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TALKING WITH
TEGAN OF
TEGAN AND SARA

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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HALSTED
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Fight revs up for marriage equality

BY KATE SOSIN

Illinois lawmakers could be voting on marriage equality in the coming weeks. State Rep. Greg Harris and Illinois Sen. Heather Steans have announced that they could be calling HB 5170 to a vote as early as next month, according to multiple reports.

Harris recently announced that he was considering moving the bill, which would overturn the state's ban on same-sex marriage, during the General Assembly's lame-duck session.

On Dec. 13, he announced that the time was right.

Same-sex marriage advocates believe outgoing lawmakers could be more likely to vote on the measure without fear of voter reprisal. Sweeping victories for

LGBT candidates and Democrats across the country this November enthused marriage equality proponents in Illinois. Harris had previously stated that his calling the bill to a vote could depend on November election results.

Those wins significantly sped-up efforts to pass same-sex marriage legislation in Illinois, said Randy Hannig, public policy director for Equality Illinois.

"If you would have asked me a year ago... I would have said give [marriage legislation] a couple of years," Hannig said.

Supporters of the bill already have the backing of Gov. Pat Quinn and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Civil unions have been available in Illinois since June 2011, but many couples believe that they fall short mar-

riage equality. Couples have reported problems at hospitals and employers. Last December, Springfield's city government initially voted not to extend its self-funded health benefits to civil union couples.

Citing those shortcomings, the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois and Lambda Legal filed coordinated lawsuits against Cook County Clerk David Orr, that seek to overturn the state's ban on same-sex marriage. Orr has refused to fight the lawsuits, which have been taken up by downstate clerks.

The combination of both the lawsuits and momentum around the marriage bill, have made many in the nation eye Illinois as the next probable state to win marriage equality.

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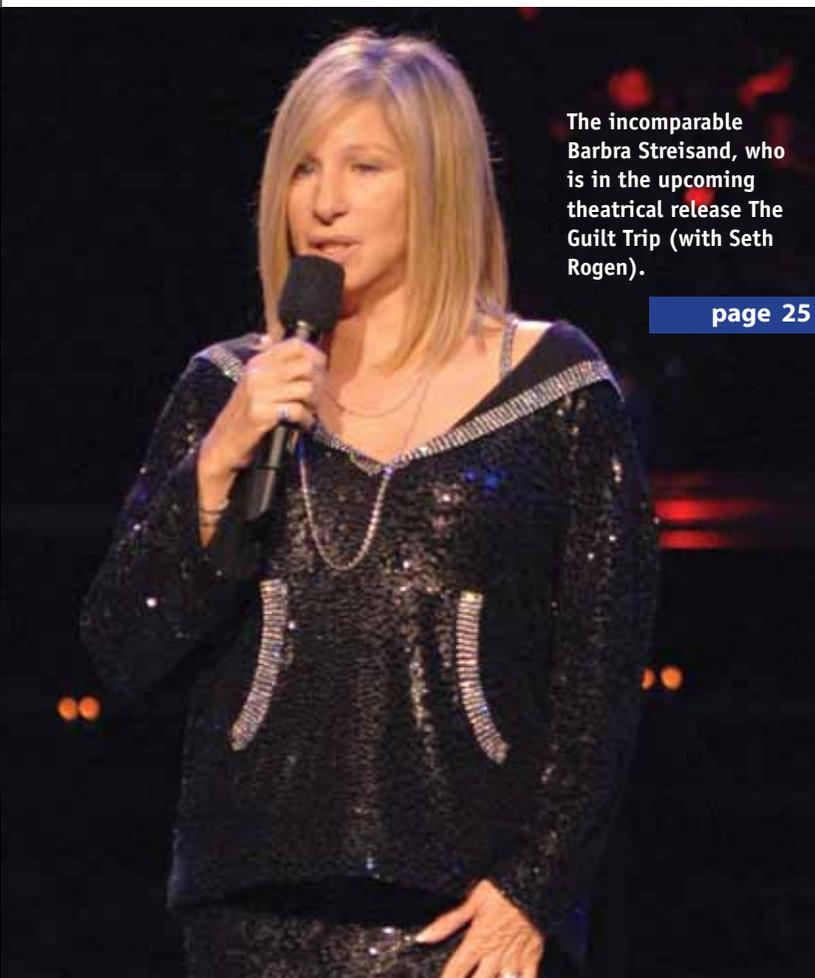
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A TALE OF TWO ICONS

This week, Windy City Times features interviews with two legends.



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The incomparable Barbra Streisand, who is in the upcoming theatrical release *The Guilt Trip* (with Seth Rogen).

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Jessica Lange, the Academy Award winner who is currently in the hit FX series *American Horror Story: Asylum*.

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Read about these two acting titans on pages 24-25. Streisand publicity photo; photo of Lange courtesy of FX.

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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Photos on cover (left, from top): Photo of Tegan and Sara by Lindsey Byrnes; Generation Halsted photo by Kate Sosin; photo of fun.'s Jack Antonoff by Lindsey Byrnes; photo of Hugh Jackman in Les Miserables by Laurie Sparham

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POP AND GO

Kelly Clarkson (left) is among the artists profiled in this week's Pop Making Sense. Photo by Jill Greenberg



Read an interview with Hearty Boys' Steve McDonagh about the duo's new book, The New Old Bar. Photo by Robb Olson



'RuPaul's Drag Race' winner Tyra Sanchez talks with WCT about being a father.

FIVE ALIVE

A new Wicker Park store specializing in fragrances in among Five Worth Finding.

THE DINER THINGS

Find out about dining news and events, including Baconfest VIP tickets.

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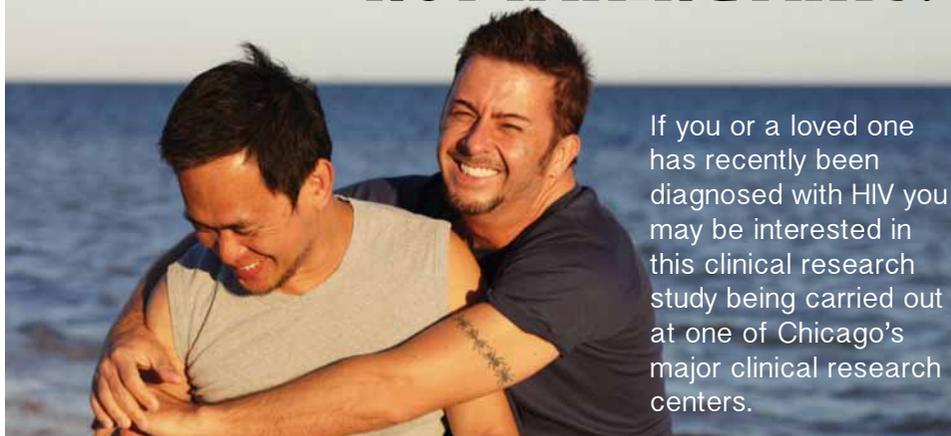
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Fiscal cliffhanger looms for LGBTs

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Chances are if you are even remotely plugged into the news, you've grown weary of hearing about the "fiscal cliff." That's the metaphor *du jour* for the sudden and dramatic cuts in federal spending and tax breaks set to occur at midnight Dec. 31 unless Congress and President Obama can agree upon a budget that makes sufficient progress toward reducing the federal debt.

Nearly every American will be significantly affected if the federal government goes over the "fiscal cliff" without an agreement. Most will pay \$2,000 to \$3,000 more in federal taxes per year, many will lose lucrative tax deductions, and the Congressional Budget Office predicts the economy will fall back into recession.

There are specific repercussions for the LGBT community.

"I have great concerns about it," said Lorri Jean, chief executive officer of the nation's largest LGBT community and health center—the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center. "In fact, these days, I'm worried about the one-two punch of capping charitable tax deductions and the fiscal cliff. And, every LGBT person who cares about our community ought to be worried about them, too."

Jean noted that the largest infrastructure for the LGBT community nationwide is its federation of more than 200 LGBT community and health centers—places like the Los Angeles Center, the Howard Brown Health Center in Chicago, Lyon-Martin Health Services in San Francisco, and the LGBT Community Center in New York City.

"When an LGBT kid is struggling with coming out, typically his or her first attempt to reach out for help is to an LGBT center," said Jean. "The list is long of what people turn to centers for—or of what centers provide to LGBT people." The LGBT centers of most major cities provide a wide range of services to LGBT seniors, to people seeking HIV testing, prevention, and treatment, to those in need of addiction recovery programs, coming out support groups, and more.

These groups, said Jean, are typically non-profit and, while they may take in significant dollars through fees for services and through private donations, many rely on federal funding for about a third of their budgets.

Going over the "fiscal cliff" without an agreement, said Jean, means two things: More people are going to need the services LGBT centers provide and LGBT centers are going to have significantly fewer dollars with which to provide those services.

"Demand for our services has already skyrocketed in this economy, and there will be fewer places to go if sequestration [the automatic cut in spending and tax breaks] goes into effect and results in the demise of nonprofits that simply cannot continue to survive without government dollars," says Jean. "The private sector does not have the capacity to fill the huge hole that would be left if government funding essentially went away. The social services safety net in this country is held together by nonprofit organizations that get significant funding from government. A dramatic reduction in that will hurt the poorest and most vulnerable Americans, and LGBT people will be significantly among them."

Dawn Harbatkin, executive director of the Lyon-Martin Health Services center in San Francisco, can put a number on it.

"Community health centers may face an automatic \$167 million reduction in funding should Congress fail to negotiate a budget deal," said Harbatkin. "It is unclear exactly what effect this will have on Lyon-Martin, as we currently do not get this funding, although we are considering applying as a new access point."

But, she said "it will affect the ability of community health centers to respond to the increased need for services expected from the implementation of the ACA."

The ACA is President Obama's Affordable Care Act. All three of the nation's major LGBT legal groups signed onto a brief at the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the ACA, noting that 30 percent of people with HIV are not able to obtain health insurance. Among other things, the ACA prohibits insurance companies from limiting or refusing coverage for a person with HIV, breast cancer or any other disease. It also prohibits insurance companies from dropping a person's coverage after the person became ill.

Cece Cox, executive director of the Resource Center Dallas, an LGBT community organization, attended a Dec. 5 meeting at the White House with 80 other Texas to discuss the impact of the fiscal cliff. In a letter to constituents about that meeting, Cox said the automatic spending cuts are "more than just pluses and minuses on a hypothetical budget sheet."

"[R]eal people will feel the pain from these deep, drastic cuts," said Cox.

And in an unusual move, a group of 29 wealthy LGBT Americans signed a Dec. 5 letter to the leaders of both political parties in the House and Senate, saying that failure to find an agreement that prevents the government from going over the fiscal cliff would have a "huge impact" on the economy generally and the LGBT community specifically.

"For LGBT Americans, this 'fiscal cliff' isn't just an abstract concept," the letter stated. "...Across-the-board cuts would compromise LGBT health by reducing programmatic funding used to address the health care needs of gay and transgender Americans, impair the federal government's ability to investigate claims of workplace discrimination, and remove critical resources from government agencies working to



Chicago LGBTs in D.C. for fiscal talk

The White House Office of Public Engagement invited approximately 50 Illinois grassroots leaders to the White House for a meeting Dec. 13. The title of the meeting was "Working Together to Avoid the Fiscal Cliff: A Roundtable Conversation with the Illinois Leadership Team."

After being briefed on the fiscal-cliff issues and provided with an economic overview, attendees were asked to comment on the Obama Administration's approach to the negotiations as well as discuss ways to encourage engagement on the part of other Illinois residents. This is the 16th state delegation that has been at the White House for meetings on the fiscal cliff.

The attendees were encouraged to stay engaged during Obama's second term as the administration continues to work on other policy issues, including immigration reform, the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and clean energy. Text by Laura McAlpine; photo of (from left) Amber Smock, Bernard Cherkasov, Laura Ricketts, Laura McAlpine, Mary Morten and Modesto "Tico" Valle courtesy of McAlpine

prevent bullying and school violence."

Signing onto the letter were LGBT philanthropists Tim Gill and David Bohnett, nationally known financial advisers Suze Orman and Andrew Tobias, former ETrade President Kathy Levinson, Equality Texas board member Paul Boskind and Texas-born filmmaker Dee Mosbacher, Chicago Cubs co-owner and Lambda Legal board member Laura Ricketts, Miami mortgage broker Joe Falk, and others. The letter indicated they all make more than \$1 million per year, a group that

Obama hopes will shoulder a larger tax increase than most.

The letter cited a report last month from the Center for American Progress, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Human Rights Campaign, the national CenterLink federation of LGBT community centers, and 21 other national LGBT groups signed onto. The report estimates that funding for the Ryan White HIV program would lose about \$196 million of funding in the first year, leaving as many as 9,000 patients without access to vital medications.

"Allowing sequestration to take place would hinder the government's ability to investigate and prevent workplace discrimination against gay and transgender employees. It would reduce programmatic funding to services aimed at addressing the specific health needs of gay and transgender people. It would reduce funding awarded to organizations working to reduce homelessness among gay and transgender youth. It would impede the government's ability to prevent and address violent crime against gay and transgender people. And it would hinder diplomatic efforts to promote the human rights and basic safety of gay and transgender people around the globe," said the report.

"In short, allowing sequestration to go into effect would be disastrous for gay and transgender Americans."

At deadline, Obama and House Speaker John Boehner, Republican leader of the GOP-controlled House, were said to be in daily discussions to seek an agreement. However, Boehner was still complaining that the White House had not agreed to identify any spending cuts, and Obama told an audience in Michigan recently that Congress needs to raise taxes on Americans making \$1 million or more per year in income.

According to The Hill newspaper, a Capitol Hill news organization, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget says President Obama's proposal would reduce the debt from 75 percent of the Gross Domestic Product to 73 percent within 10 years, while Boehner's would reduce it to 72 percent. The special presidential commission charged with proposing a strategy for reducing the debt to 65.5 percent of the GDP by 2022.

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UN official calls for end to anti-LGBT bias

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon—joined by international musical artists Ricky Martin and Yvonne Chaka-Chaka, among others—called for an end to violence and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation Dec. 11, according to a UN press release.

At a special event on the need for leadership in fighting homophobia held at the UN headquarters in New York, Ban said, "Let me say this loud and clear: Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are entitled to the

same rights as everyone else. They, too, are born free and equal."

The event was linked to Human Rights Day, which was actually observed Dec. 10. Photo of (from left) Chaka-Chaka, Ban and Martin courtesy of the UN

Uruguay closer to marriage

Uruguay has moved closer to legalizing gay marriage after the lower house of Congress approved a marriage-equality law, according to the BBC. The measure now goes to the Senate, where it is expected to be approved.

Supreme Court choices grow, speculations about strategy abound

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Court watchers and the mainstream media are having a field day with what the U.S. Supreme Court did and did not say about same-sex marriage cases during the past week—both raising and lowering expectations for a blockbuster LGBT legal victory or defeat this year.

At least one high-profile television talk-show host said the Supreme Court is about to decide whether to make same-sex marriage legal in the United States. That is not necessarily true.

Some legal experts have pointed out that the Supreme Court could use a procedural maneuver to dodge a meaningful ruling on the two marriage-related cases it has accepted. That seems unlikely.

And there was no announcement from the court Dec. 10 as to whether the high court will hear an appeal from the state of Arizona regarding benefits for the same-sex partners of gay state employees. That seems a bit puzzling.

To all this, add that, on Dec. 5, a group opposed to same-sex marriage petitioned the Supreme Court with yet another marriage case—a case the group and the state of Nevada won in a federal district court just November 26.

The group, the Coalition for the Protection of Marriage, was an intervening party in the case, *Sevcik v. Sandoval*, joining the state to defend its particular brand of same-sex marriage ban. The Nevada ban, like that of a few other states, provides that same-sex couples can have all the rights and benefits of marriage, but they can't have the term marriage.

Lambda Legal Defense, which filed the lawsuit, said the Nevada law is a particularly onerous violation of the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection because the Nevada law essentially designates same-sex couples as second-class.

Lambda's lawsuit, said Legal Director Jon Davidson, "argues, as a matter of equal protection, that, when the state provides all or virtually all the state law rights of marriage to same-sex couples [as does Nevada], it no longer has any legitimate reason to deny those couples access to the name and dignity of the institution of marriage, and that they are harmed by being singled out in this way."

Lambda filed an immediate appeal to the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals of the Nevada federal district court's decision upholding the Nevada law. Briefs are due to that court starting in March.

Meanwhile, Lambda's response brief to the coalition's petition to the U.S. Supreme Court is due Feb. 6.

Typically, the Supreme Court takes only cases that have received a hearing and ruling from a federal appeals court and, typically, only the party that loses in the lower court petitions the high court.

The coalition's lead attorney did not respond to a reporter's questions concerning the appeal.

Many legal experts believe the high court will likely say nothing about the Arizona and Nevada cases, nor any of the several other DOMA challenges, until it rules or takes some action on the two cases it has taken.

Pat Cain, a nationally recognized scholar in sexuality law, said that, once the Supreme Court decides *Windsor*, "they are likely to dispose of the other cases in accord with the Windsor holding."

"If they find no standing or rule more narrowly, then they might have to grant [review] one of the other cases. But most pundits expect them to make the ruling in *Windsor* and then dispose of the other cases in accord with whatever they rule."

William Eskridge, another well-known legal expert in sexuality law, agreed, saying the same could happen after a decision in the *Perry* case.

"The court may vacate and remand," said Eskridge, or exercise "other options."

The two cases that the Supreme Court said Dec. 7 that it will review include one appeal seeking to preserve the core section of DOMA, and another appeal seeking to preserve the California ban on same-sex marriage.

The former case is *U.S. v. Windsor*, a lawsuit that the ACLU won in the federal district court for Manhattan and the Second Circuit. The latter is *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, which the American Foundation for Equal Rights won at the federal district court for San Francisco and the Ninth Circuit. Both question whether the challenged laws violate the equal protection rights of gays.

In both cases, the Supreme Court also indicated it wants attorneys to also argue questions of legal procedure: whether the appealing parties in each case have proper authority to file those appeals. The *Perry* case included that question in the courts below. However, although the standing issue was raised in other DOMA lawsuits, it is new for the *Windsor* case. The high court asks whether the U.S. House's Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (BLAG) has proper standing to appeal, given that the executive branch of government chose not to appeal the Second Circuit

decision. It also asks whether the Supreme Court itself has jurisdiction, asking: "Whether the Executive Branch's agreement with the court below that DOMA is unconstitutional deprives this Court of jurisdiction to decide this case...."

Interestingly, the high court accepted review of only one petition appealing the *Windsor* decision in the Second Circuit. There were two petitions, and veteran Supreme Court reporter Lyle Denniston of *Scotusblog.com* noted in a recent posting that the petition the high court chose to take could affect how the case is argued.

"Because there are questions, procedural in nature but also bearing on constitutional powers, it is not exactly clear who will be on the 'top side' of the two cases, and who will be on the 'bottom side,'" said Denniston. "The top side usually challenges the lower court ruling at issue, and the bottom side defends it. But in the DOMA case granted, the U.S. is both appealing the Second Circuit and arguing that the Circuit Court got it right. That means the Court has to figure out the order in which the lawyers will appear, and what their arguments will be."

Politically minded legal activists speculate the justices, in announcing their decision to review *Windsor* and *Perry*, may have added the procedural questions to give themselves a "way out" of a majority vote they don't like.

Denniston said, in a *Scotusblog* post, that the Supreme Court is "very strict about jurisdictional issues like those, so there is a reasonable chance that neither case will result in a merits decision."

The Supreme Court could have limited its review in the *Perry* case to the much more nar-

row issue—one presented by the Ninth Circuit panel-- but chose instead to look at "Whether the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits the State of California from defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman."

That's a much broader question and that doesn't sound like a court that is looking for a way to dodge a politically sensitive issue.

As for why the court chose the *Windsor* case and not *Gill v. Office of Personnel Management*, the first lawsuit filed against DOMA: Most legal activists presume it is because Justice Elena Kagan indicated during her Supreme Court confirmation hearing that, as solicitor general, she had some conversations with Department of Justice officials about the DOMA cases. At that time, the only DOMA cases that had been filed were Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders' *Gill* case and another filed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

"I assume the Kagan recusal eliminated *Gill* from consideration," said GLAD civil rights director Mary Bonauto.

Arguments in the *Windsor* and *Perry* cases are likely to be scheduled for the second half of March. A decision in each will be rendered before the end of the 2012-13 session June 29.

The 11 petitions related to LGBT issues—one for Prop 8, eight for DOMA, one for Arizona and one for Nevada—represent the largest number of LGBT-related petitions ever before the U.S. Supreme Court at the same time.

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U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock.

Schock under investigation

The House Ethics Committee is investigating U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock, R-Peoria, according to a Chicago Tribune item.

Schock entered Congress in 2009 as its youngest member and has enhanced its na-

tional reputation since. He also has garnered attention for showing his six-pack abs on the cover of *Men's Health* magazine.

Steve Dutton, Schock's spokesman, said that the ethics review involved super PAC money. The Tribune added that Dutton's statement seemingly referred to reports that Schock solicited a \$25,000 contribution from Majority Leader Eric Cantor's political action committee. Said contribution was slated to help fund a super PAC that supported Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., in a March primary win against another GOP incumbent, Don Manzullo.

Federal officials may only ask for a maximum of \$5,000 to help a super PAC.

Lesbian dean named

The University of California Hastings College of the Law named married lesbian veteran Elizabeth L. Hillman as the school's new academic dean, according to *SheWired.com*. Hillman joined the UC Hastings faculty in 2007, after earning her Ph.D. in history and J.D. from Yale Law School. Hillman and wife Trish Culbert are raising five children in their Berkeley home.

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Bisexual Polish immigrant faces questions about marriage

BY MATTHEW C. CLARK

When Ivo Widlak first came to the United States in 2001, he was 21 years old. The only other person he knew of in the city was Oprah Winfrey, and he was determined to work for her. He was hoping his impressive credentials, as a journalist in Poland, would land him a job for her show. Winfrey cared about people's stories, he thought.

"This is what really made me want to be a journalist," Widlak told Windy City Times in an interview.

According to Widlak, it took him three weeks to get tickets to a screening. He was determined to work for "the most popular person in the media world." But after the show, he realized how



Laura Zabedra and Ivo Widlak. Photo courtesy of the couple

small his chances of landing such an opportunity would be. He became a caregiver. For a while, he says he left Chicago and then returned, and was living with friends. One night he went out in Boystown, and it was at Circuit Nightclub that he met his wife, Laura Zabedra, or "Lale," as he calls her.

In September 2002, they married.

Now, according to Widlak, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), a branch of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is calling that marriage into question. Widlak says because he and Zabedra are bisexual, the USCIS is trying to argue their marriage is not "bona fide."

Widlak said this situation began in 2009, after he worked on an investigative news piece about the Polish consulate general's remodeling of the Lakeshore Drive diplomatic mission. He said he uncovered contract deals that were not being won competitively and the mismanagement of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The consulate was eventually audited and found everything Widlak had been investigating to be true, according to Widlak. And it was shortly after his investigation that he received a letter from immigration services informing him that they were beginning his deportation process.

In July 2009, Widlak made his first court appearance and Zabedra filed paperwork for an alien relative, seeking to claim Widlak as her spouse.

According to Widlak, in December 2009, he and Zabedra were interviewed by USCIS concerning the validity of their marriage. They were interviewed separately, and during Widlak's interview he said the immigration officer made a point in declaring that Circuit was a gay club. He then told Widlak that a prominent member of the Polish community had informed him that he was gay, and asked him repeatedly if he was. Widlak denied that he was gay, but told the officer that he and Zabedra were bisexual.

According to paperwork provided to Windy City Times, the USCIS filed an intention to deny the alien relative petition in December 2009. In it, it states that the couple had failed to establish residency and finances together, but also makes specific mention of their sexual orientation.

"The beneficiary, however, openly admitted that both you and he are bisexual and you both have had several sexual relations with members of the same sex," it states.

A response to the intention to deny, written by the couple's attorney, stated, "The mere fact that the couple has openly admitted that each other is a bisexual does not support the Service's position that their marriage is not bona fide. Nonetheless, the petitioner and beneficiary are obligated to address the Service's reference to their sexual orientation as it clearly is an issue raised."

Since then, the USCIS has told both the couple and their legal representa-

tion that they have sent them an official copy of the denial. No party has received such a denial and, according to Widlak, the USCIS refuses to provide another copy.

Christopher Bentley, the press secretary for NSCIS, told Windy City Times that privacy laws prevent him from being able to discuss individual cases. However, he said that cases broadly concerning sexuality are subject to national law.

"Pursuant to the attorney general's guidance, the Defense of Marriage Act remains in effect and the executive branch, including DHS, will continue to enforce it unless and until Congress repeals it or there's a final judicial determination that it is unconstitutional," he said.

Widlak's resigned to leave this country. He says this case has affected his mood and his sleep. He thinks he's just be happier if he left. But he wants other people to know about his situation because it's the right thing to do.

"I believe there is nothing that I can do, that it is out of my power," he said. "But Lale is a U.S. citizen ... and her human rights and her rights as a citizen are absolutely violated."

Widlak emailed WCT that he is slated to stand before an immigration judge Dec. 20.

Gay man helps neighbor during Uptown attack

BY STEPHEN SONNEVELD

Tom Schabow played a pivotal role in helping a neighbor Dec. 9 in Uptown as another man was attacking her.

Schabow, a 32-year-old server, was returning from work that night in the tony Gold Coast district to his Uptown neighborhood. "I was just getting changed out of my work clothes and heard something out my window," Schabow, an openly gay man, told Windy City Times. "I was listening and heard it again, so I yelled back to my roommate it sounded like a girl was asking for help."

Cell phone in hand, he followed the sounds of struggle to the next building, finding a man atop a woman in the entranceway. He



Tom Schabow (right) hugging victim in hospital. Photo courtesy of Schabow

called out to them. "The guy got up, looked over at me, and went right back down on top of her," he said. "And I was like, 'Dude, get the fuck off her!'"

Schabow called 911. "The police response time was amazing," he said. "If it wasn't for [that], I don't know that I would have reacted the way that I did."

As the squad cars converged, the assailant jumped on his bicycle to escape down the same sidewalk Schabow was yelling at him from, "and that's when I just grabbed him off of his bike, flipped him off of it, and threw on to the ground—on to his face," he said.

Schabow's only regret about the night is that he didn't intervene sooner. The attacker, Jason Gurneau, a 32-year-old homeless man and repeat criminal offender, also nabbed the victim's purse. After thwarting the escape, Schabow brought the purse back to the woman... and saw the horrific extent of her injuries: the lacerations and the swelling from the beating, strangulation and rape.

The Chicago Tribune reported that at Gurneau's hearing the following day, Assistant State's Attorney Jamie Dickler reiterated that "Gurneau told authorities he should have 'finished the [expletive] off' and also said he 'should have beaten the [expletive] out of her.'"

In all likelihood, had it not been for

Schabow, the victim could have ended up another uptown murder statistic. "Everybody needs to be aware of your surroundings at all times. It doesn't matter who you are," Schabow cautioned. "If you need help, yell for help. Because he was telling her not to yell for help, and if she would've listened to him, she probably would've been dead right now."

Schabow visited her in the hospital once she no longer needed intensive care. "She was doing a lot better," he said. "She thanked me for saving her life."

'Over the Rainbow' raises more than \$13K

BY ROSS FORMAN

The second annual Over The Rainbow fundraiser, held in November at Sidetrack, raised \$13,261 for Gilda's Club Chicago.

"I was very pleased with the event," said event organizer Jimmy Kays. "My only goal was to raise more money than last year, which we accomplished."

The two Over The Rainbow events have raised more than \$20,000 in the fight against cancer.

About 200 attended the Wednesday night event, and Kays is shooting for 400 in 2013.

"The money raised through Over the Rainbow will support the free programs Gilda's Club Chicago offers to men, women, children and their family and friends whose lives have been impacted by any kind of cancer," Kays said. "Gilda's Club mission is to ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action and sustained by community."

"I never thought the 2011 event could be topped, but the energy in the room this year was magical. I think last year I was so nervous because it was the first time I had ever thrown an event and I so wanted it to be a success. This year I went in to it knowing that it was going to be great, so I kind of got to relax and enjoy it."

The fundraiser featured seven local performers.

"It means so much to me that they all took time out of their busy schedules to make this night happen," Kays said. "I am truly blessed to know each of them and I give all of the credit to them for the success of the evening."

Kays launched his Over The Rainbow fundraiser in honor of a friend, Gio Cosentino, who died of cancer in 2011 at age 26.

"My favorite moment [from the 2012 event] had to have been when Cyon Flare pulled Gio's grandpa up on the stage during his number and had him wearing his feather headdress and dancing around for money," Kays said. "But all of the performances were favorites of mine because I am big fans of each of them."

"Last year was very emotional for me because Gio's death was still very new. I don't want Over The Rainbow to be a sad event. To me, Gio lives on through Over The Rainbow helping other people, but I want Over The Rainbow to mean something special to each person who comes to it. Not everyone knew Gio, but we have all somehow been affected by cancer and I want to share Over The Rainbow with the world so that we can help give back to those that need it in memory of the ones we have lost."

Photos from the event can be seen online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Town hall looks at shortcomings of CPD trans policy

BY KATE SOSIN

A transgender policy that the Chicago Police Department (CPD) adopted in August is riddled with flaws, according to transgender advocates.

A coalition of groups discussed the new CPD general order at a Dec. 12 town-hall meeting, and the overwhelming response to the policy was disappointment.

Lakeview Action Coalition and transgender activists had been pushing for the policy for more than two years. Organizing efforts began after police allegedly detained a transgender woman for sex work while she was in fact on her way home from buying groceries in Lakeview.



Owen Daniel-McCarter. Photo by Kate Sosin

In August, CPD published the new general order without warning, making some speculate it had been prematurely adopted. That policy mandated that police not subject trans people to more frequent or invasive searches, that they use preferred names and pronouns, and that they not assume transgender identity is cause for suspicion of a crime.

Overall, trans advocates concluded, the policy falls short.

"I don't think we should accept this general order as written in stone," Christina Kahrl, board member of Equality Illinois, said at the town hall meeting.

Trans advocates pointed out that the general order lacks oversight, doesn't allow trans people to self-identify and that its vagueness on some points leaves room for police misconduct.

Anthony Martinez, executive director of The Civil Rights Agenda, highlighted the fact that the order tells police to determine gender based on a person's government identification or their surgeries. It does not define what specific surgeries it means, nor it does say how police will determine if such surgeries have occurred. When no ID is present, the policy states, detainees are to be classified based on their genitalia.

Owen Daniel-McCarter, project attorney at the Transformative Justice Law Project, said people should be able to self-identify.

"IDs are a hot mess for trans people, and that shouldn't be the standard," he said.

Daniel-McCarter noted that transgender people often do not want to change the gender marker on their IDs, and many more cannot because doing so might disqualify them receiving health insurance coverage for necessary gender-relegated health procedures.

Daniel-McCarter also pointed out that provisions in the policy—like placing a transgender person in his/her own cell, intended to keep a trans person safe from other detainees—can mean a trans person is left alone with law enforcement instead.

Advocates have other reservations about the policy, chief among them a presence of perceived loopholes that render it unenforceable.

"There is no accountability in this process," Daniel-McCarter concluded.

Mona Noriega, director of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, encouraged those in the room to report discrimination to police and other officials.

"If we cannot talk about what the issue is ... then the city cannot address it as a problem, as a policy issue," she said.

But youth countered that police often ignore their concerns, blaming the youth reporting a crime for staying out too late or questioning if the youth was involved in illegal activity that placed them in harm's way.

"I always felt like the police has never been there to help me," said one young person. "I feel like the police cannot help me. They can't."

Many claimed that police turn their suspicion on LGBTQ youth, rather than tracking down an alleged perpetrator.

Police officer Maudessie Jinter acknowledged that perception but said youth should still report hate violence to police immediately.

"I wouldn't suggest you jump over point A, even if point A is tough," Jinter told young people. Jinter also encouraged young people to report officers who act unprofessionally.

A portion of the forum was also devoted to preventing violence against LGBTQ youth in Austin. Turner said he wants to create a system where young people who feel compelled to, check in with Taskforce on a weekly basis to report that they are okay.

While some presenters and attendees expressed positive feelings about the forum, some of the young people said they would have liked more time to share their opinions.

Photos from the event can be seen online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Advocates also cite a lack of understanding about who the policy really covers. The order states that it "establishes policies for interactions with transgender, intersex and gender nonconforming (TIGN) individuals for provide for their safety."

Attendees remarked that while "intersex" identity is named in the document, further discussion on intersex issues is absent.

Martinez also said that the policy lacks an understanding of identities between male and female.

Martinez and others said the policy is not set in stone. Ald. Proco "Joe" Moreno previously introduced a city ordinance intended to make CPD adopt the policy. Activists hope that that

ordinance will now be revised to fix perceived problems with the current policy, including adding more community oversight and training.

Joey Mogul, at attorney with the People's Law Office, said that policies like the CPD policy are critical, but added that there is no guarantee that police will follow it.

Transgender activist June LaTrobe expressed irritation that such a policy was even necessary, as both state and city non-discrimination laws protect trans individuals.

"I find it kind of repugnant that I have to negotiate with the Chicago Police Department to follow the bleeping law," she said.

More photos from the event can be seen online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



Mike Barnes (left) and Bart Rarick. Photo from Barnes

Mike Barnes dies

BY ROSS FORMAN

Mike Barnes, who lived in Chicago since 1983 and had three long-time partners each die from AIDS, died unexpectedly himself Monday, Dec. 10. He was 56.

Barnes, who was profiled in the Windy City Times last January in the AIDS at 30 series, was a pharmacist at the Lakeview area Walgreens since 1993.

On Dec. 5, Barnes posted on Facebook that he was having an emergency colonoscopy the next day at the hospital. He wrote, "They found blood in my stool and nothing showed on the upper GI." He also wrote, "But hopefully I can go home tomorrow. I miss my house my boyfriend and our dog!!!!"

On Dec. 9, he wrote on Facebook, "Home from the hospital. No idea what is wrong. It all happened again this morning and I am sick of it."

On Monday, Tom Luce of Portland, Ore., wrote on Facebook: "My best friend of 32 years, Mike Barnes, passed away unexpectedly today."

The flood of condolences continued from across the country.

Barnes was with his first long-time partner, Donald Hendricks, 1984-89. Hendricks was diagnosed with HIV in 1986 and died in 1989.

Barnes was then with Sky Bixby 1989-97. Bixby learned he was HIV-positive in 1995 and died in 1997.

Barnes started dating Bart Rarick in 1999. Rarick had been HIV-positive for more than 22 years and died earlier this year.

"Everyone always wonders why they're here in life. After Sky [died], I figured that must be my lot in life: I'm here to take care of HIV guys," Barnes told Windy City Times earlier this year. "There are not a lot of mid-50-year-old gay men, because so many of them died in the 1980s."

"HIV/AIDS has been devastating over the past 25 years, but also has brought me joy because I feel, at times, like I have been able to beat the virus."

However, in April 2011, Barnes himself learned he, too, was HIV-positive.

Barnes was a bowler in the local gay leagues since the mid-1980s.

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Joshua H. Ehrlich, DMD

Gerber/Hart holds annual meeting

BY KATE SOSIN

Gerber/Hart Library and Archives held its first annual meeting since questions surrounding its governance arose at the start of this year.

Nine people attended the Dec. 10 meeting, which was closed to public and press.

Present at the meeting were four board members and Gerber/Hart's head librarian, Don Landers, a board member who lives in Arizona, was absent.

It has been a rocky year for Chicago's LGBT library. In January, news broke that the library was relocating, a move that prompted outcry that the organization had become shut off from the community it was founded to serve. That controversy came to a head when the library's board released a new set of bylaws that stripped member voting rights.

Former President Karen Sendziak transitioned to treasurer in the midst of the fallout and former board member (and past board president) Brad Tucker became president.

This spring, the library left its Edgewater home and moved to an unfinished building in Rogers Park. It has been closed now for eight months while construction is completed. Its estimated re-opening date has been repeatedly pushed back.

This year's annual meeting is believed to be the first held by the library in at least two years.

Windy City Times requested access to the closed meeting both prior to and at the meeting itself. At the meeting, Tucker said he would allow WCT access unless members objected to having a reporter in the room. One person did object, however, and this reporter was asked to leave.

Tucker later reported that he felt the meeting went well.

"It seemed like people were positive and upbeat, and they had some good ideas and were willing to help," he said.

According to Tucker and others in the room, the board discussed current membership numbers, the financial health of the organization, the process by which board members are chosen, the library's dearth of volunteers and its timeline for re-opening, among other things.

Tucker and Sendziak reported that the library has less than 50 members presently, a number that Tucker said is lower than past years due to the waning interest people have in checking out books.

Gerber/Hart closed out 2011 with \$215,603, according to tax documents filed by the organization. Today, it has approximately \$140,000, Tucker said. Members questioned the board on how that money had been spent.

According to Tucker, nearly \$30,000 went to rent at Gerber/Hart's old home on Granville Ave. Tucker totaled the cost of the move at \$13,000. Sendziak said that the library was also paying for less than 10 percent of construction costs



Gerber/Hart Board President Brad Tucker. Photo courtesy of Tucker

on the new space, but Tucker later told Windy City Times, "I would think it's significantly more than that."

Tucker said a pause in fundraising efforts has hindered the organization's ability to supplement those costs.

Members asked how the board is elected. Board members vote on applicant board members, they were told. At least two in the room expressed interest in joining the board. Tucker said the board is still working on a new application process for additional board members, however.

The board reported that Gerber/Hart is low on volunteers and will be ramping up its recruitment efforts in coming months.

Finally, the board announced that they hoped the new library would be finished by late January. Tucker told Windy City Times that he is aiming for a mid-February re-opening but added that he could not promise anything.

"We've been disappointed at every turn basically," Tucker said of the build-out.

Of the members interviewed following the meeting, just one agreed to speak on-record. Bob Cohn said he gained little understanding from the meeting.

"The meeting was devoted to either praise for Karen [Sendziak] or Don Landers," Cohn said.

Cohn said he felt the board failed to answer questions about the new bylaws, a major sticking point for new members.

Members interviewed also alleged that the member who objected to the presence of a reporter in the room both came and left with Sendziak.

Asked about that members' role in the meeting, Tucker said, "I knew that he was coming there to support Karen [Sendziak]." Tucker said he did not prompt the man to object to having a reporter present. He did not know if Sendziak had spoken with him, he said.

Tucker, however, has committed to a public meeting in mid January, he said. The details of that meeting have yet to be announced.

Current board members now include John Orwat who is serving as secretary and Jody Dedore, vice president. Stef Potter is head librarian.

Trans man alleges discrimination by Niles spa

BY KATE SOSIN

A Chicago-area spa is facing down discrimination allegations after management told a transgender person he could not use the spa's men's shower area.

Levi Pine, a Chicago transgender man, has filed an Illinois Dept. of Human Rights (IDHR) complaint against King Spa & Sauna in Niles, after a manager told him he would have to use a private shower or leave.

"The experience I had was particularly degrading," said Pine.

Pine has been on masculinizing hormones for a year. When he went to the spa on Dec. 9 with a friend, he used the men's shower facilities. Pine said the manager approached him while he was naked and asked to speak with him.

Both the manager and Pine tell the same story about what happened next.

The manager, who identified himself as "John" but declined to provide a last name to Windy City Times, questioned Pine about his gender. Pine told John that he was transgender, and John said he could provide Pine with a private shower.

Pine said he did not want a private shower and that he could use the same facilities used by other customers. But, John said, other customers had complained.

"We only have a men's spa and a women's spa," John told Windy City Times.

John said he recognizes that transgender people are a minority, and said that he treats all of his customers the same. But he didn't want other customers to feel uncomfortable, he said.

Pine told John that he felt he was being discriminated against.

"I shouldn't have to be sequestered into a private area," Pine later told Windy City Times. "Just because some people who go there are

uncomfortable with my body, shouldn't change what I have to do and shouldn't change my rights as a customer."

Two attorneys agree.

Joanie Rae Wimmer, the attorney behind the first successful transgender case under the Illinois Human Rights Act, said she believes Pine has a valid claim.

"It's clear that they denied him enjoyment of equal facilities," she said.

Wimmer points out that the same Illinois law that protects gender identity in public accommodations also applies to race. Customers could not dictate that an African American man should have to use a separate shower because others were uncomfortable, she pointed out.

The Illinois Human Rights Act does make exceptions for the case of "sex" in locker rooms, health clubs and other settings. But Wimmer said she believes that exception only applies to "sex" and not to "gender identity," two different protected categories.

John Knight, LGBT project attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, echoed similar sentiments.

Assuming Pine's version of events are true, he said, "I think certainly, he's got a valid claim."

"It's stigmatizing. It's not fair treatment," Knight said. "That would violate the Human Rights Act, to force him into a private facility."

Pine's state identification marker does not say "male," a fact that Knight says should not change his case.

Pine has filed an IDHR complaint against the spa, sent a letter to the spa and notified the Cook County Department of Human Rights. Pine said he simply wants an apology, and wants the spa to adopt a new trans-friendly policy.

"As mad as I am, I feel like this was an opportunity to have dialogue that wouldn't have happened otherwise," said Pine.

John, the spa manager, says that if there is a better solution than offering a private room, he does not see it.

"The naked man in the women's spa: that is equal?" he said. "I don't think so."



Suburban project gets HIV/AIDS grant

The project RAICES has once again received a \$150,000 Quality of Life grant.

The Quality of Life Fund and the Illinois Department of Public Health fund the grant in accordance with the goals of the Illinois and national HIV/AIDS strategies, which involve anti-stigma efforts in the fight against AIDS.

RAICES is an anti-stigma project addressing key challenges experienced that young people in the Cicero and Berwyn communities face.

In the past year, RAICES has created a series of LGBT educational events, trained more than 150 youth on LGBT issues, and developed a bilingual social marketing cam-

paign that addresses LGBT inclusion and acceptance. The poster will be unveiled at the Olympic Theatre in Cicero Saturday, Dec. 8.

Pictured are (from left) RAICES program participants Cesar Carrillo, Christopher Avalos, Emmanuel Garcia (project leader) and Reyna Ortiz. Photo courtesy of Garcia

CBGMC holiday party Dec. 19

The Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus (CBGMC) is holding its holiday soiree Wed., Dec. 19, at TwelveWest, 12 W. Elm St., 7-10 p.m.

CBGMC's programming promotes HIV testing, routine mental/physical health screenings and risk-reduction practices. See <http://chiblackgaycaucus.org>.



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FIGHT from cover

Rep. Kelly Cassidy, a sponsor of the HB 5170, encouraged LGBT people and their allies to talk to their state lawmakers about why marriage equality matters, especially if those lawmakers represent districts outside of Chicago.

"When we tell [lawmakers] that their districts have changed, we really need to show them that they have," Cassidy said. "We need to get our butts off the Lakefront, frankly."

Rick Garcia, director of The Civil Rights Agenda's marriage project, warned that significant work remains before the bill can be called to a vote.

"Those last handful of votes that carry you to victory, it's like herding calves," he said. "Serious hard work still needs to be done."

Garcia urged LGBT supporters to call their lawmakers and ask friends and family to do the same.

Harris and others have cautioned that they will not call the bill until they are confident they have the votes to pass it, as doing so prematurely could lock lawmakers into "no" votes.

But, Cassidy said, the momentum is there to pass the bill.

"It is absolutely possible," she said.



State Rep. Greg Harris. Photo by Erica Demarest

Starr's photos displayed as tribute

The late Steve Starr's original dream of having a 45-year career celebration came to life Dec. 12 (12/12/12) at The Murphy Auditorium in Streeterville, with an exhibition entitled "The Face of News."

Framed pictures of past photographs Starr had taken, along with a projection on the screen, highlighted his life's work. Many local restaurants, such as RL, chipped in to supply food and specialty cocktails. At the VIP reception, several of his relatives stood up after hosts Bill Zwecker and Candace Jordan mentioned them. Long-time friend Stanley Paul played the piano throughout the evening, making it a first-class affair as friends of Starr attended the dressy affair.

Photo and text by Jerry Nunn; more online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



GAY in the **LIFE**
Sky Cotton
 TEXT AND PHOTOS BY MALIC WHITE



Twenty-five years ago, Sky Cotton struggled to find her place in a male-dominated leather scene. Now the self-identified "Leather Dyke" has made a name for herself as a sex educator, leather and chain-maille artist, DJ and performer who promotes kink and fetish awareness.

Cotton's first introduction to the leather scene came when she met Benedict Michaelowski, a leather daddy who worked at former Chicago leather bar Manhole. Michaelowski introduced Cotton to Vince (last name unknown) and Deitard (last name unknown), whose basement had been converted into a dungeon for fetish parties.

At her first dungeon party, Cotton was surprised when a group of police officers entered Vince and Deitard's basement. Cotton rushed upstairs to tell Michaelowski that the party had been busted.

Michaelowski replied, "Honey, it's uniform night."

Michaelowski explained that Vince and Deitard were uniform fetishists. The men showed Cotton their uniform collection.

"They had cop, fireman, postal worker, UPS, FedEx, repairman, priest, cardinal—every single uniform possible," Cotton remembered. "I had never seen anything so beautiful in my whole life."

With her new kink-oriented friends, Cotton began attending International Mr. Leather, a contest and conference of leathermen held annually in Chicago since 1979. Cotton fell in love with the event, but she was dismayed that the only women's event the conference offered was a "women's meet and greet."



"If you want to meet someone, you can meet them, you can greet them, but if you want to go and play, only boys get to do that. I wasn't happy with that."

In August 2006, Cotton began working at Mephisto Leathers, now Leather64Ten, located in Rogers Park. Studying under leather designer Paul C, Cotton found a home for herself and the perfect location for an event that catered to women's interests.

In the spring of 2006, Cotton cleared out the basement of Mephisto Leathers and advertised Vespertine, a women's play party where queer women and transfolk could engage in BDSM (bondage, discipline, sadism and masochism) and safe and consensual scene play in a safe environment.

More than 60 women attended the first Vespertine, an annual event that coincides with International Mr. Leather.

"With Vespertine, my mission was to create a safe space for any woman who wanted to find something out about herself," Cotton said.

Vespertine has grown to include more demonstrations and BDSM arts education. Cotton hopes to reach feminists who struggle to find balance between their belief in women's empowerment and their interest in kink, particularly submission.

"The submissive [in a BDSM scene] is a submissive by choice," Cotton said. "For me, women's BDSM and women's play is about women being able to experience for themselves non-traditional roles. It's their way to empower themselves."

For the past four years, Cotton has taken her mission to broaden awareness of kink and fetish to the stage. Cotton performs with SS-Triple-X, a "fantasy fetish" performance group that brings queer, body-positive burlesque to Chicago audiences.

As a mentor to the next generation of queer women, Cotton hopes to show others what the leather community has given her.

"The leather community gave me a place where I felt I fit," Cotton said. "I've always bridged all groups and ages and generations, because I don't really take no for an answer. I just stick my hand out and say, 'Hi, I'm Sky,' and in the leather community, they love that."

Age
49

Neighborhood
Uptown

Hometown
Niles, Ill.

Relationship status
Partnered with a girlfriend of two and a half years

Pets
Two cats, Doe and Booty Pants

Little-known fact
Cotton is an avid gardener and chef.

Sunday, Jan. 6
2 p.m.
Family of Women Book Group: Heartburn
by Nora Ephron

Tuesday, Jan. 8
7:15 p.m.
Book Group: Mules and Men
by Zora Neale Hurston

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WINDY CITY TIMES

would like to express our deepest sympathies to those affected by the tragedy in Newtown, Conn.

GENERATION HALSTED

LGBTQ Youth Series from **WINDY CITY TIMES**

Generation Halsted

is an eight-week series that seeks to capture youth voices not typically represented in Windy City Times and other media. The young people portrayed have many housing situations, gender identities and sexual orientations. The series looks primarily, but not exclusively, at Boystown, where an influx of young LGBTQ people has been a source of controversy. Windy City Times will continue to explore the issues raised here beyond this series.

Center on Halsted provides youth services, support but not without controversy

BY KATE SOSIN

When Center on Halsted opened in 2007, it instantly became Chicago's most-recognizable LGBT institution, and many hailed it as a beacon of hope for future generations.

More than five years later, the Center offers a laundry list of youth programs and services from basic meals to cultural events to career counseling. Its services continue to grow, as the organization recently began offering youth programs seven days a week.

But like most large LGBT organizations, Center on Halsted has come under scrutiny, especially when it comes to youth.

A look at the Center's youth services

The Center's 990 tax form for 2011 shows that in terms of program funding, youth services are the Center's first priority. Last year, the Center reported that its youth program was its largest, funded at \$885,219. HIV/AIDS services followed at \$712,245, and cultural programs accounted for \$518,651. A 2013 projection provided by the Center budgets more than a million dollars for youth services.

On most weekdays, youth ages 18-24 can attend the Center's breakfast program, which provides meals and programming Monday through Thursday. Young people can also visit the Center for counseling services, STD/ HIV prevention programs, sex education, access to computers, job readiness support and after school programs like art classes and sports. Youth have access to open gym hours at the Center, movies, leadership training and other events. The Center hosts a ten-week spoken word apprenticeship for youth in partnership with After School Matters called "Youth Speak OUT." A program called "Street Law" educates young people on legal issues such as signing an apartment lease, rights that youth have when applying for college, and employment discrimination.

On weekends, the Center partners with About Face Theatre for programs, and it also offers a Saturday cinema event, among other things.

Tim'm West, associate director of youth programs, said that when people talk about "youth" at the Center, they are usually referring to street-based youth. But the Center serves young people ages 13-24 from all walks of life.

"We have a very broad population here at the Center on Halsted," West said. "So it's not just all street-based youth... Certainly, they are a population that has more urgent immediate needs around homeless and sometimes healthcare and different things like that. A lot of those youth don't live in this neighborhood. They come from other areas of town where they don't feel as safe to be LGBTQ and open."

West notes that the wide age range often means the Center's youth program serves three populations—ranging from youth in their early teens to those approaching their mid-20s.

Each week, staffers in the youth program post a new schedule of events on the youth space door. The colorful calendar lists the week's activities, noting when age restrictions apply, and it lists special events happening at the Center.



Center on Halsted, lobby.
Photos by Kate Sosin.

Despite a growing number of youth programs, West still has ideas for improvement. He notes that vocational training for queer youth is rarely offered in creative fields, something he is currently working to change.

"A lot of queer youth are good at music or dance or visual art," West said. "Why are we always talking about the normative professions when we talk about vocation?"

Past complaints from youth

Many youth have expressed discontent with the Center over the years.

In the past, youth alleged that Center staff made them enter the building through a side door, to keep them out of view of the public. In an April 2011 interview, Center CEO Modesto "Tico" Valle said the side entrance had originally been designed to give youth privacy when entering the building, but the Center had to stop using the door over the negative perception it generated.

"We don't want people to feel like they're second-class citizens," Valle said in April.

Other youth have complained that the Center is too strict, calling police and banning them for minor offenses.

The Center has navigated disapproval from both sides, however. Residents have complained that the organization attracts problematic youth who commit crimes and harass residents.

Those two conflicting viewpoints have often placed the Center in a tricky position when it comes to youth.

Youth speak about the Center

In August, Windy City Times reporters began a three-month survey of LGBTQ youth, primarily in Lakeview (the results from that survey were published on Nov. 14 in Windy City Times and

are available online). In that survey, youth were asked to identify what LGBTQ services, if any, they accessed.

A surprisingly high number of young people reported, unsolicited, that they had been banned from Center on Halsted at some point. Many said they believed they were still banned. Others said they refused to use services at the Center because of negative experiences.

West, who has worked at the Center since June, acknowledged that reputation. But he feels that view is sometimes propagated by youth who have committed more serious offenses than they are willing to admit.

Several youth told Windy City Times reporters that they had been banned for seemingly minor offenses. Several said they were kicked out for falling asleep at the Center.

"That's never happened," West said, when asked about reports from youth. "It's never something as soft as someone falling asleep."

West said the Center has been working on changing the culture that may have contributed to that perception—moving toward one that celebrates youth rather than viewing them as problems in the community.

Earlier this year, the Center announced the implementation of restorative justice practices in place of banning.

Restorative justice is an approach to handling supposed wrongdoing that aims to provide alternatives to punishment. It looks at the experiences of people involved and attempts to heal those afflicted rather than discipline an alleged wrongdoer.

At the Center, young people are now "suspended" instead of "banned," and they are allowed to re-enter the Center after completing a mediation process. (This process has been a source of debate between Center staff and some community activists, who argue that the Center's process is out of step with the spirit of restorative justice principles).

So far, West said, the new process has been successful, allowing many people who thought they were banned for years to re-enter the building.

"A lot of the young people who have been suspended are in the Center now doing great things," said West, adding that some youth who had been banned before recently received the Center's monthly "Youth Excellence Award."

The Center also has a grievance process, West noted. Young people can file complaints about Center staff and return them to either West or the reception desk.

One who remains unconvinced is Omari, a 23-year-old bisexual-identified youth. Despite the new mediation process, Omari has been banned from the Center for about two years, he said.

"They get funding for youth, they take the money, and then they ban the youth," he said.

"So you have people sponsoring the Center for youth programs, and the programs are not being used because all the youth are getting banned and kicked out ... that's setting them up to cause destructions or sit on people's porches."

Omari sees the relationship between youth providers and youth as co-dependent. Young people need Lakeview organizations for services, he said. But those organizations need youth to get funding for their programs, too.

"The sponsors don't see this," he said. "The sponsors don't come talk to us. They just give money because we ain't nothing but a tax write-off to them."

Omari was initially banned for pepper-spraying another youth who he alleges was trying to attack him. He now spends his time at Broadway Youth Center and the library, he said. He also stays at The Crib, The Night Ministry's LGBTQ-friendly youth shelter.

Omari is not alone in his anger towards the Center.

GENERATION HALSTED

LGBTQ Youth Series from

WINDY CITY
TIMES

"The Center is a bunch of bullshit," one young transgender woman bluntly stated in the survey. She said she feels that some Center staffers are out of touch with the needs of homeless youth in the area. Still, she frequents the Center.

Windy City Times reporters estimate that the majority of the more than 100 street-based youth interviewed or surveyed for the series volunteered that they had been banned at least once from the Center.

Very few youth stated that they had been banned from The Crib or Broadway Youth Center. Because the survey did not specifically ask each youth about their feelings about Center on Halsted, it is impossible to state what percentage of those surveyed have actually been banned. For the same reason, the surveys did not capture youth who do feel positively about the Center, its programs and staff.

West estimates that less than one percent of the Center's youth population is banned.

"We see about 1,000 youth over the course of a year, and obviously I think there's about ten [suspended]."

West also noted that people of all ages, and not just youth, can be suspended.

According to West, part of the challenge has been getting the word out to people banned from the Center under old rules. Some youth were banned years ago by staff who have long since left the organization, and those banned may not even know they can seek mediation.

Three Windy City Times reporters interviewed West and former Center on Halsted spokesperson Brian Richardson over the course of two days (Richardson recently left his position at the Center to work at the Chicago Department of Public Health).

At the conclusion of the first interview, as reporters were about to leave the building, two Center security guards came down the stairs with a transgender youth in tow.

Reporters saw that the young person was wearing handcuffs. (The youth later told reporters that they identified as transgender but did not provide a preferred pronoun. As such, this article uses the gender-neutral pronoun "they").

Security guards led the young person through

the Center/ Whole Foods lobby, where patrons sat watching. Guards brought the youth to a room behind the Center's reception desk area.

Within moments, several young people crowded the reception desk, asking why the trans youth had been detained. Three different young people told Windy City Times that they had watched the youth get handcuffed but that no confrontation had taken place prior.

Staff members indicated that the youth had been handcuffed and detained because they violated their ban from the Center.

Thirty minutes later, this reporter tracked down the trans youth, who had been let go by guards.

The youth, 17, expressed hesitancy about speaking on-record, and has therefore not been named.

"I forgot that I was banned," the youth claimed.

According to the youth, guards approached them and asked if they were allowed to be at the Center. Guards then handcuffed the youth and took them into an office behind the reception area where they looked the youth up on a computer system. The youth was released from the Center's custody shortly after and was allowed to leave the building.

The youth has been banned since June, they said. But they had been to the Center since that time without incident. Asked if they were nervous about being handcuffed, they said they were not because they did not feel they had done anything wrong.

Richardson, who also witnessed the handcuffing incident, said it is rare for the Center guards to handcuff visitors.

West echoed that sentiment during a follow-up interview the next day. According to West, security guards usually only detain Center patrons for arrestable offences, such as trespassing.

"One of the reasons we do it is to protect [the youth]. For example, that youth yesterday was allowed to go just under the promise that they would avoid the Center. Because if police get involved, and they are trespassing, they could actually get arrested and taken to jail. So when youth are serving suspension, for their own protection, we advise them like, 'Just stay away and honor the suspension period so that you don't put yourself in a worse situation.'"

In the case of the trans youth who was handcuffed, West said, "That particular youth had been suspended multiple times for fighting, like for hurting people."

West said he has only seen one or two instances of the Center detaining people. Unlike the incident with the trans youth, who was detained but almost immediately let go, West stated that



Tim'm West, associate director of youth programs at the Center on Halsted. Photo by Kate Sosin.

Security, licensing at Center

BY BILL HEALY

Center on Halsted hires its armed guards through Walsh Security, a private company that employs off-duty policemen and other law enforcement. The owner of the company is a Chicago Police officer, Tom Walsh.

As a policeman, Walsh doesn't need a license to guard the Center himself. His police credentials cover that. But because he contracts on behalf of other officers to provide services at the Center, Walsh is required by state law to have a license.

He does not have one.

In other words, Walsh and the Center on Halsted appear to be circumventing state law while strictly enforcing it.

"If he's hiring people to do security work and sending them out to jobs, he needs a license," said Sue Hofer, a spokesperson for the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation. "We have no record of any security license for Walsh or Walsh Security."

Licenses are important because they allow the state to set standards and ensure proper training. When applying to become a private security contractor, licensees must undergo fingerprinting and FBI background checks that are sent to all 50 states.

In October, the most recent month for which data was available, non-compliant nurses, barbers, doctors, massage therapists, roofing contractors and veterinarians were disciplined by the state. One private security contractor, for instance, had a license suspended for not paying child support.

In October, Brian Richardson, then-spokesman for Center on Halsted, said: "We contract out with Walsh [Security]. We pay them a set amount. Part of the contract includes details of where that money goes, how it's being used and what services we get. But that [contract or license] we just won't be able to share with you."

In recent days, Windy City Times emailed Center on Halsted CEO Modesto "Tico" Valle and Officer Walsh a list of questions seeking clarification. Among the questions was how the Center pays its guards - individually or through Walsh Security.

Neither Walsh nor the Center have commented, despite repeated requests. Walsh offered to meet, but did not follow up with plans.

This reporter spoke with Walsh at the dedication of the Halsted Street Legacy Walk in October, and he assured me that he had the proper paperwork in order. I followed up by phone a few weeks later to see if he'd looked into acquiring a license and he pointed me to the Secretary of State's website, which lists Walsh Security, LLC as a business.

Meanwhile, the website for the Illinois Department of Professional Regulations, which handles licenses, shows no record of Walsh or Walsh Security.

Center security guards frequently wear hats and sweatshirts that identify them as "Police." This appears to violate the Private Detective, Private Alarm, Private Security, Fingerprint Vendor, and Locksmith Act of 2004.

This Illinois state law stipulates that for private security contractors, "no license holder or employee of a licensed agency shall imply in any manner that the person is an employee or agent of a governmental entity." This includes displaying badges or wearing uniforms that use the words 'police', 'sheriff', 'highway patrol', 'trooper' or 'law enforcement.'

There is also a Chicago Police Department order that says police cannot work "when the secondary employer would require the Department member be represented as a Chicago Police Officer or wear the prescribed police uniform," unless written consent is provided by the Superintendent of Police.

Officer Jose Rios, the Chicago Police Department LGBT liaison, used to work for Walsh as a security guard at Center on Halsted. Rios stopped because he wanted his relationship with young people to be "clearly defined."

Rios said that by hiring off-duty police to work as security, the Center lowers the number of incidents referred to the police department.

He shared a story from one of his last days at the Center: An intoxicated young person became belligerent, knocking over chairs and swearing at people. Rios said a security guard who is also a policeman might be more discerning in this type of situation.

"Police officers are gonna be like, 'Look, you could have these people arrested. [But instead] let's put them out for a day, let them calm down and cool off,'" he said.

security detains people when the Center has called police to come make an arrest

Still, Center on Halsted contracts with a security firm that hires off-duty police officers, a position that sometimes appears to confuse the line between the Center's security team and police.

Many youth, even those banned, regularly gather on the sidewalk next to the Center along Waveland Avenue and smoke or chat. On most days, a Center security guard stands next to the Whole Foods parking garage, dispersing crowds that block the sidewalk.

Asked to define the perimeters of his jurisdiction when working for the Center, one officer stated that the Center's boundaries stop at the end of the building. But his jurisdiction, he said, is the whole city because he is a Chicago Police officer. As such, he can tell the youth to disperse no matter where they are on the sidewalk.



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Colby Mowery (right) talks with Koala (left) and another attendee during a Sunday meal. Photo by Bill Healy.

Non-affirming church offers inviting space for youth

BY BILL HEALY

East Lakeview might be the last place you'd look for a Baptist missionary church, but on Aldine Street, just a few blocks west of Halsted, there's a 40-person congregation called C3. The Chicagoand Community Church, as it's known, is part of the Southern Baptist, or Great Commission, network of churches.

Pastor Jon Pennington is a loquacious man who moved to Chicago 12 years ago to start the church.

C3 is "not a church that is open and affirming," he says. But "we are a church that is open."

He means that while his church views homosexuality as a sin, every Sunday after its 4 pm service, the congregation offers a hot meal to anyone who wants to join. The dinner is part of the church's "Safe Haven" program, which caters primarily to young LGBT people.

"Hate the sin. Love the sinner," Pennington says. "We mean it and try to live it."

And so, on Sunday afternoons when the bars and restaurants on North Halsted are packed, a group of young people often waits outside the modest-looking church for worship services to wrap.

"We honestly and completely and totally love people who are in the LGBT community," Pen-

nington says. "And we say that without flinching. I loathe the fact that some Christians try to use this book [the Bible] as a justification to scream hate and to come by with horrible signs that the scriptures don't even say. That absolutely nauseates me. Though there's a problem with the other extreme. When people just put a rainbow on the church, they're ignoring a good portion of the scriptures. And once you start bringing your scissors to the text, that's never gonna stop."

Neighbors have chided Pennington for attracting "that element," meaning young people, to their part of the neighborhood. But he insists on not only hosting the weekly meal, but also

making sure young people feel at home there. Guests at C3 are welcome to sleep if they're tired—something that's often banned at other service centers. And the church opens its closets too, giving away jeans, hooded sweatshirts, socks and underwear.

Dee Heldenbrand cooks Sunday meals. She prepares for 50 people but says the church usually only gets 25-30. Some weeks she'll make chicken and rice. Others it's macaroni and cheese or spaghetti and meatballs.

"They eat until they're full," she says.

Church member Colby Mowery, 21, runs the

Turn to page 13



One young person leaps for the camera after a Sunday dinner at C3. Photo by Kate Sosin.

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LGBTQ Youth Series from WINDY CITY TIMES

CHURCH from page 12

“Safe Haven” program. He says it’s a time when young people can get off the street, grab a bite to eat, share in some conversation or sit alone if that’s what they need. The church has instruments that it lets young people use. (The opening video in this series includes an original piano composition played by a young person during one of the weekly dinners.)

“We are not anti-gay. We are pro-Jesus,” Mowery says. “Our purpose is not that we are against anyone.”

Mowery says a few people have sought his counsel when thinking through their sexuality. When they do this, Mowery says the most important thing he can do is be a good listener. And when people ask for guidance, Mowery points toward passages in the bible that he believes indicate homosexual behavior is a sin.

But, he says, many of the youth have lives that are complicated, and their sexuality is often tied up in family and support systems. Many mention some kind of rupture with their families.

“A lot of people put on masks and say, ‘I hate my parents,’” Mowery says, “but really when you get through that, they say: I wish that I knew what my brother does every day. I wish I could go to his football games.

“They’ve grown up very fast. They’ve been exposed to everything – drugs, sex, alcohol – very

quickly and with no one to explain it to them. No one ever had any types of birds and bees conversation with them. No one ever told them what alcohol was. They learn these things on their own. And so, because of that, they became adults really fast. And because of that you’ve got them exposed to a lot of things without a lot of education.

“And I think that, mixed with a lot of hurt from their parents rejecting them, causes a different culture to happen. And they are their own culture.”

Mowery says many of the young LGBT people he sees often choose new names for themselves.

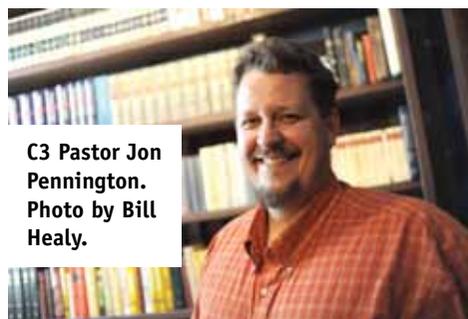
“That’s one thing where they can take back the reigns of their destiny,” he says. They think, “I don’t care what other people think about me.” And that’s why sometimes other people in the neighborhoods get frustrated, because the street kids are acting crazy in a place where its not okay to be crazy. There’s less of a sense of: It’s okay to drink in a bar but it’s not okay to drink in a church. There’s not that same compartmentalization.”

Mowery says a lot of the young people he encounters are disillusioned by how they are received in Boystown and feel isolated. “What they need is for someone to say: You do matter. I see you, and I’m willing to listen to you. And you are important.”

That’s a role C3 is happy to fill.



Drakera, 20, eats spaghetti and meatballs at Safe Haven. Photo by Kate Sosin.



C3 Pastor Jon Pennington. Photo by Bill Healy.



Many youth skip Sunday services, biding their time outside until Safe Haven begins. Here, Safaria, 20, and Kasmiere, 19, joke with friends. Photo by Erica Demarest.



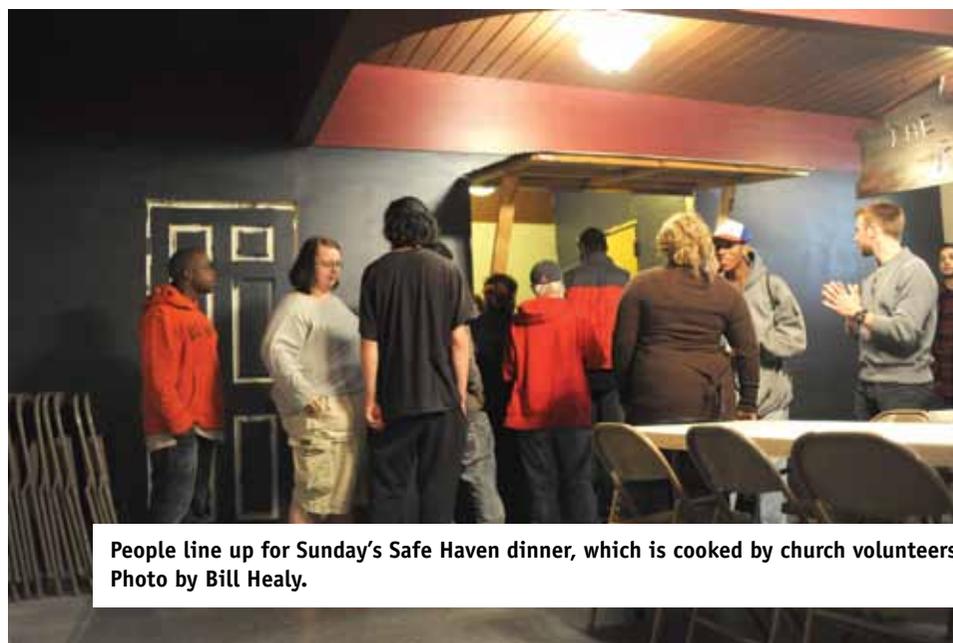
Koala (right) talks music with a C3 volunteer. Photo by Kate Sosin.



Koala, 18, plays piano inside C3. During Sunday dinners, youth regularly take turns playing the church’s instruments. Photo by Bill Healy.



Colby Mowery rifles through C3’s closet. The church gives free clothing to youth, sometimes setting aside items that particular young people have requested. Photo by Bill Healy.



People line up for Sunday’s Safe Haven dinner, which is cooked by church volunteers. Photo by Bill Healy.

next week in

GENERATION HALSTED

Windy City Times will explore the criminalization of young people.

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VIEWPOINTS

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 Community Marketing, Inc.



**DANA
RUDOLPH**

MOMBIAN

In the wake
of tragedy

This was going to be a very different column. Then 20 children died in Connecticut.

A gunman opened fire in Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., on Dec. 14, leaving 20 children and seven adults (including the shooter) dead.

As the mother of an elementary school student, school shootings were already one of my nightmares. Having grown up and gone to school in Connecticut myself, though—and now having a son in elementary school just one state over, the nightmare seems more real than ever. I cannot imagine what it is like for the parents, families, and friends of the victims. My heart goes out to them.

It is hard to find words in the wake of such a tragedy. Words will not suffice to convey the horror, or to comfort the surviving families and friends. But we can use words to help us take action, and to find in that action some sense that the deaths have at least helped move our society towards a place where such tragedies never happen again.

There have been 31 school shootings since the one in Columbine, Colo., in 1999, according to ABC News. One was too many. Thirty-one is unconscionable.

Many are seeing the shooting as one more rea-

son to call for more stringent gun-control laws. I would agree. They are long overdue.

But gun control is only part of the solution. I believe mental health care and education are the other two main components of what has to be a multi-pronged approach to the problem.

Anyone who commits such a senseless act as did the gunman has clear mental-health issues. Mental health remains a little-understood and still-stigmatized area of an already shaky health care system. We need to do more to help people identify when they or others need mental health assistance, to destigmatize getting such assistance, and to provide the financial resources so those who need it get appropriate care.

We must also educate our children—future adults—to respect each other and to handle anger, frustration, and loss in ways that don't involve lashing out at others. We have made great strides in recent years in addressing bullying and violence, but we need to do even more to show children how to respect themselves and others and to solve problems in constructive, not destructive, ways. Yes, we need to teach our children to read, write, and do arithmetic, but we also need to make sure they have social and emotional skills for life.

These are not "luxury" subjects. They are not dealt with solely in a once-a-year anti-bullying or anti-violence workshop or posters on the wall. They are critical learnings that should be woven into the fabric of school life, whether it be in working together over a science project, learning about different perspectives through a book during a language class, or learning to share at recess. Schools cannot alone obviate mental health issues, but they can create supportive environments to encourage emotional well-being.

Education begins at home, however, and we as parents must set good examples of respect and non-violent problem solving. We must monitor

the media our children consume, and talk with them when they encounter images of violence that could cause them concern or misunderstanding. We must also not be afraid to seek help when our own or our children's emotional needs require it.

Out of tragedy often come heroes. I think today of Judy Shepard, whose son, Matthew, was murdered in an anti-gay hate crime, and who has dedicated her life to "Replace Hate with Understanding, Compassion, and Acceptance" through a foundation in his honor. I wonder sometimes if I could be that brave and selfless in the face of personal tragedy. I hope I never have to find out. We cannot, however, leave it to those who were directly affected by a tragedy to take action on our behalf.

It is up to all of us, as parents and people, to make sure tragedies like this never happen again. We cannot each do everything, though. We must each pick an aspect or aspects of the problem that we feel most strongly about, or where we feel we can have the most impact—gun control, mental health, education—and do what we can, as often as we can, in our homes, schools, communities, and nation.

As a society, we give much lip service to doing things "in the best interests of the children." But if we as a society do not do what it takes to protect children's lives, even in areas like gun control and mental health that aren't traditionally associated with "children's issues," then we have failed, and our society is the poorer for it.

In fact, if we don't protect our children, we have no future as a society.

Hug your kids. Then go work for their future.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (www.mombian.com), an award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBT parents. She speaks here for herself, not her employer.



**SARAH
TOCE**

America the
senseless

Twenty children and six adults were announced dead Dec. 14 after an open fire shooting spree at an elementary school in Newtown, Conn. Parents and loved ones waited outside anxiously to see if their child was one of the casualties.

At 3:15 p.m. ET, the president of the United States wiped away tears as he delivered an address to the nation on the tragedy.

Let's talk childhood development.

The average 5-year-old is beginning school for the first time. By the end of the year, the average 5-year-old uses past, present and future tenses accurately; recalls and can repeat a sentence of at least eight words; and talks in complex sentences that often run together.

The average 6-year-old are working to understand more about what "big people" do—discoveries that make them feel both confident and confused. During this age, a child tends to have a very vivid imagination. Because of this, they tend to cling to the comfortingly familiar as well as look ahead eagerly to new things.

The average 7-year-old is mature enough to form his own opinions about many things. He looks to peers and other adult authority figures to inform his ideas. But his parents firmly remain the shining lights in his universe. Sevens

still like to cuddle, hold hands and show their affection in ways that typically vanish (at least in public) over the coming years.

The average 8-year-old is firmly in mid-childhood, fun years of remarkable capability and quick learning coupled with a pretty agreeable personality and growing self-sufficiency. She will grow at about the same rate as in the last two years: an average of 2 to 3 inches and 3 to 7 pounds each year. Baby teeth continue to fall out and larger permanent teeth come in.

The average 9-year-old starts to form stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships. It becomes more emotionally important to have friends, especially of the same sex. He begins to experience more peer pressure and become more aware of his or her body as puberty approaches.

The average 10-year-old faces more academic challenges at school. She becomes more independent from the family and begins to see the

point of view of others more clearly. She has an increased attention span.

The children affected by the shooting in Fairfield County Dec. 14 were between the ages of 5 and 10 years old. Many of them still had their baby teeth and had notes pinned to their backs for their parents to read when they arrived home from a day at school.

The face of violence has changed in America. Let the children who were killed senselessly Dec. 14 serve as a reminder that there is still so much work to be done regarding gun control, mental health funding and support services. While we argue and fuss over the so-called "fiscal cliff," we're losing control of our very communities and livelihoods. Things do not change by will alone, it is through action that courage transpires.

*Be courageous,
Sarah Toce*

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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo by Carinne Uslar

'BODY' LANGUAGE

Read a review of the theatrical production *Over My Dead Body* on page 16.

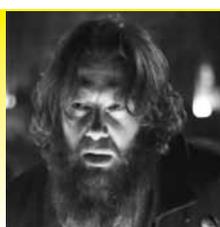
DISH

Cru love.
Page 26.

Photo of Cru Cafe & Wine Bar's stolen dates by Andrew Davis



THEATER

'Glass' case.
Page 16.Photo from *The Glass Menagerie* by Fred Bledsoe Photography

SPORTS

What happens
in Vegas...
Page 30.

Image from Eric Ryan



SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Miriam Margolyes:
A Dickensian dame

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Openly lesbian British actress Miriam Margolyes (*The Age of Innocence*, *Romeo + Juliet*) is known for being outrageous and fearless. Just do an online search for Margolyes' appearances on the BBC-TV program *The Graham Norton Show* to see her blithely sharing unexpectedly and hilariously frank stories of sexual acts and bodily functions.

"Graham is a very skilled interviewer and he allows you to be yourself," said Margolyes when asked about her unfiltered storytelling style during a telephone interview from Toronto. "I've always been like that, actually."

But Chicago audiences will likely see a more "respectable" side of Margolyes now that she has brought her Olivier Award-nominated play *Dickens' Women* to Chicago Shakespeare Theater through Dec. 22 as part of its World's Stage series. Chicago is the last city of Margolyes' 10-month tour of *Dickens' Women* across the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and North America to time with the 200th anniversary of author Charles Dickens' birth.

"I am passionately addicted to Charles Dickens—the man, the characters, the books, the prose," Margolyes said. "He's been really the main man in my life, I suppose."

Margolyes traced her obsession to Dickens when she first read *Oliver Twist* at age 11. She also seriously studied Dickens at Newnham College Cambridge.

"I wanted for many years to try and find a way of putting (Dickens) on stage," Margolyes said. "Finally I got together with a colleague from work, Sonia Fraser—we were both work-

ing together in radio for the BBC—we devised it together."

Originally, *Dickens' Women* wasn't meant to be a one-woman show, but after a fellow actor dropped out, Fraser and Margolyes reconfigured the piece out of necessity. *Dickens' Women* originally played in 1989 at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and later transferred to London.

Throughout the show, often with piano accompaniment, Margolyes uses Dickens' very dramatic textual dialogue to bring to life iconic characters like Mrs. Micawber from *David Copperfield* and the disturbing Mrs. Gamp from *Martin Chuzzlewit*. These characters are included with many biographical Dickens facts about the real women in his life.

When asked which Dickens character was her favorite, Margolyes settled on the embittered and jilted bride Miss Havisham from *Great Expectations*.

"She wasn't always my favorite, but she has become so as an iconic figure of pathos, malice, misery, resignation and revenge," Margolyes said.

Unlike Miss Havisham's unhappy fate, Margolyes has had a 44-year relationship with a retired Australian academic whom she asks not to name. However, though Margolyes has been publicly open about her sexuality throughout her career, she has controversially stated her opinion that LGBT people shouldn't always come out to everybody.

"I think it's an indulgence," she said. "I get very irritated with people who feel they have an entitlement to throw their entire family into misery because they want to express that they're



Miriam Margolyes. Photo by Prudence Upton

gay. If you think people are going to find it difficult, don't tell them."

Margolyes knows that this view is very unpopular with the current LGBT activist push for people to not be closeted. But her opinion stems from her own family trauma when her beloved Jewish mother suffered a stroke a few days after

Margolyes came out to her in the late 1960s.

"I believe things have gotten much better and of course, I hope for everybody to be able to express their love openly and freely," Margolyes said. "But some people can't cope with it."

As she winds down her world tour of *Dickens' Women*, Margolyes is looking forward to developing a new stage piece based upon the *Pickwick Papers* with actor/writer Simon Callow and appearing in the second series of the Australian TV show *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*. They're projects that just add to Margolyes long career that includes playing Professor Sprout in *Harry Potter* movies to the role of Madame Morrible in the West End and later Broadway production of *Wicked*.

"I've done a variety of things that a variety of people have seen," Margolyes said, pleased that it isn't just one thing that people instantly recognize her from.

"I'm a fat, old, not very gorgeous-looking woman," Margolyes said, not allowing me to interrupt. "I won't say I'm ugly because I don't think I'm ugly, but I've managed to make a career in theater and film which I think is quite encouraging because people say, 'Oh you can't make a career unless you're gorgeous.'"

And Margolyes warns that the Chicago run of *Dickens' Women* may be her very last outing performing the piece, especially after such a long tour.

"I'm quite old to be touring—I'm 71—and it doesn't get easier, I will say that," Margolyes said. "But I very much enjoy meeting new people and doing my genealogy and finding new relatives everywhere. I love doing my family tree which I've been doing for the past 25 years."

Miriam Margolyes in *Dickens' Women* continues through Saturday, Dec. 22, at Chicago Shakespeare Theater's Upstairs Theatre, 800 E. Grand Ave. Remaining performances are 7:30 p.m. Dec. 19-21 and at 3 and 8 p.m. Dec. 22. Tickets are \$50-\$60; call 312-595-5600 or visit www.chicagoshakes.com.

SPOTLIGHT



The late gay songwriter and playwright Lionel Bart changed the face of British musical theatre with his 1960s musical *Oliver!*, based upon Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*. So in a season of *A Christmas Carols*, Light Opera Works presents an alternative Dickens stage adaptation filled with catchy tunes ranging from "Consider Yourself" to "Food, Glorious Food." *Oliver!* plays Dec. 22-31 at Northwestern University's Cahn Auditorium, 600 Emerson St., Evanston. Performances are at 8 p.m. Dec. 22, 28, 29 and 31 with 2 p.m. matinees Dec. 23, 26, 27, 29 and 30. Call 847-920-5360 or visit www.lightoperaworks.com. Photo by Rich Foreman



THEATER REVIEW

Over My Dead Body

Playwright: material arranged by the Waltzing Mechanics ensemble
At: the Waltzing Mechanics at the Greenhouse, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.
Tickets: 773-404-7336;
www.greenhousetheatre.org; \$20-\$25
Runs through: Jan. 6

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Don't let the title fool you—this is not some Joe Orton-styled spoof of funeral customs, nor a sentimental speculation on life beyond the grave à la *Spoon River Anthology*. The Waltzing Mechanics' stock-in-trade is something that could be called roman *retrouve*—documentary narratives forged from "found" material (e.g. occurrences on a single line of Chicago's EL train) or interviews conducted with witnesses to a particular event. The topic under focus in this case is the still-unresolved fate of St. Johannes Cemetery, slated for demolition since 2001 in order to make room for expansion of O'Hare Airport.

At the center of the turmoil are the descendants of those interred in the graveyard abutting Bensenville's St. John's United Church of Christ, incensed at the indifference shown by the City of Chicago regarding the physical and psychological distress this decision precipitates. Their arguments encompass the history of land now occupied by the international transport

hub—how a WWII airplane factory's landing strip, then called Orchard Field (abbreviated ORD to this day), came to swallow the surrounding farms. The discussion also explores the practices of post-industrial societies regarding disposition of earthly remains: the graves beneath Lincoln Park bereft of their markers, the destruction of family tombs in the Chinese revolution, the crowding of columbariums housing crematory urns—even such exotic high-tech solutions as Facebook's "memorial web-pages" or the incorporation of ashes into memento-mori art.

Lance Hill, Shariba Rivers and Keely Leonard each play one of the St. Johannes deceased, who grow increasingly worn and tattered as they are shifted from one bureaucracy-mandated repository to another, and Bryan Campbell makes an earnest advocate for citizens seeking to protect their ancestors. This leaves the portrayal of 19 characters to the ensemble's six remaining members. Projecting the name of each scene's speaker on a small screen in the upper corner of the stage helps to distinguish them, but the array of identities still sometimes blurs under the weight of information stretching the show's running time to 90 minutes.

If the Mechanics' efforts to provoke contemplation of our own final rests occasionally become protracted, however, the empathy they engender puts a human face on the conflict between reverence for the dead and progress for the living. "They're Moving Father's Grave To Build A Sewer" isn't just an Irish pub song, you know.

Kinsey Sicks Dec. 20

The "dragapella" group Kinsey Sicks will return to Chicago, performing "Oy Vey in a Manger" at 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 20, at the Mayne Stage, 1328 W. Morse Ave.

According to a press release, "In Oy Vey in a Manger, we find Rachel, Winnie, Trixie and

Tramplina trying to sell off their manger before it's foreclosed upon. Crises arise, secrets are revealed, Jewish-Gentile tensions surface and mayhem ensues—all in glorious four-part harmony."

Tickets are \$25-\$35; visit www.maynestage.com or call 773-381-4551 for more information.

THEATER REVIEW

The Glass Menagerie

Playwright: Tennessee Williams
At: Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company at Angel Island, 935 W. Sheridan Rd.
Tickets: 773-871-0442;
www.maryarchie.com; \$25
Runs through: Jan. 20

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The stage looks like the tasting room of an abandoned winery: everywhere we look is glass—bottles, decanters, goblets, sniffers, globes, mirrors, on the floor, on the stairs, on the boxes and other detritus of a subterranean basement refuge. It is our first clue that what we are about to see is no conventional Theater 101 interpretation of the popular Tennessee Williams drama. Our second is the bearded, shabby, probably homeless, man who enters to warn us that he brings "truth in the pleasant disguise of an illusion."

You won't find a single classroom cliché anywhere in Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company's astonishing production, which restores the expressionistic motifs incorporated into the text by the author to conjure romantic poignancy long neglected under small budgets and imaginations. A bare wall becomes the screen for our narrator's cinematic fantasies (accompanied by title cards and nickelodeon music), while a faded tobacco advertisement thereon supplies the portrait of the Wingfield family's absent father. What we most notice, though, is that in this play composed of "memories," characters appear in isolation, facing us full-front even as they speak to one another. Only in the final scene, with the entrance of the stranger who will disrupt their reclusive dynamic, can they be said to interact.

Grant Sabin's scenic design in the cozy Angel Island extends the play's environment out into the audience area to immerse us in our dramatic universe, as does Daniel Knox's score of ambient music, and Arianna Soloway's hypnotic glassware arrangements invoke a dreamlike dazzle. In the role of the shy Laura Wingfield, Joanna Dubach rejects the standard porcelain-barbie persona to convey an



The Glass Menagerie. Image by Fred Bledsoe Photography

intensity bespeaking potential rendered all the more tragic by its impeded growth, while Maggie Cain endows the dominating Amanda Wingfield with wholly viable concerns beneath her absurd solutions, and Walter Briggs projects just the right level of dogged serenity as the optimistic Jim O'Conner.

The adhesive keeping the action cohesive and coherent for every second of the two-hour (with one intermission) running time, however, is expat Mary-Arrchie alumnus Hans Fleischmann, in the dual role of director and actor, delivering a vigorous performance as the restless Tom Wingfield. No matter how many times you may have seen this classic, no matter how familiar with its every nuance you may think yourself, you will never again view it as in this haunting and fully realized reconception.

CULTURE CLUB

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Pictured: Mark L. Montgomery and Kate Fry. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

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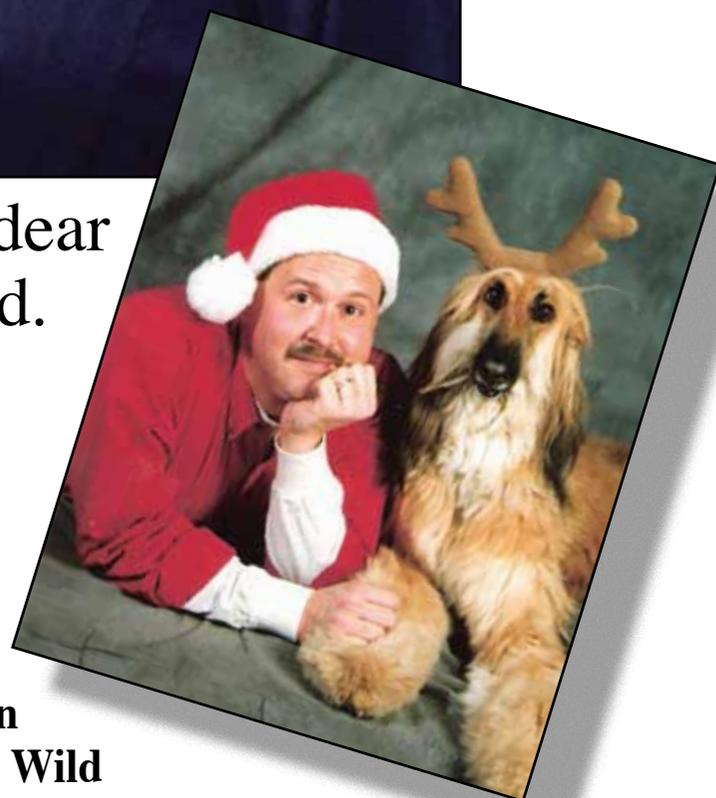


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For Memorial Information email: MomoMemorial@gmail.com





The Letters. Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW The Letters

Playwright: John W. Lowell
At: Writers' Theatre at Books on Vernon, 664 Vernon Ave., Glencoe
Tickets: 847-242-6000;
www.writerstheatre.org; \$35-\$70
Runs through: March 3

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The instant that actress Kate Fry uncomfortably walks onstage with a worried look in her eye, you know that you're in for a tense drama with Writers' Theatre's Midwest premiere of John W. Lowell's 2009 drama *The Letters*.

Fry plays an archivist editor named Anna, who works in an unnamed Soviet Union city in 1931. With framed portraits of Soviet leaders Lenin and Stalin looming large in Jack Magaw's austere office set, you're instantly guessing that Anna is the mouse who has unwillingly entered the cat's den.

Sure enough, The Director (a swaggering Mark L. Montgomery) soon bounds in with some initially good news of promotion for Anna. But we soon find out that The Director is really out to extract some crucial information from Anna.

It seems that some duplicate copies of historical and sexually explicit letters by "the nation's most famous composer" have been made, and The Director is sparing no means necessary to stop them from leaving the country and tarnishing the nation's cultural reputation around the

world. (It's safe to guess that the composer is Tchaikovsky, since it is known that 20th-century Soviet censors did their utmost to erase his homosexuality from biographies and other historical records.)

So what's on display with *The Letters* is a tightly wound confrontation where Fry's Anna is desperately second-guessing her responses to the interrogations of Montgomery's increasingly aggravated and worked-up Director. It's a battle of power and wits that richly draws the audience in thanks to Lowell's finely plotted writing and the artistic forces of Writers' Theatre who bring the play vividly to life.

Director Kimberly Senior skillfully guides her actors through the text's nervous and angry emotions. Senior also smartly stages the production with the audience on two sides of the action, so we're there to be the constant spying observers of the characters who are forever in fear that they're being watched and followed.

Although *The Letters* only features two actors, Lowell's play conjures up a whole community of co-workers and family who become intrinsically part of the drama. The sound-effects design of Christopher Kriz also aids to the intensity, giving a sometimes ominous suggestion of outside people who are waiting to charge the two characters who are doing their utmost to either conceal or expose vital information.

With *The Letters*, Writers' Theatre definitely has an intimate and dramatic winner on its hands. Audiences who love suspense and psychological dynamics shouldn't miss it.

THEATER REVIEW

The School of Lies

Playwright: adapted by David Ives
from the play by Molière
At: Chicago Shakespeare Theatre
at Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave.
Tickets: 312-595-5600;
www.chicagoshakes.com; \$48-\$78
Runs through: Jan. 20

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

There are three ways you can get away with saying ribald, vulgar, potty-mouth things in polite company, and that is to say them: 1) in Latin, 2) in French or 3) in verse. David Ives says them all of these ways in his adaptation of Molière's *The Misanthrope*, which also scrambles Shakespeare, Chekhov, Keats, several American cities and a transvestite-ex-machina into his ostensibly 18th-century milieu.

Classics scholars will recognize little of the Molière original beyond its premise in the production currently occupying the Chicago Shakespeare mainstage. Yes, we have a protagonist—appropriately named "Frank"—who insists on speaking only the unvarnished truth, and yes, he is surrounded by frivolous socialites who delight in gossip, hypocrisy and slander. What sets the plot in motion, however, is his spurious claim—intended to illustrate the evils of idle rumor—that his best friend, Philinte, is a cross-dresser. His buddy responds with not one, but two fibs—telling Frank that flirtatious widow Celimene adores his grouchiness, and informing that same lady that Frank is a well-connected aristocrat. What could go wrong?

What could easily go wrong with this brand of screwball comedy is for the road-runner pace to flag or the artificial dialogue lose its flow. The delights of heroic couplets rhyming "dump" "trump" and "sump-pump," or alliterations like "blue-footed boobies on a bay of bliss" wear thin when contemplated at excessive length, as do such anachronisms

as "LOL" and "dude" delivered in iambic pentameter and the humor of a character called "Clitander" being addressed as "Clitoris." (On the other hand, the trials of a servant passing canapés to increasingly agitated guests never ceases to pull laughs.)

Fortunately, director Barbara Gaines and movement consultant Rick Sordelet have



The School of Lies. Photo by Liz Lauren

drilled their acting ensemble so that they scamper through their slapstick hijinks with the agility and grace of Olympic gymnasts, even while swathed in several pounds of Susan E. Mickey's quivering fringes and ribbons in popsicle colors. Daniel Ostling's scenic design allows plenty of room for athletic antics (did I mention Celimene's mocking impressions of wannabe hip-hoppers and Valley girls?), its dominating motif a massive chandelier that, contrary to our Phantom-fueled expectations, does *not* fall on our heads.

Academics may grumble at the liberties Ives takes in the configuration of his madcap text, but the fun he obviously had writing it cannot help but infect those viewing it as well.

CRITICS' PICKS

The Chimes, Remy Bumpo Theatre Company at Greenhouse Theater, through Dec. 31. There's no lack of Christmas Carols at this time of year, but Charles Dickens' lesser-known New Year's Day fable is being offered by Remy Bumpo in a solo performance by artistic director Nick Sandys. **MSB**

Metamorphoses, Lookingglass Theatre, through Jan. 6; Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of myths old (mostly) and new remains a visual feast and a dream-like, sensual experience with a fine balance of humor, sentiment, sexiness and surprise. Add a show to your Boul Mich shopping. **JA**

Superior Donuts, Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company at Royal George Theatre, through Dec. 31. Tracy Letts' most optimistic play has finally found the perfect location for its celebration of the American Dream as symbolized by a humble doughnut in an economically changing Uptown. **MSB**

We Three Lizas, About Face Theatre at Steppenwolf Garage, through Dec. 22. A wonderfully campy send-up of *A Christmas Carol* involving a magically powerful drag queen, a paranoid gay designer and his lesbian assistant and of course, the amazing title show-stopping entertainer in three guises. **SCM**

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

'TapMan' to run in Skokie in Jan.

TapMan Productions, LLC begins its inaugural season with *TapMan: Origin*, performing Jan. 4, 11, 18 and 25 at 7:30 p.m. at Gorilla Tango's newly renovated Skokie Theater, 7924 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie.

After consuming a secret formula to impress a girl in his dance class, a lovelorn scientist gains super-tap-dancing powers that he uses to fight crime as his alter-ego, TapMan.

Tickets are \$15; visit www.GorillaTango.com or call 847-677-7761.

'Straight and Narrow' at Stage 773 Dec. 27

The Straight and Narrow—a comedy about four people who sign up for a two-day "gay-conversion" seminar—will take place Thursday, Dec. 27, at 8 p.m. at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Jane Blackburn Hammer and Tyler Gillespie wrote "Narrow," while Carol Bontekoe (who's also one of the actors in the production) is directing.

This production is for mature audiences only.

Admission is \$12 (\$10 for students); see TheStraightandNarrowShow.tumblr.com or www.Stage773.com, or call 773-327-5252.

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Wanted: Older, funny lesbians

BY ROSS FORMAN

Iris Golden has spent much of her career helping others land jobs, including the last 33 years as the owner of an executive search company: Golden Global Services, LLC.

Now her search is for laughs—more laughs, that is.

Golden is searching for lesbian comedians who are at least 50 for a sketch comedy and improv group. Auditions are Dec. 19-20 (6-8 p.m.) and Jan. 5-6 (2-4 p.m.) at the Center on Halsted in Lakeview.

“This is just for people to be able to come in and, through comedy, sort of say what they want to say—about society, politics, etc.,” said Golden, 75, who lives in Chicago’s Gold Coast neighborhood with her partner of 42 years, Leda Golden.

“The format of the show will be: the first half will be set scenes, sketches and more; the second half of the show will be open to audience suggestions and be pure improv,” she added.

The production will be called DNR, short for “Do Not Resuscitate,” she said.

Golden herself performed years ago and attended Second City workshops. She also has written for TV in her past.

“I think men have more outlets for their creativity; I don’t think women get as many of the same opportunities,” said Golden, who has experience with a performing group and also was a network TV writer.

Her day job has Golden representing many Fortune 50 and Fortune 100 companies—and retirement isn’t even an option for her.

“I can’t imagine retiring; I love it too much,” Golden said. “When I finally [die], I’ll probably be sitting at my desk with my headphones on.”



Iris Golden. Photo by Hal Baim

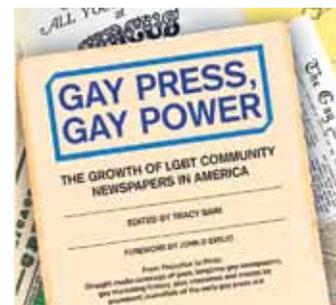
New book examines history of gay press

Chicago—As LGBT individuals became more visible in the 1950s and 1960s, the mainstream media perpetuated the attitude that they were mentally ill and morally depraved queers, freaks, degenerates, perverts, misfits and even threats to national security. In many cities, the police raided gay bars, harassing and arresting patrons.

Community-based gay newsletters and newspapers emerged to counteract the distorted view of non-heterosexuals and to support the rising gay-rights movement. They addressed gay issues, formed a sense of unity, announced demonstrations, and tracked the progress of legal and political action.

Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America, edited and co-written by Tracy Baim, publisher of Chicago’s gay publication Windy City Times, is a comprehensive overview of the past, present and future of gay print media. Baim uses essays, interviews and hundreds of news clips and images from both mainstream and early gay publications to describe the critical role of the gay press. Award-winning historian John D’Emilio provided the book’s foreword.

Part One covers the history of discrimination against non-heterosexuals throughout the 20th century and the birth of gay and lesbian publications, including Friendship & Freedom, Vice Versa, ONE, Mattachine Review, and The Ladder. Most of the publications during the turbulent 1960s and 1970s were produced on small budgets by gay societies or activists and volunteers. Many were short-lived, but others were catalysts for tolerance and acceptance. Gradually, the mainstream



media became more supportive of gay rights.

Part Two is a series of essays by and about journalists who documented the gay movement, recounting their experiences and providing observations and insights.

Part Three features the history of 10 gay publications in 10 major cities as told by their publishers, editors or reporters. Each one represents the challenges, risks, and struggles to survive that were common among almost all gay periodicals.

Part Four focuses on the business of gay publications. Initially, funding came from subscribers and classified ads since advertisers were reluctant to buy display ads-until they realized the growing gay population was a potentially profitable untapped market. Many major brands, retail stores, restaurant chains and service providers began targeting the gay community through its publications and even in some mainstream magazines.

Part Five reflects on the contribution of the gay press, yet debates its value as a source of news and advocacy in the era of the Internet, social media, and the economics of print media.

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Joffrey Dancers: Fabrice Calmels, Victoria Jaiani. Photo by: Herbert Migdoll

NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Tegan talks about Sara, new music, marriage

BY JERRY NUNN

Tegan and Sara Quin are twin lesbian sisters from Canada with an ear for indie rock. Born in Calgary, Alberta, they began writing songs and playing guitars at 15. They have released albums independently ever since, with new record, *Heartthrob*, coming out in January. They appeared this year on the television show *90210*, performing "Closer" the first single from this album.

During their down time, the duo expanded into the dance world a bit, working with Tiesto, Morgan Page and David Guetta on various tracks.

We tracked down Tegan to chat a bit before their upcoming concert in Chicago.

Windy City Times: Hi, Tegan. I interviewed Sara for the album *Sainthood* back in 2009 so I am excited to talk to you about *Heartthrob* now.

Tegan Quin: Oh, sweet. That's awesome!

WCT: First off, where is your name from? Do you know any other Tegans in the world?

TQ: I meet a million Tegans now. I meet a lot of babies, dogs and cats named after me but when I was growing up I never met another Tegan.

My parents named me from an unusual baby-names book. It is a Welsh name.

WCT: *Heartthrob* is a love-themed album about relationships?

TQ: Yeah, I like to think so. In the past we have featured love, but more in the devastated-rejected-unrequited part of love. I think that *Heartthrob* is different. Songs like "Closer" "Drove Me Wild" and "Love They Say" are actually written about meeting someone and falling in love. Before you actually close the deal while staying close to the person you like is what these songs are about, not moving into together and arguing about taxes or retirement savings accounts. Love before complications.



Tegan and Sara.
Photo by Lindsey Byrnes

There are those songs on the record, there is still heartbreak and rejected songs, but I think the direction of thinking is more empowered and strong. Sara has been joking that when she wrote "Now I'm All Messed Up" and "How Come You Don't Want Me," these songs are almost like power ballads. She says she was writing these for singers like Alicia Keys. She is speaking in a way that she has never spoken before. I don't think we held much back. I think it is still in the same universe as past records but I think it's definitely a fresh start.

WCT: Things must reflect that you are both

doing well in relationships right now. There's gay marriage in Canada...

TQ: Are you asking me if I'm getting married? [Both laugh.]

WCT: Maybe!

TQ: Gay marriage has been Canada for a really long time, Jerry, so stop pressuring me, okay! Did my girlfriend call you and tell you to ask me this? Just kidding...

WCT: She tweeted me.

TQ: She did? Because she hates marriage as much as I do. No, really—Sara and I are at a time in our lives where we are beginning to think about the rest of our lives. I do what I do because I love to write, travel and reach people. As cheesy as it sounds, I love that we bring such purpose and understanding to our fans. We have a kind of fringe-type fans that find a lot of solace in our music. I think our music, goals, and career are now changing because we are in our thirties. There are different things ahead of us than when we were in our twenties.

WCT: Your live show is an experience and not just a typical concert.

TQ: It is an experience. Sara and I knew from very early on in our career that in order to survive and make a living we would have to tour. This was before record sales, in general, had dropped and everyone had to tour. We just needed that because we were not a mainstream commercial band. We had to tour, and that meant we would have to be interesting. That hour and a half onstage is not just for us. We want to make everyone feel special. So thank you for noticing.

WCT: Will there be a video for "Closer" coming out soon?

TQ: It leaked yesterday so it should be out a week from now. In the next couple of hours it will be announced officially.

WCT: How did the shoot go?

TQ: It was really neat. The video is exactly what I have been talking about with the time before real romance, when you have a different kind of crush everyday. So the video is trying to capture that peaceful nostalgia of our youth.

It looks like we are all having a great time and it was a cool autumn evening, but it was actually 110 degrees and we were in the valley of Los Angeles. I'm sure all the extras hated us plenty: "Those fucking bitches should have booked a house with air conditioning!"

WCT: After working with Morgan Page and David Guetta, is there some dance-influenced work on this album?

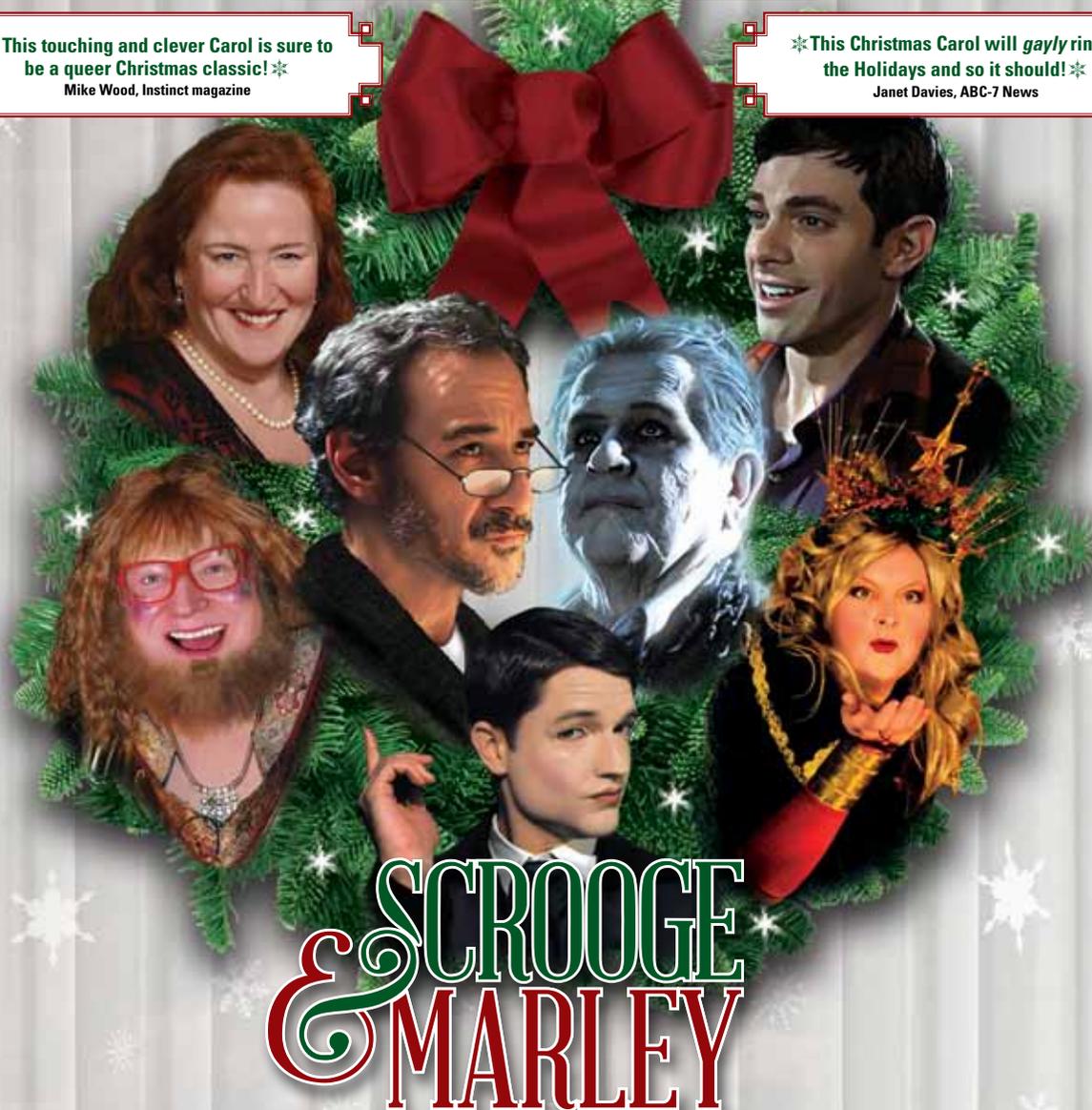
TQ: There is a little, with one track fitting in the same realm. We are definitely wary of saying dance. We are not a dance band. Even "Closer" has a rocking vibe. Our influences are more pop-and-rock-based. It is definitely a pop record out of everything we have ever done but at its core it's still quintessential Tegan and Sara. It is love songs, heartbreak, emotion and romance. I think every single song on the record could be stripped down to an acoustic guitar. It is a current record with '80s and late-'90s elements thrown in as well.

Tegan and Sara open for The Killers at UIC Pavilion, 525 S. Racine Ave. on Friday, Dec. 21, at 8 p.m. For more on the two, try www.teganandsara.com. There's also a separate show Wed., Dec. 19, at the Cubby Bear, 1059 W. Addison Ave., at 7 p.m.; see www.cubbybear.com.

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Alonso Duralde, author, "Have Yourself a Movie Little Christmas"

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Mike Wood, Instinct magazine

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Janet Davies, ABC-7 News



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NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Having 'fun.' with band member Jack Antonoff



BY JERRY NUNN

The pop band fun. burst onto the scene with only its second album *Some Nights* reaching platinum status. Boosted by the power of *Glee* after Grammy-nominated fun.'s song "We Are Young" was featured on the hit Fox television show, the tune went on to reach number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100.

The group became a trio made up of Nate Ruess, Andrew Dost and Jack Antonoff after coming together from their respective bands. The title track has a completely different sound and has done well, and the band recently performed the song on *Saturday Night Live*.

With a recent concert in Chicago, fun. donated a dollar of every ticket sale to the fight for gay rights; the band also held a booth for the pro-LGBT organization the Ally Coalition in the lobby to encourage patrons to help with the cause.

Windy City Times went backstage to talk with band member Antonoff to find out about them fighting for our team and how they have so fun.

Windy City Times: Hi, Jack, nice to meet you. Where are you from?

Jack Antonoff: I'm from Jersey and the New York area.

WCT: How was the devastation with the hurricane [Sandy]?

JA: Not bad for me. I got pretty lucky.

WCT: You began your career in a punk band?

JA: Yes; in Jersey it was a really cool scene in the mid-to-late '90s.

WCT: Was it a rocking band that you joined right after that?

JA: Steel Train was kind of like a Springsteen band.

WCT: How did you meet the other guys in fun.?

JA: We were all touring together. Back in the day we would be on a package tour with five other bands traveling all around each doing 30 minutes. That was how it was done.

Andrew had a band called Anathallo, Nate had a group called The Format and I had Steel Train. In 2004, it was the first time Nate and I had been on tour together; then all three of us were on tour in separate bands together in 2006. When you are 18 and in high school, a lot of people start a band but the years go on and people are weeded out. It becomes clear who is going to be seriously doing this. The three of us kept at it. We kept tabs on each other. Nate's band broke up in 2008 and he called us and wanted to do it. We flew to New Jersey the next day and haven't left since.

WCT: Did it just feel right coming together as a group?

JA: It took a minute because we were the alpha personalities of each of our bands. It could have been a one-plus-one-plus-one-equals-zero kind of situation, but we found the formula. It's been great.

WCT: When did you know "We Are Young" was going to blow up?

JA: Not until everyone else did. We had never really had singles before that. We did the song and everyone was very excited about it. It was on *Glee* and started to sell then really took off.

I think it had been number one for four weeks and I remember being in a car with some friends in Florida. They were playing it on the radio. I asked if it was a hit on the label and they said they had sold 4 million copies so far! That just shows the way we think. We are so insular and inside of it. We didn't even hear it on the radio until months after it came out because we were on tour on the bus. We didn't have the experience that everyone else did. We didn't hear it in a bar, or sports event or on TV. Our experience



The band fun., including Jack Antonoff (right). Photo by Lindsey Byrnes

led us to be the last to find out.

WCT: The fans have gotten crazier though, haven't they?

JA: Now that is noticeable! But we have great fans that kind of freak out for all of our songs.

WCT: So you have some longtime fans.

JA: Yes, we have been at it for a while.

WCT: How did you hook up with Janelle Monae for "We Are Young?"

JA: Our producer played her the song and she loved it. One thing led to another and she wanted to be a part of it purely as a fan, but now is featured on the track.

Turn to page 23

* A sweet and distinctive spin on a holiday standard.*
Alonso Duralde, author, "Have Yourself a Movie Little Christmas"

* This touching and clever Carol is sure to be a queer Christmas classic! *
Mike Wood, *Instinct* magazine

* This Christmas Carol will gayly ring in the Holidays and so it should! *
Janet Davies, ABC-7 News

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT, JR.

Les Miserables; film notes

Les Miserables is nearly the last of the 1980s Broadway musical juggernauts to finally make it to the big screen. (*Cats* and *Miss Saigon* have yet to go under the lens.)

Based on the Victor Hugo novel, the material has been the basis for dozens of film adaptations, and the musical version has been a worldwide sensation for nigh on 30 years. Like many of its '80s counterparts, *Les Miz* is sung-through and noted for its signature, gimmicky set piece—the gigantic turntable that slowly spins, creating an “epic” feel in the theater. (*Phantom's* was the chandelier, *Miss Saigon's* the helicopter and *Sunset Boulevard's* the mansion staircase.) Although the turntable isn't retained for the film version—which stars Hugh Jackman, Anne Hathaway, Russell Crowe, Amanda Seyfried, Sacha Baron Cohen and Helena Bonham Carter—everything else apparently was.

The movie, which clocks in at 160 minutes, feels just as long and meandering as the stage counterpart, and by its end you feel as if you've been mentally turning that treadmill as long as Jean Valjean has been on the lam. Director Tom Hooper—hot after his crowd-pleasing, Oscar-winning 2010 film *The King's Speech*—has taken the reins of this sodden behemoth and visually reduced it to its essence: a somber chamber piece in which the gaggle of leading characters sing a series of melodically pretty and lyrically simplistic songs to one another. I love musicals and several of the songs in this score, but *Les Miz* has always felt like an endurance test to me—the way that sitting through opera sometimes does—and Hooper's decision to film the numbers in handheld close-ups just about did me in.

Jackman plays Valjean, a decent man convicted and bound in chains for 19 years for stealing a loaf of bread in 19th-century France. Fate intercedes and Valjean escapes from prison and the daily brutalities of Inspector Javert (Crowe); Valjean then invents a new life for himself as a prosperous factory owner. Inadvertently, he causes the luckless Fantine (Hathaway) to lose her job, thus condemning her to a life of prostitution and leading to her demise. Discovering his mistake, Valjean makes a deathbed promise to Fantine that he will raise her daughter, Cosette, as his own. Darling Cosette (for whom the term “waif” was born) is subjected to innumerable cruelties by the lewd and corrupt tavern owners Thenadier (Baron Cohen) and his slattern of a wife (Bonham Carter).

These two characters, variations on Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett, headline the musical's one real chorus number, “Master of the House” (itself a sort of variation on “Oom Pah Pah” from *Oliver!*). The comic relief arrives in the nick of time as by then we have had more than enough of Hooper's aforementioned decision to shoot the songs handheld in close-up (and live, to boot). This isn't the stylized world of *Chicago*, *Hairspray* or *Rent*. This is a warts-and-all (and bad-teeth) approach from the get-go, and Hooper makes sure we see the blood, sweat, tears and plenty of snot running from the noses of his characters



Above: Russell Crowe (left) and Hugh Jackman in *Les Miserables*. Below: Anne Hathaway. Photos by Laurie Sparham

as they sing of regret and loss, gasping for air and, no doubt, trying to keep the phlegm from spewing on the cameraman hovering a foot away in the process.

The most famous of these ballads, of course, is Fantine's “I Dreamed a Dream,” which Patti LuPone gorgeously inaugurated in the London production in 1985 and which got new life when Susan Boyle sang it on live television and became a worldwide sensation overnight. Hathaway gives it her all as she nobly reduces herself to a walking, bereft corpse, never missing a note during the dehumanizing montage that accompanies it. But one ends up admiring the actress's willingness to plumb the depths (not to mention, bravely allowing herself to be shorn on camera) rather than the performance itself. It's a Hilary Swank-ish role—you applaud Ha-



thaway's determination and resilience but it's nowhere as emotionally complex as her work in *The Dark Knight Rises* or, certainly, *Rachel Getting Married* (although Oscar voters love awarding this kind of effort).

Hathaway beautifully expires and we are left with Valjean raising Cosette, who grows into the golden-haired Seyfried, who falls in love with Marius (Eddie Redmayne). Marius is the earnest student revolutionary who, in turn, is loved by Eponine (Samantha Barks), the grown-up daughter of Thenadier and his wife who is given the musical's other blockbuster ballad, “On My Own” (shot with yet more handheld close ups but less snot).

Meanwhile, nasty Javert (Crowe's rather intense tenor matches the stern character rather nicely) has picked up Valjean's scent and is in hot pursuit once again. (There's more than a hint of a homoerotic undercurrent here.) Javert vows he'll never give up the chase—that is, until he witnesses yet another selfless act by

Valjean: rescuing Marius from certain death after the student revolution has failed while singing the show's 11 o'clock number “Bring Him Home.”

Jackman is a certified musical stage star with the Tony to prove it—but the number is unfortunately situated in his reedy upper register. The decision to do the singing live emphasizes that and instead of being emotionally moved, one is aware of Jackman's struggle to hit the notes.

The pretty melodies and air of doom and gloom continue for another 30 minutes (with a tad more comic relief from Sacha and Helena tossed in) until we finally, finally get to the finale, in which several of the characters presumably meet up in heaven and start all over again. The French translation for *Les Miserables* is “the mis-erables”—which also aptly described, no doubt, large portions of the audience sitting through the stage version. But at least the stage version allowed the eye to roam around the theater when relief was needed. After Hooper's sweeping opening—which raises expectations that are never again met—the rest all seems to be shot in one crowded alleyway or up the nostrils of the leading characters. Ironically, the grandly scaled *Les Miserables* may be the first epic-sized musical that leaves one feeling claustrophobic.

Film notes:

—**A second helping of Hobbits:** Last week I reported on the dreadful effect of director Peter Jackson's wrongheaded decision to film *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* in the super-realistic 48-frames-per-second aspect ratio (as opposed to the norm, 24 frames per second). As if 3D isn't bad enough (and the process adds nothing to the movie), the result of this supposed technical advance makes everything on-screen—no matter how insignificant—look as if it were shot using a video camera circa 1989.

However—and it's a big however—a return trip to Tolkienland has eased a lot of this visual damage for me. Taking the movie in again in the standard 24fps (albeit still with that headache-inducing, superfluous 3D) allows one to focus on the story at hand, become immersed in the mythical Middle-earth and its fantastic inhabitants, and discover the many pleasures to be found in Jackson's movie. Although the film is still way too long-winded, especially in its first section, this second helping of *Hobbits* felt in many ways like I was seeing the movie for the first time.

—**New Year's Eve for movie lovers:** Get ready to set sail for the fifth annual Camp Midnight presentation of the camptacular 1972 disaster flick *The Poseidon Adventure* (celebrating its 40th anniversary) on Monday, Dec. 31, at the

Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave. Dick O'Day (my alter ego) will captain our filmgoing passengers on a pre-show voyage (beginning at 11 p.m.) that includes party favors, a champagne toast, comp drink ticket, '70s cruisewear costume contest (with prizes) and an interactive screening guide. I'll be joined by David Cerda, artistic director of Handbag Productions, to provide running commentary throughout the film. The screening will be timed so that theater patrons and their celluloid counterparts will celebrate midnight at the exact same time. What more could a camp movie enthusiast ask for? www.musicboxtheatre.com

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

Golden Globe nods hold some surprises

The Golden Globe Award nominations were announced Dec. 13—and, true to form, there were surprises.

The little-seen movie *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen*, a comedic drama from last spring with Emily Blunt and Ewan McGregor (both of whom got nods), scored multiple nominations. In addition, Jack Black received a best actor in a comedy nod for his role in *Bernie*, which co-stars Shirley Maclaine.

However, some films and actors were expected to receive nominations, and did. Those included the movies *Lincoln*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Argo* and *Life of Pi*, and actors such as Hugh Jackman (*Les Miserables*), Helen Mirren (*Hitchcock*) and Daniel Day-Lewis (*Lincoln*).

Regarding TV nods, there were the usual suspects, including *Breaking Bad*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Downton Abbey*, *Homeland* and *The Newsroom* receiving nominations for best drama. *Smash*, *Girls* and *Episodes* were the newcomers to the best comedy/musical category, which also includes *The Big Bang Theory* (starring out actor Jim Parsons) and *Modern Family*.

TV-related shockers included the omission of *Game of Thrones* and *Mad Men* from the Best Drama category.

The Globes telecast will air Friday, Jan. 13, on NBC, with Amy Poehler and Tina Fey co-hosting.

FUN. from page 21

WCT: Who's singing it tonight?

JA: We do it without her.
WCT: The song "Some Nights" has done very well, also.
JA: That has been exciting.

WCT: I'm sure the pressure was to come up with another hit single. This song doesn't sound the same at all.

JA: There's a flip side to everything great that happens. "We Are Young" was this huge hit song that was amazing but right after comes the thought that we might be a one-hit wonder. "Some Nights" doing well has almost been more exciting for us.

WCT: I'm sure it is and you can enjoy it more.

JA: Yeah.
WCT: "Carry On" is the new single. That has a lot of potential.

JA: To me, it is the most transcending song that we have. It can reach the most people and has a message that most people can relate to, internalize and make their own. It has the potential to get to the most people.

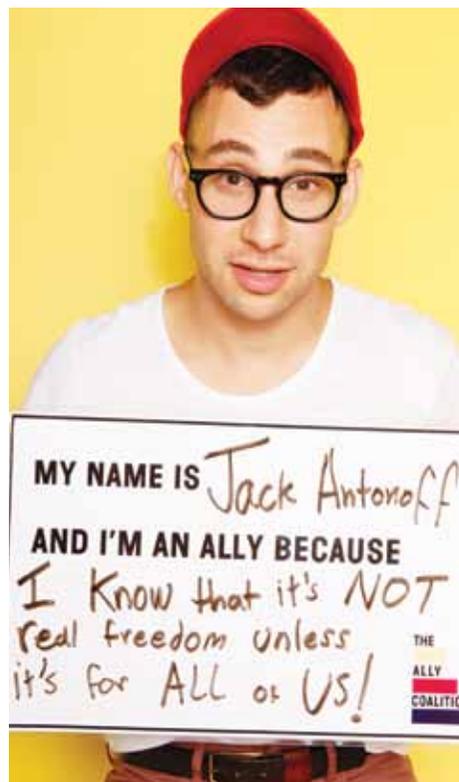
WCT: It seems to have an anti-bullying or "stop suicide" message to it.

JA: Yes, the concept of "when you are lost and alone sinking like a stone, carry on" is truly broad for anyone going through anything in their life. It is really a statement about picking up and moving on, not being put down, and not taking it.

WCT: I read that you blogged on the Huffington Post about gay rights. What made you such a supporter of gay rights?

JA: Well, just being a human being; I think that everyone should be. We are, unfortunately, in the middle of a major human-rights issue. To me, we are standing up for it or quietly letting it happen.

You think back to African-American civil rights and I remember asking my grandfather what he



Jack Antonoff. Photo by Lindsey Byrnes

did when Black people had [fewer] rights and hearing him talk about Martin Luther King. He risked his job because of his stance. It is inspiring stories and now—living in the future after all of this has happened—you realize that this changed the course of the future. How horrible would it be if someone asked you about what you did for Black people back then and you just said, "I hoped for better..."

I think everyone should think about that now in 2012 because we are in the heart of the moment fighting for equal rights and how unjust the current state is. Either you are involved or you are letting it happen. [People] should think

about in 20 years what they will say to their kids and grandkids about what they did. "Granddad, what did you do for gay rights?" How are they going to answer that question? It is game time!

WCT: I love the T-shirt on the website with writing on the front, "It's all fun. 'til someone loses their rights."

JA: It is our most successful selling T-shirt, which I think has been very inspiring.

WCT: So you guys are selling it here at the merchandise booth?

JA: Yes.
WCT: Oh, good. I will pick one up. How was Saturday Night Live?

JA: Awesome. It was a dream come true. With so much of the stuff we do it is easy to get self-deprecating or we can find a way to make it not seem like a big deal but that one was as big as it feels.

WCT: You went to school with Scarlet Johansson?

JA: We dated for two years.
WCT: What did you think of The Avengers?

JA: I thought it was good. I saw it in an airplane recently.

WCT: Is there a celebrity you have enjoyed meeting?

JA: We met Taylor Swift at the [Video Music Awards] and that was cool.

WCT: What was she like?

JA: She was extremely nice and talking about our songs. It was a funny experience to hear her talk about our stuff.

WCT: Good thing you never dated her or she would write a song about you! [Both laugh.] You are heading to Japan?

JA: In February. That is probably coming soon than I think.

WCT: Have you been before?

JA: We have.

WCT: When are you coming back to Chicago?

JA: We will come back possibly for the last run of this album.

WCT: When is new music on the way?

JA: It will be a while because we really want

to keep our heads and hearts on this album. We don't want to get onstage and play songs that no one has heard yet. That is like kissing your girlfriend and thinking of someone else.

WCT: I did that all the time in college! [Laughs] Looks like you are having a lot of fun. Where did that name come from with a period on the end?

JA: It was a legal issue. After we announced we would be fun, some Swedish death-metal band called and said, "We are fun, also." We asked if we could just add a period at the end and they said okay.

WCT: Is there a song that defines the band the most?

JA: I would say "Carry On," because there is an optimism there that you don't always get in modern rock music. I think people are afraid to be optimistic like it's not cool or something. I think that is something that can really change.

To have more fun., visit www.ourname-isfun.com, where that LGBT T-shirt can be purchased for \$10 cheaper than at the tour merch booth!

'Scrooge & Marley' in Chicago again, out on DVD

"Scrooge & Marley," a modern-day variation on Charles Dickens' classic holiday story A Christmas Carol, is now available on DVD and soundtrack and Blu-ray.

The film is also playing in theaters nationally and in Canada this holiday season. In Chicago, it plays Friday, Dec. 21, 8:15 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 22 at 7:45 p.m.; and Thursday, Dec. 27, 7:45 p.m. at Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N., State St. (scroogeandmarleymovie.com)

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM WE HEART PETS!

A special thanks to everyone who submitted pet photos for this year's installment. May you enjoy the warmth and companionship of your pets this holiday season.



NUNN ON ONE: TELEVISION

Jessica Lange

commits to 'Asylum'

BY JERRY NUNN

Actress Jessica Lange remains one of the finest actresses of our time. On the big screen she broke King Kong's heart, teased Tootsie, fought Robert De Niro in Cape Fear, and did the horizontal dance on a kitchen table with Jack Nicholson in The Postman Always Rings Twice.

She recently starred in The Vow with Channing Tatum and Rachel McAdams, and will be in an upcoming film adaptation of The Big Valley in the classic Barbara Stanwyk role.

After seeing Lange on Broadway, American Horror Story series creator Ryan Murphy wrote the role of neighbor Constance for her in the first season. She won the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress as well as the Dorian Award from the Gay and Lesbian Entertainment Critics Association for Television Performance of the Year, among other accolades.

This multiple winner of Academy Awards and Golden Globes returned to Horror Story in the second season (American Horror Story: Asylum), playing Sister Jude.

Lange talked nun to Nunn about her role in the show and the future of season three.

Windy City Times: Hi, Ms. Lange.

Jessica Lange: Windy City Times ... is that Chicago?

WCT: It is in Chicago, yes. We're a LGBT newspaper. You have tons of gay fans.

JL: Some of my dearest friends in the world for a long, long time are gay men.

WCT: You have been heavily involved in AIDS work, even traveling to the Congo and Russia as a goodwill ambassador so I thought that would be the case.

JL: I've worked a lot, especially in the beginning with different AIDS organizations.

WCT: It must be interesting to work with Ryan Murphy and all of the LGBT factors in the show.

JL: Well, yes, I think he deals with all of that in I think a very interesting way. There's always a character or two characters that enter in, and it's also interesting that he places them in specific times, like this idea that in the world of psychiatry back in the '60s homosexuality was dealt with as a mental condition, a mental illness that could be cured. He approaches things, I think, with great relevance, and I do appreciate that a lot.

WCT: "Horror Story" has opened up a new audience to your work. What do you think of that?

JL: Well, I don't follow that side of it too much. I understand that there's a demographic that otherwise probably wouldn't know my work. I'm always surprised when young people don't know certain actors or are not familiar with certain films. Even people who are working in Hollywood, which is really alarming, are not aware of certain filmmakers if it's more than 20 years ago or 25 years ago, or maybe even 15 years ago.

So I understand that this has given me a whole new exposure that probably I wouldn't have had otherwise, because the kind of films that I do [are] mostly small, independent movies, and [they have] a very limited audience. So this is a greater audience probably than I've had for a long, long time, and it's also the demographic is much younger, so that's all good, I guess. I don't know ultimately what that means but, yes, I'm glad people are looking at the work. I'm very grateful for that.

WCT: How has your career evolved from leading ladies to more character parts?



Jessica Lange on the American Horror Story: Asylum set. Photo courtesy of FX

JL: I think, obviously, your days as leading lady are limited. You have that one little window of time from mid-twenties to maybe mid-forties. I'm trying to think of the last leading lady I played, it might have been Blue Sky or something. I must have been [in my] early 40s so, yes, where you played the romantic lead that comes to an end at a certain point.

I suppose then you could define the parts that come your way as characters; you become a character actor. But I always felt that way from the beginning, except maybe for Tootsie, which was actually so well-written that it didn't fall into that category, I mean, I was never playing just the girlfriend or the wife. So ... I was always a character actress, even though I suppose combined with that was the element of being a leading lady that feels like a throwback to another era of filmmaking.

I just did a film this spring, I guess that will come out a year from now or something, based on Emile Zola's novel, Therese Raquin, which is what James M. Cain based Postman Always Rings Twice on in 1980; [in] that I played the character of Cora. In 2012, I played the mother of the son that is murdered by the young couple. So it was a full circle, because it's the same story, basically: James Cain based his story on the Zola novel so, you see, it does come back around. Yes, I suppose in some way, yes, we've all become character actors at a certain point.

WCT: Have there been times on the show when Ryan has sent something your way that was just too much for you?

JL: There are times when I've said, "I think this is too much," but that's not been too often because they tend to write for me less action and more kind of psychological [issues]. I wouldn't really know how to do a lot of the really intense action scenes so I have a few of those, but not many.

I think there was a leap of faith on my part just thinking, "Well, if I'm going to do this I'm going to do this." And I think as an actor you have to have trust, you have to believe that

somebody is taking care of you or watching your back, because with a part like this especially and where we're going with it, I can't pull any punches, I can't do it halfway, especially when you're dealing with madness and this descent into madness.

I really felt like, "Okay, I'm going to embrace this 100 percent and, hopefully, somebody will look out for me and not let me completely humiliate myself.

WCT: How do you switch from a character like Big Edie in Grey Gardens to Sister Jude?

JL: It depends. I work differently on all of them, but recently, I've been trying to work in a very immediate fashion so that I'm relying much more now on just pure imagination that comes up in a moment, and I just follow that through rather than trying to plan anything or design anything.

With fictional characters it really is you rise and fall on the strength of your imagination, I think. With somebody like Big Edie, of course, I had a wealth of resource material to draw from. But the thing that I've been working on more and more lately is finding the character through the voice, and sometimes I would work on finding it through the emotional core, which is still the main element I work in, but the external instead of finding it through movement or body or whatever, now I try to find it through voice. And it's been very interesting, because with Big Edie every day I'd come to the set I would listen to her voice, I would put on the DVD of Grey Gardens and not look at the image but just hear the voice, and as soon as I found that voice I could drop into the character.

Now, with Sister Jude this year I've also found a voice that as soon as it's there and present I feel like I think into the character. And I've done something with the voice as it's gone along that it's been changing as we go down this rabbit hole. So that's the process, I don't know if that makes any sense to you, but that's kind of how I find that I'm working now, I mean, strictly through the imagination and then looking for

the character, trying to find the character mostly through the voice.

WCT: Did you know Jude would go from being the villain to the hero beforehand?

JL: Really, no, because this thing kind of has a life of its own. It's like a river; it moves one direction and then it continues that way and then it shifts direction. I think Ryan has these things roughly plotted out of where things are going to go, but I don't always know ahead of time. I have to say I kind of understood that we would be dealing with this kind of descent into hell, but I did not know really that Jude would rise to the top of this in a way, so no. I actually think that it's made me a better actor, in a way, because [I'm not] able to go into something predetermined.

WCT: Is there a certain actor you liked working with on the show?

JL: I think the acting has been really amazing this year. A lot of the actors came back from last year, and it's wonderful. One of my favorite actors that I worked with in these episodes last year and this year is Frances Conroy. There's just something in her, I don't know there's something—when we're on screen together something happens.

I think one of my favorite scenes that I've played this year is the scene from, I guess it was episode seven in the diner when she's come for me as the Angel of Death and, I don't know, there's almost a connection that you can't really describe. But certain actors I think just find something when they're working together, and that's how I felt in these scenes with Frannie. But every actor that I've worked with on this—James [Cromwell], Sarah [Paulson], Lily [Rabe] and Ian [McShane]—it's just a pleasure to work with them. And even actors who come in for just a day's work have been amazing and have really brought something and make your work better.

WCT: Will you be on season three?

JL: We haven't really talked about it too much, and all that stuff is still under discussion. I think I will try it again, depending on what the story is and who the character is and all of that, so we'll see what happens.

New episodes of American Horror Story: Asylum return Wednesdays on FX in 2013 on Wed., Jan. 2.

'Lincoln,' 'Argo' lead SAG nods

Awards season has kicked into high gear with the Dec. 12 announcements of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) nominations.

In the movie sector, Lincoln and Silver Linings Playbook got four nominations each.

Among the film actors receiving nods were Daniel Day-Lewis (Lincoln), Bradley Cooper (Silver Linings Playbook), Anne Hathaway (Les Misérables), Hugh Jackman (Les Misérables), Helen Mirren (Hitchcock) and Jessica Chastain (Zero Dark Thirty).

A couple surprise nominees included Nicole Kidman, for her turn in out gay director Lee Daniels' The Paperboy; and Javier Bardem, who plays a sexually ambiguous villain in the James Bond movie Skyfall.

In the television categories, Modern Family was the most nominated show with four, followed by 30 Rock, which scored three nods in its final season. Homeland, Downton Abbey and the HBO movie Game Change also received three nominations each.

One of the most hotly contested TV categories is "Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series," which includes Claire Danes (Homeland), Michelle Dockery (Downton Abbey), Jessica Lange (American Horror Story: Asylum), Julianna Margulies (The Good Wife) and Maggie Smith (Downton Abbey).

The SAG Awards will be presented Jan. 27.

Barbra Streisand:

The 'Funny Girl' returns

Legend talks screen comeback, being a gay icon and her own guilt trip

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Barbra Streisand takes center stage, but she's not busting out "The Way We Were." Not today, anyway.

The legend is promoting her first major film in 16 years at the Four Seasons Los Angeles. Her hair is perfectly coiffed and—dressed in her usual all-black attire—she's got the off-the-shoulder look going on.

Hello, gorgeous, indeed.

Not long into the interview, a makeup artist waiting in the wings pats any remnants of forehead sweat. You don't let a legend perspire—and Barbra Streisand is the epitome of an American treasure: a consummate singer with a timeless mezzo-soprano; an Emmy, Oscar and Grammy award winner; and the woman who stole hearts in *A Star is Born*. To us, a gay icon.

After a short stint of recent sold-out shows, Streisand returns to starring-role status in *The Guilt Trip* alongside goofball Seth Rogen—for real: Babs with the Zack and Miri Make a Porno actor—as a mother-son duo who go road-tripping together and get into all sorts of shenanigans. If it weren't for director Anne Fletcher (*The Proposal*), who would only do the film with Babs, there'd be no movie—and, worse, no Barbra.

Streisand, along with Rogen and Fletcher, sat down to chat about the reason she finally gave in (thank her own gay son for that), what she thinks of being a gay icon and how she's managed to stay successful for nearly six decades.

Windy City Times: What was it like meeting each other for the first time?

Barbra Streisand: Seth sussed me out. He called people.

Seth Rogen: And she checked out. This Barbra Streisand lady checked out. So I thought I'd give her a shot. [Laughs]

BS: I didn't know who to call. I don't know any of those people from his movies, so what was I gonna do? No—I thought he was adorable.

WCT: What are you two like off-set?

SR: The way we talk in real life is not entirely different than our rapport in the movie. It's a lot of me trying to explain things to her about modern times and her trying to feed me shit I don't want to eat.

BS: I was the one with the iPhone.

SR: She had an iPhone before me. I was like, "I gotta get myself one of these. If Barbra can work an iPhone, it's gotta be fun."

BS: Yesterday he asked me if I had a Twitter account. I said, "I don't know."

SR: I showed her that she did! I change her clocks during daylight savings and all that stuff.

WCT: You must know a lot of gay people are going to see this movie...

BS: We hope so.

WCT: Because Seth is such a huge gay icon.

SR: [Sarcastically] I'm a gay icon? Do gay people like Barbra, too? I didn't know that.

Barbra, how do you feel about the label of "gay icon"—and do you think your own son, Jason Gould, thinks of you as one?

BS: He doesn't see me as an icon. He sees me as his mother who touches his hair too much. No—I love being an icon to anybody. Equal rights, you know!

SR: Yeah—me, too. [Laughs]

WCT: What did your gay friends think when you told them you were working with Barbra?

Anne Fletcher: Everyone in my life is gay, but



Seth Rogen and Barbra Streisand in *The Guilt Trip*. Photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures

I have one best friend who has been obsessed with her since he was a child. His entire childhood was saved because of Barbra—with her music and her movies. His mom had just died four or five years ago, so for him to meet her on the movie—and her and I having such a relationship—was just full circle.

WCT: Barbra, how much contact did you and Jason have when you were considering the role?

BS: He actually was very important in my decision to make the movie. He was recovering from back surgery, so he was in bed for a few days after, and I brought the script over and we read it out loud. It was interesting, actually. His father was in the room, too. Isn't that funny? We were both coddling our son, so he became the audience and Jason was reading the parts with me and he said, "I think you should do it, Mom." I really trust his integrity and his opinion. He has great taste in whatever he chooses to do. And he clinched the deal.

AF: I was with you all over the world, but I love that Jason just one night says, "Yes, Mom, do it." [I said that] for a whole year!

BS: Well, he's my son. [Laughs]

WCT: What about reading it with your son sealed the deal?

BS: Mothers develop guilt trips. I feel guilty as a parent that I couldn't pick up my son every day from school and bake him cookies. I know that feeling. I know that feeling a lot. Having a famous parent is an odd thing. I thought it was interesting to investigate trying to be my son's friend versus a mother.

It was a true story. It's [writer] Dan [Fogelman] and his mother. She was a fan of mine, and Dan wrote this lovely script. It just felt like it was meant to be. Meant for me to come back to work in a starring role. It was time to challenge myself again.

Of course, I made it very difficult for them to hire me, because I kept wanting an out: "I really don't wanna schlep to Paramount. It's two hours each way, so would you, like, rent a warehouse and build the sets in the Valley no more than 45 minutes from my house?" They said yes.

AF: I wasn't gonna do this movie without these

two. There wasn't backup. If Seth said no, there was no replacement; if Barbra said no, there was no replacement. It was them, or I wasn't gonna make the movie.

BS: I said to Anne, "Would you make the movie without me?" And she said no. And I felt bad! Another guilt trip, right?

SR: I was open to Shirley Maclaine. [Laughs] No, it's not true. I only would've done it if Barbra was doing it.

BS: It was great to feel wanted.

WCT: Who is another gay icon you want to work with, Anne?

AF: I don't really like the "gay icons," by the way. I don't really respond to them very well. I think Barbra is so grounded in many different things, but there's some of them—I'm really insulting gay sensibility. [Laughs] But Liza Minnelli. I do love Liza.

WCT: What was Barbra like? What surprised you most about her?

AF: We became friends instantly. She's easy-going, funny, kind, strong and knows who she is. She's unbelievably awesome. She'd tell me some of the greatest, most personable stories that happened in her life that I can't remember one iota of. My best friend's a little pissed about that. [Laughs]

WCT: I imagine directing a legend like Barbra Streisand would be intimidating. Was it? Did she call the shots?

AF: It's not intimidating. She comes to work as an actor, as an artist, and she's been doing it for so long that all the pieces fall back into place exactly how they were. We're all there for the common good, so she would come to work as any other actor. She's a legend, so that's a little different. But it was never intimidating, because she's just so genuine. She had my back, and the support I had from her was extraordinary.

WCT: So no diva moments?

AF: Never. I know we've all heard the stories about her endlessly throughout all these years, but I can't say whether they're true or false. I just know from my experience I had an unbelievable experience with her, and I would do it again. She works harder than anyone. And her brain never shuts off. That's the only thing I

would complain about! Like, "Please stop thinking for just five minutes—because I'm tired." [Laughs]

WCT: Even if people think of her as a diva, this role really takes you out of that mindset. You never think of Barbra Streisand, "the diva."

AF: That's the best compliment. I'm glad you say that. This was part of our conversation: "If we're gonna win the audience, you have to be every mother. You have to capture the essence of moms now. You can't be glamorous-beautiful. You have to be every mom for us to tell the story the right way."

WCT: Barbra, what's your beauty secret?

BS: God, what is my secret?

SR: Sitting next to me helps.

BS: [Laughs] He is so funny. If you knew all my self-doubt, my god—I don't know. Maybe I'm slightly childish.

AF: Your spirit is youthful.

BS: Yeah. I kind of like the child part of me.

WCT: What was harder for you, Barbra: the drama or the comedy elements of the film?

BS: Eating steak! That was the hardest thing, I think. But no, they're both the same. I don't think there's a distinction between how you play drama or comedy, if it's based in truth.

AF: This woman may not like steak, but she's a foodie. You've never met a foodie in your whole life until you've been with Barbra Streisand. This woman loves food more than anything—and she will eat it! She's a bottomless pit. We had many discussions about that steak scene. From Barbra's side it was, "Does it have to be that? It seems a little gross."

WCT: Anne, did Barbra ever break into song?

AF: Never. Barbra will not sing. I sang an awful lot to her. But she will not sing. There's a thing that she did in the movie that we cut out where she'd go, "Hmm, hmm, hmm." She would do rhythmic things that she does with her voice that only Barbra can do—and I would take that as singing. But she would never do it. Never. She's so rude. [Laughs] Give us a free concert, Barbra. She's like, "Pay for it!"

WCT: You can sing, act, produce, write and direct. What can't you do well?

BS: I can't cook at all. I mean, I would not know how to make coffee. I took cooking classes. I know how to make chocolate soufflé. Just ask me if I want to make it. I'd rather have somebody else make the chocolate soufflé—and I eat it. When I tried to cook, put it this way: It was never appetizing to eat. And the hands! So filthy with the stuff. And then cleaning up—no, I don't like that part.

WCT: Barbra, you must see a lot of scripts, right?

BS: I don't. You see, everybody thinks like you. Meanwhile, I go, "Where are the scripts?" [Laughs] It's not the same as when I last made a film. They're not interested in love stories. It's a different time. I don't like it as much.

WCT: What's the secret to your success?

BS: Oh my god. I don't make that many movies and I don't make that many appearances so I ...

SR: ... leave them wanting more.

BS: Less is more. Maybe that keeps a little mystery or something.

WCT: What do you want audiences to take away from the film?

BS: I want them to be moved and I want them to see themselves in the movie. I want them to get closer to their children. A lot of things. It's a transformative kind of movie. They start at one point and are both kind of tragically alone, not finding a mate, and then at the end there are many more possibilities. Horizons open. He took me out of my shell. It's about love. I always say it's a different kind of love story.

SR: Which to me sounds gross.

BS: See where your mind goes? Always to the sexual.

SR: Right in the gutter.

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

the **DISH** WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN **WINDY CITY TIMES**



Cru Cafe & Wine Bar; Weather Mark Tavern

BY ANDREW DAVIS

This column deals with two restaurants that may play on readers' (or eaters') assumptions—but with results that benefit people.

Cru Cafe & Wine Bar (25 E. Delaware Pl.; www.cruwinebar.com), possibly because of its Gold Coast location and elegant atmosphere, has some people thinking of patrons dining while clothed in tuxedos and flowing dresses. However, the place couldn't be more relaxed (a polo and nice jeans are fine), although the interior is, indeed, elegant. (My dining companion commented that Cru looks like "someone's Gold Coast mansion.")

However, just because Cru isn't hoity-toity



Above and right: Menu selections at Cru Cafe & Wine Bar. Photos by Andrew Davis



Left and below: Weather Mark Tavern. Photos by Ed Negron



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doesn't mean the food and drinks aren't high-quality; in fact, the dinner was most impressive (and reasonably priced). We started with cocktails, notably the Sazerac (which contains rye, syrup, bitters, absinthe and a lemon twist) and the Headless Horseman (a concoction of orange vodka, bitters and ginger beer), which we enjoyed immensely. (I later tried an elder fashion royale that was even better than the Horseman.)

The food? Well, choosing the stolen dates (chorizo-stuffed dates wrapped in bacon with romesco sauce) as an appetizer got the dinner off to a tasty start—and, somehow, things even got better with the flatbread, one of the best I've tasted in quite some time. The server had me at "turkey chorizo," but it also had mozzarella, tomatoes and basil—making for a tantalizing mix.

The entrees were more than satisfactory. My friend loved his gnocchi, and the slow-roasted Amish half-chicken burst with flavor—and there was enough to take home to enjoy later. There are also some incredible desserts (which aren't indicated on the website), but one would be wise to partake; the pumpkin cheesecake is incredibly good.

The only no-no of the night occurred when a server brought out our entrees—and picked up my (unfinished) Horseman by the top (or head, if you prefer); needless to say, I didn't finish

that glass. However, aside from that hiccup, my friend and I had an amazing time at Cru.

Another place that may have to deal with misconceptions is **Weather Mark Tavern** (1503 S. Michigan Ave.; www.weathermarktavern.com). There was a time when the word "tavern" conjured thoughts of a dive bar with a bowl of salted peanuts among the eats. However, as affable owner Mark Stern told Savor, "You have places like Tavern on Rush and City Tavern, so 'tavern' now has a more upscale meaning."

Again, by "more upscale," don't think this place is fancy-schmancy. However, do expect an unbelievable selection of food and drink items; the online menu alone is impressive.

Also, expect to see nautical items everywhere. ("Weather mark" is a sailing term.) Retractable sails separate booths on one side of the wall, and there are buoys, flags and nautical-themed photos.

However, don't confuse this place with a Long John Silver's. For one thing, Weather Mark offers 45 different rums. Also, as previously mentioned, the menu is quite extensive—and it's not just seafood.

I started things off with a server's suggestion: a drink called a Dark and Stormy (rum and ginger beer) that was quite pleasant. As for appetizers, my friend and I tried bacon-wrapped potatoes,

mac 'n cheese and pigs in a blanket. However, the last item were definitely not your run-of-the-mill "pigs," which featured grilled venison and wild-boar sausages wrapped in puff pastry. Those were tasty, but the potatoes (served with sour-cream sauce) hit the high mark for both of us.

Entrees consisted of a pork chop and a burger called "One Fungi." (I felt like I needed a rimshot when I ordered this.) The latter is an Angus burger topped with a portobello mushroom, filled with sausage-and-spinach stuffing, and topped with Swiss cheese—and it's just as filling as it sounds. The grilled pork chop got an "A+" from both of us; it was tasty and incredibly juicy. (By the way, as a side you can get regular fries, sweet potato fries—or a mix of the two.)

To wrap things up, my friend had the raspberry chocolate-mousse cannolis (which he said were divine). I had the delectable brownie bites, served with vanilla ice cream. Needless to say, we were both in food comas by the time we left.

I highly recommend Weather Mark. The food is incredible, the servers were quite friendly (and eye-catching, to boot) and Stern is quite gay-friendly. (At one point, he and I talked about local gay icon Chuck Renslow.) Also, don't forget that the restaurant offers weekend brunch—including items such as eggs Benedict and bottomless mimosas. I have a feeling I'll be back.

the DISH DINING LISTINGS

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			<p>GERMAN Chicago Brauhaus 4732 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago 773-784-4444 chicagobrauhaus.com Serving up traditional German specialties, beer, wine, music and dancing 6 days a week.</p>
			<p>MEDITERRANEAN Troy Mediterranean Grill 2908 N. Broadway 773-770-3866 Facebook: TroyMediterraneanGrill 100% homemade, fresh menu includes veggie dishes. All food is prepared fresh as the time of ordering.</p>

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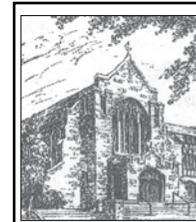
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A Festivus for the rest of us!

Crew Bar and Grill, 4804 N. Broadway, broke out the pole for Festivus Excessiveness, this year's holiday-themed staff drag show, Sat., Dec. 15. All proceeds from the sale of raffle tickets and tips went toward providing a happy holiday for two local families. After the show, customers were encouraged to enjoy photo-ops at the Festivus pole. Photos by Kirk Williamson



Turn to this space each week for all your fresh nightspots-y goodness.

Also, "like" our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/nightspots) for even more pictures of all your favorite nightlife denizens.

Look for the 2012 retrospective issue, out this week, and for the next all-new issue of Nightspots, on newsstands January 9, 2013.

calendar

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Wed., Dec. 19

Cooking Class for Lesbian Singles & Couples Entertaining appetizers for the holidays or anytime, with Shannon Lauridsen, executive chef of minibar. Advance registration Required. Late registration increases \$10 on and after 12/12/12. Register at chef@bestchefs.com; 7pm-9pm, 224-353-3300, Raw Bar & Grill, 3720 N. Clark St., <http://bestchefs.com>

Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus Holiday Soiree Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus will present a fun, light-hearted event to thank one and all for helping CBGMC have a successful year, to cultivate new friendships and to build much needed bridges in our community. 7pm-10pm, 312-629-2988, TwelveWest Nightclub, 12 W. Elm St., www.chiblackgaycaucus.org

Team Trivia Wednesdays DS Tequila Co. hosts Team Trivia! Sign up starts at 8pm, free to play. Hosted by Robin; 8pm-11pm, 773-697-9127, DS Tequila Company, 3352 N. Halsted St., www.dstequila.com

BETTY The cult band BETTY returns to Chicago with a BETTY twist on the holidays, incorporating songs from the holiday CD SNOWBIZ as well as new material from their upcoming as-yet-to-be-entitled CD. 9:15pm, 312-733-9463, City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph St., www.hellobetty.com; Tickets: <http://goprize.com/z7n3>

HyDrag Revue Xmas Show: Naughty or Nice! Join Hydrate for the world famous HYDRAG REVUE XMAS Show! Hosted by Tajma Hall featuring DiDa Ritz, Soraya Dash, and special guest Mimi Marks! 10pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, Chicago, <http://www.hydratechicago.com>

SCENE AND HEARD Dec. 21, 22 and 27

The film *Scrooge & Marley* is running at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St.

Photo of David Moretti



Thursday, Dec. 20

Women Like Me Support Group Women Like Me Support Group is for women who are in or are coming out of a marriage or long term heterosexual relationship and are looking to discuss issues of sexual identity, relationships, aging and family dynamics in a safe and confidential space. 6pm-7:30pm, 773-388-1600X3319, Howard Brown, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., <http://www.howardbrown.org/lccp>

Lesbian improv group auditions A Second City Workshop alum is forming a non-profit seven-member Improv Group, comprised of lesbians age 50+. This newly created company will create/perform set scenes and audience suggested improv sketches. Candidates must have background as writer, performer or director with improvisation/sketch experience. 6pm-8pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St.

T and GQ OUT Mic Night An open mic, for both musical and spoken-word performances, it is intended to be a safe and

encouraging environment for members of the broad Trans community, along with their Significant Others, family members, friends and allies. Occurs the third Thursday of each month. 7pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Re:Gifted Features the very best of GayCo's Christmas sketch comedy spectaculars. Packaging up oldies, but goodies from Christmas past ('Scream If You Love Christmas' and 'Lit'), GayCo gives you the Best (of) Christmas EVER! Tickets are \$15 at the door, by phone, or online. Through Dec. 27. 8pm, Annoyance Theatre, 4830 N Broadway; www.gayco.com; Tickets: www.annoyanceproductions.com/shows/index.shtml

Radio City Christmas Spectacular MSG Entertainment (MSG) announces an all new production of the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, starring the Rockettes. In this multifaceted production, the Rockettes will dance their way through an awe-inspiring journey with new scenes, an array of glamorous new costumes, dramatic lighting effects, and a 50-foot LED screen that will enhance the show with breathtaking new imagery. 8pm-10pm, 800-745-3000, Akoo Theatre, Rosemont, <http://akootheatre.com>

Kinsey Sicks presents "Oy Vey in a Manger" Dragapella group holiday show, with Rachel, Winnie, Trixie, and Trampolina trying to sell off the manger before it's foreclosed upon. Crises arise, secrets are revealed, Jewish-Gentile tensions surface, and mayhem ensues in glorious four-part harmony. \$35 reserved, \$25 general admission balcony. First show 7pm; 9:30pm, Mayne Stage, 1328 W. Morse Ave., www.maynestage.com

DiDa Ritz's Birthday Bash at Dollhouse Drag Revue Come celebrate RuPaul's Drag Race season four standout DiDa Ritz's birthday, along with Saya Naomi, Gia Gunn and Debbie Fox as they work the stage at the Spin Dollhouse Drag Revue. Enjoy a hosted bar featuring 42 BELOW Kiwi and Passion Fruit premium vodka from 10-11pm, show starts at 11:30. VJ/DJ Chester spins the hits until 2. No cover. Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave., www.spin-nightclub.com

Friday, Dec. 21

Scrooge & Marley Chicago-made film is a heartfelt, modern-day, gay variation on Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol - a holiday movie for all of us. 8:15pm, Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N State St., www.scroogeandmarleymovie.com; Tickets: www.siskelfilmcenter.org/

Santa's Dead! & Dirty Carol's Christmas The company that brought you Snow White and the Seven Drag Queens, Twinkie and the Beast, and Alex in Wonderland are premiering something new this holiday season! Giving homage to classic noir films and Christmas television specials, MidTangent Productions presents a dazzling and daring musical double feature like no other! 9pm-11pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com/home; Tickets: www.brownpapertickets.com/event/295446

Chicago Bears' Brian Urlacher joins Martina McBride on stage in "The Joy of Christmas" Tour and reading of Dr. Seuss's classic, "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas!"; 1:45pm, 1.800.745.3000, Chicago Theatre, 175 N State St., <http://thechicagotheatre.com>; Tickets: <http://ticketmaster.com>

Saturday, Dec. 22

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (GLBT) A weekly peer support group for members of the LGBTQ community with depression, bipolar disorder, or other psychiatric illnesses. Free of charge. Community Room. 11am-12:30pm, 872-216-3272, Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., www.dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com/

Youth Speak OUT! Saturdays. Open Mike for young people to express themselves and to hear from legendary artists in the making. Free. 4pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Santaland Diaries Less than merry misadventures as a Christmas elf gone bad, a celebration of the desperation of unemployment, the insanity of Christmas shopping and the ineffable "cheer" of the holiday spirit. David Sedaris' anti-holiday show through Dec. 30. Thursdays through Sundays plus two Wednesday performances. Tickets \$18 to \$35 online or by phone. 9:30pm, Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave, www.theaterwit.org

Rudolph the Red-Hosed Reindeer David Cerda's parody of the classic television special now celebrating it's 15th year. Nobody believes in Santa anymore and he's desperate for government bailout money. Elves have been laid off and the morale and morals are at an all time low. Santa devises a calculated media campaign to help save his tarnished image. \$12-\$22 VIP Tickets, \$35-\$95 Group Rates, \$15 w/10 or more tickets. Runs until Dec. 30. 5pm, Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark St., www.handbagproductions.org; Tickets: www.brownpapertickets.com/event/131657

Scrooge & Marley Chicago-made film is a heartfelt, modern-day, gay variation on Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol—a holiday movie for all of us. 7:45pm, Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N State St., www.scroogeandmarleymovie.com; Tickets: www.siskelfilmcenter.org/

Sunday, Dec. 23

Urban Village: Wicker Park Service LGBT-welcoming worship services at Urban Village Church are eclectic and experiential, practical and intelligent, relevant and, hopefully, inspiring. 10:30am-11:45am, Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division St., www.urbanvillagechurch.org/wicker-park/

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 involved in the community! 10:30am-11:45am, Bethany Retirement Center, 1602 W. Ainslie St. (at Ashland), www.newchicagochurch.com

Sunday \$2 Mimosas \$2 Mimosas and \$4 well cocktails! Open @ 1pm and stay open til' 2am. 1pm, 773-248-0100, Bonsai Bar & Lounge, 3503 N Halsted St., <http://bonsaibarchicago.com>

Advent Concert Series: Elizabeth Ulanday As part of its Second Annual Advent Concert Series, flutist, Elizabeth Ulanday.



PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ

Thursday, Dec. 20

DiDa Ritz will celebrate her birthday at Spin, 800 W. Belmont Ave.

Photo by Mathu Andersen

4pm-5:30pm, 847-864-4806, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 1509 Ridge Ave., Evanston, www.stmarksevanston.org

Monday, Dec. 24

Open Gym Volleyball Mondays and Thursdays. Co-ed, open court volleyball for players of all levels. \$7/night; \$30/month; 6pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Live Band Karaoke with Amy Armstrong Every Monday night at 10pm in the Front Bar, hosted by the one and only Diva, Amy Armstrong (www.AmyFreddy.com); 10pm, Roscoe's, 3356 N Halsted St.; www.roscoes.com

Christmas Eve Party with Santa A Touche tradition. The Big Guy takes a break to party with the naughty boys. 10pm, Touche, 6412 N Clark St., www.touchechicago.com

Tuesday, Dec. 25

Drag Race with Frida Lay Chicago's only amateur drag contest, hosted by Frida Lay! A hit at Roscoe's since its premier in 2000. 9pm, Roscoe's, 3356 N Halsted St, Chicago, <http://www.roscoes.com>

Wed., Dec. 26

Top Shelf Wednesdays Weekly guest DJs featuring \$5 Top Shelf Cocktails; 5pm, 773.871.6227, Minibar, 3341 N Halsted St., www.minibarchicago.com

Thursday, Dec. 27

Scrooge & Marley Chicago-made film is a heartfelt, modern-day, gay variation on Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol - a holiday movie for all of us. 7:45pm, Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N State St., www.scroogeandmarleymovie.com; Tickets: www.siskelfilmcenter.org/

Saturday, Dec. 29

little queer film festival Masquerade Ball In the spirit of the classic 16th-century Venetian masquerade parties, we invite you to come in your beautiful attire and masks to escape into a celebration of possibilities limited only by your imagination. Benefits the Little Queer Film Festival which showcases LGBT movies. \$35 before Dec. 15, \$45 after. Light appetizers, cash bar. Silent auction, Dj and dancing. Mask required for entry. 9pm, 312-952-4606, Blokes and Birds lounge, 3343 N. Clark St., www.littlequeerfilmfest.org/events/; Tickets: <http://lqffmasquerade.brownpapertickets.com/>



BETTY AS SHE GOES

Wed., Dec. 19

The band BETTY will perform at City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph St.

Publicity photo

BILLY MASTERS

"She's got that star charisma and everything about her. I couldn't take my eyes off her, either, so it was mutual."—Christina Aguilera remarks on a photo where Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is ogling the singer's mammaries. Like husband, like wife.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go—and I do mean everywhere. Even in celebrity houses, you'll see decorative balls hung high and low. In one case, the high ones actually belong to the sexy Mario Lopez, who was snapped on a ladder placing the star atop the tree. If he weren't doing it pantless, I wouldn't mention it. Ho, ho, ho from BillyMasters.com.

The best gift I've gotten is the interview Calvin Klein's ex-boytoy Nick Gruber gave to the New York Post. It is a veritable cornucopia of revelations from an oddly confident minor porn actor. Although he reveals that CK got him a penthouse in the West Village and a 2011 Bentley Supersport worth a quarter of a million dollars, he insists that he never asked for anything and was not a user. The relationship was chock full of give-and-take. Calvin's chef may have taught Nick the delicacies of cooking French cuisine, but Nick brought the designer to McDonald's for his first Big Mac. Calvin ordered it medium-rare—because McDonald's is known for its Big Mac tartare!

He's now with another older man with money—which I'm sure is just a coincidence. John Luciano is the nephew of infamous mobster Lucky Luciano and is only 28 years older than Nick. This relationship is not without challenges. Said Luciano, "The most intimidating thing is having sex with your boyfriend and pulling down his pants and his ex-boyfriend's name is staring you right in the face."

John is helping Nick develop a reality show, which John claims will clear up the misconceptions about Gruber: "He's a cross between Kim Kardashian and Honey Boo Boo." Apparently, I had a big misconception about Nick. Before this interview, I thought he was a moron. Then I read that John bought him a BMW motorcycle and Nick made sure that the title was in his name. He's learning...

I've been wondering what was going on with Streisand's proposed remake of Gypsy. She hasn't mentioned it much since Arthur Laurents' death, although she did perform two of Mama Rose's songs in her recent tour. Back in March we heard that Downton Abbey scribe Julian Fellowes would be adapting the script. The latest holdup is with the rights, but Universal is confident that's just a formality. Babs still plans to begin filming next year—and she's likely to both star in it and direct it. When Entertainment Weekly asked her if she was too old to play Mama Rose, she said, "What's that got to do with anything? How old do I look to you? Age is a number." Like Babs, I often ask questions without waiting for an answer. One thing you don't have to wait for is Streisand's thoughts on casting. According to Time magazine, she's considering Lady Gaga as Louise, who would follow in the footsteps of Natalie Wood and Cynthia Gibb. Well, there's only so much you can do with "Little Lamb."

Time for more of "Billy's Holiday Gift Giving Suggestions." The fabulous Kathy Griffin has just released a DVD box set of her seven specials for Bravo. The Kathy Griffin Collection: Red, White & Raw is the perfect gift for any gay. If you want something oral (and who doesn't?), Kathy Griffin: Seaman 1st Class just earned the funny gal her fifth Grammy nomination for Best Comedy Album. Although it was never released as a CD, you can download it from iTunes.

Let's slip in a quick "Ask Billy" question. Gerard in Dallas writes: "Do you watch Arrow? It's so good. Stephen Amell is beyond hot, and now it looks like John Barrowman is the father of the villain. First question is, am I right? And second,

is Barrowman so old that he's now the father of the hot guys?"

My darling, life does go on. For almost two decades, forces in Hollywood have tried to create a hit show for Barrowman. First was Central Park West, which lasted a full season. Even when it came back from hiatus as CPW, it didn't work. He then resurfaced on Titans—a Dynasty-style soap featuring the talents of Yasmine Bleeth and Casper Van Dien. NBC smelled a hit; I smelled direct-to-video. When Vicki Principal joined the cast, the smell got more pungent and it, too, was cancelled. John's real television breakthrough occurred when he joined the UK cast of Doctor Who, which led to his own series, Torchwood. Along the way, there was talk of a role on Desperate Housewives. After a private meeting with Marc Cherry, he joined the show for five episodes (well, Johnny's knees ain't what they



John Barrowman's TV journey continues with Arrow. Photo from Starz

used to be). Will Arrow be the series to keep him stateside for a while? Or will it be plagued with the Barrowman curse? Stay tuned.

By the way, get ready for the addition of sexy Colton Haynes to the cast. He'll be playing Roy Harper, who comic aficionados tell me is Speedy, Green Arrow's sidekick. Kinda sounds like Colton's XY pictorial, oh, so long ago. If he takes off all his clothes like he does in the making of that porn video on BillyMasters.com, I'll be mighty happy.

When I'm starting and ending with some (minor) celebrity skin, it's definitely time to end yet another column. But that gives me an idea I'd like to run by Barbra. You know when the three old strippers show Gypsy how it's done in "Gotta Get A Gimmick?" What if the trio was played by former notable Broadway Mama Rose's? I'm thinking Patti LuPone as Mazeppa, Bernadette Peters as Electra and Tyne Daly as Tessie Tura. If one of them balks, I'm sure Angela would be game. Jason, pass this along to your mom. (He hangs on my every word.) In the meantime, check out www.BillyMasters.com, the site that never comes up short. If you need a last minute gift, a subscription is only a few clicks away. And if you have a question, you can always send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before LuPone bumps it with a trumpet (which should be a breeze after what she did with that tuba in "Sweeney Todd"). So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

What Apocalypse?
Let's party!

"Kiss today goodbye."
Chorus Line

"A kiki is a party for calming all your nerves"
Scissor Sisters

"Dance like there's no tomorrow"
Paula Abdul

"I'm still here."
Shirley MacLaine

"It's the end of the world as we know it."
REM

"I'm still standing."
Elton John

"And I'm telling you... I'm not going."
Dreamgirls

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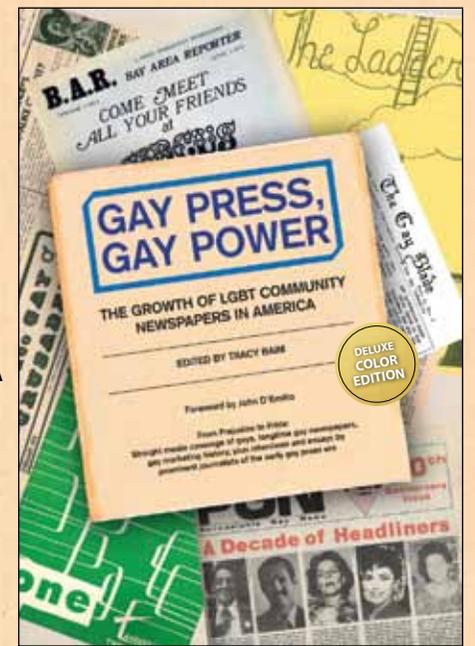
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From Prairie Avenue Productions and Windy City Times
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Multi-sport LGBT tourney kicks off in Vegas in 2013

BY ROSS FORMAN

An annual gay softball tournament has expanded into a Gay Games-esque event, offering a week-end in Las Vegas filled with 12 sports/events.

The 6th annual Sin City Shootout is set for Jan. 17-20, 2013, featuring ice hockey, basketball, soccer, tennis and more.

"I have attended dozens of softball tournaments and thought if you take the best thing from each of those, and put them all together, it would be an amazing event," said Eric Ryan, who lives in Los Angeles. "In 2007, I scouted out cities to host the event, [along with] fields, hotels and clubs in those cities to see where we could accomplish all I wanted to do."

The first Sin City Shootout softball games were played in 2008 and the number of teams participating increased annually—maxing out for the last two years at 175 teams.

"In 2010, I had friends who played in other LGBT organizations tell me that their tournaments don't have all the elements we do. That sparked an idea in my head to start inviting other LGBT sports organizations to hold their own tournaments alongside [the] softball [tournament,]" said Ryan, 42, a firefighter by trade who is now the tournament director and creator for the Sin City Shootout.

Softball was followed by wrestling and bodybuilding, forming the first multi-sport event in 2012.

The 2013 event—which the Greater Los Angeles Softball Association will host and which

Ryan will produce—also will feature dodgeball, Frisbee, golf, bridge and volleyball.

"All the athletes and sports organizers involved [in the 2012 event] told me that they had a great time. With all of our collective buying power together we were able to get discounts for the attendees on show tickets, restaurants, hotel, etc.," Ryan said. "For 2013, I ended up sending an introduction of myself and the event to dozens of LGBT sporting associations, and out of that, 11 replied and loved the idea of all the organizations [coming] together."

Ryan said his goal for the Sin City Shootout is simply "to give the athletes the best possible bang for their buck; this includes not only money, but nightly events, deals on hotels, restaurants and travel."

Ryan said about 6,000 are expected to attend, which includes athletes, family and friends. The majority of the registered participants are from the U.S. and Canada, though the worldwide LGBT sporting community will be represented by participating athletes from England, Mexico and Australia, among other countries.

The majority of the registered athletes are 25 to 45 years-old and about 80 percent are men, Ryan said.

There are co-ed and women's-only divisions for some sports.

Softball is the most popular sport, with about 3,500 participants.

Many players from Chicago will be participating in multiple sports, including softball and hockey, among others.



"I wanted [this event] to try to appeal to everyone," Ryan said. "When I attend a LGBT tournament, I want to know where is everyone going, what hotel are they staying in, etc. So starting with the hotel I wanted to make sure the rates were as attractive as possible, so [participants] will stay there. Our host hotel is the Tropicana. The hotel and its staff has been incredible, going out of their way to make sure our athletes have the best possible experience and welcoming them. The Tropicana wants our athletes to feel at home."

The Tropicana is offering 20 percent off at all of its restaurants during the event, even Starbucks.

"We all know a six-pack of beer costs about \$6.99 so when you have some clubs charging \$5 for a single bottle, you feel like you are being cheated. So I made sure to work with each nightly host bar on drink specials," Ryan said. "The Sin City Shootout participants have exclusive drink specials available only to them at all of the host venues each night."

"The success of the event will solely depend on the athletes having a good time. At the Sunday [night] closing party, it's time to let go and have a good time, partying with your competition and seeing those smiles and new friends being made between the different sports is the success."

Ryan said participants can play multiple sports over the weekend.

"We have 800 rooms at the Tropicana Hotel," Ryan said. "This is 75 percent of the entire hotel, so the hotel will be gay, gay, gay for sure [that weekend]. But it will also have lots of options for attendees, such as shows, restaurants, spa, tranquil pool and then of course the nightly parties. The hotel casino dealers will be wearing our event shirts to make us feel welcome and a part of the Tropicana family. The Tropicana really is going above and beyond to make us feel welcome."

For more information, go to www.sincityshootout.com.

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When the Civil Union Act was signed into law by Governor Quinn, everyone was rejoicing at the granting of all the legal benefits to same-sex couples. For Beth and her ex-lover Janet, however, the joy of the new civil union law was not that they could enter into a legally binding relationship in Illinois – the joy was that they could finally end the legal relationship they created in Vermont in 2000.

In 2000, LGBT couples from all states could travel to Vermont, apply to Vermont town clerks for a civil union license and then receive a civil union certificate. Vermont intended that the legal status granted to LGBT couples was to be parallel to civil marriage. But it only worked while in Vermont.

Relationships change and it changed for Beth and Janet, who now live apart. In 2006 they split. Now ready to move into new unions and marriages, they discovered they could not terminate their Vermont civil union in Illinois. Illinois did not allow them to "divorce" under Illinois law. The only way for Janet and Beth to terminate their Vermont civil union was for one of them to move to Vermont and meet the residency requirement of living there for one year. They couldn't afford to move back nor did they want to. So they stayed together legally.

People change and grow, people can create ugly disasters and people make mistakes – what seemed like a good idea at one point in someone's life may not be the same great idea years later. The new civil union law in Illinois provides a legal fix for the mistakes. It allows judges to grant legal dissolution of unions and make declarations of invalidity of a civil union, and decree that a marriage between persons of the same sex, a civil union, or a substantially similar relationship (other than a common law marriage), legally entered into in another jurisdiction, can be dissolved here in Illinois.

Now Janet and Beth – as well as all the other LGBT couples who have marriage licenses from other states and countries – can have the benefit of Illinois' law and courts to terminate their legal ties – to unwind the mistakes and fix the bad ideas. This gives a real sense of equality to LGBT couples so they know they won't end up in legal limbo if their relationship changes.

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Urlacher with Martina McBride Dec. 21

The Chicago Bears' Brian Urlacher will join country singer Martina McBride at the Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State St., on Friday, Dec. 21, for a special reading of the Dr. Seuss classic *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas!*

McBride's show is at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$39.50-\$110; see www.ticketmaster.com.

Sports shorts

Liz Carmouche, 28, is the first openly gay competitor signed to the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), according to the Huffington Post. The UFC has had a history tainted with anti-gay sentiment, and some see her joining as a sign of progress. Carmouche recently revealed to *Sports Illustrated* that while serving in Iraq during the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" era as a closeted lesbian, she was surrounded by anti-gay sentiment.

In California, **Gabrielle Ludwig** stands out from her Mission College women's basketball teammates in three ways: (a) she is 50; (b) she is 6' 6" and 230 pounds; and (c) she is transgender, according to *USA Today*. Ludwig, who is a systems engineer, underwent gender-reassignment surgery in July. Ludwig's partner of two years is Theresa Foakes; Foakes' daughters, 11 and 7, live with Ludwig and call her "Momma Gabbi."

Out Canadian figure skater **Jeff Buttle**, who won an Olympic bronze medal in 2006, is back on skates—as a member of the Toronto Gay Hockey Association, according to *Outsports*. Buttle has said that he is comfortable playing hockey, and that playing it has helped his figure skating. Buttle retired from competitive figure skating in 2008, and now performs in exhibitions.

NFL player **Arian Foster**, who is a running back for the Houston Texans, said it won't be long before there is an openly gay player in the league—and that he's fine with it, according to *Outsports.com*. While guesting on the show *Jim Rome on Showtime*, Foster was asked, "How long before an active NFL player comes out?" Foster responded, "I'm not sure, but in today's world it's getting [less] taboo. It used to be very taboo for homosexuality, but I think nowadays it's getting to be more and more open."

Bull-riding in Jan.

The Professional Bull Riders (PBR) announced that the 2013 PBR Built Ford Tough Series will be at Allstate Arena, 6920 N. Mannheim Rd., Rosemont, on Jan. 12-13.

Competition begins at 8 p.m. on Jan. 12 and at 2 p.m. on Jan. 13.

Tickets are \$15-\$125; visit the Allstate Arena box office or www.Ticketmaster.com, or call 800-745-3000

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Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas. He is a longtime advocate for and member of the LGBT community, and is involved in several charitable groups, community associations, and professional organizations. Ray is a member of Clark Hill PLC, a full-service law firm consisting of a diverse team of attorneys and professionals committed to our clients and our communities.

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