



LOOKING AHEAD TO THE TRANS 100 FORUM
PAGE 10

High court hearings

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The U.S. Supreme Court took the marriage equality issue on a roller coaster ride Tuesday as it heard almost 90 minutes of argument in the case testing the constitutionality of California's ban on same-sex marriage.

For supporters, the highs included Justice Sonia Sotomayor asking whether there was any other context other than marriage where there would be a rational basis reason for using sexual orientation as a factor in denying rights to gay people rights, to which Yes on 8 attorney Charles Cooper conceded "I do not have anything to offer." And they included Justice Anthony Kennedy commenting on the importance of considering the "immediate legal injury" that 40,000 children in California suffer because their same-sex parents are not allowed to marry.

Turn to page 4

Right: Well over a thousand gather outside the U.S. Supreme Court. Photo courtesy of GLAAD



FORMER HBHC HEAD HARLEY MCMULLEN DIES
PAGE 8

SPRING FLING

Windy City Times' Spring Music/Movies Special



PROFILING 'UNDER A RAINBOW FLAG'
PAGE 13



pages 19-23

Our spring movie/music special spotlights several works and entertainers for the LGBT demographic, including the movie Pain & Gain (with Dwayne Johnson and Mark Wahlberg) and the singer De'Borah. Pain & Gain website image and De'Borah PR pic



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Photos on cover (left, from top): Screen shot of Gabrielle Ludwig on HBO's Real Sports show; PR image of Janet Mock; photo of Harley McMillen by Patrick Duvall; image from Under a Rainbow Flag from David Zak



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FUND HOUSE

Sidetrack hosted an event to provide aid to Cuba—and raised thousands of dollars.

Photo of Pepe Pena and Art Johnston by Ross Forman



Read about the offerings at the Hash House A Go Go restaurant—including its chicken and waffles (above).

Photo by Andrew Davis



Windy City Times was at Rihanna's show—and has the lowdown on all the action.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

WED-LETTER DAY



See photos from RainbowWedding Network's gay wedding expo.

Photo by Mike Sosin

'PORN' AGAIN

Gay singer Eric Alan talks about his single, "Pornstar," and LGBT fans.

IMMIGRATION NATION

This month's Ask Lambda Legal explains why immigration reform is an LGBT issue.

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SUPREME from cover

The lows included the considerable time justices spent wrangling over whether the Yes on 8 supporters of Proposition 8, California's ban on same-sex marriage, have proper legal standing to appeal the case. It included Chief Justice John Roberts saying the debate was "just about the label" marriage. And it included Justice Antonin Scalia repeatedly interrupting marriage equality attorney Ted Olson demanding that he identify "when did it become unconstitutional to exclude homosexuals" from marriage. But none of the three attorneys had an easy day.

Chief Justice Roberts tackled Solicitor General Donald Verrilli over his brief to the court, saying it was "inconsistent." Roberts noted that Verrilli was arguing that the children of same-sex couples do as well as the children of male-female couples, while also arguing that Proposition 8 harms the children of same-sex couples.

"Which is it?" asked Roberts.

Cooper stumbled, too, when Justices Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan challenged his argument that marriage is all about regulating procreation. If so, asked Breyer, why does California allow sterile male-female couples to marry? If so, asked Kagan, why allow people over 55 to get married. (Cooper, to much laughter in the courtroom, offered that it was "very rare that both parties in such marriages are infertile.")

Olson, lead attorney with David Boies of the American Foundation for Equal Rights team representing two same-sex couples, got into the most prolonged and exchange of the session when Justice Scalia demanded to know "when" it became unconstitutional to exclude gays from marriage. Scalia repeatedly insisted Olson identify a "specific date in time." Olson tried several times to answer the question and eventually shot back, "you've never required that before."

Gay legal activists seemed impressed with the overall discussion and most enthusiastic about Justice Sotomayor's pointed question to Cooper, concerning other areas where gays could be excluded from rights.

"It was basically asking him whether it's permissible to treat gay people differently from everyone else in anything else other than marriage," said Mary Bonauto. "And [Cooper] said, 'I can't think of anything, no.'"

"I thought that was extremely important in terms of acknowledging equal treatment," said Bonauto. "I thought that was critical."

Jon Davidson, legal director for Lambda Legal Defense, said a high point for him was Kennedy's remark about the "legal impact" on children of same-sex couples.

"I was really encouraged that he was thinking about the children of same-sex marriage. That is a very good sign."

Kate Kendell, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said she was a little surprised by the "rather heated exchange" between Scalia and Olson, over when it became unconstitutional to exclude gays from the right to marry.

"What Ted Olson should have said is, 'It's always been a violation of the constitution but, like in many of the other cases [involving rights withheld from other groups], it took a while for us to recognize that this right always existed for these people that we treated differently in the past.'"

"I doubt that if any other lawyer had been up there it would have been as heated," said Kendell, who said the exchange was like "two old friends" having a debate.

But each of the legal activists cautioned that it's important not to read too much into what the justices said or asked.

"We all know you can't tell from argument how it's going to go," said Evan Wolfson, head of the national Freedom to Marry group. "The argument showed they're wrestling with a lot of these big questions. I think standing is very much on their mind—very much a live part of the case. But they also were really grappling with the merits."

Though none mentioned it, it must have been



Well over a thousand people gather outside the U.S. Supreme Court. Photo courtesy of GLAAD

somewhat worrisome for marriage equality supporters to hear Justice Kennedy say, "the problem with this case" is that it is asking the court to "go into uncharted waters." That mantra was repeated by several other justices during the argument in the case, *Hollingsworth v. Perry*. Justice Samuel Alito echoed it when he told Solicitor General Donald Verrilli that marriage for same-sex couples is a "very new" phenomenon, newer than cell phones.

"You want us to step into" this debate, he said, when "we don't have the ability to see into the future. Why not leave it to the people?"

But hearing it from Kennedy was even more worrisome because he is considered the most likely fifth vote to provide a majority on one side or the other. Kennedy wrote the opinion in the 1996 *Romer v. Evans* decision striking an anti-gay initiative in Colorado and in the 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas* decision striking down sodomy laws. Both sides of the Proposition 8 case consider him the key vote to sway in order to consolidate a five-vote majority.

But Kennedy has been listing toward the conservative wing of the court recently, leading its dissent against President Obama's Affordable Care Act and leading its majority ruling to allow corporations to contribute without limits to political campaign activities. And in a speech in Sacramento March 6, he worried many marriage equality supporters when he told reporters he thinks it is a "serious problem" that the Supreme Court is being asked to settle controversial issues facing a democracy.

The *Hollingsworth v. Perry* case is testing the constitutionality of California's voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage. Voters approved Proposition 8 in November 2008, just six months after a California Supreme Court ruling found that the state constitution required that same-sex couples be able to obtain marriage licenses the same as male-female couples do.

The American Foundation for Equal Rights organized the original lawsuit in federal district court in San Francisco in January 2010, initially over the objections of LGBT legal activists and groups. But the groups came onboard quickly and U.S. District Court Chief Judge Vaughn Walker (who came out as gay after retirement in 2011) issued a decision in August 2010, saying Proposition 8 violated the federal equal protection and due process clauses, that there was no rational basis for limiting the designation of marriage to straight couples, and that there was no compelling reason for the state to deny same-sex couples the fundamental right to marry.

Then California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Attorney General Jerry Brown declined to appeal Walker's ruling, but Yes on 8 was granted permission to do so. A Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals panel upheld Walker's decision but on much more narrow grounds. It said the U.S. Supreme Court's 1996 ruling in *Romer* precluded voters from withdrawing the right to marry from same-sex couples in California. But the Su-

preme Court asked for arguments on the broader question of whether Proposition 8 violates the constitutional right to equal protection. It also asked whether Yes on 8 has proper legal standing to appeal the case after California elected officials decided not to.

As expected, there was considerable attention on the cases from the mainstream news organizations leading up to the arguments and very heavy media coverage of the argument Tuesday. Many nationally televised political talk shows spent time with commentators speculating whether the justices might be influenced by the latest polls showing growing popular support for marriage equality.

A number of news and commentary sites reported that Chief Justice John Roberts' openly gay cousin—48-year-old Jean Podrasky of San Francisco—and her partner Grace Fasano would be in the courtroom as the Chief Justice's guest. The Los Angeles Times quoted her as saying that, "He is a good man. I believe he sees where the tide is going. I do trust him. I absolutely trust that he will go in a good direction." She acknowledged that, while Roberts knows she's gay, she does not have any personal knowledge his views on the marriage issue.

People began standing in line for public seats on Thursday afternoon, five days before the Proposition 8 argument and in weather that was in the low thirties with rain and snow. On Monday afternoon, most were huddled under large blue tarps to fend off a wet snowfall. None of the dozen or so whom this reporter talked to acknowledged being professional "line-sitters," though one small group did say they were holding places in line for friends from California. Surprisingly few said they were gay.

Three young men relatively near the front of the line were with the Family Research Council, which opposes same-sex marriage.

Abigail Cromwell, a former criminal prosecutor from Cambridge, flew in Monday morning to see if she could get a seat. She supports marriage equality.

But the reasons each gave for trying to get into Tuesday's argument was similar: history.

"This is the most important case of our generation," said Cromwell.

"This is the civil rights issue of our time," said a man in his fifties or sixties at the very front of the line. Rick declined to give his last name.

On the other end of the National Mall from the Supreme Court on Tuesday, the National Organization for Marriage held a rally of opponents of allowing same-sex couples to marry. The rally was broadcast live by C-SPAN.

The Proposition 8 case was the first of two historic oral arguments before the Supreme Court this week. On Wednesday, the court is set to hear arguments in *U.S. v. Windsor*, testing the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

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GLAAD affirms bi and trans support, changes name

GLAAD spokesperson Wilson Cruz appeared on MSNBC's Melissa Harris-Perry to affirm the organization has formally dropped the "Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation" from its name and will now be known simply as GLAAD, the LGBT media advocacy organization, according to Advocate.com.

The organization also issued a commitment to incorporate trans and bi people in its efforts to support the entire LGBT community. "It is a natural progression that reflects the work GLAAD's staff is already leading," Cruz told Harris-Perry. "We respect and honor the full name that the organization was founded with, but GLAAD's work has expanded beyond fighting defamation to changing the culture."

17th annual PA HIV Drug Guide available

Positively Aware magazine's 17th Annual HIV Drug Guide is now available, in print and online.

This 76-page issue of Positively Aware devotes a full page to each approved HIV medication, where readers will also find detailed information on side effects, drug interactions and current trends in HIV care and treatment.

In addition to the 31 medications now approved for use in HIV, four investigational drugs are also included in the guide. The pullout HIV Drug Chart, which Walgreens sponsored, includes dosing information on all of the drugs as well as food and liquid requirements, alongside a photo, that can be used to help quickly and easily identify each medication.

To order copies of the magazine, call 773-989-9400 or email distribution@tpan.com. For more information about TPAN and Positively Aware magazine, visit www.tpan.com and www.positivelyaware.com.

Pediatrics group backs marriage equality, adoption

The American Academy of Pediatrics is saying gay people should be allowed to marry to help ensure the health and well-being of their children, according to ABC News.

The policy, published online March 21, cites research showing that the parents' sexual orientation has no effect on a child's development. Kids fare just as well in gay or straight families when they are nurturing as well as financially and emotionally stable, the academy says.

LGBT groups are praising the policy. "On behalf of the three million parents in our country who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and their six million children, the Family Equality Council welcomes the statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) that marriage strengthens our families," said spokesperson Steve Majors.

Correction

In the March 13 issue, an article on a screening of an Angela Davis should have stated that one of the panelists was Joy James, not Joy Davis.

In the March 20 issue, the review of the theatrical production *Aspects of Love* included words from a previous review.

Windy City Times regrets the errors.

Hundreds march for marriage equality in Chicago

BY KATE SOSIN

In an action coordinated with cities across the nation, hundreds of LGBT Chicagoans and allies marched through the city's streets demanding equal marriage as the U.S. Supreme Court readies to hear arguments in two marriage cases.

Approximately 400 people attended the Federal Plaza rally, organized against the national Defense of Marriage Act and California's Proposition 8, which both ban same-sex marriage.

Speaking at the rally were veteran LGBT activists including Vernita Gray, Andy Thayer, Rick Garcia and Kim Hunt.

Garcia, from The Civil Rights Agenda, said that if Supreme Court rules against equal marriage, LGBTs across the nation were poised to fight back.

"We have come a very long way, and we have long way to go, but we are in no ways tired," he said.

Gray cited the overturning of the U.S. ban on interracial marriage and said she was tired of paying tax bills but being denied the same rights as heterosexual couples.

"I'm saying to the Supreme Court that we've got to change this," Gray said. "We are part of the fabric of this nation."

Thayer, of the Gay Liberation Network, argued that LGBTs must demand social equality in addition to legal equality. He called on attendees to support other marginalized communities in their political movements and to push for safer schools and homeless shelters for LGBT youth.

Hunt added that the question of marriage was one of economic stability for many Black LGBT families.

Also speaking were The Civil Rights Agenda's Richard Streetman and Rev. Suzanne Anderson-Hurdle, a Lutheran pastor who testified in favor of the Illinois bill that seeks marriage equality.

Anderson-Hurdle said that she was ready challenge claims that the issue was one of religion, and she urged attendees to remember that they have strong allies.

"Know that you are loved for who you are and as God created you," she said.

Demonstrators marched through the cold under dozens of large rainbow flags as Chicagoans commuting home from work stopped to watch.

"LGBT, we demand equality!" demonstrators called.

They ended the march at Pioneer Plaza, where activists Thayer, Br. Michael Oboza and Lair Scott gave closing remarks.

The Supreme Court was poised to hear remarks on the two marriage cases March 26-27. The court is expected to rule in June. For ongoing coverage on those cases and to see more photos from this rally, see windycitymediagroup.com.



Attendees marched in support of same-sex marriage (left); Rick Garcia and Vernita Gray were among those who spoke at the event. Photos by Kate Sosin and Tracy Baim; more online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

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Religious-liberty campaign strikes at gays for discrimination

BY CHUCK COLBERT

Although freedom of religion enjoys federal and state constitutional protections, the Christian Right has argued, for some time now and with some success, that religious liberties are under attack by LGBT-rights and reproductive-rights activists. The argument is that laws and policies favoring same-sex marriage, adoption by gay couples, and access to contraceptives and abortion trespass on the rights of persons who oppose such measures based on religious beliefs.

But a new report shows that the religious-liberty-under-attack refrain masks an intention to discriminate.

"There is, in the U.S. a very well-funded, organized, well-conceived, and well-coordinated campaign to redefine the term 'religious liberty' to include the so-called liberty of individuals who wish to discriminate against LGBT individuals or who wish to restrict access to reproductive health care to make discriminatory decisions," said Jay Michaelson, author of a recently released 60-page report, "Redefining Religious Liberty: The Covert Campaign Against Civil Rights."

Michaelson was speaking March 18 during a telephone conference call for reporters. An author, activist and lawyer, Michaelson is a fellow at Political Research Associates (PRA), a Boston-based progressive, social justice think tank. He holds a Ph.D. in Jewish Thought from Hebrew University and a law degree from Yale University.

The idea that civil rights impact religious liberty is not new, Michaelson explained. It dates back decades to an IRS decision revoking Bob Jones University's tax-exempt status for racially discriminatory policies, a decision upheld by the US Supreme Court.

Bob Jones University "was part of a last-ditch effort to maintain racially discriminatory institutions," the report states, adding, "Then, as now, the 'religious liberty' in question was the liberty to discriminate against others."

Right now, "what's essentially happening," said Michaelson "is a coordinated campaign to redefine the term 'religious liberty' and reframe the questions of LGBT equality and reproductive rights."



Jay Michaelson. Photo by Sebastian Collett

Take an example from the report of a New Mexico wedding photographer (*Willock v. Elane Photography*), who was fined \$6,000 for refusing to photograph a same-sex couple. In the religious liberty frame, the photographer's rights—her freedom of religion not to sanction a same-sex union—are at stake. In the civil-rights frame, the couples have the right to be free from discrimination.

As Michaelson notes, the religious liberty

framing inverts the victim-discriminator dynamic. "It's a 180-degree turn," he said. "In the religious liberty context, prohibiting the discrimination is itself a form of oppressing religious liberty."

The Willock case turned on anti-discrimination law and on the photographer's status operating a public business. Same-sex marriage was not legal when the case was decided. And yet the Christian Right often cites it as a reason to oppose same-sex marriage.

Another tactic of the of the religious liberty campaign is an attempt carve out faith-based exemptions in same-sex marriage and non-discrimination laws of general applicability.

The question arises, however, are these legitimate exemptions for certain religious organizations and individuals, like clergy, or are the exemptions really about eviscerating the laws themselves?

Michaelson is comfortable drawing the line for exemptions at "the church house door," he said, but is wary of extending that line to situations where "religious organizations are operating in more or less secular capacities," such as hospitals and agencies providing social services.

"Even if religiously affiliated, we cannot have a situation where large businesses and huge corporations don't have to obey the same laws as everybody else," said Michaelson. "Americans don't believe in discrimination."

The report identifies key players behind the effort to redefine religious liberty, including conservative Catholic funded organizations that are producing religious liberty documents and rhetoric, which is then replicated by Christian Right evangelical organizations.

"The leading organization is the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a public-interest law firm based in Washington, D.C.," said Michaelson, who went on to name others behind the effort, including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Alliance Defending Freedom (formerly the Alliance Defense Fund), the Christian Legal Society, Ethics and Public Policy Center, and the Family Research Council. These organizations are funded by private donors and by the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization, he said. The Becket Fund has also received government funding in the past.

"The same networks and organizations doing the work now on religious liberty were forged in the pro-life movement," said Michaelson. "It is essentially the pro-life movement taking on a new rhetoric, for an old cause."

Unlike the pro-life movement, however, the religious liberty campaign has a significant academic presence, he said, pointing to the recently established Center for Religious Liberty at Stanford University, funded by the Becket Fund. And religious liberty campaign has succeed in marshaling influential academics, namely Douglas Laycock, a distinguished professor at the University of Virginia Law School, and the conservative Catholic Robert P. George of Princeton University.

The report also discusses the tactics of the religious liberty movement, documenting its public relations campaign to convince Americans that religious liberty is indeed under attack.

"So far the strategy has not been very successful," said Michaelson, noting that 39 percent of Americans believe religious liberty is under attack in general. "However, it has had a significant impact on specific questions."

Michaelson pointed to a recent example, the Minnesota referendum, where voters defeated a ballot measure that would have amended the state's constitution banning same-sex marriage.

"One of the leading arguments by the anti same-sex marriage side [was an assertion that] if same-sex marriage passes, your minister will be compelled to solemnize gay weddings in your church," Michaelson explained.

Such an assertion is patently false. "Not a single gay-rights activist anywhere would make such a claim, and no court would uphold it," he said. "No religious institution can be compelled to provide any kind of service that violates the tenets of the religion, whether it's mixed race marriage, or mixed religious marriage, or a same-sex marriage."

But research from robo calls in Minnesota found the anti same-sex marriage assertion "was quite effective," said Michaelson. "The number-one concern among those opposed to same-sex marriage was that their church or pastor would be forced to solemnize a same-sex wedding."

There is a take away point for marriage equality advocates. Data from the report suggests that "conservative 'religious liberty' advocates will succeed if they can continue to blur the lines regarding what same-sex marriage legislation would actually do."

Alternatively, the report data suggests "that if progressives state clearly and loudly that no church will ever be compelled to perform a same-sex marriage," then "many opponents will now become supporters."

In all, the religious liberty campaign presents progressives with a more complicated, nuanced landscape to advocate LGBT equality. "No one wants to oppose religious liberty," said Michaelson, explaining the issue is not about "imposing the bible on anyone. The language is civil not theological."

Nonetheless, he said, "Progressives have begun to recognize this is a front in the culture war, that religious liberty is a code word, like family values, not applied everywhere only selectively on reproductive rights and LGBT equality."

Still, "there has yet to be any unified response," said Michaelson. "Among specialists, and in certain areas, there's been a lot of excellent work. Yet in the wider LGBT movement, there is little understanding of the religious liberty campaign, and what it seeks to accomplish."

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African-American LGBTs lobbied Reps. Mary Flowers (center left) and Ken Dunkin (center right). Photo courtesy of Ben Montgomery

Marriage-equality vote pushed to April

BY KATE SOSIN

Organizers pushing Illinois' equal-marriage bill are inching toward a vote on the measure, they say, but action on the bill is not anticipated until early April.

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, told Windy City Times, "We are closing in on 60 votes."

Support in the House for the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act has been the source of much speculation and debate in recent weeks, after predictions for when the bill might be called were repeatedly pushed back.

The bill will not face a House vote until after lawmakers return from spring break April 8, Cherkasov said.

House Speaker Mike Madigan made headlines in mid-March when he told reporters that the bill was 12 votes shy of the 60 it needs to pass.

Some scoffed at that number, as earlier reports from LGBT activists in Springfield suggested that the bill had stronger support.

Cherkasov declined to offer a vote count, stating only, "I feel like we're very close," and adding that every day that reps. are in session a vote is possible.

Rick Garcia, policy director for The Civil Rights Agenda, said that different groups, activists and sponsors had varying vote counts.

Garcia estimated that the bill has a vote count "in the upper 50s."

"Now, we have our 'yes's' our 'no's' and a large number of undecided's," Garcia said. "I'm still confident that we can get it done this session...We're still moving forward."

Estimated timelines for the bill have been repeatedly pushed back this month, as sponsors, lobbyists and LGBT field organizers target undecided lawmakers.

Cherkasov said that Illinois Unites for Marriage, the coalition of organizations pushing the bill, has been phone banking and collecting post cards to legislators, among other things.

The coalition has more than a dozen field organizers working solely on getting the bill passed.

Garcia said that in addition to phone banking, The Civil Rights Agenda has been pushing influential people to call undecided lawmakers.

LGBT groups remained on the ground in Springfield through March 21, where they facilitated visits from LGBT families and allies to state reps.

Among those visiting was a large group of Black LGBT leaders and community members, who met with Black Caucus members and urged them to vote in favor of marriage equality.

Michael O'Connor, who served as legislative staffer for former Rep. Constance Howard, and Ben Montgomery, retired staffer for Congressman Danny Davis, organized the trip, which included members of Affinity Community Services, Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, Youth Pride Services and the Chicago Urban League.

Chicago Urban League also sent a letter to Black Caucus members urging them to vote for equal marriage.

O'Connor noted the importance of showing Black Caucus members that Black LGBTs back marriage equality.

"The responses from a number of legislators was this is a white issue," O'Connor said.

He called on young Black LGBT leaders push back against that narrative.

"They need to challenge the bias, the discrimination that exists, coming from the Black Church," he said.

Rev. Dr. L. Bernard Jakes of West Point Missionary Baptist Church also threw his weight behind the bill, urging people of faith who support the bill to make their voices heard.

"The Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act extends the freedom to marry to same-sex couples and strengthens religious freedom—there's no doubt about it," Jakes wrote.

LGBT leaders said that they would continue to build support for the bill during the two-week break in session.

CJR social-justice conference April 5-7

The Coalition for Justice and Respect (CJR) is holding a social-justice conference April 5-7.

According to a press release, the event will feature "life-affirming and lifestyle-enhancement workshops, and speakers on topics and issues [ranging] from civic engagement to relationship development and celebration of arts and culture."

Those interested in presenting workshops should submit abstracts to cjr.chicago@gmail.com. For more info, contact CJR Executive Director Marc Loveless at marc.loveless@gmail.com or call 773-257-3050.

Urvashi Vaid in Chicago April 3

Author of Irresistible Revolution: Confronting Race, Class, and the Assumptions of LGBT Politics

CHICAGO: Longtime LGBT-rights advocate Urvashi Vaid will be in Chicago Wed., April 3, for a free event at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St. She will discuss and sign copies of her new book, **Irresistible Revolution: Confronting Race, Class, and the Assumptions of LGBT Politics**. This is her only public program in Chicago.

The event will start at 7 p.m. and is co-hosted by Center on Halsted, the Community Media Workshop; Ellen Stone Belic Institute for Women & Gender in Arts & Media, Columbia College Chicago; and Windy City Times newspaper. Women & Children First Bookstore will have books for sale at the event.

Comic and activist Kate Clinton, Vaid's longtime partner, will also be at the event, leading a Q&A with the author.

From one of the nation's best-known social justice leaders and community activists comes a strategic and informed argument about the pitfalls of limited political vision, and the benefits of an agenda that encompasses, yet moves beyond, equality.

The LGBT movement is on one of the most active, contested, and engaging social movements in the world. This optimistic book challenges advocates for LGBT rights in the U.S.

to aspire beyond the narrow framework of equality. It outlines a more substantive politics with race, class, and gender at its foundation, and suggests that such a politics will produce greater and more meaningful change for a larger number of people.

Irresistible Revolution is intended for a broad and general audience. The book turns an experienced and thoughtful lens onto many common controversies, rhetoric, and strategic questions that face contemporary social change movements: pursuit of broad or narrow agendas, integration of economic and racial justice, integrating sexual orientation and gender identity in human rights frameworks, the persistence of sexism, the dilemmas of bipartisanship, and the challenge of seeing beyond the short term to secure gains made for the long run.

RSVP: To make a reservation, contact Tom Elliott at telliott@centeronhalsted.org or 773-472-6469.

BOOKS: To purchase and/or reserve your copies call Women & Children First Bookstore at 773-769-9299 or visit www.womenandchildrenfirst.com. Guests are encouraged to reserve copies or prepay to ensure an adequate number of books. Reserved copies and a limited number of additional copies will be available at the event.

For more information, contact the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women & Gender in the Arts & Media, Columbia College Chicago at 312-369-8829.

Former HBHC leader Harley McMillen dies

BY TRACY BAIM AND PATRICK DUVALL

Harley McMillen, 70, former executive director of Chicago's Howard Brown Health Center, died March 23 in Viroqua, Wis. He lived in nearby Viola for the past 10 years before moving into an assisted living facility.

Allen McMillen, 31, said his uncle suffered a massive stroke and passed away just a couple of hours later. Allen said there is no service planned. Donations can be made in his name to Howard Brown Health Center or Tree House Humane Society.

In addition to Allen his survivors are: his brother Jack McMillen, 67, of Kansas City, Mo., and his sister Janis McMillen, 75, of Overland Park, Kan.

McMillen was an important pioneer in the early gay men's health movement, on issues of sexual health, hepatitis and AIDS. He was also very involved in the leather community, and bartended for gay bars. He was also part of the Pride Chicago Motorcycle Club, and bartended at clubs owned by Jim Flint and Chuck Renslow. He also worked for Renslow at Gay-Life newspaper in the early 1980s.

"He was really helpful on men's health issues, and in growing Howard Brown clinic," Renslow said, remembering his longtime friend, part of his Renslow "family." Jim Flint posted on Facebook that McMillen "will be missed by many."

McMillen was interviewed at length for the Windy City Times AIDS series Oct. 12, 2011. See www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/AIDS-Harley-McMillen-An-early-champion-in-fight-against-HIV/34185.html.

During the early fear-stricken days of the AIDS epidemic, McMillen stood out as a voice of reason. His strong Midwestern values and commitment to community service led him to become a focal point for the coordinated response to AIDS in Chicago, which included holding discussion forums on the disease,

starting an AIDS hotline, founding the AIDS Action Project to provide direct outreach and social services, and helping to start the first Brown Elephant thrift store to fund their efforts, all while managing a clinic with a staff of more than 400 employees and volunteers.

"People back then were scared. You could see it in their questions and their eyes," McMillen told Windy City times in 2011. He was former executive director of HBHC (then known as Howard Brown Memorial Clinic) at the beginning of the AIDS crisis, in the early 1980s.

The full obit is at www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/PASSAGES-Former-HBHC-leader-Harley-McMillen-dies/42090.html.



Harley McMillen. Photo by Patrick Duvall

'Mad Hatter's Brunch' to benefit Broadway Youth Center

BY MATTHEW C. CLARK

Holding on to your hat may not be so easy if the Kinsey Sicks have you bowling over with laughter. But the comedy and music revue act may do just that at an upcoming brunch.

On Sunday, April 7, the Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) will be hosting a "Mad Hatter's Brunch." The event is a fundraiser to benefit the Broadway Youth Center (BYC), a social services program for youth in the Boystown area. The brunch will be held at ZED451 restaurant, 739 N. Clark St., 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

According to an HBHC press release, "This festive afternoon will bring Chicagoans together to sport their zany and outrageous hats and to enjoy delectable specialty dishes from a rich buffet—all to raise funds to support the work and programs of the Broadway Youth Center."

The Kinsey Sicks, the live entertainment for the event, will be opting out of any headwear, which isn't required.

"The problem is our height of hair," performer Winnie told the Windy City Times. "Last time we tried adding hats on top, we got too close to the lighting and caught fire."

The Sicks are known for their stinging wit, as many of their YouTube parody music videos can attest to.

"All four Kinseys were deeply disappointed at losing the run for the papacy," Winnie said. "But we're a bit appeased now that we've picked up all of Michelle Shocked's cancelled gigs."

Winnie said attendees could expect four-part a cappella harmonies, "and dresses far more attractive than their wearers."

"The wonderful staff at Howard Brown are all dear friends," she added. "And we'd do anything for friends with benefits. Even perform midday on a Sunday, when we could be sleeping off our hangovers. Oh, and it's a really good cause too."

BYC aims to offer young people a safe, positive social outlet, by providing youth access to basic needs such as meals, showers and clothing, on-site medical services, HIV/STD testing and treatment, educational services, counseling, case management, and youth leadership opportunities.

BYC announced last year that it would be moving its program's operation base, temporarily housing it at the Broadway United Methodist Church, with other services being provided at its Lakeview office. The relocation is scheduled to end in April.

HBHC Senior Director of Communications Alonzo Brown told Windy City Times there are currently no updates on the permanent space, but that services at BYC will continue to expand based off the needs of the youth who visit it's center.

According to Brown, BYC was designated as the Northside Regional Coordinator for the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services Homeless Youth Engagement program, which will provide BYC with more resources and services and allow BYC to link youth to a greater access of health services.

"The funds from this event will assist in our efforts to continue to provide much-needed health and wellness services for more than 2,900 LGBT youth who currently receive our services annually," he told Windy City Times.

Brown said the center is always in need of donations such as food items, hygiene products and clothing, as well as volunteering.

The Sicks recently premiered their 20th anniversary show, "America's Next Top Bachelor Housewife Celebrity Hoarder Makeover Star Gone

Wild," which they'll be bringing to Chicago in August.

"But that is not a substitute for coming to the HBHC Mad Hatter event on April 7," Winnie Said. "In fact, anyone who skips the HBHC event and then shows up at our show in August, we be singled out from the audience and identified as a callous, selfish person who doesn't believe in health care."

In 2012, BYC conducted 1,207 HIV testing and counseling sessions, and 1,380 youth were provided walk-in clinical services through a record-breaking 2,075 medical visits, among other services, according to the press release.

The BYC also provides homeless resource advocacy sessions as well as GED tutoring and testing.

"We are thankful for those who have contributed to this event," said Lara Brooks, director,



The Kinsey Sicks will perform at the Mad Hatter's Brunch.

Broadway Youth Center. "The capital raised will assist in our endeavors to continue to provide much-needed health and wellness services to at-risk LGBT youth regardless of their ability to pay."

Mad Hatter's Brunch sponsors include Walgreens, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, MillerCoors, Price-

waterhouse Coopers and Orbitz. Windy City Times is a media sponsor for the event.

Tickets to the event can be purchased online at www.howardbrown.org/madhatter. More details about donations and volunteers can be found at www.howardbrown.org/byc.

Event to honor national trans organizers

BY KATE SOSIN

When transgender people see their stories reflected in the news, the image is almost always the same: scary or tragic.

Little transgender coverage falls outside the bounds of murders, discrimination or people trapped in the “wrong” bodies.

That, said Jen Richards, is exactly the point of the “Trans 100.” The event is March 31 in Chicago and Phoenix.

The “Trans 100” will honor 100 of the most engaged transgender organizers nationally in an effort to build unity in transgender communities, empower activists and showcase positive transgender stories.

“We’re going to help shift the tone of the way the media interacts with trans people,” said Richards, who is producing the event through her blog, WeHappyTrans.com. “So in a sense, the list itself is activism.”

The Trans 100 launch event, scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Mayne Stage in Rogers Park on Sunday, March 31, will feature talks by transgender icons Janet Mock and Dr. Kortney Ryan Ziegler. Performances will include trans musicians Namoli Brennet and Joe Stevens. Chicago activist and performer KOKUMO will host the evening.

The event will run concurrently with a launch event in Phoenix, produced by transgender activist Antonia D’orsay, who conceived of the idea for the Trans 100.

And everything from the promotion of the event down to the videography will employ the skills of trans-owned businesses.

Changing the narrative

The Trans 100 launch is scheduled on the International Transgender Day of Visibility, a relatively new observance intended to celebrate trans lives.

The International Transgender Day of Visibility sprung up a few years ago out of frustration that the only day set aside to honor trans people, The Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) in November, mourned the dead. While most felt that TDOR was a crucial event to draw attention to gender-based violence, many trans activists also longed for a day that celebrated the living.

It was Rachel Crandall, executive director of

Transgender Michigan, who first acted on that desire, according to a post by Monica Roberts on her blog TransGriot. Crandall’s idea spread over Facebook, and the March 31 observance was born.

That sentiment is echoed in the Trans 100 list. “We want to be able to show the wonders and celebrate the lives of trans people,” said D’orsay.

D’orsay notes that most LGBT lists of notable people include few transgender names, and when they do, they are seldom the names of working



Clockwise from top left: Janet Mock, Joe Stevens, Dr. Kortney Ryan Ziegler, Namoli Brennet, KOKUMO, Jen Richards.



activists or current leaders.

“They include ones that are dead or inactive or just famous for being trans,” said D’orsay. “The people [in the Trans 100] are doing good work for trans people right now.”

The start of the Trans 100

The Trans 100 was born accidentally.

D’orsay reconnected with her son last fall after five years apart.

During those five years, her son had studied up on her life. D’orsay is well-known for her work as the executive director of This is HOW, an Arizona organization that serves trans people.

Her son commented that it seemed like she was as pretty big deal in the transgender community.



“Not really,” she said. “If there was a list of 100 transgender people, I’d be like 98 or 99.”

D’orsay recounted that interaction on her Facebook page, and Richards happened to see it.

“I thought that was a really great idea, and I saw the potential in it. So I wrote to Toni,” said Richards.

It was past midnight when the two started talking and within a few hours, they had come up with a formal version of the Trans 100.

Creating the list

In the first 24 hours of the Trans 100 launch, D’orsay and Richards had more than 100 nominations. By the time the nomination deadline arrived, Richards and D’orsay were looking at more than 500 entries, 345 of them discreet.

“I think what was most exciting to me was going through the list and seeing names than had multiple nominations and had people just gushing about how much great work they were doing that I had never heard of,” said Richards. “It was like being at a party with all of your friends and you realize that there is a whole other room full of their friends. You’re like, ‘I get to meet all these people now.’”

An undisclosed group of 15-20 curators is wading through the nominations currently, Richards said.

They will be looking for activists in the United States whose organizing work is current and conscious of race, class and other identities intersecting in transgender communities. Those selected will be given a chance to accept or decline the honor. Their names will be presented at the Phoenix and Chicago events.

Beyond the event

Richards chose Chicago to host the event for multiple reasons, she said. Aside from the fact that she lives in the city, Richards points out that transgender advocacy in Chicago is some of the most exciting in the country right now.

Longtime HIV service provider Chicago House is in the midst of launching several transgender programs including transgender housing, Lurie Children’s Hospital recently opened a gender identity clinic for trans kids and last year, Chicago saw its first ever transgender pride event, among other things.

Richards would like to keep the event in Chicago in future years, but that will depend on funding, she said.

Right now, she is focused on selecting 100 names on a tight deadline. After that?

“We begin planning the next one,” she said.

Ticket info is at <http://trans100.eventbrite.com>.

UIC holds trans health forum

BY YASMIN NAIR

On March 18, Palliative Neglect, an interdisciplinary collective that looks at health issues for LGBTQ people, hosted a trans health and healthcare forum at University of Illinois at Chicago’s School of Public Health (SPH). The forum was designed to answer the community’s questions about the new Affordable Care Act (ACA) and resources. The event was held in conjunction with Pride At Work, SEIU Lavender Caucus, Transgender Law Center, Center for American Progress and the National Center for Transgender Equality.

Panelists included a mix of activists and healthcare professionals. They were Alexis Martinez, of the Trans Oral History Project; Laura Grimes, River Rock Therapy; Channyn Parker, Trans Life Center & Chicago House; Dr. Margo Bell, Stroger Hospital; Jen Richards, of We Happy Trans; Lisa Kuhns, Lurie Children’s Hospital and UIC SPH and John Peller of AIDS Foundation of Chicago. Rebecca Kling served as the moderator and Hale Thompson, a Ph.D. student in the School of Public Health, delivered introductory remarks.

Thompson spoke about March as a “Transgender Month of Action,” an ongoing campaign among labor unions as well as trans and LGBTQ groups designed to bring awareness about healthcare disparities faced by trans people. Health care has historically been complicated for trans people because vital elements of trans health, such as hormone therapy and surgery, are often denied to those who seek them on grounds that they reflect “pre-existing conditions.”

Peller spoke at length about the ACA, saying that it meant “good news for trans people,” and that it was a “critical step in the right direction for access to healthcare.” According to him, two important elements of the ACA were that insurance companies will not be able to ban people because of pre-existing conditions and that people will be able to buy more affordable health insurance.

Kling stopped Peller as he continued to discuss the virtues of the ACA, and asked what she said were the biggest questions for people in the room: Would it provide for surgery and would it provide for hormones? The response from Peller was, “We don’t know yet. In most cases, hormones will be covered. Surgery will be a heavier lift.” He also added that “the

Obama Administration has stated that non-discrimination provisions apply to trans and LGBTQ populations.”

As the discussion moved to the rest of the panel and opened up to include the many attendees in the room, it became clear that both economic and social issues were pressing matters for many people.

For many, like Richards, simply getting health insurance has been impossible, even after protracted correspondence with providers who eventually told her, “We cannot appropriately price for someone in your condition.” Richards said she took that to mean, “We cannot charge you enough money.” Alexis Martinez spoke of having difficulty with healthcare even though she has had insurance in nearly all of her workplaces, because of the lack of cultural competency on the part of providers. For instance, her revealing that she is on hormones will lead to doctors insisting that those are the cause of any unrelated medical conditions.

Bell spoke of her work with trans youth of color, and that for them even getting transportation to get to the hospital for hormone therapy can be an economic burden and, as a result, “most youth buy street hormones” and this “can be tough on adolescents’ growth and development.”

Kuhns spoke of similar issues and talked about ongoing research at Lurie. One study, on more than 100 trans women, showed, among other findings, that 38 percent had no insurance of any kind, 44 percent had no personal doctor, and 37 percent needed to see a doctor in the past 12 months but could not because of the cost.

The relationship between social stigma and health was especially clear for many. Channyn Parker pointed out that providers, social workers, and the community needed to understand what it was like to be trans and even step out of the house to get to an appointment. For someone who does not “pass” according to societal norms, every minute of the trip to a hospital, from taking a bus to sitting in a waiting room clearly designed for cisgender women, means becoming the subject of intrusive stares or harassment.

At the time of this writing, the event’s Facebook page is still being used as a provisional resource for further questions. See <https://www.facebook.com/events/262589797205013>.

Read the entire article online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

BI in the LIFE

Chuck Kramer

TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN
PHOTOS COURTESY OF KRAMER



Age
69

Relationship status
Single

Neighborhood
Uptown

Job title
Retired teacher, Chicago Public School

Favorite local restaurants
Sun Wah BBQ and Calo's

Granddaughters
Alexandra, 17; Hanna, 10; and Elle, 7

Five people (living or dead) who you'd like to have dinner with
Phillip Roth, Toni Morrison, Tony Hoagland, Stephen Spielberg and Joan Baez

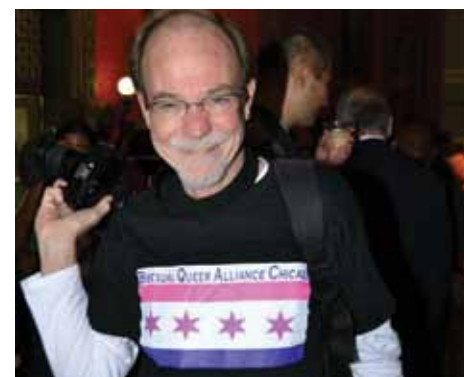
Chuck Kramer taught reading and writing to local junior high students for 30 years.

"I really enjoyed working with adolescent kids; I liked their fresh point of view, often raw and unmodulated," he said.

Now retired, Kramer stays in contact with some of his former students via Facebook, watching as they pursue careers as lawyers, engineers, teachers and more.

Kramer's passion has long been photography. He has taken pictures, documenting the lives of his students, friends, and family. "While still teaching, I did some magazine work and shot a book-cover for a friend's poetry book," Kramer said. "After retiring, I found myself shooting a lot of drag shows and submitted the pictures to Nightspots, leading to regular freelance work for that magazine and Windy City Times. I've also done event photography and glam shots for performers."

In retirement, Kramer has resumed his passion for writing. After all, he worked on student newspapers in high school and college, and did free-lance journalism for the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Daily News and The Reader while still teaching.



"Since [retiring,] I've been able to focus more on fiction and poetry," Kramer said. "I've had short stories published online and recently attended the Key West Literary Seminar."

Plus, Kramer has had poetry published in various small journals, "and I'm a regular at the Weeds Monday night for its poetry open microphone, where I not only read but photograph the other poets," he said.



"I've been actively bisexual since puberty, though I never thought of myself as bi or gay or straight. I simply didn't define myself in terms of my sexuality. I'm a son and brother, husband and father, a teacher and photographer, a man who enjoys the company of both women and men. That's just me. I want people see me as a person rather than as some creature defined and limited by a label, even when that label does describe a certain aspect of my personality. But I am bi and that's the only label that comes close to describing who I am in terms of my sexual orientation, so it'll have to do until something better comes along."

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 Community Marketing, Inc.



LUIS ROMAN

Why immigration is an LGBT issue

A few months ago, my dad and I had one of the most remarkable conversations ever. This was the first time that I had ever taken the chance to actually talk to him about what he thought about my sexual orientation.

Prior to this conversation, my father had always been a silent supporter—I knew he believed in equal rights for the LGBTQ community, but he had never really voiced any support for the work that I do. During our conversation, I asked him what he thought about having two gay sons. He responded by reminding me of why my mom and he decided to leave everything behind and immigrate to the United States from Mexico.

Like many immigrants, my parents left their rural hometowns in search of a better future for my brothers and me. Part of that better future, my dad explained, was being able to live our lives comfortably—and that included being queer. That was the reason why my mom was unable to fully accept my sexuality. She was not upset because I was breaking Catholic dogma; rather, she was afraid because she could not protect me from homophobia.

To them, immigrating was about being safe, but being out put me in danger, according to them. My dad continued with affirming that my quest to find someone to love is a continuation of that immigrant story. He said, "I don't care that you will one day fall in love with another

man. What I care the most is that you find someone who will love you and treat you with the respect that you deserve."

Our fight to have our love validated and respected is interconnected with our immigrant struggle to find a better future. Both communities yearn to be treated as humans with dignity. The bridging of these communities (LGBTQ and immigrant) has occurred with the labor of those who identify within both communities. The struggle and ardent activism of the undocumented queer youth, highlights how our intersecting identities manifest themselves in our daily lives. As a queer Latino immigrant, I realize that there is no way that I can separate any of my identities. As much as I am queer, I am Latino as I am an immigrant. These three identities have played a role in the way my life has shaped up to be.

The LGBT community needs to be conscious of the fact that LGBT immigrants experience another layer of barriers that LGBT citizens are immune from. Many LGBT immigrants have a hard time accessing LGBTQ-specific resources. In many instances, the resources are not culturally sensitive or they are not available in languages other than English. There are also several resources that are inaccessible to LGBTQ immigrants because they require proof of residency.

For some, especially LGBTQ youth, these resources are a matter of life and death—and given the catastrophic youth suicide epidemic, it is imperative that we address this issue. Therefore, if our movement wants to be an all-encompassing one, the LGBTQ community needs to not just stand in solidarity with the immigrant rights movement but needs to be a part of the movement.

While most LGBT organizations have focused on binational couples, with one partner being a U.S. citizen and the other being an undocumented immigrant, it is important to note that only 9 percent of LGBT immigrants are in a same-sex relationship. Therefore, there is a larger popula-

tion of LGBT immigrants that are not in a relationship.

According to a report by The Williams Institute, "LGBT Adult Immigrants in the United States," (Gates 2013) there are approximately 904,000 LGBT-identified immigrants. Specifically, there are 267,000 LGBT-identified undocumented immigrants, which account for 2.7 percent out of all undocumented immigrants.

While that number may seem small, our community's investment should be huge. The LGBTQ community is inherently diverse, there are people from all races, ethnicities, genders, faiths and economic backgrounds who identify within our community. And as the demographics of the country change, it is crucial that we begin to look closely at how our community and our allies are also changing.

According to every recent poll, Latinos continue to support equality for the LGBTQ community in huge numbers; in many polls, the support from Latinos is significantly larger than the national average. According to the latest poll by Latino Decision, approximately two-thirds of Latino voters are in favor of an LGBT inclusive immigration reform. The Latino/a leadership and community is ready to collaborate and work with the LGBT communities in addressing these fundamentals inequalities. It is imperative that we are also ready and willing to work in partnership and achieve equal rights for all people, whether LGBT and/or immigrant.

Immigration is not just an issue about good policy; it is about humanity and families. As LGBTQ people, we understand first-hand what it means to fight for our lives and our families.

Luis Roman is the Uniting America Fellow with ICIRR and Lambda Legal. For more information and ways to get involved, please contact Luis at LRoman@lambdalegal.org.**

(**Title and organizations for identification purposes only)

LETTERS

A letter to the pope

His Holiness Francis
Apostolic Palace
00120 Vatican City State, EUROPE

Your Holiness:

The purpose of this communication is to call on you to open a dialogue with the Rainbow Sash Movement (RSM) on how best to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ outside of the ancient taboos and personal biases that have been directed at the international LGBT community by your predecessor. Many in our community have been made to feel unwelcome in the Church. Its public hostility towards our social justice journey have angered and alienated many.

We are a Roman Catholic organization that supports the human rights of LGBT people within the social-justice tradition of the Church. Our vision is the formal acceptance of LGBT people into the Catholic Church.

On behalf of the board of the directors of the RSM, please accept our fraternal love, and prayers on your election as pope of the universal Church.

Some might say you occupy the Chair of St. Peter at a difficult moment in history. We would prefer to understand your election as an opportunity of healing and reconciliation. Never forget we are all frail and sinful people in need of healing and reconciliation.

There has been too much misunderstanding

directed at us in the Church, and it is my hope that a dialogue process would be better than public assaults on each other. It is in that spirit that I call for communication between people of goodwill to replace the present hostility.

I have met with Cardinal Francis George of the Archdiocese of Chicago, and have been in written communication with him and Cardinal Timothy Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York, the current president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops on the subject of LGBT inclusion in the Church. It is my hope that we can formalize this dialogue process. We believe your encour-

agement for dialogue rather than hostility would have positive consequences beyond our borders and send a message of welcome and not the opposite.

I will keep you in my prayers, and ask that you keep me in yours.

Sincerely,
 Joe Murray
 Executive Director
 Rainbow Sash Movement

Send letters and viewpoints
 to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com.
 Items may be edited for length or clarity.

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo from David Zak

Under a Rainbow Flag is featured below and reviewed on page 14.

DISH

Park place.
Page 22

Photo of branzino at Viaggio at the Park by Andrew Davis



THEATER

'Remix' 'n match.
Page 15

Photo from Othello: The Remix by Michael Brosilow



MOVIES

'Mental' health.
Page 18

Photo of Toni Collette in Mental from Screen Australia



SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

'Flag' flies high

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Leo Schwartz, the composer and lyricist to Pride Films and Plays' world premiere musical Under a Rainbow Flag, first met Jon Phillips, now 91, in the 1980s. Schwartz, who works in fundraising and marketing, was entranced by Phillips' stories of his many brushes with celebrities and even royalty from his three decades of working in various planning departments for the city of Chicago starting in 1954.

But it was Phillips' stories of his formative gay experiences while serving in the Navy and Marine Corps during World War II that stuck out in Schwartz's mind.

"It was unlike anything I had heard before because I was under the impression that all of this was very hidden," said Schwartz in a telephone interview a few days before his show officially opened March 23 at Profiles Theatre's Main Stage. "Jon had some very interesting moments in his career as a soldier and I tried to incorporate those things into the musical."

Now Schwartz's original intention was to use Phillips' experiences along with other veterans' stories from other wars as part of a large-scale oratorio-style piece for gay choruses to highlight the contributions of gay and lesbian service members as a response to the now-defunct "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy of the 1990s. But without a commission, Schwartz put that oratorio idea aside.

But Phillips' stories still resonated with Schwartz, which is why he thought they would make a good narrative musical. Schwartz was already working on Under a Rainbow Flag when he became aware of Pride Films and Plays' Great Gay Play and Musical Contest, which spurred him on

to finish the piece. Under a Rainbow Flag was a finalist and received a reading as part of the Gay Play Weekend in April 2012 at the Center on Halsted.

Schwartz decided to focus on 10 years of his characters' lives starting during World War II and then to look at the gay communities they helped to develop afterwards. Schwartz also drew from his experience managing and performing in the Clark Street Big Band ensemble in the writing of the piece.

"There's a lot of jazz in it, there's some rock stuff and your standard show tunes and I've got a couple of characters who at times remind me of Disney characters because they're so animated and energetic and their music is so bouncy and catchy," Schwartz said, adding that he also drew from the Abbott and Costello and Andrews Sisters films he remembers watching on TV growing up in the 1950s.

Schwartz found the feedback from audiences at the reading to be invaluable, particularly from Pride Films and Plays artistic director David Zak, who advised Schwartz to expand the relationships in the show and to focus on the characterizations. Schwartz also laughed at a suggestion told to him by Phillips at the reading's intermission: "The Jon Phillips on stage is a lot nicer than I am," he said.

Although Under a Rainbow Flag lost the contest to Sean Chandler and David Leeper's one-man play At the Flash, both shows found a spot in Pride Films and Plays' 2012-13 season of fully staged productions.

"The fact that we can do a Chicago piece is really thrilling," said Zak, who also directs the production with Robert Ollis as music director. "It's a big piece and Leo's a wonderful writer



Under a Rainbow Flag. Photo courtesy of David Zak

who has had a couple of little things done in Chicago and New York, but nothing this big. I also think it's a great story based upon someone who is still alive."

At opening night of Under a Rainbow Flag, Phillips was given a front row seat and acknowledged at the curtain call along with the creative team. The cast also gave Phillips a framed autographed show poster to mark the occasion of part of his life becoming a piece of musical theater—quite an accomplishment for this native of Streator, Ill., who rose above complicated family origins to be a success in Chicago city planning and to become an inspiration for the LGBT community later in life.

"I told Leo to go ahead with it, but I was skeptical of the whole thing," Phillips said during a telephone interview at his Evanston care home. "But Leo put his heart and soul into this whole thing and the first run I saw convinced me that it's a worthwhile project to help gay men and women to be accepted."

Although he is coping with chronic emphysema, Phillips said he hopes to see Under a Rainbow Flag each Saturday evening during its run. Phillips is also relishing all the attention the musical is giving him since he's starting to receive invitations to speak about his life by groups around town.

"When these offers came up, I talked to the doctors and nurses and one said I should do it because you're shutting down—you're too bright and too valuable a person who still has life to live," Phillips said. "So I said yes."

Pride Films and Plays' world premiere of Under a Rainbow Flag continues through April 21 at Profiles Theatre's Main Stage, 4139 N. Broadway. Performances are 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays with 2:30 p.m. matinees on Sundays (no show on March 27). Tickets are \$15-\$25 with discounts for veterans, seniors and students; call 800-838-3006 or visit www.pridefilmsandplays.com or www.brownpapertickets.com.



Kevin Gudahl and Chaon Cross in *Proof*. Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW

Proof

Playwright: David Auburn

At: Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis Ave.

Tickets: 773-753-4472 or

www.courttheatre.org; \$45-\$65

Runs through: April 14

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It has taken a long time for David Auburn's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *Proof* to finally "come home" as it were to the Court Theatre. After all, Auburn's 2000 play is set in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, and its main focus is the 25-year-old daughter of a University of Chicago mathematics professor.

The delay probably has to do with the fact that *Proof* was one of the few hit non-musical Broadway dramas that actually toured in the past decade, playing its Chicago debut at the Shubert Theatre in 2002. Then in terms of *Proof*'s first professional regional production, the Goodman Theatre had dibs on that with an African-American cast directed by Charles Smith in 2004.

And *Proof*'s true University of Chicago homecoming was last year in a student production that helped open the new Logan Center for the Arts on campus. So Court Theatre's *Proof* might come off as a tad late to the party.

But leave it to artistic director Charles Newell to reconsider Auburn's drama in a rich staging that does away with a hyper-realistic setting and places more of an emphasis on the leading heroine's agitated and troubled state of mind amid Martin Andrew's stark modernistic set of stairs, platforms and a bench swing. Newell's take on *Proof* heightens Auburn's celebrated text, as memories, ghostly conversations and grief-filled confrontations all blend together into a seamless whole.

Proof is all about Catherine (Chaon Cross) who is mourning the recent death of her father, Robert (Kevin Gudahl), a brilliant mathematician who had struggled with madness. Catherine fears that she has inherited both her father's genius and mental issues, which come into focus when she reveals that she has figured out a complex and ground-breaking mathematical proof, much to the disbelief of her older sister, Claire (Megan Kohl), and her father's protegee grad student, Hal (Erik Hellman).

Proof essentially falls or rises with its leading lady, and Cross expertly delivers a complex

portrait of a young woman riddled with grief, fear and anger when her feelings and views are dismissed by those around her. The rest of the cast is also strong, especially Hellman as the self-aware geeky, yet still hip, mathematics student who also serves as a romantic interest to Catherine.

At Court Theatre, *Proof* gains a heightened resonance in part due to its production location (there's a mention of the street the theater is located on, plus a few jabs at Northwestern University that spurs big laughs). But Newell's clear and polished staging is also an amazing emotional asset, which shows why *Proof* has truly come home at Court Theatre.

CRITICS' PICKS

Bear Suit of Happiness, The New Colony at Dank Haus, through March 30. Like the schoolboys in Joe Calarco's Shakespeare's R & J, the four GIs staging a show for the troops during WW II learn more than they anticipate about themselves and each other. MSB

Improbable Frequency, Strawdog Theatre, through March 31. There's a bit o' Irish whimsy in this soufflé-light musical about an English spy, a fare Colleen and a Nazi scientist in WWII Dublin. There's love, absurdity, a touch of fact and tuneful song-and-dance. JA

A Soldier's Play, Raven Theatre, through March 30. Charles Fuller's Pulitzer Prize-winning play rejects history's simplistic version of racial divisions to expose the internal prejudices associated with the 1944 desegregation of the U.S. military forces in this hard-hitting drama of men in uniform. MSB

Stones in His Pockets, Northlight Theatre, Skokie, through April 14. David Ivers and Brian Vaughn, the artistic directors of the Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespearean Festival, both comically dazzle as they rotate in and out of multitude characters in Marie Jones' dark comedy about a Hollywood movie being filmed in Western Ireland. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Under a Rainbow Flag

Playwright: book, music and lyrics by Leo Schwartz

At: Pride Films and Plays at Profiles Main Stage, 4139 N. Broadway

Tickets: 773-773-549-1915;

www.pridefilmsandplays.com; \$20-\$25

Runs through: April 21

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Subsequent generations relying on pop-culture images for their view of history can be forgiven erroneous impressions of World War II as a giddy carnival of swing-dancing GI Joes and Riveting Rosies. The archival panorama of America-at-war also includes courageous wives and mothers struggling at home bereft of their beloved menfolk, as well as idealized glimpses of the latter's heroism in the field, with an emphasis on the phenomenon of socially diverse citizens putting aside their differences to unite in a common goal. Such was the Hollywood version of the "Good War"—its complexities left to another time and other narrators.

Composer Leo Schwartz claims to have based his tale of homos-in-uniform circa 1943 on material collected from veteran Jon Phillips, but despite the bitterness you might associate with authentic first-person accounts of a far less tolerant age than our own, *Under a Rainbow Flag* emerges as an unabashedly sen-

timental distillation of period propaganda as rosy-eyed as any Tinseltown quickie.

Well, so what if it does? War means death, and wherever you find young people struck down untimely, you will find romance. It's Phillips' story, and if he and Schwartz want to tell it as a fantasy of Andrews Sisters harmonies, hankie-twisting widows-in-trousers and old-school swish, its faithful adherence to its chosen genre makes it easy for us to suspend our disbelief. It's not *all* happy endings, after all—the archetypal characters who undergo self-discovery as a result of their turbulent times suffer loss and compromise, some finishing contented and others regretful.

Schwartz delivers a score steeped in nostalgic riffs and rhythms—we can hear echoes of Hope & Crosby duets in patter songs like "Can't Run Away From Gay" and "The Army's Handing Out Medals"—along with flowery ballads for every occasion (listen for the slowed march-tempo and descending bass on the optimistic "One Day In His Arms"). David Zak directs a 10-member cast that sings and hoofs with oodles of energy and enthusiasm to warm the chilly Main Stage space, while the four-piece orchestra led by Robert Ollis makes the most of the room's multi-level architecture to achieve a comfortable acoustical balance.

In Evan Linder's *Bear Suit of Happiness*, set in this same era, a group of gay soldiers are ordered to put on a show for the troops. In the "impossibly hospitable world" they can only imagine, *Under A Rainbow Flag* would be that show.

THEATER REVIEW

Priscilla Queen of the Desert

Playwright: Book by Stephen Elliot

and Allan Scott from the movie

At: Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Pkwy.

Tickets: 1-800-775-2000;

www.BroadwayInChicago.com; \$25-\$85

Runs through: March 30

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

The biggest expense for *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* is razors and shaving cream—so much glorious man-flesh on display and not a single chest, leg or armpit hair to be seen. Makes you wonder 'bout them crotchets.

They must be spending money on manscaping, honey, 'cause they sure haven't spent it on scenery in this jukebox musical based on the 1994 Australian cult film about drag queens in the Oz outback. Not that there isn't much to enjoy and savor in this shallow but dazzlingly Day-Glo disco-fest, but if you think it might look just a little bit like Australia or, actually, anyplace, you'd be wrong. The entire show is performed in a multicolored limbo of computerized LED lighting that rarely uses more than 15 feet of stage depth or provides more than a minimal sense of place. This touring version is built so that one size can fit any theater you throw it in.

OK, those who go to *Priscilla*—presumably those who love the movie, drag artistes of all stripes and several generations of disco babies—are *not* going for the scenery. They are going for the evergreen songs (some going back to my own dancing days in the Late Pleistocene), the maudlin and thoroughly predictable story and most of all for the high energy *and the fuck-in' costumes*, both of which *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* has in spades. It's a curiously clichéd combination of a gay Magic Mike, Pee-Wee's Big Adventure and Beach Blanket Babylon with dancing cupcakes, three-foot-high wigs, a chorus of high-stepping paint brushes and hooped gowns bigger than bathtubs. It's fantasy drag or nightmare drag, take your pick.

Fortunately, *Priscilla* is populated by first-class talent in the persons of Wade McCollum, Bryan

West and Scott Willis as Tick, Adam and Bernadette (transgender but played by a man), respectively. They have great voices, great moves and bright personalities which go far to cover the thin writing. Indeed, just like *Mamma Mia*, nothing in this show takes itself too seriously, which is the right attitude. The second act is too long by two musical numbers, and the intermission is unnecessary because there's nothing at stake for the characters, but only critics worry about stuff like that. Most ticket-buyers will take a cue from the guy in front of me, who jumped up and started to boogie during the overture.

Tim Chappel and Lizzy Gardiner designed the over-the-top costumes (several of which are directly from the movie); Ross Coleman provided the plentiful but unspectacular choreography (hey, what can you do in six-inch platform shoes?); and the peppy musical direction is by Brent Frederick in arrangements by Stephen "Spud" Murphy that make disco sound like art.



Priscilla Queen of the Desert. Photo by Joan Marcus

DOUBLE REVIEW

Measure for Measure

Playwright: William Shakespeare

At: Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St.

Tickets: 312-443-3800;

www.goodmantheatre.org; \$25-\$86

Runs through: April 14

Othello: The Remix

Playwright: adapted by the Q Brothers

from the play by William Shakespeare

At: Chicago Shakespeare

Theater at Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave.

Tickets: 312-595-5600;

www.chicagoshakes.com; \$20-\$35

Runs through: April 28

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Measure for Measure ranks just behind The Merchant of Venice as the Shakespeare play most likely to make people nervous. The prospect of a romantic comedy revolving around crooked politicians, sexual harassment, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, imminent executions and resolutions relying on bedroom and jail-cell switcheroos is enough to reduce most productions to safe priggish-Angelo-vs.-spunky-Isabella scene-study exercises. For Robert Falls, however, the view is always the big picture and the spotlight always focused on the leaders responsible for societies in turmoil.

Our universe is New York City's Times Square circa 1975—a conclave of brothels and strip clubs, street hustlers, drug vendors, petty thieves and the slummers who patronize their services. While the mayor is on an incognito fact-finding mission, the straitlaced Angelo is left in charge. The zealous deputy's strict application of the law sentences baby-daddy Claudio to death for the crime of fornication. The death-row convict's novice-nun sister, Isabella, petitions for his pardon, only to be told by Angelo that he will grant it in exchange for a roll in the hay. After much connivance and chicanery initiated by hizzoner-in-disguise, Claudio is spared, Angelo is punished and Isabella's virginity protected.

So all's well that ends well—right? Not according to Falls. When the people who make the law bend it to their own caprice, it doesn't matter whether or not we like those who profit thereby. No justice can come of a system rooted in corruption, however seductive its pretty lights or charming its denizens. Sure, go ahead and revel in Walt Spangler's Hieronymus Bosch-meets-Ivan Albright urban landscape and James Newcomb's charismatic doppelgangers, both civil and religious, but even as the promised happy ending appears to be unfolding right before your eyes, don't be too quick to put on your coat. In a world where appetites rule, nothing is ever ensured.

Playgoers who saw The Bomb-itty of Errors and Funk It Up Over Nothin' know what to expect when the composing team of GQ and JQ take on Shakespeare, but applying street sounds to tragedy requires tonal sophistication considerably more sensitive than the farcical-Seussical playfulness of comedy, particularly when the familiar fable is recounted in its entirety by an all-male cast of four rappers and a DJ.

Transposed from its original setting to the modern-day music industry, our story is now that of a successful recording manager gulled into homicidal despair by a jealous colleague. Assisted by Clayton Stampler's electric orchestra, Postell Pringle, Jackson Doran and the brothers Q trade off personae with protean ease—even donning drag for the roles of Bianca and Amelia, the latter of whom stops the show with a torchy rendition of "It's a Man's World." (Wisely, Desdemona is represented by only a vocal track and our imaginations.)



James Newcomb and Alejandra Escalante in Measure for Measure. Photo by Liz Lauren

SPOTLIGHT



Leave the small kids at home for Theatre Zarko's **Fools Tango Two**, a revival of Michael Montenegro's solo show that consists of puppet and mask pieces that can be described as surreal clowning. See how Montenegro's turns bits of wire, sticks, rags and more into characters in this dark comedy of various vignettes. Fools Tango Two continues through May 11 at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center's Studio 213, 927 Noyes St., Evanston. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays (no shows April 13 and 14). Tickets are \$20; call 847-350-9275. Photo by Michael Tekler



**"My father was an extraordinary man.
People loved him, animals loved him,
mosquitoes wouldn't bite him.
But he and I were like strangers
who knew each other well.**

**That's the thing with strangers.
They can surprise you."**

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The multi-talented **Megan Hilty** makes an impressive bow with *It Happens All the Time*. Here, the blonde starlet from NBC's *Smash* belts out the title track and "Dare You to Move," both will place her among vocal heavyweights like *X-Factor* alumna Leona Lewis. Hilty shows range with "Be a Man," a scream fest directed toward her ex who did her wrong. Then there is the brilliant, breathless obsessing on her take of Damien Rice's "The Blower's Daughter." Another great interpretation here is her stripped down version of Don Henley's "The Heart of

the Matter." *It Happens All the Time* is available now on Masterworks.

After a sold-out sensational show last summer at The Metro, **Garbage** has an encore concert on Wed., April 3, at Riviera, 4746 N. Racine Ave., to support *Not Your Kind of People*. CW's *Vampire Diaries* has used its licensing of "Control" well, having played the standout on multiple occasions. There is speculation that Garbage will have a follow-up out later this year.

Another remarkable female-fronted rock band is **The Joy Formidable**. The British trio delivers a satisfying serving of fuzzy guitars *My Bloody Valentine*-style on the sophomore effort *Wolf's Law*. "Cholla," "Tendons" and "Maw Maw Song" are strong, heavy-hitting rock tracks. But "Silent Treatment" and "The Turnaround" display a slower side that is not dependent on a six string. The material on *Wolf's Law* will spill over easily into a live setting. The Joy Formidable will be at Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield Ave., with Kitten on Tuesday, April 2.

Out international recording artist **Mika** is known for his playful, upbeat pop numbers like "Grace Kelly" and "Celebrate." On Wed., April 3, Mika will host an intimate evening at Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln Ave. It will be interesting to find out how his catalog is rearranged to suit the evening. It also will serve as a spectacular opportunity to hear Mika's mighty vocals, which have been compared to Freddie Mercury's.

Drake Jensen is making a name for himself for being an openly gay Canadian country musician. He even landed on *Towleroad.com*'s list The 50 Most Powerful Coming Outs of 2012. Jensen's big, rich voice carries his latest, *OUTlaw*, especially on "When It Hurts Like That." Jensen dreams of escaping to a simpler kind of life on "Fast Enough for Me," "I Don't Want to Know" and "Midnight Forest Cricket Chorus." Although he does not flaunt his sexuality, Jensen has a coming out anthem with the closing number "Be." *OUTlaw* is out now.

Considering my affinity for lesser-known artists and those thriving outside the spotlight, I am alarmed by **Michelle Shocked**'s recent con-



Dido. Album cover

troversial performance at Yoshi's in San Francisco. Here, *Shocked* has become a topic on social media after she exercised the First Amendment by saying same-sex marriage will spawn Jesus' second coming. She then invited attendees, "if some of you will be so gracious as to please tweet out Michelle Shocked just said from stage that God hates faggots."

On the audio clip posted on SoundCloud, patrons shout back at Shocked during their exodus. There is no way to spin doctor this situation. In this modern age, shows are often recorded by guests. Just ask comedian Michael Richards.

In the wake of her rant, promoters and venues canceled all but one of her upcoming appearances, including her date at SPACE in Evanston. Shocked has since offered apologies. During the performance's clip that runs more than 22 minutes, there are plenty of opportunities to rectify her banter or to clarify that these are not her viewpoints as audience members were yelling at her and leaving the venue. The olive branch arrived "Too Little Too Late," a title from her album *Captain Swing*.

At first, I thought Shocked was portraying a persona, doing a character study or trying to explain how to love people with different mindsets, since a sizeable portion of her following is LGBT. Also, the dialogue and setting were not well thought out, considering San Francisco's liberal leanings.

In the late '80s, Shocked went into heavy rotation on MTV with her video "On the Greener Side." This was a response to Robert Palmer's stylish clips with female models like "Addicted to Love" and "Simply Irresistible." Here, the Texan singer-songwriter is joined by male models who go through the motions made famous by Palmer's video vixens. Shocked has since released multiple albums and toured extensively.

LGBT artists to add to spring playlists:

1. Drake Jensen
2. God-Des and She
3. Hunter Valentine
4. Nina Sky
5. Pet Shop Boys
6. Sally Shapiro
7. Sam Sparro
8. Ssion
9. Tegan and Sara
10. The Young Professionals

Music event to feature 'Four(eign)' women

This month the "Four Women" showcase series at Katerina's, which was established six years ago, introduces a new twist: Mid-western songwriters addressing the audience in languages reflecting their roots and origin.

Detroit-based Tamara Finlay plays music rooted in traditional Ukrainian folk and gypsy styles. South African Rozanne Gwaar has lived in the States for 10 years. Asian-American Dawn Xiana Moon was born in Singapore and moved to Michigan, and has released two solo albums. A fourth songstress will be announced shortly. Hannah Frank will host.

Four(eign) women takes place Tuesday, April 9, at Katerina's, 1920 W. Irving Park Rd. The cover is \$5; see www.katerinas.com.



Megan Hilty. Photo by Mike Coppola/WireImage

Pride Films and Plays presents the world premiere of

UNDER A RAINBOW FLAG

A New Musical by
Leo Schwartz
Directed by
David Zak
Musical Direction by
Robert Ollis

Based on the true story of Jon Phillips

March 23 to April 21
Pride Films and Plays
performing at the Main Stage
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The Baton Show Lounge, 436 N. Clark St., marked 44 years of world-class female impersonation with five days of special shows, kicking off Wed., March 20. Founder Jim Flint greeted the appreciative crowd before they were treated to special numbers by Baton cast members Chillli Pepper, Mimi Marks, Ginger Grant, Maya Douglas, Victoria La Paige, Regine Phillips, Sheri Payne, and special guest Mykul Valentine. Photos by Hal Baim. Look for more photos in next week's issue of Nightspots and online at

www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Baton-marks-44th-anniversary/42077.html



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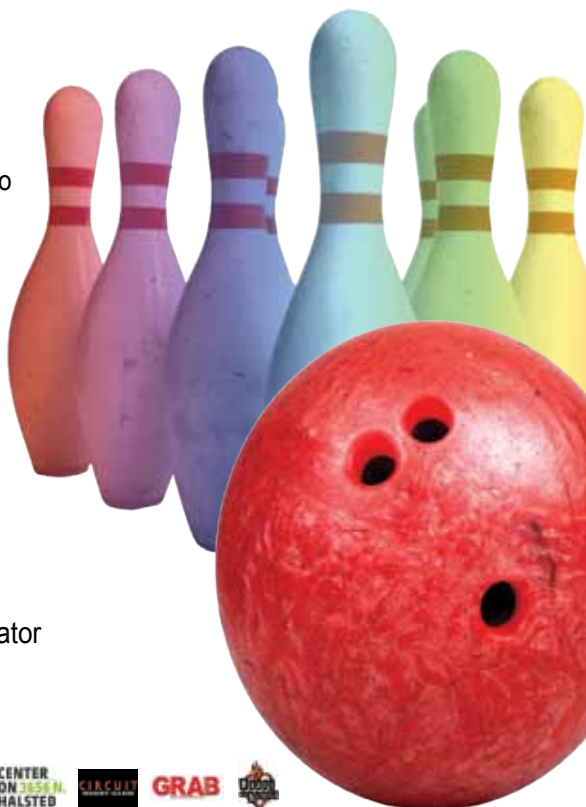
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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT, JR.

Mental; Oscar films on DVD; movie notes

Toni Collette, who has had one of the most versatile acting careers that I can think of since her breakthrough film role in 1994's *Muriel's Wedding*, now reteams with the writer-director of that film, P.J. Hogan (also his breakout movie), on **Mental**.

Like *Muriel*, this new film focuses on a highly dysfunctional family and is set in Australia, where both Collette and Hogan hail from. *Mental* opens exclusively in Chicago this Friday, March 29, at the AMC Loews, 600 N. Michigan Ave., and is also available On Demand. Similar in tone and feeling to the darkly funny *Muriel*—although not quite as immediately winning—the movie is based on an incident from Hogan's own adolescence.

After his mother had a nervous breakdown, the 12-year-old Hogan arrived home one night to find himself confronted by a tough, no-nonsense babysitter—a female hitchhiker that his father, a local politician who hid his mother's breakdown out of embarrassment, had picked up on the way to work. The babysitter, who rolled her own cigarettes, had brought along a snarling dog and a hunting knife, and immediately took charge of Hogan and his equally rambunctious siblings. This improbable situation was trumped by what followed: the babysitter/drill sergeant brought order to the family and even stayed on after Hogan's mother returned.

That scenario is the ideal basis for a black comedy and Hogan uses it as a starting point for the movie, his first since 2009's intermittently funny and awfully familiar *Confessions of a Shopaholic*. That description also describes *Mental*, which opens with the mother (already close to her nervous breakdown) singing "The Sound of Music" in her backyard in full-on Julie Andrews mode to her aghast neighbors and her mortified daughters. The father (Anthony LaPaglia) has the mother put away and installs Collette's Shaz, the hitchhiker, to watch over his brood of five unruly daughters. (The eldest, who works at the local aquatic theme park and falls for a hunky lifeguard, is the stand-in for Hogan).

Shaz, a sort of modern-day Nanny McPhee, works her rough magic on the disintegrating family, brings mum back into the fold, takes revenge on the disapproving neighbors, gives her blessing to an unlikely lesbian romance and even gets dad to play ball. Plot developments—in the form of Trevor (Liev Schreiber), the sinister owner of the shark exhibit at the aquatic park—lead to a frenzied last act before Happily Ever After can be attained. Given all the last-minute complications that kinda work, the movie ironically pushes too hard at the outset to score laughs after its lovely opening sequence, and takes a long time to settle in.

Collette, who first heard Hogan's unlikely story when the two were working on *Muriel*, claimed rights to the part of Shaz (whose name and other characteristics have been changed) should he ever film it. She typically gives the role her all and, though the performance starts too high



Mental. Image from Screen Australia

(taking its cues from Hogan's over-the-top scenario, no doubt)—a rarity for the multitalented Collette—she quickly finds the right balance and from that point on, as usual, this marvelously intuitive actor is a pleasure to watch. Although *Mental* comes off like a pale imitator of the greatly superior *Muriel*—due in part to its over-familiarity, thanks to a spate of similarly themed Aussie black comedies in the ensuing years (*Welcome to Woop Woop* et al)—this reunion of the star from *Oz* and her director is worth the trip Down Under.

Oscar-nominated and -winning films coming to home video:

In days of yore, Hollywood would get its Oscar-winning and -nominated films into theaters as soon as possible after the awards ceremony in order to multiply their box-office returns, realizing that millions of moviegoers were dying to at last see what all the fuss was about. Home video slowly changed all that and now the faster the award winners can be made available to the public, the better.

These days, many of the nominated films are released before the ceremony (as was the case with the suspenseful and entertaining Best Picture winner *Argo* and with the tremendous *Skyfall*, the latest James Bond movie). Joining those titles are the eye-popping *Life of Pi*, which brought Ang Lee his second directing Oscar; *Lincoln*, Steven Spielberg and Tony Kushner's enthralling history lesson (made all the more so with Daniel Day-Lewis's third Best Actor Oscar win in the title role); and the love-it-or-hate-it musical juggernaut *Les Misérables* with its Oscar-winning turn from Anne Hathaway as the luckless Fantine, who belts out the ubiquitous "I Dreamed a Dream." *Zero Dark Thirty*—the unflinching hunt for terrorist Osama bin Laden from Kathryn Bigelow, with an Oscar-nominated performance for Jessica Chastain—joins these releases. Although the movie is unnecessarily overlong, it still rates a strong recommendation, given its last suspenseful hour.

Also too long is Peter Jackson's three-hour-plus *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, which got shut out of all three of the technical Oscars it was nominated for. Much easier to digest in the home theater (for obvious reasons) and not saddled with Jackson's ultra-high-definition ratio, the movie still seems to take a long time to get going. However, the leisurely pace at the outset is more than made up by the movie's fantastic visual panache, some great action/fantasy sequences, and the welcome return of Ian McKellen and Cate Blanchett among

the newcomers to Middle Earth. Each of these movies is offered in deluxe, Blu-ray/DVD/digital download, multi-disc combos with a host of special features as additional incentives (including lengthy "making-of" featurettes, commentaries and more) on down to one-disc, bare-bones editions.

After luxuriating in all these carefully crafted pictures, a bit of counterprogramming, in the form of camp or plain old movie junk, might just be the ticket. Shout! Factory—with its release of the four-disc *Mystery Science 3000: XXVI*—is here to provide just such a breath of hilarious fresh air (thanks to the awful movies and the always hilarious onscreen commentary). The titles

say it all in this latest compilation, culled from the archives of the beloved cult show dedicated to the worst that the movies have to offer: *The Magic Sword*, *Alien from L.A.*, *Danger!! Death Ray* and my personal fave, the sci-fi "classic" *The Mole People*.

Film notes:

—Cinema Q III, the annual free Cultural Center LGBT film series, ends Wed., March 27, with a 6:30 p.m. 15th-anniversary screening (in the Claudia Cassidy Theater in the Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St.) of out director Bill Condon's Oscar-winning *Gods & Monsters*. Ian McKellen stars in an Academy Award-nominated performance as James Whale, the man who directed *Frankenstein*, its sequel and many other early classic Hollywood hits—and whose openly gay lifestyle contributed to his career downfall. Condon's film, based on the excellent novel of the same name, imagines Whale toward the end of his life in 1957, battling loneliness and increasing health challenges until a young, hunky groundskeeper (Brendan Fraser) agrees to sit for a portrait. Lynn Redgrave, also Oscar-nominated, plays his overprotective, eccentric housekeeper. Pride Films & Plays co-sponsors the screening. http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/cinema_q.html

—Audience members who relish dressing up in nun habits and Nazi uniforms won't have to wait until Thanksgiving for the annual **Sing-A-Long Sound of Music** at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave. The theater is bringing back the popular screening event—complete with costume contest, goodie bags and lyrics projected on the screen—on Saturday, March 30, at 2 p.m. The following day, Sunday, March 31, the sing-a-long concept continues with an Easter screening of 1971's scrumdillyious *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*—again with pre-show costume contest, goodie bags and the prerequisite sing-a-long. www.musicboxtheatre.com

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

Gay playwright Patricca honored by Loyola

Chicago-based gay playwright and scholar Nick Patricca was presented with a "Living Tradition" award from the Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage at Loyola University March 22.

The award was presented to Patricca by Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., president of Loyola, and Mark Bosco, S.J., director of the Hank Center.

Patricca is a professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago, president of Chicago Network JP, playwright emeritus at Victory Gardens Theater and member of TOSOS theater ensemble in New York City.

"It is a great honor for me to receive the 'Living Tradition' award from the Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage for many reasons," Patricca said. "The award recognizes—while I am still alive—a lifetime of effort integrating Catholic thinking and culture with my work in the arts, in education, in community-based healthcare, and in justice and peace. ... And, at a time when the Catholic Church is not enjoying a good press, it affords me an appropriate occasion for celebrating the profound benefits of Catholic education to our civil society and to the pursuit of the common good in cultures throughout the world."

"It is important to remind ourselves that our Catholic faith, lived in community and



Nick Patricca. Photo by Tracy Baim

articulated in the freedom of its rich intellectual traditions, has the same power today as it has had from the beginning: to inspire and to transform, to educate and to serve people wherever they are, whatever their needs, regardless of class, caste, color, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, politics or religion. This power does not spring from worldly power but from the compassionate Spirit of Jesus the Christ."

Patricca will begin a column in *Windy City Times* April 3, and continue the first Wednesday of each month.

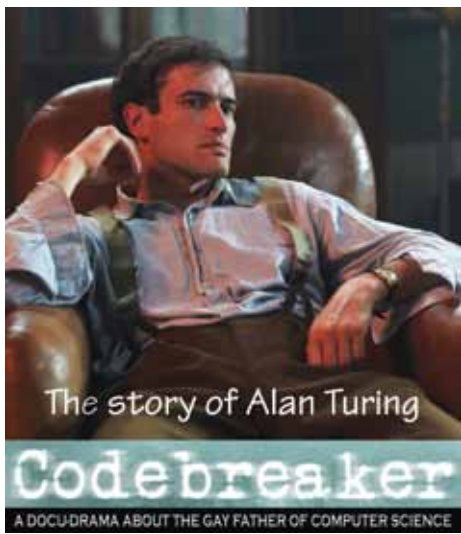
Spring LGBT movie preview

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Spring is here—well, officially, anyway even if the warm weather hasn't quite arrived yet—and for the next two months as the studios ramp up for summer. Here's a batch of queer-tinged movies and local screening events for avid filmgoers.

April

A Woman's World: The Defining Era of Women in Film—TCM kicks off a new Friday-night series April 5 with a slate of 17 movies handpicked by Cher, who co-hosts the series along with TCM's Robert Osborne. The line-up starts with a bang with the grandmother of all mother-daughter movies—1945's *Mildred Pierce* starring Oscar winner Joan Crawford and Ann Blyth. Stella Dal-



las, *Penny Serenade* and *Bachelor Mother* are on the bill the first night. Highlights of subsequent weeks include *Since You Went Away*, *His Girl Friday*, *The Great Lie* and, of course, *The Women*. April 5, 12, 19, 26

Codebreaker—Alan Turing, the British mathematician who cracked the Nazi Enigma code during WWII and the “father of computer science,” is the subject of this 2011 docudrama that highlights Turing's incredible achievements and his tragic downfall (and early death)—attributed to the public disgrace he suffered after his homosexuality was revealed. The 7:30 p.m., one-night screening at AMC River East 21 (322 E. Illinois), a Chicago premiere, will benefit the Legacy Project (Turing's Legacy Walk plaque on Halsted Street in Boystown is the only public acknowledgement of his being openly gay), the Queer Film Society and Reeling. Advance tickets are at www.legacyprojectchicago.org. April 9

Un Chant D'Amour/The Continuing Story of Caryl and Ferd—The Gene Siskel Film Center (164 N. State St.) is programming Jean Genet's homoerotic 1950 silent classic and the little-seen 1975 underground documentary that features Ferd Eggan, co-founder of ACT-UP Chicago, in the years before the late AIDS activist lived in Chicago. See www.siskelfilmcenter.org. April 12, 16

William Friedkin Q&A—The Oscar-winning director of *The French Connection*, *The Boys in the Band*, *Cruising*, *The Exorcist*, *Sorcerer* and the recent *Killer Joe* appears at the Harold Washington Library in the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium (400 S. State St.) in support of his forthcoming memoir, *The Friedkin Connection*. The event is free and begins at 6 p.m. See www.chicagopubliclibrary.org. April 16

Chicago International Movies and Music Fest—The annual fest returns with a host of music-themed movies, including three with a decided queer bent: *Peaches Does Herself* (a trans rock musical), the lesbian-flavored *And You Belong* and *Asphalt* (a 1929 German silent movie) with live scoring by Yael Archer. Check www.cimmfest.org for venue and ticket information. April 19, 20

The Big Wedding—Diane Keaton and Robert DeNiro star as a long-divorced couple forced to pretend they're still married in this roman-

tic comedy that co-stars hunky Topher Grace, queer audience fave Amanda Seyfried, Katherine Heigl, Susan Sarandon, Robin Williams and, my favorite, Christine Ebersole—playing a character named Muffin O'Connor. April 26

Pain & Gain—Mark Wahlberg and Dwayne Johnson play bodybuilders. It's based on a true story but that's really all you need to know, isn't it? April 26

May

Iron Man 3—The summer blockbuster season officially starts with this latest installment in this Marvel Studios superhero franchise. Robert Downey Jr., the key reason for the success of the previous films, returns as Tony Stark, the billionaire inventor of the Iron Man suit who finds himself starting from scratch when a terrorist (Ben Kingsley) wreaks havoc. Gwyneth Paltrow is also back as Pepper Potts. New cast members include Guy Pearce, Rebecca Hall and Paul Bettany. May 3

The Great Gatsby—Strictly Ballroom/Moulin Rouge director Baz Luhrmann ventures back into cinemas for the first time in five years (the epic financial flop *Australia*) with this new adapta-

tion of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Roaring Twenties classic. Leonardo DiCaprio takes the title role, the lovelorn mega rich Jay Gatsby infatuated with the mysterious Daisy (Carey Mulligan). Tobey Maguire, Isla Fisher and Joel Edgerton co-star. Pushed back from its holiday 2012 release date, expect lavish combined with *Serious* (with a capital “S”) romance. May 8

Mommie Dearest for Mother's Day—Dick O'Day, the alter ego of yours truly, returns to the Music Box (3733 N. Southport Ave.) to host the fifth annual matinee screening of the 1981 camp classic, abetted by David Cerda and Ed Jones of Hell in a Handbag. Pre-screening costume contest, photos with Joan and Christina, interactive screening and a brunch option before the 2 p.m. event are part of the fun. www.musicboxtheatre.com May 12

Star Trek Into Darkness—It's been four long years since J.J. Abrams successfully rebooted this beloved sci-fi franchise for the big screen but Captain Kirk (in the personage of dreamy Chris Pine) and company (headed by out actor Zachary Quinto as Kirk's No. 2 Spock) are finally back in perhaps summer's most anticipated blockbuster. The veddy British Benedict Cumberbatch (who sports my new favorite showbiz name) is the villain in this installment. May 17

Fast & Furious 6—Yes, there really have been

six of these fast-car/hot-guy/revved-up engine movies—which means that audiences must be responding to something much deeper than the endless muscle-car chase sequences in this franchise. Perhaps—just a guess here—it's the subconscious homoerotic connection between Vin Diesel and Paul Walker (both returning for this installment)? To up the musculature even higher, Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson rejoins the cast. May 24

Behind the Candelabra—HBO has become the go-to network for a host of terrific, actor-driven biopics that, in the pre-comic-book movie era, would have debuted in theaters instead. Joining past winners like *Grey Gardens*, *Normal*, *The Laramie Project* and many others comes this much-talked-about, behind-the-scenes look at the relationship between glitzy Vegas entertainer Liberace and his paramour, Scott Thorson. Michael Douglas tinkles the keys as the uber-prissy pianist while Matt Damon portrays his much younger lover. Director Steven Soderbergh tried to get studio interest in the picture (which apparently features plenty of no-holds-barred love scenes between Douglas and Damon) to no avail, ending the project at HBO—where it rightly belongs. Rob Lowe, Dan Aykroyd and the unsinkable Debbie Reynolds (as Liberace's mother) are also in the cast. Debuts May 26



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SPRING MUSIC SPECIAL: NUNN ON ONE

Lucas Silveira sticks with the Clik



BY JERRY NUNN

Canadian Lucas Silveira, lead singer for The Clik, is coming out in a big way with a new album entitled *Black Tie Elevator*. This time, the band is leaning toward a soulful blues sound being produced by Hill Kourkoutis from Toronto.

Founded by Silveira in 2004, The Clik is still going strong. The group is the first to be signed by a major record label with an open trans man as the leader. There have been several lineup changes with Silveira remaining the focal point, playing on the *True Colors* tour and appearing on the *L Word Soundtrack* in the past.

Windy City Times talked by phone to ChartAttack.com's elected Sexiest Canadian Man.

Windy City Times: Hi, Lucas. Tell me about yourself. What is your nationality?

Lucas Silveira: I was born in Canada but my parents are Portuguese. I call myself a Portuguese-Canadian even though that is not necessarily where I was born although I did live there for about six years when I was a kid from ages 6 to 10. I have a deep attachment to my roots.

WCT: Do you speak Portuguese?

LS: Fluently, my friend. It's good for picking up girls!

WCT: I bet. What part of Canada?

LS: Toronto.

WCT: Were you always into music?

LS: Absolutely. I lived in a little teeny village on an island. Music is what people used to get rid of their boredom. Every little village had a marching band. That was my first exposure to music. My dad played trumpet in one, my brother played the drums, my sister played the sax, so I had a very musical family. My dad thought he would be the next Elvis Presley one day! I had The Beatles and Elvis Presley records all over the place. It has always been around me.

WCT: It must be rewarding to play music yourself now.

LS: Absolutely, man. It feels like it is just so innate to me, you know?

WCT: Are you able to incorporate that kind of performance when you play live?

LS: I wish I could take a horn section with me, to be honest. That is a hard thing to incorporate into a live show. The music on the new record is very soulful, blues and R&B but not in the way that the '90s are but there is a rhythm-and-blues feel to it.

I feel like I have lived out of the hard rock genre. I think that has a lot to do with the other music that I grew up with. When I got back to Canada I was really into artists like Michael Jackson. Then I went through a stage of '60s blues bands like The Doors. It was like all of that put into one. I really feel like I went back to my roots in that capacity.

WCT: It sounds like you have grown up a bit, also.

LS: I've grown up a lot! You know my story. I lived my life trying to be someone that I wasn't. I think in my last three years in my transition it has been a natural movement where I feel more

connected to my past musically as well. It is a very interesting thing to me. I'm still trying to figure it all out. I always tell people that I'm a mirror three years old in this body and this mindset. I did a lot of growing up and I have a lot more growing up to do. For me it works because I'm an artist. I sort of thrive off of that.

WCT: What advice can I give our transgender readers?

LS: One thing I always tell people is don't always think that your transition is going to be the same as anyone else's. Everybody is so different. Don't grasp onto the steps of anyone's journey of being transgender. It is not like that. Accept that you can be different than other



Lucas Silveira. Photo by David Hawe

people just like people that are born into their gender are. We all have our own path. That is truly my own advice.

When I first came out I thought it would be the same. I would take testosterone. I would get muscular. My voice would deepen. I would get hairy and that would be it. It has been such a different situation, especially for me as an artist. Nobody told me that hormones completely manipulate your personality. They change who you are, whether you want that to be the case or not. I think that is a combination of who I am physically but it really changed me. It is not like I'm a completely different person, like Jekyll and Hyde, but my emotional pathways are not the same as they used to be. It has taken a lot to get used to.

WCT: Were you concerned about your voice?

LS: Oh, yeah. My voice was the scariest part of all of it because I was told for such a long time that I would lose it. That was the case with many trans of the past in the earlier days when people were on T because the doses were so high—at least, that is my theory. When I discovered a bunch of younger guys that were doing it and singing, this was only after five years when I was transitioning that I realized it was possible. They just told me that I had to go really slow and sing every day.

WCT: Being voted Canadian's Sexiest Man must be so rewarding and unexpected.

LS: It was completely unexpected! I'm a trans guy and at the time I wasn't even on testosterone. So it was stranger to even hear someone say that to me. I took it for what it was and found it to be quite comical to be honest. To be

voted something like that is a little bit funny. For me, it felt neat to be validated in that way and to have the public vote for it. It wasn't a committee that made me win it was actually readers that voted for it. It gave me a lot of hope. I think the main thing for me was I wish when I was a kid that I could have seen someone like me in the public. I got so many emails from young trans kids saying how much hope they were given through it. I had nothing to do with it since it was the publication but it made me feel good and the media was moving in that direction.

WCT: Why stick with The Clik? Did you think about going solo?

LS: Absolutely. That was the struggle I had. I talked to my manager toward doing this record. I said that it didn't feel the way it used to. I'm not a band anymore and it has always been just me but I have always had a band. She fought me on it and it was completely based on her feeling that I had branded myself this way. The music industry is in a very volatile place. I've changed so much not only with the personality but also in the music. To also change my band name could be a huge mistake. I'm a stubborn artist but I trusted her. I kept it.

SPRING MUSIC SPECIAL

'Up Close and Personal' with Beckie and Tom

BY TOM WRAY

How do you celebrate 14 years together? If you're Beckie Menzie and Tom Michael, you get "Up Close & Personal" (the name of their newest show).

The duo will be celebrating 14 years of performing together with a new show at Davenport's starting on April 6.

Menzie and Michael perform together throughout the year and across the country. But the April show at Davenport's has become a tradition for them. And this year the theme found them.

"We actually started off working on a theme like we always do and we weren't inspired by any, so we wanted to be looser this year," said Michael during an interview between rehearsals. "It's almost like this theme found us in a way." But the songs they were picking fell into a theme of being up close and personal.

"This show is about being up close and personal to us and then how reality TV can be too up close and personal and how love can be up close and personal in good and bad ways," Menzie said.

They do a theme show each year at Davenport's because it forces the duo to choose have new material and keeps the audience interested, said Menzie. "It makes a great way to spend the winter as well," added Michael.

The premise of the show is they start out just bringing in songs. But as the show goes on, the audience, many of whom are long time followers, will get to learn about the duo, but also have some fun.

Songs in the show include "I'm Fine" from Peter Pan, "Me and My Shadow," "Too Close for Comfort," a parody medley skewering reality TV and "The Boob Fairy." "It's a comedy song, obviously," Menzie said, laughing.

Menzie and Michael do have a duo album, *Better Two-gether*, but at present don't have plans to turn the current show into another CD. "We'd love to," said Menzie. "But it is incredibly expensive to do a new CD."

"We have thought about a holiday CD," Michael said.

"Right now the whole medium of that is changing," Menzie added.

Future plans for the pair are to keep performing. "Our goal has always been to share our music anywhere we can," Menzie said.

One day I was sitting with a friend of mine who I had known for a long time and met as a Clik fan and grew to be friends. I told him about changing the band name and he was really disappointed. He felt he had grown with the band and all the changes that I had been through he felt like he had been through them with me. He felt part of the storyline and felt like it would be dropping it. I was intrigued by that emotional response. That is what I am about. I'm about change and The Clik is about change. I think life is about change. It is another extension of who I am so why not keep the name?

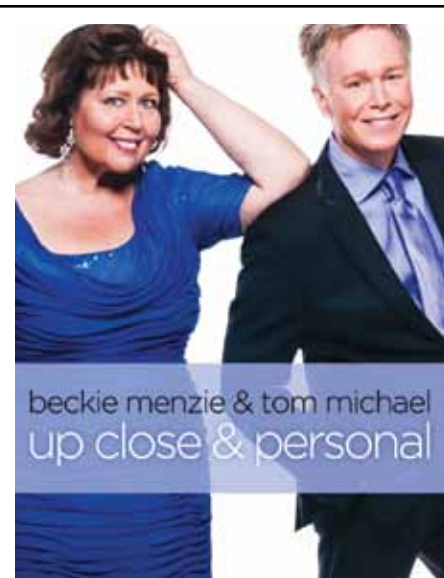
WCT: The new album comes out in March.

LS: Yes, at the end of March. We just decided to add another track so we are hoping to make the deadline. That is our goal. If not the end of March, it will definitely be an early spring release like in April, for sure.

Also, I wanted to mention that we are going to go on tour and will be playing at Township on May 8.

WCT: You took the question right out of my mouth. See you at the show!

Keep up with The Clik as www.theclicks.com.



While they've been performing together for 14 years, Menzie and Michael met 25 years ago not long after Menzie first moved to Chicago. Michael had gone into an open mike night and Menzie was playing the piano. She was so good, Michael then asked her to help put together his first solo show.

Each of them has performed solo as well. Menzie is an award-winning songwriter and who teaches in the musical theater department of Northwestern University. She's also recorded two solo albums, *Real Emotional Girl* and *Heart & Soul*, that have received national airplay and won Chicago's After Dark Award. Michael's three albums—*Let Me Be Your Home*, *Written in the Stars* and *Sailing On*—have received international critical acclaim and radio play and he's received the After Dark Award twice.

But they still come back to performing together. The duo has performed at The Auditorium Theatre, Park West, The Pritzker Stage at Millennium Park, The Metropolis, The Empire Room and Maxim's in Chicago and at New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

"It's home," Menzie said. "I did my anniversary show without Tom for a couple of weeks. I was nervous because I was without my partner. Of all the ways I make my living, the way I enjoy most is when I'm singing with Tom. And it's the singing I'm most proud of."

"Up Close & Personal" will be presented at Davenport's Cabaret every Saturday in April (6, 13, 20, 27) at 8 p.m. Davenport's is at 1383 N. Milwaukee Ave. (773-278-1830 for reservations). For more information, go to www.davenportspianobar.com.

You can follow Beckie and Tom's schedules at www.beckiemenzie.com and www.TomMichael.net. Their songs are available on Amazon.com and iTunes.

SPRING MUSIC SPECIAL:
NUNN ON ONE

Magic Mika: Singer talks Twitter, bullying and drinks

BY JERRY NUNN

British singer Mika is bringing it back stateside in a return tour that is more acoustic and intimate than past sold-out shows.

The artist who released his third album *The Origin of Love* last year has continually stepped up his game with his impressive vocal range while selling 8.5 million records in the process. This has developed into a large catalogue of work over the years, with songs such as “We Are Golden” and “Grace Kelly.”

His lead-off single and collaboration with Pharrell Williams, “Celebrate,” was a highlight from his latest album. He then went Broadway using music inspired by the musical *Wicked* for “Popular Song,” featuring Nickelodeon star Ariana Grande. The composer, Stephen Schwartz, was so moved by his rendition that it’s the only time he’s authorized its usage.

Mika takes on bullying, Twitter and *The Brady Bunch* in this interview.

Windy City Times: Hey, Mika. You are coming back to Chicago again.

Mika: Yes, It’s quite cool. I love Chicago. People dance and lose themselves there. It’s fun.

WCT: I noticed at a past concert of yours that people dressed in bright colors and jumped around. It’s a big party.

Mika: Yeah, which I find is funny because often the local crew at some of these places don’t know who I am or don’t know the live show so they are not prepared for what happens. Over the course of two hours the security staff is going, “What the heck?”

WCT: The inflatable balls are flying in the air!

Mika: Exactly. This show is different though. It is shrunk down to me and two other musicians. We are all swapping instruments so you have us all singing, there is a clarinet, trombone, sax, marimba, and tons of different sounds. But it is just three of us and I wanted something that was a lot more focused and dynamic that could go from acoustic to very big sounding. I thought that was really important.

For the first time really across the United States I will show people how I make my music, and by seeing it in this setting you can kind of get it. What is amazing is that I have done shows with the piano and people still kind of jump up and down, while singing as loud as they possible can. I love the energy but this is a totally different vibe than the show we just did in Chicago.

WCT: I knew the show would sell out, with such a small intimate space.

Mika: It did quite fast, actually. I know my friends in Chicago were waiting to buy them in the morning. They waited like an hour too late because they didn’t wake up and buy them in time. They were pissed. I said, “You see? Who are my real friends? My fans are my real friends!” I wasn’t going to give them any tickets then a half hour later I asked, “How many do you want?”

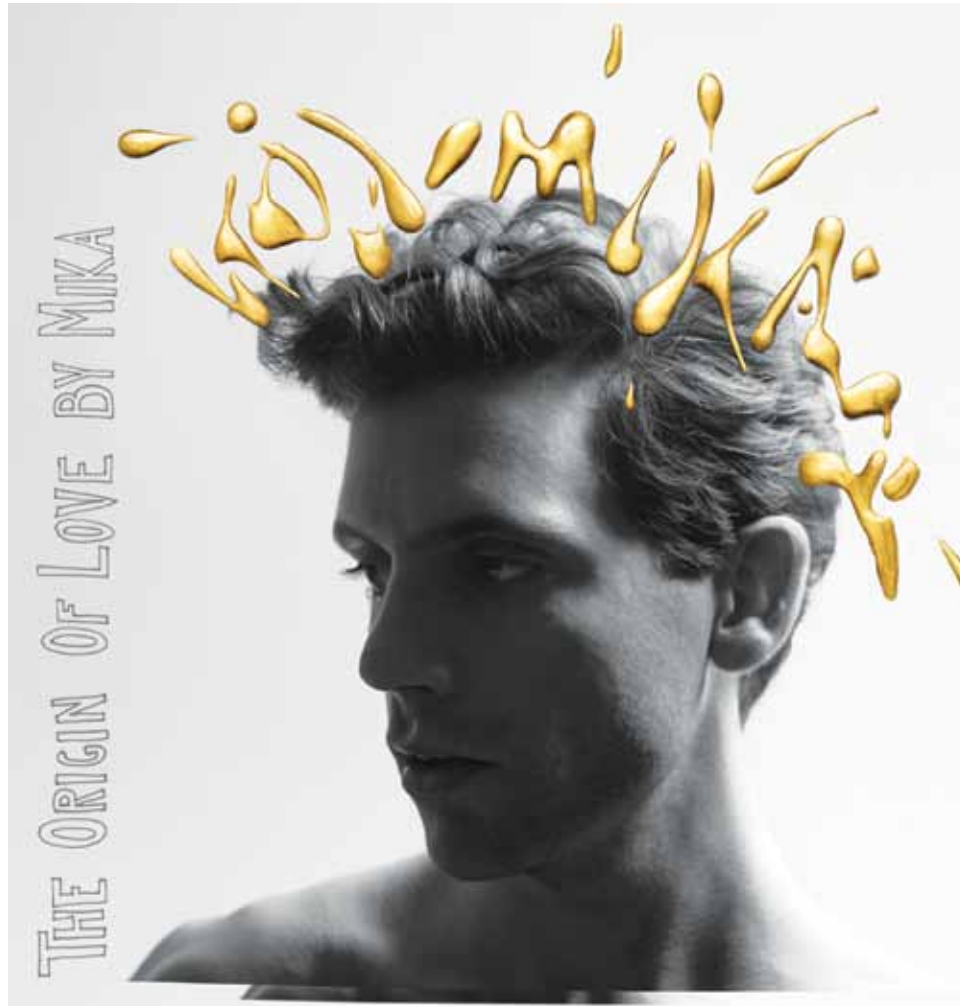
WCT: You have always been good to your fans. I know many people who wait until late to meet you but always come out and say hello.

Mika: I always go out and talk to people. I come from nowhere and I try to make my music like I come from somewhere. If someone says they like what I do or relate to it in some way then it is inevitable that I meet them and hear what they say. I want my fans to become a part of my world too. I find that it’s a really nice thing to come across.

WCT: Your lyrics are very relatable to people. Tell me about the song “You Only Love Me

and there was a sweetness about that hook.

I always look for things that have that sweet coinable quality to them. I think you put everything in them that is bitter, dark, twisted and you put it next to a hook like that it suddenly becomes palatable. Just like “Lollipop” when you put all of that dark, strange, surreal stuff around it then it’s okay because it’s a lollipop. When I read that it was one of Stephen King’s



Mika.

When I’m Drunk.”

Mika: No, it’s “I Only Love You When I’m Drunk” that’s the song. [Both laugh.]

WCT: Oh, I got it mixed up. What was it inspired from?

Mika: It was written completely as a message to someone I was hanging out with at the time. I was turning into the worst good-time lover. I wanted to look at somebody and have them look at me like they are drunk without having to drink anything. That is what I want out of the person that I am looking at. Some people have to actually be drunk to feel like they are going anywhere with someone. I would never have the courage to say it in real life, but I can in a song.

WCT: I heard it playing at a gay bar recently.

Mika: Really? That’s fucking cool!

WCT: Do you have a favorite drink?

Mika: An old-fashioned. I was with a friend in Miami at a club with all of these rich people and it was fucking horrible. They were all party people who wanted to take drugs for the weekend to forget their lives. It was so incredibly loud. I decided to have a drink and leave. This was one of those most expensive places. When I asked the waitress for an old-fashioned she said, “What the fuck? Do you think this is the 1920s?” I was like, “Listen up, bitch—this is why people don’t come to your shit hole!”

WCT: Well, we will have one after the show! Mika: Definitely.

WCT: Is *Wicked* your favorite musical? Did that make you want to have your own take on “Popular?”

Mika: I think it’s a brilliant musical mainly for the writing. It has been masterfully written. The engineering of how it is written is absolutely amazing. I love the use of the Greek chorus. They have the maddening crowds in the classical theater way. I thought it was really clever. I just really loved the song

favorite songs I felt very validated.

It was the same for “Popular.” I loved the song and the sweetness of that hook so I wanted to turn it around. Instead of the cool chick I wanted the loser to sing it to her own advantage. That is why I switched the roles around.

WCT: It works well as an anti-bullying song.

Mika: Definitely. That is what it’s about but it is more than that. Part of it is about bullying but it also about the music industry. We strive to hard to create something but we are still that same thing that we started off as. It definitely has some of my favorite lyrics on the whole album. “Standing on the field with your pretty pom poms now you are working at the movies selling popular corn.”

WCT: I heard you were bullied when you were younger so it must be rewarding to make a statement about it.

Mika: I was absolutely bullied every day, every hour on the hour. It was horrific. I hated school and most of my school life as a child. I was always being dumped on. What the fuck was their problem? How stupid, ignorant and foolish do you have to be to pick on someone? Especially when it is something they haven’t chosen or can’t change. How much of an idiot do you have to be? Whenever teachers would try to help they would never try to alienate the bully or really them what they thought of them.

It is a bullshit attitude. Why didn’t they stand up and say, “You are a fucking idiot and here is why...” It always has to be so soft and the bullying is never soft. All of that shit made me want to create my own world. I wanted to transform myself into something else. I wanted to get my own vengeance. I wanted to be something else, somewhere else, and someone else so I wrote songs that felt like I could be anything.

WCT: So it made you into the musician that you are.

Mika: Definitely. On one hand I don’t like that part of my life but it has made me who I am. I like who I am right now so would I be the same if I didn’t have that experience? That doesn’t matter because I came out of it well. I had a good family and a support mechanism. Take that support mechanism away and you are just fucked.

WCT: You had a big family, didn’t you?

Mika: Yes, I had five brothers and sisters.

WCT: So kind of like *The Brady Bunch*.

Mika: A little bit but as dysfunctional as you could possible get. Well, now that I think about it *The Brady Bunch* is pretty dysfunctional, [laughs] minus the braces. We didn’t have a budget for braces!

WCT: How many languages do you speak?

Mika: I speak French, Spanish, English and I am about to learn Italian. I am trying to get fluent and conversational in the next few months.

WCT: That’s awesome.

Mika: Oh, that is nothing. My sister speaks Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Spanish, French and English. The advantage we had was we actually moved around a lot. Language wasn’t the kind of thing that you gleaned off textbooks. You were surrounded by it. It was so much easier.

WCT: What has been the reaction of your fans after coming out of the closet publicly? Do they tweet you with their stories?

Mika: No, I have found on Twitter that no one says anything meaningful or very rarely. Usually, it is an inconsequential sound bite on Twitter, which is one of the reasons I have a real problem with it. It just trivializes everything. We get messages on Facebook and I read those. That gets really intense sometimes. When I meet people after shows and on the street people tell me their stories and how I play into their lives.

Beyond on that it has been quite amazing. There has been no increase or decrease since I labeled myself. It wasn’t really much of a coming out but more of an affirmation in a way. There has never been an increase to it because people have been telling their stories and relating to me with stories of their lives and stories of their sexuality from the very beginning because they saw that in my music and it was clear. It has always been a part of who I am and my music. It is not all of it but definitely a fabric of who I am as a person and a writer. It is undeniable.

Magic Mika will be at Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln Ave., on Wed., April 3. Visit www.lincolnhallchicago.com or www.mikasounds.com for more information on this artist and show.

Fleetwood Mac in Chicago in April, June

Legendary musical act Fleetwood Mac will be in Chicago in April and June.

The current line-up of Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks is already slated to perform at the United Center April 13. However, the band also added a June 14 visit to Allstate Arena to its roster of 13 additional dates.

“Fleetwood Mac Live 2013” begins in Columbus, Ohio, at the Nationwide Arena on April 4 with confirmed dates through July 6 in Sacramento, Calif., at the Sleep Train Arena. For additional ticket and tour information, visit www.ticketmaster.com and www.fleetwoodmac.com.

Girlyman’s Tylan in Evanston May 11

Singer Tylan, who was in the folk-pop quartet Girlyman, will perform at Evanston’s SPACE Saturday, May 11.

Tylan is supporting her debut solo record, *One True Thing*. The first single, “Already Fine,” features Amy Ray of Indigo Girls.

For more, see www.tylanmusic.com.



WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN **WINDY CITY TIMES**

Viaggio at the Park

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I'll admit it: I had high expectations when I went to Viaggio at the Park (401 W. Fullerton Pkwy.; www.viaggiochicago.com).

Fortunately, those expectations were met.

Two words that spring to mind regarding Viaggio are "warm" and "inviting." Manager Dave Flanzbaum makes everyone feel welcome in a restaurant that accommodates families and romantic couples. There's definitely an old-school Italian vibe, as reflected in everything from the cuisine to the wall photos of Dean Martin.

As for the food, it is as good as the hype. The meatball salad is more than satisfying, thanks

to the gigantic ball that more than makes an impression. My friend Noel and I also tried the grilled seafood platter (with calamari, baby octopus and shrimp accompanied with house dressing), which hit a high note as well. Other appetizers include baked clams, beef carpaccio and shrimp scampi.

There's practically a surfeit of entree choices. Prices on the standard pasta selections vary, depending on sauce choice and what meats people what added. The specialties include penne in the Park, eggplant parmesan, eight-finger cavatelli, cheese ravioli and veal Ragu (with house-made sauce, not the item you see at Jewel).

The remainder of the entrees are divided by the featured meat: seafood, chicken, veal and chops. I tried the branzino (sea bass filet topped with crab meat sautéed in a lemon and white-wine sauce)—and it was simply divine, with the

flavors lightly playing off each other. Moreover, it was a huge portion, adding to the allure. Noel had the chicken Saltimbocca (chicken breast prepared with imported prosciutto, fresh sage and Provolone cheese, served in a white-wine sauce), and she absolutely loved it.

If it's possible, save room for dessert, as the tempting offerings include tiramisu and bread pudding. They're just as tasty as the rest of the menu items.

Viaggio doesn't do too much that's innovative with its menu—not that it's a problem. It takes traditional dishes and makes them worth revisiting.

Note: There is another Viaggio at 1330 W. Madison St. It reportedly has a different (read: party) vibe, as it's near the United Center. I'm hopeful the food is just as good, but the Fullerton Park location has set the bar pretty high.



Grilled seafood platter at Viaggio at the Park. Photo by Andrew Davis

**Thursday, March 28
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SPRING MUSIC SPECIAL: NUNN ON ONE

De'Borah discusses coming out, 'The Voice'

BY JERRY NUNN

Rising star De'Borah burst into the public eye on season three of *The Voice* with a unique look and story.

The Chicago-area native came out of the closet to her family and the world, capturing a lot of attention in the process. Now she comes out again with a debut single, "Coming Out Looking Good." This freshly released single on Liquid Spins features fierce vocals that showcase a big range. Produced by Chicago's WuLi Records, she keeps things down home.

We met at a coffee shop in Andersonville to find out the real story behind the music.

Windy City Times: Hey, De'Borah. Where are you from?

De'Borah: I grew up in the Rosemont area in Chicago around 102nd then I migrated through a couple of suburbs before landing in Chicago Heights.

WCT: Are you still there?

De'Borah: Actually, I just left there but it is still my hometown.

WCT: Did you always have a music background?

De'Borah: Oh, yeah; I have been singing since I was able to stand. My mom is a singer. My father was over a lot of choirs. They are very musically inclined so we had a small group between my brother and sister at ages 3, 4 and 6.

WCT: So you started off like Destiny's Child except there was a boy.

De'Borah: More like The Jackson 3.

WCT: Did you study music in school?

De'Borah: I went straight to theology school. I have been studying music, experience-wise. I learned to play all those instruments by ear then went to school later and learned. My musical background is really based off of experience. I was just singing and singing until I got it right. This is why I was a stickler on the show. When it wasn't correct I didn't want to sing it. I wanted to fix it first. It was a spur-of-the-moment-type deal.

WCT: Tons of pressure, I can imagine.

De'Borah: Oh yeah, but it was an easy pressure.

WCT: What religion did you grow up with?

De'Borah: Pentecostal.

WCT: How is your relationship with your parents since coming out on *The Voice*?

De'Borah: The same. My mom and father are great parents. They taught us, first of all, that love is over everything. Family is one of the first things ordained in the bible. We have a close-knit family.

WCT: There are many other artists with the same religious coming-out story.

De'Borah: My songs are geared toward religion. I will never sing about clothes or shoes. They are more "How are you feeling today?"-type songs.

WCT: How did you get on *The Voice*?

De'Borah: My sister signed me up. She told me that I had three weeks to get there. I went in defeated thinking it would not work. I ended up making it and proving myself wrong.

WCT: The show is all about how people judge your voice and then view your look.

De'Borah: I look very distinct.

WCT: What is one thing you learned from doing the show now that it's over?

De'Borah: I learned how to live a fast-paced life. They showed me the music industry, definitely.

WCT: Maybe good and bad?

De'Borah: Well, yeah. Getting up, rehearsing, and knowing I have to do something. I rehearse a lot at home but it is not scheduled. I learned how to manage my time and business.

Overall, on the sweeter side I learned that the



De'Borah. Press photo

biggest artists are still regular human beings. Cee Lo and Christina Aguilera were cool. Adam Levine was definitely my favorite. Blake is fun, especially when you are drinking with him.

WCT: What does he drink?

De'Borah: Jameson.

WCT: Whiskey man! Are you going to watch the next season of *The Voice* [which starred March 25]?

De'Borah: Yes, of course.

WCT: Do you like [new judges] Shakira and Usher?

De'Borah: Usher I am a big fan of. Shakira I know her hits.

WCT: I just heard that show has the biggest ratings on TV. The exposure must have been great.

De'Borah: Oh yes. I have fans in Peru now. That is just crazy! I have a lot of fans overseas.

WCT: Isn't that wild?

De'Borah: Yes, because that show really is international. Then I have real genuine fans who will cry. That lets me know that the show shows a side of you that others don't. To know that I am personal to people and we share the same life makes me feel good.

WCT: You have reached a lot of people with your story. What inspired your first single, "Coming Out Looking Good?"

De'Borah: I wrote the song. It was inspired by one of my father's sermons. I heard him say it and thought it was the best title ever. I told my story in each verse: "You can talk about me, that's cool. My mind is not shaking nor my self-esteem. I choose to be who I was designed to be. You can scream at me. Think of the good not the bad, not the stress or the strain. I'm not ashamed of my wonderful change. Coming Out Looking Good." Oh my gosh; I get to tell my story from my standpoint. You guys see me on TV; then I see negative and positive comments

on the Internet. I reach for the good but the bad is there, too.

WCT: Your voice sounds very mature on the track.

De'Borah: With my voice, I have a soulful type of tone but I like to rock. It is a double whammy.

WCT: Your brother produced it?

De'Borah: Yes, his name is Troy and also with my engineers from WuLi Records. We literally did it in one month. It may seem like a lot of time but when you are running around doing interviews it is not. I can't believe we got it finished.

WCT: So a full album at some point?

De'Borah: Maybe later, but I want to test the waters and check my crowd. I don't want to get ahead of myself. I don't want to miss a step, put it like that.

WCT: What live performances are you planning?

De'Borah: I have done a couple for Black His-

tory Month, then a Motown cover review show that was amazing. I have hit local spots like The Shrine and Schubas. I am going back to Schubas again, too. I have a big crowd so I have to hit the North Side, downtown Chicago and then the suburbs so there is a lot going on. Then there is always New York, L.A. and Texas.

WCT: And Peru!

De'Borah: I have to get over there! *[Laughs]*

WCT: How do people keep up with you?

De'Borah: Facebook but spelled my actual way. That is my real name. A lot of people don't know that. My mom's name is Deborah but I am De'Borah.

WCT: So to still separate yourself from her almost like a Deborah, Jr.

De'Borah: I kind of felt like I was a junior in a way. But I am definitely my own person.

Visit www.liquidspins.com to pick up De'Borah's "Coming Out" single.

Shocked show canceled; singer apologizes

Evanston's SPACE has canceled singer Michelle Shocked's May 5 performance at the club following reports of her anti-gay rant from a San Francisco stage March 16, according to the Chicago Tribune.

In fact, all 11 U.S. stops on Shocked's tour have been cancelled, according to Billboard.com.

Shocked—who came out as bisexual in *Outlines* newspaper (which purchased and merged with *Windy City Times* in 2000) two decades ago—reportedly told the crowd that "God hates fags" and that she lives in fear of same-sex marriage, according to The New Civil Rights Movement. Many audience members were furious and walked out on her performance.

Shocked later tweeted, "Truth is leading to painful confrontation #shortsharpshocked,"

according to the Huffington Post.

SPACE general manager/talent buyer Jake Samuels, who had booked Shocked previously, confirmed with the San Francisco promoter that Shocked's comments were "ugly in nature, and not meant to be artistic or satirical in any way. ... It wasn't a very hard decision for us."

Shocked later said her comments were misinterpreted, according to CNN.com. "I do not, nor have I ever, said or believed that God hates homosexuals (or anyone else)," she said. "I said that some of His followers believe that." She also apologized to fans, saying, "I'm very sorry: I don't always express myself as clearly as I should," she said. "But don't believe everything you read on Facebook or Twitter. My view of homosexuality has changed not one iota. I judge not."

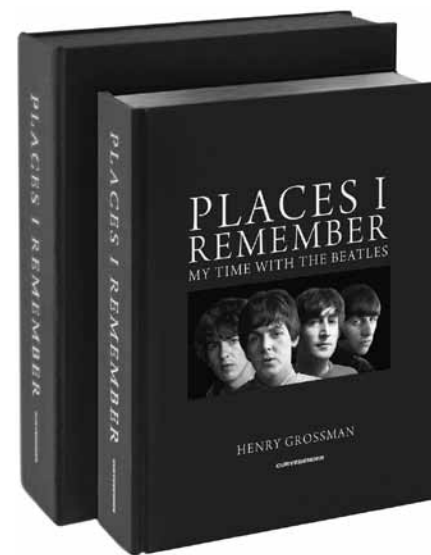
MUSIC/MOVIES SPECIAL: BOOKS

Places I Remember: My Time with the Beatles
by Henry Grossman
Curvebender Publishing;
limited ed.
BY TRACY BAIM

Best known for his classic contributions to publications such as *Time* and *LIFE*, revered photographer Henry Grossman has captured everyone from Oscar-winning actresses Elizabeth Taylor, Meryl Streep and Barbra Streisand, seven presidents including John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon to rock 'n' roll legends Jimi Hendrix, Rod Stewart and the Grateful Dead.

However, most are unaware of Grossman's long relationship with the Beatles during the 1960s. For more than four decades, the vast majority of his Beatles archive (which tops a staggering 6,000 photographs) has been tucked away, awaiting rediscovery. Now, for the first time ever, more than 1,000 of these images—most of which have never been published or even seen—are being made available in *Places I Remember: My Time With the Beatles*, published in a limited quantity of 1,200 numbered copies, the first 250 signed by the photographer Henry Grossman. Paul McCartney provided the book's introduction, a nice companion to the myriad photos of Paul, John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr.

Editors Kevin Ryan and Brian Kehew, who published the book through their company (Curvebender Publishing), spent more than four years culling the best images from this



archive and distilling them into one volume. Weighing in 13 pounds, numbering 528 pages and featuring more than 1,000 black-and-white and color images, *Places I Remember* is a new contribution in the world of Beatles photography. The images are presented chronologically, and the accompanying text by Grossman clarifies and explains events along the way.

Grossman's relationship with The Beatles began in early 1964 when he photographed them during their iconic first performance on The Ed Sullivan Show. By 1965 he had become a trusted friend and companion, traveling with the group to the Bahamas and Austria during the production of *Help!* Over the next three years, he would photograph them time and again behind closed doors.

Website: www.henrygrossman.com.

Publisher's website: www.curvebender.com

Prints of Grossman's photographs are available for purchase through Rock Paper Photo, www.rockpaperphoto.com.

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Every Wednesday without charge, regardless of age, ability to pay or residency. The process, from completing the consent paperwork to getting the results, takes 45 minutes. Counselors are available to review the results and provide referrals, as necessary. 12pm-4pm, CALOR, 3220 W Armitage Ave, www.calor.org

Lady Gaga's bus in Chicago

The Born This Way Foundation (BTWF) announced that the Born Brave Bus was to head back on the road to embark on a four-city tour of Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., New York City and Chicago. Visitors to the bus can enjoy food, live performances from Lady Gaga's friends The Dirty Pearls, as well as DJ sets from Lady Starlight and DJ White Shadow in select cities, and fun activities including interactive digital kiosks, games and more. 12pm-6pm, Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave., www.bornthiswayfoundation.org

Cinema Q III: Gods and Monsters (1998):

Portrait of the last days of gay Frankenstein director James Whale and his complicated friendship with his hulking, hunky gardener. Free LGBT themed movies every Wednesday in March at 6:30pm; 6:30pm, Cultural 78 E. Washington St.

The TomKat Project A play that transcends the tabloids to discover the truth behind the marriage of Tom Cruise, Katie Holmes and The Church of Scientology. Playing at

the Playground Theater, 3209 N Halsted St. 8pm-10pm, Playground Theatre, 3209 N Halsted St., www.facebook.com/the-tomkatproject

Jock Jams queer dance party Subject to Change will be paying tribute to the incomparable Jock Jams series with March Madness, a benefit for the Chicago Rowing Union. 21+, \$5 suggested donation. 9pm, The Burlington, 3425 W. Fullerton Ave., www.facebook.com/groups/subject-tochangechi

Thursday, March 28

The Cure for the Common Book Group Join Linda Bubon and Lynn Mooney (who, combined, have more than 30 years' experience leading book groups) for an evening of wine and cheese and a discussion of what's working, and what isn't, in book groups. 7:30pm, Women & Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenand-childrenfirst.com

Jesus Freaks Stardust presents the Jesus Freaks remixes release party. Chicago debut of DJ Light Year (Bang Gang/Modular), DJs LA Jesus and Mr. Automatic. 10pm, Berlin Nightclub, 954 W Belmont Ave., www.berlinchicago.com

March Madness at Crew Catch the Sweet 16 on 24 HDTVs. Open at 11am for early games. 11pm, Crew Bar & Grill, 4804 N Broadway, www.worldsgreatestbar.com

Friday, March 29

Weekly lunch and discussion West Subur-

ban Senior Services LGBT Seniors Program also offers free case management and mental health counseling to LGBTs 55 and up in the Western Suburbs. 11am-2pm, 8300 Roosevelt Road, Forest Park, www.wsseniors.org

Katie Kadan at Roscoe's Start Your Weekend of Right with Katie Kadan every Friday from 7-9pm! A soulful mix of Motown meets Janis Joplin. 7pm-9pm, Roscoe's, 3356 N Halsted St., www.roscoes.com

VBGH: A Depeche Mode Multimedia Mixdown DJs VoxBox and Greg Haus mix Depeche Mode and related projects. Celebrating Delta Machine, Depeche Mode's new album. Win free albums while supplies last. 9pm, Berlin Nightclub, 954 W Belmont Ave., www.berlinchicago.com

Millennial Pop Explosion!: Boy Bands vs. Girl Pop

Calling all millennial pop junkies. Mary's is kicking off a new Friday night dance party with a Millennial Pop Explosion! DJ Moose pits your favorite pop acts of the last 15 years (Britney, Xtine, P!nk, BSB, N Sync, Destiny's Child, Mandy Moore, 98 Degrees, etc.) against each other in pop's ultimate Celebrity Dance Match. No cover. 9:30pm, Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark St., www.hamburgermarys.com/chicago

Saturday, March 30

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (LGBTQ) Weekly, peer-led support group for members of the LGBTQ community with mood problems such as depression or bipolar disorder. Free. Community Room; 11am-12:30pm, 872-216-3272, Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., www.dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com

Magic Matinee Sean Masterson brings to life the magic and stories of the witty French magician "Herrmann The Great" beloved in 19th century Chicago. Sean imaginatively combines sleight-of-hand magic and baffling illusions with tales of Herrmann's off stage antics in the Windy City. 2pm-3pm, 773-975-8150, Theater Wit, 1229 W Belmont Ave., www.mastersonmagic.com

Same Sex, Different Gays: Musical Tales of Relationships Written by a team of three

gay men, one lesbian, and two straight folks, this satirical but honest look at ins, outs, tops and bottoms of gay and lesbian relationships. 9:30pm-10:30pm, 773-961-8214, The pH Comedy Theater, 1515 W. Berwyn Ave., http://whatisph.com/samesex.php

Scream: A Night of Thrills A CLAW Nation party. \$25 VIP reception 10pm to midnight in the Club Room with hosted bar, gift bags, VIP raffles. Silent and live auctions after midnight. Proceeds benefit Chicago House. 10pm, Touche, 6412 N Clark St., www.touchechicago.com

GLAAD Hatter Brunch The GLAAD Chicago Leadership Council invites you to join us for the return of GLAAD Hatter Brunch. This year, our host is Taverna 750, located at 750 W. Cornelia, just off Halsted Street, in Lakeview. Enjoy a sumptuous brunch plus mimosas and other brunch cocktails. 11pm, Taverna 750, 750 West Cornelia Ave., www.glaad.org/events/glaadhatter

Sunday, March 31

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! LGBT welcoming worship services at Urban Village Church are eclectic and experiential, practical and intelligent, relevant and, hopefully, inspiring. 10:30am-11:45am, Bethany Retirement Center, 1602 W Ainslie St., www.urbanvillage-church.org

Urban Village Church Wicker Park Service Wicker Park is a unique neighborhood full of passion, art, diversity, and eclectic energy, all which makes Urban Village Church thrilled to be involved in the community! LGBT welcoming worship services at Urban Village Church are eclectic and experiential, practical and intelligent, relevant and, hopefully, inspiring. 10:30am-



CENTER OF ATTENTION

Wed., April 3

Activist Urvashi Vaid (and partner Kate Clinton) will be at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

PR photo

11:45am, Chopin Theatre, 1543 W Division St., www.urbanvillagechurch.org

Easter Bonnet Contest and Brunch Brunch begins at the omelet bar at noon, going until 3. Easter bonnet contest with a grand prize of \$50 Scot's dollars. 11am-5pm, Scot's, 1829 W Montrose Ave., www.chicagoscotsbar.com

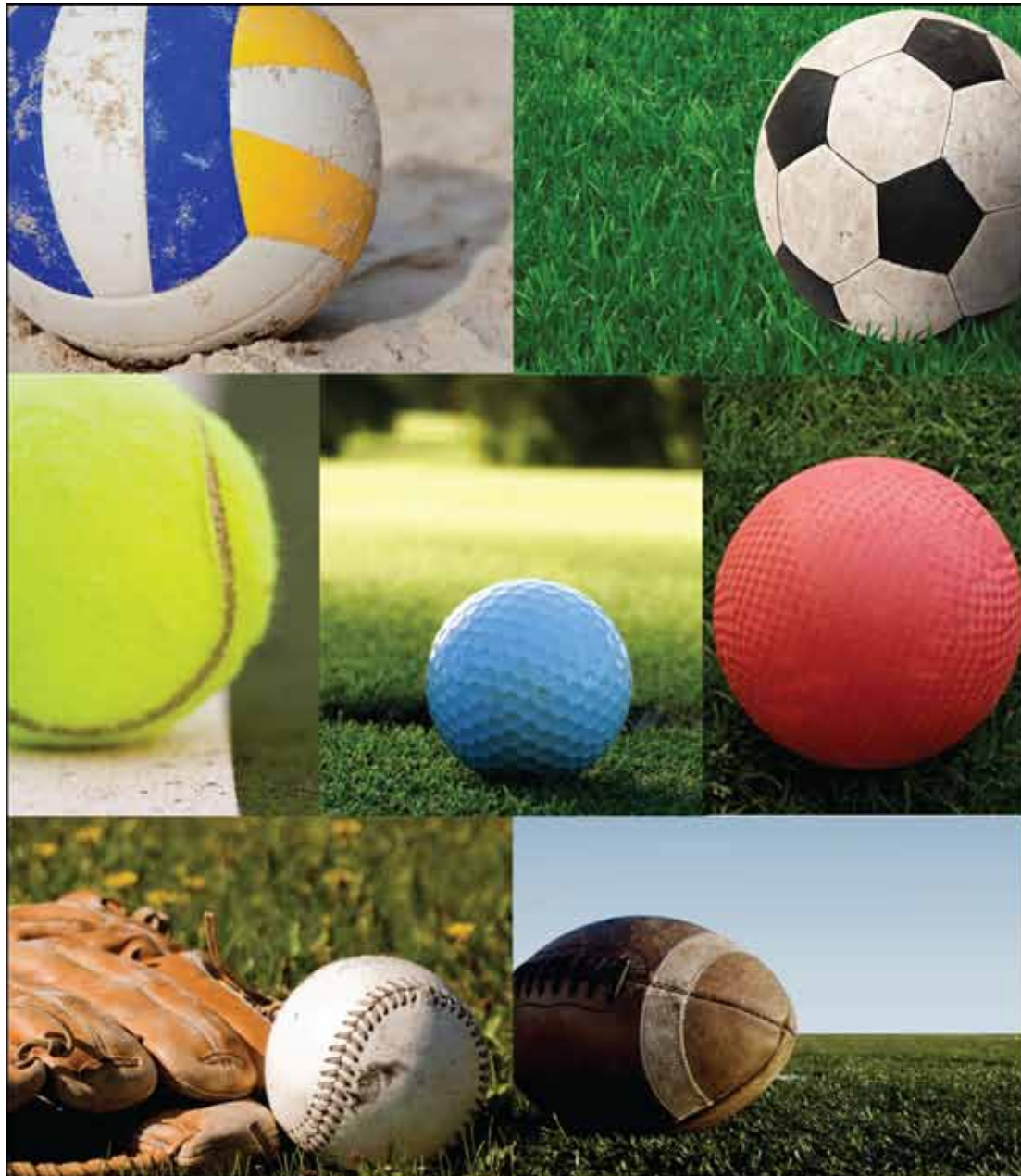
Trans 100 Launch Event The 2013 Trans 100 is an inaugural overview of the breadth and diversity of work being done in, by, and for the transgender community across the United States. A production of We Happy Trans, This is HOW, Chicago

Turn to page 25

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BILLY MASTERS

"Wicked holds a dear place in my heart, and I can see wanting to do something like that someday. But they'd better hurry up before I get too old!"—Kristen Chenoweth says she'd love to do a reunion concert with the original Broadway cast of *Wicked*—which will celebrate its 10th anniversary on Broadway in October.

Audiences love a reunion. This has been one of the secrets of the success of the TV Land Awards, the one awards show that routinely orchestrates reunions of our favorite TV casts. Alas, it appears those celebrations are a thing of the past. A spokesperson for the network has announced there are no plans for a 2013 TV Land Awards. That doesn't mean that the network is any less committed to such reunions. The most success-



Billy's mad about Belinda Carlisle.

ful show on TV Land is *Hot in Cleveland*, and it regularly features notable stars of yesteryear. We hear that the upcoming season will find Carol Burnett playing Wendie Malick's mother. Regular viewers of the show know that Tim Conway has already appeared as Betty White's beau. I'm told Conway will also turn up on that episode—wooing Burnett!

That's just the beginning. The producers have come up with an idea that seemed impossible—a reunion of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (spurred, no doubt, by the terminal illness of Valerie Harper). In addition to the beloved Betty White (as Elka), Georgia Engel often guest-stars as her friend, Mamie Sue. Last season, Ed Asner popped up pursuing an uninterested Elka, and the second season started with Elka in prison with Mary Tyler Moore as her cellmate—complete with her trademark "M" on the wall (the "M" was for "murder"). The show's fifth season will begin with Elka planning a reunion of her old bowling league—which includes Mamie Sue, Mary Tyler Moore as Diane, Cloris Leachman as Peg, and Valerie Harper as Angie. This will be the first time all five ladies from *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* have acted together since the series finale in 1977. Taping is slated to take place on April 5, which is hopefully soon enough to ensure Harper's participation—and would be a lovely bookend to her career. Of course, I think it would be even better if the ladies caught the attention of a couple of guys bowling in the next lane—Ed Asner and Gavin McLeod. Just a suggestion. The new season begins June 19.

In a not terribly surprising move, Hillary Clinton has categorically made her position on gay marriage crystal clear: "LGBT Americans are full and equal citizens and deserve the rights of citizenship. That includes marriage." Of course, this is no surprise given Clinton's first order of business when she became secretary of state—providing full spousal benefits to same-sex couples. Go, Hillary!

In an equally unsurprising move, members of the Osmond family have come out supporting traditional marriage. "Celebration of Marriage" was slated to take place March 26 at the Utah State Capitol Rotunda, and proceeds were to benefit "the protection of marriage between a man and a woman". It will be hosted by Alan and Suzanne Osmond with entertainment by Nathan Osmond and "The Osmond Grandchildren"—in other words, not a single Osmond you've ever heard of.

Thank God I get to follow that story with one about a singer who most certainly supports same-sex marriage. Belinda Carlisle was a gay icon long before her sexy son, James, came out. In fact, she was a gay icon before James was even born! While her recorded output over the past decade has been sparse at best, she was coaxed into the studio to record a new single to be included on her latest CD, *Icon*, a best-of compilation. "Sun" captures Babe at her full-tilt California girl best. I've heard so many arrangements of the song—a stripped-down acoustic version, the radio version, the dance remixes, and the version Belinda sings in concert. I love them all. So will you. Check out the new CD, or just download the new single on Amazon or iTunes.

This week, I got three different "Ask Billy" questions about the penises of three different men. Which do I choose? Do I go all "Sophie's Choice" and just pick one? Do I play King Solomon and cut them in half? Nah—I'm gonna bring you all three. But for reasons of space, I'll do it quickly and without reprinting the actual letters.

Several people on my Fan Forum have asked about the story circulating that producers on *Mad Men* have asked Jon Hamm to please start wearing underwear. Apparently, the tight-fitting wardrobe and his propensity for freeballing has created an issue. The fire was fueled by certain candid paparazzi shots clearly displaying his large appendage. I've shown 'em before, and I'll show 'em again—on BillyMasters.com.

Next up is hunky actor Nicholas Gonzalez—best known to my readers from his work on *Resurrection Blvd.* and *Undressed*. Larry in *West Hollywood* heard that he did some nude photos during his modeling days. Do I have them? Yes I do. Are they hot? YES they are! And they're on my website.

Lastly, Tom in D.C. wants to know if that's really Jamie Foxx's large penis in the infamous nude scene from *Django Unchained*. Since I haven't heard anyone talking about a prosthetic, it's either Jamie or a body double. To my expert eye, it sure looks like Jamie Foxx in that scene. Of course, I have a slight advantage since I've actually seen his penis—in a photo, of course. You can compare them for yourself on BillyMasters.com.

When I can squeeze in three penises (my personal best), it's definitely time to end yet another column. Since this column was super-sized (much like Mr. Foxx), let me quickly remind you to check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that never holds back! If you have something or someone you'd like me to investigate, send a note to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Jon Hamm follows up *Mad Men* by starring in a reboot of *Hung!* So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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CALENDAR from page 24

House, and KOKUMOMEDIA. Jen Richards via jen@WeHappyTrans.com. 7pm-9pm, Mayne Stage, 1328 W. Morse Ave., Chicago, <https://www.facebook.com/events/491163934264456/?ref=22>; Tickets: <http://trans100.eventbrite.com/>

Miss Continental Plus and Elite Preliminaries The preliminary rounds of Miss Continental Plus and Elite. Doors open at 6pm, competition begins at 7. Call 312-527-9338 for tickets and information. 6pm, Park West Chicago, 322 W Armitage Ave., www.thebatonshowlounge.com

Monday, April 1

Miss Continental Plus Finals Final round of the Miss Continental Plus competition. Doors open at 7pm, competition begins at 8. Call 312-527-9338 for tickets and information. 7pm, Park West Chicago, 322 W Armitage Ave., www.thebatonshowlounge.com

Roscoe's 26th Anniversary Join Roscoe's as they celebrate their 26th Anniversary with performances by RuPaul's Drag Race Season 5 Stars Jinx Monsoon, Alaska, Detox & Roxxy Andrews! 11pm, Roscoe's, 3356 N Halsted St., www.roscoes.com

Tuesday, April 2

Adler School of Professional Psychology Open House Graduate Open House. Meet with Admissions Counselors and receive a tour of the downtown campus. RSVP by phone or via email at admissions@adler.edu. 10:30am-12:30pm, 312-662-4100, 17 N. Dearborn St., www.adler.edu

Miss Continental Elite Finals Final round of the Miss Continental Elite competition. Doors open at 7pm, competition begins at 8. Call 312-527-9338 for tickets and information. 7pm, Baton Show Lounge, 436 N. Clark St., www.thebatonshowlounge.com

Classics of Women's Literature Book Group This month's book is *On Lies, Secrets & Silence* by Adrienne Rich (and book selection meeting). 7:15pm-9pm, Women & Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Wed., April 3

CALOR confidential HIV and STI testing Every Wednesday without charge, regardless of age, ability to pay or residency. The process, from completing the consent paperwork to getting the results,

takes 45 minutes. Counselors are available to review the results and provide referrals, as necessary. 12pm-4pm, CALOR, 3220 W Armitage Ave, www.calor.org

Urvashi Vaid Author of *Irresistible Revolution: Confronting Race, Class, and the Assumptions of LGBT Politics* and leader in the LGBT and social justice movement for thirty years. Free event co-hosted by Center on Halsted, the Community Media Workshop; Ellen Stone Belic Institute for Women & Gender in Arts & Media, Columbia College Chicago; and Windy City Times newspaper. Reservations: Tom Elliott at telliott@centeronhalsted.org or 773-472-6469. Reserve a copy of the book with Women & Children First Bookstore at 773-769-9299 or visit www.womenandchildrenfirst.com. 7pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted

Friday, April 5

Architectural Artifacts Presents 25th Anniversary Three Day Auction Event Auction extravaganza will include items from carved fireplaces to antique saloon bars to vintage chandeliers to fun, frivolous and funky items. The festive event will also include entertainment, a variety of food and wine. 10am-5pm, Architectural Artifacts, 4325 N. Ravenswood Ave., www.architecturalartifacts.com

Weekly lunch and discussion West Suburban Senior Services LGBT Seniors Program also offers free case management and mental health counseling to LG-BTs 55 and up in the Western Suburbs. 11am-2pm, 8300 Roosevelt Road, Forest Park, www.wsseniors.org

Saturday, April 6

2013 Thomas A. Dooley Award Dinner & Ceremony GALA-ND/SMC, the Gay and Lesbian Alumni/ae of the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College honors The Right Rev. Gene Robinson \$30. for members, \$20. for students faculty/staff, \$40. for non-members. Register online. 7pm-9pm, Stapleton Room in LeMans Hall at Saint Mary's College, <http://www.galandsmc.org>

Gabrielle Ludwig: A pioneer in the world of college basketball

BY ROSS FORMAN

She just wants to play the game she loves, basketball. She wants to grab rebounds, thanks to her height (6-foot-6) advantage while playing center. She wants to score points when given the chance, with an experience edge over opponents and teammates.

Gabrielle Ludwig, wearing No. 42 on her uniform, plays for the Mission College women's basketball team, a community college in California that has been garnering national, if not international, headlines since her debut for the Saints in December. She was also featured on Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel on HBO March 19.

Ludwig is a Navy veteran who served in Desert Storm. Ludwig is a parent of three daughters, with a partner (Theresa Foakes) of two years. Ludwig's story—which includes a suicide attempt years ago and two failed heterosexual marriages—seems to have come from Hollywood, but, in reality, is taking place on the Mission campus in Santa Clara, in the heart of the Silicon Valley.

Ludwig, 51, is an imposing on-court figure, with multiple tattoos, playing with and against others who usually range in age from 18 to 21.

"I see a very rich, rewarding and complete life," Ludwig said, reflecting. "How many 51 year-olds get to go back to college and play basketball again? How many 51 year-olds could have played basketball as a guy and as a woman at the college level? And my military service in the Navy. As I look back, all I say is, 'Wow, what

a ride."

Ludwig is a transsexual, simply interested in shooting hoops, raising a family, helping trouble youth and trying to avoid the grips of Father Time.

"Many people have commented that I have an advantage over the women that I play against and, yeah, I'm in pretty good shape, but, I have absolutely no advantage, other than my height. I probably have to work three times harder than they do—hey, I'm 51 years-old," Ludwig said. "Just getting back into basketball shape has brought aches and pains to muscles I didn't even know I had. But it's keeping me healthy and happy, and I'm able to contribute to the team.

"Playing with these younger women has been an eye-opener in so many different ways." Heck, just the pre-game music that her teammates prefer, hip-hop, is new to Ludwig because that's never been her genre of choice.

"I think the biggest thing is, having lived as a man for so many years, then all of a sudden to be on a team of all women, the whole mindset is so much different than when I was a man playing basketball. It's been a wonderful, wonderful experience—and I hope it continues for a long, long time, as long as my body holds up," said Ludwig, eligible to play for Mission next season, too, and then, she hopes, move on in the world of women's basketball.

"I remember when I tried out for the team, running up and down the court was very, very difficult. I was extremely winded," she said. "Over time, I have earned the respect of my



Image of Gabrielle Ludwig. Photo from the HBO Real Sports show

teammates. And I've done that by proving I can play basketball, and more."

But despite her positive impact on the team, which includes the support of her teammates, coaches and the school as a whole, her presence has raised a few eyebrows—from opponents, opposing fans and even some mainstream media.

Steve Czaban and Andy Pollin were temporarily suspended in December from hosting their sports radio talk show on ESPN 980 in Washington, D.C., after mocking Ludwig on air. They said on-air that transgender people should not be allowed to play sports, and referred to her as "he/she" and as "it ... I think 'it' is the politically correct term."

Cyd Zeigler, of Outsports.com, said Czaban and Pollin "featured one of the nastiest, most anti-transgender rants I've ever heard."

Helen Carroll, from the National Center for Lesbian Rights, told Outsports.com: "The horrific comments by ESPN Radio's Steve Czaban and Andy Pollin show a level of disrespect and harmful rhetoric that is inexcusable. They called Gabrielle Ludwig 'it.' This and their entire transphobic rant shows a level of ignorance and just plain meanness that I try to stay away from. Unfortunately, the many transgender sports participants I have had the privilege to work with are not shielded from hateful people such as Steve Czaban and Andy Pollin."

ESPN 980 issued a statement after suspending the two. "We strongly believe two of our employees crossed the line when discussing a transsexual person on their program. Such intolerance and insensitivity will never be tolerated by this company. Due to the nature of their conversation, the pair [has] been temporarily removed from ESPN980's Sports Reporter program."

Zeigler said, "there [was] simply no legitimate reaction the station could possibly have [taken] but to suspend everyone involved." He tagged their on-air comments as "disgusting, of the highest order, meant to demean another human being who has broken no rules and no laws."

Zeigler said Czaban and Pollin "are a disgrace to their profession."

Czaban and Pollin issued a 10-second on-air apology for calling Ludwig "it."

"It was among the least sincere non-apologies in history," Zeigler said. "The only things they're really sorry for [is], being caught. I'm sure they were rolling their eyes with every word of their non-apology."

Ludwig said the ESPN Radio comments were a slam-dunk personal attack.

"I was not expecting such a gigantic media barrage [from my Mission debut]. I figured it would just be a quick, short story, and everyone would just go on with life," she said. "Unfortunately those two idiots from ESPN Radio, Steve and Andy ... I can't begin to tell you how humiliated I was, how hurt I was [by their comments].

"As my father said, no one can take anything away from you—unless you let them. So I'm not letting anyone take anything away from me, let alone my pride. I just found a way to deal with it, keep my head up high and keep playing basketball. My teammates have been affected by this, too.

"I did not [return to college basketball] for attention; I did this for the love of the game."

The ESPN TV station wanted to air a one-hour story about Ludwig, but she rejected their request based on the hurtful comments made by the announcers on the ESPN Radio show.

"Maybe they should have gotten a little more [of a penalty] than two days on the beach and a slap on the wrist?!" Ludwig said. "Had [the announcers] called me and said, 'We made a mistake and we're sorry,' I think I would have accepted that."

But they didn't.

"What they said is a constant reminder of how cruel people can be," Ludwig said. "I work a full-time job, carry 12 units [in college], work hard on the basketball court, raise my kids, coach a [youth basketball] team, run a nonprofit youth basketball program, and just lead the day to day life with all that comes at you.

"Their [on-air] comments have made things really tough.

"After hearing [their comments], all I thought was, 'Who are they to pass judgment; they don't even know me. I also thought back to my military career, when I defended this country; what were they doing then, where were they?'"

Ludwig said, despite their suspension, she hasn't forgotten, can't forget. In fact, she admits she's, "had some crazy dreams about the things they said."

She added: "Time heals all wounds, and I won't let anyone take away my pride, so I'll just give it time and then it'll be fine. But the damage is irreversible at this point. Time will heal my wounds, not the comments that they made."

On the court

The Saints' season started in early November and the regular-season slate—which features games against San Jose City College, Hartnell College and De Anza College, among others—runs through late February, followed by playoffs.

Ludwig—despite the controversy, or perhaps because of it—is focused, on and off the court.

"I've thought, what can I bring to the table to help transgender youth. I'm all about kids; I love kids, have three of my own. All a parent wants to do is, see their kids succeed in life. Me too," Ludwig said.

She often talks to students of all ages, especially now so they can hear directly from a college athlete who has endured hardships and overcome. "I can tell people, regardless if they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, it's OK that you feel this way; it doesn't matter what the world is telling you—be yourself and be proud of who you are and know that you can reach for the stars. Hey, if I can do it at age 51, you can do it, too," she said.

"I play hard under the basket, fight hard for rebounds. I consider myself someone who has learned to be aggressive, has learned to be a team player, truly try to be cohesive with my teammates. I'm trying to be the best teammate I can be, contributing good, hard defense, [plus] communication on the court.

"If they allow me, I definitely can be a mentor to them, mainly because I've lived [about 30 more years than them.] More than anything, I don't want [my teammates] to dwell on the fact that I'm trans. What I want them to see is, here's a 51 year-old woman busting her butt and, if she can do it, I can do it. That's the way I see it."

Added Christina Kahrl, of Chicago, a trans sportswriter: "What Gabrielle Ludwig is doing is not simply inspiring to trans folk everywhere, it's a reflection on what's best about sports: Their ability to bring people together. Beyond just her willingness to play, her bravery in the face of some horrible reactions and even worse comments is every bit as inspiring."

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AVOIDING A WILL CONTEST; THE IRONCLAD WILL - PART II

Last week's article concerned an LGBT couple where one member had cancer, was in the hospital and wanted to make a will to leave his house, car and the bank accounts to his lover. It isn't enough to simply have a will. The will must be as ironclad as possible. Often times family members who are disinherited in favor of an LGBT lover will be angry as hell and will try to contest the will. Although there is no way to guarantee that a will won't be challenged there are ways to avoid will contests.

First, have your will drafted by a specialist. This area of the law has become more complex. There are cases of inexperienced attorneys making mistakes. Common mistakes include leaving out residuary clauses, omitting contingency plans, misnaming charities and—perhaps the biggest mistake of all—not keeping up with tax law changes.

Second, try to avoid having an "angry will." Many times someone who is writing a will is mad at a friend or relative and wants to express that anger in the will. Examples could include, "I leave nothing to my good for nothing brother, Jack, the louse" or "I leave nothing to my evil mother and father who never liked my lover." Venomous statements in wills can show the maker to be terribly prejudiced and narrow-minded. And carried far enough, such prejudice might be used to show that the maker was incompetent to make the will.

Because angry provisions in wills serve no real purpose it is better to leave them out. You don't want to offer a relative an opportunity to contest your will by showing that you really did love the relative and therefore must have been incompetent at the time the will was signed.

Some people wanting to get retribution from the grave often include a "no contest" or "in terrorem" clause in their will. They will leave a small bequest to family members thinking that they are obligated under the law to leave their families something or run the risk of having their will contested. Such a clause can raise the issue that the will maker was prejudiced or irrational and provide the ammunition for a will contest. The better practice to simply leave family members out of the will. They must then look elsewhere for the ammunition to contest the will.

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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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