reilly, Jane Lynch, Jack McBrayer and Sarah Silverman—add their voices to the Disney animated comedy **Wreck-It-Ralph**, based on the classic video game. Nov. 2

Get out your leg-warmers and roller skates for the midnight screening of **Sing-a-Long Xanadu**, the so-bad-it's-good quasi-1980 musical starring Olivia Newton-John and Gene Kelly. My alter ego, Dick O'Day, hosts yet another edition of *Camp Midnight*, the series of fabulously awful movies along with *Hell in a Handbag Productions*. At the Music Box Theatre Nov. 3

James Bond is back (finally) in **Skyfall**, once again fetchingly played by muscular eye candy Daniel Craig. Co-stars include Javier Bardem, Ralph Fiennes, Ben Whishaw and, of course, Judi Dench as M—whose character sets the plot in motion.

Steven Spielberg's epic biopic of **Lincoln** (portrayed by Daniel Day-Lewis)—which Angels in America playwright Tony Kushner scripted with assistance from historian Doris Kearns Goodwin—hits theaters this month. Sally Field, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Lee Pace and many others are in the cast. Nov. 16

Two-time Oscar winner Sean Penn (*Mystic River*; *Milk*) goes the gender-bending route in **This Must Be the Place**, in which he plays a retired goth rock star *a la* the Cure's Robert Smith. Penn vows vengeance on the man who humiliated his recently deceased father during WWII. Nov. 16

The final, final (no really, we mean it) installment of the *Twilight* series is here. **Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2**, helmed again by gay director Bill Condon, centers on the Cullen vampire clan, their shirtless hottie enemies (the werewolves) and the fate of Edward and Bella's forbidden child. Nov. 16

The Windy City's gay and lesbian international film fest, Reeling—which normally takes place the first weekend in November—is taking the year off, and that means a lot of LGBT movies will not get even a onetime screening in Chicago. That's reason enough to encourage Reeling to hurry back next year. In its absence, keep a look out for several queer-themed pictures that have garnered awards at other LGBT fests—and have definitely perked my curiosity.

Among them are Any Day Now, a '70s-era courtroom drama with Alan Cumming, **Joshua Tree 1951: A Portrait of James Dean**, a black-and-white, artsy look at the ambisexual '50s icon; **Jobriath A.D.**, the fascinating documentary examination of glam rock's self-proclaimed (and ultimately tragic) "rock-n-roll fairy;" and **Cloudburst**, a feel-good road movie with Olympia Dukakis and Brenda Fricker as a long-term lesbian couple heading to Canada to exchange wedding vows.



From left: Juno Temple and Riley Keough in *Jack and Diane*.

MUSIC

Singer-songwriter AG on gender-bending through the Beatles

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Singer-songwriter Adrienne Gonzalez, going by the moniker AG, has a booming music career within the L.A. music scene. With eight solo albums under her belt—including her latest, *Me After You*—she has released *Let Loose The Horse* with the group of local troubadours signed to Universal Records known as The Rescues. Moreover, her music has been featured on various TV shows.

Always craving a challenge, AG takes on six of the The Fab Four's songs creating an EP titled simply *The Beatles*. Coincidentally, it's being released on the 50th anniversary of Ringo Starr joining John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison to form the iconic group. In an interview with *Windy City Times*, she talks about covering the classics while adding her own unique style and her passion for human rights and gender issues as an out lesbian.

Windy City Times: What influenced your music style? What's your inspiration?

AG: Eighties music is my favorite kind of music. Something about it—it doesn't take itself too seriously and it just makes you feel good, but I also do like songs that are super thought-provoking and gut-wrenching. I love to do both of those things.

The Beatles EP, I feel, really does that. I think my record does that, too. I feel like too much of one or the other can start to get kind of self-indulgent. Everybody has so many differ-

ent moods; you need to make records that can satisfy many different moods as opposed to just one. That's just my humble opinion.

WCT: What made you want to cover Beatles songs?

AG: I work at a publishing company and they actually were the ones who gave me the idea because they partnered with a company that has the copyrights to these songs. They're the only songs that aren't owned by Sony TV. So, they wanted me to do inspired versions of these songs.

Initially, I was just going to sit down and do it on my laptop and just play acoustic, but then I was like this could do something more than just being covered. I could do something gender-bending and be able to start talking about issues that I've always wanted to bring up on a larger scale and it sort of gave me the opportunity to do that. It was definitely not something that I expected. Let me put it that way.

WCT: What kind of [gender-bending] issues were you trying to touch on?

AG: I'm just basically trying to [promote] the transgender community, or just gender fluidity as a whole. I'm just trying to raise awareness about that. We don't have to have these specific roles. If we choose to have a more traditional role in our relationship then we can if we choose to, but it shouldn't be forced down our throat. If we choose to be a certain way, choose to look a certain way, if we choose to identify a certain way, we should be able to do that.



AG. Press photo

It's really hard for other people who want to be the way they want to be but because it's "not normal" or hasn't really been recognized or anything by the masses all of a sudden now they sometimes have to hide who they are and they just have to go through an unbelievable amount of oppression and repression and self-hate and all this stuff that just doesn't need to be there. If I can help make that a non-issue in anyway, I'm down.

WCT: We discussed why you chose the songs you covered, but what ultimately drew you to The Beatles?

AG: Well, they're the best and I really do like a good challenge. In my humble opinion, you're

not really supposed to cover Beatles songs. You're supposed to just leave them there, learn from them, move on. You don't cover these songs, but I was like, "Well, I shouldn't be doing this, so I'm going to go ahead and do it."

And when my producer and I first sat down for a meeting to talk about this, I was like, "You know, this is going to be really hard. ... We have to do this really well. Otherwise it can be really harmful for my career on a lot of levels, so we have to really nail this." Thank God, I think we did.

WCT: Have you heard a Beatles cover that you truly enjoyed?

AG: Oh, yeah. Rufus Wainwright covered "Across the Universe," which is one of my favorites.

WCT: You made a video for "I Wanna Be Your Man." What were your thoughts when you did that song and made the video?

AG: Honestly, I feel like it just gave me even more confidence to be who I am in the public world and in the music industry. Yes, I'm not singing my own songs about girls. I don't feel like my music should be doing that. I feel like my music should just be very androgynous because I don't think it should be about me.

I'm not masculine at all in my relationship, but I was able to kind of live vicariously through these transgender women and it felt really great and it was really cool.

It's hard to explain but because I have such empathy for that culture and because I'm so fascinated by it, I think it's just so bad ass on so many levels that being able to sing that song and making that video, I feel so badass even though it's not what I personally identify myself with.

The Beatles will be released Oct. 9. Visit www.musicbyag.com and www.facebook.com/musibyag.com for more information. Her music video can be found at <http://youtu.be/bSGt2pobzaE>.

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The 'Unsinkable' Debbie Reynolds



BY JERRY NUNN

Legendary actress Debbie Reynolds doesn't plan on retiring anytime soon. Starting her career at 16 for Warner Bros., she then moved to MGM, landing her parts in movies from *Singin' in the Rain* to *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, for which she she received an Oscar nomination. She has continued to perform in more than 50 films, and has had television roles such as Grace's mother in *Will & Grace*, which earned her an Emmy nod.

She brings her one-woman show to OakBrook Terrace, where she will present clips and stories of her lengthy and varied career.

Nunn talked with Reynolds one on one about all of this and more.

Windy City Times: Hello, Miss Reynolds. You have been entertaining crowds for six decades, I read.

Debbie Reynolds: That's for sure. "Here she goes again..."

WCT: And out on the road, still.

DR: Oh, yeah. I get bored if I stay at home. I like to entertain. Today, I wouldn't want to go to New York and begin a play. In order to be in one place, you have to do a play. That is six shows a week and something I don't want to do anymore. I love the Drury Lane because I always worked there for Tony DeSantis. Did you ever meet him?

WCT: No.

DR: He was a great character and wonderful guy. You live in Chicago. Did you see my daughter Carrie Fisher play there?

WCT: I did.

DR: Good—now we are getting somewhere.

WCT: You have been a supporter of her work.

DR: Well, I think she learned something from me, don't you think? Anyways, I am coming out there on Sept. 17 to do a matinee show and then an evening show then I am doing another matinee show on the 18th. Matinees are really good because older people like them; then they don't have to drive at night. [*Sings*] "I'm on my way for a matinee!"

WCT: Do you have past clips in your show?

DR: Yes, I do for people like you who have never seen me my whole life. "Debbie Reynolds: Is She Still Alive?" will be the title of this interview, I bet. George Burns always said, "I am going to stay on the stage until I die, then have myself stuffed like Trigger!"

Phyllis Diller was so funny right until the end. I saw her the week before she died when I brought shepherd's pie to her. We had dinner together and I loved her to pieces. She was always funny.

WCT: She definitely was a character.

DR: My show is film clips, impressions; I do Katharine Hepburn, Mae West. I sing a lot of songs—even a country section. I do Broadway tunes, of course: [*Sings*] "I'm still here!" I have

been in the business for 65 years so I have a lot of stories. I talk about Jimmy Stewart and working with Frank Sinatra. I worked with all of the greats, from Gene Kelly to Fred Astaire.

Some people call my act vaudeville but I call it "in concert."

WCT: It sounds like a variety show.

DR: It is a variety show and it is like what Bette Midler does and Liza, too. Most of us aren't doing it anymore.

WCT: I prefer the old-school acts.

DR: Entertainers sing and dance. It is a variety—that is what vaudeville means. These days I am fortunate to have the movie clips. I do a whole section of mistakes. It is just amusing. It has James Cagney and Bette Davis, all of the



Debbie Reynolds. PR photo

greats. That is what I care about—getting the audience laughing. I want the audience to forget their troubles and be happy.

WCT: I heard you have a huge movie collection.

DR: I have collected my whole life. I have the largest private movie collection in the whole world. I just had an auction two months ago. It was the largest of its kind. I had the Marilyn Monroe white dress. It sold for \$5 million. I had the Audrey Hepburn ascot dress where she says, "Move your bloomin' arse!" I had 5,000 costumes.

WCT: Was it hard to let these go?

DR: I tried to get a museum built for years. Hollywood is not interested in itself for preservation.

WCT: That's a shame.

DR: It is a dreadful mistake but I was just exhausted from all of the years of collecting. It is a huge investment so Todd, my son, and daughter Carrie both wanted me to sell it. I had spent all of my money on the collection. I was always

buying. Some things I just kept for myself, like Charlie Chaplin's derby. I have a pair of the ruby red slippers. I kept those.

WCT: Well, I hope so! Speaking of friends of Dorothy, when did you realize you were a gay icon?

DR: Over the years many of the boys that have worked for me as dancers have been gay. The creative people were all gay people, from producers to writers. To me, they were just family. I have a gay boy that takes care of me and lives with me. He's an angel. He cooks for me and works in my dance school. I have had this dance school for 25 years to teach young people how to dance. They want to learn hip-hop, not tap dancing, these days. It is not my favorite thing but it is fun to watch.

WCT: You have a book coming out next year?

DR: It will be finished in December. If the publishers are happy, it will be out in February. It is about the end of my life. I wrote a book about the beginning of my life, but then my life became more interesting than the first part! The



Matt Alber. Photo by Paul Noblin

Matt Alber out with new CD

Two-time openly gay Grammy Award-winning recording artist Matt Alber has released a new acoustic, self-produced album entitled *Constant Crows*. It's a follow-up to his debut album from 2009, *Hide Nothing*.

Constant Crows features new original songs, a Madonna cover ("Take a Bow"), and a duet with his brother, Bryce.

Alber first became known in 2009 for his song "End Of The World" and its accompanying music video set in a 1960s barbershop that features two men (including Alber) dancing together.

Alber is scheduled to be part of The Legacy Project's Legacy Walk dedication in Chicago Oct. 11—National Coming Out Day. In addition, he has a song on the soundtrack of *Scrooge & Marley*, a gay-themed holiday movie filmed locally.

See www.MattAlber.com for more information and the full album stream.

Joffrey Ballet's 'Landscapes' at Roosevelt in Oct.

The Joffrey Ballet's 2012-2013 season will start with the mixed-repertory program "Human Landscapes," which will feature three choreographers exploring principles of the human spirit through dance.

only thing missing was Elizabeth Taylor. I didn't have another scandal for them like that. I did reveal many things, so I will probably be sued by everybody!

WCT: Don't say that.

DR: I don't care. I just wanted to get it off my chest.

WCT: It is called *Unsinkable*?

DR: Yes, because I am not down yet. I will be going on tour for the book so you will see me again. Bring a gay friend with you out to my show at the Drury Lane.

WCT: I will.

DR: Or if you come by yourself, that will be gay enough! [*Both laugh.*]

Reynolds reigns over the Drury Lane, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace, for three shows Sept. 17-18. Singin' in the Rain arrives at the same venue on Nov. 8.

Visit www.drurylaneoakbrooke.com or call 630-530-8300 for ticket information.

Ten performances will take place Oct. 17-28 at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy.

The Joffrey brings James Kudelka's *Pretty Ballet* as well as Jiri Kylian's rarely seen work *Forgotten Land* and Kurt Jooss' anti-war ballet *The Green Table*.

Tickets are \$31-\$152 each. Visit the Joffrey box office at Joffrey Tower, 10 E. Randolph St., the Auditorium Theatre box office of www.Ticketmaster.com; also, call 800-982-2787.

'Performance. Art.' opens 25th season for Sinfonietta

The Chicago Sinfonietta's 25th-anniversary season opening concert, "Performance. Art.," will take place at Wentz Concert Hall, 171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville, on Saturday, Sept. 29, at 8 p.m. and at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, on Monday, Oct. 1, at 7:30 p.m.

The concert will feature a unique collaboration with the Brooklyn-based, high-energy chamber ensemble *PROJECT Trio* (Greg Pattillo, Peter Seymour and Eric Stephenson).

Sinfonietta Music Director Mei-Ann Chen will open the concert with a variation on Johannes Brahms' one-movement work *Hungarian Dance No. 5*. The program will continue with *PROJECT Trio* performing three pieces, with the orchestra and on its own, including a take on J. S. Bach's *Bourree* from *Suite in E Minor* for Lute.

Tickets are \$40-\$50 for the Naperville concert and \$26-\$50 for the Chicago show, with special \$10 pricing available for students. For tickets, call 312-236-3681, ext. 2, or visit www.chicagosinfonietta.org.



Mei-Ann Chen. Publicity photo



Boy George has sung covers like “Everything I Own” and “The Crying Game,” transforming them into hits. Even the overlooked remakes of “Starman” and “Funtime” are mighty spectacular. His latest is a stirring rendition of Lana Del Rey’s “Video Games.” His soulful, aged voice suits the piece perfectly. The accompanying clip captures young lovers trapped far outside the city limits. The catty comments posted on the official YouTube page just add to the magic behind this cover. The Culture Club frontman also has teasers of new material on his Sound Cloud page, www.soundcloud.com/boy-george.

When **Madonna** tours, it is an event. Her latest trek, The MDNA Tour, is coming to The United Center, 1901 W. Madison St., on Wed., Sept. 19 and Thursday, Sept. 20. Her dates in Russia were surrounded with controversy, because she endorsed the native feminist band Pussy Riot and spoke out against the country’s recent law



Bob Mould is on tour this month in support of his new, rock-driven outing, *Silver Age*. The openly gay rocker will be at The Metro, 3730 N. Clark St., on Thursday, Sept. 13, and Friday, Sept. 14. Thursday’s show is already sold out. Here, Mould plans to play material from *Silver Age* as well as Sugar’s *Copper Blue*. The night will feature other work from his catalog, too. *Silver Age* is buzzing with guitars, where “Steam of Hercules” and “Fugue State” are highlights. Mould also is half of the DJ duo Blowoff and penned his memoirs, *See a Little Light: The Trail of Rage and Melody*.

When it comes to concerts, I try to see the opening band. In 2008, **Paper Route** opened for Low Vs. Diamond at Subterranean and I was won over by the majestic number “American Clouds.” Paper Route returns with its sophomore effort, *The Piece of Wild Things*. Here, the Nashville-based group proves to be on par with sensitive rockers like The Script and OneRepublic. It is the ethereal titles like “Calm My Soul” and “Born in Love” that make Paper Route stand out. “Better Life” is catchier than anything on radio now, with its killer chorus. Paper Route takes to the stage at Schuba’s, 3159 N. Southport Ave., on Wed., Sept. 19 before embarking on tour with Switchfoot.

Already I am pegging **Joan Osborne**’s *Bring It on Home* to be one of the top albums of the year. It is a solid collection of classic blues and



Madonna and Bob Mould. Photo of Madonna by Mert + Marcus; Bob Mould image by Peter Ellenby

making homosexuality among minors illegal. Sir Elton John’s harsh words at Madonna’s expense managed to keep her in the entertainment news. But for the remainder of her tour, will her nipple accidentally be exposed again? Will she tone down the violence of her production in the aftermath of the Aurora, Colo., shootings? Regardless, she will put on one hell of a show supporting her dance-driven album MDNA. Let’s hope that “Some Girls,” “I’m Addicted” and “I’m a Sinner” from MDNA find their way onto the setlist. Berlin Nightclub, 954 W. Belmont Ave., is having a special Madonnarama on Wed., Sept. 19, as an after party with DJ Riley York.

R&B numbers. “Shake Your Hips” has an irresistible rhythm thanks to the drums, guitars and harmonica. “Bring It on Home” and “Broken Wings” are slower, but abundant with passion, as Osborne purrs to get her point across. The “One of Us” singer-songwriter has four dates scheduled at City Winery Chicago, 1200 W. Randolph St., on Sunday, Sept. 16; Monday, Sept. 17; Tuesday, Oct. 16; and Wed. Oct. 17. Megan Reilly guests in September and Matthew Santos will join Osborne in October.

On her sophomore set, *Anxiety*, **Ladyhawke** favors a more rock vibe, as heard on the catchy opening track “Girl Like Me” and the title cut.

“Sunday Drive” shows influence from The Cure, as the New Zealand artist sings, “I can’t pretend to hate you / ‘cause I will always love you.” Good luck getting “Black, White & Blue” out of your head. Its video is trippy with a campy ‘80s-flavored storyline. On Sunday, Sept. 16, Ladyhawke comes to The Bottom Lounge, 1375 W. Lake St., with Shuteye and Greg Corner.

Lollapalooza is becoming more mainstream with its line-up with each passing year. Chicago is one of the cities to host **Riot Fest**, a three-day festival focusing on alternative and punk acts starting Friday, Sept. 14. The schedule boasts pioneers like Elvis Costello and The Stooges plus favorites like Rise Against and Offspring. L.A. rock band **Dead Sara** just released its impressive self-titled debut and will be playing at Congress Theater, 2135 N. Milwaukee Ave., on the opening day of Riot Fest. Dead Sara shines brightest

on its edgier efforts “Weatherman,” “Dear Love” and “Lemon Scent,” where lead vocalist Emily Armstrong complements guitarist Siouxsie Medley’s riffs. For information on the after shows with draws like Alkaline Trio, a complete schedule and tickets, visit www.riotfest.org/chicago-tickets.

Canadian electro-pop outfit **Dragonette** issued the tracks “Let It Go” and “Live in This City” as a precursor for the upcoming full-length *Body Parts*, which is due Sept. 25. That is Dragonette collaborating with Martin Solveig on the feel-good ditty “Hello.” This crossover hit has been licensed to a Trident commercial as well as 90210, The Vampire Diaries, Skins and Gossip Girl. Dragonette will be at the Metro Tuesday, Sept. 18.

SIDEBAR

Upcoming shows and new releases

Upcoming shows:

Bob Mould, Thursday, Sept. 13 and Friday, Sept. 14 at Metro
On Stage with... Susan Werner, Saturday, Sept. 15 at Auditorium Theatre Stage
Grizzly Bear, Sunday, Sept. 30 at The Riviera
Girlyman with Chastity Brown, Sunday, Sept. 30 at City Winery Chicago
Gossip, Wed., Oct. 3 at Bottom Lounge
Hunter Valentine, Tuesday, Oct. 9 at Stage Bar
Alanis Morissette, Saturday, Oct. 13 at The Riviera
Mika, Thursday, Oct. 18 at The Vic Theatre
Brandi Carlile, Saturday, Oct. 20 at The Chicago Theatre

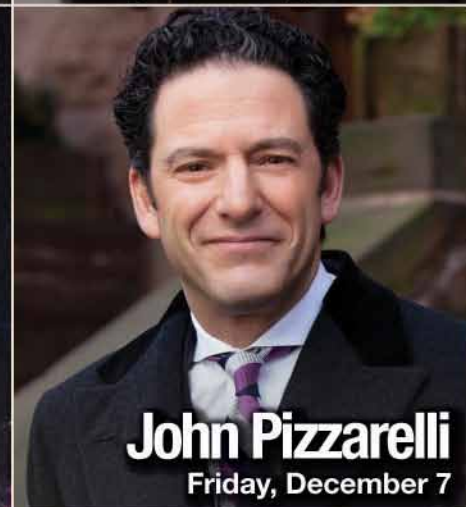
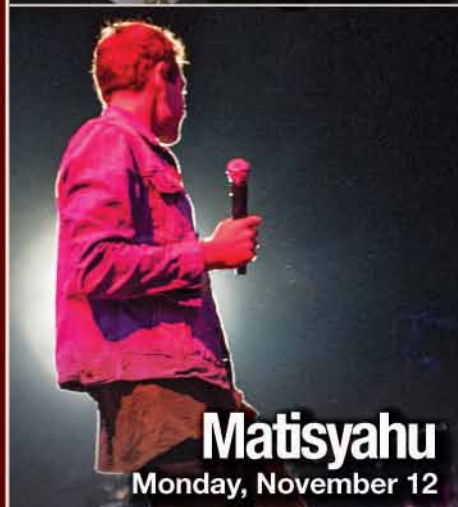
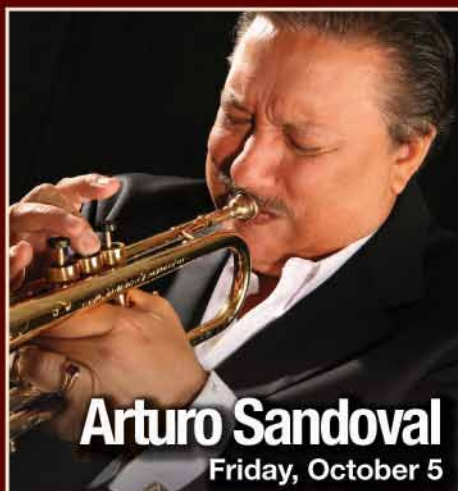
Cheryl Wheeler, Sunday, Oct. 28 at City Winery Chicago

Kaki King, Friday, Nov. 2 at City Winery Chicago

Melissa Etheridge, Saturday, Nov. 10 at The Chicago Theatre

New releases:

Amanda Palmer—*Theatre Is Evil*, Sept. 11
Pet Shop Boys—*Elysium*, Sept. 11
Michael Jackson—*Bad 25*, Sept. 18
P!nk—*The Truth about Love*, Sept. 18
Ssion—*Bent*, Sept. 18
Kristine W.—*New & Number Ones*, Sept. 28
Beth Orton—*Sugaring Season*, Oct. 2
Heart—*Fanatic*, Oct. 2
Tori Amos—*Gold Dust*, Oct. 2
Barbra Streisand—*Release Me*, Oct. 9
Meshell Ndegeocello—*Pour une ame souveraine* (For a sovereign soul): A dedication to Nina Simone, Oct. 9
Delerium—*Music Box Opera*, Oct. 30



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NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Meshell Ndegeocello on Sinead O'Connor, love of theater

BY JERRY NUNN

From singer and rapper to prolific songwriter, Meshell Ndegeocello brings an eclectic style of music to the table every time. She has received 10 Grammy nominations and has made 10 albums throughout the years.

Her duet with John Mellencamp, "Wild Night," brought her national attention, along with her own song "If That's Your Boyfriend (He Wasn't Last Night)." She has worked on a variety of soundtracks, from Love Jones to Lost & Delirious.

Her latest album, *Pour une Ame Souveraine* (or For a Foreign Soul) is a Nina Simone covers album following up last year's Weather.

Her contributions to AIDS organizations such as the Red Hot Organization and, now, with Howard Brown (with its Sept. 14 "Garden of Eve" event) have helped the LGBT community while entertaining at the same time.

Nunn talked to her as she prepared to visit Chicago again.

Windy City Times: Hi, Meshell. You are coming back to Chi-town.

Meshell Ndegeocello: Yes, and I am excited about the cause. I am always excited when there is a place where people can get health care for free. Of course I love Chicago, too.

WCT: You have been in the music business for a long time.

MN: It has been 20 years if I counted.

WCT: The biz has evolved so much.

MN: No—technology has, but the business hasn't really changed. There is always somebody trying to get someone else to pay for their art and there is always someone trying to make money off somebody. That never changes.

WCT: I read you have had 10 Grammy nominations.

MN: I have. I just haven't talked to the right people so I haven't won one yet.

WCT: This latest album, *Pour une Ame Souveraine*, might win it for you.

MN: Thank you but thank Nina Simone, oh my gosh.

WCT: Have you always enjoyed her music?

MN: I didn't get into it until later in life, when I was about 23 and living in New York with a friend of mine. I wish I had grown up with amazing music like that. She is someone I have had an awesome admiration for.

WCT: You worked with other artists on these tracks, like Sinead O'Connor.

MN: She is incredible. She's a big fan, too. I feel like everyone should be singing Sinead's praises. Her ability to captivate you with a song is something I have always loved about her.

Lizz Wright is my unsung hero. I love her. Toshi Reagon I grew up with. She is one my main and first mentors. The Cody Chestnut song is probably my favorite track on the whole recording. He's amazing. He's a very different kind of brother. I feel humble just being on the same recording with all of them.

WCT: How were connected to them? Through the various music labels?

MN: I went to go meet Valerie June. I had only heard an mp3 and just fell in love with it.



Meshell Ndegeocello. Photo by Charlie Gross

I wanted to find the voice and I went to one of her shows at South By Southwest. I met her after her performance. That was a highlight for me because it is great when just their voice enchants you—then you meet them and everything is about them is incredible. She might even open up one of my shows.

I had tried to get D'Angelo but he was too busy and my publicist, who I will thank forever, suggested Cody Chestnut. I wish I had thought of it because it is freakin' brilliant. He does so much for the song. When I sang it the song was very dire and dark. "To Be Young, Gifted and Black" has nothing to do with race but about being young and trying to find your place in the world. I really felt he brought that across.

WCT: How did you pick out what songs to put on the album?

MN: I just picked my favorite out of the play list. If it were up to me, it would be three volumes. You could just go on and on. These are the ones that I thought I could do justice to.

WCT: I know you have performed at the Old School of Folk Music several times. Could you possibly bring the tour there?

MN: I want to bring this Nina Simone project out with a full band. I just have to find the right venue to play in.

WCT: I know you have a new single with Miguel Migs called "Tonight."

MN: I worked with him a couple of months ago. He's a strange dude but I love him. He's so mellow that it's scary.

WCT: You did a tribute album for Fela. Did you see the musical Fela?

MN: Yes. My friend is in it. That musical is incredible. I wish it had stayed around longer. There is a lot of theater in Chicago, right?

WCT: Yes, Broadway in Chicago as well as

tons of theater companies.

MN: I loved Book of Mormon, too.

WCT: That's coming. I am jealous you already saw it.

MN: I love the theater. That is the gayest part of me!

WCT: Would you want to make a musical?

MN: I am working on one in my mind. I just have to put it together.

WCT: What will your performance be like for "Garden of Eve?"

MN: It will be acoustic. I will just come across as a singer/songwriter and tell some stories. Hopefully people will give their hard-earned cash to a good cause.



Scott Free. Photo courtesy of Free

Free, Brooks in 'Bear All' at Touche Sept. 22

"Bear All: Four Sensuous Men Singing Steamy Sweaty Songs!" will take place at Touche, 6412 N. Clark St., on Saturday, Sept. 22, at 10 p.m.

JC Brooks, Mike Grimes, Anthony Whitaker and Scott Free are slated to perform. Bryan Dowling will host.

The musicians will showcase contrasting styles. Brooks is known for everything from R&B ballads to dance-punk; Grimes' work "is a blend of American roots and acoustic ska music"; Whitaker co-founded the New American Folk Theater; and Free classifies his music as "sometimes humorous, sometimes angry, always touching songs of queer life," according to a release.

For more info, email MrScottFree@gmail.com.

Diamond Rings has new album, tour

Astralwerks has announced the upcoming release of Diamond Rings' new album, Free Dimensional, which will be out Tuesday, Oct. 23. Damian Taylor (who's work with Bjork, Robyn and The Killers, among others) co-produced the CD.

The first single, "I'm Just Me," is out along with the video.

Diamond Rings is the solo project of John O, who burst onto the scene with what has been called an "inventive home-recorded video" of his debut single, "All Yr Songs."

A tour starts Thursday, Sept. 20, in Portland, Maine and concludes Saturday, Oct. 20, in San Francisco. His closest stop to Chicago is a gig Thursday, Oct. 4, in Indianapolis, Ind.

WCT: Speaking of good causes, I read your work for the "It Gets Better" project with Dan Savage.

MN: A lot people like to hide out and not talk about things. I love that he is just in your face with his ideas and wants to dialogue with people. I am glad he is on the planet.

Look for Meshell on our part of the planet during the "Garden of Eve" annual fundraiser to benefit Howard Brown Health Center Friday, Sept. 14, River East Art Center, 435 E. Illinois St., at 7 p.m. Visit www.howardbrown.org for tickets, including a VIP reception with gay foodie Ted Allen.

To read a past interview with Diamond Rings, see www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Diamond-Rings/30558.html.

Loudon Wainwright, Dar Williams here Sept. 22

Folk musicians Loudon Wainwright III and Dar Williams will kick off Dominican University's performing-arts season Saturday, Sept. 22, at 7:30 p.m. in the Lund Auditorium, 7900 W. Division Street, River Forest.

Wainwright is the father of musicians Rufus and Martha Wainwright. His latest album, Older Than My Old Man Now, takes a retrospective look at his life. He also has been in productions such as the TV show Parks and Recreation and the movie The 40-Year-Old Virgin.

Williams has released nine successful albums since breaking onto the scene in the early 1990s, including her latest, 2012's In the Time of Gods.

Tickets start at \$25 (\$10 for Dominican students); contact the box office at 708-488-5000 or visit www.dom.edu/pac.

Field Museum fashion exhibition starts Sept. 14

The Field Museum's newest exhibition, "Fashion and The Field Museum Collection: Maria Pinto," will run Sept. 14-June 16, 2013.

The exhibition explores the world of design, mixing artifacts hand-selected from the museum's collections by esteemed Chicago fashion designer Maria Pinto along with contemporary pieces Pinto created.

In 2010, Pinto selected objects that inspired her in collaboration with Alaka Wali, the museum's curator in North American anthropology. Pinto's artistic perspective includes items such as a crocodile skin vest, a parka made of bird skins and a necklace made of woven monkey fur.

The museum is at 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr. See www.FieldMuseum.org.



Inuit raincoat in exhibit. Photo courtesy of Field Museum

Windy
City Times
Fall Music/
Movies
Special

NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Linda Clifford: 'One Night Stand' and her gay fans

BY JERRY NUNN

Linda Clifford has provided a mix of house, R&B and disco over the years with roots in jazz music. She started as an actress in films like *The Boston Strangler* and *Sweet Charity* before beginning her music career. Clifford landed a variety of hits in the '70s, including "Runaway Love" and a cover of "If My Friends Could See Me Now." Her song "Red Light" wound up on the *Fame Soundtrack* in 1980, and she had several disco-flavored hits afterwards.

She will perform at the event "One Night Stand" to benefit HIV/AIDS agency Chicago House Saturday, Sept. 15. Clifford sat down to talk about her love for the community, Luther Vandross and party tips.

Windy City Times: How are you, Linda?

Linda Clifford: Good—keeping busy!

WCT: I bet. Let's talk about your career from the beginning. You started off in jazz music?

LC: Yes. I started off doing jazz, a Nancy Wilson-type thing, not recording, just working clubs. Unfortunately, the market for that shriveled up. I continued singing things from Broadway shows and that sort of stuff because I really loved that. I moved slowly into the pop, funk market and added those things to the song list. That was many years ago—doing jazz on the road and allowing people to get up and dance. I thought that was really cool!

WCT: How did having your first hit feel?

LC: The first real hit was "If My Friends Could See Me Now." That was in 19...—Wait, you are going to make me give my age away. I was 12. *[Both laugh.]* We recorded it in 1977. Then it hit and became number one. It went all over the world.

WCT: You seemed to really enjoy singing it at San Francisco's Pride in the past.

LC: Oh, I love it. I have been doing it all these years. I cannot do a show and not do that song. People will just not have it! A lot of my friends are sick of me singing it and I go through phases where I don't want to do it again but once I start then I think about how it gave me the life that I have. I am so appreciative. The thing that is so wonderful is that people relate to the lyric in that song. There is always somebody in the past who thought they were something back then but look at them now, okay! "Check me out!"

WCT: I love the fact that you sang "Red Light" on the *Fame Soundtrack*.

LC: I do, too! That was such an incredible experience. I worked with Michael Gore and Dean Pitchford. They are the writers. They wrote three things for that movie. We met as a result for doing that song for the soundtrack and we became fast friends. They decided to write and produce songs for me for the next album. That is where "All the Man That I Need" came from. Many people have heard Whitney Houston's or Sister Sledge's version, but that song is actually written for my husband and me. How about that?

WCT: That's nice!

LC: Okaaay? I was the first one to record that song. For some reason the record company didn't want to release it right away then after everyone else released it they decided it was a good song. That is typical record-company stuff. It was a great experience with "Red Light," and the fact it was nominated for a Grammy was wonderful.

WCT: Do you have a favorite item from back in the day?

LC: I was given an award and besides all of those Billboard Awards and the ones you get



Linda Clifford. PR photo

from the professional end of it, there was a young man who came up to me when I was performing at a junior high school. He had saved his money and had an award made that said, "Presented to Linda Clifford, Lady of the Year." He couldn't have been more than 14 years old and I still have it. I keep it in my office. It is great to touch someone like that with my music.

WCT: How did you get involved with the Chicago gay community?

LC: I have lived in Chicago for so many years. People always think that I live on the West Coast or in New York. I grew up in New York but have lived in Chicago longer than there. I have been to so many clubs that aren't even around anymore. When "If My Friends Could See Me Now" came out that was a great deal of the audience that fell in love with that song. The gay community just ate that song up so I started playing a lot of the gay clubs.

I found myself meeting and falling in love with so many people that were in these clubs. I thought, "Why am I trying to kill myself to try to please people that don't want to hear my music when I have this wonderful group of people who love me?" I worked so many clubs. Remember a club called Le Pub?

WCT: No; that was before my time.

LC: It was a fabulous club. It had wonderful food and it was a straight club. It had switched over to a gay club the week before we played there one time. We didn't know until there were no women in there.

One time they asked me to sing when I was very pregnant and ready to pop. I did very dramatic ballads up on stage with my belly for two and half hours. I had never had that kind of response and so much love from any group in my life. When I was in the hospital after having my baby the room was filled with flowers and gifts with a note saying, "This is from your 1,500 fairy godmothers!"

WCT: What a great story.

LC: That was it. I was hooked. They were so incredibly wonderful to me. Aside from that I did have an older brother who was gay. He was my best friend and I lost him to AIDS in the early '80s. Three weeks after his death, my younger brother died of AIDS. My ties to the community are both happy and sad. I do everything I can to

make people aware and raise funds to get rid of this disease. I would like to see it gone before I die.

I feel that if we had had something like Chicago House at that time I would still have my two brothers. It is such an incredible organization. They do so many wonderful things so when this opportunity popped up to be a part of it I said, "Absolutely count me in."

WCT: How long is your set at "One Night Stand"?

LC: We want to keep some things secret but it will be a full show, I can tell you that. I want people dancing during the show. This is not going to be a sit down, drink yourself into a stupor, this is a party. We want people to walk in and be amazed by everything that they see and hear. This is going to be a feast for the senses and unbelievable.

WCT: I read that Luther Vandross was a backup singer for you a long time ago.

LC: Yes, he did background on "Red Light" and just a ton of stuff. That was before Luther was

BEARS from page 17

was fine with it. Some actors are still so weird about playing gay. I think when he saw our credentials in the ad, he realized this wasn't some half-assed porn shoot.

WCT: How did you manage to snag Jackie Beat to make a cameo in the series?

BZ: Kent [Fuher] and I go way back—we did sketch comedy together back in the '90s. He is one of the funniest people I know. He is one of the toughest people to keep a straight face around. You laugh just by looking at him! It was great that he gave us time to shoot for an afternoon.

WCT: You are a founding member of the Annoyance Theatre in Chicago, and you were here last month to celebrate the theater's 25th anniversary. Talk about your favorite memory of being involved with the Annoyance.

BZ: When I moved to Chicago in 1987, I was sort of floundering around. I was waiting tables at Houlihan's and sort of trying to figure out what I was going to do. Mick Napier, who started the company—which was Metraform Theater back then—brought me in, and it was just a blast! I consider it one of the most wonderful times of my life. Here we were in our 20s, and we were putting up these amazing shows like *The Real Live Brady Bunch*—it was just a huge fraternity house of talented people; it really was.

WCT: Jane Lynch [from the TV series *Glee*] played Carol Brady, right? Watching Lynch perform and working with her live on the stage—was it pretty apparent that she'd make it big someday?

BZ: Well, it was just that she was so funny! We would all crack up. I think everyone who was a part of *The Annoyance* was destined to have careers—and many did: Jon Favreau and Andy Richter, and many others. With Jane, I always thought "Wow, she really can do everything" because she was doing *Steppenwolf*, too, at the time.

WCT: Where are some of your favorite places to hang out in the Windy City?

BZ: I haven't spent any real time in Chicago in 21 years, and there were moments [during my recent visit] that I actually got teary-eyed. The weather was amazing and I did all the things I love! [There was] *Sidetrack*, obviously—we went to *Sidetrack* every night, and it's grown like a monster! *Sidetrack* is now like the Wal-Mart of Showtunes! *[Laughs]* I don't like Wal-Mart, but I love *Sidetracks*. We went to Bucks and it looks exactly the same—which was great fun. I used to live at 857 W. Roscoe, so I lived right in the heart of it all. We also spent some time north, in Andersonville, which I didn't really do when I lived

LUTHER ... At that time he was doing jingles and commercials.

WCT: I wonder if he would have come out of the closet in this day and age if he was, in fact, gay?

LC: Who can say? If someone is involved in the church and family sometimes it is hard. My father didn't want to believe my brother was gay when he was in the hospital. I have been able to see that after struggling with my brothers that people have been deserted by their families and friends. So I understand not wanting to come out. That is a tremendous fear to lose everyone.

WCT: That is why it is great to have a service like Chicago House that is there for people when they are abandoned.

LC: I know. That makes me so happy. I am thrilled to be a part of this event!

Don't miss this "One Night Stand" at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave., on Saturday, Sept. 15, at 8 p.m. Tickets and information can be found at www.chicagohouse.org.



The creators of *Where the Bears Are* (with Zook on the right). Image by JayPGPhotography

here—and it was a blast! We loved SoFo Tap, and a lot of the guys came up to us and told us how much they loved the show. Everyone made us feel very welcome.

WCT: Where the Bears Are ends in October. Will we see these characters again?

BZ: We're hoping to do more seasons. And when this one wraps up, you will definitely know who the killer is!

We're releasing the DVD around Thanksgiving. We're self-distributing it through our website, and the plan is to use that money to do more seasons. It will be a continuous movie—everyone has been telling us they want to see it all cut together. The DVD will have tons of extras, a stand-alone Christmas special, a music video to go with our amazing theme song, outtakes, and commentary. We're also selling hats and T-shirts, and if everyone buys a hat we could probably do two more seasons!

WCT: Talk a little about how bears are portrayed in popular culture. Does *Where the Bears Are* shatter any stereotypes?

BZ: Joe and I and Rick are heavier, hairy, middle-aged men, as are all of our friends—so we said, "Okay—this is a world we know; let's set the show in this world." We decided we didn't have to do much more than that, as far as referencing the bear culture, because it would take away from the mystery and comedy. We didn't need to comment on ourselves. We thought, "Let's just stick to the comedy of a sitcom and a murder mystery set in the world of bears." It's not a show about bears—but with bears.

Where the Bears Are is currently available online at www.wherethebearsare.tv.

NUNN ON ONE: TV

'The New Normal' for Ellen Barkin

BY JERRY NUNN

Actress Ellen Barkin is making her regular television series debut this fall on The New Normal, playing Jane Forrest. Part of the plot from the show revolves around gay adoption; Jane is the mother of the surrogate for the couple.

While she has guest-starred on hit television shows like Modern Family this year, Barkin has focused primarily on film work from her major debut in Diner to The Big Easy, Sea of Love and Ocean's Thirteen. Her film last year, Another Happy Day, once again brought her critical acclaim.

Barkin's Broadway debut The Normal Heart won her a Tony last year.

She blasted a Utah TV station on Twitter for making a decision not to air The New Normal, calling it "blatantly homophobic."

Windy City spoke with her the after that tweet about the new NBC show.

Windy City Times: Hello, Ellen. I guess the last time you were in Chicago was for the Rosie O'Donnell Show.

Ellen: Barkin: I was. I love that city.

WCT: First off, what attracted you to The New Normal?

EB: For me, personally as an actor when I read the pilot script, aside from thinking it was like to be sent out as an example for how to write a pilot, I just thought, "Oh, Ryan Murphy—with his big beautiful brilliant brain—along with Ali Adler, have come up with a way to reach out to a very divisive country about some very, very important issues."

I guess the big overriding issue is, "What makes a family?" And they've done it with an enormous amount of love, sensitivity and more fun than a barrel of monkeys.

WCT: Your character is similar to Archie Bunker [from the TV classic All in the Family] in many ways. Why did you want to play her?

EB: I think any actor who wouldn't be interested in bringing Archie Bunker types back into the conversation at this point in our history would need to have their head examined. So, the appeal was great. She is whip-smart, she is extremely well-informed and extremely articulate.

This isn't a stereotypical liberals' version of someone who doesn't disagree with their positions, whatever they are: anti-choice, anti-gay, anti-any ethnic, anti-foreigner xenophobic character. She is not that. She's informed, she's passionate about our commitments and they are informed positions.

Like all TV series, no character is fully revealed in the first episode or the pilot episode or the second the episode. I would beg that audiences stick with her and hear her arguments, which are just extremely intelligent, they come from her heart, from her gut, and they come from her own life experience.

WCT: With the title The New Normal, do think this show could make gay people more of the norm in society?

EB: God, I hope so. I think that's one of the main purposes of the show. I hope that everyone starts maybe opening up a tiny bit and are able to redefine what normal is. And, you know, like Archie Bunker, he was very un-PC but every now and then—like, I remember the Edith Bunker rape episode and you saw a humanity in Archie, where it wasn't just coming from hate. It's not just hate. It's fear of the other.

Look: With all of the divisiveness that is going on in the country we live, so much of it is based around just fear of the other. Anyone who does not look like me, walk like me, talk like me, have



Ellen Barkin. Photo courtesy of NBC

sex like me, they're the other and I'm afraid of them. And hopefully we will learn that it's just not scary. There's nothing to be afraid of.

WCT: Were you a fan of Ryan Murphy's past projects?

EB: I have to say I was a huge Nip/Tuck fan, so you know Ryan Murphy had me at Nip/Tuck. With American Horror [Story], like, I had never in my life seen a horror movie until about four years ago. I never saw Jaws; I never saw The Exorcist. I'm terrified of horror movies, and I became addicted to American Horror. I couldn't go to the bathroom by myself in the middle of the night. I have yet to watch the last episode because I'm too afraid.

WCT: Do you think Ryan is changing television with these types of shows?

EB: I think it's obviously Ryan is presenting worlds to mass audiences on network television that they might not be so accepting of that all of a sudden they love, because Ryan Murphy knows how to entertain. So the world of Glee, for instance, you know if you just like told somebody what that show was about they might say, "Well, this is not for me." Then, you watch Glee and you're just wildly entertained.

WCT: How was it working with NeNe Leakes, who has now been on both Glee and The New Normal?

EB: I love NeNe. I love that woman flat-out. She's fantastic. She's a real life force. She's a very strong presence. She's a very hard worker. She's there to work and to learn.

WCT: How do you feel about the response on your Twitter?

EB: I felt good about it. On both sides of the spectrum I felt that, yes, it is their right to Barnes & Noble something, but I do think it's a form of censorship, and to ban a show because [of] "explicit characterizations" and "inappropriate behavior and dialogue."

I did look at [Utah station] KSL's line-up. And I don't understand why a show that I happen to love, like Law & Order: SVU, is not in family-viewing time. That's what they kept talking

about. Why that show? I hope nobody is allowing a 10-year old to watch. [The New Normal is] about a very loving, committed, same-sex couple wanting to raise a child, [and SVU] is explicit and offensive [with] rape, murder and child slavery, in very graphic detail.

I did take a position on that, and being responded to by both sides meant that people paid attention. And I think that that is what matters. Whether you agree that KSL should ban the show and let your children watch a TV show where they use words like "anal tearing" and "vaginal tearing" and "child slavery," that's okay, but not watching two men kiss each other and cry because they've decided to raise a child together—I don't get it.

If you read my Twitter feed, it would pale in comparison to what I get back.

WCT: So what is your connection with the gay community? You are becoming a gay champion, defending us on Twitter now.

EB: Well, thank you. I have a hard time answering that question because I know there's a big fight to be fought here, but if I considered the gay community a separate community, I don't think I'd have a community. This has been a part of my life since I was in junior high school. I went to an artistic high school in New York now called LaGuardia. It was a very mixed community, with heterosexuals and same-sex couples. I was raised by liberal Democrats, and we were very much working-class Jews in a very mixed ethnic neighborhood.

I'm for anybody who's being ostracized and treated with inequality.

WCT: Well I, for one, appreciate it. Mazeltov and good luck with the show!

EB: Thank you.

Flip over to NBC for The New Normal on Tuesdays each week. Visit www.nbc.com for details and listings.

The New Normal: Poised to change TV

BY DAVID-ELIJAH NAHMOD

The Peacock Network has unveiled a show that might just change the TV landscape forever. Ryan Murphy—creator of Glee, Nip/Tuck and American Horror Story—offers not a show with gay characters, but a series that's about its gay characters. Murphy, who's openly gay, co-created The New Normal with Glee writer Ali Adler, who's lesbian.

Andrew Rannells and Justin Bartha head the cast as Bryan and David, a gay couple starting a family with the help of surrogate mom Goldie (Georgia King). A short preview clip at NBC's website promises a show that will be topical, deal with real issues, and make us laugh, all at the same time.

Rannells is an openly gay actor who's made his mark on Broadway. Appearances on the Great White Way include Hairspray, Jersey Boys, and The Book of Mormon, for which he received a Tony Nomination.

"I immediately jumped on board," said Rannells, "Because, as a gay man, it's hard to find projects where you can play a gay man that feels like it's a fully developed character that's not just the best friend or the bitchy boss. This is a fully developed person that I get to play. And certainly the gay is a big part of it, but the gay is also just a fraction of what I get to do in the show."

Bartha is best known for his roles in "straight-guy" films such as The Hangover and National Treasure. The actor, who's been

romantically linked with several women, jumped at the chance to play Rannell's on-screen partner.

"I just look to do quality," he stated. "I was sent some television stuff that I didn't think was quality or relevant. I had read about Ryan doing a show with Andrew—I'd also seen The Book of Mormon and thought he was brilliant. So I called, I kind of initiated it. It just seemed like the best quality project out there. It talks about love, and it talks about real issues in a non-trite way that is also entertaining. So it's a show that I'd want to watch, and I wanted to be a part of it."

The cast also includes Ellen Barkin as a character who's not quite as liberal as she thinks she is. While she professes to love her gay hairdresser, she's, in truth, not that far removed from the infamous One Million Moms, who organize boycotts against any and all gay images that appear in the media.

"I think every person in a group has a right to protest and not like something," said Murphy. "I always find it to be interesting when people take that position before they've seen it. I think if they [One Million Moms] watched the show, they would love it because for the first time they're represented."

For Rannells, the series is also a chance to lighten his intense work load: "I love musical theater, and I love Broadway, but I don't miss that schedule. I'll be honest, it's nice to have weekends again and things like that."

The New Normal runs Tuesdays on NBC.



The New Normal. Photo courtesy of NBC

Sarah Terez Rosenblum: Local novelist releases lesbian thriller

BY THOMAS BATEMAN

Local author Sarah Terez Rosenblum's debut novel, *Herself When She's Missing*, was released this summer. A lesbian psychological thriller and romance, "Herself" has been well received throughout the country. Recently, Rosenblum sat down with Windy City Times to discuss the book, her writing process and how she hopes to be received as an author.

[Note: Rosenblum has written for Windy City Times.]

Windy City Times: What kind of critical reception has *Herself When She's Missing* met with, thus far?

Sarah Terez Rosenblum: It's gotten a lot of good feedback and I feel like people have understood what I was getting at. There's been some good responses from fellow authors; Carol Anshaw called it a compelling read and Peter Orner recommended it as well.

WCT: This is your first full-length novel. It always seems easy when reading the final product, but can tell me a bit about the development of the story?

STR: I started it in class here [at Columbia College, where Rosenblum received her MFA] and, up until then, I had only written short stories. Originally, it was a short story because I didn't know what a novel felt like at the point. I quickly realized that I had more to say about these characters than would fit in a short story!

It's in non-linear form, so it doesn't follow a

timeline. I decided that making it non-linear made Andrea, my main character, work.

WCT: The non-linear timeline threw me off a bit in the beginning, but by the middle I was right on board. Speaking of the main characters, both Andrea [protagonist] and Jordan [antagonist] are great characters who seem like they must have been a blast to write. Do you have a favorite between the two?

STR: It might seem that because the story is told through Andrea's eyes that I thought of her first, but that's not necessarily the case. Actually, the first character I came up with was the Criminal Mastermind [as Jordan is referred to throughout the story]. The first real sentence of the book is, "The Criminal Mastermind loved reality television." This sets up the questions, "Is she really a criminal or a mastermind?" and "Who's narrating it that we think of her this way?"

I had to figure out a lot about Andrea, and who she was internally, things you don't necessarily see on the surface of a character. Andrea and Jordan are ultimately drawn together because of their similarly obsessive personalities. They're similar in ways greater than Andrea even knows, or want to believe.

WCT: Do you draw inspiration from prominent lesbian novelists such as Alison Bechdel and Jeanette Winterson, or do you see yourself creating a style or genre all of your own?

STR: I think it's really important to read all the



Sarah Terez Rosenblum.

time if you want to be a writer. I've potentially learned more reading than I have in school. I'm especially interested in lyrical phrasing, as much as I care about character; language absolutely has to be there as well. In light of that, I love Michael Cunningham. I recently read *Specimen Days*. I took it off the shelf not knowing anything about it, which is my favorite way to read. Even if the novel wasn't entirely successful, he made me want to take a pilgrimage to wherever he lived and have him teach me everything he knows. I'm obsessed with the language!

I mentioned Carol Anshaw earlier, and I definitely love her writing. Janet Fitch, who wrote *White Oleander*—I think she renders characters so exquisitely.

Generally, I'm not concerned with maintaining my own voice. I trust that my voice is going to be there. I think that other voices are good—as long as they're good voices and they're going to help me!

WCT: I also thought that sexuality was very well rendered in *Herself When She's Missing*.

It's a very sexy novel.

STR: Thanks. When I was doing readings on the West Coast and here in Chicago, I felt so awkward reading the sex scenes out loud. Nonetheless, I felt like to leave the sex scenes out would only hurt the book. My intent was not to arouse, but the develop character, and I think the book really did that. A lot of it is about more than lesbian sex even; it's about power dynamics and sexuality.

WCT: What demographic is *Herself When She's Missing* written for and what kinds of responses have you gotten from readers, thus far?

STR: When I started writing, I wasn't thinking of a specific readership, but when it got later in the writing process I started thinking, "Who's going to read this?" I wrote it for anyone who's ever been in or seen someone is the sort of relationship situation where you lose your sense of who you are for another person.

In terms of queer versus straight, I've been super-thrilled by the response from queer publications. As I was writing, though, I wanted to make sure it wasn't for queer audiences only and that it was compelling to men as well as women.

I've been so happy: A lot of my early readers were straight guys and now I'm hearing from a lot of straight women in their 50s who say, "I've been there!" That makes me really excited because I didn't want it to get marginalized. I've been excited to hear from booksellers who put it in with general fiction as well as lesbian fiction.

WCT: All right. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

STR: Buy it! Please!

WCT: I appreciate the candor there!

Herself When She's Missing is available at Women and Children First as well as other local bookstores. Rosenblum will be at the store Saturday, Sept. 15, for the monthly lesbian-themed event Sappho's Salon; see www.womenandchildrenfirst.com.

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WINDY CITY TIMES



Images from 90 Miles Cuban Cafe by Andrew Davis.



SAVOR

90 Miles Cuban Café

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

The restaurant 90 Miles Cuban Cafe (2540 W. Armitage Ave. and 3101 N. Clybourn Ave.; www.90milesclubancafe.com) has a back story that is quintessentially American. The cafe takes its name from the distance it took for owner Alberto Gonzalez to travel with his family from Cuba to Florida.

Gonzalez opened the cafe with his wife Christina in 2008. Their nephew, Anthony Cruz, is the operations manager of the Armitage location.

The cafe was recently featured on the Food Network show Diners, Drive-ins and Dives. Since then, Cruz told Savor, they have had visitors come from all over the world to try their authentic Cuban cuisine.

Serving traditional family recipes, the cafe is festooned with eclectic decorations that create a lively, inviting and distinctly Cuban atmosphere. In addition, every Tuesday night features live Cuban jazz from 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m., and a saxophonist and pianist perform from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. every Sunday.

"Savory" was the first word that came to mind when I bit into my appetizer, the chicken ta-

mal. I loved both the texture and flavor. As for my friend's masitas de puerco (pork chunks) appetizer, he liked the balance of ingredients and said that fresh lime definitely enhanced the dish.

My bistec de palomilla was unlike any steak sandwich I've ever eaten and had just the right amount of kick. I loved it. Opting for a tilapia filet, my dining companion chose the sandwich de pescado. What stood out for him was that the tartar sauce enhanced the fish without overpowering the entire sandwich.

Of course, we couldn't go without dessert. The bread pudding was a perfect blend of sweet (but not too sweet) ingredients; it was the best bread pudding I've ever tasted. As for the pastelitos, my friend pointed out that the guava and cheese inside the pastries played off of each other perfectly.

Along with the cafe, 90 Miles also offers take-out and catering services, and will even roast a whole pig during a catered event. Seating ranges between 75-100 people depending on the season (patio service is available) and as for alcohol service, it's BYOB.

Visiting 90 Miles Cuban Cafe made me want to seek out other restaurants featuring authentic food from other areas of the globe. The food was that good, and I definitely plan on returning.

Dining news

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

—Men's Health has named Butcher & the Burger, 1021 W. Armitage Ave., the "Manliest Burger Spot in America." The Chicago burger hot spot went head to head with five other burger joints around the U.S. to win the title as part of the magazine's "America's Manliest Restaurant" contest, which included five nominees in nine different guy-food categories.

—Four sister pubs—River Shannon, Pippin's Tavern, Streeter's Tavern and Mahoney's Pub & Grille—will "Pour on the Knowledge" with eight upcoming wine-tasting and -education nights, all free to participants when they RSVP. Events will run at one of the aforementioned pubs on Wednesdays through Oct. 17; RSVP and see more info at www.rushanddivision.com.

—This month, Rosebud Prime (1 S. Dearborn St.; www.rosebudrestaurants.com/rest10.php) will host a wine dinner featuring Chimney Rock Winery Stag's Leap District. Patrons will enjoy a seasonally inspired four-course dinner expertly paired with Chimney Rock wines. The cost is \$89 per person; call 312-384-1900.

—Cafe des Architectes at Sofitel Chicago Water Tower will partner with Laurent-Perrier to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the legendary champagne house. On Saturday, Sept. 22, Café des Architectes will have a six-course degustation that will feature select Laurent-Perrier champagnes paired with the contemporary French cuisine of Chef Greg Biggers and Pastry Chef Leigh Omilinsky. The cost of the dinner is \$100 per person, excluding tax and gratuity; for reservations, call 312-324-4063.

—Executive Chef/Partner Jason Paskewitz and Managing Partners Anna and Ryan O'Donnell have announced that Rustic House, 1967 N. Halsted St., has officially opened for lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (It will offer lunch every Tuesday through Friday thereafter.) Items will include quiche Lorraine, steak salad and organic rotisserie chicken. In addition, the dinner menu has been revamped. See www.rustichousechicago.com.

—BOKA, 1729 N. Halsted St., will welcome Old Rip Van Winkle Distillery (Frankfort, Ky.) and Three Floyds Brewing Co., LLC (Munster, Ind.) Wed., Oct. 3, at 6:30 p.m. for an exclusive evening of craft beers and artisan whiskeys paired with a six-course fall menu Chef/Partner Giuseppe Tentori will present. There will be spaces for 90 people. Tickets are \$160 each; see www.bokachicago.com.

Send news items to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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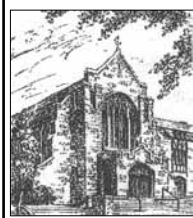
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Wed., Sept. 12

Equality Illinois Women Wednesday On the second Wednesday of every month, Equality Illinois hosts a monthly social gathering for women to meet, mingle, and have fun. 7pm, Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St., <http://eqil.org>

After Mandela: The Struggle for Freedom in Post-Apartheid South Africa Author Douglas Foster. In the mid-1990s, South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy inspired millions of people around the world. Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism Professor Foster explores how the successes and failures of this remarkable experiment in social change have repercussions in the broader global community. 7:30pm, Women & Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Curtains Up! Showtune Video Night Come and enjoy the music of the Great White Way and the Silver Screen, 9pm, The Call (Chicago), 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.,

\$1 Drink Night Join SPIN every Wednesday for \$1 Cocktails, featuring 42 Below Vodka, Wine & Beer and \$5 Bacardi Bombs! 9pm, Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave., www.spin-nightclub.com

Hydrag Revue Join Hydrate Nightclub for the world famous HYDRAG REVUE hosted by Tajma Hall, featuring the all star cast of Dida Ritz, Sorraya Dash, Mercedes Andrews, Kelly Lauren, Erica Andrews and special guests each week! 10pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com

Thursday, Sept. 13

Clock Out Rock Out Anniversary Party Vox-box and Moose are thrilled to celebrate

BANDANNA REPUBLIC Through Oct. 28

Xanadu is running at Oakbrook Terrace's Drury Lane Theatre.

Photo by Brett Beiner



one year spinning at the city's premiere after work hangout. Spinning the most popular cuts from their expansive Clock Out collections: '90s alt rock, remixed metal, twisted mashups and flat out floor burning hits. \$6 Tito's Vodka martinis and mixed drinks. 5pm, Downtown Bar, 440 N. State St., www.downtownbarandlounge.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, 773-388-1600, ext. 3319, www.howardbrown.org/lccp

Open gym - co-ed volleyball All participants must sign-in and purchase a gym pass at first floor receptionist desk. \$7 fee per night or pay only \$30 for a monthly pass. mross@centeronhalsted.org or by phone. 6pm, 773-472-6469, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, www.centeronhalsted.org

After Work Karaoke You are the singing sensation at this night of Karaoke. Sing the secret song for a bar tab. 7pm, The

Call (Chicago), 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

Beth Richie, author 'Arrested Justice' Black women in marginalized communities are uniquely at risk of battering, rape, sexual harassment, stalking and incest. Richie shows that the threat of violence to Black women has never been more serious, demonstrating how conservative legal, social, political and economic policies have impacted activism. 7:30pm, 773-769-9299, Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Voices of Strength Two Programs of dance and theater by 20 women from Africa, a "mini-festival" celebrating the stylistic diversity and talent of African women artists. Post-performance conversation with the artists, free and open to ticket holders. Program A: Thursday and Friday, Sept. 13 and 14, 8pm Program B: Saturday, Sept. 15, 3 and 8pm \$26-30; 8pm, 312-369-8330, www.colum.edu/dancecenter

Xanadu, The Broadway Musical Phenomenon Drury Lane Theatre, presents the effervescent Broadway musical Xanadu, running through Oct. 28. 8pm, 630-530-0111, www.drurylaneoakbrook.com

White Party Minibar's White Party is known for being the best way to kick off your weekend! Make your VIP Reservation for tonight, 773-871-6227. 10pm, Minibar, 3341 N. Halsted, www.minibarchicago.com

JD Samson LIVE Stardust presents JD Samson (Le Tigre, Men), spinning with Zebo, Reaganomix. \$2 PBR, \$3 Berlin bombs, \$5.50 Ultimat, \$6.50 Patron Silver. Photos by A/S/L. 10pm, Berlin Nightclub, 954 W. Belmont Ave, www.berlinchicago.com

Friday, Sept. 14

Fashion and The Field Museum Collection: Maria Pinto Mixing artifacts hand-selected from the museum's collections by esteemed Chicago fashion designer Maria Pinto along with contemporary pieces Pinto created. A crocodile skin vest, a parka made of bird skins and a necklace made of woven monkey fur. Through June 16, 2013. 12pm, Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr, www.fieldmuseum.org

Reception for The Great Refusal: Taking on New Queer Aesthetics Description Exhibition interrogates and explores the concept of queerness in this cultural moment through the work of over 50 contemporary artists. Exhibit through Nov. 10. 4:30pm, www.saic.edu/

Meshell Ndegeocello at Garden of Eve Food, live entertainment, a silent auction, and dancing, with Ndegeocello and Ted Allen, host of Food Network's Chopped. Support women's health and wellness services at Howard Brown Health Center. (Also \$300 VIP reception. 6-7pm with Ted

Allen.) Main event tix \$125 till July 31 then \$150. 6pm, www.howardbrown.org/hb_news.asp?id=1105

OPALGA Monthly Potluck Connect with old friends and make some new ones at the same time. Please bring a dish to share, and as always it's BYOB. info@opalga.org. 7pm, www.opalga.org

World premiere of Band of Sisters Documentary produced in Chicago about the journey of Catholic sisters in the United States from sheltered "daughters of the church" to citizens of the world. Band of Sisters will screen through Sept. 20, with director Mary Fishman in person at select screenings. 8pm, Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., www.siskelfilmcenter.org

Saturday, Sept. 15

Lambda Legal's 16th annual Into the Woods 6 - 9:30 pm Chicago time. Celebration of summer and civil rights in a perfect setting. Savor, stroll, and enjoy this afternoon garden party, while supporting Lambda Legal's work toward equality for all. 7pm, www.lambdalegal.org/intothewoods, <http://support.lambdalegal.org/site/calendar?id=102761&view=detail>

Mozart's The Magic Flute Chicago Opera Theater (COT) will present the first new production of The Magic Flute in Chicago in 17 years. Tickets \$45-\$125, and COT offers half-off tickets to students in sections A, B, and C. COT offers 100 tickets to each performance for only \$25, available on a first-come, first-serve basis—limit of two tickets per household. 7:30pm, 312-704-8414, www.harristheaterchicago.org, www.chicagooperatheater.org

Opening of 'Shakespeare's Female Women' An absurd romp that delves into the feminine mystique of the Bard. Ever Mainard and Alicia Queen will perform all of Shakespeare's women in this offbeat performance with a sketch comedy feel. 7:30pm, 773-598-4549, <http://www.gorillatango.com>

The Sound of Music Two performances only. Chamber Opera Chicago's production with orchestra and singing nuns. 7:30pm, 312-951-7944, Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport Ave., www.chamberoperachicago.org/sound-of-music.html

Chicago House: One Night Stand An explosive multi-sensory dance party wrapped around a live concert. An annual themed event built inspired by a dance recording artist, our inaugural year will be launched by disco icon Linda Clifford performing live in a custom designed, immersive nightclub environment. 8pm, Park West Chicago, 322 W. Armitage Ave., www.chicagohouse.org/event_onenightstand.html, http://www.chicagohouse.org/event_onenightstand.html

On Stage With... Susan Werner This intimate concert offers the audience the opportunity to sit on the stage of the Auditorium Theatre while enjoying songs spanning singer-songwriter Susan Werner's career. Her soulful honesty, wit and rowdiness will be on display in this up-close-and-personal cabaret performance. 8pm, 312-431-2357, Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy, www.auditoriumtheatre.org

Sunday, Sept. 16

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 eve-



SPIN DOCTOR

Thursday, Sept. 13

JD Samson will be spinning tunes at Berlin, 954 W. Berlin Ave.

PR photo

ning 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. Hoyne (At LeMoynne), www.newchicagochurch.com

Floor hockey sign-up The Athletic Alliance of Chicago (AAC) and the Chicago Gay Hockey Association present the fall floor hockey season, starting Sept. 30. Teams will play each week at Center on Halsted. Games are played Sunday nights 6-8 pm, with each team playing twice each night. Come to this registration event for more information or to register. You can also register online on the AAC website, athleticallianceofchicago.com/leagues/floor-hockey. Individual players and entire teams can sign up. Recreational and competitive divisions will be offered. 7pm, North End, 3733 N. Halsted St, www.northendchicago.com

Monday, Sept. 17

Congregation Or Chadash, Days of Awe/High Holidays 2012 Rosh Hashanah Day; 10am, 773-271-2148, www.orchadash.org

Legendary Debbie Reynolds returns Iconic Hollywood entertainer Debbie Reynolds will perform in a limited engagement with her immensely successful variety show that features Broadway favorites and comedy. Through Sept. 18. 1:30pm, 630-530-0111, www.drurylaneoakbrook.com

Man's Country 40th Anniversary - Founders Night Free locker to membership numbers under 100,000. 8:30pm, Man's Country, 5017 N. Clark St

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Tuesdays at POW-WOW LGBTQ poets and open mic. \$5. powwowinc@gmail.com. Door opens 7:30 pm; 8:30pm, Jeffrey, 7041 S. Jeffery Blvd.

Wed., Sept. 19

Madonna 8:45pm, United Center, 1901 W. Madison St., www.citiprivatepass.com

Little City Foster Care & Adoption Orientation Care to Foster? Little City Foundation is in need of people willing to care for DCFS children in their home. Little City's foster care and adoption program serves children with special needs between the ages of 0-21, with the greatest level of need being for children between the ages of 8 and 16 with moderate to severe developmental delays and/or emotional/behavior issues. 6pm, 773-265-1671, ex.236, <http://www.littlecity.org>



DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN

Saturday, Sept. 15

Musician Susan Werner will perform at Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy.

Photo by Asia Kepka

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BILLY MASTERS

"I would have preferred Heidi show a little bit more class and at least wait until we separated first before deciding to fornicate with the help, as it were."—Seal goes for the jugular when discussing rumors of his marriage breaking up due to the supermodel cheating with their bodyguard. His publicist later said, "Seal would like to clarify that he was not implying his wife was cheating while they were together, but he was merely pointing out that their separation and divorce were not final and they are still legally married." Yeah, that's what he meant.

For a change, my trip home from Europe was entirely uneventful. But I had no idea how lucky I was until I read about Christopher Bridgeman and Martin Borger of Norfolk, Va. In May 2011, they were flying home from Costa Rica on United Airlines and got quite a surprise when they went to retrieve their luggage. When their bag came out on the conveyor belt, a sex toy that had been inside was taped on top of the bag and covered with a dirty oily substance. Of course, everyone else in baggage claim was watching to see whose bag had what turned out to be a rather large purple dildo sitting on top. (To be fair, it's actually bursting out of what appears to be a broken zipper.) The guys say they endured emotional trauma from the experience and have filed suit against the airline. And to think I was willing to sue when I didn't get a bag of peanuts!

Here we go again—John Travolta's back in the news. This story comes from his alleged ex-boyfriend, Doug Gotterba, who was officially the pilot of the star's private jet. After being silent for so long, he's suddenly leaking little details here and there, undoubtedly trying to jack up the advance for the his upcoming memoir. He said the first time they were "together" was on Sept. 21, 1981. They flew up to Carmel, Calif., together, and went to a resort where they had a great dinner and even better wine. As they were walking to their room, Travolta asked, "Hey, would you like a massage?" Oh, that old trick. Doug said that John was "gentle, but very passionate."

There's been speculation of a sex tape of the two. Apparently, Johnny wanted to make one, but Gotterba said no. While it would certainly boost his allegations, I can completely understand him demurring. I know that when I have sex in a room with a large mirror, I'm often distracted by thoughts of whether I could somehow do the act in question more attractively! Doug ran into John a few years after their relationship ended and allegedly asked him, "So, John, tell me—now that you're married, do you still prefer men? Or women?" John reportedly said, "Well, Doug, I still prefer men." Here's what makes me doubt this entire exchange—how often are you having a conversation where you both refer to each other by name? Rarely, I reckon.

Talk about John Travolta obviously leads directly into gossip about Tom Cruise. You probably know that Vanity Fair has a lengthy article about how the head honchos in the Church of Scientology "auditioned" girls to be Cruise's next wife, something I wholeheartedly believed before even a cursory glance at the "facts." According to this exposé, the church was desperate to get Cruise away from Penelope Cruz, who was a Buddhist and could not be controlled. Rumor has it that one of the most promising candidates was removed from consideration once the church learned she had enjoyed a three-way. (Rumors about this was either Sofia Vergara or Scarlett Johansson.)

The gal who was eventually chosen was Nazanin Boniadi. She was vetted by a committee who told her they were auditioning people for a new Scientology training film. One of the questions was "What do you think of Tom Cruise?" Apparently, Nazanin didn't answer, "He's crazy as a

loon!" The church allegedly told her that she had been selected for a very important mission that required her to be audited every day for a month.

During the course of this process, she was told to get rid of her braces, her red highlights and her boyfriend. They also had her sign a confidentiality agreement, stating that if she revealed anything about her mission, she would be declared an enemy of the church ... and I think we all know what that means. Eventually, Tom and Nazanin started to date but Cruise didn't like that she asked too many questions and was very independent. He had the church break up with her, and she was reassigned—to scrubbing toilets with a toothbrush and cleaning bathroom tiles. I knew Scientology was a haven for gays—only a gay church would look to Mommie Dearest for ideas on punishment!

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Reed in Chicago: "Enough with that douche Ryan Lochte. You haven't once mentioned Danell Leyva—and



The Church of Scientology may have been "auditioning" women for Tom Cruise, Billy says.

there are supposed to be nudes of him. Let's see those. He's gotta be family."

I was waiting for the Lochte backlash, and there it is—courtesy of the Windy City. Even The Bachelor passed on Ryan. I guess once you've skipped Prince Harry's orgy, you're old news. As for Olympic gymnast Danell Leyva, one can't deny he's hot. But I don't get a gay vibe from him, and since the photos in question were texted to a girl he was trying to hook up with, I think that's a closed book. Regardless, we can still look and it's a sight for sore eyes. I bet a different part of you will be sore after checking him out on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm calling for Olympians to go back to competing in the nude, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Of course, I only suggest this because I'm a purist and not after seeing Leyva's nude gymnastic shots (although I must confess I've never been so jealous of a pommel horse in my life). For more revelations, be sure to check out www.BillyMasters.com, the site that never holds anything back. If you have a question for me, just send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Cruise looks for his next wife on The Bachelor! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 19

FREE NIGHT

Free Single Room or Locker to
ALL Members
Subject to Availability &
Occupancy Code
3 Hour Limit - 1 per Member
\$1 Towel Fee

THURSDAY, SEPT. 20

BEAR NIGHT

Free Pizza & Spaghetti at 10PM

FRIDAY, SEPT. 21

BIRTHDAY PARTY

Presents include Free Flip Flops, Silk Jock Straps
Flashlight Pens & Birthday Cake at Midnight
Strippers on Stage include Brazil & Ethan

SATURDAY, SEPT. 22

SEX SHOW

LIVE ON STAGE - SPECIAL SEX SHOW
Hot Male Show At Midnight - Antholy, Blaze & Dex
and Brazil

SUNDAY, SEPT. 23

MOVIES in MUSIC HALL

Queer as Folk (Season 1, Episode 1) 9 PM
Cabaret at 10 PM

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WATCH FOR SPECIALS ALL YEAR LONG AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 40TH DECADE OF DECADENCE

Women's rugby team in dire financial straits

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Women's Rugby Football Club (CWRFC), which has been playing on the pitch since 1976, is in a financial crisis.

The sport is financed by the players and this season alone, the team has had league matches in Detroit, Austin and Denver. If the team makes the playoffs, the first round is in Atlanta and the finals will be in Ft. Myers, Fla.

"In the fall, we get a lot of kids right out of college," said team coach Lisa Gartner. "Other players are in grad school or at the beginning of careers. The airfares this fall would stress most people's finances."

"As of last Thursday, we didn't even have a

full side (15) to go to Austin. The [air] fare last I checked was over \$400. That's why we put out an emergency call to our alums, affectionately referred to as the COWS [Chicago Old Women's Side]. There have been responses" but more is needed, she added.

"Rugby takes up a lot of time—practices and games, plus training in the gym and track. So it's difficult to also spend a lot of time fundraising."

That said, the team is planning a fundraiser Sept. 22 at Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave.

Gartner, 56, a Chicago resident, first started playing for the team in 1979. She said the 2012 team has "a lot of talent and good numbers."

"When we put it all together with everyone



Leslie Johnson (with the ball) competes in a local women's rugby match. Photo courtesy of Lisa Gartner

available, we'll be really good, but we're not sure when that will be," she said. "Our forwards are really strong this season. Once they got their rhythm together, they out-played Detroit. We just couldn't finish with enough scores."

CWRFC hosted the first Women's National Rugby Classic in September 1978, and then again in 1979.

"As in other sports, women's rugby has not been promoted as much as the men [who play

rugby,]" Gartner said. "Sponsorships are usually not large or long-lasting. It is a wonderfully fun, physically rigorous and mentally stimulating sport. Women's rugby attracts a wide variety of interesting, vibrant people."

"The team has been around for a long time: 36 years. So we're not going anywhere. We have a long, colorful history, which we will continue to [grow]."

Gartner can be reached at coach@cwrfc.org.

Md. legislator criticizes athlete; another player responds

Maryland state House Delegate Emmett Burns has criticized Baltimore Ravens line-backer Brendon Ayanbadejo for the player's stance in favor of marriage equality, Outsports.com reported.

Burns sent a letter to Ravens owner Steve Bisciotti saying he found it "inconceivable" that a player would support same-sex marriage. In response, the player tweeted, "The fight is not about same-sex marriage or interracial marriage or slavery or equal rights for women. The fight is for equality for all." Ayanbadejo offered two tickets to the Ravens' season opener to support a fundraiser for Marylanders for Marriage Equality.

However, in response to the attack, another player has berated Burns. According to ABC News, Minnesota Vikings punter Chris Kluwe (in a letter) told the politician, "I can assure you that gay people getting married will have zero effect on your life. They won't come into your house and steal your children. They won't magically turn you into a lustful cockmonster. ... I find it inconceivable that you are an elected official of Maryland's state government."

In response to a deluge of criticism, Burns has since changed his position, saying Ayanbadejo has a right to support marriage equality. Burns told the Baltimore Sun, "Each of us has the right to speak our opinions. The football player and I have a right to speak our minds."

Proud to Run seeks beneficiaries for 2013

The board of directors of Proud to Run (PTR)—which coordinates Chicago's Pride weekend's 5K and 10K runs—is seeking beneficiaries for next year's event.

The PTR board will consider applications from organizations that serve the Chicago-LGBT community; that clearly define the need or have a project with a specific timeline and budget; are community-based and driven; and are "grassroots" in nature or do not receive a large part of their budgets from state or federal grants.

PTR has given more than \$300,000 to the local LGBT community. On Aug. 4, PTR donated checks to its 2012 beneficiaries, Gerber-Hart Library and Pride Youth Program at the Chicago Frontrunners/Frontwalkers circle. Each beneficiary received a check for \$10,000.

Guidelines and application forms are available by visiting www.proudtorun.org or emailing proudtorun@yahoo.com. The deadline is Oct. 30.

'Race Judicata' Sept. 13

The 19th annual Race Judicata Sprint for Justice—a 5K run & walk that raises money for the Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (CVLS) Foundation—will be held Thursday, Sept. 13, at Columbus and Balbo. The start time is 6:30 p.m.

Last year's event, which netted more than \$180,000, attracted nearly 5,000 including participants and support from many of the city's top law firms.

Advance registration is \$33 through Tuesday, Sept. 11; after that date and on-site, the fee is \$38. Visit www.cvlsl.org/judicata or call 312-332-3319.

AIDS Run & Walk changes date; will feature Wanda Sykes

The date for the 2012 AIDS Run & Walk Chicago has been changed to **Sunday, Sept. 30**.

The event will still start from Soldier Field and offer 5K and 10K routes along the lakefront. The run/walk is a fundraiser for dozens of organizations that provide life-saving services for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Among the celebrities taking part in the event are out actress/comedian Wanda Sykes and Jamar Rogers, an HIV-positive man who competed on the NBC show The Voice. There will also be an appearance by two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer Michael Feinstein.

Event registration is \$30 in advance and \$50 on-site. To register as a fundraising individual or as a team, visit www.aidsrunwalk.org or call 312-334-0946. Visit www.chicagoforcefootball.com/events.asp; to sponsor or donate, email sponsor@chicagoforcefootball.com.

Force tryouts Sept. 23

Tryouts for the women's tackle-football team the Chicago Force will take place Sunday, Sept. 23, at the University of Illinois-Chicago's physical-education building, 901 W. Roosevelt Rd., 2-4 p.m.

People should arrive by 1:45 p.m. to register.

The tryouts will consist of various sprints, agility and strength assessments as well as football basics and a Q&A session. Women must be at least 17, and there's a one-time tryout fee of \$20.

Afterwards, there'll be a meet-and-greet at Morgan's Bar and Grill, 1325 S. Halsted St. See www.ChicagoForceFootball.com.

Chicago Force golf outing Sept. 30 in Bensenville

The Chicago Force women's tackle football team will host its seventh annual golf outing Sunday, Sept. 30, at the White Pines Golf Club, 500 W. Jefferson St., Bensenville.

There will be prizes for longest putt, longest drive, the drive that's closest to the pin and for the top three finishes.

Registration is \$110 (\$125 after Aug. 30); the entry fee includes 18 holes of golf with cart, gift bag, buffet lunch and post-golf appetizers. Registration ends Sept. 20.

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.

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SELLING YOUR HOME WITHOUT A REAL ESTATE AGENT?

With the depressed real estate market we are now facing, some sellers are questioning the need for the services of a real estate agent. Dropping sales' prices and high mortgage payoffs leave home sellers wondering where they can cut expenses to make the sale happen.

Discount internet brokers and for sale by owner companies are promoting their services to an eager and willing market. And legitimate realtors faced with this strong competition and declining sales are struggling to pay office expenses and advertising budgets. It's bad for everyone, except buyers who are willing to jump into unknown territory.

For over thirty years I have always believed the expense of a sales commission was justified by the benefit a realtor provided to the seller even though the cost may have seemed high at the time. I still believe that, but I would never argue that a house seller should pay a 6% percent sales commission.

The day is gone of sellers putting an advertisement in the Sunday real estate section of the local paper, staying home on weekends and acting as tour guide and salesperson and making a quick sale. Now properties can sit and sit with realtors wondering how they can make their advertising expenses in newsprint.

Using the services of a real estate agent can offer some real advantages:

* **Overpricing** Many sellers overestimate the value of their homes resulting in a very hard time for the owner in selling the house. Real estate agents can offer guidance in setting the selling price of the property based on market value from sales of similar properties in the area. Remember your house is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it.

* **Screening** When a seller places an ad in the paper to sell their property the ad attracts not only genuine prospective buyers but also browsers and curious neighbors looking for a free tour. A real estate agent will be able to distinguish between the looker and the serious buyer.

* **Helpful advice** Real estate agents can suggest ways to make the dwelling more saleable painting a room, removing debris, cleaning an offensive odor not noticeable to a seller, etc. Agents can suggest how to best describe the features, details and highlights of a house. And they can suggest staging, well worth the expense.

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Ray is a legal authority on all of his
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