

WILLIAM FRIEDKIN TALKS ABOUT 'CRUISING,' 'THE BOYS IN THE BAND,' AND HIS OTHER FILMS

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# WINDY CITY TIMES

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# Intersex: Straddling the sex divide

BY KAVYA SUKUMAR

Crixs Haligowski was giving birth in a midwife clinic in rural Philippines, when he first learned of intersex people. The doctors told him (then her) that he was not fully female.

This did not come as a surprise to Haligowski. He was born with genitalia not clearly male or female. What he did not know was that he had a narrower alignment of pelvic bones, usually found in biological males—the kind that would make natural childbirth impossible.

Like Haligowski, an estimated one in 1,500 babies is born intersex.

The term is used to describe conditions in which a person is not clearly male or female. Not all intersex people are born with atypical genitalia. Sometimes the differences

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Crixs Haligowski says of his gender identity, "I don't have a problem being one gender or the other. I can swing either ways. I don't have that crisis in my head." Photo by Kavya Sukumar

# ETHICAL TREATMENT

Reporter Charlsie Dewey speaks with Dan Mathews, senior vice president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), about the longstanding bond of support between the organization and the LGBT community.

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Photos on cover (left, from top): Photo of William Friedkin by Pat York; photo of James Wandela from Wandela; image of Pete Wentz courtesy of Oxygen; photo of Grace Penney from Patricia Martin



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### WADE FOR IT...

Out former NFL player Wade Davis (left) spoke at the "Bolder Than Out" conference this past weekend.

Photo by Jamie Anne Royce



Read about Tommy Walton, who is attempting to be the next host of Check, Please!

Photo from Walton



Willie Nile is among the acts whose shows are reviewed in Bent Nights.

Photo by Vern Hester

### BIG MAC

Fleetwood Mac, Lady Gaga and Rufus Wainwright are among the acts in this week's Pop Making Sense.

### IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

Local playwright Cathy Earnest wins an NYC festival.

### ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

Find out the latest about David Geffen, Elaine Stritch and Adam Lambert.

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# Lesbian sailor fighting Great Lakes fraternization case

BY KATE SOSIN

A fraternization charge coming at Naval Station Great Lakes in Illinois is raising questions about military policy impacting lesbian and gay service members.

Chief Petty Officer Sabrina Russell is facing a charge of fraternization for her relationship and subsequent civil union to a woman of a lower rank in her command.

Russell's lawyer insists that she is being unfairly targeted because she is a lesbian and because her partner reported a sexual harassment complaint.

Navy policy prohibits relationships between service members of differing ranks in the same command.

According to Russell's attorney Eric Montalvo, Russell began a relationship with Petty Officer 1st Class Jodi Geibel when the two were still the same rank. But Russell was later promoted to a rank above Geibel. They later entered into a civil union.

"They would have had to stop the relationship as soon as they found out that one of them was getting promoted," said Montalvo.

Montalvo said that Geibel did not fall under Russell's supervision. He said that such relationships are common in the military and that the charges against Russell were brought subjectively after Geibel reported sexual harassment against one of her peers.

"We have a situation where two people were engaging in lawful behavior, and now you're converting it to criminal behavior," said Montalvo.

He said that the relationship came to public light after someone in the command discovered a photo of their civil union ceremony on Russell's phone and began sharing it with others in the command.

"If this was a male and female couple, why would someone post a photo of them all over the base?" Montalvo said.

Lt. Matthew Comer, a spokesperson for Naval Services Training Command, said that neither Russell's sexual orientation nor the harassment complaint had anything to do with charge.

"It's the fact that they're at the same command and that in itself is how fraternization works," said Comer. "It's a violation of Navy policy. We have to investigate all accusations of that violation."

Geibel is also facing disciplinary action but Russell has opted to fight the charge and will face a Navy court-martial trial.

Rachel Natelson, legal director for Service Women's Action Network, said retaliation cases against women reporting sexual assault are not uncommon and that fraternization policies are often enforced at a commander's discretion.

"There doesn't really have to be consistency," Natelson said. "There's bound to be a lack of uniformity."

She said she sees retaliation charges for sexual harassment reports all the time.

Zeke Stokes, spokesperson for OutServe-SLDN, declined to comment on the specifics of Russell's case but said that what stands out about her charge most is that she feels has been targeted.

"It's not inconceivable that a situation like this could arise as a result of a service member being targeted for sexual orientation," said Stokes.

OutServe-SLDN has been pushing for a presidential executive order banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender

identity for such circumstances.

That order would give LGBT service members an outlet to report discrimination outside their chain of command.

## Gerber/Hart not ready to reopen

BY KATE SOSIN

A year after closing and moving to a new location, Chicago's LGBT library has yet to set a reopening date.

Gerber/Hart Library and Archives remains closed while the buildout on its new Rogers Park home is completed.

Board President Brad Tucker said that the reopening is dependent upon an elevator inspection from the city. Without it, the library cannot

accept a shelving delivery to house the books.

"The movers are advising of us dates for the actual assembly and move in of the library (again dependent on the elevator)," Tucker wrote in a statement to Windy City Times.

At a February public meeting, Tucker had predicted an early spring opening.

"I'm ready to have the movers be there on March 15, and that is not a promise," he said in February. "That's my expectation as of right now."

Gerber/Hart's reopening has been repeatedly pushed back over the last year, after the library moved in to an unfinished space. The move came amid accusations that the organization had shut out community members while its board had shrunk to a handful of directors.

The board has since promised increased transparency. Tucker took over as a president during controversy, replacing longtime president, Karen Sendziak, who is still on the board.

Rosemary Mulryan, a former Gerber/Hart board president, has since been heading up a taskforce, aimed at growing the board of directors.

Tucker said that work is also moving along. "There won't be any announcement of names until after the entire process is completed," he said.

But, he added, he would like to remain on as president through the end of the year.

## AFC advocates holding Lobby Days April 10

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) will lead a group of 40 Chicago-based advocates to Illinois' capital April 10, according to a press release.

The advocates plan to defend state funding for HIV/AIDS services and encourage lawmakers to repeal a law that requires healthcare workers to notify school principals of students living with HIV.

This is the first of three Springfield-bound advocacy events in a series known as Lobby Days.

On March 6, Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn released a \$35.6-million state budget that reduced HIV/AIDS funding by 16 percent, totally \$4.27 million. This is the third year in a row the state has cut HIV funding. Since 2011, Illinois has reduced funding for HIV/AIDS services by \$9 million, or 30 percent.

Participation in Lobby Days is open to the public. Contact Lucy Baglin at lbaglin@aidschicago.org for more information.

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# Tanzania group WEZESHA helps gays and lesbians

VIEWPOINT BY MEL WILSON AND NATHAN LINSK

WEZESHA (meaning "empowerment" in Kiswahili) is a fledgling gay and lesbian group in Tanzania. It is urgent that this organization receive immediate funding support.

We have been shuttling back and forth to Africa for the past several years (Nathan since 2001, Mel since 2006) where Nathan has been involved in various efforts to develop university-level social work education programs in Tanzania and at Addis Ababa University, research issues of HIV drug adherence (as a Fulbright scholar in 2006), and to develop programs for district-level para-social workers serving orphans and vulnerable children in Tanzania.

In all of this work, Nathan is the professional (who does the work!) and I go along to give what support and company I can (and, provide comedy relief). We are now back in Oak Park after seven weeks in South Africa, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

In all of these years, we have traveled as a couple who have been together (now for 27 years). Our wedding in Washington, D.C. two years ago was posted on Facebook and celebrated by our many African friends. Yet, in Tanzania and Ethiopia homosexuals are subject to draconian social stigmatization, and homosexuality is a criminal offense subject to 15 years in prison. In 12 years, we have met and worked with hundreds of Africans on the frontlines of the "helping professions" serving where there are needs at every hand. We have met only one openly gay Ethiopian (who soon fled to Norway) and, just last year, one openly gay Tanzanian man who stayed home to fight. It is about that man, his struggle and his organization that I am writing this letter.

We met James Wandera a year ago when I ran across a local reference to a new LGBT organization, WEZESHA, advocating for civil rights. Immediately intrigued, I called a listed number and found James. We were unable to get together while on that trip to Dar es Salaam, but Nathan did meet Jim and a female colleague—and visit WEZESHA's office—later last spring.



James Wandela. Photo courtesy of Wandela

At that time, Nathan was able to gain an understanding of the organization's membership (around 200 at that time) and programs (advocacy, support groups, HIV counseling). We learned more about WEZESHA when we met James at the International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C. last July. His visit there was sponsored by The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) who included James in several of their panel groups. Last month, again we were in Dar es Salaam, and Nathan and I helped James with an article he is writing for the African Journal of Social Work. And, I learned more of James' own story of how he had come to found WEZESHA.

James was born in Bukoba, near Lake Victoria in Tanzania. He graduated from seminary in Uganda, and was at the point of ordination as a priest when he informed his bishop that he was homosexual. He found himself immediately expelled from the church. He soon found out also that he was HIV-positive. James didn't talk much about this part of his life, but it is clear from listening to him that rejection from his church had a tremendous impact on his sense

of both himself, and of his church. Importantly, the experience did not deter him from his will to serve needs he found all around him. James pursued further studies in non-profit business management, and found employment with an international HIV/AIDS outreach organization working in Tanzania. He was a community outreach worker for three years. It was this work that brought awareness of the desperate need to develop support for LGBT Tanzanians excluded from access to care at every turn. James began building the organization that became WEZESHA from personal funds saved from this period. The organization was registered with the Tanzanian government three years ago.

Until WEZESHA's founding there was no voice for LGBT persons in Tanzania, and no venues for making connections, developing programs or advocacy. The need for such a voice led to the establishment of WEZESHA in 2009 by a group of LGBTs with a cause for other LGBTs in Tanzania. The organization currently has more than 200 members and works to advance equality, diversity, education and justice. WEZESHA seeks recognition of human rights based on sexual orientation and gender identity at the national level (the country is currently calling for public input in a new constitution to be approved soon) and promotes the articulation of clear national norms and, as James tells me, to "mobilize international pressure because our government has failed to live up to those standards."

WEZESHA has amplified the voices of LGBT people during HIV/AIDS prevention and control policy reviews, and has assisted in development of stigma reduction strategies. WEZESHA is now the leading organization working directly with social media to ensure that LGBT stories are heard—again as James says, "because as people get to know the LGBT community they come to understand that we simply seek and deserve the same things all Tanzanians do: to take care of each other and our families, to have decent jobs, to support our neighborhoods and to publicly serve our local, national and religious communities."

WEZESHA is creating a national network to ensure that groups and individuals working on these issues do not do so in isolation but as part of an effective, coordinated national movement that will strengthen mechanisms for monitoring, documenting and reporting human-rights violations and create opportunities for leading national stakeholders to work effectively together to advance clearly articulated strategic goals.

In a recent initiative, WEZESHA in partnership with Ilala Municipality is establishing a gay clinic at Tabata Health Center to provide free quality health services, including HIV testing, TB screening, treatment care and support to more than 500 LGBT people in the Dar es Salaam region.

James arranged for us to meet with six WEZESHA members all of whom were young, HIV-positive, banished by their families and struggling to keep their lives together. We met in an outdoor café in the poor Dar neighborhood of Tabata. They were eager to ask us lots of questions about our world, one they could hardly imagine: where two old gay "Babus" could live together openly for 27 years. They told us about their lives, too: how they were rejected by their families when their sexual orientation was discovered, how without financial support they were expelled from schools, how even as waiters and cleaners they were fired from their jobs, how some of them had turned to sex work to survive, how they learned most tragically they were HIV-positive. They told us how hard it was for them to find support in their search for healthcare in a society where they are shunned by healthcare providers anxious to avoid the stain of homosexuality.

We found no hang-dog, "save-the-puppies" search for sympathy from these boys. They were bright. They were funny. They were happy to be together. And here is where the valuable work of WEZESHA was most strikingly obvious. The organization provided them with hope for their futures.

WEZESHA now has a unique opportunity to establish a mechanism for securing international support through an Open Challenge provided by the organization Global Funding, who supports small not-for-profit organizations worldwide. The challenge is that WEZESHA must raise \$5,000 from not less than 40 donors by April 30. If this threshold is met, WEZESHA will be featured permanently on Global Funding's Website, where they have the potential to benefit from corporate relationships, find exposure to a new donor network and access dozens of online funding tools.

I am asking you to help WEZESHA succeed in this challenge by making whatever online contribution you can ... no matter how small. If you ever felt that you would like to make an important contribution to the front lines of the civil-rights struggle, I can assure you that your opportunity is now. And, here is what you can do:

—Make a Donation now to WEZESHA: [www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-lgbt-access-free-quality-health-service/](http://www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-lgbt-access-free-quality-health-service/).

—Call or email at least five friends and ask them to donate.

—Post a link to our project page your Facebook page asking your friends to donate.

Also see [www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-lgbt-access-free-quality-health-service/](http://www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-lgbt-access-free-quality-health-service/).

**Mel Wilson and Nathan Linsk are co-founders of OPALGA, the Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association, in west suburban Chicago.**

## Margaret Thatcher dies at 87

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the first woman to become British prime minister, has died at the age of 87 after suffering a stroke.

Thatcher served from 1979 to 1990 as leader of the Conservative Party, CNN.com reported. She was called the "Iron Lady" for her personal and political toughness.

Thatcher won the nation's top job only six years after declaring in a television interview, "I don't think there will be a woman prime minister in my lifetime." She was elected to Parliament in 1959 and served various positions, including education secretary, until her terms as prime minister.

Regarding gay rights, Thatcher regressed in the eyes of some. In a 2011 Daily Mail item, Michael McManus wrote, "As a young, new MP in 1960, Margaret Thatcher had been one of a tiny minority of Tory MPs to support gay rights, but now she turned back the clock and gays became second-class citizens." Also, Thatcher's government introduced Section 28 in 1988, banning the "promotion" of homosexuality within schools, Gay Star News noted.

## Zambia chiefs want gays 'caged'

In Zambia, tribal chiefs have called for a crackdown on gays in the African nation after four gay couples sought to have their marriages recognized by a state registrar—with the chiefs calling for them to "be caged," according to Gay Star News. Chief Madzimawe of the Ngoni and Chief Shakumbila of Mumbwa wrote to the Zambia Daily Mail to condemn LGBT people after they heard of the development regarding the couples.

## Correction

The April 3 article on Oak Park trustee Colette Lueck should have been credited to Tom Wray, who also took her photo.

Windy City Times regrets the errors.



The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Suicide Prevention Symposium will be held on:

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# Lawmakers return to Springfield as marriage takes national stage

BY KATE SOSIN

Momentum on the push for equal marriage in Illinois has been slowed as lawmakers were out on break for two weeks, but recent national progress on the issue could strengthen efforts at home, advocates say.

Illinois lawmakers were due in Springfield April 8, where an equal marriage bill awaits a House vote.

Sponsor Greg Harris has vowed not to call for a vote on the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act until it has the votes to pass. A final vote on the measure had been expected as early as January, but LGBT leaders and sponsors have struggled to pull in the 60 votes needed to pass the measure.

LGBT leaders remained optimistic returning from break, however, after a handful of U.S. senators, including Illinois Republican Mark Kirk, came out in support of marriage equality.

"When I climbed the Capitol steps in January, I promised myself that I would return to the Senate with an open mind and greater respect for others," Kirk wrote in a statement on his website. "Same-sex couples should have the right to civil marriage. Our time on this Earth is limited, I know that better than most. Life comes down to who you love and who loves you back—government has no place in the middle."

Kirk's comments came just days after Republican Sen. Rob Portman made headlines for backing equal marriage, after Portman's son came out as gay.

A majority of U.S. senators now support marriage equality, a fact that advocates expect will help with the fight in Illinois.

"Frankly, I don't think we lost momentum," said Rick Garcia, policy director for The Civil Rights Agenda, noting that a handful of senators had come around on the marriage issue.

That momentum may have carried into Illinois where two Republican reps. announced support for equal marriage.

The Chicago Tribune reported that Ed Sullivan Jr. (R-51) and Ron Sandack (R-21) are both backing the bill.

According to the Tribune, Sullivan's support was influenced by the fact that his mother-in-law is in a same-sex relationship.

The push in Illinois also comes alongside U.S. Supreme Court hearings on two equal marriage cases—one on the Defense of Marriage Act and another on California's Proposition 8, both of which ban same-sex marriage.

Despite the two-week delay in Illinois, LGBT groups have been phone banking and building support for the bill.

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, said that now that lawmakers have returned for session, a vote could come up at any time.

"I feel confident that it's going to pass with strong support," Cherkasov said. "We're extremely close."



State Rep. Greg Harris. Photo by Erica Demarest

Garcia said the bill still lacked "a handful" of votes, but that movement on the marriage issue nationally could be a game-changer in Illinois.

Backing the Illinois push April 5 was also Julian Bond, chairman emeritus of the NAACP national board of directors. Bond sent a letter to supporters urging the bill's passage.

"I believe that marriage strengthens families and communities. I believe that marriage provides the protection and security that every loving couple needs and deserves. I believe that marriage is a universal right, guaranteed equal protection under the law," Bond wrote.

Also voicing support for the bill recently was a group of African-American faith leaders.

"Our representatives in the House will be deciding whether loving gay and lesbian couples get a marriage license down at the courthouse — not a church. While there is a diversity of theology on the boundaries of religious marriage, this is about civil marriage," said Rev. Dr. Richard Tolliver, St. Edmund's Episcopal Church, in a statement.

But the bill has also been met with strong opposition. Catholic Cardinal Francis George spoke out against same-sex marriage April 5 with a group of African American faith leaders, according to the Chicago Tribune.

LGBTs have also pushed back against anti-gay rhetoric. Responding to recent anti-gay remarks by Wheaton Rep. Jeanne Ives, a group of residents published an ad in Mysuburbanlife.com, thanking Ives "for her candor."

Ives previously stated that gays were "disordered" and were trying to "weasel their way

into acceptability" on Catholic Conference Radio Hour.

The ad in response disparages those remarks. "Gay men and women obey the same laws and pay the same taxes as straight Americans," the ad stated. "There is nothing 'weasely' about marriage equality—gay men and women are openly and honestly seeking the equal protection of law guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution."

Advocates declined to give a timeline for when a vote was expected.

## Illinois marriage bill has GOP support

BY KATE SOSIN

Sponsors of a bill that would legalize equal marriage in Illinois might be short the 60 votes needed despite a Democratic House majority, but the bill is picking up Republican support.

Two Republican Reps. will vote for SB10, the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act.

Ron Sandack (R-21) and Ed Sullivan Jr. (R-51) will vote "yes" on equal marriage, they announced.

Sandack, who previously told Naperville Patch he did not support moving past civil unions, told Windy City Times that he believes SB10 respects families and protects religious freedom.

"It's a question of freedom, fundamental fairness and equality under the law," said Sandack.

"Those are core Republican and pro-family concepts," he added.

Sandack said he has had conversations with colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

"The public is way ahead of us [in the General Assembly] on this," he said.

Sullivan became the second Republican rep. to come out for the bill.



State Rep. Ron Sandack. Official headshot

According to Chicago Tribune, Sullivan's mother-in-law is lesbian. He said he believes that other Republicans will support the bill.

"There is tremendous momentum leading up to this vote. I think we're very close," he told the Tribune. "There's many of my colleagues that have talked about this, that have said it's the right thing to do."

Sullivan's support is seen as significant because he serves as chairman of the House Republican campaign organization.

Sullivan is the latest in a string of high-profile Republicans to back equal marriage both in the state and nationally. His support comes days after Illinois Sen. Mark Kirk publicly backed equal marriage. Illinois Republican Party Chairman Pat Brady has also called for the passage of SB10, a move that landed him in hot water with some of his colleagues.

Republican support will be welcome news from SB10 sponsors and LGBT leaders. The bill passed the full Senate and the House Executive Committee but has yet to pick up the 60 votes it needs to pass the House, despite a Democratic House majority.

Chief Sponsor Greg Harris said he will not call the bill to a vote until those 60 votes are in line. LGBT organizations have said that a vote on the bill could come any day now.

Gov. Quinn strongly supports the bill and has said he will sign it into law.

## TPAN's spring giving campaign launches

On April 4, 40 of TPAN's (Test Positive Aware Network's) strongest supporters gathered at the offices of Seyfarth Shaw LLP to kick off the organization's "Spring Giving Campaign."

The April 4 event also coincided with the release of TPAN's 2012 annual report.

TPAN's goal is to raise \$25,000 in unrestricted donations that can be used to fill in the funding gaps for its psychosocial and mental health programs that are underfunded and unfunded.

In partnership with the restaurants Wilde and Lady Gregory, for every \$50 that is donated to TPAN during the month of April, donors will receive a \$20 gift card. In addition to the campaign sponsors, an anonymous donor has pledged to match the next \$2,500 raised as an incentive to reaching the \$25,000 goal. Visit [www.tpan.com](http://www.tpan.com).

## LAGBAC's Champagne brunch April 14

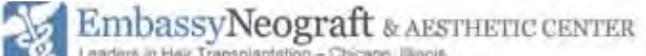
The Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago (LAGBAC) and The LAGBAC Foundation are hosting a Champagne brunch at Bin 36, 339 N. Dearborn St, on Sunday, April 14, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

The cost is \$25-\$75 for LAGBAC members and \$50-\$100 for non-members. See [www.lagbac.org](http://www.lagbac.org).



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## INTERSEX from cover

may be at chromosomal or gonadal (ovaries and testes) levels.

In the medical community, the term intersex is referred to as “disorders of sex development” or DSD.

David E. Sandberg, a pediatric psychologist at the University of Michigan who has worked extensively with children with DSD, explained the reason behind that term,

“DSD is an umbrella term that covers any range of medical conditions associated with atypical development of sex,” Sandberg said. “Whereas when you say intersex, it has a sense of identity associated with it.”

Haligowski, who now lives in Chicago, has a condition called congenital adrenal hyperplasia or CAH, which is the most prevalent intersex condition. CAH affects the adrenal glands, which are located above the kidneys and produce various hormones including cortisol and androgen. CAH occurs when one of the enzymes needed for making these hormones is deficient.

The amount of these hormones affects how a baby’s genitals develop. CAH can take different forms based on a variety of conditions and may not always result in intersex conditions.

Haligowski was born with what is known as classic CAH, which is usually associated with visibly atypical genitalia. But he was not diagnosed.

Haligowski had already been in labor for more than two days by the time the doctors realized that his pelvis could not accommodate the child. The midwife clinic he was at didn’t have facilities to do a cesarean.

“The doctor had to put ... one of those wood[en] vices and literally break my pelvis bone. It was a nightmare,” Haligowski recalled this incident which happened 20 years ago, with a shudder.

Medical nightmares like this are not uncommon in the intersex community. Some of them involve delay in diagnosis and sometimes misdiagnosis. Others mean difficulty in getting medical records. But the single biggest issue has been that of surgical sex assignment on babies born with ambiguous genitalia.

### An elective surgery or a medical necessity?

When Alex McCorry was born in rural Indiana, the doctors told his parents that he was a boy. “But a few hours later they changed their mind and said I was a girl,” McCorry said. “I didn’t know what happened and my mother would never tell me more.”

McCorry was given a feminine name and was raised a girl. But McCorry did not feel at ease living as female.

“I was forced into dresses all the time,” McCorry recalled about his childhood. “And I had this beautiful long blonde curly hair which I would go out and get tangled up in the weeds and everything. So my mother got tired of having to brush all that crap out of my hair, she let me cut it short.”

“I would tear my dresses and stain my dresses and everything else till she let me wear blue jeans,” he added with a laugh.

McCorry was 40 when learned what happened to him at birth.

Unhappy living as female, McCorry was considering transitioning to male. During a pre-evaluation examination, a doctor discovered that he was born with atypical genitalia.

McCorry found out that the doctors had surgically removed his penis and converted his genitalia to conform to a female one.

Surgeries, like the one done on McCorry, were once standard medical procedure for children born with genitalia that are not strictly male or female. This has changed in the recent past, said Dr. Mary Fallat of the American Pediatric Surgical Association. Fallat is a professor of surgery at University of Louisville, Kentucky, and a practicing pediatric surgeon.

“The medical community has changed the way they approach children that have genitalia that



**Mugsie Pike (left) appeals to the medical community, “Let the children grow up and decide their gender.” Alex McCorry (right), an intersex person, underwent surgery shortly after birth to change his atypical genitalia to conform to female genitalia. Photos by Kavya Sukumar**

is not obviously one sex or the other. The rhetoric has changed,” she said.

According to her, many intersex babies are transferred to a tertiary care center for multidisciplinary care. A team of doctors including endocrinologists, pediatric surgeons and geneticists evaluate the child and decide on further treatment, she said.

Veronica Drantz, a biologist and a founder of a support group called Intersex Chicago, said she feels that the approach has not changed enough.

“I got involved with intersex rights advocacy when I found out that they are carving up babies to meet some twisted idea of normal and this carving up continues even today,” said Drantz, who is not intersex. “The medical community has been way too enthusiastic in equating difference with disorder. Just because people are different, just because there are in minority, just because their numbers are small, doesn’t mean that there is something wrong with them or that it needs to be fixed.”

Activist Anne Tamar-Mattis raises a question on the ethics of this practice.

Tamar-Mattis is the founder of Advocates for Informed Choice, a California-based organization for legal advocacy of rights of children born with DSD.

“It is questionable whether adults should be allowed to decide on cosmetic procedures for children,” Tamar-Mattis said. “This irreversible physical treatment is not done for health needs. It is purely done to correct the way it looks.”

Sometimes surgery is a medical necessity for children born with DSD, said Sandberg, the pediatric psychologist.

“Sometimes there are issues like repeated urinary infections. Sometimes there are more severe problems that may require surgeries to fix this.”

Fallat points out that these days, surgery is recommended only when it is required for health reasons and not for aesthetic reasons.

“There is also a question of informed consent,” Drantz points out. The surgery is irreversible and may have serious side effects. “The parents often do not fully understand what they are getting into,” she said.

McCorry’s surgery, he said, robbed him of any sensation in his genitals. “I was left with a useless flap of skin. The nerves were cut and there is no feeling at all.”

“Growing up, I went through all these years of sexual dysfunction because there is no feeling there. The few times I was able to ask a doctor about it, they told me it was probably all in my head,” McCorry said.



There is also the possibility that, like McCorry, a baby will not identify as the gender they were assigned later in life.

“The moral of my story was that ‘The doctors decided you are a girl, so start acting like one,’” he said.

Sandberg agrees that the risks of the surgery often far outweigh the benefits. But he cautions that there may be a bigger picture.

“We have people who have had surgeries come out and be vocal about how it was wrong for them,” he said. “It doesn’t follow from that argument, that by not doing surgery there are no problems.”

Fallat points out the deficiency in quality and quantity of data available on the condition.

“Because we lack the ability to look at large numbers of people with different kind of [DSD], we are at a disadvantage when trying to look at the big picture,” she said. “I am a doctor who is trying to educate herself, so that I can take care of my patients in the best possible way. We just don’t know yet, what the right recipe is or if there is one.”

Despite these grey areas, there is consensus among the doctors, activists and members of the intersex community on the need to avoid unnecessary surgery.

“The recommendation is to hold off any irreversible changes till the child is grown up and able to decide for themselves,” Tamar-Mattis said.

So what is the recommended approach when a child is born with atypical sex?

Drantz is a proponent of letting things work themselves out.

“Leave them alone!” she said. “Do not try to fix something that is not a problem in the first place. We are all not ‘Adams or Eves.’ We are not in that story.”

### Beyond the binary

A hands-off approach can be tricky. How do you explain to a 5-year-old child that they are neither a boy nor a girl?

“We need to assign a working gender identity no later than when the child is 18 months old,” Sandberg said. “But what is important is that everyone involved must understand that this assignment is not rigid. It may change as the child grows up.”

Not everybody agrees. Drantz questions the need for gender.

“We try to fit people into molds we are comfortable with,” she said. “We want them to be in neatly labeled boxes. Why can’t they be both? Who is to say that I can only be a woman?”

Some members of the intersex community echo Drantz’s reasoning.

“Why can’t I just be an intersex person and just take the hormone that is required to keep my body healthy?” Haligowski asked.

Haligowski has come to terms with his history and has picked a predominantly male gender identity. But he still acknowledges both his sides.

“My girlfriend calls me her ‘wifband.’ Some days I am such a husband and some days a wife,” he said.

While people like McCorry and Haligowski picked one gender, some people like Mugsie Pike prefer a middle road.

Pike embraces both the male and female identities equally and prefers the pronoun ‘they’ over a he or she.

“Gender is not black or white. It should not be rigidly defined,” they said. Pike, however, agrees that this may not be a concept that young children may understand. “A working gender identity is important for a child growing up. But there should be room for change.”

Sandberg says that this decision to assign a baby’s gender is based on a number of factors including results of clinical observation, medical diagnosis and, to some extent, parents’ intuition.

“We make our best effort,” Sandberg said. “But there is no guarantee that this assignment will hold through their lifespan.”

“We certainly have gaps in what we know. We need to focus our efforts on improving this area of decision making,” he added.

### To tell or not to tell

Some intersex people are also forced to combat the secrecy and shame sometimes associated with the condition.

“All of us are a little weird in some ways,” Drantz said. “Some of us will never discover the weird genes that we have. But when the difference is some sexual way, we are ostracized.”

Pike, unlike Haligowski or McCorry, was born with a form of CAH called non-classic form. There were no tell-tale signs.

When “they” were in high school, Pike was prescribed birth control pills to combat acne. But their body reacted in unexpected ways. Doctors soon diagnosed Pike’s CAH. But Pike was not told.

“The doctors did not give me an inaccurate diagnosis. But they never told me it was an intersex condition,” Pike recalled.

When Pike read about CAH, they felt it explained their symptoms. Pike underwent treatment for three years before they confirmed their CAH self-diagnosis.

“[The doctors] are taught that it is emotionally traumatizing for the patient to be told that you are the ‘other.’ It was traumatizing for me not to be told that,” Pike said.

“Nobody is going to come out ‘normal’ after being systemically lied to,” Pike said. “One of the biggest problems with being intersex is isolation and invisibility. It is hard not to feel like a freak of nature.”

Sandberg, who has worked with a large number of parents of intersex babies, agrees.

“When parents first learn about their child’s condition, the initial reaction is to protect the child and the family against stigma,” he said.

Secrecy and shame extends to obtaining medical records.

“A lot of individuals have been lied to about their medical history. It is difficult to get their medical records,” Tamar-Mattis said. Advocates for Informed Choice, the organization founded by Tamar-Mattis, helps to educate intersex people and medical providers about HIPAA (guidelines for medical organizations on sharing patients’ medical information) and other privacy regulations.

The secrecy and stigma associated with the condition have led to misinformation and ignorance about DSD.

“When parents hear about DSD, they often do not know anything about it,” Sandberg said. “They know about rarer conditions like cystic

**Turn to page 9**

# Glenwood owners split days after T's closure

BY KATE SOSIN

A shakeup at Rogers Park gay bar The Glenwood has sent employees and patrons reeling, just days after the closure of one of the owner's other bars.

Renee Labrana and Colm Treacy, co-owners of the The Glenwood, 6962 N. Glenwood Ave., have apparently parted ways, leaving Treacy with sole responsibility of the bar just days after his other bar, T's, was evicted.

According to Rick Nyman, a former bartender at The Glenwood, Treacy called the bartenders April 3 to let them know that he and Labrana had split ways. All bartenders except for Nyman were allowed to keep their jobs, Nyman said.

Nyman said he and Labrana are longtime friends, and he was let go due to his loyalty to Labrana.

"It's been tense between them for a long time," said Nyman, adding that employees had long anticipated the split.

Nyman declined to comment on the reason for the fallout between Treacy and Labrana.

The split appears to have occurred while Labrana is vacationing out of the country, leaving employees questioning the timing Treacy's announcement.

Treacy did not respond to requests to comment. Labrana, who is reportedly still out of town, could not be reached for comment either.

The Glenwood, a neighborhood bar just five years old, has fast become a community fixture, both for LGBT and heterosexual Rogers Park residents.

"It wasn't just a bar," said Julio Perez, a regular. "It was a Rogers Park living room."

Many patrons credit Labrana with creating that environment. While Treacy owned T's and other local businesses, most associated Labrana with The Glenwood, Perez and Nyman said. They say that the split changes the culture of The Glenwood.

"They ripped out a huge chunk of the heart and soul of that bar," said Perez.

A private Facebook group in support of Labrana had gathered 315 members by April 4.

On April 3, regulars of the bar gathered at ParLOUR, another North Side gay bar, to show support for Nyman and Labrana. About 16 attended

the informal meeting.

Less than two miles away, The Glenwood remained open for business.

The fallout at The Glenwood comes just days after T's Restaurant, Treacy's popular Andersonville bar, was shuttered by the Cook County Sheriff's Office in an eviction case.

Like T's, The Glenwood had attracted a strong crowd of loyal LGBT customers.

A year ago, Treacy reflected on that success in an interview with Windy City Times.

"The Glenwood has been a huge anchor to the neighborhood with a real mixed audience. It's been more than I ever expected it to be," Treacy said. "I didn't realize how the neighborhood was going to totally embrace The Glenwood, and they really have. From the [area] alderman to the Rogers Park Business Alliance to so many others. It has lent itself to being a real anchor of the community."



The Glenwood. Photo by Kate Sosin

## Lewis, teachers' union to receive Ron Sable Award

Crossroads Fund—a Chicago foundation that funds grassroots groups working for racial, social and economic justice—will honor Karen Lewis and the Chicago Teachers Union at its annual benefit Seeds of Change on April 12 at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St., 5:30-9:30 p.m.

Sable was one of the founders of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and one of the first openly gay candidates for alderman in Chicago. In addition, he served on the Crossroads Fund's board of directors for 10 years.

In addition, the National Lawyers Guild-Chicago Chapter will receive the Donald F. Erickson Synapses Award.

Tickets start at \$30; see [www.crossroadsfund.org](http://www.crossroadsfund.org).

## Howard Brown Health Center Honors the Memory of

# Harley McMillen

Howard Brown Health Center would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of our former Executive Director (1980-1984) Harley McMillen. Because of the foundation that Harley laid and his dedication and leadership, Howard Brown Health Center has been able to continue to provide high quality, compassionate, competent health and wellness care to our community regardless of the ability to pay.

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*Your memory will forever live in the fabric of our mission.*

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This ad was timed to be in last week's Windy City Times, but was inadvertently left out of the paper.

### INTERSEX from page 8

fibrosis, which affects only one in 30,000 people. But DSD, which affects nearly 1 percent of the population, is alien to them."

Information and education is the way to deal with the stigma, Sandberg said.

"It is never a question of if, but of when and how to tell the children about their condition," he said.

Over the last decade, things have been improving for gender-variant people. Activists agree that society has been more accepting of those who do not strictly conform to the gender binary. But there is more to be done.

Sandberg said, "It will benefit us all if we acknowledge that gender is more of a continuum and not a dichotomy."

See video interviews for this story at <http://vimeo.com/63114953>, <http://vimeo.com/63114952> and <http://vimeo.com/63114951>.

Kavya Sukumar is a software engineer-turned-journalist who is currently a graduate student at Medill School of Journalism.

# Urvashi Vaid talks LGBTs, race and diversity at Center

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Race, class and LGBT politics were the themes of a talk by community organizer, author and attorney Urvashi Vaid April 3 at the Center on Halsted. Political humorist, author, and activist Kate Clinton—Vaid's longtime partner—lead a discussion and Q&A session following Vaid's remarks.

An LGBT and social-justice movement leader for the past 30 years, Vaid is currently the director of the Engaging Tradition Project at Columbia Law School's Center for Gender and Sexuality Law. Last summer, Vaid was a founder of LPAC—the first lesbian political action committee. She serves on LPAC's advisory board as well as the board of directors of the Gill Foundation.

Vaid is the author of *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay & Lesbian Liberation* and co-edited an anthology *Creating Change: Public Policy, Sexuality and Civil Rights* with Dr. John D'Emilio and Dr. William Turner. She previously served as a staff attorney with the ACLU National Prison Project, was an executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and a columnist for *The Advocate*. Vaid has also received awards from a number of organizations including the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association, the American Foundation for AIDS Research and Lambda Legal.

In addition to her books—*Don't Get Me Started*, *What the L?* and *I Told You So*—Clinton also performs her comedy act around the country and writes a column for the national monthly magazine *The Progressive*.

After an introduction by Jane Saks, executive director of the Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media at Columbia College Chicago, Vaid spoke to a crowd of more than 150 people about her new book *Irresistible Revolution: Confronting Race, Class and the Assumptions of LGBT Politics*.

Before Vaid read an excerpt she revealed that this was one of her first outings since she was diagnosed with breast cancer. "Everything is fine now. It's been quite a year for the two of us ... we've done everything together. We've been together for 25 years and this is the first time

we've been this fused," said Vaid.

Vaid noted that the book and her talk are acts of self-criticism. Reading from her book, Vaid remarked that "honesty changed attitudes, laws, cultural possibilities, sexual ideas and family forms in revolutionary ways by telling the truth about desire and gender by showing the power of intimacy beyond reproduction ... yet lately, I've come to a cynical conclusion that by ... investing heavily in making sure that the heterosexist world sees us as no threat to its norms and traditions ... the LGBT movement has been co-opted by the very institutions it once fought to transform."

Of her political activism, Vaid said she is motivated by a desire to change the material conditions of people's lives, issues surrounding race and gender, and creating participation by people without authoritarian, patriarchal control. Vaid said that in the 17 years since her book *Virtual Equality* was released so much has happened. In that book, Vaid argued that the LGBT movement needed to be placed among racial, economic and gender social justice frameworks; LGBT policies should be shifted to the state level instead of the federal level and the right-wing needed to be defeated both culturally and politically. What amazes Vaid is how everyone is now taking notice of the LGBT movement's progress without recognizing the decades of hard work among activists.

While talking about the positive changes that have occurred over the years, Vaid noted that some things haven't changed including who is the subject of the LGBT movement, the difference between politics of recognition versus redistribution and the difference between rule shifting and culture shifting. Vaid argues that the subject of the LGBT movement is still predominately white, middle/upper class men, the economic needs of the LGBT community haven't been addressed and the rules (laws), practices (implementation) and norms (who we are) are not aligned. Formal legal equality hasn't changed the way LGBT people are perceived and treated by society.

LGBT people's relationship with the government has been affected by the increase in state



Urvashi Vaid at the event. Photo by Hal Baim

and social control over the last 20 years, Vaid remarked. Race-based disparities as well as issues surrounding the financing of the LGBT movement are other things that need to be looked at with a critical eye, said Vaid. Vaid noted that no matter how much of a financial investment one makes to LGBT organizations and causes everyone should have an equal voice.

On the topic of marriage equality, Vaid said that Clinton calls it "mad vow disease." Vaid said marriage has been a great and a problematic issue. She said it addresses rules, practices and norms and as a result attacks cultural prejudices, however, it promises more than it delivers and it won't be the end of the struggle for equality because marriage doesn't address other societal issues.

As for the future, Vaid said that creating an electorate that will push progressive causes including LGBT equality is essential. Refocusing the agenda toward economic, gender (women and the trans community) and race within the LGBT community should also be a priority, she said.

Following Vaid's remarks, she and Clinton launched into a discussion about the Prop 8 and DOMA Supreme Court cases. Vaid said she is still troubled by the justices use of the word homosexual. However, it was exciting for her to see the law used to tell a story about people. Of the upcoming DOMA decision, Vaid said she is optimistic.

The audience asked about climate concerns in relation to the LGBT community, whether labor unions should align with the LGBT community, if

the LGBT movement is going backwards by fighting for marriage equality, the criminalization of HIV/AIDS, the fight to overturn DADT and DOMA, the theme of liberation by counteracting internalized heterosexism, and homophobia.

Responding to the marriage question, Vaid said she sees how people are troubled by the institution itself (Vaid and Clinton were married last June). Regarding the efforts to repeal DADT and DOMA, Vaid said there is an assimilation logic surrounding those efforts.

Vaid asked D'Emilio—who was in the audience—his thoughts. He spoke about a passage in Vaid's book where she critiqued the mainstream LGBT organizations and called for a federation of the queer, radical, multi-issue groups including those who are concerned with immigrants and labor. D'Emilio liked that idea and said he wanted to join such a federation.

As for the future, Vaid said new structures, new avenues for funding and investing in new leaders who are younger and more diverse are essential for the LGBT movement.

The event was co-hosted by the Center on Halsted, the Community Media Workshop, Ellen Stone Belic Institute for Women & Gender in Arts & Media at Columbia College Chicago, Women and Children First Bookstore, and Windy City Times. The Windy City Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf provided ASL services for the event.

See [www.urvashivaid.net/wp](http://www.urvashivaid.net/wp) and [www.kate-clinton.com](http://www.kate-clinton.com) for more information.

See [www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Urvashi-Vaid-Kate-Clinton-in-Chicago/42262.html](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Urvashi-Vaid-Kate-Clinton-in-Chicago/42262.html) for more photos from the event.

## Gay man accuses Peru police of misconduct, bias

BY MATTHEW C. CLARK

A gay man has accused the police department of Peru, Ill., of discrimination and misconduct, including a claim that one officer verbally demanded oral sex.

Henry A. Cabrera-Calderón, a 21-year-old student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, outlined the events of Feb. 10 and 11 in a letter that was addressed to Peru Police Department (PPD) Chief of Police Douglas P. Bernabei, and shared with the *Windy City Times*.

In it, Cabrera-Calderón states that as the result of a payment dispute with a taxi cab driver, three PPD officers came to his hotel on the night of Feb. 10 and began interrogating him.

Cabrera-Calderón stated that, while draped in a towel, Officer Piscia told him to "suck me."

Cabrera-Calderón also provided an audio file he said was a recording of the night's events.

The recording appears to corroborate Cabrera-Calderón's story. In it, one hears multiple voices interrogating another individual. One

of the voices, an interrogator, is heard using profane language and saying "I'm sick of you already."

Moments later, the same voice is heard saying what seems like, "Suck me. I don't care."

In the complaint, Cabrera-Calderón also states that he was forcibly removed from his hotel room the next day by an Officer Peters, and also provides an audio file to corroborate his claims.

"I strongly believe that both Officer Piscia and Officer Peters violated several of my Constitutional rights, including my right to privacy and my Miranda rights," wrote Cabrera-Calderón.

Cabrera-Calderón declined to speak with *Windy City Times* about these allegations, which were sent via e-mail by a third party.

Chief Douglas Bernabei confirmed that an Officer Peters and a Sargent Piscia were on staff with the PPD. However, he told *Windy City Times* via e-mail that he was prohibited from discussing personnel matters and could neither confirm nor deny anything.

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**GAY** *in the*  
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**John-Michael Korpala**  
TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF KORPAL



**Age**  
44

**Relationship status**  
Partner, Pablo Escriva

**Neighborhood**  
West Rogers Park

**Job title**  
Artist and massage therapist at Toujours Salon

**Hobbies**  
Cooking, baking, bicycle riding

**Favorite local restaurant**  
Frida's on Southport

**Favorite movie**  
Fame "Inspired me a lot as a kid."

**Little-known fact**  
Is a vegetarian.



Born and raised in rural Indiana, John-Michael Korpala quickly became connected to nature and though he moved to Chicago in 1988, where he now lives, Korpala hasn't forgotten his roots, literally.

Korpala is an environmentally conscious artist, focused on an eco-friendly lifestyle.

He also has been a certified, licensed massage therapist for more than 20 years—the last five at Toujours Salon, where he uses a mix of popular forms, including Swedish and deep-tissue massage as well as reflexology, into what he calls "personalized integrated massage." He also does advanced reflexology, hot-stone massage and aromatherapy-raindrop technique. Plus, he is a certified provider of pre-natal massage.

He also teaches calligraphy.

Much of Korpala's art features environmental objects for texture or the concepts behind the piece. Korpala often incorporates such objects into his artwork as twigs, pine cones, rocks, chain-link fence, sand, broken safety glass and more. The items, he said, "create a topographic map of their previous life," he said.

"I'm trying to find a balance in nature and myself," Korpala said. "I've been an artist for 20 years, but am still exploring what an artist is for me."

"I have fun with [art]."





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## VIEWPOINTS

WINDY CITY  
TIMES

VOL. 28, No. 27, April 10, 2013

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

Community Marketing, Inc.



JORJET  
HARPER

## LESBOMANIA

## Back to the Batcave with 'Da Vinci's Demons'

"Historical fantasies" can be amusing. Like that movie that makes Abraham Lincoln a vampire killer. Or that steampunk TV show that tells me Victorian science fiction author HG Wells was "actually" a woman ninja fighter. But please. I draw the line at making Leonardo da Vinci a heterosexual horndog.

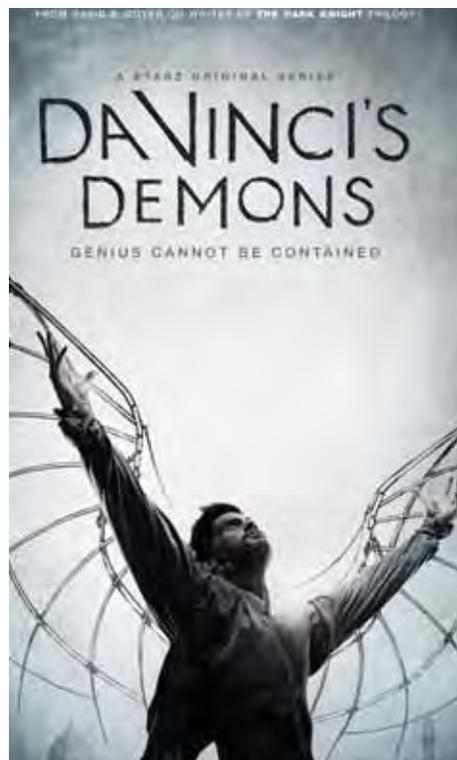
*Da Vinci's Demons* is a soon-to-premiere TV series in which our favorite gay Florentine is not only a scientific genius far ahead of his time and a great artist, as he was in real life, but also a master swordfighter and ladies' man. He's eagerly shown romping and snarking one-liners in bed with several different women in the show's official trailer. According to creator David S. Goyer (who co-wrote the *Dark Knight* trilogy of blockbuster Batman films), the series "reimagines" Da Vinci as a superhero. "He's a little bit Indiana Jones, a little bit Bruce Wayne," Goyer says. But apparently not even a little bit gay.

The 20th century is littered with art critics and academics who fell over themselves to refute the obvious about our gay forefather Leonardo. Sigmund Freud was the first to openly discuss the subject of Leonardo's sex life, and he proposed that Leonardo didn't have any. Yes, Freud conceded, he had definite homosexual impulses, but rest assured he would never have acted on them. In his famous *Leonardo da Vinci: A Study in Psychosexuality*, Freud says Leonardo was a "homosexual in feeling" but not in practice, who rerouted all his homoerotic desire into creating art works of genius.

Then one day, said Freud, when Leonardo was in his fifties, a young married woman from a prominent family in Gioconda walked into his studio wanting to have her portrait painted, and Leonardo fell in love for the first time. (I'm not making this up, but Freud sure was.) Already sounds like Hollywood shlock, doesn't it? Yes, Freud believed that the enigmatic Mona Lisa stole the genius's heart, and the rest is art history.

Only it's really, really not.

There were a number of biographical red flags that Freud sidestepped in his musings disguised as analysis. For example, Leonardo had been a male model and a noted fashionista who was always impeccably dressed. By all accounts,



he was a mild-mannered, left-handed vegetarian who bought caged birds in the market for the sole purpose of letting them fly free. He employed only the most strikingly handsome youths as his models, never married, and left all his property to his longtime companion Francesco Melzi.

Oh yes, and by the way, while a young man Leonardo had been imprisoned for sodomy. Apparently it never occurred to the venerable Doctor Freud that Leonardo might have "evaded everything sexual" in public because he'd already been arrested and locked up for having sex with a man. As the dusty old psychosexual maxim goes, "Once imprisoned, twice shy."

And, as Freud was aware, Leonardo is well known to have remarked that he considered "procreative sex" to be "disgusting." How more clearly, in religion-saturated Renaissance Italy, could Leonardo have stated that he was not heterosexual?

*Da Vinci's Demons'* creator and the Starz network seem to be attempting to "reimagine" their TV Leonardo as a raging Renaissance pussymeister, like another historical figure, Pope Alexander the Sixth, in the hit show *The Borgias*, which is set in the same time period but on a competing cable network. *Da Vinci's Demons*, though, as a historical "fantasy," will have, according to their press release, the added attractions of sorcery, prognostication, and yes, the obligatory historical vampire or two.

According to Huffpost's Laura Prudom, when questions about Leonardo's sexuality were raised at a publicity panel for the show that included Goyer and Tom Riley (who plays the lead role), "the panelists assured reporters that other ori-

entation options were a definite possibility." Right. Let's not even use that pesky G-word.

To be fair, so far I've only read the publicity and seen the trailer. I don't doubt that *Da Vinci's Demons* will have breathtaking production values, great special effects, and be a whirlwind of derring-do and clanking swords. The show is Starz' new hit series hopeful now that *Spartacus* is ending, and the continued sound of clanking swords and swishbuckling, pardon me, swashbuckling, is just the ticket for that audience. *Spartacus* certainly didn't shy away from gay characters, but judging from the trailer for *Da Vinci's Demons*, "other orientation options" are not planned for this lead character who, it is now generally conceded, was decidedly gay in real life.

"One of the themes of this show is 'history is a lie,'" said Goyer. This is something GLBT scholars are acutely aware of, having spent at least the last three decades resurrecting our lost and stolen, invisible-ized past. Apparently Goyer doesn't see the irony of his own statement as it applies to his "reimagining" of da Vinci's sexuality.

"Everything you've heard about da Vinci, we're going to turn on its head," said executive producer Jane Trantor. And *Da Vinci's Demons'* tagline is "Everything you've never imagined." Cute, huh? What I never imagined—considering that Leonardo and Michelangelo are the gay Dynamic Duo of Renaissance art—is that a "historical fantasy" would make one of Western Civilization's most important gay artists into a tits-and-vajayjay hunter.

I'll be happy to be proved wrong if the show's other "orientation options" turn out to show Leonardo experimenting with heterosexuality but discovering he's really gay. I don't think that's very likely to be where this "historical fantasy" is headed, however.

I guess a gay heroic action-adventure leading role is still considered too financially risky even for cable, though *Da Vinci's Demons* would have been the perfect show to test that assumption. Several of *Da Vinci's Demons* personnel once worked on *Torchwood*, the series that already gave the lead-role-orientation-options car a test drive, with mixed results. But in hetering up Leonardo—I mean, for godssake, Leonardo!—*Da Vinci's Demons* becomes a nominee for the new 'hip' face of homophobia, where "reinventing" the past seems to be code for reburying or at least reblurring gay history.

*Da Vinci's Demons* will be those who think that showing him for the gay man he was, even in today's world, would be in some way to demonize him.

**Da Vinci's Demons will premiere on Starz on Friday, April 12, at 10 p.m. ET.**

## Bond backs marriage

*Illinois Unites for Marriage sent out the following letter from Julian Bond, chairman emeritus of the NAACP's national board of directors, April 5 in support of marriage equality in Illinois:*

I've spent my life as a civil-rights activist, working to make our society more just and fair for all of us. It is that commitment to equality that has led me to support marriage for all committed couples.

I believe that marriage strengthens families and communities. I believe that marriage provides the protection and security that every loving couples needs and deserves. I believe that marriage is a universal right, guaranteed equal

protection under the law.

That's why I'm urging the Illinois House of Representatives to extend the freedom to marry to all families. Will you join me?

Click here to send a message to your Representative, asking for a "yes" vote on marriage equality: <http://equalityfederation.salsalabs.com/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=Q945apuZattFn9jwSf08Ii5a08LD%2B1v>.

I've experienced the joys of marriage for more than 20 years. My wife, Pamela, and I stood before our friends and family and made a lifelong commitment to one another. We've taken care of each other ever since.

My gay and lesbian brothers and sisters simply want the freedom to make that same commitment. And they deserve the same protection

that my wife and I have. It's just that simple.

All across the state, fair-minded Illinoisans like you are coming together to move us closer than we've ever been to securing the freedom to marry in the Land of Lincoln. But we have to keep pushing until we win approval on the House floor.

Make sure your representative hears from an outpouring of constituents before our next critical vote. Send a message now.

Thank you for making this one of the strongest grassroots movements Illinois has ever seen.

Julian Bond

## LETTERS

## GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo  
courtesy of  
Patricia  
Martin

## STATE OF GRACE

Windy City Times profiles out lesbian boxer Grace Penney (facing the camera). Read page 26.

## DISH

Give and steak.  
Page 22

Bison ribeye at American Junkie  
Photo by Andrew Davis



## THEATER

'Broken' down.  
Page 16

Photo from Beautiful Broken  
courtesy of Benjamin Brownson



## TELEVISION

Sweet Kandi.  
Page 23

Photo of Kandi Burruss  
from Bravo



## DANCIN' FEATS

# Joffrey's Mauro Villanueva comes full circle

BY VICKI CRAIN

"It's just think it's time," he said. After 13 seasons dancing with the Joffrey Ballet, Mauro Villanueva, 31, has decided to leave the company. "I've always wanted, in a selfish way, to go out on top. I feel like I'm doing pretty well dancing-wise, so why not go out leaving people talking and wanting more."

At the end of a jam-packed season, in which the dancers haven't had a two-day weekend since going back into rehearsals in January, company life comes at a price. "It's hard," he said. "I'm kind of over the month-long tours. Now I get to choose what I want to do. There's an independence that I needed to gain instead of being told what to do."

Don't worry; he's not retiring from dancing or leaving his Lakeview neighborhood home. First thing post-Joffrey, he will be dancing as a guest artist at a gala in Philadelphia in early June with Joffrey ballerina Christine Rocas. He plans to audition for work around Chicago, looking for "a different approach to dance and movement."

Villanueva grew up in San Antonio, Texas, the son of a German/Spanish mother and Spanish father. After seeing the Houston Ballet perform The Nutcracker at age six, he decided he wanted to be a dancer. He studied locally with Shawn Knife (still a family friend) and attended the University of the Incarnate Word, a private Catholic university, where he met teachers Buddy and

Susan Trevino. The Trevinos, a husband and wife team, helped Robert Joffrey set up the Joffrey Summer Program in San Antonio.

"That was my very first connection with the Joffrey," Villanueva said. That same summer program, where he has attended in the professional study program and served as a teacher for the last three years, is now in its 35th year. The Trevinos are looking to retire and are handing the program over to him. "Isn't that amazing," he said. "That's the next big thing. They are going to do this summer, then I'll work with Susan for a year really getting the ins and outs of the program." Full circle.

Another full-circle moment came recently when he performed Edwaard Liang's Age of Innocence and a reconstruction of Vaslav Nijinsky's Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring) for his hometown crowd on the company's last tour. "It was really cool," he said. "A lot of people got to see me dance." Back in Chicago, he's now in rehearsals to reprise the role of Iago in Lar Lubovitch's Othello (April 24-May 5).

Some of the highlights of his career at Joffrey include dancing the roles of the Prince in Sir Frederick Ashton's Cinderella and Prince Albrecht in Giselle, as well as performing in Antony Tudor's Lilac Garden and Jiri Kylian's Forgotten Land. But one particular performance stands out. In May 2010, Villanueva had the honor of dancing with fellow Joffrey dancer and dear friend Suzanne Lopez in her final performance



Mauro Villanueva. Image by John Reilly Photography

with the company. "In the beginning, I just appreciated the senior dancers in the company," he said. "Watching Maia [Wilkins], Calvin [Kitten] and Suzanne, those were big moments for me, because I felt like I learned how to be a professional from them, how to be an artist. Later on, to dance alongside them was a huge accomplishment. The fact that I was able to dance with Suzanne at her retirement performance was a moment in my personal history that will always stand out. It was such a pleasure."

He also met his partner, David Gombert, while dancing with the Joffrey. They will celebrate their 12th anniversary later this month. "We were such kids when we started," said Villanueva. "It just kind of happened, as young romance does. I don't know how or why, but we clicked and that was that. He makes me laugh. I think that's what I need most in my life. I tend to be a very serious and methodical person. He makes me chill out and go with the flow."

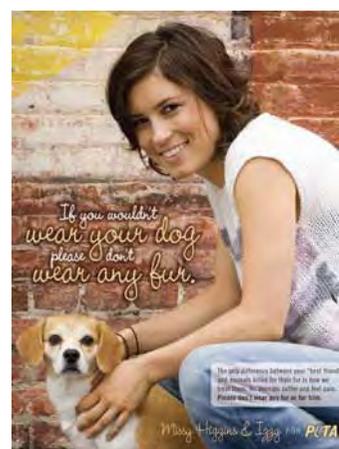
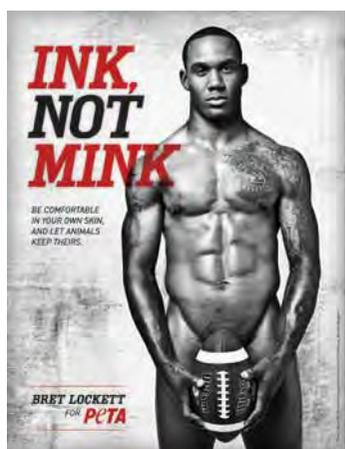
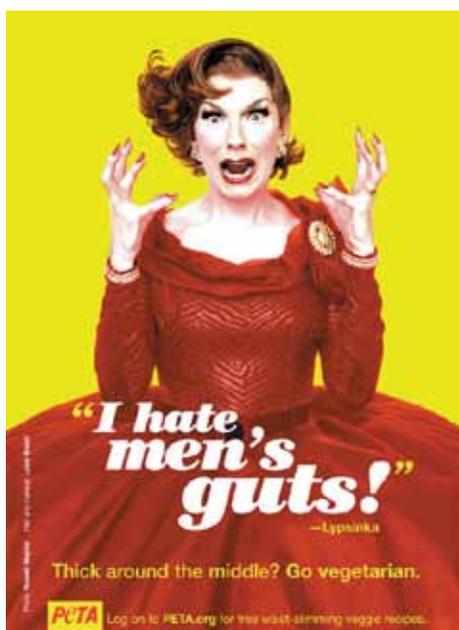
Joffrey Ballet presents Lar Lubovitch's Othello with live music from The Chicago Philharmonic at the Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Pkwy., Wed., April 24 through Sunday, May 5. Performance times vary. Tickets are \$31-\$152; call 800-982-2787 or visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). Pre-show Meet the Artists discussions on Saturday, April 27; Thursday, May 2; and Saturday, May 4.

#### Also in April:

**The Seldoms** mixes things up by having the dancers create the dances in "Mix With Six" at Links Hall/Constellation, 3111 N. Western Ave., Friday-Saturday, April 12-13, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, April 14, at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15; call 773-281-0824 or visit [www.mixwithsixlh.eventbrite.com](http://www.mixwithsixlh.eventbrite.com)

**The Eisenhower Dance Ensemble** presents the Chicago premiere of "Motown in Motion" at the Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Pkwy., Sunday, April 14, at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$25-\$35; call 800-982-2787 or visit [www.AuditoriumTheatre.org](http://www.AuditoriumTheatre.org).

In here, we are whole: an evening of dances features choreography by local artists **Francesca Bourgault**, **Ashley Deran**, **Lauren Warnecke** and **Jessie Young** at the new Links Hall/Constellation, 3111 N. Western Ave., Friday-Saturday, April 19-20, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, April 21, at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10-\$20; call 773-281-0824 or visit [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com).



# Ethical Treatment: PETA and LGBT community share longstanding bond of support

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

It's long been a joke that one of the signs of lesbianism is a vegetarian or vegan diet, a point made hilariously funny by RuPaul's character Mike in the 1990s film *But I'm a Cheerleader*.

"In diet, watch for a switch to vegetarianism," Mike says, as he tries to bring main character Megan around to the realization that she is a lesbian by listing off her many stereotypical tendencies.

In fact, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has long seen the LGBT community at large as a strong contingent of its supporters, and many of its earliest volunteers were part of the LGBT community.

"I've been at PETA since 1985 and even back then a lot of our volunteers were gay," said Dan Mathews, senior vice president at PETA. "I think there has always been an affinity between gay activists and animal rights activists, because I think when you see the mockery that some people have about the rights of animals, gay people have that same mockery that we've faced ourselves, the cruelty and the indifference to suffering. At an activist level, I think we share that."

PETA also established an inclusive environ-

ment early on that no doubt helped it attract LGBT volunteers and employees. It hired out individuals like Mathews in its initial years, participated in Pride festivals, held events at gay clubs featuring well-known drag stars, and welcomed musician Morrissey as its first out spokesperson in 1985—and Morrissey's support continues to this day.

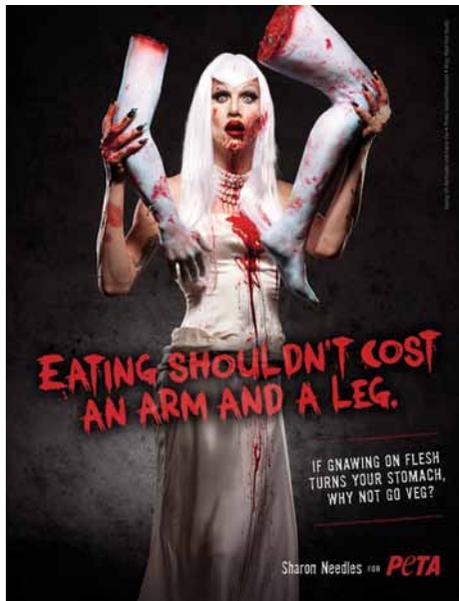
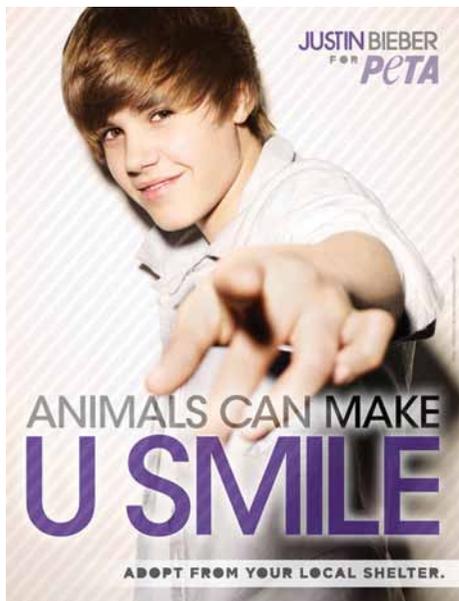
Mathews noted that 1995 Melissa Etheridge and her then-girlfriend Julie Cypher were the first gay couple to pose for the "Rather Go Naked Than Wear Fur" ad.

Additionally, RuPaul was on the cover of the organization's cruelty free cosmetics shopping guide during that same decade.

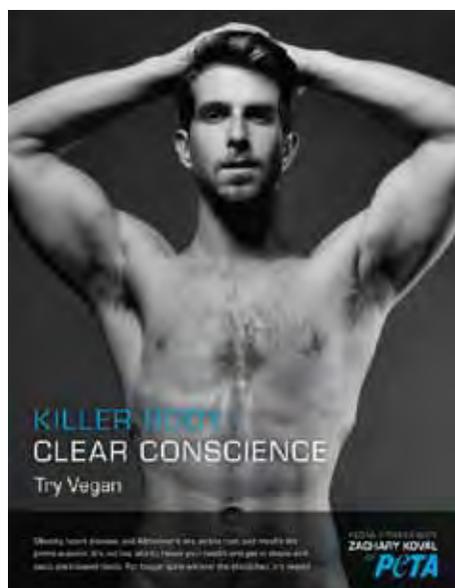
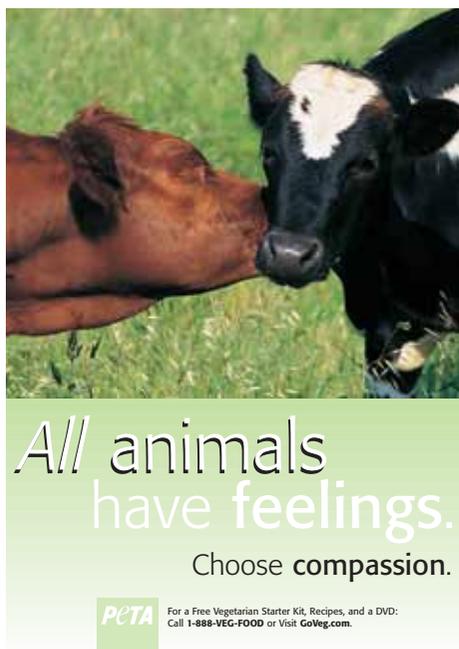
Despite occasional backlash against its use of LGBT celebrities, PETA has never backed down from being inclusive, and that decision has only helped it grow its membership.

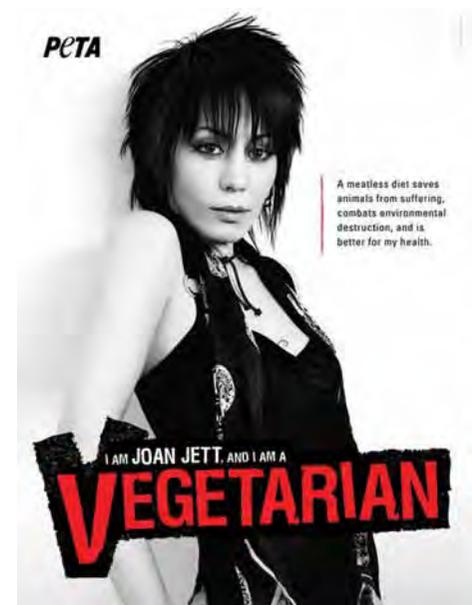
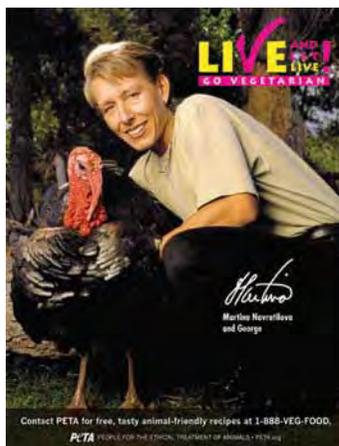
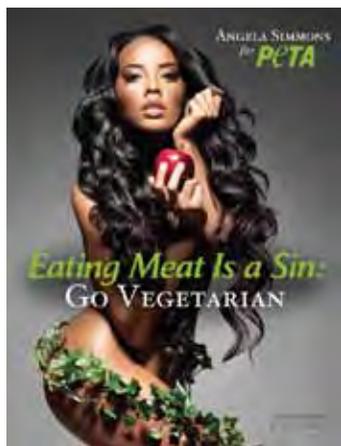
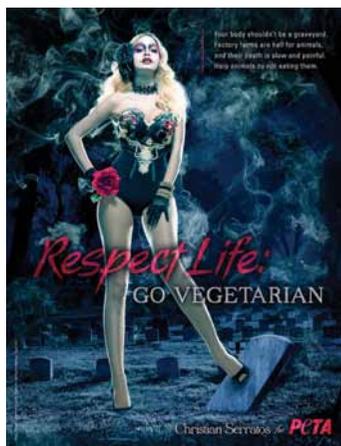
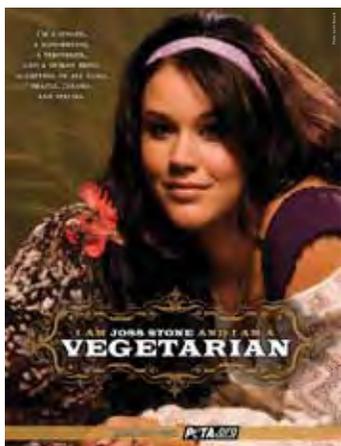
"k.d. lang, when she fronted our 'Meat Stinks' campaign back in the early '90s, a lot of the meat industry response was really homophobic as well as anti-animal and that brought a lot of gays to our side as well," Mathews said.

The organization has continued to feature LGBT individuals in its campaigns throughout its history including Ellen DeGeneres, Portia de Rossi, Alan Cumming, Lance Bass, Jane Lynch,



These two pages: Many ads from PETA's campaign, featuring a range of celebrities.





tilla DeBarge, impersonating Star Jones, as examples of how drag queens have really helped make the point of how outrageous and ridiculous some of the personalities are who are unwavering about wearing fur.

As an organization known for its edginess, the combination of mainstream and underground celebrities has helped draw a broad swath of support.

"We have kind of a radical image, which I think suits us very well, but it's nice when we can soften the edges through these many gay friends we have in these various industries."

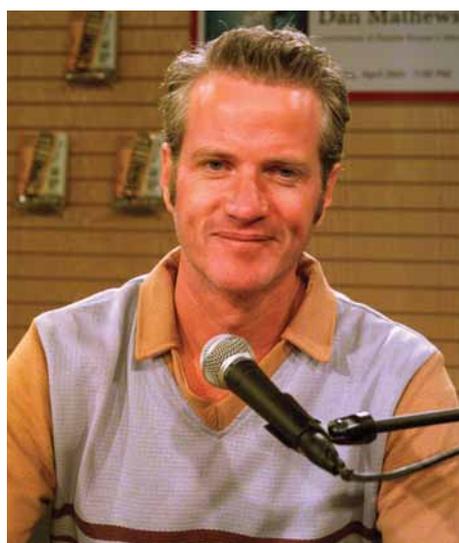
For example, Mathews said that PETA's relationship with Tim Gunn has been particularly important. Gunn has been involved in numerous ways including hosting video exposés of what happens to animals in the various skin trades before they are made into products such as leather shoes, fur coats or wool jackets.

"He brought me in to speak at Liz Claiborne's headquarters and we worked with him to eliminate fur from all 21 fashion lines at Liz Claiborne."

To date, PETA has successfully convinced many within the fashion and cosmetics industries to reconsider their use of animals in creating their products.

"We pressured dozens of companies like Avon and Revlon and Estee Lauder to stop testing their cosmetics on animals," Mathews explained.

"We stopped General Motors from using animals in crash tests. They had killed about 20,000 animals up until the time that PETA started targeting them in the '90s. We've convinced designers like Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger to drop fur from their collections."



PETA Senior Vice President Dan Mathews.

Mathews said that one of the reasons PETA has continued to succeed is because of its ability to evolve.

"You've got to reinvent yourself because society changes a lot, the sort of things people pay attention to changes every few years," he said. "I think if you don't adapt you become invisible, and we've always been very agile about reformatting new campaigns for new eras."

Currently, PETA's main focus is on helping people understand the benefits of a vegetarian and vegan diet.

"We are still getting a great response with the recent campaign we did with Sharon Needles, last year's winner of RuPaul's Drag Race. She

launched a really grisly Halloween campaign which made the analogy of flesh-eating zombies and people who eat animals, as both being flesh crazed. It's been a really phenomenal campaign."

This year's winner of PETA's annual sexiest vegetarian contest will help the organization continue its focus on vegetarianism and fitness.

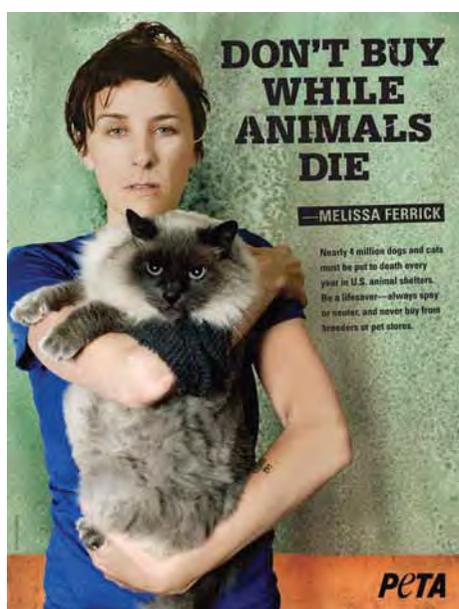
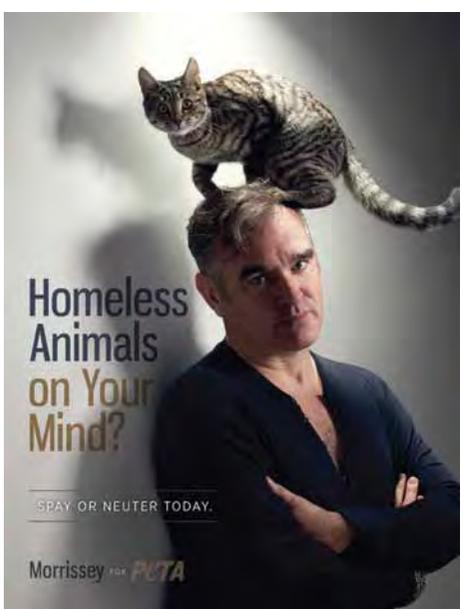
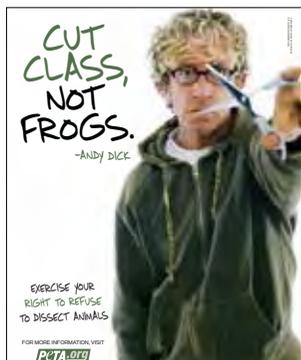
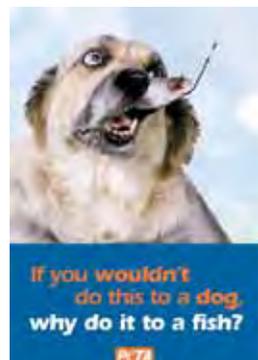
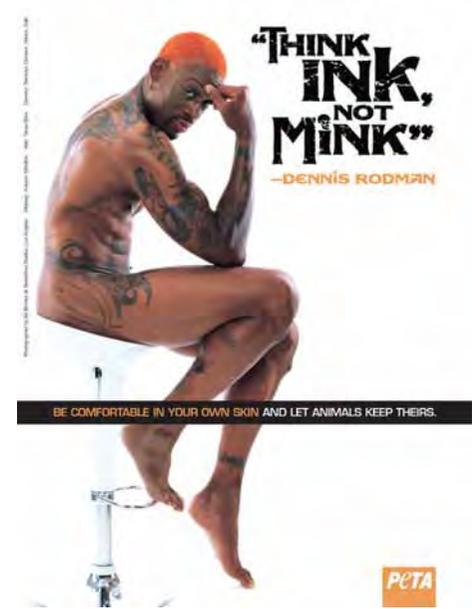
"We do a sexiest vegetarian celebrity and we also do a sexiest vegetarian non-celebrity, essentially the vegetarian next door," Mathews explained. "Interestingly enough, the winner of this year's sexiest vegetarian was Zachary Koval, who is an ex-trainer in New York and is gay. His work with us, after winning the contest, has led us to do vegetarian fitness outreach with gyms and lots of really wonderful positive campaigns."

PETA will also continue to show support to the gay community through participating in Pride festivals and parades this summer.

Mathews said that many people have become much more open to discussing animal rights issues and the health benefits of eating vegetarian or vegan diets than in the past, in part because of PETA's attention-grabbing ads.

"I think the biggest thing that we do is put animal issues on people's minds through a lot of the provocative things we do, many of which have been led by openly gay spokespeople, to get people thinking about animal issues and to reconsider their diet," Mathews said. "This is much more of a social movement than a political movement because it's about the products that people eat and the things they wear."

See <http://www.peta.org>



## THEATER REVIEW

## Catch Me If You Can

Playwright: Terrence McNally;  
Score: Marc Shaiman & Scott Wittman  
At: Cadillac Palace Theatre,  
151 W. Randolph St.  
Tickets: 800-775-2000 or  
www.broadwayinchicago.com; \$18-\$85  
Runs through: April 14

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

To use a baseball analogy, *Catch Me If You Can* is a solid triple rather than a home run. While that's sometimes perfectly acceptable, it's a disappointment when you consider that the majority of the creative team who cooked up *Catch Me If You Can* are also the folks behind the 2002 global smash hit musical *Hairspray*.

*Catch Me If You Can* doesn't quite cut it with its intriguing show concept idea, despite the best efforts of songwriters Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman (*Smash*), playwright Terrence McNally (*Ragtime*), director Jack O'Brien (*The Full Monty*) and choreographer Jerry Mitchell (*Legally Blonde*). Though perfectly enjoyable, you can also sense the effort and strain that went into transforming the true-life tale of young con man Frank Abagnale Jr. (and the 2002 Steven Spielberg film *Catch Me If You Can* that was inspired by him) into a swinging and stylish 1960s TV musical variety revue.

*Catch Me If You Can* flopped on Broadway after a five-month run in 2011, so consider yourself lucky that the recognizable show title and its creative talents prompted a non-Equity national tour to be sent out. And when compared to the Broadway original, the touring *Catch Me If You Can* features many improvements.

A major plus is in the casting. On Broadway, Aaron Tveit was too much of an overconfident pretty boy to make you truly care for his Frank Abagnale, Jr. As Frank on tour, Stephen Anthony comes off as far younger and more vulnerable,



Catch Me If You Can. Photo by Carol Rosegg

which is a plus to make you empathize with such a crafty liar and thief.

Also on Broadway, the amazing charisma of Tony Award winner Norbert Leo Butz made you care more about the obsessive FBI agent Carl Hanratty rather than Frank. As Hanratty on tour, Merritt David Janes doesn't live up to Butz's performance, but that actually benefits the show overall by putting the focus back where it should be.

Other solid performances include Dominic Fortuna as the slick Frank Abagnale Sr.; Caitlin Maloney as Frank's French mother, Paula; and Aubrey Mae Davis as the underutilized Act II love interest Brenda.

Although the orchestra and the onstage bandstand has been scaled back for David Rockwell's touring *Catch Me If You Can* set, one big improvement is the addition of a big background LED video screen on that allows for many more cool 1960s-style graphics and animations (designed by Bob Bonniol) to establish the show's many locales and shifting moods.

All this adds up to a *Catch Me If You Can* that works as an entertaining and jazzy 1960s revue attached to a chase caper story. No, *Catch Me If You Can* doesn't hit it out of the park like *Hairspray*, but it's still bright and vibrant fun on its own.

is tested by personal family tragedies and bitter resentments. Paul is still mourning the death of his Hollywood actor brother, David Rockwell, while Bridgette is a firm teetotaler because her father's alcoholism proved to be so destructive to her family.

Brownson's dialogue is a lot of fun, particularly when he shows the women and men simultaneously evaluating their relationships at different locales. He also makes much of the theater "ghost light" both symbolically and dramatically.

Director Thomas Murray makes clever use of the Greenhouse Upstairs Mainstage space by utilizing both the stage and one seating area to show the divide between onstage and offstage realities. Murray also coaxes strong performances from the cast.

But the details of *Beautiful Broken* are often questionable. Just what Chicago storefront theater does three Shakespeare plays in a row with the same company of repertory actors? And how could Paul's brother become such a big Hollywood sensation with multiple film credits in such a short amount of time?

I also found myself waiting for the other shoe to drop to reveal why Bridgette has such a deep-seated dislike for her father. Her initial explanation stands, though a darker secret could have added more weight to the drama.

All in all, *Beautiful Broken* is a nice, tender play with light comic moments. Yet there are times you feel that it could have gone into darker, more dramatic territory to create bigger risks and conflicts for the people tied to the duality of performing and presenting live theater in Chicago.

## THEATER REVIEW

## Beautiful Broken

Playwright: Benjamin Brownson  
At: Broken Nose Theatre at  
Greenhouse Theater Center,  
2257 N. Lincoln Ave.  
Tickets: 773-404-7336 or  
www.brokenosetheatre.com; \$15-\$25  
Runs through: April 21

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Broken Nose Theatre artistic director Benjamin Brownson aims to show that backstage romances and relationships can be just as dynamic as those presented onstage in his world premiere comic drama *Beautiful Broken*, now playing at the Greenhouse Theater Center. And for the most part Brownson succeeds in making a delicate and often funny show, though some details raise plausibility questions here and there.

Set against Chicago's storefront theater scene, *Beautiful Broken* mainly focuses two relationships that develop between actors and front-of-house staff. In the main dramatic relationship, there's the introspective and more dramatic pairing of the actor Paul (Bradford R. Lund) and Bridgette (Leslie Ruettinger). Bridgette is helping out her house manager friend, Julie (Catherine Bullard), who is secretly and we soon learn reciprocally obsessed with the actor Matt (Michael Bullaro) in the secondary, more comic relationship.

Adding comic support is the theater geek actor Alex (Spenser Davis, who wears a number of musical-theater T-shirts) and the no-nonsense stage manager Sarah Martin (Neala Barron), whose repeated two-name moniker is a running gag that never gets fully explained.

The meeting of Bridgette and Paul is one of like minds and attraction, though their relationship

## THEATER REVIEW

## Dream of the Burning Boy

Playwright: David West Read  
At: Profiles Theatre at the Alley  
Stage, 4147 N. Broadway  
Tickets: 773-549-1815;  
www.profiles theatre.org; \$35-\$40  
Runs through: April 28

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Death *interrupts!* Among the many irksome injuries generated by the Grim Reaper, the most painful is his blunt and irrevocable re-configuration of the bereft survivors' future expectations. Oft-invoked anticipations of the years ahead, in which the missing person may have played a prominent part, must be quickly revised. This information typically takes time to process—indeed, many reminders may be needed before habitual fantasies can be abandoned and the expediency of their abandonment accepted.

The deceased, in this case, is a high school student named Dane, who sustains a fatal brain aneurysm following a conference with his English teacher. The school counselors take immediate action with memorial assemblies, posters bearing consoling slogans, a week's suspension of classroom activities, none of which are effective at easing the shock—initially. Dane's sister rages against



Dream of the Burning Boy. Photo by Michael Brosilow

the sanctimonious hypocrisy surrounding the event, his girl friend is pressured to mourn his loss more deeply than their relationship deems appropriate, and his mother blames the teacher for letting him die unaware of his true lineage, while the teacher, though he protests any complicity, is no less troubled by the boy's untimely demise. Their self-appointed comforters—one for the students, another for the grownups—shrug off the hostile rejection of their services, patiently awaiting the moment when each of the bereaved kin and kindred undergoes their individual catharsis, after which the healing begins.

This progress alone would be enough to sustain the 80 minutes of the play, but author David West Read appears to have feared his audiences becoming impatient and so, raises a number of unnecessary questions, only to dismiss them moments later. We forgive him his error, since our attention is riveted, not on plot twists or social issues, but on character. Darrell W. Cox projects just the right level of avuncular concern—and denial—as the professor suffering a Dickensian secret associated with small communities and populaces that rarely stray far from home. Eric Burgher endows his nerdy counselor with a resiliency hinting at the strength beneath the superficial silliness. Sarah Chalcraft likewise imposes a dignity on Read's overly-melodramatic scene of maternal grief.

In the end, though, the show belongs to the teenagers, played by actors barely a year away in age from their personae and thus capable of imbuing their dialogue with the unimistakeable authenticity of adolescent confusion at their first encounter with death—in particular, Alaina Stacey (a senior at Whitney Young High School) as the ambivalent Rachel, whose stubborn bravado in the face of mixed feelings over her brother's memory makes us want to assure her (noting the irony as we do) that loss will come easier with experience.

## THEATER REVIEW

## Barnum

Playwright: music by Cy Coleman,  
lyrics by Michael Stewart,  
book by Mark Bramble  
At: Mercury Theater,  
3745 N. Southport Ave.  
Tickets: 773-325-1700;  
www.mercurytheaterchicago.com; \$25-\$59  
Runs through: June 16

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

It should go without saying that when you tell a story within the framework of a musical, a portion of the story must be set aside to make room for the music—and when the story revolves around the man who invented the panoramic vaudeville that defined the circus in America, even more narrative must be excised to make room for illustrations of the product now constituting his legacy. So if you're looking to learn more about the life of Phineas Taylor Barnum from this Broadway-style bio than you learned about that of our seventh president in Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, look elsewhere.

P.T. Barnum wasn't a huckster in the criminal sense, but instead a master of hype—marketing foreign-born soprano Jenny Lind as "The Swedish Nightingale," for example—with a talent for manipulating his customers' imaginations. The blame for their disappointment when the promised reward fell short of expectations lay not with the advertiser, but with the gullible consumers (who didn't know, to cite another legendary hoax, that the sign reading "This Way to the Egress" meant that they were exiting the building and would have

to pay a second admission to re-enter). The irony was that the famous "Prince of Humbug" was a morally upright citizen in private life—advocating abolition, women's rights and temperance—and remaining constant to a wife as level-headed as he was mercurial, even as he squired his show's songbird (and star attraction) to public events.

This is not the story that Cy Coleman, Michael Stewart and Mark Bramble want to tell, however. Their account of a career spanning nearly a century is presented as a circus (you can even get popcorn in the Mercury Theater lobby), replete with the kaleidoscopic spectacle associated with that entertainment genre. Scenes are bridged with dazzling tumblers, unicyclists, web dancers and human pyramids, courtesy of Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi and the Actors' Gymnasium. Joanna Iwanicka's parachute-silk elephant boasts a prehensile trunk for sitting or vaulting. The construction of Barnum's American Museum is illustrated by a work song titled "One Brick At A Time" and accompanied by an agile cigar-box toss encompassing the entire cast and the entire stage. There are a few sentimental ballads—notably, "The Colors of My Life," a sweet anthem to marital affection—for Cory Goodrich, playing the crusading Mrs. Charity Barnum, to strut her stuff, as well as showstopping solo vocals by Summer Naomi Smart and Donica Lynn, but these somber moments are quickly dispelled by a ragtime, march or soft-shoe.

This family-friendly cotton-candy fluffy carnival is a perfect opportunity to usher in the warm weather. It may be still too early for excursions under the Big Top, but see if you're not tempted, yourself, to heed the finale's exhortation to "join the circus."

# SPOTLIGHT



Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1949 musical **South Pacific** is a treasure trove of great Broadway standards like "Some Enchanted Evening," "Nothing Like a Dame," "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair" and more. This World War II-set play also is one of the few musicals to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama, and it insightfully deals with the issue of racial bias. The Marriott Theatre production of *South Pacific* continues through Sunday, June 2, at 10 Marriott Dr., Lincolnshire. Performances are at 1 and 8 p.m. Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 4:30 and 8 p.m. Saturdays and 1 and 5 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$40-\$48, excluding tax and handling fees; call 847-634-0200 or visit [www.marriotttheatre.com](http://www.marriotttheatre.com). Photo by Peter Coombs

## Pam Ann in Chicago May 24

Airhostess/entertainer Pam Ann will be at Chicago's Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St., on Friday, May 24, at 8 p.m. as part of her national tour.

In "Pam Ann: Cockpit," the '60s-inspired Pam Ann takes aim at the numerous airline calamities making news today. She will also premiere her spoof appearance on the ABC-TV series *Pan Am*.

Pam Ann's concert DVDs, *Come Fly With Me* and *Pam Ann Nonstop: Live from New York City* are available now on Amazon.com. Pam Ann's travel app is available on iTunes. She is currently working on the feature film, *Pam Ann The Movie*.

Advance tickets for "Pam Ann: Cockpit" are available now at [www.reactionshows.com](http://www.reactionshows.com).



## CRITICS' PICKS

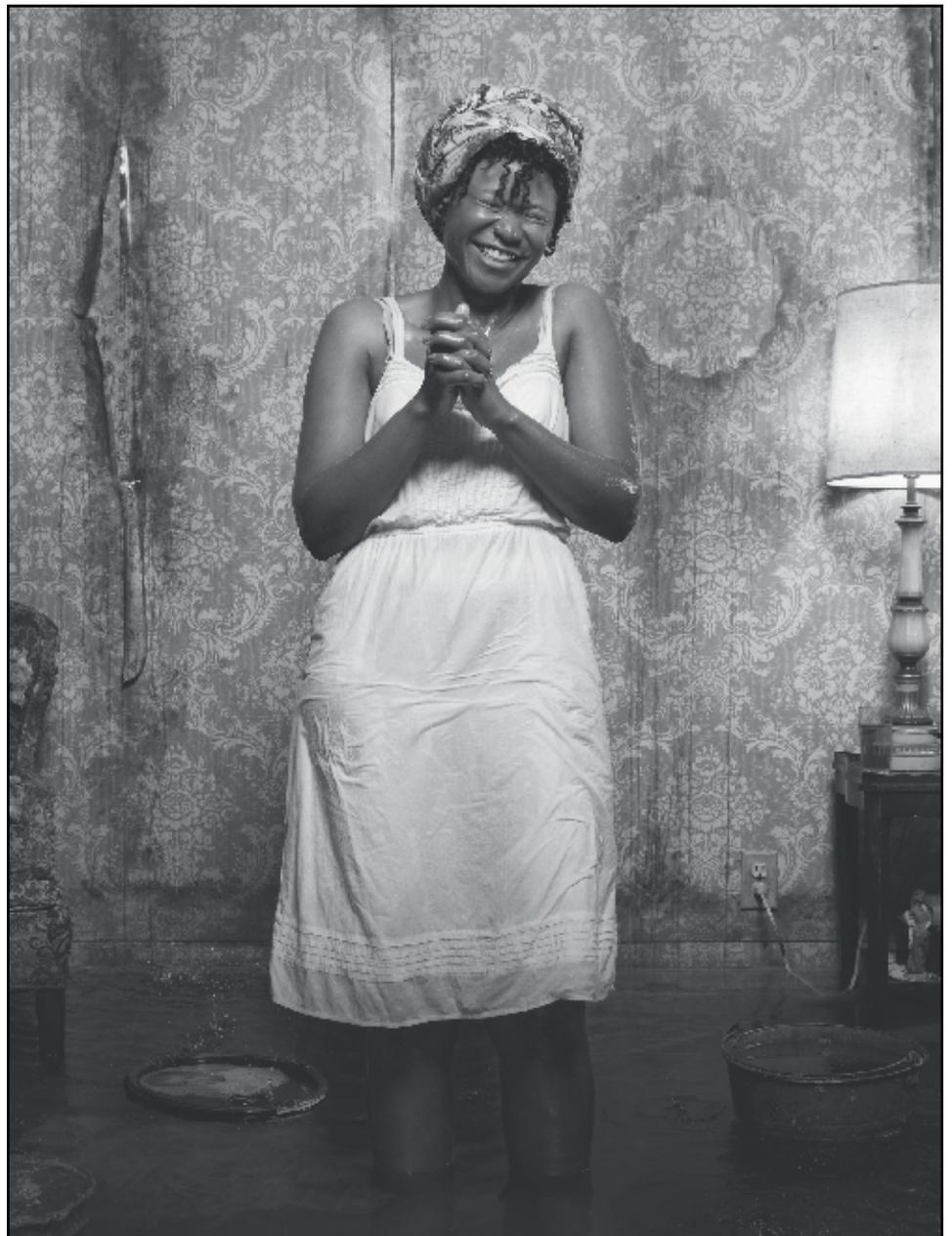
**Jar the Floor**, eta Creative Arts Foundation, through May 12. Four generations of African-American women air resentments and reveal bitter family secrets when the great-granddaughter returns home with her Jewish Lesbian lover in this enjoyable production of Cheryl West's comic drama. SCM

**The Magic Parlour**, The House Theatre of Chicago at Palmer House Hilton, through June 21. Youthful master magician Dennis Watkins offers an intimate hour of jaw-dropping sleight-of-hand magic and mind-reading in an oak-paneled room. His clever repartee adds to the fun. JA

**Measure for Measure**, Goodman Theatre, through April 14. You may think that all's well that ends well in Shakespeare, but director Robert Falls never lets us forget that it's a neon-sequin-Donna-Summer-disco urban jungle out there. MSB

**Smokey Joe's Café**, Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre at Royal George Theatre, through May 26. Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller wrote the first chapters in the American Rock-and-Roll Songbook, and now that Theo Ubique's dazzling hit revue has moved to the Royal George cabaret, audiences spanning five generations can be found reveling in forever-young teen-romantic angst. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan



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# KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY  
RICHARD  
KNIGHT, JR.

## Disconnect; film notes

In the 20th century, radio programs—quickly augmented and then supplanted by movies—were national communal experiences that brought Americans together. Then TV came into the home and changed everything, slowly eroding that past time.

Now in the 21st century, the shared movie going experience (the shared anything public experience for that matter) has become the exception rather than the rule. The Internet age has led to a new type of communal gathering in which momentous and inane events alike are “shared” online—fragmented into segments, interrupted by distracting live commentary as they’re happening and, ironically, oftentimes viewed alone, physically apart from others.

Concurrently, social media has become the world’s largest pacifier in which your 2,643 Facebook friends and 547 Twitter followers are ready to pat you on the back for simply getting out of bed successfully, let alone accomplishing



Marc Jacobs in *Disconnect*. Image courtesy of LD Entertainment

anything that requires an ounce of effort beyond typing, or hitting the “return” key or “upload photo” button. Our thoughts on every subject are at the ready, and we opine like mad no matter the subject (or our knowledge level). Pictures of family, pets, personal occasions of every kind and, especially, oneself (“look at my new haircut!”) are fodder for continued immediate emotional sustenance. Personal tragedies, too, are now routinely shared online. Grief, shame, loss, financial setbacks—nothing, it seems, is held back.

Thanks in a large part to the Internet and so-

cial media, we’re beset with physical alienation, short attention spans, a constant need for validation (narcissism is rife) and a major case of defensiveness about our faults (real and imagined). This mass vulnerability daily collides with the oftentimes overwhelmingly snarky, mean culture we live in at the same time—led by the anonymous online comment—where it’s not just the lethal level of the nasty wisecrack that matters, it’s the speed with which it’s delivered. Lagging behind whatever happened to change the zeitgeist 10 seconds ago, falling behind and, worse, not embracing the latest perceived technical marvel (“How old is your cell phone?!”) is collectively thought to be not just crazy, but an act of sedition and at the very least, spite.

What’s going on here, folks?

That’s the general area Andrew Stern attempts to explore in his screenplay (his first) for *Disconnect*, a movie that focuses on three of the most potentially anxiety-producing, psychologically devastating areas of the Internet—social media, identity theft and online porn. Helmed by documentary filmmaker Henry-Alex Rubin, making his narrative feature debut and starring a group of heavyweight actors (Jason Bateman leads the cast), *Disconnect* gets under your skin at the outset—feeling you with unease about what’s to follow.

The three stories, which eventually intersect, are based on real-life incidents and present worst-case scenarios. Bateman plays a hard-working corporate attorney, welded to his cell phone, who doesn’t take much notice of his wife (Hope Davis), teenage daughter or son. The son, Ben, is a male version of the social misfit played by Ally Sheedy in *The Breakfast Club*—the kid who hides behind his bangs; dresses in baggy, dark clothes; and expresses his yearning through creativity. (Ben writes music on his computer.) Two young bullies at school concoct a phony online profile of a pretty girl who begins to send Ben texts and online messages. Eventually, they upload a randomly chosen female nude photo minus the face, and goad Ben into taking a similar picture and sending it back. Of course, these two punks immediately publicly share it with the entire school online.

Meanwhile, Mike Dixon (Frank Grillo), the father of one of the bullies and a private investigator, is hired by Cindy and Derek (Paula Patton, Alexander Skarsgard), a young couple who have been the victims of identity theft. After going through the couple’s hard drive, Mike identifies a probable suspect, and Cindy and Derek—whose marriage is in free fall since the death of their infant son—decide to confront the man and get proof that he stole from them.

The third story follows Nina (Andrea Riseborough), a young TV reporter eager to make the leap to national television. She thinks a story on underage, online sex workers will do the trick. After several encounters with the sexy Kyle (Max Thieriot), she uses unethical means to convince him to give her the address of the house in which he and several other teen runaways of both sexes have been sheltered by their “friend” (played with oily finesse by fashion designer Marc Jacobs).

Stern’s screenplay touches a nerve—the audience is nodding their heads at the outset of each of the stories and Rubin’s excellent cast perfectly embody these familiar, everyday characters whose lives are suddenly upended because they’ve innocently (or not quite so) reaped the potential disaster that is awaiting at just the touch of a misguided click online. But he pushes each of the situations—especially the identity-theft scenario—into the melodramatic, thriller realm that is obviously heightened for dramatic purposes. In doing so, this cautionary tale loses a great deal of its punch and potential for lasting impact given its hot subject matter. And there are both logical and tonal gaps in Stern’s script and Rubin’s pacing which—ironically—are distracting and throw one out of the picture as it chugs along.

But *Disconnect*, like *Crash*, does offer something irresistible to audiences—the chance to engage in a lot of discussion about the up to the moment social problems it attempts to explore. Further irony: No doubt social media will be utilized by people having a cup of coffee at the local diner following a screening of the movie.

### Film notes:

—The Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., is programming Jean Genet’s homoerotic 1950 silent classic short film *Un Chant D’Amour* and the little-seen 1975 underground documentary *The Continuing Story of Carel and Ferd* on Friday, April 12, and Tuesday, April 16. The latter is an hour-long black-and-white film that tracks the romance of a former porn actress from the ‘60s (Carel) and her protracted romance with a bisexual junkie (Ferd). The movie includes scenes from 1975 with Carel and Ferd looking back at themselves in 1972 planning their wedding and discussing at length their unusual relationship. The “Ferd” featured in the film is none other than Ferd Eggan, co-founder of ACT-UP Chicago, filmed in the years before Eggan came out as gay and became a noted AIDS activist. (He succumbed to the disease in 1991.) [www.siskelfilmcenter.org](http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org)

—Legendary Oscar-winning film director **William Friedkin** (*The Exorcist*, *The French Connection*, *Cruising*, *Boys in the Band*, etc.) will be in town at two events in support of his newly released memoir, *The Friedkin Connection*.

The first is at the Chicago Film Critics Association (CFCA) Film Festival at the Muvico Theaters 18 in Rosemont on Sunday, April 14, with a 6 p.m. book-signing followed by a Q&A with Friedkin and a screening of his 1977 action thriller *Sorcerer* (an overlooked classic). Friedkin’s appearance concludes CFCA’s first ever film series, a three-day event at the Muvico that kicks off Friday, April 12, with an appearance by actress/filmmaker Sarah Polley, who will present her new documentary, *Stories We Tell*, at 7 p.m. Complete line-up and advance tickets for the CFCA series at [www.chicagofilmcritics.org](http://www.chicagofilmcritics.org)

Friedkin, a Chicago native, will also discuss his book with movie podcast *Filmspotting* co-host and producer Adam Kempenaar at the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St., in the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium on Tuesday, April 16, at 6 p.m. The latter event is free but seating is on a first-come, first-seated basis. <http://www.chipublib.org/events/details/id/102601/>

Also, see the interview with Friedkin in this issue on page 20.

Check out my archived reviews at [www.windycitymediagroup.com](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com) or [www.knightatthemovies.com](http://www.knightatthemovies.com). Readers can leave feedback at the latter website.

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# Roger Ebert, dean of film criticism, dies at age 70

BY RICHARD KNIGHT JR.

Roger Ebert, the world renowned film critic and longtime Chicago resident, has died at 70 after a long battle with cancer.

Ebert's decades long career was filled with many triumphs which were challenged beginning with his initial cancer diagnosis in 2002. By that point Ebert's identity (along with his late comrade Gene Siskel) had come to be recognized as the face and voice of movie criticism. A long running popular television show, a slew of best-selling books, celebrity guest appearances, an array of prestigious awards, and a non-stop movie review column for his hometown newspaper, the Chicago Sun-Times, which was syndicated world-wide, had brought Ebert fame, wealth and career longevity.

Although the struggle with cancer—which Ebert bravely made public—sidelined him for periods of time, it never dimmed his passion for movies. Only two days before his death Ebert announced, via his popular blog, that while he was taking a step back from regular reviewing he would continue to write about the movies he genuinely loved. Ebert's undimmed ardor for film was unwavering, and his take on everything from acknowledged masterpieces like Citizen Kane to movies from the lowest rungs of cinema made his reviews insightful pleasures to read. The vast body of writing Ebert leaves behind—including his moving and powerful 2011 autobiography, *Life Itself: A Memoir*—will inspire readers for years to come.

Ebert's personal example will also serve as an inspiration. After becoming instantly recognizable as a TV personality via the many incarnations of the *At the Movies* film-review show, Ebert's struggles with cancer included the removal of his jaw and the loss of his voice in 2006. Rather than hide in the shadows, he chose to be photographed and interviewed in-depth, and he even brought back his television show—heroic acts in a cultural age obsessed with personal appearance. Along with his film writing, he documented his health challenges and presented his views on a wide variety of subjects (including his unstinting support for liberal causes) via his blog and Twitter posts.

Ebert, who was born June 18, 1942 in Urbana, Ill., began his association with the Sun-Times in 1966 after graduating from the University of Illinois. After becoming the paper's film critic in 1967, he went on to a career filled with a series of film critic firsts: in 1970 he co-wrote the infamous screenplay for the Russ Meyer soft core porn classic *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, in 1975 he was the first to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Film Criticism. That same year Ebert and Chicago Tribune film critic Gene Siskel began their movie review program "Sneak Previews" for WTTW, which was bought by Disney and syndicated as "At the Movies," becoming a national sensation throughout the 1980s. The duo's famed "thumbs up/thumbs down" take on movies became iconic, brought film reviews to the masses and presaged the shorthand approach to film criticism—the use of star ratings and other quick takes utilized by Rotten Tomatoes and Metra Critic—in vogue today. After Siskel's death from cancer in 1999, Ebert launched a search for a replacement and settled on Richard Roeper, who co-hosted with Ebert until both left the program soon before the show's demise in 2010, during the midst of his health challenges. In 2011 Ebert and his wife Chaz, acting as executive producer, briefly brought back another incarnation of the show for WTTW.

I was well aware of Ebert's career and, indeed, had been inspired by his reviews. Though I'd met Roger years before becoming film critic for Windy City Times in May of 2004, it wasn't until I began to review on a regular basis that I got to

know Roger. Unfailingly gracious and extremely witty, Roger was a very unaffected man without a whiff of "celebrity" about him. His kindness and generosity to an entire generation of young film critics and especially to those in his personal orbit who had the pleasure of taking in the breadth of his interests (which went far beyond movies) will be greatly missed. He is survived by Chaz, his equally gracious and tremendously supportive wife since 1992.

Editor's note: Ebert's funeral took place April 8 at Holy Name Cathedral. A memorial is slated for April 11 at the Chicago Theatre.

## Indigo Girls call for trans inclusion at womyn's festival

The duo Indigo Girls has released a statement concerning the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival's (MWMF's) ban on transgender individuals.



Indigo Girls. PR photo

On its website, the musical act wrote, in part, "The community of MWMF has a responsibility to fight this hate and be a beacon of love and light for all womyn suffering under hate and oppression, and this includes our Trans Sisters. ... This kind of hate and aggression will rip our community apart and we all know who benefits from "divide and conquer and it's not womyn or queers."

"Although we are playing the festival, we hon-

or the current protest against MWMF and hope that it will help move the community towards change. Any money that we make playing the Festival will go towards Trans Activism. We will make a statement from stage at the Festival in support of Trans Inclusion. ... We love Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and hope for it's continued presence and power in our lives."

The festival is scheduled for Aug. 6-11. Among the other acts slated to perform are Nona Hendryx, God Des and She, Melissa Ferrick, Toshi Reagon, Jill Sobule and BETTY.

## 'Wonder Women' on PBS April 15

Wonder Women! The Untold Story of American Superheroines will air on PBS April 15 at 9 p.m.

A film by Kristy Guevara-Flanagan and Kelcey Edwards, *Wonder Women* looks at how popular representations of powerful women often reflect society's anxieties about women's liberation.

The film goes behind the scenes with TV stars Lynda Carter (*Wonder Woman*) and Lindsay Wagner (*The Bionic Woman*); comic writers and artists; and women such as Gloria Steinem. See [www.pbs.org/independentlens/wonder-women](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/wonder-women).

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## MOVIES

# Director William Friedkin talks 'Boys in the Band,' 'Cruising' and Streisand

BY RICHARD KNIGHT JR.

When choosing the subject matter for his films, legendary movie director William Friedkin has never been one to shy away from edgy material focused on the dark side of life. The 1973 film *The Exorcist*, the mega blockbuster focusing on a young girl's demonic possession is easily his most famous film in a career that includes his Oscar-winning direction of 1971's gritty *The French Connection*, 1977's *Sorcerer*, 1985's *To Live and Die in L.A.* and the more recent *Killer Joe*.

Friedkin has a prominent place in the annals of gay cinema as well: he helmed 1970's gay-themed *The Boys in the Band*, based on Mart Crowley's off-Broadway sensation. A decade later, after a series of box-office hits, Friedkin had the clout to get *Cruising* made. The infamous film—the story of a gay serial killer trolling for his victims within New York City's S&M bar scene and his pursuit by an equally determined cop (played by Al Pacino) who goes undercover to capture him—was the subject of protests by the gay community when it got wind of Friedkin's script, which seemed to link the killer's behavior directly to the gay S&M scene. Released in 1980, *Cruising* was a modest financial and critical success and has been the subject of controversy ever since. James Franco, teaming with queer film director Travis Matthews, has recently made *Interior. Leather Bar*, an experimental film with hardcore gay sex that is based on the approximate 40 minutes of footage Friedkin excised from the final cut of *Cruising* in order for the movie to receive an "R" rating instead of an "X."

The four times married Friedkin, a Chicago native, recently talked at length about Franco's project, his regrets over aspects of *Cruising*, his propensity for dark themed material, working with two gay icons (Cher and Barbra Streisand), and other memories from his storied career, all of which are detailed in his just released memoir "The Friedkin Connection" in an exclusive interview with *Windy City Times*. The director will be in town for two events—at the CFCA Film Series at the Muvico 18 Rosemont on Sunday, April 12 and at the Harold Washington Library in the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium on Tuesday, April 16. Friedkin will discuss his career and sign books at both events.

**Windy City Times: Times change, opinions change—and this is very true of movies. Sometimes, what seemed tremendous, no longer does and what was problematic, well, might have many redeeming qualities. I'm thinking of *The Boys in the Band* now. It must have been so shocking in 1970 for film audiences because in America nobody had ever done that before.**

William Friedkin: Well, I can tell you this about what I remember about *Boys in the Band*. First and foremost, what stays with me is what a great script it was. I try not to think about it as a social document, although a lot of people perceived it that way. But it never occurred to me—and this is going to be hard for you to accept—that I was making what was essentially a gay film. I was making a film that was a love story and that was very funny and, ultimately, very touching.

Obviously, all the characters with one possible exception were gay. Yes, that's true but the story itself stood on its own; the script, the dialogue, the relationships. I found it very moving and at the same time, very funny—which is what I think Mart Crowley intended. I don't know that

Mart was attempting to make a statement here or carry the banner. He wrote about a world that he was very familiar with. He wrote about characters he knew, including himself.

**WCT: If *The Boys in the Band* had made a buttload of money in 1970, do you think the whole future for queer cinema would have been different?**

WF: Yeah, no doubt. They would have all jumped on that. Of course because what Hollywood is about is trends. The trend right now is vampires, aliens and robots. That's basically it. That's what you're likely to see in a film coming out of Hollywood and it's over and over and there's sequels upon sequels and that's because economics does drive the film business.

**WCT: You worked with two musical sensations: Cher, at the beginning of her career (for 1967's *Good Times*, the feature debut for both), and years later you directed Barbra Streisand's "Somewhere" video for her 1985 Broadway Album release. Can you talk about working with those two women?**

WF: I see a lot of Streisand; she's a close friend. My wife and I (movie executive Sherri Lansing) see [Streisand's husband] Jim Brolin and her socially, and I just love her as a person.

She's obviously a great artist, and when I worked with her that consisted largely of getting out of her way. What a director is doing, really, is trying to create an atmosphere for performers, and I know that she had a lot of problems with directors, starting with William Wyler, and the reason for that I quickly perceived was because she knew what she was doing. She knew what was best for her and if you didn't, you got out of her way. I interviewed her for *The Broadway Album* video and I just tried to light her well and stage her well and whenever she was uncomfortable, I would adjust it to make her comfortable because I was not doing "my thing." I was doing her thing, for which I had high regard.

When I knew Cher she was not all that motivated. She was deeply in love with Sonny; she idolized Sonny. Then she gave Sonny the courage to believe that he could do what [record producer Phil] Spector did. That was their relationship. She told me she always thought she was imitating Sonny and Sonny always thought he was imitating Frankie Laine. After Sonny would get the track down, he would bring Cher in and write the lyrics afterwards and she'd hear the lyrics in front of the microphone.

**WCT: Did you hear or see that certain "something" in her? You must have.**

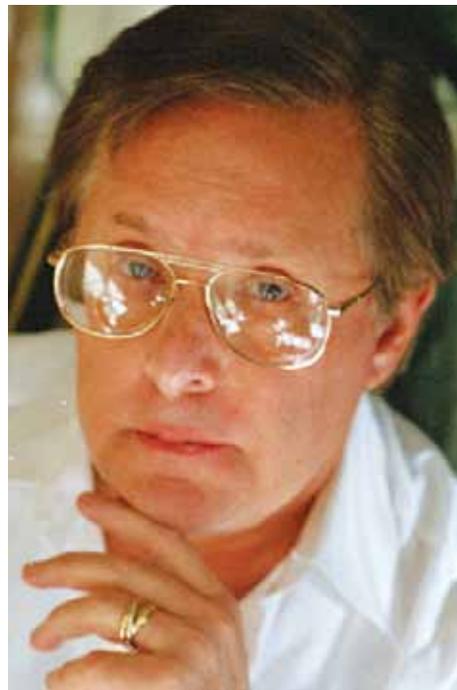
WF: No I didn't, Richard. I didn't see it. In the early years of Cher I couldn't see it. The act was a creation of Sonny's, and Cher played a very important role in it but Sonny was the producer, the director and the writer.

**WCT: Have you seen her recently?**

WF: A couple of years ago in Vegas, we had a reunion and we spent hours just talking about the old days. I have great fondness and affection for her.

**WCT: That comes through in your book. Now, of course, we need to talk about *Cruising*. When you started working on the script you thought that because this was a world that hadn't been explored before on film, it would be a great backdrop for a murder mystery, correct?**

WF: Completely exotic, yes. I knew I had a really unique background for a murder mystery. And that's how I think of *Cruising* to this day. It's not meant to be a commentary on that life-



William Friedkin. Photo by Pat York

style at all, other than I found it was fascinating.

**WCT: Did anybody ever say to you, "C'mon this is a gay murder mystery, WTF?!"**

WF: No. At the time when I said I was going to do it I was in a position where the studios were prepared to do anything I wanted to do and they were bidding to do it. Then when I finished the script—we had a deal with Warner Bros. to make it—when the people at Warners saw the script they said, "No way, we can't do this, we just can't. Let's do something else." But by then I was just so hooked into making a film about that world that I wasn't going to be deterred.

**WCT: What I remember—because I saw it in the theater when it was released—was having trouble with the subplot. And still do. This was the next-door neighbor of the character Pacino played—the "nice" gay man who gets into this violent argument with his lover and ends up being murdered and the overall impression, combined with the gay serial killer that Pacino is tracking, is that every single gay person is violent and once we get hysterical we pick up a knife and start stabbing people. Did you ever think about things like this?**

WF: I didn't at the time but I certainly do now. I mean it did not occur to me the implications of that but I'd have to say that you're absolutely right and it took me awhile to understand the protests that occurred. This was clearly not the best foot forward for the gay-rights movement in a time when it was making massive strides and, yes, the implication—which I was not conscious of—was that, yeah, the gay lifestyle leads to murder. There's no doubt that a film like *Cruising* was not a flag for gay rights. I realize that; I didn't at the time.

**WCT: Ironically, here we are more than 30 years later on the cusp of extraordinary cultural changes for gay people, and James Franco has chosen this moment to make this film that purports to re-create this deleted footage of yours from the movie.**

WF: I had heard that Franco was doing this. That he was auditioning people from film schools to be in a movie that was kind of an homage to *Cruising*. "Really?" I thought.

Then a bunch of articles started to appear about it. I didn't know Franco but I know that he did try to get the remake rights to *Cruising*. He wanted to do another film of it and I control those rights and that wasn't going to happen. I called Franco's lawyer and we had a very pleasant conversation. I said, "Look, I respect Mr. Franco as an actor very much and I don't want him to get his tit in a ringer but I don't know what he's planning to do." The lawyer said to me, "Don't worry about it, it's an homage but it's not the story; nothing like it." Now Franco had been shooting the film and I don't know how much of it he had shot—maybe all of it—and out of the blue he calls me.

He introduced himself on the phone, he said, "You know about what I'm doing?" I said, "I heard you're doing something; I'm not sure what it is." And he said—with a laugh—"What is the missing 40 minutes of *Cruising*?" I said, "You're kidding, I thought you were making a film about it; your impression of what those missing 40 minutes are" and he said, "Well, I am but can you tell me anything about what it was?"

Now I'm telling you, Richard, I think by this time he had finished shooting and I said, "The missing 40 minutes—all of it, every frame of it was pornography, as it would be defined by the Motion Picture Association." I shot everything you can imagine and I put it in the cut; we showed the head of the ratings board knowing that he would decimate it and that I would be left with the film I wanted to make. And that's what happened. When Warner Bros. took over the film—they now own it—they were desperate to find that footage but we have not yet been able to locate it. Anyway, Franco sent me on my iPad a copy of *Interior. Leather Bar* and I looked at it briefly and I have no idea what he had in mind or why he did that. I can't comment on its quality. I just have no idea what was going through his mind to do the film.

**WCT: Does it feel like an homage to your picture?**

WF: Well, it clearly was a reference to it. It wasn't a criticism of it; it wasn't a put down of it. I just believe that Franco—because I know on two occasions he tried to remake the film and couldn't—he had to shoot something. I understand that. He had an itch that he had to scratch and so he did this film on the premise that it was his impression of the missing 40 minutes.

**WCT: But having seen it, you don't quite understand what the itch is? [Laughs]**

WF: Well, I don't quite know what he expected to get out of it. First of all, it's not feature length. It's like a long short. It got a lot of publicity. But it would be very difficult to play it; there's not really a story. But Franco does a lot of experimental stuff and it falls into that category.

**WCT: To finish up, we have to obviously talk about *The Exorcist*. Is it true that you and William Peter Blatty have a script for a mini-series remake?**

WF: No—not at all. I now understand that they are trying to do some kind of a series which I've talked to Blatty about. It's supposedly not the characters in *The Exorcist* but involves a new set of characters and a similar kind of investigation about somebody who appears to be possessed. They were trying to get some very good people to do it but I don't know where they are.

**WCT: Do you have a follow-up project to *Killer Joe*?**

WF: I'm looking at several things and I may have an announcement shortly about what I'm going to do next. I can tell you this: It will not be a step back from *Killer Joe* in the sense that I'm not going to go back to some conventional "boy meets girl" or "boy meets boy" or "anybody meets anybody" story. It's going to have a hard edge to it.

**A longer version of this interview is at [www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Film-director-William-Friedkin-in-Chicago-/42278.html](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Film-director-William-Friedkin-in-Chicago-/42278.html).**

## NUNN ON ONE: TELEVISION

# Pete Wentz talks tats, music

BY JERRY NUNN

Fall Out Boy bassist Pete Wentz is bringing back body art for the reality show *Best Ink*'s second season. He is guiding 12 of the nation's top tattoo artists in challenges as they compete for the top spot. The winner of the Oxygen Channel's show gets \$100,000 and a cover story in *Tattoo Magazine*.

Wentz is in good company, with Sabina Kelley back for a second season; also, new judge Hannah Aitchison joins the cast.

Windy City Times talked with Wentz about tattoos and music on a phone interview before the show began.

**Windy City Times:** Hi, Pete. How are you? I'm calling from Chicago!

Pete Wentz: Nice! I like that.

**WCT:** You guys just put on a huge show here. It was amazing with everybody waiting down the block.

PW: Oh, wow—thank you.

**WCT:** Are there any Chicago contestants on *Best Ink* this season?

PW: Tylor is from Chicago. He came to see the band in Arlington Heights a long time ago.

Hannah one of the judges is from Chicago too. Hannah and I connected in Chicago and talked a bunch about it actually. I've gotten tattooed at her shop, Deluxe Tattoo from Tim Biedron in Chicago so we talked about that before.

**WCT:** Is that your favorite place to get tattooed in Chicago?

PW: Yeah, definitely. There's a little bit of a transient vibe when you get tattooed on tour,

you're here and there. But Chicago's obviously home base, so that is definitely an important place for me to get tattooed.

**WCT:** What did you get out of the experience of doing your first reality show?

PW: That's a good question. So I feel like every once in a while, I get hit up to do whatever kind of reality show and they don't really make a whole lot of sense for me. This one did because I felt like it was authentic to my brand. I've been into tattoos for a while. I wanted to learn more and obviously I've been an enthusiast. I felt like after meeting with Joe and realizing that I'd get to learn a lot about the inner workings of a tattoo shop and more about tattoo culture—that was really important to me.

I think the other thing was to really present this as pop culture and pop art. Going into it, it was really important for me to be able to be involved from the ground up in the Flash Challenges, which are like the non-tattoo challenges. So we got to do some pretty crazy stuff. I'm really into street art so we got to hang these guys from the side of a billboard six stories up and let them spray-paint. I guess they kind of let us just do what we wanted to do as far as those wacky ideas.

**WCT:** Why do you find tattoos such an art form?

PW: I think there are so many things that make them a fascinating art form. I think to be a walking canvas is a pretty cool thing. It's an actual living, breathing piece of art. It's interesting because everybody's body kind of has a different skin tone and shape so tattoos look



Pete Wentz.  
Photo  
from  
Oxygen

different depending who it is, depending on when you got them. They all tell different stories I think specifically with this show, it focuses so much on the pop culture aspect and I think the pop culture aspect is part of it. So we go through everything from traditional tattoos to stuff that is more illustrative stuff to wacky stuff, animated tattoos, just kind of crazy stuff.

I think there's something in there for everyone. I feel like tattoos are such a subjective art form. The wearer makes the choice of how much they'll add to it and how far they'll go with it. I don't think that it's something that hides in the shadows anymore. I have friends who are doctors who have tattoos, I have everyone from friends who are in bands who have tattoos. It's kind of all over the place.

**WCT:** What do you remember about your first tattoo?

PW: Oh man. My first one was brutal. It was on my back. I was 15 years old. I had snuck in the shop. I did a lot of goofing around. I definitely recommend waiting until legal age to get tattooed. Not just because you're probably doing some shady stuff. But also because I think people really have to grow into who they are and who you think you're going to be for a long

time. When you're 15 you think 30 seems like it's going to be forever. But one day you will be 30 and you'll have that tattoo still.

**WCT:** Do you have one that means the most, personally?

PW: Well, I think one of my most meaningful ones is probably the one that I have with Travie McCoy from *Gym Class Heroes*. I have half of a banner and he has half of a banner and they meet up on our wrists. His says "young hearts" and mine says "be free"—a Rod Stewart song—so that one's probably the most meaningful. I remember I actually told my son on the way to school, as soon as he learns to write his own name I'll probably get tattooed in his handwriting, at some point that'll happen.

**WCT:** How do you juggle the show and the band?

PW: The great thing is we've had kind of a really cool group on the show. I mean it's definitely a group of us, me, Joe, Hannah, Sabina and then the contestants. The whole crew that worked on it, we filmed it all through October and I didn't really realize that I didn't have a lot of experience with reality competition TV. We filmed basically six or seven days a week. So how you see it is very real. Everything is actually filmed. I would usually film during the day and then head to the studio at night all through October.

The cool thing is I'm able to do a lot of the press for the album and do press for *Best Ink* at the same time. Thankfully the two kind of are married, when people think about tattoos they think of rock music and when people think of rock music, vice versa. So thankfully I didn't do like a reality competition show on being a celebrity food person or something. I did something that actually married well.

**WCT:** I read about you fighting against Prop 8 in the past so hopefully we will have gay marriage in Illinois soon.

PW: Awesome—we're into it.

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## American Junkie

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Yes, another restaurant has opened in the River North area—but this one has a different vibe, down to its name.

The name of **American Junkie** (15 W. Illinois St.; [www.americanjunkiechi.com](http://www.americanjunkiechi.com)) is meant to convey a laid-back vibe mixed with all-American values, according to Rona, our incredibly helpful server. I'm not sure about how laid-back it is, as Junkie (part of a chain that includes Baja Junkie in Mexico) is part-bar, part-restaurant and part-club.

The place is attention-grabbing from the moment you walk in, assuming you find the place. (A problem this place has is a lack of conspicuous signage.) Rock music blares from the speakers and you see a swarm of telegenic servers and bartenders. More is on the second floor of this 17,000-square-foot bi-level establishment; for the club vibe, there's a descending DJ booth there as well as the Midwest's largest screen (16 feet by nine feet—in high-definition).

By the way, my friend and I wondered about how LGBT-friendly this venue is. Our question was answered shortly afterward by a mixologist who made the misstep of initially confusing us

with the TV show *Windy City LIVE*. He commented that the popular Big Gay Cocktail Club would be holding an event there soon.

Then there's the food. It's intriguing because, despite the supposed laid-back vibe, chef Kendal Duque's cuisine is decidedly upscale. (Even the chili cheese fries are made with wild-boar chili.) Depending on how one sees it, it's either a fusion or clash of two tastes. I'm hoping people see it as the former.

Duque sent out several items for us to try—and most rated from great to amazing. From the "More than Appetizers" part of the menu, we tried the beet salad, lobster with bone marrow, grilled octopus and mushroom risotto. All of these we loved, and the risotto probably would've done Martha Stewart proud.

We also tried the pork-and-kumquat flatbread, which has bleu cheese. It was tasty, although a little cheese goes a long way.

For my friend and me, the pork belly sliders (with quail eggs and cabbage slaw on a brioche bun) and the Frieda burger were the undisputed highlights. However, the very tender bison ribeye was not far behind. Junkie is no slacker when it comes to dessert, either, with a mango/vanilla cheesecake that I dare anyone to resist.

Also, be sure to try the drinks here. The West Coast Invasion (Skyy vodka, Combi, lemon



Lobster and bone marrow at American Junkie. PR photo

and litchi) and Cheating Tiger (Jim Beam Black, Combi, peach, tea and lemon) are on tap, and other intriguing-sounding items include the Del Mar Derby and No Gordita.

American Junkie is intended to be a feast for several of the senses—sight, sound, smell and

taste. I do intend on coming back, if for no other reason than to check out the second floor. (It was being worked on the night my friend and I attended.) However, with everything the senses are being treated to, I wouldn't be surprised if this becomes the new celebrity hangout.

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## NUNN ON ONE: TELEVISION

# Kandi Burruss on her 'Factory' workers



BY JERRY NUNN

Kandi Burruss has gone from R&B singer to actress, then record producer and, finally, a reality television star. She combines all of that in a new show. From the group Xscape to the Real Housewives of Atlanta, Burruss always seems to land on top.

Now Burruss is ready to help 16 contestants build their dreams on Kandi Factory her latest project. She brings a history of such hits as "No Scrubs" and "Bills, Bills, Bills" to the table. With such vast experience she takes these budding music stars to a whole new level on a competition reality show.

We talked to her right before the season kicked off.

**Windy City Times:** Hi, Kandi. I interviewed you at a club in Chicago a while ago. How is the Chicago contestant on the Kandi Factory?

**Kandi Burruss:** Oh yeah, I actually love Mathew Cash. I can't tell you everything that happens, of course, but Matthew is a rapper and he actually writes his own lyrics. I knew that he was serious about his craft so I didn't want people to take him as a joke. So I wasn't even going to attempt to try to write his raps for him or anything like that.

He's the only artist out of all of the contestants on the show who actually had the opportunity to write his own music. I only wrote his hook because I just felt like to be taken seriously as a rapper now somebody has to actually be a good writer. I guess that, in itself, makes him stand out from everybody else.

**WCT:** How were the contestants in general?

**KB:** A lot of the people who came on the show they did not have a musical background and we did have some who did. Like there were some people that came onto Kandi Factory who had already done music videos before.

They had already been trying to get a deal for some years. One of the guys he is actually an engineer.

The thing that cracked me up and weirds me out is we had one gentleman who told us he was a choreographer. But then when it came time for him to start doing the choreography something was going on. I don't know. I sure didn't see a choreographer. So sometimes it's harder for them to take direction.

Whereas with somebody who is open minded, they've never done it before, they're kind of like open and they're just soaking up everything you're teaching them.

**WCT:** Were there any gay contestants on the show?

**KB:** Oh yeah, definitely. There were a couple, actually. We had a young lady. She is an open lesbian. She is an older woman as well. We also had a young guy. He lives in California and he was openly gay. He's definitely a fun artist and he brought the drama.

As far as when it comes to sexuality and the entertainment business come on now, we know

there are a lot of people in the entertainment business who definitely are in the LGBT community.

Whether or not they're open with it or not I mean it is what it is.

**WCT:** What went into the selection process?

**KB:** We did have a casting agency that they received like thousands of audition tapes and they kind of narrowed it down to a certain number. Then it went back and forth between myself, you know, some of the Bravo executives and True Entertainment, the production company.

Like we were going back and forth voting in a way, which ones we felt like should make it. And with that it was like we had to have people that represented all different age groups, all different styles of music. We wanted people with different levels of talent.

When we did the pilot some people thought



Kandi Burruss. Photo courtesy of Bravo

that we were only catering to people who weren't necessarily great performers or great artists or great singers. Well we wanted all different levels of talent this time around.

We wanted people who could really sing or re-

ally rap. We wanted some people who were a little more challenged, to show the range of what we could do with that person. So that's how we kind of judged it.

Like if we had somebody who is great in this area then we had to find somebody who was great in another area and we wanted all different age ranges as well. So it was a lot of different factors.

**WCT:** What made you do another reality show?

**KB:** Basically, I wanted to do another show that I had two show ideas that I had pitched to Bravo.

I could give people the opportunity to help them achieve their lifelong dream of doing music because after my first year on the Housewives when I did the song with Kim, so many people were coming up to me every day saying oh, if you could do that for her I know you can do that for me.

So I was like well it would be kind of cool and fun to just do it for just regular everyday people who just never had anybody to work with them. So Bravo thought it was a great idea and they let me do it.

Read the entire interview online at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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# calendar



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## Wed., April 10

### 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

### Atomic Mom screening

Movie weaves an intimate portrait of a complex mother-daughter relationship within an obscure but important moment in American history. As the only female scientist present during atomic detonations in the Nevada desert, Pauline Silvia, the filmmaker's mother, undergoes a crisis of conscience. After a long silence and prompted by her daughter, she finally reveals grim secrets of working in the U.S. atomic testing program. Tickets \$8 online. 7:30pm, Hokin Hall, Columbia College Chicago, 623 S. Wabash Ave., www.atomicmom.org; Tickets: <http://chicagofilmmakers.org/content/atomic-mom>

### BTQ Book Group

Discussing 2012 Lambda Literary Award finalist *Girlfag: A Life Told in Sex and Musicals* by Janet W. Hardy. 7:30pm, The location of the meeting will be announced., www.gerberhart.org

### Eat to the Beat: Music Institute of Chicago

Exciting program of solo pieces, chamber music and song by accomplished young musicians from the Community Mu-

sic School, Jazz Studies and Academy programs; 12pm-1pm, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph St., <http://goprde.com/z7pz>

## Thursday, April 11

### Lucy Knisley reading from her new book

**Relish: My Life in the Kitchen.** Graphic novel invites the reader to celebrate food as a connection to our bodies and to the earth, rather than an enemy, a compulsion, or a consumer product. 7:30pm, Women & Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

**2CELLOS** In 2011, classically trained cellists Luka Sulic and Stjepan Hauser combined forces to record something unexpected: Michael Jackson's "Smooth Criminal", have joined Elton John on tour and have appeared on "Glee," "The Tonight Show" and "The Ellen DeGeneres Show."; 7:30pm-9:30pm, 847-622-0300, Elgin Community College Arts Center, Building H, at 1700 Spartan Dr., Elgin, <https://tickets.elgin.edu>

### Inside Amy Armstrong's Mind Again!

Diva Amy Armstrong is back in an all new once a month show! Boystown's favorite cabaret performer broadens her horizons, assembling a cast of her favorite comedians to produce and star in her own adult variety show. 9pm-11:30pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com

### Cinema Slapdown Round 45: Flight

Screening of *Flight* followed by a knock down drag out debate featuring Chicago

Tribune film critic Michael Phillips and United Airlines First Officer Dan Swanson. Referee'd by faculty member and Talk Cinema host Ron Falzone. 7pm-10pm, 312-369-6708, Film Row Cinema of Columbia College Chicago, 1104 S Wabash Ave., 8th Floor, <http://colum.edu/film>

## Friday, April 12

**Seeds of Change Crossroads Fund gala.** Reception, awards, music from DJ Chapulin; 5:30pm-9:30pm, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E Washington St., <http://www.crossroadsfund.org/seedschange2013>

### Photography by Hayden Myrick and Eliot Taguiam, open reception

Two artists working collaboratively. Through May 8th, 2013; 6pm-11pm, 312-927-7546, Ugly Step Sister Art Gallery, 1750 S. Union St., www.uglystepsisterartgallery.com

### Chronic Malcontents

Dark musical comedy about employees from mythical Splayne Corp, traumatized by their jobs and driven to seek vengeance. Called "an incidental musical", the characters in *Chronic Malcontents* create music from items they find in an office conference room. Through April 21. 7:30pm-9:15pm, 312-841-7545, Endpoint Theatre, Second Unitarian Church Performance Loft 656 W. Barry Ave., <http://endpointtheatre.org/>

### '90s Nirvana-Shaun Spertling does Madonna

Enjoy a special performance from Shaun and friends Cyon Flare and current Windy City Gay Idol Robert Hughes as we raise funds for the RideforAids Chicago! \$10 suggested donation; 9pm, Big Chicks, 5024 N. Sheridan Rd., <http://bigchicks.com>

### WSGA Meetup

West Suburban Gay Association's very popular monthly Meetup event, the second Friday of each month. Come out and enjoy making new friends in a relaxed social environment. Stay to watch the strippers and dance with your friends. Look them up at Meetup.com. 9pm, Hideaway, 7301 W Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park

### 11th Annual Windy City Gay Idol

Windy City Gay Idol searches for the best amateur GLBT singers in the Chicago area. Competition continues through June in Chicago's

bars and clubs. 9pm sign up, 10pm start. 10pm, Hideaway, 7301 W Roosevelt Rd, Forest Park, [www.windycitymediagroup.com/pdf/wcgi2013\\_ad.pdf](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/pdf/wcgi2013_ad.pdf)

## Saturday, April 13

**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

### 2nd Annual Bowl-a-thon

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and adult supporters will gather for a fun-filled fundraiser and bowling extravaganza to help make schools and communities safe and respectful places for ALL young people. [loren@illinoisafeschools.org](mailto:loren@illinoisafeschools.org). 1pm-3pm, 312-368-9070x314, Diversey River Bowl, Strike Out Bullying, <http://www.illinoisafeschools.org>

### Proud To Runway

A great runway show for you with the newest collection of Nike Running Gear and the hottest swimwear and underwear available at CRAM Chicago. All of this modeled by some of Chicago's most attractive men and women. Your \$20 entry includes a drink ticket, a raffle ticket and access to the runway show. Svedka drink tastings through out served by the men of Svedka. Raffles throughout the event with a grand prize of one-year membership to FFC (a \$1,200 value). All proceeds from Proud to Runway go to 2013 beneficiaries Links Pride Youth, TPAN and The Night Ministry. 4pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St., www.sidetrackchicago.com

### Amigas On The Rise/ Amigas Ascendiendo

Unveiling of the new Amigas Latinas/ El enlace de las Nuevas Amigas Latinas, starring The Latina Diva of Comedy/ Presentando la diva latina de la comedia Sandra Valls. Featuring/Con Ashley Black,



## RON OF A KIND

### Friday, April 12

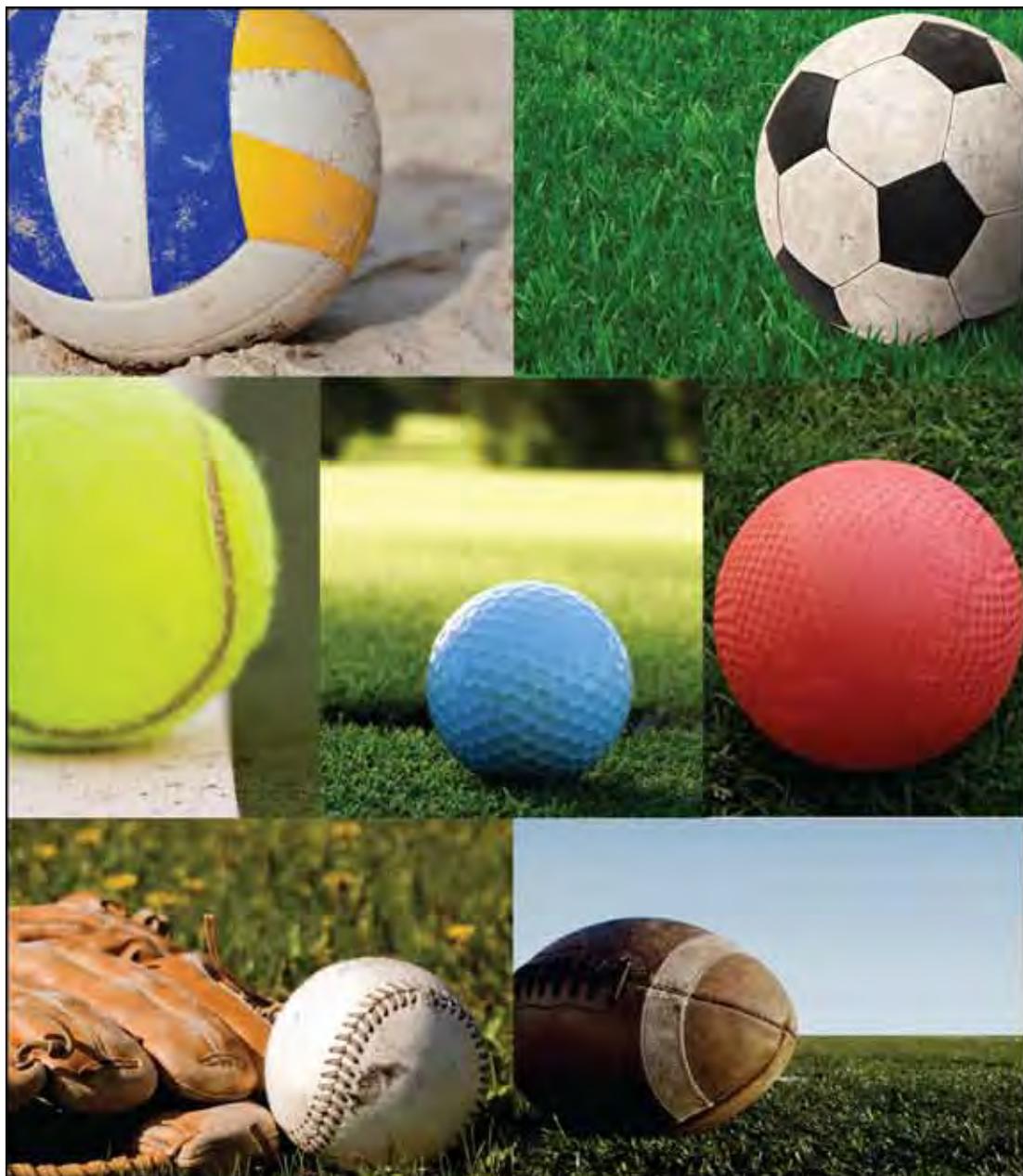
Karen Lewis and Chicago Teachers Union will receive the Ron Sable Award at Crossroads Fund's Seeds of Change gala.

Photo of Sable by Lisa Howe-Ebright

spoken word/intérprete, poesia; Claudia Martinez, improv, comic/comediante; Noemi Shah, stand up comic/ comediante and other surprise guests/ y otros invitad@s de sorpresa. Poet, Artist, Activist C. C. Carter will be MCing and Paola Bordon of QTC Queer Tango Chicago will be performing. Cocktail Reception, Recepcion de Cócteles 6 - 7pm. Show/ El show 7pm. \$20 advance, \$25 door. 18 and over. Info from [almaizquierdo5@gmail.com](mailto:almaizquierdo5@gmail.com) or [Rossette17vall@gmail.com](mailto:Rossette17vall@gmail.com); 6pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/361305](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/361305)

Turn to page 25

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# BILLY MASTERS

"I've spent time with George Clooney and he's the most interesting man on the planet. He can do it all. Yep, I guess what I'm saying is I'd have sex with him."—Channing Tatum shares this information with a reporter at a screening for his film *White House Down*. Note that the question was not "What man would you have sex with." It was "Who do you think is the sexiest man in the world." I guess Chan just had this burning desire to say he'd have sex with Clooney.

In the past few years, Regis Philbin and Larry King have been pushed off the small screen before they wanted to depart. This, of course, is nothing new—after all, Johnny Carson was also ousted. Even Donahue was dumped ... twice. Sometimes people are good at their jobs and want to work, but are pushed out by a network pursuing bigger ratings and a younger audience—something that usually doesn't happen. I wouldn't be surprised if Barbara Walters pitches



Billy says that Dwayne Johnson (above) has some brotherly love for Channing Tatum.

a new idea next year which goes something like this: "I had this idea for a show. Different people with different backgrounds and views. A journalistic legend in his early hundreds. A late night comedian with an enormous chin. Someone who has interviewed Moses. A man who once hosted a show wearing a dress. And in a perfect world, I'd be the boss of all of them. We call it *The New View!*"

Another iconic performer is caught in the middle of a bit of drama. Although Joan Rivers isn't directly involved, the writers on her hit *E!* show *Fashion Police* have claimed that the network owes them more than \$1 million! The argument is that the producers have broken California law by not compensating them for overtime hours. If the writers were being paid a flat salary, they wouldn't have a case. However, they appear to be paid by the hour, which means that any time beyond an eight-hour day (or 40-hour week) should result in overtime. They filed a claim with the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement demanding this additional money. Stay tuned.

*Fashion Police* co-host Kelly Osbourne claims that she'd like to change her purple hair—but she isn't allowed to: "I'm contracted to this hair color. I can't change it for two years. I wanted to go green, but was told I wouldn't be able to work anymore." How foolish—Kelly can't change her hair, but Joan Rivers can change her face? Crazy!

This week, all eyes were on Magic Johnson after TMZ ran a video of his 20-year-old son, EJ, walking down Sunset Blvd holding hands

with another boy. The paparazzi might have been looking for a scandal (which wasn't so far-fetched since EJ was wearing a black boa and pink shoes, and carrying a red Chanel purse), but they were sadly disappointed. After EJ confirmed that he was gay, Magic sat down with Harvey Levin and said, "I think this is gonna be good for a lot of young Black people who want to come out. EJ is really gonna help a lot of young people." This is not the first time Magic has shown support for the gay community. When Proposition 8 was on the ballot, he recorded a robocall condemning the constitutional amendment, saying, "Prop 8 singles out one group of Californians to be treated differently, including members of our family, our friends, and our co-workers. That is not what California is about. So this Tuesday, vote no on Proposition 8. It is unfair and wrong." Bravo!

In more gay-marriage news, little Danny Pintauro is engaged. His boyfriend, Wil Tabares, popped the question on their one-year anniversary. While the couple was vacationing in Palm Springs, Wil showed Danny a video of him holding up a ring box. When Danny looked over at Wil, he had the same box in his hand and proposed. The glitch is that the couple lives in Las Vegas, where Danny is managing a PF Chang's (apparently he gave up his flourishing career selling Tupperware) and Nevada is far from legalizing gay marriage. But that clever Pintauro has that covered. "Our plan is to move to California once Prop 8 is overturned."

In a bit of late-breaking news that will come as no surprise to my readers, another talk show host is out of work. Bravo has cancelled Kathy Griffin's quirky gabfest, although we hear she'll still do comedy specials for the network. Of course, this frees her up for that mysterious project she's been developing with Anderson Cooper.

Our "Ask Billy" comes from Donny in Albany: "I went to see *GI Joe: Retaliation* and was disappointed. How could a film have Channing Tatum and *The Rock* and still not have anyone even take a shirt off?"

You aren't alone in your surprise. Quite a number of people have commented on Channing Tatum's lack of skin—especially since Magic Mike. But Chan tends to go up and down about 20 pounds, and he wasn't in peak shape when filming this *GI Joe* sequel (which was shot prior to *Magic Mike*). However, DJ Cotrona (who played Flint) did take off his shirt in one scene—and he was VERY hot. Mysteriously, this footage ended up on the cutting-room floor just before the film opened. Wonder why? Maybe the other leads were a little jealous. Thank heavens we can show you the evidence on *BillyMasters.com*.

By the way, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson has been gushing about his co-star. "I love Channing. ... The truth is, and I can say this because I'm very comfortable in my own manhood and sexuality, he is a very sexy guy. He's a good-looking guy. He has nice eyes. Everybody talks about his eyes, right? He got lost in my eyes." Geez, get a room.

When there's the possibility of a three-way between Channing, *The Rock* and Clooney, we've definitely come to the end of yet another column. With that, I'm off to Florida for South Beach Pride, where Adam Lambert will be making his virgin gay pride appearance. And if Adam turns you on, feel free to chat him up—he's recently single. Of course, you can always approach me—I'm perpetually available. Or you can check out [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com), the site that never goes down. If you feel the need to reach out and touch me in a virtual way, drop a note to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before Barbara Walters teams up with Kathy Griffin (in other words, before hell freezes over). So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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## CALENDAR from page 24

**I've Got A Life in Kalamazoo** Legendary actors Ed Asner and Marion Ross appear in live staged reading. 7pm, Museum of Broadcast Communications, 360 N. State St., Tickets: <http://www.lifeinkzoo.com>

**Dyke Delicious Series: Atomic Mom Screening** Complex mother-daughter relationship within an obscure but important moment in history, the story of the only female scientist present during atomic detonations in the Nevada desert, the filmmaker's mother. \$8 ONLINE/\$10 at door; 7pm, Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N Clark, Chicago, <http://chicago filmmakers.org/cf/content/atomic-mom>; Tickets: <https://www.tix.com/event.asp?event=564898>

**Beckie Menzie & Tom Michael** Get up close and personal with Beckie Menzie & Tom Michael in their brand new show. "Up Close & Personal" will be presented at Davenport's Cabaret every Saturday in April. 8pm, Davenport's Piano Bar and Cabaret, 1383 N Milwaukee Ave., [www.davenportspianobar.com](http://www.davenportspianobar.com)

### Sunday, April 14

**Urban Village Church** Spiritual worship is about coming together as community to make space for God to move in us. It's a place to receive God's grace and love and to give of ourselves, as well. LGBT welcoming worship services at Urban Village Church are eclectic and experiential, practical and intelligent, relevant and, hopefully, inspiring. 10:15am-11:30am, Spertus Institute 610 S. Michigan Ave., [www.urbanvillagechurch.org](http://www.urbanvillagechurch.org)

**James Gavin's Deep in a Dream: The Long Night of C** Featuring spoken word by author James Gavin and music by Spider Saloff (vocals), Art Davis (trumpet), and Dennis Luxion (piano); 3pm-5pm, 847-622-0300, Elgin Community College Arts Center, 1700 Spartan Dr., Elgin, <https://tickets.elgin.edu>

**Lesbian, Gay Bar Association of Chicago 2013 Champagne Brunch** Email John Litchfield at [jitchfield@lagbac.org](mailto:jitchfield@lagbac.org) for more information. Tickets online. 11am, BIN 36, 339 N. Dearborn St., <http://www.lagbac.org>

**R.E.A.C.H (Risky, Eclectic Artists Comedy Hour)** In support of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, The Second City Outreach & Diversity. Performers include Tamale Sepp. 7pm, 312-662-4562, UP Comedy

Club, third floor of Pipers Alley, 230 W. North Ave., <http://comedyclub.com>

### Monday, April 15

**TPAN Complimentary Therapy Programs** Reiki is offered the second and fourth Mondays of the month from 1pm to 3pm on a first come first serve basis. 1pm-3pm, TPAN, 5537 N. Broadway, [www.tpan.com](http://www.tpan.com)

**Breaking New Ground: Harold Washington and the 1983 Election** 2013 Harold Washington Birthday Celebration, discussion on his historic mayoral victory. Free. 6pm, 312-747-4050., Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S State St., <http://chicagopubliclibrary.org>

### Tuesday, April 16

**Journalist and NPR "All Things Considered" Host Michele Norris** Columbia College Chicago, Conversations in the Arts series free, public lecture. Seating is limited so RSVP online. 6pm-9pm, Film Row Cinema of Columbia College Chicago, 1104 S Wabash, 8th Floor, Chicago, <http://www.colum.edu/conversations>; Tickets: <http://www.colum.edu/conversations>.

### Wed., April 17

**11th Annual Windy City Gay Idol** Windy City Gay Idol searches for the best amateur GLBT singers in the Chicago area. Competition continues through June in Chicago's bars and clubs. 9pm sign up, 10pm start. 10pm, Touche, 6412 N Clark St., [http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/pdf/wcigi2013\\_ad.pdf](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/pdf/wcigi2013_ad.pdf)

**World Book Night** Celebrate the commitment and hard work of pre-registered, volunteer "Book Givers," an opportunity for Book Givers to pick up their books and meet other Givers. 7:30pm, Women & Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark St., Chicago, <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

**GLBT Loop People** Fun GLBT group that meets in the Loop. Will sit near the bar, for drinks and/or dinner. 5:30pm-8pm, Berghoff Bar, 17 W Adams St., Chicago, <http://www.meetup.com/glbloop/events/113132702/>

# Lesbian boxer living her lifelong dream

BY ROSS FORMAN

Grace Penney has long been a boxing fan who even dreamed of being an Olympian in the sport.

Wrestling, though, was the first sport she conquered en route to the boxing ring.

Penney, 20, a lesbian who lives in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood and is a sophomore at DePaul, wrestled on the boys' team at Lyons Township High School, where she graduated in 2010. She even was a state champion.

"I was a good wrestler. I felt real comfortable wrestling, in a combat sport," said Penney, admittedly an aggressive child.

After graduating from high school, Penney gave boxing a try—and quickly was hooked.

"Boxing has been more than I expected," she said. "I knew that I would like it; I just didn't realize how much a part of my life it would be, it would become. I definitely would not be the same person without boxing in my life; it's taught me a lot, particularly discipline.

"The most challenging part of boxing is just the fact that I'm so small. I'm only five feet tall and weigh about 105 pounds, and I'm mostly sparring with men, and they always are bigger and taller than me; that can be difficult."

Penney had her first official fight earlier this year—and she won the three-round bout.

"I trained for three months for that fight and when I finally got in the ring, I was surprised how comfortable I felt. I was really composed and just used my technique," she said. "That was one of the best feelings I've had in my life because I had worked so hard and, at that moment, I realized I had something—boxing—that I couldn't live without.

"Before the fight, I was nervous how the crowd

would affect my performance, or the adrenaline. But that didn't happen. I stayed really focused; it was a great performance."

That victory pushed her into the finals for the prestigious Chicago Golden Gloves Championships, set for April 11-13 at The Cicero Stadium, 1909 S. Laramie Ave.

"I'm really excited; I can't wait for that [fight]," Penney said. "I keep visualizing my opponent, which is a big part of boxing. I feel comfortable and confident in the ring, mostly because I've been working so hard for the past few years. I've sparred and trained with some really tough guys, and I don't think I'll have to face [opponents] as tough as those I train with and against. I'm confident that I can win.

"If I were to lose, I'd still be proud of myself because I competed, but I am very confident that I will win."

Penney is right-handed in the ring, and uses her speed and agility to her advantage. "I like to counter [my opponent] a lot; that's really important to me, to my style. I'm a patient fighter; I don't like to go out there and go crazy. I work at my opponent's weaknesses," she said.

Being gay has not been an issue in boxing, said Penney, who struggled with her sexual orientation while wrestling in high school.

"I wouldn't say that everyone was open-minded at my high school," she said. "It also took me a long time to come out at my old gym because I wasn't sure how I would be treated, if [being openly gay] would affect my training. When I did come out [at my former gym], they were totally fine with [my sexual orientation]. It's been the same [response] at my current gym. Ultimately, they didn't care, and I think that made a huge difference, a huge deal to me.



Grace Penney (left) with her coach. Image courtesy of Patricia Martin

"I couldn't imagine living with that [obstacle], and am so happy I don't have to. It's a huge deal that I can totally be myself with the people at the gym."

Penney was dating a girl in high school, and the only person she came out to was the other female on the wrestling team.

"I was worried if the guys knew, what they'd say," Penney said. "It was weird. ... I knew I was doing something that I loved, wrestling,

but I couldn't really be myself, which was really weird—and I struggled with that. I didn't know if [being gay] would be tolerated on the wrestling team. I really don't know if it would have been a problem for the other guys on the team, but I thought about it, perhaps because I was more self-conscious at the time. But I did show them that I really did care about the sport, that I took it seriously, that I wanted to compete."

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## THE AIDS TRANSMISSION LAW - IS IT A CRIME TO HAVE SEX?

**Q. I was tested for the HIV virus and the results were positive. Since then I have had sex with people and have not told them that I had tested positive. Should I tell my future sexual partners that I test positive for HIV? Does it make any difference if we used condoms during sex? Am I guilty of a criminal offense?**

A. The Illinois Supreme Court has unanimously upheld Illinois' HIV Criminal Transmission of HIV Act. The case before the Illinois Supreme Court concerned two individuals (Caretha Russell and Timothy Lunsford - his alleged conduct was vaginal intercourse) who were charged with violation of the Criminal Code of Illinois, section 12-16.2(a)(1) which provides that a person commits Criminal Transmission of HIV, a class 2 felony, if he or she, "knowing that he or she is infected with HIV: (1) engages in intimate contact with another."

Subsection (b) defines "intimate contact with another" as "exposure of the body of one person to the bodily fluid of another person in a manner that could result in the transmission of HIV."

The law does create an affirmative defense if the person exposed knew or should have known that they were at risk of being infected and consented to having sex with that knowledge. This means that anyone who is positive and has sex should disclose their HIV status to their partner. The law does not include other defenses which should be considered in a criminal prosecution such as safe sex precautions with the use of a condom.

The law also does not require the sexual partners to have actually been infected. Furthermore, the prosecution would not have to show that the accused had the criminal intent to infect someone else with the HIV virus. Merely having sex ("intimate contact") would be sufficient.

Because the language of the law focuses only on a person's knowledge that he or she is HIV positive the law will discourage testing. The result may be that individuals might be putting themselves at risk to avoid any actual knowledge and resulting criminal prosecution.

There have been very few Illinois prosecutions under this law other than actions involving prisoners who spit on guards. If you are HIV positive, however, there is always the possibility of criminal prosecution if you engage in sex.

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The Chicago Force at the April 6 game. Photo by Ross Forman

## Force roll in opener

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Force showed no mercy April 6 on the Detroit Dark Angels, scoring seemingly at will in the season-opener, played at Lazier Field on the campus of Evanston Township High School.

The Force built a 46-0 lead at halftime and coasted to a 62-0 victory.

"It was a good game, a fun game," said Chicago running back Brandy Hatcher, named the Game Day MVP (Offensive), sponsored by Spin Nightclub.

Darcy Leslie grabbed Game Day MVP (Defensive) honors, though she also was an offensive superstar as she scored the Force's first three touchdowns on runs, including the first TD of the season on a 76-yard jaunt into the left corner of the end zone.

Quarterback Sami Grisafe connected with Ashley Berggren for TD passes of 13 and 49 yards.

Mary Choules scored a 3-yard touchdown to open the second half, which was followed minutes later by a safety by Elisha Okrey.

Hatcher scored the team's final touchdown, rushing in from 33 yards out.

"It was great seeing Darcy play both ways, offense and defense. She really is a workhorse. Same for Mary," Hatcher said.

The Force is next in action on Saturday, April 20, playing host to the Indy Crash. Kick-off is set for 5 p.m.

## April 13 runway event to help Proud to Run beneficiaries

The Second Annual Proud to Runway event will take place Saturday, April 13, 4-7 p.m., at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

Male and female models will exhibit the newest collection of Nike running gear, along with swimwear and underwear available at Cram Chicago. A \$20 fee includes a drink ticket, raffle ticket and access to the runway show.

Proceeds will help the Proud to Run beneficiaries: Links Pride Youth, TPAN and The Night Ministry. See "Proud to Runway 2013" on Facebook for more info.

# CONNEXIONS

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## Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC



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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