



**PAM ANN  
DISHES  
THE DIRT**

**PAGE 22**

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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

**MAY 22, 2013**  
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**CHAKA KHAN  
HEADLINES  
HUMAN  
FIRST GALA  
PAGE 28**

# Marriage advocates: The votes are there

**BY KATE SOSIN**

With the end of the Illinois' spring legislation session just days away, LGBT leaders say that equal marriage legislation has the support needed to pass by month's end.

Sponsors have until May 31 to pass the "Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act," which would allow all couples, regardless of their gender, to marry. Failing that deadline, the bill's passage would be delayed for months.

LGBT groups pushing for the bill say they are ready to see it come up for a vote.

"I have absolutely no doubt we're going to be done with this by May 31," said Jim Bennett, Midwest regional director for Lambda Legal. "I believe that this bill is going to pass."

Bennett declined to give a specific vote count, but said that he expected the bill could be called and passed any day.

Rick Garcia, policy advisor for The Civil Rights Agenda, said he thinks the bill has the 60 votes needed for passage in the House.

"I believe we're there," said Garcia. "The cake is baked. We're waiting for the icing."

The bill passed the Senate on Valentine's Day. House sponsors have since struggled to pull together enough votes to pass it in the House.

Illinois Unites for Marriage, a coalition of groups working for the bill, has scheduled a community meeting to update supporters on the bill's progress and share plans sur-

**Turn to page 6**



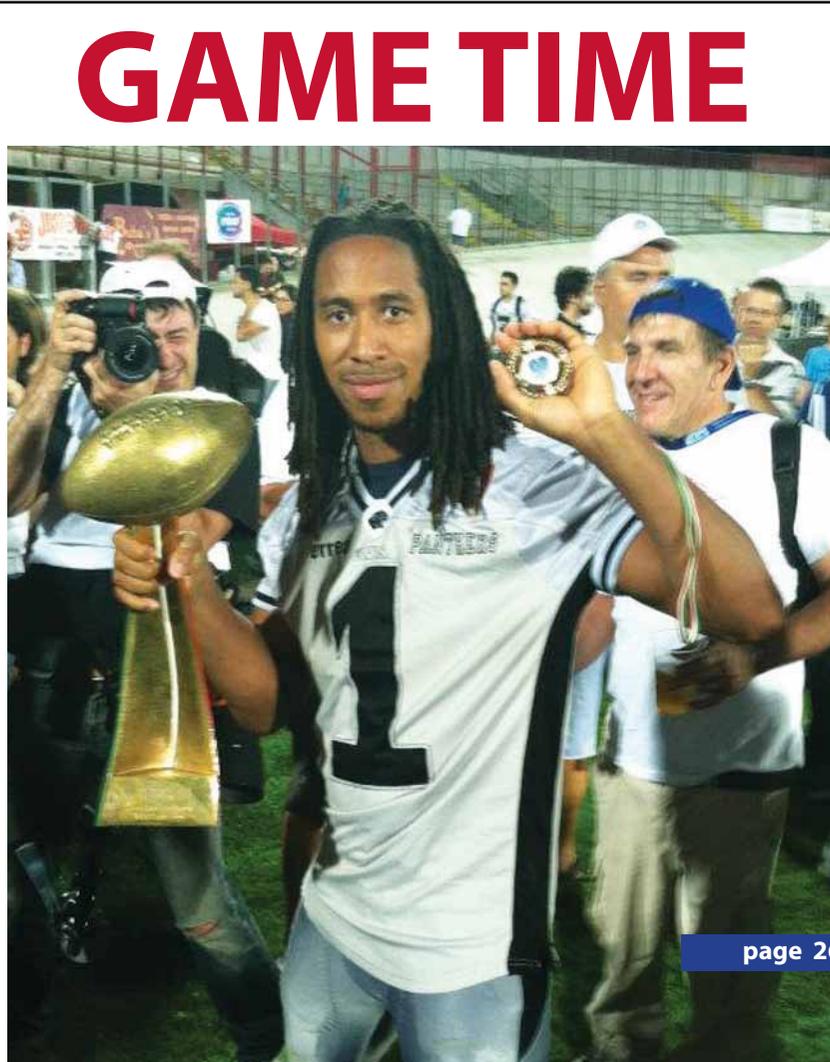
Pro-marriage equality attendees at Saturday's rally in Little Village. Photo by Kate Sosin



**WCT CONTINUES  
ITS CRIMINAL  
LEGAL SERIES  
PAGE 12**

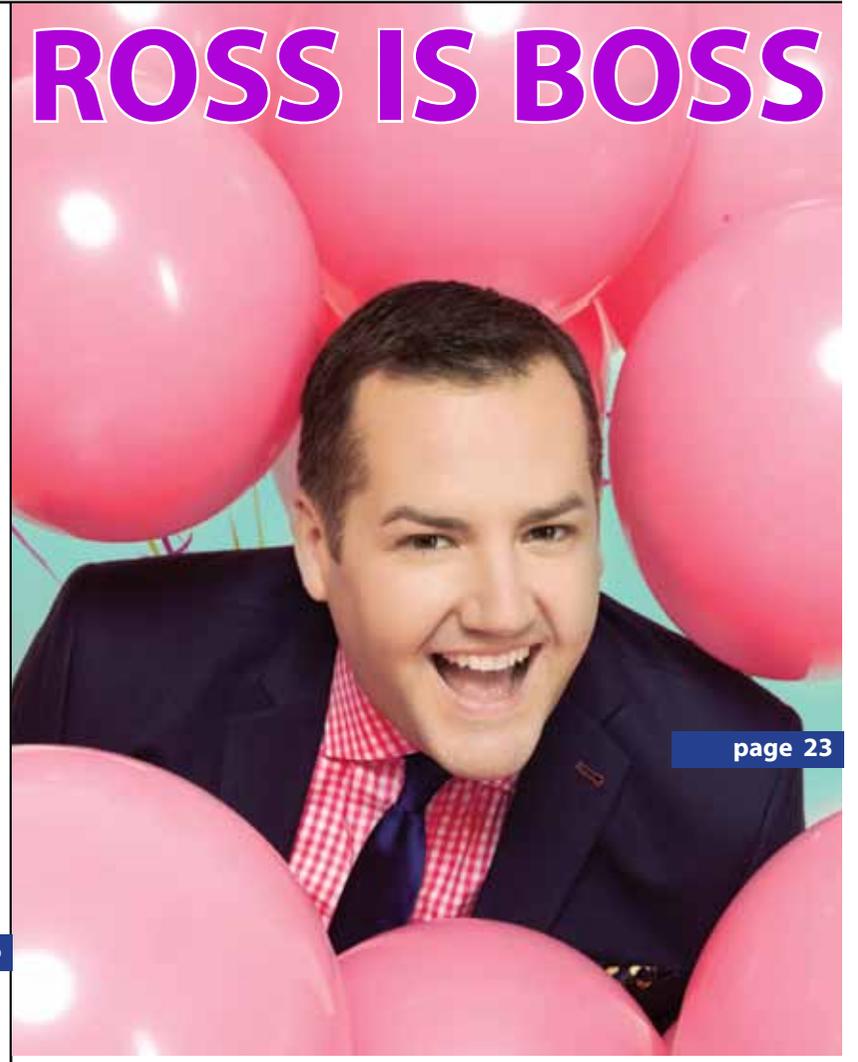


**JESSICA HALEM  
TALKS POLITICAL  
CORRECTNESS,  
QUEER COMEDY  
PAGE 25**



**page 26**

In his first interview for a newspaper, magazine or website, now-out athlete Kevin Grayson talks about his hopes for playing in the NFL. Photo courtesy of Grayson



**page 23**

Before coming to Chicago, out personality Ross Matthews (The Tonight Show with Jay Leno; Chelsea Lately) chats about his new book, Man Up! Tales of My Delusional Self-Confidence, and his own talk show. Publicity photo

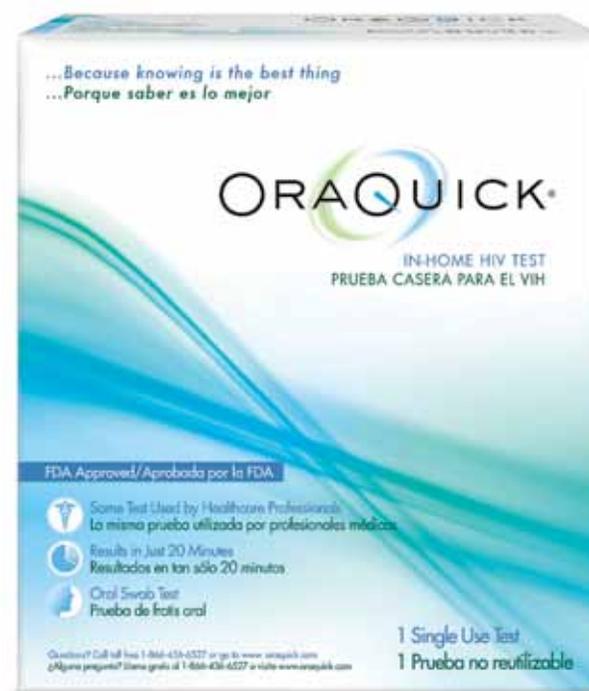
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# this week in WINDY CITY TIMES

<b>NEWS</b>		<b>ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS</b>	
Minn. couple makes history; column	4	Scottish Play Scott	19
Domestic abuse; marriage advocates	6	Pam Ann interview	22
Nate Silver; Lambda Legal CLC	8	Ross Matthews chats with WCT	23
LGBT senior housing	9	Knight: Candelabra, Jason	24
Leather vendor; June LaTrobe	10	Comic Jessica Halem	25
Gay in the Life	11	Athlete Kevin Grayson comes out	26
<b>CRIMINAL LEGAL SERIES</b>	12	Umpierre-Herrera appearance	27
<b>VIEWES: Peller; letters</b>	18	IML schedule	27
		Human First gala layout	28
		<b>AUTOS: MazdaSpeed 3</b>	30
		Billy Masters	37
		<b>OUTLINES</b>	
		Dish; classifieds	34
		Calendar Q	36
		Sports: Sky season about to start	38

Photos on cover (left, from top): Publicity photo of Pam Ann; photo of Chaka Khan by Kat Fitzgerald; photo from criminal series by Kate Sosin; publicity photo of Jessica Halem

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**ABSOLUTELY 'FABULOUS'**  
The Chicago History Museum hosted the Out at CHM event "Fierce & Fabulous," a look at the Ebony Fashion Fair (left).  
Photo by Melissa Wasserman



Music director Larry Rachleff talks about leaving the Chicago Philharmonic.

Photo from Chicago Philharmonic



Out actor/comedian Alec Mapa talks about his new series, Showville.

Photo from AMC Networks



**PATTI MOUTH**  
Bent Nights looks at shows by The Patti Smith Band (above) and Rondi Charleston.

Photo by Vern Hester

**SCREEN AND HEARD**  
Richard LaGravenese talks about writing the screenplay for the HBO film Behind the Candelabra, which is about Liberace.

**THE BIG REVEAL**  
Ask Lambda Legal looks at the subject of HIV disclosure.

**ENTERTAINMENT NEWS**  
Find out the latest about Backstreet Boys, George Michael and R&B diva Monifah Carter.

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

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Photo of Mike McConnell (dark suit on left) and Jack Baker (dark suit on right) attesting to information in marriage license application at Hennepin County clerk's office May 18, 1970. Photo by R. Bertrand Heine, courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.

# Hennepin: The quiet revolution for LGBT equality

BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Nearly every LGBT person knows about “Stonewall”—the spontaneous resistance to police intimidation of LGBT patrons at the Stonewall bar in New York City in June 1969.

Relatively few know about Minnesota’s Hennepin in May 1970.

Events in both places became powerful catalysts for change in the way mainstream society treats LGBT people.

Stonewall took the form of hundreds of LGBT people using rights and defiance in a major city, refusing to obey laws that were hate-motivated and discriminatory on their face. Hennepin was one gay male couple, wearing suits and ties, walking into a county clerk’s office in the Midwest and applying for a marriage license.

Stonewall inspired the creation of thousands of LGBT organizations, newspapers, and communities that grew enough political strength to win elections, change laws, and insist the world understand that gay people are here—“Get Used to It.”

Hennepin garnered a relative lightning flash of media attention—a story in *Look* magazine, appearances on two nationally televised talk shows, and a summarily dismissed appeal of their lawsuit by the U.S. Supreme Court. Its specific goal—to allow same-sex couples obtain marriage licenses the same as male-female couples—appeared to fail.

Now, 43 years to the month after Jack Baker and Mike McConnell walked into the Hennepin County clerk’s office and filled out an application for a marriage license, their quiet revolutionary act stands as a monument to perseverance and success.

To say Richard John (Jack) Baker and James Michael McConnell were ahead of their time is an understatement.

They are considered the first same-sex couple to walk into any municipal clerk’s office in the United States and apply for a marriage license. They were the first to sue the local clerk when their application was refused, and the first to take their lawsuit to the U.S. Supreme Court.

They are also likely the first same-sex couple ever to obtain a marriage license, albeit through a sleight of name-change. According to a variety of news reports, Baker and McConnell were joined in marriage by a pastor in September 1971 after they obtained a marriage license from Mankato, Minn. An un-bylined “special” article in the Jan. 7, 1973, *New York Times* reported that, in addition to their initial lawsuit over the rejected

marriage application, McConnell adopted Baker in August 1971 “with the goal of securing tax and inheritance advantages.”

“At that time, Mr. Baker legally assumed the name Pat Lynn McConnell, while continuing to use the name Baker in his daily affairs.” Then Baker, using his newly adopted name, filled out a marriage license application with McConnell in Mankato, a small city west of Minneapolis.

“On Aug. 16, 1971, Blue Earth County issued the license, and, on Sept. 3, Mr. Baker and Mr. McConnell were married in a private ceremony in Minneapolis by the Rev. Roger Lynn of the United Methodist Church,” noted the *Times* article. Although the Blue Earth County Attorney challenged the legitimacy of the license, a Hennepin County grand jury “found the question not worth pursuing,” and thus, left the license intact.

Baker and McConnell’s actions garnered other publicity in the early 1970s—publicity that took some courage on their part, given the volatility of the time. They appeared on the *Phil Donahue Show* and the *David Susskind Show*, nationally televised talk shows. They were profiled briefly in *Look* magazine’s cover story on “The American Family.” Their willingness to identify themselves as gay touched many individual gays around the country.

After reading about Baker and McConnell in *Look* magazine’s cover story, a Birmingham, Alabama, man called the telephone operator in Minneapolis to see whether there were phone numbers for Jack Baker and Michael McConnell. It’s not that he wanted to call them, it’s that he could hardly believe there were other men in the world like him—men who loved men.

“I have secluded myself in an apartment in Birmingham where I live alone away from parents and friends,” wrote the man, whose handwritten letter to Baker is part of an archive at the University of Minnesota. “You and Mr. McConnell have more guts than any man I have ever met.” He asked them to send him information about their gay political organization to “help make a new life for myself.”

“At seventeen years of age, I have already experienced the deep hurt of loving one who can never possibly love you,” wrote another young man, this one from a tiny rural town in Maine who said he had attempted suicide. He couldn’t even bring himself to spell out the word “homosexual” in his letter, and he cautioned them not to include their return address on the envelope because “I’m still unable to speak at home.” But

Turn to page 5

iO  
ut!

BY TANIA UNZUETA CARRASCO

## Queer Proms As Organizing Tools, Not Veneers of Safety

An event that started nine years ago as a fundraiser for a local community radio show has become a staple of the Pilsen neighborhood, and a tool for organizing and connecting young people to resources. But its existence and longevity is not proof that young LGBTQ people of color are safe, on the contrary, it is a reminder that the intentional creation of safe spaces in our communities continues to be a necessity.

For the past nine years, young people in the Pilsen neighborhood have been organizing a prom for LGBTQ youth, known as the Queer Prom. It is a night at the end of May when the Pilsen neighborhood sees a subtle parade of gowns and tuxes from the 18th Street Blue Line stop to the National Museum of Mexican Art (NMMA). The event itself serves as a space for young people to socialize with other LGBTQ youth and allies from Chicago high schools, receive

BTO youth—the thinking being that if we were going to have a room full of young people interested in connecting with community, it would have been a wasted opportunity not to have community organizations there. For each meeting—whether at a high school or at a community organization—meant dealing with institutions, bureaucracy, paternalistic attitudes towards young people and LGBTQ youth of color, and once in a while, racist attitudes toward the Pilsen neighborhood that assume, for example, that because the neighborhood is predominantly Mexican, it is homophobic.

It was also an opportunity to organize within the museum and staff. I remember making it a point to have gender-neutral bathrooms at the prom—as far as I know the first and only time that this has happened at the NMMA. Part of making sure this process took place was to

have conversations with the maintenance and event staff about what that meant and why it was important. From these conversations, I found out who had gay relatives, who thought they had never spoken to another gay person, and who had questioned their own sexuality—often in post-meeting one-on-one gatherings.

This year, the ninth queer prom is taking place Friday, May 24, 2013, 7-11 p.m., with the theme “I am what I am/ Soy lo que soy.” The lead coordinator and dear friend, Emmanuel Garcia, continues to maintain the goals of organizing and connecting to community, creating a youth-led space, and grounding the event in the immigrant and Mexican history of the host neighborhood. Nine years later, the neighborhood has changed—there is increased gentrification that has led to low-income people and immigrant residents moving south and west, the Chicago Dyke March took place on 18th Street for two years, and organizations like United Latino Pride have made it a point to increase the visibility of LGBT-owned businesses in the area.

But while it is important to celebrate these efforts and the changes that they have brought, we cannot forget that they are important in part because they are so needed. Young LGBTQ people continue to experience violence—in the streets, in our neighborhoods, in LGBTQ neighborhoods, in our homes, in our schools. That Queer Prom continues to exist, that young people continue to attend it (and spread the word), and that there are people and institutions committed to making it happen, is a sign of how much this space is still needed.

Congratulations to all those who continue to make this space happen.

For more information visit [radioarte.org/queer-prom-2013](http://radioarte.org/queer-prom-2013). The address is 1842 W. 19th Street in Chicago, cost is \$10 for youth, \$20 for adults.

“But while it is important to celebrate these efforts and the changes that they have brought, we cannot forget that they are important in part because they are so needed.”

informational resources from non-profit organizations and community groups, experience a drag show, dance, and participate in the informal election of a prom queen, prom king, and prom queer.

I have attended every prom—first as one of the event organizers and founders, and more recently as a volunteer. Each time that I have gone, there has been a moment in the night when I find myself standing still, staring at all the young people walking in, trying to appreciate how special the moment and the space are. The food smells of Mexican rice and beans, fajitas, tortillas, and flan for desert. Young people hang out at the front entrance looking at resources brought by community organizations, some getting tested for HIV, while in the back room folks are dancing. I can hear the music playing in the background—a mix of music aimed at pleasing a wide-range of audiences from the top 20, to the music by Latin American gay icons, to music in Spanish by LGBTQ artists.

But creating an intentional space takes work behind the scenes. The first few years, when I was one of the coordinators, we formed teams that went to different high schools around Chicago to talk to young people about the event, and ask them to help us create it. We spoke with gay-straight-alliances, intentionally in immigrant neighborhoods and communities of color, meetings that led to deep exchanges about what it was like to be LGBTQ in our respective communities.

We also reached out to organizations that provide services and resources for LG-

Tania Unzueta is co-founder of IYJL and an organizer at the National Day Laborer Organizing Network. Follow her on twitter at @LaTania.

## HENNEPIN from page 4

he asked the couple to write "a hopeful clause" to him if they knew of any gay organization that might exist in Maine.

It's not clear whether Baker and McConnell were able to help the many individual people who wrote to them, but they continued their work of knocking on doors that had previously been closed to gay people—doors that many believed could get them killed.

The couple lived in a world rocked by violence over racial integration, President Nixon's invasion of Cambodia, the Kent State shootings, and the emergence of the more raucous movement for equal protection of the law launched at Stonewall. In many states, including Minnesota, laws back then were heavily stacked against gay people and it was still illegal to engage in oral or anal sex.

For whatever reasons, these two men believed in the system. They believed that they should trust the system to treat them with the same rights due to all American citizens. But despite the powerful burst forward provided by the Stonewall rebellion, many gay people at the time did not have the courage it took for Baker and McConnell to apply for that marriage license on May 18, 1970.

"The fear then wasn't that you'd be discriminated against, that was a given," said one Minnesota activist of the 1970s, in an article by the Associated Press last December "You were a lot more afraid that someone might come after you with a shotgun."

McConnell, in fact, lost his job at the University of Minnesota library because of the couple's activism. But still the men forged onward.

And not everyone in the gay community supported what Baker and McConnell were doing. It's not that they were opposed, but rather they felt the community's focus and resources needed to be concentrated on goals that were embraced by greater numbers in the community—goals such as laws prohibiting discrimination based

on sexual orientation in employment and housing, and striking down sodomy laws.

On the David Susskind Show in 1973, Baker said gay activists around the country had criticized him and McConnell, saying gay couples didn't need a marriage license. And in a 1993 oral history recording, Minnesota State Senator Allan Spear spoke about Baker and McConnell's efforts, saying marriage "wasn't the issue that most of the rest of us saw as a front burner issue."

Today, there is little doubt that marriage for same-sex couples is a "front burner issue." The U.S. Supreme Court will issue decisions before the end of June on two cases involving the legal rights of same-sex couples. And Minnesota passed a marriage equality law May 13, becoming the twelfth state plus the District of Columbia to treat same-sex couples the same as male-female couples in marriage licensing.

McConnell was on hand in the Senate gallery for the final passage of Minnesota's marriage equality law, just days shy of the 43rd anniversary of the date he and Baker first filled out the application for a marriage license in Hennepin County.

Though they have, from time to time, responded to questions via email, McConnell and Baker, both in their early 70s now, have eschewed interviews. Reached by phone this week, Baker summarily dismissed this reporter's request for an interview, saying "I don't give interviews to reporters, thank you," and hanging up.

But in a response to a question via email by Minnesota Public Radio reporter Sasha Aslanian, McConnell had this reaction to the passage of the Minnesota marriage equality bill: "Yesterday was a very powerful experience for me. I am so proud of this generation! I'm just so elated to have been alive to see and experience this moment in time. Words cannot describe the feeling. When I saw all those thousands of young and older people together celebrating the victory today, it was overwhelming."

## Vital Bridges center receives check, food

BY VERN HESTER

As part of its ongoing efforts to combat hunger in the Chicago area, Fifth Third Bank presented a check for \$10,000 along with a truckload of food to Vital Bridges Center on Chronic Care.

After Vital Bridges suffered significant budget cuts May 1, putting its home delivery and food pantry programs at risk, employees at Fifth Third Bank immediately stepped up to help by raising money and donating food to help offset the budget gap.

"We are truly overwhelmed by the support of the bank's employees," said Lori Cannon, pantry co-founder and co-founder of the Open Hand Program. "We would not have lasted twenty years without this partnership or partnerships in the community." She went on to explain that the bank's donations will help feed 450 people for over the next six months.

If anyone is interested in helping, Vital Bridges is in special need of personal care items such as toilet paper, paper towels, Kleenex, shampoo, toothpaste/brushes, hand soap, and cleaning supplies. Vital Bridges can be reached at 773-271-5116 for its three Chicago-area locations.

Photos from the event are at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

## Forum on race, immigration, sexuality May 28

The Chicago Dyke March Collective and Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago are co-hosting "Connecting the Dots: Immigration, Race, Sexuality and Community" Tuesday, May

28, 6-7:30 p.m., at 4753 N. Broadway.

This program is in preparation for the 17th annual Chicago Dyke on Saturday, June 29, at 3 p.m. in the Argyle neighborhood. For more information, visit [chicagodykemarch.wordpress.com](http://chicagodykemarch.wordpress.com) or email [dykemarchchicago@gmail.com](mailto:dykemarchchicago@gmail.com).

## Charges filed in hazing case

BY KATE SOSIN

Charges have been filed in the high-profile case involving Maine West High School hazing rituals, the Cook County State's Attorney's office announced.

Former soccer coach Michael Divincenzo, 37, faces charges of Hazing, Failure to Report Abuse as Mandated and Battery, all Class A misdemeanor offenses, Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez said in a statement.

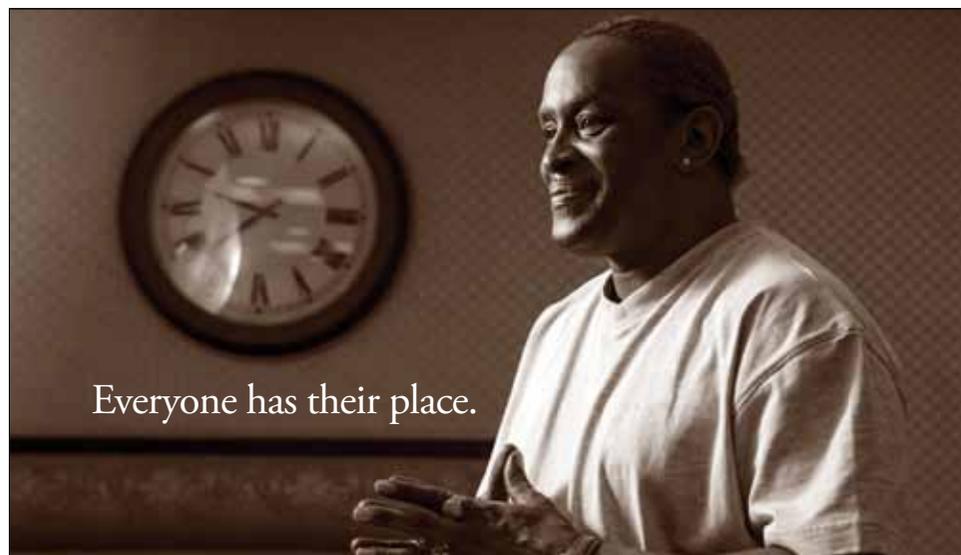
The Des Plaines high school was hit with a lawsuit last fall accusing Divincenzo of sanctioning a hazing ritual during which a freshman soccer player was allegedly held down, beaten and sodomized by peers.

Prosecutors allege that four male athletes were victims of the hazing, during which Divincenzo was present.

"According to prosecutors, a number of the players were physically attacked in various ways by older players, including attacks in which the players' shorts or pants were forcibly removed by groups of players who held them down and poked the players' buttocks area with their hands or other objects," the statement reads.

Prosecutors also claim that Divincenzo ordered the hazing and threatened players.

Divincenzo also headed a baseball team that was hit with a similar complaint dating back to 2008.



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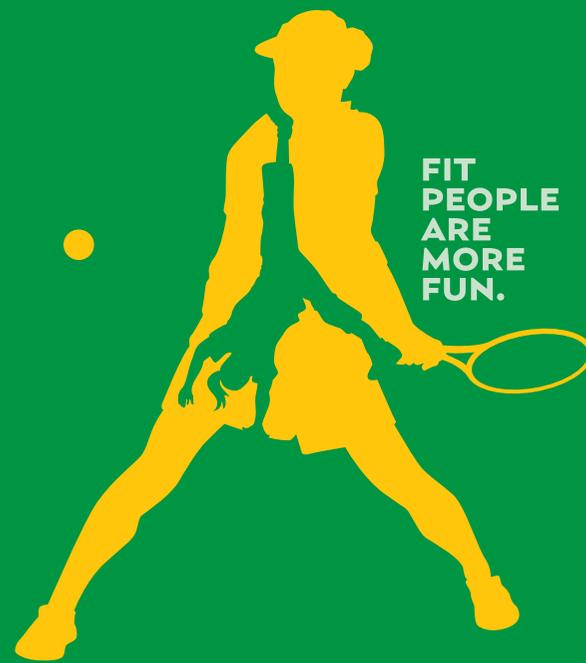


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# Bar association offers training regarding LGBT domestic abuse

BY MATTHEW C. CLARK

"Feel free to walk out now if you don't want to get in touch with your feelings," said Director of Education & Victim Advocacy at the Center on Halsted Lisa Gilmore, getting a few chuckles in response. "C'mon, it's lunch time."

In a conference room at the Chicago Bar Association (CBA), a group of lawyers with the LGBT Committee were receiving a special training during their lunch hour. Except the ones training them had never made a single case in court.

On May 15, the CBA held a "Domestic Violence in the LGBT Community" forum to discuss the dynamics of domestic violence, impact on victims and the criminal justice system's response.

Gilmore, along with Jennifer S. Greene, policy advisor to Cook County State's Attorney Anita



Lisa Gilmore. Photo from Center on Halsted

Alvarez, walked law professionals through the basics of domestic abuse, in a broader context outside of the courts, as well as answered their questions about the legal actions one might take.

The two experts walked the group through abuse, which they labeled as a behavior that occurs over time to get people to comply with one's actions or desires.

"A lot more can go into a criminal situation that are not necessarily criminal acts," Greene said.

According to the two, because LGBT people are still living in a society that carries stigma against their identity, and because laws treat LGBT people differently, it leaves them at risk for abuse.

For example, they said the recognition of parenthood under the law could become a form of power and control—the aims of abuse.

Gilmore said she offered a survivor-based, choice-based perspective that did not always involve law enforcement or criminal legal action, but stressed education about healthy relationships and equality under the law.

According to Gilmore, one out of three individuals who contact the Anti-Violence Project, a program that provides support and services for survivors of abuse and violence, also contact law enforcement.

Gilmore said reasons why people may not seek help include a lack of resources, fear of disclosing identity, or a pressure from the LGBT community itself not to discuss negative relationships.

In Chicago, there are no shelters for men who are survivors of domestic abuse.

Greene said though a very few percent of vic-

tims go through the legal system for help, those who do often find help in family courts, through the civil arena without a criminal case.

"It's a totally different ballgame in the domestic violence courts now," she said.

Both experts discussed the various dynamics that can come in to play—many victims may call 911 repeatedly, without wanting an arrest to be made, simply to get the violence to stop in that particular situation.

Answering a question regarding the need for a battered wife defense equivalent for the LGBT community, both experts stated that rarely is that defense being used in court anymore, but rather instructed lawyers to look at the legal history of a relationship, such as if there were any prior calls made to the police.

Although both experts stated that government and the courts can't have all the answers for problems in interpersonal relationships, they also applauded legislation that responsibly dealt with domestic abuse, such as the Illinois Domestic Violence Act and the recent reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, which specifically included projects for LGBT people.

Greene pointed to a recent survey released by the CDC, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, which reported on data from 2010, but included information regarding gay and lesbian couples.

Greene, who said her role with the state's attorney focuses on victim safety and offender accountability, told Windy City Times she hopes those who attended the meeting get a broader view of domestic abuse and its impact.

"It's just a matter of understanding that to be the best practitioner, there has to be a community response," she said. "We can't have a total reliance on the legal system."

Those who attended the meeting were offered a certificate for continuing legal education.

The Center on Halsted's Anti-Violence Project has a 24-hour crisis hotline available if you or someone you know is a survivor of anti-LGBTQ, queer, questioning or HIV discrimination, hate violence, domestic abuse, sexual violence or assault or police abuse or violence at 773-871-2273,

For more information of the Anti-Violence Project please visit <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/eva.html>.

## Jewish LGBT group part of women's solidarity action

BY KATE SOSIN

Chicago LGBT Jewish organization Congregation Or Chadash was among groups to demonstrate in support of Jewish Israeli women May 10 in Chicago.

Women of the Wall (WOW) Chicagoland, a local group backing women's rights to pray at the Western Wall in Jerusalem alongside men, led a Torah service at Daley Plaza in support of their Israeli peers. Among the participating groups was LGBT Jewish organization Congregation Or Chadash.

The Chicago service was assembled to show support for Israeli women who have fought to worship at the Western Wall for decades, despite opposition from ultra-Orthodox Jews and police. A recent Israeli court order backed the women, leading Israeli police to defend the women instead of arresting them as in past years.

WOW is an international organization that has been holding prayer services at the wall for more than two decades, according to a media

statement put out by the group. WOW services at the Western Wall May 10 fell on Rosh Hodesh, a holiday marking the beginning of a new Hebrew month. Chicago services were also held on that day in solidarity.

According to WOW Chicago, more than 100 attended the downtown service despite the rain and cold.

"We have seen over the ages that individual people acting collectively can make a difference," Carol Goldbaum a steering committee member of WOW Chicagoland and president of Congregation Or Chadash, in a statement. "Women in several cities throughout the country are holding Rosh Hodesh services in support of the freedom to pray openly and independently today."

Leading the service were Debbie Lewis, Carla Cener, Ricky Lewis and Rhonda Wehner. Doris Schyman read the Torah. The service took place before a replica wall by Carol Johnson.

## 'Transvisible' screening May 30 at UIC

Unid@s: The National Latin@ LGBT Human Rights Organization is presenting the film screening of *Transvisible: Bamby Salcedo's Story*.

A film screening of *Transvisible* will take place at the UIC Behavioral Sciences Building, Room 140, 1007 W. Harrison St., on Thursday, May 30, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

A reception with Roland Palencia, the film's executive producer, and the movie's sponsors will take place at 6:30 p.m.; the screening starts at 7:30 p.m.

Salcedo is a long-time Mexico-born trans activist who resides in Los Angeles.

For more information, call 312-925-2132 or email [jcestou@aol.com](mailto:jcestou@aol.com).



Pro- (right) and anti- (left) marriage equality protestors. Photo by Kate Sosin.

## MARRIAGE from cover

rounding the vote Wednesday evening.

The bill has the backing of major political players in Illinois, including Gov. Pat Quinn, who told Windy City Times that he has met personally with more than a dozen representatives in an attempt to get the bill passed. Quinn has said he will sign the measure into law.

Chief Sponsor Greg Harris has vowed not to call for a vote until the votes are there to pass it.

Steve Brown, a spokesperson for Speaker Mike Madigan, confirmed that Madigan has also met with wavering lawmakers in recent days in an effort to secure the final votes.

"There were conversations with people last week, hoping to persuade some people," Brown said.

But when the vote comes is in the sponsors' hands, Brown said.

"That would all be up to Greg Harris," he said. Brown said he could not give a specific vote count.

Harris could not be reached to comment before press time.

If the bill does not pass by month's end, sponsors will need to wait until at least until fall to push the legislation. That option, however, is not seen favorably. Representatives hold office for just two years, and campaigns are expected to heat up as the year goes on, making controversial legislation like equal marriage harder to pass with time.

Complicating that option, Garcia pointed out, will be anti-gay efforts to stop the bill. Delays in its passage will give anti-gay organizations and churches time to mobilize opposition. Illinois Family Institute, a staunchly anti-gay group, has already held several rallies throughout the Chicago area against the bill.

Groups both for and against the bill faced off in the city's Little Village neighborhood May 18, in what was expected to be the last demonstration before the end of the state's legislative session.

Approximately 90 demonstrators turned out to oppose the "Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act," which would legalize same-sex marriage. That group had come at the urging of anti-gay organization the Illinois Family Institute, which has organized rallies every Saturday for the last month.

The rallies have targeted wavering lawmakers, and pro-LGBT groups have organized to counter each of them. The Little Village protest was intended to target 21st Dist. Democrat Silvana Tabares, a journalist-turned-lawmaker who took office this year.

Just 22 pro-LGBT protesters turned out for the late morning demonstration. That group marched from Tabares' district office to Shedd Park, where they confronted the anti-gay rally.

Police kept the two groups on opposite sides of the street. LGBT protesters shouted at anti-gay demonstrators, who largely did not respond.

The conflicting rallies caught the attention of many area residents in the otherwise quiet residential neighborhood.

Abdul Aziz-Hassan, a resident of Little Village for seven years, walked up the block with his wife and child to oppose the anti-gay rally.

"I'm just offended by these people's presence in my neighborhood," Hassan said. "There are other issues on the forefront here."

Over the sound patriotic music playing from IFI speakers, Hassan said he wants to see his neighbors working against gun violence in the neighborhood, not opposing LGBT rights.

"I'm not going to support hate in any form," he said. But he added that he felt many of the anti-gay protesters were not from his neighborhood.

Anti-gay protesters sang, chanted and listened to speeches, while pro-gay demonstrators shouted opposition. Anti-gays chanted, "One woman, one man." Pro-gays responded, "One tax payer, one tax payer."

The pro-LGBT counter protest was organized by Gay Liberation Network, The Association of Latino Men for Action, La Voz de los de Abajo and The Civil Rights Agenda, according to the event's Facebook page.

Video by Kate Sosin is at [www.youtube.com/watch](http://www.youtube.com/watch).

An additional photo spread is at [www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/photospreadthumbs.php](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/photospreadthumbs.php).

The Illinois Unites for Marriage community meeting will be held Wed., May 22, at 5:30 p.m. at the Urban League, first floor conference room, 4510 S. Michigan Ave. That meeting will be cancelled if a vote is expected that day. See [www.windycitytimes.com](http://www.windycitytimes.com) for up-to-the-minute information.



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# Nate Silver talks statistics, politics during Chicago visit

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Statistics and politics were the themes of a talk by openly gay statistician, blogger and author Nate Silver May 19 at the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership.

A New York Times best-selling author, Silver runs the website FiveThirtyEight.com which is featured on The New York Times website. Silver previously published his statistical analysis on the political blog the Daily Kos and prior to that

with the invention of the printing press information was spread at a rapid pace and this created problems since differing ideas were shared across Europe. Silver noted that in the 100 years after the invention of the printing press there was an increase in the number of wars which led to that century becoming the bloodiest century across history until the 20th century.

An example of data problems, Silver explained, can be seen with flu statistics. Because of the way that Google measures data collection vs.



Nate Silver at book-signing. Photo by Stephanie Shacter

developed a statistical method called PECOTA to analyze baseball statistics. He was named Out Magazine's "Person of the Year" in 2012 and in 2009 Time Magazine named Silver as one of "The World's 100 Most Influential People."

Spertus Institute CEO Hal Lewis and Chair of Spertus Institute's Board of Trustees Mark Mehlman provided words of welcome and spoke about the mission of the Spertus Institute. "We believe that a learning Jewish community is a vibrant Jewish community," said Lewis.

After an introduction by Steve Edwards, deputy programming director for the Institute of Politics at the University of Chicago (he works alongside political analyst David Axelrod who is the institute's director) and former host of WBEZ's news magazine Eight Forty-Eight, Silver spoke to over 400 people about "The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail - But Some Don't" based on his book of the same name.

The focus of Silver's talk was why do we keep making mistakes with our predictions? Silver explained that the explosion of data in recent years has created problems since some of the data isn't really useful. Then Silver shared that

the way that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collects data there was a 4.3-percent difference in the way flu statistics were measured with the CDC showing less of a flu outbreak than Google.

Then Silver shared his data from the 2012 election and how he determined the winner of each state. The 538 method, Silver said, is to average the polls, count to 270 and account for the margin of error.

Silver asked when will big data produce big progress? Silver noted that there are three problems to contend with. The first problem is that big data can lead to big bias. "It helps if you have amnesia if you are a pundit" so you can claim that you are always correct, said Silver. The second problem is that people are desperately seeing a signal i.e. where is the unbiased correct information, Silver explained. The third problem, according to Silver, asks whether big data is a helpful feature or bug. Silver used GPS as an example because it is usually a helpful device but sometimes it goes wrong.

Another thing that Silver pointed out is the signal-to-noise ratio. Silver said that as more data (i.e., signals) is collected the incidents

of inaccurate information or information based solely on opinions increases (i.e., noise).

Using population as an example, Silver said that when looking at the entire U.S. population 36 percent reside in blue states, 37 percent reside in swing states and 26 percent reside in red states. In looking at the Jewish population in particular, Silver noted that 68 percent reside in blue states, 26 percent reside in swing states and 6 percent reside in red states. Silver remarked that the only way that the Jewish population can have any influence in elections is to spread out to swing or red states.

Silver offered three suggestions to help produce better data results: think probabilistically meaning report all of the data for a particular situation; knowing where one is coming from when looking at specific data; and trial and error.

The values that are important to have when looking at data, according to Silver, are humility (which Silver said is the most important value), diversity, independence, respect, hard work, ac-

countability and a love of learning.

During the Q&A, Silver was asked why people always want to know what will happen tomorrow, if there is a way to churn data to predict how much time we have left to live on earth, the ability to accurately assess primary races, using census data to predict results and medical data mining.

Silver was also asked the difference between the United Kingdom and the United States when it comes to death and he said people in the UK are skeptical about death whereas people in the United States have a curiosity about death. A question was posed about ways to improve assessing academic achievement and Silver said that college rankings are arbitrary. Someone asked if the United States is ready for Hillary 2016 and Silver said yes.

A reception and book signing took place following Silver's presentation and the Q&A session.

See [fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com) for more information.

## Lambda Legal CLC holds conversation on women and equality

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

"Leading Chicago: Women Making the Case for Equality" was the theme of Lambda Legal's Chicago Leadership Council's (CLC) conversational salon at the Douglas Dawson Gallery May 15.

About 60 people gathered to hear Chicago-based women in leadership positions speak about LGBT equality.

The Chicago Leadership Council is, according to its website, "a volunteer committee that supports the work of Lambda Legal by raising awareness and membership for Lambda Legal through inclusive community events and relationship building."

Kelly Suzanne Saulsberry, president of the



From left: Amy Bloom, Evette Cardona and Vivian Gonzalez at the event. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

board of directors of Affinity Community Services, talked about the work that Affinity Community Services does. Then Saulsberry introduced the featured guests: Mona Noriega, human rights commissioner for the City of Chicago; Kim Hunt, executive director of Affinity Community Services; Lark Mulligan, case manager at Howard Brown Health Services; Laura Szumowski, author, illustrator and publisher at ZMK Press; and Camilla Taylor, marriage project director for Lambda Legal.

Following Saulsberry's remarks, Rebecca Kling performed a spoken-word piece. Kling is a transgender artist, educator and instructor at the Piven Theatre Workshop.

Kling shared the story of how she went about changing her name. Kling noted that her journey was filled with twists and turns as she navigated the hearing process at the courthouse as well as the DMV. By the end of the day, Kling explained that she had docu-

ments from the state of Illinois and a new drivers license that legally recognized her identity as a woman.

Fay Clayton, a founding partner at Robinson Curley & Clayton, was the keynote speaker for the evening. A civil-rights attorney, Kling advocates for women's rights, transgender rights and varied social-justice efforts. In 1986, Clayton successfully litigated in front of the United States Supreme Court in the case *National Organization for Women v. Scheidler*. The court's ruling stopped anti-abortion protesters from blocking abortion clinics and threatening patients.

The emerging women's movement of the 1970s inspired Clayton to change careers again and follow her true passion into the law, she explained. Clayton was a secretary and a teacher before becoming a lawyer. One of Clayton's first cases involved a transgender woman pilot for Eastern Airlines. Clayton won the case and throughout her career she kept on taking cases that focused on the transgender community. "I have come to realize that if any oppressed group is denied its rights we probably all suffer in some regard," said Clayton. "Some years ago, most importantly for me, one of my children came out to me as transgender and I was certainly delighted that I had picked the right side of the issue."

A Q&A followed Clayton's and Kling's remarks. Then KOKUMO, a transgender singer and former scholar of the Affinity Scholars Program, performed an original song, "The Circle" (an homage to Black trans women who have died) from her debut album and a cover of the Disney song "Colors of the Wind."

"I think we had a fantastic turnout. It was really wonderful to see women leaders all in one space from different communities in Chicago who are doing great things and making the case for equality," said Elizabeth Ricks, co-chair of the CLC.

"We are incredibly honored to celebrate these women tonight. Not only are they moving Chicago forward they are making a huge difference in the lives of all LGBT people throughout Chicago and across Illinois," said Chris Mullins; co-chair of the CLC.

Chicago Gourmet to You provided hors d'oeuvres and made-to-order risotto dishes; Sidetrack provided beverages. The L Stop also provided an in-kind sponsorship for the evening.

See [www.facebook.com/lambdalegalchicago](http://www.facebook.com/lambdalegalchicago) for more information.

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Rendering of the senior housing. Image courtesy of Center on Halsted

## Boystown LGBT senior housing project nears groundbreaking

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

The City of Chicago, the Center on Halsted and Heartland Housing are about to break ground on the Midwest's first LGBT-friendly affordable senior housing facility.

Center on Halsted CEO Modesto Tico Valle said a ground-breaking ceremony will be held toward the end of the month to start construction on the 79-unit facility, which will be built just north of northwest corner of Halsted and Addison streets and include the historic 23rd District Town Hall police station.

The Chicago City Council approved the land transfer on Mar. 13, in addition to several sources of city funding including up to \$5 million in HOME dollars, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credits. The deal was finalized and closed in mid-April.

"The city and everyone we've worked with have been very excited that this is another step in the right direction, that a leading city is going to be creating affirming, affordable housing and that speaks loudly," Valle said.

The project has come along as conceived, according to Nadia Underhill, associate director of real estate development at Heartland Housing, especially considering the complications that arose from adaptive reuse regarding the historic police station. The project will preserve the station's exterior along with certain interior details, she said.

One of the major changes to the plan came from planning charrettes, or focus groups, with seniors, many of whom are involved with Center on Halsted's SAGE programming. After listening to seniors' needs and desires, Heartland made changes to the unit layouts to make them as flexible as possible and also made more space for larger social gatherings.

"We were having discussions about people's lives and the lives they envisioned for people who might live in the building," Underhill said. "The importance of friend networks and the role that socializing and gathering has played for people became very clear."

One of the ways Heartland will meet that need is by creating a shared dining room space for residents to host gatherings of 8-10 people.

"We hope (the dining room space) will give people who are dependent and connected to friends and family networks a space to continue having those interactions in their new housing," Underhill said.

Valle added that many of the seniors he has heard from expressed an interest in a community space to be closer to friends. He said a group of seniors who were regulars at Bucks Saloon in Boystown, for example, approached him right after the LGBT-friendly bar closed last month wanting to know how they could get on a list.

"If anything, we've been able to put the spotlight on aging and people are thinking about that and thinking about how will they age in community, that they don't have to age alone," Valle said.

Construction will last about 16 months, Underhill said, and Heartland will begin accepting housing applications sometime next spring. Both Heartland and Center on Halsted expect a large amount of interest from hopeful residents, and stress that while the facility will be LGBT-friendly, they cannot discriminate in leasing.

"Hopefully, people will self-select themselves out of the project if they are not our allies," Valle said.

During construction, Valle said the Center hopes to offer hardhat tours of the new building as well as provide some fundraising opportunities that will allow for some creative partnering.

Meanwhile, the success of this project to date has already made waves in the Chicago area. Valle said that Center on Halsted was awarded a request for proposal to help create another LGBT-affirming senior housing project in the Western suburb of Berwyn.

For future updates on the project, Center on Halsted plans to keep people informed via social media and its new magazine/newsletter The Ville.

## MSM meningitis case reported in Chicago

BY KATE SOSIN

A case of the disease that causes meningitis has been reported in Chicago among a man who sex with men (MSM), the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) said May 20.

The case of meningococcal disease is similar to those reported among gay and bisexual men in Los Angeles and New York this year, said Brian Richardson, CDPH spokesperson.

"This is the only case we have seen reported in Chicago this year," Richardson noted.

Richardson said that the man, whose case was reported to CDPH May 12, has fully recovered.

CDPH identified the man's close contacts to determine who will need preventative antibiotics, said Richardson.

"We have no reason to believe that there is an outbreak," he stressed. "Currently, we do not believe that there is an increased risk among MSM in Chicago. That said, we're continuing to follow this closely."

Last year, Chicago saw seven cases of the disease. None of them were among MSMs. The May 12 case marks the first this year.

U.S. public health officials have been on alert since last September when New York City saw four cases of meningococcal disease among MSMs. In April, Brett Shaad, a gay man in Los Angeles, died after contracting the disease. Cases on both coasts have sparked fears of an outbreak among gay and bisexual men across the country.

But Richardson said that Chicago has not identified any other cases, and that there is no evidence of increased risk.

The disease has hit gay Chicagoans in the past. In 2003, the city saw an outbreak among gay and bisexual men, and three men died. More than 14,000 were vaccinated during that time.

In 2008, teenagers on the city's West Side also

began contracting the disease, and vaccinations were done there, said Richardson.

Howard Brown Health Center has vaccinations on hand, the organization said in a recent statement. That vaccination is \$150 for uninsured patients. The agency has been informed of the reported case, said Richardson.

But health officials say because there is no increased risk among MSM currently, CDHP is sticking to its usual suggestion that youth ages 11-18 receive the vaccination.

"We're not changing the vaccination recommendations," Richardson said.

### Information on meningococcal meningitis from CDPH:

When someone has meningococcal meningitis, the protective membranes covering their brain and spinal cord become infected and swell. The symptoms include sudden onset of fever, headache, and stiff neck. It is often accompanied by other symptoms, such as:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Photophobia (increased sensitivity to light)
- Altered mental status (confusion)

The symptoms of meningococcal meningitis can appear quickly or over several days.

Another common outcome of meningococcal infection is bloodstream infection, either septicemia or bacteremia. The more serious of the two is septicemia. When someone has meningococcal septicemia, the bacteria enter the bloodstream and multiply, damaging the walls of the blood vessels and causing bleeding into the skin and organs.

Symptoms may include:

- Fatigue
- Vomiting
- Cold hands and feet
- Cold chills
- Severe aches or pain in the muscles, joints, chest or abdomen (belly)
- Rapid breathing
- Diarrhea

In the later stages, there's a dark purple rash.

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# Vendor nears end of leather era

BY ROSS FORMAN

A fixture in the Chicago gay community is closing its doors, literally, thus ending a long, storied history—with Stanley Harrison retiring, capping a near-25-year leather legacy.

Chaps worn in Chicago—especially over Memorial Day weekend, the annual tradition of International Mr. Leather (IML)—never will be the same again, at least in design.

Harrison, 66, the owner for the past 10 years of Shel-Don Chicago and who previously worked about 14 years at Male Hide Leathers, is calling it a career. His Lakeview store, at 3820 N. Broadway, will close for good at the end of May.

He has been working since last September to reduce his stock.

"I have reached the ripe old age to collect social security, so it's time to move on," said Harrison, who said at the IML in 2012 that was going to be his finale.

Harrison initially planned to close his 1,500 square-foot Lakeview store at the end of April, but pushed it back until the end of May.

"It's been tough the last few years, mostly because of the economy. But as for memories, wow, I could go on for days," said Harrison, who lives in Berwyn, and has been dating Daryl Bergeron, 45, for about 10 years. "I know I'll miss the customers and the socializing, but now I have more time to get out and go to events."

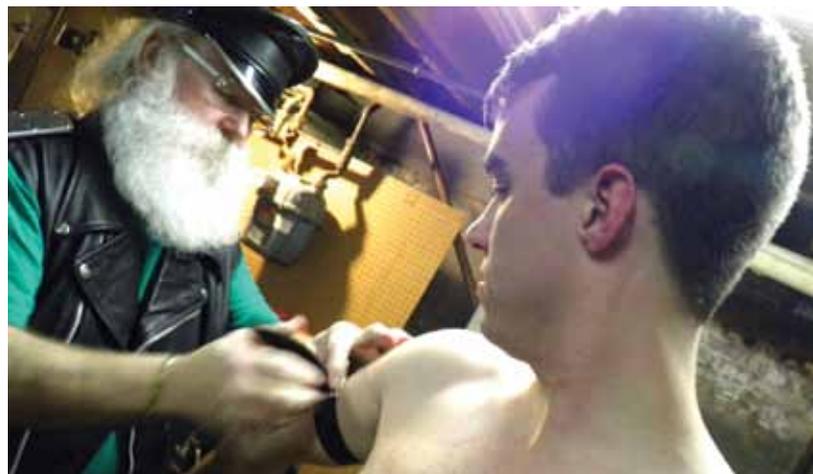
Harrison has a degree in fashion design and was working for a large wholesale florist when, about 25 years ago, he spotted a posting at



Stanley Harrison. Photo by Kirk Williamson

Male Hide for a leather craftsman job. He talked to Male Hide about the position and soon began working there part-time. Six months after starting, Male Hide owners wanted Harrison full-time, though Harrison admits he was leery as to whether or not Male Hide could afford him, including a similar benefits package.

He ultimately spent about 14 years working at Male Hide and then, in October 2002, he opened his own leather store, "to carry on the tradition of Male Hide Leather," he said.



Harrison outfits a contest winner at Touche in 2012. Photo by Kirk Williamson

That includes, "dressing the boys and making them look great for IML with a lot of custom-made leather," he said, laughing.

Harrison also has aided contestants for Mr. Chicago Leather, Mr. Cell Block, and more.

His handiwork has been worn all over the U.S., if not the world—particularly his chaps.

"I make your ass look the best in chaps, he said.

So what's the key to a good pair of chaps?

A good fit, Harrison said. "I make them out partially before I finish them, then I have the customer come back in for a fitting, in case we need to do any nips or tucks. You want [the chaps] to fit like a glove."

Harrison has been a fixture working the leather market at IML, and admits it's "satisfaction" seeing his work worn on stage during IML weekend.

Harrison said he's planning to attend the 2013 IML, but will not be working, just enjoying the festivities and renewing long-time friendships.

Harrison said he also is proud of countless product demonstrations he has led, from how to properly put on a cock ring to how to use nipple clamps. He has led many demonstrations over the years at Touche.

"I've been able to show [the community] my knowledge and help them out. It's been fun," Harrison said.

## LaTrobe battles cancer, fights for trans rights

BY ROSS FORMAN

June LaTrobe was on Belmont Avenue near the Red Line Jan. 3 when she passed out. June (as she prefers to be called), 71, was rushed to the hospital, where she learned she had massive blood clots in her lungs.

At the end of February, June had serious stomach problems, so she went to Howard Brown and they sent her to Illinois Masonic Hospital immediately. She had a colonoscopy, which showed the reasons for the blood clots: a massive blockage in her colon, which was though malignant. June was operated on immediately, and doctors removed about 40 percent of her colon to attack the colon cancer diagnosis.

She since has been on multiple medications, and it wasn't until May 16 that she learned she was cancer-free.

"I'm the type of person who, if I have a plan, I'm able to deal with things. But at first, that was not the case, and very upsetting," said June, who is transgender and lives in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. "I think this is true for everyone. ... When [doctors] put your name and cancer in the same sentence, it can prompt you to do some prioritizing in your life. That was exactly the case for me."

Consequently, she admits she paired down some activities that she is involved in.

June, who turns 72 June 1, is now retired from her career in corporate sales and marketing. She is single, with five children (three girls, two boys) from three past marriages.

June is now on Res. Mike Quigley's LGBT council, and is a member of the board of the Chicago House. Plus, she is the co-chair for the Trans Right Project which is part of the Civil Rights Agenda.

Although she now uses a walking stick to more easily get around, June remains a staunch advocate for the transgender community, braving stomach pain and more medical woes at times.

"So far [this year], it definitely has been challenging, I'll say that," said June, an admitted TV junkie who enjoys shows on multiple networks.

June was, from its inception until November 2012, responsible for transgender and gender-varying programs at the Center on Halsted. She also was a past officer at the now-defunct Illinois Gender Advocates. In addition, June has been very active with Lakeview Action Coalition.

June started her transition in 2005, but has ties to the "T" part of the LGBT community dating back decades.

"It's been an interesting life," June said, smiling. "I did not play with dolls as a kids, and don't remember having any interest. I [also] never tried on his mom's clothes. I went to high school, then started working, and then went to the Air Force. I was [stationed first in] West Berlin, and it was in Berlin where I had a romantic experience with a



June LaTrobe. Photo by Ross Forman

trans female. The experience was not a big deal.

"After that [experience], I slipped into a quasi-normal life, though I always had an interest in the trans community in the back of my mind, so to speak."

After June's third divorce in the early 2000s, she took to the Internet for information on the trans community. She also met other transgender Chicagoans.

"An awakened feeling [for the transgender community] in me came about after an experience, and that's when I realized that I was what I was interested in. In other words, in the past I had been interested in transwomen, but in reality, that's more of who I am," said June, who sought help and guidance along the way from multiple people at Howard Brown Health Center in Lakeview.

"For me, the timing was perfect."

And today, she's happier than ever, except for her medical issues.

"The work I'm doing now is more rewarding than any in my past," she said. "I did not truly become an advocate until I became active in the trans community."

June said she has had "wonderful mentors along the way," starting with Rick Garcia, who is a member of the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame and the founding executive director of Equality Illinois.

June said she has had many contributions to the LGBT community that she's proud of, starting with visibility for the trans side of the rainbow. She also boasts a Trans101 presentation that she gave in 2010-2011 to every unit in DePaul University's student affairs department, totaling about 150 people. Plus, June has been instrumental helping 120-plus transgender Chicagoans looking/hoping to get their name changed or have their gender-identification marker changed.

June, who wears a silver ring with multiple colors of the rainbow on it, also wears a red AIDS pin daily.

"I'm very sensitive to the fact that the battle [against HIV/AIDS] is not over," June said. "I have a dear friend who has AIDS, and is still alive. That person played an interesting, integral part in my transition—it's kind of a tribute."

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## Changing Worlds honors Jane Saks

Changing Worlds, a nonprofit which fosters inclusive communities through oral history, writing and art programs that improve student learning, affirm identity and enhance cross-cultural understanding, held their annual benefit May 8. Among their honorees this year was cultural advocate and lesbian activist Jane M. Saks.

Saks has worked to challenge and champion issues of gender, sexuality, human rights, race and power within the worlds of arts and culture, politics and civil rights, policy and advocacy, academia and philanthropy.

She is the founding executive director of the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media, Columbia College Chicago.

Latin dance performances, student presentations, a Q & A session with youth participants, and artwork exhibitions were at the heart of Changing Worlds' 11th Annual Benefit.

More than 230 attendees joined together in a celebration of the arts, education and cultural awareness.

See [www.changingworlds.org](http://www.changingworlds.org).

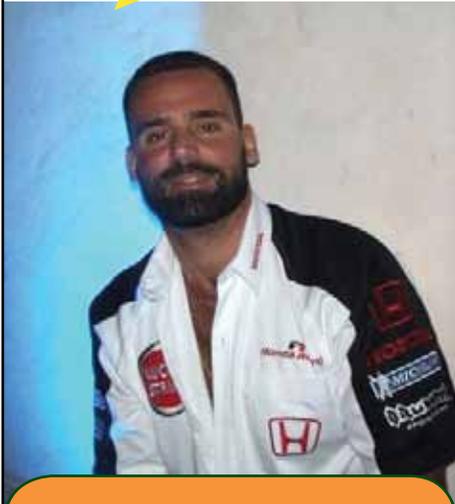


Jane Saks (right) and her girlfriend Emma Ruby-Sachs at the Changing Worlds awards. Photo by Tracy Baim

## GAY in the LIFE

### Raphael Ferreira

TEXT BY ANDREW DAVIS



**Age**  
40

**Relationship status**  
Partnered for four years with Angel Velez, Mr. Chicago Leather 2012

**Neighborhood**  
Near East Side

**Homeland**  
Brazil

**Favorite snack**  
Pao de queijo (baked, cheese-flavored rolls)

**Favorite TV show**  
Star Trek

Everyone has some sort of responsibility with his or her job.

However, Raphael Ferreira is responsible for the information of thousands of individuals as a database administrator at Governors State University in University Park, Ill. (the preparation and commuting which take up to four hours of Ferreira's day if he takes the train).

"If someone gets hired or fired, that information has to get stored in a database," Ferreira said. "When a student registers, that has to [go somewhere]." When asked if he has access to information about everyone, he answered, "It is a highly classified job. You pretty much have to swear your life away."

Ferreira detailed a recent situation where his expertise was needed: "It was graduation time, and on a Friday. (It's always on a Friday, it seems.) There's an urgent request from the president because there's a graduation and they [needed to check] who to give the honors to. So, you need the grade-point averages [GPAs]—which are calculated on the fly. What I had to do was go into the system and reverse-engineer it so it would calculate GPAs and produce a list for them." He added with a laugh, "That's the kind of situation where you say, 'Let's see how this goes.'"

Ferreira was born in Brazil. When he was 27, he received an offer to come to the United States to work as a translator, and ending up staying in Naples, Fla., for several years. He later resided in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Miami before relocating to Chicago, living in Hyde Park before moving to the Near East Side, near Navy Pier. "When I saw this view, I said, 'Wow, awesome,'" he added.

Regarding coming out, Ferreira initially joked, "Do you have five days?" The first person he came out to was a friend of his in Brazil who was a teacher. (Ferreira was an instructor as well.) "She was kind of falling in love with me and I told her it wasn't going to happen," he said. They remain friends to this day.



The ensuing discussion revealed a man with various interests, including spiritism and the upcoming International Mr. Leather (IML)—the latter which makes sense since his partner won Mr. Chicago Leather last year. He also revealed that he has 46 cousins on his father's side alone. Also, when told that someone said that Brazilians are bisexual, Ferreira immediately corrected, "No—everybody is very sexual in Brazil."

Ferreira is also passionate about the subject of marriage equality. "If I had gay marriage, it's possible I would've gotten my citizenship much earlier," he said, while citing the many other benefits same-sex marriage would confer.



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## CRIME

## LGBTQs and the Criminal Legal System

## OUT

When we talk about LGBTQ people and the courts today, we're often referring to the seemingly endless stream of LGBTQ victories coming out of judicial systems across the country.

But in the criminal courts, LGBTQ people have long faced a different reality. Perhaps nowhere has that been more visible than in Cook County,

historically a model for criminal legal systems throughout the country.

In the coming weeks, Windy City Times will take readers through that structure today as we look at how LGBTQ people get caught in the system and the challenges they face once there.

Additional editing provided by William B. Kelley.

## A Windy City Times Special Investigative Series: Week Three

## Cook County Jail works on transgender policies

*Cook County Jail has quietly expanded its transgender policies and services in recent months, opening a protective unit for transgender women and bringing in local advocates to work with detainees and staff*

BY KATE SOSIN

The women file in all at once, in a fit of laughter and hugs, turning a quiet, empty room into a reunion.

Bonnie Wade and Channyn Lynne Parker from Chicago House are here today, and some of the women know them from the outside.

Nastasha Valentino, 38, rushes to hug Parker. Parker and Valentino have been friends for more than 20 years, and Valentino is proud to see Parker doing good work, the kind of work she was destined to do, Valentino says.

Today, Parker's work involves meeting with transgender women detained at Cook County Jail. She is the first out transgender person to work in the Cook County Department of Corrections, a role she fills as part of her job as the Connect to Care program coordinator for Chicago House.

Chicago House, an HIV and transgender housing service agency, has recently formed a partnership with the jail to provide services to transgender detainees.

It has been just three weeks since the protective custody tier for transgender inmates opened in Division 6, and the room is full of cautious optimism about the new programs that come along with it.

She started doing sex work in 1973, at age 14. It's been 16 years since she stopped. Today, as a peer specialist for the Cook County Sheriff's Office's Human Trafficking Team, she tries to steer others away from sex work. She wears street clothes—jeans, a white-and-pink top and gym shoes.

Myers-Powell is celebrating an anniversary today, she tells the room. Forty years ago, she started doing sex work. She celebrates this day, Good Friday, because she has since stopped, she says.

A few of the women respond with an "amen."

The meeting room looks much like a middle-school classroom—milk-colored tiles and chalk-yellow walls bathed in fluorescent lighting. A couple of posters hang from the cinder-block walls, most of them with inspirational sayings. A black-and-white sign shouts, "NO PROFANITY PLEASE!!" Another lists off the rules for a barbershop, suggesting the room has multiple uses. An anatomy poster hangs in the corner. Otherwise the walls are bare.

Twelve white plastic chairs are assembled in front of an old metal desk. The detainees sit in the chairs. They appear to range from the late teens to middle age. Almost all of them are people of color.

Most of the women wear the same type of blue



Officer Erica Rosas (left), Nastasha Valentino (center) and another detainee listen to Miss Brenda's talk. All photos by Kate Sosin.

she says. "I knew I was."

Myers-Powell talks a lot about self-respect and self-preservation. She'll be 100 percent, regardless of a man—regardless of her husband, even.

"People told you that you ain't shit for so long that you bit into it," she says.

This message resonates with the room.

"We feel like we need somebody to love and live our life," says one of the women. "But we don't even love ourself first. You know what I'm saying?"

Still, many are not sold on the idea of giving up sex work, and they tell Myers-Powell this.

transgender detainees, and he responded that jail staff should follow the existing policy.

"I just saw blank stares across the room," he told Windy City Times in 2011. "I said, 'Are you trying to tell me there is no policy?'"

The only policy dealing with transgender detainees dated back to 1984. The "Transsexual Treatment Protocol" detailed guidelines for prescribing hormone therapy, but it did not address gendered housing, clothing or staff training..

As instructed in the new 2011 document, corrections officers were to use preferred names and pronouns for transgender detainees. A committee would meet to determine the needs of each transgender person in detention. Perhaps most



Above: The entrance to Division 6, home of the jail's protective custody tier for transgender inmates. Right: Brenda Myers-Powell and Channyn Lynne Parker talk to a group of 12 women in Myers-Powell's "Prostitutes Anonymous" support group. The group meets once a week.



On today's schedule is a group meeting on sex work. Brenda Myers-Powell, better known as "Ms. Brenda," runs the "Prostitutes Anonymous" support group for trans women. She also runs a similar group in Division 11 that primarily serves non-transgender women.

Myers-Powell is not transgender, but her history makes her easily relatable, easy to talk to. It's likely one of the reasons her journey away from sex work has been the subject of much media coverage over the years.

slip-on shoes, but a couple sport tattered flip-flops. Some of their socks are mismatched or spotted with holes. A few have come carrying personal items—a comb with most of the teeth missing, a container of what looks like lip balm.

Behind the desk sits a chair, but Myers-Powell sits on the desk itself.

She tells the group about the time she "dated herself." What she means is that she devoted her energy to her own needs and happiness.

"I didn't need nobody to tell me I was fine,"

### Trans policy at Cook County Jail

Before March 2011, Cook County Jail had no official rule for placing transgender detainees together. That year, it became one of the first jails in the country to implement such a measure.

The seven-page order had come at the urging of Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart after he discovered a lack of uniformity in policy. A jail employee had asked him what to do about placing

significantly, gender identity was to be a major determinant of housing.

The policy made national headlines, and some hailed it as a victory for transgender rights. Others lamented that it had been adopted without consulting local transgender leaders. But for the most part, local advocates waited and watched to see how the policy would play out and if it would be followed.

Reports on its success have since varied. While the policy aims to keep trans detainees safer



**Left: An electronic monitoring device is affixed to one of the women's ankles. Center: Most of the women wear the same blue slip-on shoes, but a couple sport tattered flip-flops and appear to be in need of new socks. Right: A detainee holds a comb with most of the teeth missing.**

from their peers in detention, the majority of anecdotal complaints seem to be about corrections officers, not inmates.

In 2012, Monica Scott, a transgender woman, was detained in Cook County Jail on a forgery charge.

Scott, 40, spent four days in a men's lockup with the general population before a staffer approached her about moving to Division 17,

where she would be housed with women, she said.

"They made it sound really, really sweet," said Scott.

Scott, who entered the jail with a drug problem, would have access to programs and resources that would both affirm her identity and help break her addiction, she was told. She would be housed with women instead of men. Still, she

didn't want to go to Division 17.

Scott had already been locked up with the men. Moving to a women's facility was bound to cause a stir, not just with other detainees but with corrections staff.

In the end, Scott said, she was right.

"When I got there with the women, it was crazy," she said. "I was assaulted by one of the officers."

Scott had been promised confidentiality, she said. But in Division 17, corrections officers knew she was transgender, and they taunted her because of it. Other detainees had also been told about her gender identity, making Scott a target for harassment.

In the showers, other detainees would corner her to study her body, she said.

She also alleges that she was beaten in front of other women by a corrections officer.

And the harassment followed her once she was released, she said, as the same officer tracked her down on the outside.

Keisha Allen, another transgender woman who entered the jail in November 2012, reported similar harassment when she was jailed in a men's lockup, Division 9.

"To me, my experience was horrible," said Allen. "I didn't really have no problems with men. I mostly had issues with the security guards. I felt like, for me, it was torture, waking up like, 'What is this officer going to say about me tomorrow?'"

Allen alleges that despite having a gender marker of "female" on her ID, she was housed with men.

Allen's story and Scott's resemble many coming out of not just Cook County Jail in past years but also jails and prisons throughout the country, where detainees are often confronted by anti-LGBT bias daily.

One Cook County Jail employee, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal, said that anti-trans verbal abuse at the jail has been part of the culture there. He has seen it regularly, he said.

"I've heard them called 'faggot' to their face," he said. "I've heard professional people, who are supposed to be professional people, in there like, 'I don't want to deal with this he-she. I don't want to deal with this it. Get this thing out of my office.' I've heard that. I've witnessed that. I've heard like, 'That thing should not be allowed to walk around.' I've heard that 'there's no way in hell I want to deal with that shit.' I've heard all kind of stuff. This is overt. This is what is allowed. It openly exists, and people laugh, and they giggle ... I've heard people say, 'I will not recognize you as a woman,' or, 'I will not recognize you as this person, because you were born this way, and that's the way you are going to be addressed.'"

According to the sheriff's office, the Cook County Department of Corrections has a zero-tolerance policy for verbal and physical abuse against inmates.

"We do have training procedures for staff regarding gender identity and discrimination," said the sheriff's office in a statement. "The Sheriff's Office of Professional Review objectively investigates all allegations against its employees. A new policy is being written to co-

ordinate services with CCSO (The Cook County Sheriff's Office) and Cermak [Health Services, at the jail] to provide appropriate accommodations for all subjects in its custody who identify as transgender or who are identified by Cermak as transgender. CCSO and Cermak strive to uphold the respect and dignity of all subjects in CCSO custody."

The protective-custody tier that houses transgender detainees and the addition of staff training are intended to address some of those issues.

Cook County Jail is one of a few in the country to draft a transgender policy that allows for self-identification. It is rarer still that jails offer several, if any, trans-specific accommodations. In many cases, Cook County is operating without other examples of how to house transgender inmates. Much of the strategy on that work has developed within the Gender Identity Committee with the backing of Sheriff Dart.

While the Division 6 tier is new, many trans women were previously housed in Division 11, where they had access to similar programs for trans women. Still, not all trans women are being held in Division 6; some remain in other parts of the jail for various reasons, including the charges they face.

#### Officer Erica Rosas

Among those who began work with the Gender Identity Committee early on was Officer Erica Rosas, a representative from Assistant Executive Director Martha J. Salazar's office.

Rosas had not worked with transgender people previously, but she fell into the role quickly and



**Monroe, a 26-year-old detainee, sits next to Officer Erica Rosas. For Monroe, being transgender in jail is not so different from being transgender on the outside.**

took over as chair of the committee about a year ago.

As chair of the committee, Rosas spent a lot of her off days visiting trans detainees at the jail. It took a long time to build rapport with the women. But in time, she feels she has started to gain trust.

Rosas appears quiet and serious but warm. Her attire is business-casual rather than the uniform that many jail employees sport. A large badge around her neck identifies her as an officer.

## Chicago House partnering with jail on transgender programs

BY KATE SOSIN

HIV service agency Chicago House has been making headlines the past two years for a massive expansion into transgender housing, employment, medical services, programs and legal support.

Now, the organization is taking that work into Cook County Jail.

The Cook County Sheriff's Office has announced a new partnership with Chicago House in a Windy City Times exclusive.

"This is the right thing to do," said Bonnie Wade, director of the TransLife Center at Chicago House. "We have to go where the need is, and it just makes sense to start this partnership."

Chicago House will provide services to transgender detainees as well as those being released from the jail. The organization will also be conducting trainings and support for jail staff.

Officer Erica Rosas is chair of the jail's Gender Identity Committee, which oversees transgender housing and programs at the jail. She sought out Chicago House in an effort to improve transgender services at the jail, she said.

"It's a no-brainer," Rosas said.

The announcement comes in the wake of a large expansion of services at Chicago House, which has long been a HIV housing service provider. Chicago House is in the process of opening its TransLife Center, a North Side transitional living house for transgender people. The organization has been steadily adding services to that project under the directorship of Wade, a long-time LGBTQ housing advocate.

Advocates have noted that few resources are available for transgender women upon release from jail. Sometimes, they are released in the middle of the night without housing, money, employment or other resources.

Chicago House hopes to change that by connecting trans detainees to the organization's TransLife Center before release.

Through Chicago House, transgender detainees will have access to a support group in the jail, one-on-one support with Chicago House staff, legal assistance and planning services before being discharged.

Channyn Lynne Parker, connect to care coordinator for Chicago House, has already started meeting with detainees, running a weekly support group in the jail for transgender people.

Parker is believed to be the first out transgender person to work in Cook County Jail.

"[The jail] sought the help of someone who has walked in [the trans detainees'] shoes," said Parker. "I was a stone's throw from being there. It could have been me."

Chicago House will work with those released on securing housing and employment. The organization said it hopes to cut down on recidivism at the jail.

Asked if a partnership with the jail, historically seen as an unsafe place for LGBT people, would be complicated for Chicago House, both Parker and Wade said the move would allow Chicago House to support the community's most marginalized.

"We go to where the need is, and it just makes sense to start this partnership," Wade said.



**Brenda Myers-Powell and Bonnie Wade walk through the halls of Cook County Jail's Division 6 together.**

## COOK CO. from page 13

In Ms. Brenda's group, Rosas observes silently in the background as Parker and "Ms. Brenda" Myers-Powell talk self-esteem. She pipes up toward the end to encourage the women to seize the moment and turn things around for themselves.

More than anyone, Rosas is charged with seeing to it that trans detainees are safe and are able to express their gender. She meets with each known trans detainee individually when they enter the jail and reports back to the committee. She also does wellness checks on the women.

Challenges range from securing appropriate clothing, underwear and toiletries to making sure that medical care is in order. And then there is the issue of staffing.

"I've become very overprotective," says Rosas, who acknowledges that there have been issues with corrections staff when it comes to transgender detainees.

Under Rosas, the role of the Gender Identity Committee has expanded significantly.

In March, the jail updated its transgender policy, adding more detailed guidelines for corrections staff and more oversight by the committee on the policy's implementation.

Under the current policy, detainees are asked if they self-identify as transgender once they enter the jail's booking area.

Those who self-identify are offered protective custody and are interviewed by Rosas or someone else from the committee. It is also possible for detainees to be classified as transgender by



**Left: Nastasha Valentino, 40, takes a moment for the camera. She says that Cook County Jail has made vast improvements over the last decade when she was last detained. Right: Nastasha Valentino and Monroe talk about their experiences in the jail's new protective custody tier for transgender inmates. Below: The Gender Identity Committee meets on Friday afternoon to discuss the 18 known transgender detainees in the jail.**

were harassed by peers. That same study found that 16 percent of trans detainees reported physical assault behind bars. Another 15 percent reported sexual assault.

Among Black transgender people who had interacted with police, 38 percent reported harassment. Fifty-one percent said they were uncomfortable seeking police assistance.

Of those who had been in prison or jail, 29 percent of Black respondents reported physical assault in custody, and 32 percent reported sexual assault.

Employment discrimination coupled with lack



**Dr. Kenya Key (Left) and Assistant Executive Director Martha J. Salazar listen as Officer Erica Rosas reviews the files of transgender detainees at the jail during a Gender Identity Committee Meeting.**

jail staff and placed into protective custody without self-identifying, the sheriff's office confirms.

After meeting with Rosas or another committee member, a detainee is assigned an accommodation plan. The plan includes information about the detainee's needs—from toiletries and underwear to hormones and other medications.

Many of the trans women who enter the jail receive a care package of feminine toiletries, bras and panties, among other things. The packages are donated either by Myers-Powell or the sheriff's Women's Justice Program. Part of the reason for this, Rosas notes, is that many of the trans detainees who enter the jail don't have money to purchase such things in the commissary.

Special accommodations have also been made for showers in Division 6, according to Rosas. Transgender women are given their own allotted time to shower.

Conspicuously absent from the discussion is anything about transgender men or transgender people who do not identify as strictly male or female. The Division 6 tier, Rosas says, is for transgender women alone. The sheriff's office states that the same services and accommodations are available to transgender men but does not go into specifics.

### Trans and locked up

The statistics about transgender people behind bars, particularly transgender women of color, are staggering.

A widely cited 2011 survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force found that 37 percent of transgender people experienced harassment by correctional officers, and 35 percent

of access to gender-related medical care leaves sex work as one of few options for many—even though people engage in sex work for myriad reasons. For many trans women, who would otherwise go without the surgeries and/or hormones they need in order to live, sex work has become the fastest and most economical option.

That fact, among other things, is a reason for pause about programs such as the "Prostitutes Anonymous" support group at Cook County Jail, say some advocates.

Cassandra Avenatti, a social worker and executive board member for Sex Workers Outreach Project Chicago, said that programs that aim to convince people to leave the trade can be shaming instead of helpful.

"They tend to not allow for sex workers to have any sort of agency or draw a more comprehensive picture of sex workers as a population and honor the fact that some folks do choose to engage in the sex trade, and some folks do feel empowered," Avenatti said. "Not everyone identifies or feels like a victim."

Avenatti also points out that the "Prostitutes Anonymous" support group assumes that all of the trans detainees in the tier are engaged in sex work. The sheriff's office confirmed that the tier attends Myers-Powell's meetings as a group, but added that other topics are open for discussion in the group.

Many trans women not engaged in sex work in Cook County report being charged with prostitution because police profile trans women as sex workers. So common and widespread is that occurrence in the U.S. that trans people have come to refer to it as "walking while trans."

Some trans women also get arrested on purpose, said the jail employee. Some trans people, he said, commit crimes so they can enter the jail because they can't afford medical care on the

outside.

"I've heard detainees say this. They do just enough to come in [to the jail] because they need that medical care. That's the only way they can afford to get that medical treatment," he said. "I've heard detainees say, 'You know, I'm in here because I need to get my hormones, and the only way I can get this is to do something on the outside.' And that's sad."

### The Gender Identity Committee

On a Friday afternoon, the Gender Identity Committee convenes to review the files of new detainees.

The conference room is small, warm and out of date, lit by the same fluorescent glare as Myers-Powell's classroom.

Around the linoleum table sit George J. Vournazos, assistant general counsel to the sheriff; Scott Bratlen, superintendent in Division 6; Myers-Powell; Rosas; Salazar; and Dr. Kenya Key. Parker and Wade from Chicago House are also present.

Rosas hands each committee member a stack of papers. There are just a handful of new detainees this week, so things proceed quickly.

Rosas reads the name of each detainee, detailing what the woman has and what she needs. For the most part, the committee discusses two things: how a detainee is faring at the jail and whether or not her basic needs as a trans person are being met.

Rosas reports that one of the women needs a brassiere, while she notes that another has received a care package of feminine hygiene products.

In total, Rosas reports that there are 18 transgender people detained at the jail.

The jail employee said he thinks that number is far higher.

### A change at the jail

Some of the trans women in custody report that a change in the overall culture at the jail has also changed what it means to be detained there. That's in part because the jail has increasingly focused on rehabilitation over punishment, employees say.

Valentino has been locked up since September. It's her first time being detained at the jail in a decade, she says.

"The Cook County Jail from when I was here 10 years ago was nowhere near close to the same,"

Valentino says.

In her eyes, things have changed dramatically and for the better.

There are days now, she says, when Cook County Jail doesn't exactly feel like jail.

You can come and go between activities without handcuffs. There are programs here, people to talk to, friends you know from the outside. On good days, the jail feels like a place with resources and opportunities, she says.

"You can get your hair cut," she says. "You can get your hair done. You can get a job here."

But there are other days when the reality of detention hits you, days when the place morphs. It's the mood, Valentino says. You walk through the halls and you feel it—today you are in jail. Yesterday, this was a different place.

Not everyone in the tier is thrilled to be there. In fact, many feel they have been unnecessarily segregated. A 26-year-old trans detainee who asks to be identified only as Monroe was among them.

"At first, I thought the transgender committee was segregating you," Monroe said.

In Division 6, the women are picked out of the general population and placed in protective custody, a designation for detainees deemed vulnerable by corrections staff.

When the jail's Gender Identity Committee meets to talk about the new tier, Dr. Kenya Key reports that several of the women are requesting psychiatric evaluations in an attempt to have their gender-identity status changed to get out of the tier.

Part of the challenge has been that the women have been plucked out of men's lockups but have yet to see a benefit in the transgender tier, Rosas notes.

Chicago House services at the jail are just beginning. Without those services, some women feel they have been unnecessarily singled out, outing them to the rest of the jail and putting them at risk of ridicule and harassment. Others would rather be in close proximity to men, Valentino notes.

Rosas hopes that the partnership with Chicago House will make the tier more appealing to detainees. Monroe says she is open to the possibility.

Valentino prefers protective custody. Being with the general population feels dangerous, she said. She remains hopeful but skeptical.

"At the end of the night, you're still in jail," she says.

# Dear Brother Behind Bars: LGBTQ letter-writing campaigns to prisoners

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Ditching technology and the email that goes with it, men reach for pen and paper to write letters to their pen pals behind prison bars.

Brothers Behind Bars is a letter-writing campaign run through RFD (Radical Faerie Digest) magazine, a national quarterly publication geared toward gay, bisexual and transgender men.

Dating back to 1974, RFD is a reader-written journal, focused on country living and alternative lifestyles. The magazine aims to promote community-building and networking, among other things.

Myrlin is the editor for Brothers Behind Bars. He reads every single piece of mail.

Since 2002, he has been receiving letters from inmates requesting pen pals. With his database of about 1,600 prisons, he makes a list of all prisoners who would like to have correspondence and distributes the list to subscribers who request it.

The majority of the men writing in to participate are inmates rather than men outside prison, which makes Myrlin wonder if the gay community cares about inmates and inmate issues.

"It's mushroomed under my watch because I respond to everybody, and I try to do a good job," said Myrlin. "A lot of times I feel some people, they'll say to me, 'We know you can't guarantee us any results, but at least you give us hope that we might be able to find someone to write to and become friends with.'"

Myrlin also assembles the Prison Pages column featured in RFD magazine. The column is an outlet for inmates to communicate and share talents as they are able to send in material such as advertisements for pen pals, poems, short stories and artwork.

"I've known a lot of people who've been friends of mine who have gone to prison for various reasons, and when I got started in this, it was more that I was looking for friends," said Myrlin. "So, I was writing to people in RFD magazine when it used to be published in there, and I found some amazing pen friends who were inmates who helped me through some really tough times in my own life, when I needed someone to talk to."

Over the years, Myrlin has corresponded with many inmates, and with the number growing, he said it is sometimes difficult to juggle.

In 2004, Myrlin chose to write to a trans inmate named Trixi, who lived in a prison in California. The two became friends and over the years, a romantic relationship grew. The two now live in Tennessee together.

Gay inmates, Myrlin said, have no one with whom they can share their feelings, an emotionally straining experience. The letters provide a way for inmates to let out thoughts they would otherwise have to keep to themselves.

"It can be the world of difference if they survive in prison or not," said Myrlin. "You have no friends in prison. Trixi, my partner, says you don't trust anyone. You can't even trust the people who are closest to you in prison; you have to guard everything you do. Where with a pen friend, that you open up and trust, you can pour your heart out and not feel rejection. We all need that."

Andrew Deppe, a Chicago resident, has corresponded with his two current pen pals with two letters a month to each since 2007. He has even made a few trips to visit his pen pals at their respective prisons. One of his pen pals identifies as gay, and the other as bisexual. Deppe said having the LGBTQ male connection was largely why he was interested in Brothers Behind Bars.

"That's a big part of why they picked me, or

why I picked them to write to," said Deppe. "It's more isolating in prison. It's better than it used to be in terms of how the guards are trained and how the other prisoners interact with you, but it's certainly in the dark ages in terms of trans issues. I think for gay men it's still harder in prison because you're sort of a target or sexually more vulnerable as well."

Deppe came across a handful of descriptions of possible pen pals and picked randomly.

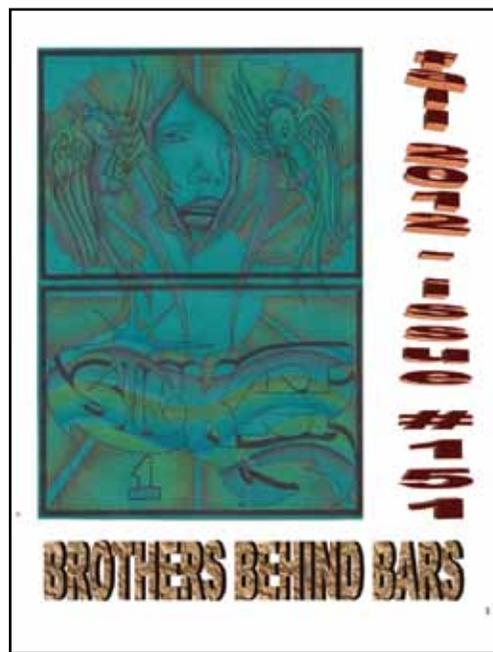
His pen pal relationships make him feel like part of somebody else's growth process. Writing is never repetitive, as each inmate has something different to say, whether it be different complaints, different things he is doing, or different things he reads.

"I feel kind of honored these people are willing to be so candid and honest and trusting of me," said Deppe. "I think they feel the same way. So, it's a mutuality of trust and affection and gratitude for the whole thing. It's rare. We live in a pretty hostile, angry world, and certainly they do inside the prison system in Illinois. There's just a lot of negative energy from the prison guards and other prisoners and so forth. There are sparks of light and nice little occasionally positive relationships. Just to share a little bit of love and positive energy and faith is a good thing for them and for me."

Photographs, Deppe said, are something his pen pals enjoy receiving, so he sends pictures of him and his partner, vacations, the lakefront in the summer and other subjects.

Aside from being targets as LGBT people, inmates have conveyed other concerns to Deppe. Access to job preparation or vocational programs for job opportunities once they are released is a significant worry.

"People are being punished, so when they get



Left: Cover of the Fall 2012 issue of Brothers Behind Bars. Below: Myrlin (left), editor of Brothers Behind Bars, with his partner Trixi.

out they're not prepared," said Deppe. "They've never seen a computer, or they don't know how to look for a job, and then they end up back in the same social situation that got them in the prison in the first place, whether it's gangs, or drugs, or screwed-up families."

For Deppe, being a source of trust for his pen pals is a privilege.

"The ability to extend myself and focus on making somebody else's life just a little bit better, sending them a book about Buddha, going to visit for an afternoon, or whatever, totally changes their whole perspective and their attitude and everything because their life is so bleak otherwise," he said. "It's not that much skin off my nose. I have a very privileged life ... Why not share a little bit of it? The messages I get in the mail are so full of appreciation and kindness and thoughtful energy, and it's so worth it."

**For additional information on Brothers Behind Bars, visit [rfdmag.org](http://rfdmag.org). To receive the pen pal list, write to P.O. Box 68, Liberty, TN 37095.**



## A letter from Andrew Deppe to Charles in prison, Sept. 17, 2012

Dear Charles:

Just checked my email and spent about an hour on the computer with the U.S. Chess Federation website, so I thought I'd compose a note to you at the keyboard this time. I got your letter of September 3 with the long list of legal websites to investigate. I thought I'd start with the Chess Federation, since you asked about that over the phone and mentioned it in your earlier letter of August 20.

What a project. I was able to submit an inquiry about correspondence chess, mentioning the name of Alex Dunne. However, their website and my printer don't seem to have a very good relationship. I enclose three barely readable pages: first is a copy of my inquiry submitted via their comments page; second is the main page under "correspondence chess"; and third is what came up under "more correspondence chess information." I was unable to find anything about algebraic notation.

Hope this helps. At some point, I'll get to the other list of websites. Meantime, tell me how you're doing with the paralegal course.

I've also gotten some phone messages of collect calls on my machine the last few days. I hope everything is all right. Sorry I'm so hard to reach by phone. If I come to visit in October, it will probably be in the first week (October 1-5 sometime). I'll either let you know or just show up!

I know you're in need of money, but it's pretty tight for me right now. I think I can scrape together \$40 and send it with this letter tomorrow. My clients are continuing to cancel at the last minute, reschedule multiple times, or just not show up for appointments. The sessions that I am doing are great - I just wish I had more of them, and that people weren't so inconsiderate. I lose a lot of business holding a spot for someone, telling others I'm not available, then facing last-minute cancellations. In any event, I hope this contribution will help somewhat.

I don't have much cash right now, but I'm raising a lot of money for AIDS Walk, which I've been doing every year for 12-15 years now. This year it's September 30—and I've raised over \$1,500 so far. I milked my 50th birthday for all it was worth, emailing lots of friends and family and telling them I wanted contributions to AIDS Walk as a birthday present this year. They're really coming through.

My birthday itself was great. My cousin Tom (son of my Uncle John who died in August) came to town with my Aunt Sue from Champaign/Urbana. His birthday is a day before mine. Stephen, my dad and I took him to a White Sox game (his favorite team), then my mother made a nice birthday lunch for the both of us the next day. That night, Stephen took my parents and me to a really fancy French restaurant for dinner. Lots of wine and fantastic, memorable food. Now I'm starting my second half-century.

Today is Rosh Hashana, so we went to services at Or Chadash (the mostly lesbian/gay synagogue where Stephen has been a member since 1978). It was a beautiful and meaningful service for the Jewish new year. I have plenty of new year's resolutions this time!

I'm still swimming in Lake Michigan every other morning or so, but the water temperature has started to drop. It's now about 72, after hovering around 79 or 80 for several weeks. We'll see how long I last! At least the indoor Park District pool is two blocks away, so I can start going back there when the lake has really cooled off.

I hope I get to see you in a couple of weeks. Meantime, hope the \$40 is at least some help. I'm also planning to send \$25 to Michael Williams, since I got another letter explaining his situation and what he needs. Love and blessings to you,

Andrew Deppe



Andrew Deppe.

# Beth Richie on race, gender and the 'prison nation'

BY YASMIN NAIR

Beth Richie is professor of African American Studies, criminology, law and justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago and director of the university's Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy.

One of the most cited scholars on the intersection of race, gender and prisons, Richie also has a long and illustrious history as a feminist activist and was a co-founder of INCITE!, a national organization of activist women of color working on violence.

Her new book, *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation* (New York University Press, 2012), is a critical examination and re-examination of several of the issues Richie has been writing about and working on for many years: prisons, the criminal legal/justice system, and the particular vulnerabilities of women and African-American women in particular as they operate at the intersection of what Richie and many other scholars point to as a profoundly racist and misogynistic system.

Richie cut her activist teeth within the anti-violence movement, where LGBTQ and feminist activists (often the same people) have found a place to both articulate and resist the violence done to them. So, it might surprise many that her latest work is critical of the anti-violence movement for two main reasons: the fact that it contributes to what Richie calls "the prison nation" by uncritically invoking and strengthening a law-and-order system that expands incarceration, and its inability to consider both gender and race inequality. At the same time, Richie contends, Black mainstream political figures and organizations ignore those whose bodies and lives fall outside the neat categories of race and gender.

As an example, Richie considers, among others, the case of the New Jersey 4 (also known as the NJ4). Seven Black lesbian young women were walking in Greenwich Village one evening in 2006 when they were attacked by a man who began abusing them verbally and threatening them physically, while hurling anti-gay epithets. In the confrontation that followed, one of the women used a knife on the man, who was hospitalized with a lacerated liver. The resulting trial, where the women claimed self-defense, became a media sensation with the press using terms such as "lesbian wolf-pack" to describe them. Out of all the women, Patreese Johnson is the last one remaining in prison. According to Richie and many other commentators, the only people who eventually came to the women's aid, organizing funds and support, was a nationwide network of queer radical grassroots activists.

Richie spoke to Windy City Times in her Hyde Park home about the complex underpinnings of the NJ4 case, what it revealed about race, sexuality and gentrification, women and prison, her own history in the anti-violence movement and why she felt compelled to turn a critical eye upon it.

**Windy City Times: Most people writing critically about the criminal legal system, as you do, refer to or focus on what they term "the prison industrial complex." You focus on what you call the "prison nation." What do you mean by that term?**

Beth Richie: When I use the term "prison nation," I'm referring both to the actual existence and control exerted through the prisons, jails, prisons, detention centers, secured halfway houses, the actual buildings and the ideology. So, it's both a literal meaning and a metaphorical meaning. The literal meaning is of course the 7 million people who are detained, the disproportionate number of people of color, the harsh conditions, the distance from communities, the money that's poured into that, operating those buildings instead of funding other things. I critique that practice.

But I'm also trying to critique the ways that



Author Beth Richie.

we think about social problems as problems related to lawbreaking, and how we exercise a punitive or criminalized approach to solving problems like mental illness, pregnancy, sex, violence, drug addiction.

This came home to me when I was reading about the decarceration rates, or the rates of imprisonment going down, especially for women, especially for Black women in a new study that came out. And first I thought, Oh, this is great news, I can now write about gardening or something [laughs].

And then I realized that in some ways the closing of the buildings doesn't change all that much, because as we close more buildings, we put more people in ankle bracelets, under house arrest, or make their probation longer.

**WCT: We expand sex offender registries.**

BR: The registries, the registries ... I mean, that's a prison nation without a prison. We might have fewer buildings but we haven't changed the fundamental ideological position that says we need to control people, keep them under surveillance, make sure that their freedom and mobility are constrained, and their options are taken away from them. That's a prison nation.

**WCT: In light of all that, what do you think of hate-crime legislation, which is so popular, especially in the LGBTQ community?**

BR: There again, I would start out by saying, just like I would about all violence, that violence ruins lives, it serves to threaten not just the people who are directly harmed but groups of people associated with that. Violence has a symbolic meaning as well as a concrete meaning, and we need to find ways, serious ways, that can be sustained over time, to stop it.

[Hate-crime legislation] empowers the state that has articulated an interest in making non-citizens out of queer people—to turn to that state to protect queer people is illogical. It's illogical at best, and naive and dangerous. It means that we will somehow trust or give authority to the state to not mess up [laughs] the part of its job which is to protect people from harm, when in fact it exerts such harm. It would worry me to report a hate crime in a place where we have aggressive sex offender registries, for example, because all that does is give more information about who's queer and who's not to

tionate targeting of queer youth who live on the street, the lack of protection inside the facilities, for queer people, the inability of a school to accept gender-non-normative students: It's all of that. And yet, we're going to say, "We're hurt, help us."

**WCT: The book is focused on women. A lot of the work around the prison nation or the prison industrial complex focuses on African-American men given, for instance, the disproportionate numbers of them in prison. But your book barely mentions such issues, and there isn't even a gestural motion towards the issues facing men in prison. What was behind that decision?**

BR: I intentionally use the term "male violence," to push the notion of a patriarchal state versus interpersonal violence inflicted upon women by men. But whenever you say "male violence," people think about a male batterer, a husband battering a wife, a boyfriend battering a girlfriend. One of the things I'm trying to do here is discuss the larger structural violence that is inherent in patriarchy which, for me, can account for things like violence, can account for police brutality, can account for media images that are degrading, without reducing it to the kind of sexual assault and domestic violence that typically gets all of the attention.

Men are implicated in the patriarchal state in particular ways because of their privilege, but the book is about more than just individual male violence.

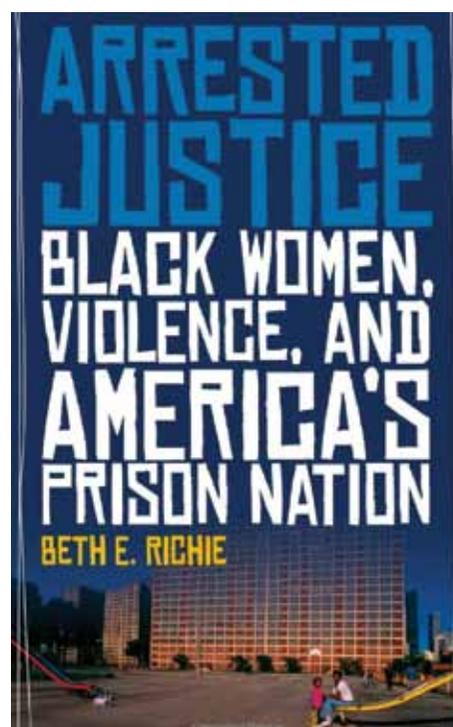
In the question of African-Americans or Black violence and state violence and incarceration: On the one hand the field, including activism in the field, has been appropriately preoccupied with the overrepresentation of Black men and incarceration. I think that has allowed for a narrowing of an understanding of what the real problem of a prison nation is. Because it's focused on the number of Black bodies and the gender of those Black bodies inside the walls. [Centralizing the] prison nation allows us to discuss something much bigger that, for better or worse, has equal effects in terms of its impact on men and women.

If you're a woman, things are much worse, because our communities don't attend to the ways that we're under the control of the prison nation. That doesn't rise up to a community priority. The prison nation is much worse for women because we're left with the burden of both the political and personal or intimate sphere of life—we've got to do everything in our communities, we're burdened because we are the primary care providers of prisoners we visit, we send money, make phone calls, go to court. There's disproportionate labor involved for Black women.

Most activists, even queer women of color who are in leadership positions as prison abolitionists ... are working without a clear gender analysis.

**WCT: In your critique of the anti-violence movement and what you see as its failure to address key issues facing Black and queer women in particular, you point to some harrowing examples, including the backlash against the New Jersey 4. You point out that both the mainstream African-American community and the mainstream gay and lesbian community abandoned these women, and it was left to grassroots radical organizers to mount a campaign for their support. Why do you think the New Jersey 4 were ignored by the people who might seem like the ones with the most at stake in helping them?**

BR: I think they made it too complicated. The Black civil rights self-appointed leadership that sees race as the master narrative to explain everything needs to hold very tight to that narrative to make it work. So [it resists] anything that complicates its agenda, be it sexuality, class, even age to some extent. They're arguing in many ways on a platform of Black respectabil-



the state, when they're going after us in other kinds of ways.

**WCT: Can you expand on the part about making queer people non-citizens?**

BR: The prison nation is a metaphor as well as a place, and there are lots of examples where the state has said that our rights as queer people aren't the same as other people's. People have a right to marry—not that I think that's a right worth all of the effort that we're involved in—but it's a right. Our partnerships, our ability to have children, our ability to do the same kinds of things, join the military, all of those places where there is a prohibition of gay citizenship being exercised, however people choose to do that, means that the state hasn't fully recognized us as full citizens. And it's when the state recognizes you as a full citizen that you can access the benefits of the state, including the benefit of protection.

What we've said in hate-crime legislation, overly simplified, is [to ask the same state that criminalizes us to give us protection] by, in effect, saying, "We're going to ask you to protect us, even though you have not only not recognized our full humanity as citizens, but also gone after us in some very particular ways."

We see that criminalization in the disproportional

ity that does not include poor, Black, lesbian, young people, let alone only young people, only lesbians.

The same is true of queer organizing. That's why marriage and military service become the dominant issues we fight for because those are about mirroring heterosexuality: "We're just like straight people, and we deserve the same rights as straight people. We want to get married and we want to fight in the wars." And so they can't accommodate for gender very well, class very well, age very well, or anything that transgresses something that makes it either a complicated intersection or something that's not about respectability.

So, the fact that the assaults on the New Jersey 4 happened in Greenwich Village is critically important to that analysis. Greenwich Village is white, and middle-class gay manhood is just the perfection there. You can feel a difference in how that community has changed. First of all, any displays of affection, let alone between Black, feminine, sexual, younger women insult everybody and it probably insults white, middle-class gay men who are heterosexually identified as much as it did that dude who assaulted them.

There's a gentrified, class dimension to that area, even the white performance of male queerness: the very well-dressed, physically attractive-in-a-very-particular-kind-of-way gay male. That appeals to a kind of progressive heterosexual group of people who are their neighbors: It's the coexistence of those two things, class and a performance of a certain kind of sexuality.

These kids insulted that. That public space is contested territory, so I'm not sure gay men were any more sympathetic. In fact, I'm sure they weren't any more sympathetic to what happened to the New Jersey 4 than the Black community leaders.

And, to be very clear, anti-violence groups didn't show up, either. Feminist-based anti-violence groups that supposedly understand sexual assault and street harassment didn't show up, either. Because, again, the combination, of who the young women were, threatened so-called feminist analysis.

**WCT: Given all that, what made it possible for such an intense grassroots effort to spring up around the New Jersey 4?**

BR: One reason is that it was so vile, so obvious. The way it was reported, in the newspapers, even if you look at the actual sentencing, it was all so aggressively violent: the description of them as a "lesbian wolf-pack," the interest in protecting New Yorkers from terrorism invoked as the sentencing proceeded. It was all so easy to see; there was no nuance.

**WCT: You mentioned feminist anti-violence**

**groups, and this book is certainly extremely critical of them. Yet, you've been doing feminist anti-violence work for a very long time. You've been both a part of it and one of its main figures. In many ways, your work has helped move anti-violence work forward. What accounts for your particular trajectory away from that and for such a strong critique?**

"Something has to stop the violence. Where were the neighbors? Where was gun control? Where was medication for his mental-health problem? Where was a religious institution that didn't deny and maybe even enable it?"

BR: Yes, it's a very important part of what this book is. I can read the anti-violence movement as a place where I grew up politically, and the critique that I offer is in part a self-critique. I did believe that the anti-violence movement was the place where a radical-feminist-of-color articulation of politics could be actualized. I really believed that. So I worked a long time—and sometimes I think too long—inside that movement to try to change it.

I still think of myself as a part of the movement that I describe in the book. That's because I think that if we trust it, take the movement at its word, it is one of the places where the most radical potential can happen. Unlike other issues, the immediacy of life and death around violence feels like it requires particular urgency. At the same time, there is nothing more powerful in how it's organizing race and class in our society than the prison nation.

When you put those two together, the working out of the interrelationship between those two things is profound. I sometimes say that I feel like growing up as I did in the anti-violence movement taught me to be a prison abolitionist, and I don't know that I would have embraced the critically urgent work of prison abolition if I hadn't been in the anti-violence [movement].

So, for instance, when my cousin was hurt, and [her partner] was trying to kill her: I'm glad someone called the police; she'd be dead otherwise. But here's what it also challenged me to think about as an activist as well as a human being, a human-rights activist: What else would have possibly saved her life? What could have saved her life in a better way than the state incarcerating him? What damage did it do to her

to have him almost kill her, and what damage did it do to her to incarcerate him? It raises a different set of questions. Because male violence, patriarchal violence, is so raw and real and urgent, it asks us to ask these questions, rather than being limited to the question "Oh, no, what can do we do in this immediate situation?"

**WCT: In the situation that you describe, what is the alternative at that very particular moment of violence?**

BR: Something has to stop the violence. Where were the neighbors? Where was gun control? Where was medication for his mental-health problem? Where was a religious institution that didn't deny and maybe even enable it? So all of these things, where were those things? I don't just mean in his history but the day before that could have prevented that and if not them, then an authority that could at that moment intervene to protect her and how do we have that authority—if we're going to rely upon a hierarchical system of authority, how do we contain that authority so that it doesn't go crazy?

And to me that's the challenge. A lot of people think about prison abolition or nonreliance on law enforcement as only prevention, but I think we have to bring it much more up to the moment where harm is actually being done and who else or what else could stop it. I know it means removal, separation, containment, protection. I could imagine that it might look to people like a police department. I'm not saying there shouldn't be police; I'm saying there shouldn't be this kind of unregulated authority to intervene and take away even her rights, to figure out what it is that she wants.

**WCT: In what ways are her rights denied or taken away?**

BR: If she failed to cooperate, she would possibly be charged with a crime herself. If she got an order of protection, and didn't turn him in if he violated it to bring her cash or to see his kids, whatever that might be, then she's in violation. She not only may be charged with some-

thing like that, but she could also lose whatever the right that comes from "oh, he was here yesterday to give me \$50, but I'm calling you today because he's got a gun" and they respond, "Well, you let him in yesterday."

**WCT: So, she's constantly criminalized.**

BR: And the cases where the women try to do the right thing, use their own judgment about what's right, but also try to do the right thing by the law—it just feels like that doesn't work any better, either. Take, for instance, the case of Tiawanda Moore, the Chicago woman who called the police in 2010 after a case of domestic violence, was sexually harassed by an officer who responded, recorded the police officers who discouraged her from filing a complaint, and then was jailed for violating Illinois' eavesdropping law. [Moore was eventually acquitted] So even doing right by the system leaves women criminalized. And these aren't extreme stories. They're all too common.

**WCT: Your analysis of all these issues is very much focused on African-American communities. How do you prevent it from being read as another kind of pathology, another way for people to explain away the issues facing African-Americans as inherently cultural, for instance?**

BR: This is why writing a book about a movement that you're part of is tricky, because I know that one read of this could be, "See, that does explain violence in African-American communities." So, one strategy that I try to use when talking about the book is to make sure to push out the analysis beyond the individual level to the structural level. In other words, the more serious indictment of state-inflicted violence is the one that I want to be the master narrative here. It's the state-inflicted violence that allows for the unchecked intimate-partner violence or interpersonal violence or community violence. I really do believe that if we were to challenge a racist, patriarchal state and get that right, we would decrease violence at the individual level. So, I wrote it not to be evidence of what's wrong with Black people, but for what's wrong for Black people. That's a real critical difference.

**WCT: We're in Illinois, which is home to a significant anti-prison movement, and we've seen a fair amount of decarceration. What's your response to that?**

BR: Well, in a prison nation, that almost doesn't matter. Because people are going to states of confinement that are maybe even more difficult because they're not getting the credit for being in prison. So, it's not as though liberation is coming from decarceration.



**CRIME  
OUT**

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## VIEWPOINTS

WINDY CITY  
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 Community Marketing, Inc.

JOHN  
PELLER

## State-run health insurance marketplace: Why AFC opposes HB 3227

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) recently made the difficult decision to oppose legislation pending in Springfield that creates a state-run health insurance marketplace. We base this decision on the poor consumer protections in the bill.

House Bill 3227 (Senate Amendment 2) is backed by our partners, including Campaign for Better Health Care (CBHC), and is sponsored by Sen. Dave Koehler (D-Peoria), a long-time friend of AFC and champion for helping people without insurance access health care. Still, we cannot support it.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) creates online health insurance marketplaces that will allow individuals, families, and small business employees to shop for health coverage. Marketplaces are a central component to the success of ACA state implementation. Plans sold on the marketplace will be available to most people,

including people with HIV, regardless of their diagnosis or condition, ending decades of legal discrimination by insurance companies against people with HIV. People earning between about \$16,000 and \$46,000 will be able to receive subsidies to make premiums and out-of-pocket costs more affordable.

States have the option to operate the marketplace themselves, use a marketplace run by the federal government, or operate a state-federal partnership. In 2014, Illinois will employ the state-federal partnership option and use the federal marketplace as the backbone of its system; however, Illinois will directly operate outreach, enrollment, and other programs. (See the Kaiser Family Foundation's "State Decisions on Health Insurance Exchanges and the Medicaid Expansion" for more information.)

The primary reason AFC opposes HB 3227 is that the Illinois General Assembly and its insurance-industry allies would have heavy control over the marketplace. Here are three examples of why this creates an unhealthy system of oversight: 1) the General Assembly would annually approve the budget for the exchange, even though its operating funds are held outside the state treasury; 2) the General Assembly would control even small details, such as the executive director's salary; and 3) language in the bill limits the exchange's future ability to impose standards that are more rigorous than the minimums established by the federal government.

The insurance industry has tremendous influence in Springfield. Advocates often joke that consumer-friendly insurance reform bills go to the House and Senate Insurance Committees to die. Moreover, the insurance industry makes significant campaign donations to sitting members

of the General Assembly, as detailed in this 2011 State Journal Register article.

Giving significant control of the exchange to the General Assembly is akin to letting the fox design, build, stock, and guard the henhouse. If us chickens are to have a meaningful choice of affordable insurance plans that provide high-quality health care, the exchange needs more independence from the General Assembly and by extension, the insurance industry.

We favor an independent marketplace board of directors that includes strong consumer and small business members, not insurance industry representatives. A board with these standards and statewide representation will be vested in making the best decisions for Illinois health insurance consumers.

HB 3227 passed the Senate Insurance Committee May 9 by a vote of eight to five. Tellingly, the Illinois Governor's Office position was "neutral," meaning they neither supported nor opposed the bill. The bill awaits a vote in the full Senate, and then must proceed to the House. It's too soon to predict if the measure will advance in the House by the end of the session on May 31.

Meanwhile, the marketplace, run by the state-federal government, will begin enrolling Illinoisans beginning Oct. 1, 2013, for coverage starting Jan. 1, 2014.

If HB 3227 does become law, AFC will work to influence regulations to favor consumers, and of course, we will advocate in future General Assembly sessions to improve the law for people with HIV, as well as other vulnerable populations.

**John Peller is vice president of policy at AIDS Foundation of Chicago.**

## LETTERS

### A taxing situation

Dear Windy City Times,

Cardinal Francis George, in a desperate attempt to prevent the legalization of same-sex marriage here in Illinois, is relying on a group of Chicago-area Black ministers he thinks he can count on to halt the gay-marriage movement.

His efforts fly in the face of a growing number of African-American leaders—including ministers and the former head of the NAACP, Julian Bond—who have come out in favor LGBT-marriage rights. Nevertheless, the Cardinal met with a number of Black ministers (the anti-gay African-American Clergy Coalition) to hammer out a plan to urge congregants to tell their legislators to say "no" to legalized same-sex marriage.

At the cardinal's behest, the pastors recently recorded a radio commercial in the archdiocese studios pitched to African-American households. Shame on Francis George. Not only do the majority of Catholics favor gay marriage but the cardinal now faces a petition drive to get the tax-exempt status of the Chicago Archdiocese revoked.

With his aggressive street campaign to interfere with House Bill 170 and because he has become the predominant and most active opponent of this legislation, his influence can only be considered substantial and in violation of Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. The reader can sign the petition online at [www.change.org/petitions/revoked-chicago-diocese-tax-exempt-status](http://www.change.org/petitions/revoked-chicago-diocese-tax-exempt-status).

Craig Teichen  
Chicago

### A bad raise

I have assisted, in the past, with a non-profit group getting a booth established for Market Days. I was very saddened to learn this year that the booth fee increased—but only for the non-profit customers. The reason is that they are not revenue-generating, and the increase is being done to "weed them out." Non-profit booths, in a street faire of this nature, are very important for many reasons.

First, they show the world the many faces that, in this case, make up our colorfully gay culture. People, who may not be out themselves, can come to this in a guise of safety with their peers, and use it as an opportunity to learn about things that could assist them in their "coming-out." Also, non-profits that depend on events such as these to drive membership for fundraising purposes would be impacted if the goal of "weeding out non-profits due to profit-

ability" is really what is the case here. Lastly, I'd like to point out that grassroots organizations that are similar to those that have helped shape this country got their start in places like these, so taking away their opportunity due to a lack of funds is a travesty. Funds are scarce when first starting out and bright lights may be cut short at just a thought because of this issue.

I felt compelled to email your paper about this issue because you are so closely tied to the gay community, and if this is correct I'd hope you'd like to bring in issue like this to light. In a world where there is so much injustice going on, it would be said to see an organization of gay-focused business owners potentially hurting some of the groups that have helped shaped the society they live in.

Warm regards,  
Kevin Patterson  
Chicago

Send letters and viewpoints  
to [Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com](mailto:Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com).  
Items may be  
edited for  
length or clarity.

## GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo courtesy of HBO

## PIANO MAN

Windy City Times reviews the HBO bio *Behind the Candelabra*, about the life of Liberace (Michael Douglas, above). Read page 24.

## DISH

Show time.  
Page 34

Photo from the National Restaurant Show  
by Andrew Davis



## THEATER

'Flower' child.  
Page 20

Photo Orange Flower Water  
courtesy of Mary Jane Maharry



## SPORTS

Play ball.  
Page 38

Photo of Sylvia Fowles  
from Chicago Sky



## SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

# Young, gifted and Black

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The Chicago theater scene is about to lose the gifted out actor and playwright Sentell Harper. He's planning on relocating to Brooklyn soon, so now is the time to catch him locally in *Seek and Ye Shall Find*, Harper's amazing one-man show for Mortar Theatre Company focusing a guy's love-hate relationship with different people and aspects of the gay Black male community.

"This show is deeply personal because I really feel like even though it's through the characters, it's really my journey," said Harper, who started developing the idea for this one-man show in graduate school at Arizona State University in 2008.

Back then, the show featured only about 15 characters and was drawn from more formalized interviews. But now the dozens more characters Harper portrays in the show have been also drawn from his hometown in Washington, D.C., and from his past five years living in Chicago.

"When I came to Chicago, it was wonderful to be surrounded by other gay Black men," Harper said.

Yet Harper also developed a lot of qualms about many of his peers. For example, there's a vignette in the show where he goes to a Black gay book club meeting and is shocked to discover that he was the only person who actually read the book (*The Lovely Bones*). The gathering then shifted focus to everyone just listening to the latest Rhianna CD.

"That really did happen!" Harper said with a

laugh. "When I was in those situations, I noticed that I myself was passing a lot of judgement and I felt like I didn't fit into this group, so I felt kind of like an outsider, even in this specific community."

One of the amazing things about Harper's show is how he transitions so seamlessly between characters, who are homages to people he knows and have met through the years.

"One of the reason I've always wanted to be an actor is because I love character transformation," Harper said. "It really was my desire and love to make sure that every character was precise."

Harper also tackles a lot of issues facing not only the African-American gay community, but also other communities at large. The "down low" issue of gay men maintaining a straight facade is, of course, brought up, although one character in the show points out that it doesn't just happen in the Black community.

"I did want to tackle HIV and I wanted to look at it not in the terms of 'Oh, I'm so sorry for this gay Black man who has HIV, I wanted the audience to actually hear from someone who has survived and is surviving his experience,'" Harper said. "What I love about the character of Shawn, who has HIV, is that he overhears this shade being thrown and instead of him being shunned by it or feeling awful about it, he stands up to it."

One constant that Harper found throughout all his interviews was a lot of men are still dealing with incidents and insecurities from their childhood and early teen years, which became a sort



Sentell Harper in his one-man show *Seek and Ye Shall Find* for Mortar Theatre Company at the Apollo Theater Studio. Photo by Tom McGrath

of theme in the show.

"There's a lot of hurt, angry men in the gay Black community. And instead of getting to the root of what's causing that, which could be something that either has to do with something about themselves or has happened to them, what happens is that they blame the outside and I found that's what I did," Harper said. "I took a whole group and started to generalize them and it wasn't until I was able to say to myself, 'Wait a minute, I'm worthy and I'm good enough,' that I was able to open up a little more and allow people to be who they were."

Mortar Theatre Company's *Seek and Ye Shall Find* continues through Saturday, June 8, at the Apollo Theater Studio, 2540 N. Lincoln Ave. Performances are 3 p.m. Saturdays, 7 p.m. Sundays, and 7:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Tickets are \$15 and \$10 for students; call 773-935-6100 or visit [www.mortartheatrecompany.org](http://www.mortartheatrecompany.org).

### Gay plays in the suburbs

One expects to be able to see prominent gay plays in a major metropolitan city like Chicago. But what about in the traditionally conservative Chicago-area suburbs like the ones in DuPage and Kane counties?

It's interesting to note that Batavia-based Albright Theatre in Kane County recently staged a 20th-anniversary production of Jonathan Harvey's British gay teen drama *Beautiful Thing* (following *Pride Films and Plays*, which produced its own 20th-anniversary Chicago staging earlier this season). Meanwhile, Village Theatre Guild, in DuPage County's Glen Ellyn, is just about to open its own production of Geoffrey Naufft's 2010 gay spirituality drama *Next Fall* just as AstonRep Theatre Company is finishing its run of the show at the BoHo Theatre at Heartland Studios.

And it's not just gay drama making inroads to the suburbs. On the musical side, the new Naperville company Bright Side Theatre this June will stage *Rent*, Jonathan Larson's award-winning 1996 rock opera which prominently features LG-BTQ relationships. The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus has also in recent years performed regularly in Oak Brook at the Mayslake Peabody Estate and plans to perform more in Skokie in the future.

Although Albright has produced shows with gay characters in the past like *The Laramie Project* and *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*, Quirk said that there was some resistance from the Albright Theatre board of directors to *Beautiful Thing* since it dealt so openly with a gay romantic relationship—particularly between teenagers.

"This is the first show in 40 seasons where there's actually been physical interaction [among gay characters]," said J.P. Quirk, director of Albright Theatre's *Beautiful Thing*, noting that he received two letters from subscribers who said they felt some of the shows this season "were not appropriate." "We made it very clear that we were not promoting a specific agenda but we also advertised it and made it very clear what the show was about."

Jim Liesz, director of Village Theatre Guild's *Next Fall*, also says that his venue has received letters from some subscribers saying that they will not be attending *Next Fall*, but he feels it's

Turn to page 22



Rhea Perlman in *Stella & Lou*. Photo by Michael Brosilow

## THEATER REVIEW

### Stella and Lou

**Playwright:** Bruce Graham  
**At:** Northlight Theatre at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 N. Skokie Blvd., Skokie  
**Tickets:** 847-673-6300;  
[www.northlight.org](http://www.northlight.org); \$25-\$72  
**Runs through:** June 9

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Riley was dead, to begin with—our play is set on the evening following his funeral. A search of Riley's squalid living quarters revealed many never-sent letters to an estranged daughter, but the sole mourners at his burial were his fellow regulars at Lou's south Philly bar. His buddies might be unsure of their own destinies, but one thing they know is that they don't want to die alone like Riley.

Guys like Riley—old men (and sometimes women) who arrive early and don't leave until closing time—can be found in every bar in every city. In fact, two years-widowed Lou is, himself, a Riley in the making, his days divided between the business inherited from his father-in-law and the shrine to the late Mrs. Lou that his house has become. He doesn't know it—indeed, stubbornly resists the very suggestion—that his salvation lies in Stella, the nurse who comes in nightly after her shift for a chat and a beer, but tonight comes packing an agenda that will determine her future, and maybe his, too.

In this and his other plays, Bruce Graham demonstrates a rare talent for writing older than his own experience. Most playwrights not yet past the midpoint of their earthly existence cannot escape their own perspective—"this is me, looking at my father/mother"—but Graham refuses to traffic in gray-haired teenager stereotypes. If Lou accepts Stella's invitation to a dinner and show in Atlantic City, it will be in pursuit, not of a romantic fling, but the companionship that endures beyond marital imperative and proximal camaraderie. Bartender Donnie may claim ambivalence over his imminent wedding and the vulnerability inherent in that contract, but imagine taking a step in that direction with the full knowledge that whatever happiness it may bring will inevitably lead to further loss.

Rhea Perlman has made a career of playing capable caretakers—when Armageddon comes,

this is whom you want supervising the clean-up—and Francis Guinan is likewise renowned for his portrayals of strong-and-silent family retainers. Their rapport glows with the comfortable candor that comes of having outgrown rash impetuosity, and if even at 90 minutes (what with Donnie's fretful interruptions), it takes them a little too long to hit all of Graham's arguments, we still hold out hope for these stalwart comrades to risk one last venture while opportunity still beckons.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**Death Takes A Holiday**, Circle Theatre at Stage 773, through May 26. What is Romance, but Love triumphing over Death—no grisly phantom this time, but a handsome suitor enamored of a young woman—and transforming Yeston and Stone's uneven score into a chest-heaving hankie-wringer for lovers of all ages. MSB

**Oliver!**, Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook Terrace, through June 2. The late gay songwriter and playwright Lionel Bart created worldwide sensation with his jaunty, if quirky, 1960 musical-theater take on Dickens' classic novel. SCM

**Othello: the Remix**, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, through June 15. Hip-hop Shakespeareans, the Q Brothers, tackle their first tragedy and come up with a four-actor precision version that's clever, joyful, musical, extremely funny and yet respects the original. Their best work yet. JA

**Pal Joey**, Porchlight Music Theatre at Stage 773, through May 26. A fast-paced staging of the 1940 Rodgers & Hart musical about a sexy cad hooper who courts two gals and gets his comeuppance. Snappy songs, cheesy chorus numbers and handsome Adrian Aguilar, as Joey, will bewitch (if not bother or bewilder) you. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

## THEATER REVIEW

### Lear

**Playwright:** Young Jean Lee  
**At:** Red Tape Theatre,  
 621 W. Belmont Ave. (St. Peter's Church)  
**Tickets:** [www.redtapetheatre.org](http://www.redtapetheatre.org); \$25  
**Runs through:** June 22

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Weird play. Psycho-drama, really, akin to a much gentler version of Sarah Kane, the suicidal 1990s British playwright whose *Blasted*, *Cleansed* and *4.48 Psychosis* have been produced locally. Similar to Kane's work, *Lear* features self-absorbed and self-flagellating characters, although thankfully without Kane's obsession with rape, mutilation and violence. The other significant difference is that Kane wrote about herself, while Young Jean Lee riffs on King Lear.

In a comfortable modern living room, the daughters of King Lear, Regan and Goneril, sit out a storm, joined by the legitimate (Edgar) and bastard (Edmund) sons of Lear's counselor, Gloucester. Goneril and Edmund are casually clothed while Edgar wears a tie and jacket and Regan sports a high-glam, beaded black cocktail dress. Shortly, Lear's third daughter, Cordelia, arrives from Paris with a *Bride of Frankenstein* hairdo. Lear and the blinded Gloucester are out in the storm—dead or alive?—both represented by a portrait over the fireplace of a man with defaced eyes. So, what to do if you are, possibly, guilty of patricide?

For 45 minutes the kids hurl insults and blame at each other, and generally reveal their incapacities to love or be loved. Lee's

favorite tool is the seemingly witty *non sequitur*. Edgar to Edmund: "I would kill you in an instant if it were a choice between your life and my look." Goneril: "When everything falls away there is nothing ... except what is there." Cordelia, about exile in Paris: "I drank and I forced myself upon animals." This portion of the play has neither story arc nor character development.

Then Edgar steps forward and offers the audience an opportunity to leave, following which Big Bird (Edmund) appears and the others regress to childhood as the kids of recently deceased Mr. Hooper, the local drug store owner. Using stuffed animals, the girls act out the death of Cordelia from Shakespeare's play, and the kids explain death to Big Bird. Finally, stripping to underwear, Edmund offers a moving monologue about the relationship between father and child. The monologue is so accessible, it almost seems a sentimental reach-out from Lee to her audience in contrast to the selfish introspections which have preceded it.

The Korean-born Lee is a New York-based experimental playwright who does not make ethnic or cultural heritage the subject of her plays. Red Tape Theatre previously staged a double-bill of two Lee plays which I found more immediate and engaging than *Lear*. As they have before, Red Tape offers an environmental setting: the audience sits with the characters within the complete, four-walled living room. The capable performers are earnest and often amusing under director James D. Palmer, but the rambling and petulant introspections of the first section didn't interest me, and I had no emotional connection until the end.

## THEATER REVIEW

### Orange Flower Water

**Playwright:** Craig Wright  
**At:** Bare Bones Theatre Group/  
 Interrobang Theater Project at  
 Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St.  
**Tickets:** 773-338-2177;  
[www.raventheatre.com](http://www.raventheatre.com); \$25  
**Runs through:** June 9

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

What happens when two people, after 15 years of marriage and a total of six children, discover that they don't want to grow up? For the last three years, David and Beth—both married, but not to each other—have been canoodling with each other on the down low. Granted, Beth's husband, Brad, is a hyperjock boor, and David's wife, Cathy, can be more Athena than Aphrodite. Still, there are the children to think about (as a bargaining chip in their parents' negotiations, if nothing else), but now Beth wants to have another child, this one fathered by her paramour—after they leave their "mistakes" behind, of course.

The discarded spouses' reaction to this plan vary—Brad rages while Cathy dismisses her departing hubby with managerial efficiency. Unsurprisingly, no sooner do the sweethearts settle into their own nest than guilt over their estranged families sets them to squabbling. Ah, but then Beth announces that she's pregnant (the results of her toddler son having snacked on a month's supply of her birth-control pills). The final word goes to David, apostrophizing a letter to his newborn baby daughter, in which he confesses to the pain he has caused others in conceiving her—thus laying the blame for his transgressions upon HER, all but ensuring his progeny's anticipation of a similar fate.

Well, hasn't romance always been predicated on obstacles, and lovers universally selfish and irresponsible? This isn't Romeo and Juliet, however, but bored suburbanites weary of being adults, for whom sympathy is not easily generated. Director James Yost's valiant efforts in-



Orange Flower Water. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Maharry

clude suspending the play's action in a limbo furnished with pensive incidental music and a spartan four chairs and bed (upon which Cathy collects one final orgasm from her submissive mate as she warns him that the thrill-of-the-forbidden he pursues so relentlessly will soon wane).

The intimacy of the Raven's west theater allows us to remain alert to the actors' emotional cues and the text's hints of what is to come, catalyzing the empathic response to a degree rendering us willing to accept the notion of the characters truly believing what they say they believe. Ultimately, though, skeptics cannot help but speculate on Craig Wright's own marital disposition in 2002, when he wrote this absolution of messy mid-life crises, even as it extends comfort to those sharing its ethical myopia.



Jordan Brown (left) and Brendan Roche in *In the Company of Men*. Photo by Michael Brosilow

**THEATER REVIEW**  
**In the Company of Men**

**Playwright:** Neil LaBute  
**At:** Profiles Theatre's The Main Stage, 4139 N. Broadway  
**Tickets:** 773-549-1815;  
**www.profiles theatre.org;** \$35-\$40  
**Runs through:** June 30

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Filmmaker and playwright Neil LaBute is famed for creating nasty and manipulative characters. But those LaBute characters are so complex and juicy to play that it's no surprise that a go-for-broke storefront company like Profiles Theatre has forged a tight relationship with LaBute over the years, presenting many Midwest debuts of his work.

So it's quite the occasion for Profiles to present a world premiere stage adaptation of LaBute's seminal 1997 film *In the Company of Men*. The film famously put LaBute and actor Aaron Eckhart (both graduates of Brigham Young University) on the map thanks to the massive amount of controversy it generated.

*In the Company of Men* started life as a play before it was adapted to film, so LaBute's stage revision is a homecoming of sorts. As in the film, the play focuses on two embittered Midwestern corporate guys named Chad (Jordan Brown) and Howard (Brennan Roche), who strangely decide to emotionally manipulate a random and dejected woman as a way of getting back at women who recently walked out on them.

The two find their mark in Christine (Jessica

Carleton), a hearing-impaired office temp who marvels at the sudden and dueling attention that Chad and Howard shower upon her. But when the truth comes out, the revelations of betrayal and cutthroat bullying are shocking.

Director Rick Snyder has guided *In the Company of Men's* return to its stage roots immaculately with great performances all around in the company.

Brown is appropriately loathsome as the attractive, yet aggressively full-of-himself Chad, while Roche isn't afraid to play up the faults of the more empathetic Howard. As Christine, Carleton can be heartbreaking through her self-aware impaired dialogue and speeches (her character in particular is aided by the extra monologues that LaBute has written for the main trio to explain themselves).

It also helps to play out this malevolent material against such a chillily corporate unit set by designer Thad Hallstein. One of his smart symbolic touches is to expose pipes of fresh water and sewage jutting from behind the stylish late 1980s office locations perhaps to reflect on the rotten cores of the outwardly handsome Chad and Howard.

Like the film, there's a percussive score between scenes (possibly to point out the primal and revengeful urges of the men), though the sequence of events is stretched out over months instead of weeks. There's also a tighter focus on the characters thanks to the reduction of film locales, so it's a safe bet that *In the Company of Men* should find plenty of success in subsequent stage productions—especially if they're as shudder-inducing and good as Profiles' brilliant and deliberately nasty piece of work.

**SPOTLIGHT**



Director Hans Fleishmann's re-imagining of Tennessee Williams' classic drama *The Glass Menagerie* for Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company was so rapturously received by critics and audiences alike that the production is being remounted again. So if you missed the Mary Arrchie production the first time around, there's another chance to see this heart-breaking memory play by one of America's greatest playwrights of the 20th century. Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company's revival of *The Glass Menagerie* returns from Thursday, May 23, through Sunday, June 30, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Performances are 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 3 p.m. Sundays with an official 8 p.m. opening on Wednesday, May 29. Tickets are \$37 and \$32 for students and seniors; call 773-975-8150, or visit [www.theaterwit.org](http://www.theaterwit.org) or [www.maryarchie.com](http://www.maryarchie.com). Photo by Emily Schwartz



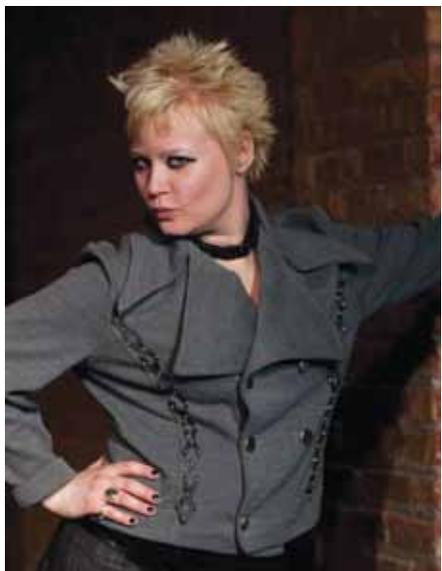
**Jillian Erickson at Prop Thtr in June**

Performance artist, monologist, poet and writer Jillian Erickson will bring his show, 3:00 a.m., to Prop Thtr, 3502 N. Elston Ave., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. June 7-29.

A press release states that "the performance is a menagerie of Erickson's life over the past years: from Colorado to Chicago... from Ralph Macchio to religion...from biological clocks to a Norwegian obsession."

Erickson is writer, performer and co-producer/director of *Beast Women*, which spotlights female artists through music, belly dancing, burlesque and sketch comedy.

Tickets are \$15 at the door or can be purchased at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/382209>.



Jillian Erickson.

**About Face presenting 'The Pride' June 6**

About Face Theatre will kick off LGBTQ Pride Month with the Chicago premiere of the Olivier Award-winning drama *The Pride* by Alexi Kaye Campbell June 6-July 13 at Victory Gardens Richard Christiansen Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

Artistic Director Bonnie Metzgar will direct. "The Pride maps the progression of the gay-rights movement from the repression of the fifties to the freedom of today through the fate of two twisted love triangles," according to a press release.

Tickets are \$15 (students)-\$30; visit [www.aboutface theatre.com](http://www.aboutface theatre.com) or call 773-871-3000.

**Richard Pryor Jr. in 3 Squares' 'Lipstick'**

The company 3 Squares Productions, LLC, will present its first play, the world-premiere comedy *Lipstick Goes On Last*, at the Den Theater, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave., May 25-June 23.

The cast includes Kathleen Lawlor, Ashley J. Dearborn, Annamarie Schutt, Suzy Brack, Aniyah McCullum, Ben Nicholson, Bobbie O'Connor, Sandy Gulliver, and his in Chicago stage debut, Richard Pryor Jr., son of the late classic comedian. Pryor plays a closeted husband in the production.

It will run Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 3 p.m.

Tickets are \$30 each; see [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/370776](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/370776).

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## NUNN ON ONE

Flying high with  
Pam Ann

BY JERRY NUNN

The air hostess with the mostest—Pam Ann—is flying into Chicago, and hilarity is expected with a title like “Cockpit!”

For those readers who aren't hip to Ann's comedy, she is the alter ego of Melbourne native Caroline Reid.

Born from the travel industry with a pinch of Austin Powers, a smidge of Dame Edna, and a dash of Kathy Griffin, this comedienne mixes a recipe for entertaining audiences over the years. Madonna herself described her as “cruelly funny” and Elton John hired her for his own private jet. She toured with Cher and performed on the first ever JetPride flight on JetBlue.

Let's get to know the funny lady from down under with a fly-by-the-seat-of-our-pants interview.

**Windy City Times: So tell our readers about the new show, “Cockpit.”**

Pam Ann: It is really based on a lot of things that are on the news and have happened in the airline industry. I found the information from sources, the airlines and crew.

There is so much merging of airlines to the point that we will be one big airline one day. It will be called Merge!

This show will be topical to what is happening in the airline industry. I've packed up the trolley. There is dry ice and a champagne service. There is an opportunity for Pam Ann to talk to her first class cabin. There are new videos. I have spoofed the Pan Am ABC series where I put Pam Ann in their shoes. I think if they had made the Pan Am show with Pam Ann it would have been a hit.

**WCT: It is a shame that it went off the air.**

PA: It is a shame. So there is a spoof on that. I am shooting a new safety video on Saturday but I am not sure if I will put it in this show or not. I'm constantly organically growing it. There's a movie channel where I have Pam in all these different movies. We recap the show with a montage of what I have been talking about throughout the show at the end through news clips. I think half the time people think what I am saying is a joke and it is not real but then I surprise them at the end that it is real. That inspired this show.

**WCT: You have interacted with the crowd before in past shows. Are you coming out into the audience to talk to them?**

PA: Anything can happen at my shows. One time a guy actually put himself into a plastic bag to cleanse himself when flying over cemeteries. So I might put someone in a plastic bag. You will see what I am talking about at the show.

I will talk to the audience from the trolley and get to know people and what they do. I want to ask them what airlines are in and things like that. I won't actually get people onto the stage this time so they can rest easy but they will be verbally abused.

**WCT: I will warn them. Will you be flying**

**first-class to the show?**

PA: I think I will be flying JetBlue, which is just one class.

**WCT: I like that airline.**

PA: I like it, too. I think it is my favorite airline domestically through the States because you can watch TV. It keeps you occupied. I love watching TV live and there are priority seats for an extra price. People will pay more for 1A. It's like the same seat, bitch, but you have extra legroom!

**WCT: Will we ever get Wi-Fi on airplanes?**

PA: There is already. I think Virgin and American have Wi-Fi. You can actually get online and get on Facebook, all of that stuff.

**WCT: People can't live without Facebook.**

PA: It passes the time though, right? You get sick of watching movies. Everyone has attention deficit disorder. No one can focus.

**WCT: After flying on airberlin in business class, I am spoiled with flying.**

PA: I heard the new chairs are hardcore.

**WCT: It has a massage feature built into it.**

PA: I need a German man to do that.

**WCT: I heard you love Germans.**

PA: I love them. They can speak to me in German any day. It sounds like porn to me!

**WCT: We flew back on American and it was nice, too.**

PA: Sounds like you didn't want to get off. When I flew to Australia I could have stayed on the plane for days and just drink wine.

**WCT: I like the uniforms on airberlin.**

PA: They have those leather gloves. They make that sound when they hit you in the face don't they? “Sit down!”

**WCT: Speaking of clothing, talk about your new costumes.**

PA: Garo Sparo, who does Amanda Lepore's costumes, is based in New York and I have been working with him for a while. We have created some great stuff. There are so many costumes I don't know which ones to wear in the show.

Inspired by Pierre Cardin I have this sort of space-looking PVC and visor outfit, which is Pam-galactic.

I have this Pucci fabric that we have made into a gown for this show. I have really over-the-top big hair.

**WCT: You have a travel app, too?**

PA: I do, but it is a bit outdated to be honest with you. I did it a couple of years ago. It is about good places to go when you are visiting Sydney, New York, and London. We are doing a Pam Ann app that will be more current. It is hard to keep up with the apps. I put a place on there and then these venues close down.

**WCT: You should start a Chicago section. Where did your gay following come from?**

PA: I think they just see my ad on Grindr and think they can get some cock. They know it is going to be a hot audience.

I have always been in the gay world myself. I grew up with gays and drag queens. They have been the people that I have always hung out with. It was a natural fit. I did all the gay bars in my early career in London. I did every fuck club and was usually the only girl there.

**WCT: When did Madonna come to see your show?**

PA: That was in London. I don't know when or what show. I love the quote [that Pam Ann is “cruelly funny”] because it is so true. People ask if I am offended by it but it's true, I am. Pam Ann is a cruel bitch—get used to it!

**WCT: It would be intimidating if you knew Madonna was in the audience.**

PA: Hell, yeah.

**WCT: You opened for Cher for a while, I read.**

PA: I did for the UK part of the tour back in 2004. Every night was like a dream. I was always

wondering if she was coming to hang out after the show. Ever seen the movie Waiting for Guffman? This was waiting for Cher.

**WCT: You are working on a movie?**

PA: I am writing a screenplay. It is going to take a little while to make it because I want to produce it and do the whole thing. It will take some time so like a couple of years. I know some of the locations and the gist of it. It is Ab Fab-meets-Austin Powers-slash-The Hangover. It is a big airline disaster movie thrown in there, too. It's filthy as fuck. I don't think it will even get past any censors. It might have to come out as an adult video!

**WCT: Maybe you can work on it after the tour.**

PA: Yes. My trainer just presented a sitcom to me out of the blue just the other day, too. Only in New York is a trainer also a screenwriter. It is brilliant. He named me Pam Ann Muscovich, all of sudden I am Russian and Jewish. He put Caroline's life, my life, into this which is genius.

**WCT: You can get ideas while you are getting in shape.**

PA: I am. I tell him all about my life. I think he wants to fuck me.



## SCOTTISH from page 19

important for even suburban theaters to produce shows that challenge audiences. Liesz points out that Village Theatre Guild has also done edgier works with gay characters like Christopher Durang's Beyond Therapy and David Marshall Grant's Snakebit in the past.

“What's going on with Proposition 8 in California and gay marriage before the United States Supreme Court, we could not have picked a more relevant time to be doing this piece,” said Liesz about Next Fall and the questions it brings up about faith within a gay relationship and how it is tested when an accident occurs. “This play needs to be done and people should see the show.”

Quirk was proud to point out that Beautiful Thing ended up being the second highest-grossing show of Albright's season. Yet he's slightly disappointed that Albright's next season is largely traditional fare from the 1940s

**WCT: Good luck ending it with a trainer. When I cut off mine it was rough.**

PA: I can't even think about that. I have to finish the sitcom before we break up.

**WCT: An Australian living in New York would be enough of a sitcom.**

PA: Just like Crocodile Dundee. I would keep saying, “That is not a knife. This is a knife!”

**WCT: Do people recognize you when you are out on the street?**

PA: Not in New York. They couldn't give a fuck.

**WCT: They are in their own world there, from what I have experienced.**

PA: So true. There is so much eye candy and everyone is on Grindr. They don't look at you—they are looking at their phones.

**WCT: Why isn't there a straight version of Grindr?**

PA: They have one and it is called Blendr but it didn't work. I would fuck someone five minutes away but women are, unfortunately, such prudes.

**WCT: They don't hook up, like some gay people.**

PA: Gays have taught me everything I know. I am on Grindr myself.

**WCT: I am going to look for you on Grindr when you are in town!**

PA: I am called Captain Rim. I am Middle Eastern and “I like flying.”

I haven't been on for a while. I need to go check my profile out. I took a picture like an Islamic extremist, put a turban on and it got accepted. People are so turned on by it.

**WCT: It must be nice to get out of New York and visit Chicago.**

PA: I love Chicago. Last time I was there, it was fantastic. This visit will be at the same time as Mr. International Leather. You know me—I love my leather queens!

**WCT: We should take a stroll around the leather market when you get here.**

PA: They are so fucking hot with those leather harnesses on. If I were a gay, I would be a big bear and eat everything! I got propositioned once by two bears on a sea cruise to go with them to their cabin. I was like a baby seal to them.

**WCT: You didn't go through with it?**

PA: I couldn't wake up with a rainbow flag in my face and DJ music playing. That would be horrifying.

**WCT: We have to hit the town after your show.**

PA: Let's go have a COCKtail!

**Fly over to the Harris Theater, 205 E. Randolph St., on Saturday, May 25, at 8 p.m. Visit [www.harristheater-chicago.org/performers/pam-ann](http://www.harristheater-chicago.org/performers/pam-ann) for tickets and more information.**

and 1960s.

“I think [Beautiful Thing] delivered a really great message, especially when we're talking about all sorts of things like teen suicide and teen bullying and yet another state legalizing same-sex marriage,” said Quirk. “It's things like this that make me go, ‘Guys, look, this is what people want to see. Just because we're in the suburbs doesn't mean we can't be doing shows like this.’”

Village Theatre Guild's Next Fall plays from Friday, May 24, through Saturday, June 15, at the corner of Butterfield Road and Park Blvd., Glen Ellyn. Performances are 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays (plus Thursday, June 13), with 3 p.m. Sunday matinees. Tickets are \$18; call 630-469-8320 or visit [www.villagetheatre-guild.org](http://www.villagetheatre-guild.org).

For more LGBTQ shows playing throughout the summer, don't miss the Summer Theater Preview issue of Windy City Times running Wed., May 29.

NUNN ON ONE

# Ross Matthews tells his 'Tales'

BY JERRY NUNN

Ross Matthews became an overnight success thanks to The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, where he was coined "Ross the Intern." His standout voice and personality made him instantly memorable on late-night television at home.

He joined Celebrity Fit Club and the cast of Chelsea Lately since then along with interviewing many celebrities on the red carpet over the years.

He just released a book called Man Up! Tales of My Delusional Self-Confidence and is embarking on a comedy tour including a stop at Chicago. Nunn talked to Matthews the day of the book release.

**Windy City Times: Hi, Ross. So excited about talking to you today!**

Ross Matthews: I saw you tweeted me, right?

**WCT: I did.**

RM: I saw and it is so great to meet you.

**WCT: Finally, you are coming to Chicago. Have you been here before?**

RM: I have been to Chicago for an extended layover but I have never been to Chicago to visit or for work. Can you believe it?

**WCT: No, but I have been waiting for a chance to interview you.**

RM: I have been waiting for a chance to go there for years. I never travel if not for work and never had to work there before.

**WCT: This is your big world tour.**

RM: It is amazing. It will be so much fun. People are asking, "What is it? Is it stand-up? Are you reading the book?" I tell them, "It is like Liza with a Z but Ross with an S!" I am doing a one-man show. We are talking pop culture and bringing scenes from the book to life. I am playing games with the audience, there's a Q&A and I sign afterwards for everybody that wants to buy it. I will be the last one to leave.

**WCT: I just finished reading the book.**

RM: You did? I am so glad you read it.

**WCT: How long did it take to write?**

RM: It took a long time. I really wanted it to be funny and true to my little heart. I also wanted it to have a message. I thought if I am going to get a podium like this then I want to use it in the right way. I wanted to plant a little seed of something good in the world. Did you like the book?

**WCT: I did, especially the Madonna story. I've talked to Madonna's rep, Liz Rosenberg, and can't imagine getting on her bad side.**

RM: Oh my God—I never would. She was totally nice to me. She made that happen.

**WCT: It's a great story.**

RM: It's nuts. I almost didn't put that in there. That was one of the later ones. I woke up in the middle of the night and I go "What the fuck? Why didn't you put that in the book?" That might have been one of the last chapters I wrote I think.

**WCT: Were there things you wanted to put in there that you didn't?**

RM: There are so many stories left to tell. I have lived a ridiculous life. These were the right stories for the first book. I already know about the second book. I have endless stories to tell but for this first book this is the cream of the crop.

I am so proud of it. I define Man Up as you are what you are. I think you have to start with what makes you different and what makes you stand out. These are stories of when I have done that and when I didn't. I'm not the hero in every story. I messed up a lot. I wanted to include those kinds of stories and I think I did.

**WCT: I am sure some of those stories were not easy to write.**

RM: Like when I got fired from Lane Bryant? That was not an easy story to write.

**WCT: I did my time in working retail with Structure; now it is called Express.**

RM: I know Express, heyyy. You were at the top of the totem pole in the mall, at least in my mall.

**WCT: I wanted more pictures in Man Up.**

RM: I thought about more pictures. I talk a lot about my dad in the book and I was going to put a picture of him then I thought, "Let people imagine how they create him in their head." That was on purpose that I didn't put pictures in. I love reading books but when I see pictures it is sometimes very far from what I have created in my mind. I don't want to fuck that up for people.

**WCT: There wasn't a part about when you met Salvador, your partner, in the book.**

RM: You know, I didn't include a lot about me meeting him. I think honestly that will be in a future book. This book is more about how I got to where I am right now. I felt like I had to define who I was when I was a little boy in a small farm town who is super-gay and has dreams of Hollywood. That is still who I feel like inside. I wanted to make sure that person came through in this book.

**WCT: You talk about Gwyneth Paltrow in the book. What did you think about her being voted Most Beautiful Woman in People Magazine?**

RM: Well, she has my vote. Of course she is beautiful on the outside and the inside. She has been so good to me. She wrote the forward to this book. The story of how we became besties is in the book and is an insane story.

**WCT: It doesn't normally happen like that...**

RM: No, it doesn't happen like that. I basically asked her to be my best friend on a red carpet and she said yes and she meant it. It has lasted over a decade now.

**WCT: I have talked to a few celebrities and sometimes they say things that they don't mean.**

RM: In Hollywood people don't mean anything they say. I don't think she knows that. She could have said yes in that moment and I would have loved her even if I never heard from her again. But she followed through which I think makes her even crazier than me!

**WCT: Gwyneth is coming to Chicago to the Siskel Center on June 15.**

RM: If she were there the same time as me I would have had her come co-host my show with me.

**WCT: Will you have time to hit the gay bars when you are in town?**

RM: I travel a lot for work and I always go out. I like to get a flavor of the town, not late because I have to be in bed. I hope so. This tour is so packed. I get to the city in the morning. I do press, then a show and leave at six in the morning. I hope I get to soak up some Chicago. I have heard so much about it. Hello, I always dreamed of being on Oprah, which didn't happen. If I don't get to then I promise I will come back.

Salvador and I went to Puerto Vallarta once and we met 14 people from Chicago. We have a good friend base there but never visited.

**WCT: I love Puerto Vallarta.**

RM: By the way Palm Springs is my favorite place then Puerto Vallarta second.

**WCT: You like Latin guys like I do, obviously.**

RM: Yeah, my Salvador is a hot Latin lover!

**WCT: Do you want gay marriage when it happens?**

RM: Oh yeah. Salvador and I won't get married until it is legal here, though. I don't want a fake wedding or fake marriage. I want a legit marriage. The reason I am holding out is because I know it is going to happen.

**WCT: Let me know if I can arrange bottle service at the bars if you go out.**

RM: That is so fun. As long as there is Pinot Grigio with ice I will be fine. I'm not fancy.

**WCT: Is your own talk show in the works?**

RM: It is now in the works it is starting in September. E! just announced that I am getting my own talk show on their network. It is a dream.

**WCT: What is it called?**

RM: Right now the tentative title is called Hello Ross. This show is all about being a super fan. There will be celebrities and I will go out in the audience so they can ask questions as well. We will Skype and Google-chat people in. There are so many shows that have pop culture but I want to show that I love this and you love this so let's talk about it.

**WCT: Who is your latest celebrity story?**

RM: I am upset with Amanda Bynes. Every morning when I wake up I am hoping she has left me a little gift on her twitter page. It never stops. It is so good. It is so great what she has given us.

**WCT: Have you ever met her?**

RM: No I saw her once when we were at the same event one time. I have interviewed so many people I can't remember sometimes.

**WCT: That means you have a met a lot of people.**

RM: I was with my producer from The Tonight Show and was working the Elton John Oscar party. When Jamie Foxx won the Oscar I told the producer that I would love to interview him. He told me that I had last year and had a whole conversation with him. Sometimes it is so fast that I just don't remember things.

**WCT: Do you ever take a moment to think about how lucky you are?**

RM: Every day. I saw just saying it this morning. Today I am having a big party at Target that is throwing the launch of my book. Jay Leno and Chelsea Handler are going to be there. My mom is flying down from the town I grew up in. Then I am going to New York and doing Howard Stern. I start my tour there and travel the country with this book I am so proud of. I come home and start my talk show. I can't believe it.

If I could go back to the little kid in Washing-

ton and tell him this all happened do you know what little Ross would say?

**WCT: What?**

RM: "Duh. Of course it would happen." [Both laugh.]

Say hello to Ross at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave., on Tuesday, May 28, at 8 p.m. Visit [www.jamusa.com](http://www.jamusa.com) for ticket information and more on Matthews can be found at [hellosross.blogspot.com](http://hellosross.blogspot.com).

Also look for him at Macy's on State Street signing at noon on May 28.



Ross Matthews. Publicity photo

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# KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY  
RICHARD  
KNIGHT, JR.

## Behind the Candelabra; Portrait of Jason

It's perhaps fitting that Steven Soderbergh—who won the Palm d'Or at Cannes in 1989 for his breakthrough feature, the sexually challenging *Sex, Lies & Videotape*—is once again at the fest with another sexually provocative film just as he is about to take a much-publicized break from making movies.

Soderbergh's swan song (for now at least) is **Behind the Candelabra**, a backstage look at the relationship between the flamboyant entertainer/pianist Liberace and his lover and companion of six years, Scott Thorson. Whether or not this darkly funny film—which is at times dishy, campy, at moments surprisingly moving, and naturally, gay as a goose—takes any prizes (the fest ended last night after WCT deadlines), it's clearly the work of a filmmaker still relishing the chance to push the envelope.

Michael Douglas and Matt Damon, who play the title roles, willingly follow the lead of their adventurous director and go for broke in their portrayals. It's a toss-up as to who gives the better performance. Douglas delivers the mincing, dimwitted Walter "Lee" Liberace in all his sequined, bejeweled, and (mostly) bewigged glory as well as the sexually voracious narcissist whose complicated interior life is occasionally hinted at. As Scott Thorson, Damon has a field day as the not-so-innocent raised in foster homes who is dazzled by the excessive lifestyle that his paramour offers and whose downfall comes after taking to heart his mentor's financial promises and for indulging in the sybaritic pleasures of the late '70s (cocaine and prescription drugs) the times were noted for. Both subtly get past what could easily have been just



Michael Douglas (left) and Matt Damon as, respectively, Liberace and Scott Thorson. Behind the Candelabra. Photo courtesy of HBO

caricatures. (Damon's hurried walk, for example, matches what we perceive must have been a reflection of his anxiety about his newfound status.)

The actors are also fearless when it comes to the physical aspects of the characters—Douglas unapologetically gives us the paunchy, middle-aged queen, sipping champagne with his muscle-bound young lover in his sauna, gasping at his own crow's feet during an appearance on *The Tonight Show* and going under the knife for yet another plastic surgery, while Damon bulks up to be convincing as he struts around in a thong. And neither actor holds back during the sex scenes. (At one point, Liberace harps on Scott for not bottoming at least once in a while.) They kiss, cuddle and make love with wild abandon (while seeming to have a contest with the audience about who can provide the most butt shots).

Richard LaGravenese's script (based on Thorson's memoir) tracks the twisted love affair from 1977 to the mid-80s. The visually tacky time period, combined with the over the top nature of Liberace's Las Vegas lifestyle (authentically recreated), his kitsch taste (inspired by King

Ludwig) which permeated his home and stage shows, not to mention the man's colorful companions (a rogue's gallery that includes his mother, a really creepy plastic surgeon, a snarling houseboy, and a supplicant of a manager) all aid in freshening up the familiar trajectory of the dysfunctional relationship. Expert supporting turns by Debbie Reynolds, Rob Lowe, Dan Aykroyd, Scott Bakula, and Cheyenne Jackson (as a previous boy toy) add to the fun. As do the maudlin, treacle-infused piano tracks (supervised by the late Marvin Hamlisch, to whom the film is dedicated).

Soderbergh has always been fascinated with outsider characters like Liberace and he gifts the movie with small details that underscore this. In embedding these details he again reveals a gifted filmmaker at work (a pack of dogs introduced at the outset in Liberace's arms, for example are never again seen but are heard yapping in other rooms of the home as the relationship disintegrates, upping the tensions). The final sequence, which recalls the finale of *All That Jazz*, is a bittersweet triumph of both kitsch and heart—Liberace, no doubt, would have loved it.

The movie's biggest flaw is that it's weighted too heavily in Thorson's favor (no surprise, given the source material) and that it doesn't do more to reveal the many incongruities in Liberace, this one of a kind, decidedly strange man whose gigantic popularity is still hard to fathom. This is especially evident when cracks here and there in the sunny Liberace façade are shown (in his relationship with his mother especially).

It's been eight years since *Brokeback Mountain*, the first high profile movie to feature two straight actors engaging in gay sex. That fact alone put Ang Lee's film on everyone's radar. But subsequent queer themed movies have not had the same fascination for wide audiences (*I Love You Phillip Morris*, anyone?) and it's not really surprising that *Behind the Candelabra*, after initially being readied for a studio release, instead found itself being paid for by a cable distributor after nerves set in (HBO, who will premiere the movie on May 26).

Something perceived to be this "gay" is still not thought of as a good box-office bet—the factor which determines what gets greenlit and what doesn't. So if there's been a change since *Brokeback* it's a subtle but very cool one—the enthusiastic embrace of gay roles by straight actors (slowly, the reverse is also becoming a reality—see my review of *Star Trek Into Darkness* for proof of that). Douglas and Damon have both had a fun time on the press circuit touting their willingness to get jiggy with one another

on camera and it certainly shows.

Behind the Candelabra depicts without apology or condemnation the warts and all, highly sexed sugar daddy/bo-toy relationship of Liberace and Thorson—a type of relationship that has always been a staple of the gay community but never one explored so intimately by the movies. This too is an astonishing feat—and the movie does this in capital letters. So Soderbergh's going out with a double triumph—a movie that is as deeply entertaining and creative as it is socially enlightening.

**Of related interest:** The late Shirley Clarke, the mother of indie filmmakers, received little credit during her too brief life for her illuminating films. Perhaps the greatest realization of her art—which seemed to merge director and subject—is 1967's *Portrait of Jason*.

In December 1966 Clarke put Jason Holiday, a 33-year-old Black hustler and wannabe cabaret performer, in front of her camera; 12 hours later, she emerged with enough material to amass a masterpiece. Holliday, *nee* Aaron Payne, regales the viewer with hilarious tales of his fabulous, checkered life in a non-stop, fascinating monologue that is enormously entertaining.

For nearly two hours Holliday's infectious laugh punctuates his witty stories and insightful observations. Holliday (who died in 1998) was a born raconteur and we're definitely watching a self-invented creation who revels (as he should!) in his own hard-earned fabulousness. Fact and fiction surely commingle, but that seems to be part of the point. The Northwest Chicago Film Society presents Milestone Films's restored 35mm print of *Portrait of Jason* on Wed., May 29, at 7:30 p.m. at the Portage Theater, 4050 N. Milwaukee Ave. [www.northwestchicagofilmssociety.org](http://www.northwestchicagofilmssociety.org)

### 'Glamorama' talent named

Macy's Passport Presents Glamorama 2013 will feature nine-time Grammy Award winner Sheryl Crow and performance group Cirque du Soleil at this year's event, scheduled for Friday, Aug. 9, at the Harris Theater at Millennium Park, 205 E. Randolph St.

This year's theme is "Fashion in a New Light." Past musical performers have included Cee-Lo Green, Far East Movement, Cyndi Lauper, Beyoncé, Robin Thicke, Karmin and more.

Ticket prices are \$75 for show only; \$175 and \$285 for show and after-party; \$1,000 for the VIP show and after-party. (The after-party is on the Harris' rooftop terrace.) Presale for American Express card members runs May 30-June 5; as of June 6, tickets will be sold at the Harris box office.

### Lambda Literary Awards finalist readings May 22

Chicago will host a reading of nine finalists for the 2013 Lambda Literary Awards Wed., May 22 at 7 p.m. The event will be at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

The readers will be Anne Laughlin (*Runaway*), Marty McConnell (wine for a shotgun), Lania Knight (*Three Cubic Feet*), E.M. Kokie (*Personal Effects*), Ramón H. Rivera-Servera (*Performing Queer Latinidad: Dance, Sexuality, Politics*), Chris Paynter (*Survived by Her Longtime Companion*), C.P. Rowlands (*Jacob's War*), Lewis Wallace, and Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim (*Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America*).

Each author will read from their nominated book and have books for sale and signing.

See [www.lambdaliterary.org](http://www.lambdaliterary.org).



Portrait of Jason.

## COMEDY

# Jessica Halem talks NYC, political correctness

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Jessica Halem may have changed residences over the years—living in cities such as Chicago, Seattle, New Orleans and, now, New York—but thankfully she still has retained the same bawdy, pointed sense of humor.

And she has definitely earned her stripes, sharing the stage with Indigo Girls, Kate Clinton, Margaret Cho, Jill Scott, Justin V. Bond, Dirty Martini and Julie Atlas Muz.

On May 27, Halem will headline “Homos A Go Go,” Laugh Factory Chicago’s new premier queer comedy showcase that Scott Duff hosts, at 8 p.m. Before coming back to Chicago, she chatted with Windy City Times about New York City, political correctness and her influences, among other topics.

**Windy City Times: So how have you been? We haven’t talked in a couple years.**

Jessica Halem: I know! I’m great—I’m back in Brooklyn again; I last lived here in 1996.

**WCT: So how has it changed?**

JH: When I lived here in 1996, the hipsters hadn’t invaded Brooklyn yet; now, they’re here. I work in Manhattan and live here. I love it here—there’s so much going on and there’s such an interesting mix of people. But it’s also very expensive out here.

**WCT: The last time I talked with you, you were in New Orleans and we talked about how the city was in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Now, I’m about to ask you how New York City has recovered from Superstorm Sandy.**

JH: Isn’t that crazy? It’s like the earth is rising up against us. I have to say New York City is such a resilient place; New Yorkers don’t scare easily. However, [Sandy] reminded everyone that we live on an island—we’re surrounded by water. You can really see how the developments have taken place and how we use the waterfront. I was on the waterfront last week; it was packed full of people—it was so much fun. Of course, Sandy reminds you to wear your galoshes.

I work for a nonprofit during the day, and we work throughout the neighborhood that was struck by Sandy—and a lot of people were very vulnerable to begin with.

**WCT: But with the daytime job, it’s nice to see you’re still doing comedy.**

JH: Yes! And the nice thing about being here is that I can have this day job. I can do all the things I want to do: be a political activist, work at a nonprofit and be an entertainer at night. Everyone’s like that, and there are so many opportunities to perform—and everyone’s really taken me in.

**WCT: You talk about being an activist and a comic. Do you see those as entirely separate entities or is there a time when those come together?**

JH: I don’t think I’ve seen them as separate, and I guarantee the people in Chicago who know me would agree. I’ve always been both. The only difference is that during the day I probably swear less. [Both laugh.] But I talk about the same things.

When you identify as an organizer—whether it’s about a political rally or having a good time—it’s all about the same goal. I’m trying to touch people’s lives. Even though I don’t work in the queer community, per se, during the day, there are still the same issues: being an advocate for people, for the city, for better lives.

As for the swearing, I don’t think I’ve mellowed, and I haven’t mellowed about sex. I’m very gratified that I’ve had the ability to pay my rent and stay busy with good political work—and that people appreciate my comedic sensibilities that I take wherever I go. I’m glad I can [establish] an emotional connection with people—and that’s what comedy is about: having that connection, whether it’s about making them laugh or think.

**WCT: Do you think we are too politically correct, as a society?**

JH: I don’t think... What I think has come of that political correctness is that there’s a wider grasp of understanding of the human experience. I think it’s a gift. I think that culture has evolved over the last 20 years; even the language has changed—and, for me, that’s a good thing.

I see representation more and more. I think [the PC movement] has actually done us a service. We have to make the table bigger [as more people come to it]. What’s going on in Chicago that makes you ask that?

**WCT: It’s something I routinely ask comics, seeing that you all tackle a range of topics. Some people are offended by the issues discussed, as well as by the approaches to those issues.**

JH: I think there’s a lot of territory that a comedian can touch on that other people don’t have the language to get to. I think comedy is an opportunity to talk about different things, right? If you’re a bad comic with bad values, it’ll come across. Even with the best-written joke, if your values are in the wrong place, that will come across. I will know where you’re coming from.

But if you’re someone who fundamentally loves all people and you’re curious about something, that’s fine. I think *that’s* what people get anxious about, as well they should. You have to appreciate people’s differences; if you can’t, then shut the heck up.

Don’t get up on stage to complain how the world is changing. Get up on stage and help me understand better how the world is changing, and how I can be a part of it.

**WCT: Let’s talk about Homos A Go Go. How did that connection happen?**

JH: My dear friend Scott Duff is the organizer. Laugh Factory, which is new to Chicago, is very lucky to have gotten Scott, who is a longtime LGBT theater person/organizer/personality. We worked years ago at About Face Theatre, so I’ve known him forever. He told me they were launching this, and I’ve been so hungry to see Chicago broaden its comedic traditions. Everyone thinks about Chicago and improv; we need just as many people to support stand-up comedy.

If there’s going to be a big comedy venue, you have to make special, fun nights for the gays. The gays will not come out to a regular night. The gays should not be forced to mix with people who do not drink good vodka or sit through a show where there’s potentially a comic who says fucked-up shit about gay people, which happens at regular comedy shows all the time. I’ve been doing this for 15 years. I refused to sit through that. I will pull you off [the stage] and punch you in the face.

I’m also see the new Laugh Factory, which has a long tradition on the West Coast, coming to Chicago and establishing a gay night from the beginning. Plus, they hired a really funny gay guy to put together a regular gay show.

**WCT: There’s something I haven’t asked you, but I’m curious to know: Who are your comedic idols?**

JH: I have to say, first and foremost is Margaret Cho. I’ve gotten to see how she works at this. Not only is she funny and political; she’s at the top of her game when it comes to radical queer sexual politics. But she, as a career person, is someone to be admired. She’s just done so much, and she tries new things.

I have been inspired by Kate Clinton, as well. Again, it’s her politics; she’s smart and actually being political on stage. She gets queer stuff and what’s going on. I wish all young people could experience Kate the way I’ve gotten to. She’s smart and fresh and real.

But from the beginning, my initial inspiration was Richard Pryor, when I was a child. I watched



Jessica Halem. Publicity photo

Richard Pryor movies, and I saw Live on the Sunset Strip. It was so inspirational, as someone who wanted to be a white, anti-racist ally—and there’s nothing so special as watching a comic talk about being an African-American. To hear Richard Pryor open his heart and soul about racist America was life-changing about comedy as a tool for social change.

**WCT: By the way, his son is going to be in a Chicago production while you’re in town.**

**Richard Pryor Jr. is playing a closeted husband in Lipstick Goes On Last.**

JH: That is so interesting! I might have to go to [the Den Theatre]. I can’t wait to come back to Chicago. I’ll be in town for IML—hell, yeah!

**Halem will kick off “Homos A Go Go” Monday, May 27, at the Laugh Factory Chicago, 3175 N. Broadway; see <http://www.laughfactory.com/clubs/chicago>.**

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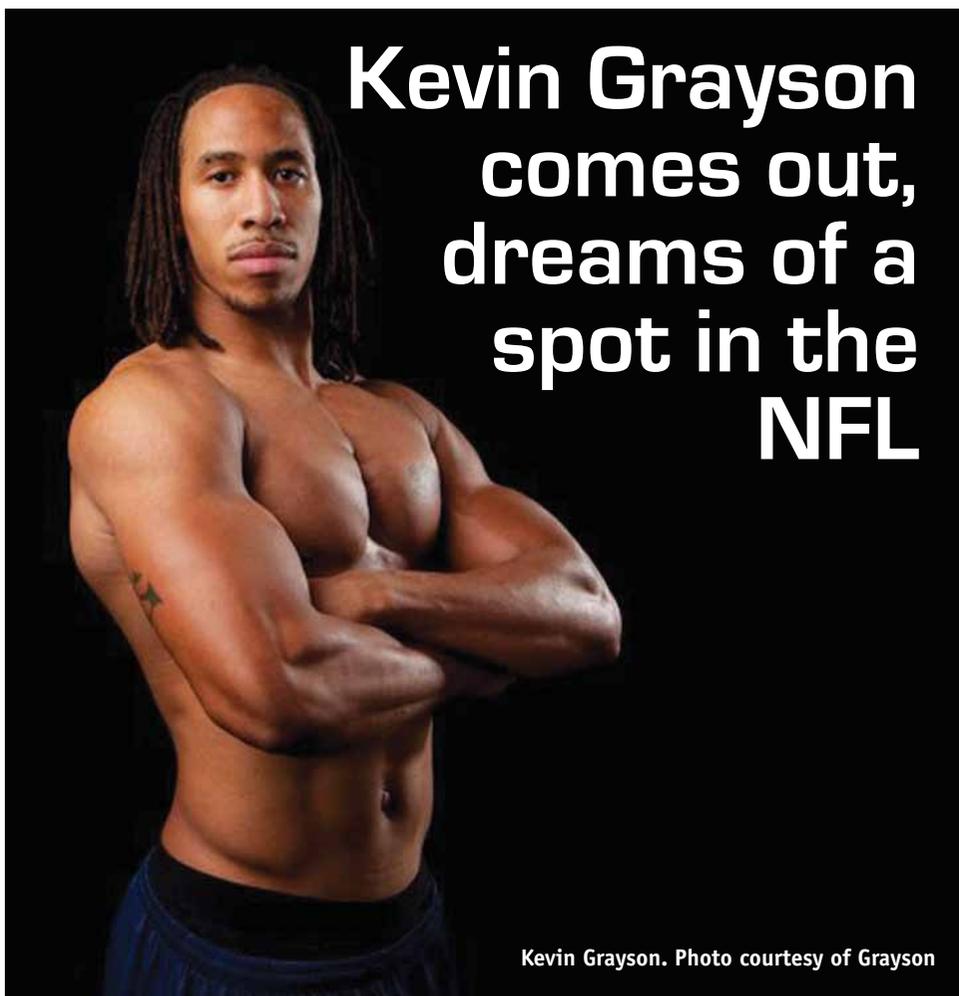


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584 Castro St. #834  
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# Kevin Grayson comes out, dreams of a spot in the NFL



Kevin Grayson. Photo courtesy of Grayson

BY ROSS FORMAN

Kevin Grayson wants just one shot, one team to give him a chance—and every minute of every day, rigorous, sweat-filled workout is motivated by that wish, that dream.

Grayson was a high school and college football standout, and last July was named the MVP after leading the Parma Panthers to a 61-43 win and the team's third consecutive Italian Football League championship. That game was played Varese and it was the Panthers over a team known as the Catania Elephants.

Now back on U.S. soil, Grayson dreams of similar glory in the National Football League (NFL), hoping for just one pass thrown his direction from any of the 33 teams, or even just a chance to try out for a club.

He dreams big, motivated by his past sporting glory, and encouraged by thousands, literally, of supporters worldwide—from Africa to England, from Ireland to his native Virginia, anchored by the Internet and his coming-out interview that aired regionally on TV and has since gone viral.

Grayson is one of the most decorated football players ever in central Virginia, where he was named all-district and all-region while playing both offense and defense at L.C. Bird High School in Chesterfield. He then helped the University of Richmond win the Football Championship Subdivision national title in 2008.

Grayson first told his story to longtime friend Lane Casadonte, the sports director at WTVR, the CBS affiliate in Richmond—and the seven-minute segment aired May 7.

He has since done one other radio interview. This is Grayson's first interview and story for a newspaper, magazine or website.

"It's been amazing, crazy, absolutely crazy," since coming out, Grayson said. "I thought it would [be reported] locally, perhaps [also] along the East Coast. But social media has carried it worldwide."

He's gotten emails, text messages, phone calls and more—from fellow athletes to coaches, from fans to countless unknowns, all encouraged by Grayson's inspirational, motivational story. He's been asked how he built his support group, what mental issues he's had to deal with, how he's handling various situations, and so much more.

Grayson has almost instantly become an off-the-field star, just as he was on high school Friday nights and Saturday afternoons in college.

Grayson's coming-out started when Casadonte

emailed him, requesting to be interviewed about being gay—and before Grayson read the email, he was messaged by Casadonte on Facebook to look for the email. But Grayson wasn't told what the email was about.

"My mind was going in many directions [about what the email concerned,] but [coming out] was not one of them," Grayson said. "Initially, I was not going to do [the coming-out interview on TV], to come out on national TV. But, as I continued to read [the email], I learned what he truly wanted to do with the story."

That is, to help others, to support others—through the face and story of a known local, a star area athlete.

Still, Grayson took two weeks to decide to do the interview.

"As I kept thinking about it, about how many people this story would touch, affect and inspire, I decided to do it," he said.

Grayson had been closeted in high school and college, despite rumors in both that he was gay.

A former Richmond teammate, who is straight, encouraged Grayson to come out—because he supported Grayson when he was closeted and would continue to support him if and when he came out, as would others.

Grayson said he is "very glad" he came out.

"As I look back now, I think I shouldn't have even second-guessed [the TV interview,]" Grayson said. "Coming out is a scary time and it really was putting myself out there, but on the flipside, as much support and awareness this issue has gained, that has made worth it."

"I didn't think this story would touch as many people as it has, in so many ways, and not just gay people. It's men, women, high school students, college students, old, young ... everyone. It's touched more people than I thought it would. I'm very happy with how it's gone. I'm very happy and excited about the response."

Make that "responses"—plural. Grayson's inbox has been flooded with heartwarming, emotional messages—such as the female student-athlete who reached out to him.

She told Grayson about a teammate of hers who is gay, and got outed. Many were bashing the outed athlete, and this writer didn't respond.

"When she saw [my] interview she cried and all she could think about was that she didn't help her teammate; she felt like she let that teammate down," Grayson told of the email.

The next day, the student-athlete came out herself to her team, and played Grayson's com-

ing-out interview for her team. She told Grayson that it "completely changed the ideology that her team had of gay athletes."

She told Grayson that the majority of her team apologized to her and to the other female as well. She also told Grayson that her team is now closer than it's ever been.

"That story touched me," Grayson said.

So did the conversation he recently had with a fellow former college football player, who is straight, simply curious about gay athletes. He admitted to Grayson that he couldn't fathom the idea of playing with a gay teammate. He asked if Grayson thought he played with a gay teammate. "I said, it's almost guaranteed you played with a teammate who was/is gay, though maybe hiding [his orientation,]" Grayson said.

"In my mind, there's at least one [gay player] on every team across the nation. That's just my thought, based on my sports background and experiences."

Grayson and the fellow footballer also discussed the locker room setting, and the potential distractions a gay teammate may cause.

"I told him, I could only speak for myself, but, when I'm doing football, I'm only doing football. There are no other thoughts, no other stuff, no attraction to guys. Nothing but football," Grayson said. "As I told him, we are just like you on the field; we just choose to go different directions in our personal lives."

The fellow footballer ultimately thanked Grayson for talking to him.

Grayson, now 25, lives in Charlottesville, Va., is dating Austin Gilbert, and works at a clothing specialty store.

Grayson did not want to discuss his current relationship, nor his past marriage to a woman, although he did confirm he was previously married.

"In high school, I told a friend that if I ever came out [as gay], it would be after I was an established NFL player, or probably when I was retired," Grayson said. "I feel that I should not be judged on my personal life, and my personal life should not affect my teammates because that's not fair to them, to have my personal life thrown upon them."

"It's not that I didn't want to come out because I was scared; it's more that I was going to take away from my sport, from my teammates—and that could lead to negative thoughts about me because now they're being burdened with my personal life."

Grayson wants that one shot at NFL glory, to show he can play at the game's top level, on the biggest stage in the world. He wants to show he has the ability, skill, knowledge and talent.

"The NFL is that one thing hanging over my head, which I have not achieved yet," he said. "Making it into the NFL, that's one thing I want to accomplish."

"I know, if I hadn't gotten hurt [while in college], I would have at least had a shot at [making it in] the NFL."

"I want to prove that I can do it."

"I want to make the NFL and prove to myself that I can do it. And when you're also carrying a community behind you, it gives you a power that people can't imagine."

Grayson said his chances for breaking into the NFL rely on himself, on his mentality, his drive, his dedication. "As hard as I work for it, the better the chances," he said. "If I push myself as hard as I've ever pushed myself, I know I can get a chance, I know I can."

But will coming out impact a team signing him?

"I thought about that," Grayson admits. "There's a saying that I believe: If you can play, you can play."

"I think, if I was invited to a tryout or went to a workout [for an NFL team], and performed, they would give me a shot; they wouldn't hold my sexuality against me."

"My talent will shine over anything else."

Grayson knows his coming-out will have an impact well beyond the football field; he knows it will affect teens of all interests—and he's proud to help.

"I have shown, just because you are gay, that does not mean you cannot achieve lifelong goals, absolutely anything that you want to accomplish," he said. "This burden can actually give you a drive that is stronger than what most normal people have. But, it also can affect you [negatively] if you don't have a support network."

"No one's dreams should be crushed because of a personal choice, their sexuality."

Grayson played at Richmond from 2007-2010, catching a combined 196 passes in his four-year career, with 13 touchdowns, including seven as a rookie.

Grayson confirmed he heard anti-gay comments in high school and college. In high school, it often was along the lines of "That's so gay." In college, he was in football meetings when coaches at times said things like, "Stop being a princess," or "stop being a faggot," Grayson said.

No anti-gay comments were ever said directly to, or about, Grayson, he confirmed.

"In high school, I kept my [sexuality] covered up as much as I could," said Grayson, a popular three-sport prep star (track & field, basketball and football). "Once the rumor got out [about my orientation] during my junior year in high school, it spread like wildfire. I suppressed [the rumor] as best as could, and I had a lot of [other] athletes support me because they were under the impression that [the rumor] wasn't true. Senior year, I kind of stopped caring because I was about to go to college."

In college, Grayson told a friend that he was never going to let his orientation get out, that he would cover it up so well that it never would even be brought up."

But it did, again during his junior year.

He silenced the rumors as best he could.

He didn't, though, silence the anti-gay comments that he heard.

"Those comments didn't bother me because I was doing football; I wasn't thinking about what they were saying [or taking the comments] personally," Grayson said.

Since coming out, Grayson said he has been contacted by several past coaches to apologize for things they said. "I told them, I didn't take [the comments] personally," Grayson said. "Could I have said something at the time? Yes, but that would have outed myself in the process, likely."

Grayson's 2012 season in Italy, featured a team with two other Americans; the rest of his teammates were Italian. He came out to one American and one Italian, and neither had an issue with a gay teammate.

"I had numerous discussions with the American [teammate who I came out to] about the topic because he didn't care, but wanted to be educated on how it is as a gay athlete," Grayson said. "He wanted to know how I kept it a secret, how I remained focused on sports, and more. Sure, it is challenging and you have to be mentally strong to do it. There were times I was severely depressed, and it eats at you like a cancer."

Grayson confirmed that his Italian team now knows, like the rest of the world, that he is gay, "and their response was overwhelmingly supportive," including the team's coaching staff, he said. "A lot of the Italian players said I should have told them sooner."

"It's great to have gotten that reaction."

Also while overseas, he told his parents that he is gay, and his family has been very supportive, he said.

"Life is great," Grayson said. "I'm happy and able to be myself. My friends know that I'm still the same person, that I'm not going to change since coming out. I'm still the same person, same friend, same athlete. My life isn't going to change, just people's awareness of my life; that's all that's going to change. I'm the same person—I love sports; I love football; I love my hobbies."

"So many people have contacted me to say that I inspired them [by coming out], but, after hearing their stories, they inspired me."

# Puerto Rican activist discusses life, poems

BY YASMIN NAIR

Luzma Umpierre-Herrera, a leading and out lesbian Puerto Rican poet and critic, was in Chicago this past week to present on her work.

One of these events was held at DePaul University's Student Center at 2250 N. Sheffield on May 17. Umpierre-Herrera read from and spoke about her most recent work, a volume titled "I'm Still Standing: Treinta años de poesía/Thirty Years of Poetry." This anthology collects some of her most well-known poetry, including The Margarita Poems, first published in 1987, a set of poetry that openly discusses lesbian sexuality.

The events were organized by collaborations between DePaul's Center for Latino Research and the Women's Center, The Butterfly Poetry Project, Casa de Cultura Calles y Sueños, En Las Tablas Performing Arts Center, Voces Primeras and the LBQT Giving Council of the Chicago Foundation for Women.

The venue for this first event was significant because Umpierre-Herrera is the first woman to have her papers collected at DePaul, which acquired them in 2008.

Umpierre-Herrera read from the anthology, in-

terspersing the poems with biographical details about its origins and about the events in her own life at the time.

She introduced her own biography by speaking about how she came to the United States in 1974, to get a Ph.D. at Bryn Mawr. She said she left because she was persecuted for being openly lesbian; her principal at the school she taught in at the time told her her life would be threatened if she didn't leave the country.

Her first poem, in Spanish, with a title that translates to "The Term Paper" was an onomatopoeic piece that combined words with the sounds of the typewriter she used one night to finish an assignment. It was also, she said, a reflection of the isolation she felt as a Puerto Rican woman in white, upper-class Philadelphia.

While still pursuing her degree, she worked with bilingual children in barrios of North Philly, who were taught inside garages because they had been labelled "abnormal." Out of this experience came the poem, "Rubbish," written in both Spanish and English, which combined the speech of a Spanish speaker with the intermittently puzzled Anglo response, "I beg your pardon?"



Luzma Umpierre-Herrera reads at the event. Photo courtesy of Linda Garcia Merchant

Umpierre-Herrera also read from her poetic exchanges with fellow poet Sandra María Esteves. In the 1980s, the two wrote poems in response to each other, with Esteves writing a piece about her idea of traditional Puerto Rican womanhood. Umpierre countered with a poem she read this evening, titled, "My Name Is Not Maria Cristina," where she portrayed herself as someone who did not depend on men—a line repeated throughout insists she fixes her own faucets.

Umpierre-Herrera has been sexually explicit in her poetry, and this was especially evident in her reading of one of the Margarita poems, filled with images of female sexuality and which Umpierre seemed to relish performing, running

her fingers down her body as she named her sexual organs.

The reading consisted of humorous pieces as well—Umpierre-Herrera said she often turned to humor as a way to survive her experiences, particularly in places and times where her identity was ignored or derided. Before reading "Only the Hand That Stirs Knows What's in the Pot," she spoke of how, at Bryn Mawr, "Anglos were not interested in the political conditions of Puerto Rico or gay and lesbian life in Puerto Rico—they just wanted to know the ingredients in my recipes for the Puerto Rican food I served."

In "God Is Moving," Umpierre-Herrera wrote about a God tired of the salsa music and Puerto Rican food invading Philadelphia, a God who longed so much for the return of waltzes and familiar American cuisine that he decided to leave the city. In "The Cat's Meow," she wrote about the difference between Puerto Rican felines, who were only kept around as hunters of mice, and American cats, used to cushions and special cat food.

In the question-and-answer session that followed, Umpierre-Herrera spoke of the importance of gay rights in Puerto Rico, where a non-discrimination bill has just made its way through the Senate. She said it was important that Puerto Rican gay activists not fight about who would be the spokespersons for the movement, and that they always acknowledge the work of pioneers who had laid the groundwork for current work.

## Chicago welcomes International Mr. Leather XXX5

The 35th annual International Mr. Leather contest charges into town this Memorial Day weekend, bringing with it thousands of leather and fetish devotees from around the world. Convention-goers will be treated to world-class parties, the infamous (and well-attended) Leather Market, and the International Mr. Leather

(or IML, for short) contest itself, in addition to a variety of leather/fetish-related events all over Chicago.

Highlighted here are some of the can't-miss events from the IML XXX5 calendar. For a full schedule of IML and Memorial Day weekend parties and events, pick up the current issue of Nightspots,

which is the official guide to IML XXX5, available in an extended print run at all our normal locations. You can also download the full guide from our website at [www.windycitymediagroup.com/images/publications/nightspots/2013-05-15/current.pdf](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/images/publications/nightspots/2013-05-15/current.pdf)

### Thu., May 23

7 - 10:30 p.m.

The Roast of Woody Woodruff, IML 2012 and Nick Elliott, IMBB 2012

Bid a fond and funny farewell to the current International Mr. Leather Woody Woodruff (pictured) and the current International Mr. Bootblack Nick Elliott, along with friends, well-wishers and members of the Leather community.

Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave. [www.leatherarchives.org](http://www.leatherarchives.org) for more information.



### Fri., May 24

8 - 11 p.m.

IML XXX5 Opening Ceremonies

Get to know the contestants, judges, and ultimately, the new International Mr. Leather, to be chosen at the contest on Sunday.

The Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield Ave. Single tickets available ONLY at 5th floor Ticket Sales Desk, Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, 540 N. Michigan Ave. (IML host hotel)

### Sat., May 25

3 - 5 p.m.

Chicago Hellfire Club Annual IML Cocktail Social

Meet and greet the members of the Chicago Hellfire Club, now celebrating its 42nd year at this annual Club charity fundraiser.

4th Floor Ballroom, Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, 540 N. Michigan Ave. (IML host hotel).

### Sun., May 26

5 - 9:30 p.m.

35th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MR. LEATHER CONTEST

Doors open at 5 p.m., contest begins at 6 p.m. Entertainment by hot recording artist, Beverly McClellan. Proudly sponsored by Miller Lite.

The Harris Theater, 205 E. Randolph St. Buses start from host hotel at 4 p.m.

9 p.m. - 4 a.m.

IML Victory Party



Spanish DJ Dani Toro (pictured) makes his Chicago debut as the new International Mr. Leather is celebrated. More info at [www.circuitmom.com](http://www.circuitmom.com)

House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn St.

### Mon., May 27

8 p.m. - 4 a.m.

Black and Blue Ball

Featuring DJs Matthew Harvat and Ralph Rosario. More info at [www.circuitmom.com](http://www.circuitmom.com)

Castle Nightclub, 632 N. Dearborn St.



## Marketing 101

IML Leather Market

Fri., May 24, Noon - 7 p.m.

Sat., May 25, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Sun., May 26, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Mon., May 27, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Leathermen, leatherwomen and fetishists flock to the **Leather Market**, taking place in the 5th and 7th floor ballrooms of IML host hotel Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, 540 N. Michigan Ave. Attendees can view the wares of over 100 official IML vendors. There's always something to see at the Leather Market! Photos of the 2012 Leather Market by Jerry Nunn.

**nightspots**  
THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO  
**INTERNATIONAL MR. LEATHER 2013**

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# Center on Halsted's gala puts Chaka Khan, honorees on center stage

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Center on Halsted hosted its annual Human First Gala and performance at the Hilton Chicago May 18.

The untraditional black-and-white-tie gala, which raised funds to support the Center on Halsted and the LGBTQ community it serves, was also a celebration of the advancing community and the individuals and businesses contributing to the progress. The meaning behind the gala and its title is each individual, despite sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical ability, ethnicity or age is, above all, human first.

"In the end, we're striving to be recognized as humans first," said Center on Halsted's CEO Modesto "Tico" Valle. "That's our work, that's our mission. We strive to be recognized as human first and we do that in many ways at the Center."

More than 800 guests including corporate and foundation sponsors of the Center, civic and city leaders, local and national elected officials, major donors and supporters, as well as members and allies of the LGBT community attended the gala with a cocktail followed by a sit-down dinner. Raffle tickets were also sold throughout the evening.

Among the political guests were Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan and State Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka.

"There was this feeling to the evening about family and that we've come along way and we're recognizing the whole family as we're heading toward full equality," said Valle. "It is an opportunity to bring community together and to really celebrate all the accomplishments and recognize some very important people in our community. That to me was really the feeling last night. The only sadness is that we weren't celebrating full [marriage] equality. There was definitely an energy in the room that we think it's soon to come."

This year's Human First Award recipients were couples Sarah Schmidt and Julie Matthei as well as Jonathan "Yoni" Pizer and Brad Lippitz for their efforts in progressing marriage equality; and Richard Turner, who has been active in AIDS/HIV and LGBTQ issues, in addition to corporate and philanthropic communities. Allstate Insurance Company was honored with the Community Spirit Award for its support of agencies nationwide around the issues of domestic violence and fiscal literacy.

"The individuals that were honored were very much from the community and they have all been wonderful allies to Center and to many, many causes in the community," said Valle. "The whole atmosphere and the whole group embody giving back, hard work, hope and community."

Willard S. Evans Jr., president of People's Gas and North Shore Gas; Laura Ricketts, director of the Chicago Cubs, chairperson of the board of Chicago Cubs Charities and co-chair of the Human First Gala; and state Rep. Kelly Cassidy each presented awards to the Human First Award honorees.

Prior to each acceptance speech, videos familiarizing attendees with the honorees played on large screens. Schmidt and Matthei's and Pizer and Lippitz's videos displayed each of their families at home. Valle said this was the first time kids were featured in the videos and it added a valuable component to the evening. Kids from the two families were also present at the event along with honorees' parents to help celebrate.

"I love the fact the little boys were up there with their dads to accept the award and celebrate that and when you look at our movement, especially with the leadership among the lesbians, Laura Ricketts and Sarah and Julie and others, that's pretty powerful too. When the honorees bring their moms and dads to celebrate with them, we've truly come a long way. We still have a ways to go, but still, 20 years ago you couldn't bring your parents to celebrate honors like this. That's just so beautiful," Valle said.

Ricketts and Charles A. Schrock, chairman, president and CEO of Integrys Energy Group co-chaired this year's event, while Billie Jean King (who did not attend) served as honorary co-chair. Other honorary co-chairs were Amina Dickerson, Anne L. Kaplan, Abby O'Neil and Carroll Joynes, and Maria Bechily and Scott Hodes.

NBC Chicago Reporter Natalie Martinez emceed the event. For introductions and following remarks, Valle and Marcus Brady, chairperson of the board for Center on Halsted, both took the stage.

Chicago native and Grammy winner Chaka Khan headlined the event. Guests got up to dance to the live concert. DJ Matthew Harvat followed her performance, ending the evening.

"Chaka is a legend in our community and a diva and she really put on a show for all of us," said Valle. "She rocked the house. The headliner is always like the gravy of the evening because the honorees are the headline, so it was wonderful to see that we had a headliner that everyone could kind of connect to and everyone stood on the floor and really enjoyed the evening with Chaka."



From left: Julie Matthei, Brad Lippitz, Jonathan Pizer and Sarah Schmidt with the men's sons Jack (left) and Max. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald ([www.MysticImagesPhotography.com](http://www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)), many more photos available at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).



Chaka Khan. Videos of speeches and Chaka Khan at [www.youtube.com/WindyCityTimes](http://www.youtube.com/WindyCityTimes).



From left: NBC's Natalie Martinez; Charles A. Schrock (right) gives honoree Richard Turner a hug; Center board chair Marcus Brady.



Ann Hilton Fisher, Lori Cannon and Victor Salvo.



Richard Turner.



Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan and David Munar.



Brad Lippitz, Jonathan Pizer and their sons Jack and Max.



DJ Matthew Harvat.



Sarah Schmidt and Tico Valle.





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## VEHICLE REVIEW

## 2013 Mazda MazdaSpeed3

BY JAMES HAMEL, GAYWHEELS.COM

Some people (and cars) are just born with that special something—a star power that not only makes them special, but also makes it acceptable for them to be a bit more demanding of the world around them. This phenomenon is often dubbed “being a diva,” and it applies just as much to famous people who demand Cool Ranch Doritos in their dressing rooms (lookin’ at you, Britney Spears) as to cars like this 2013 Mazda MazdaSpeed3: both are larger than life, frighteningly powerful, and occasionally demonstrate signs of being a bit unbalanced.

Our test MazdaSpeed3 was also a very bright, sensual red (Velocity Red Mica) that not only screamed “fast” and “give me a ticket,” but also hinted at this car’s seductive charms. One might say it was a shade of “hussy red,” but that would be taking it too far, as this hatchback looks handsome in all photos, especially when equipped with the 18-inch gunmetal alloy wheels that set a nice contrast with this sporting red hot hatch.

Speaking of divas some might refer to as “hussies,” Dolly Parton has often said that “it takes a lot of money to look this cheap, and underneath the wig and the boobs lay a brain and a heart.” Since the MazdaSpeed3 is based on the more basic commuter many people use as their main transport when they “9 to 5,” how well

does this far more powerful, glitzy, star-power-infused variant fare as a daily driver? Let’s find out if there’s substance underneath all the visual menace that the 2013 MazdaSpeed3 possesses.

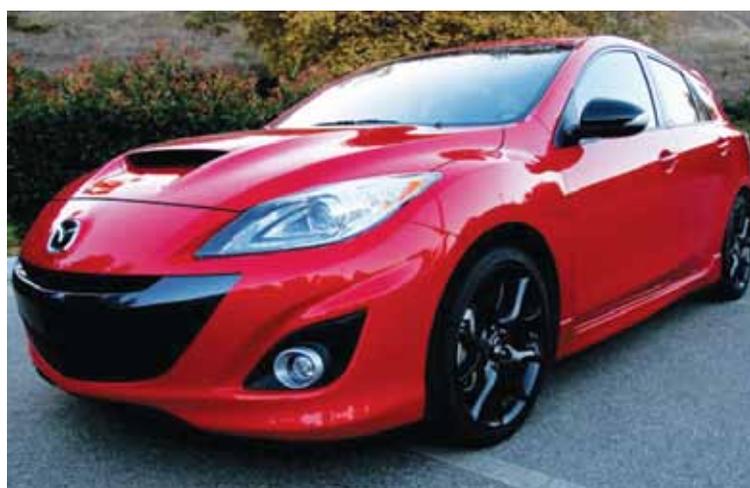
**The looks**

If you’re introverted, stick to a regular Mazda3, or at least don’t order your MazdaSpeed3 in red. We happened to like the latter’s muscular wheel arches, squat haunches, and front-end smile—two of which we also find appealing in men. After all, a nice smile goes a long way.

Adding to the sporty effect is the rather large air intake on the hood that looks like it was designed to inhale birds, kittens, and other sweet, furry creatures the car encounters as it roars down the road. Doesn’t matter if it’s a freeway, a city street, or just down your driveway, there’s no doubt that the 2013 MazdaSpeed3 does everything with a dose of rough and tumble seriousness. This is not a car to be ignored, as driving it is one of the most engaging things you can still do legally on regular roads. However, that isn’t to say this car won’t bite back if you treat it like some underpowered commuter with lazy, imprecise handling.

**Living with the 2013 MazdaSpeed3 as your daily driver**

The 2013 MazdaSpeed3 is anything but imprecise. Its steering is so quick, it could cut you like a surgeon’s scalpel without you even noticing. Even though Mazda has done a lot to improve the way this hot hatch tends to steer itself as you shift from first to second at redline, this is not a maneuver you want to undertake without both hands firmly on the wheel. All the



2013 Mazda MazdaSpeed3.  
Photo by James Hamel

MazdaSpeed3 asks of you is that you pay attention to it while driving. Is that too much to ask?

You see, the 2013 MazdaSpeed3 comes with an epically potent, out of control 2.3 liter turbo-charged, direct-injected 263 horsepower/280 ft-lbs of torque four-cylinder, all putting the power down via the front wheels. Thankfully Mazda included a torque-sensing conical limited-slip differential that help keeps the engine power from steering the car under most circumstances, but there are exceptions. Just listen to what your MazdaSpeed3 tells you to do, and we promise it won’t be the cause of your death. It just likes to have a good time.

The MazdaSpeed3 will never leave you hanging, thanks to a specially tuned sports suspension as well as uprated brakes made to withstand the extra abuse a car with this kind of power plant will suffer. Try as you might to drive the 2013 MazdaSpeed3 slowly and maturely, but that darn turbo is like a tiny devil on your shoulder screaming “floor it!” Bad devil. It also corners like it’s nailed to the pavement.

**Conclusion**

In a world where so many of us are stuck in the hum-drum monotony of living a Dolly Parton-

style “9 to 5” existence, the 2013 MazdaSpeed3 is like a shot of adrenaline and a “cup of ambition.” Driving this car is a visceral experience you don’t often find nowadays, and it isn’t necessarily for everyone. It’s far too ferocious for that. Ask yourself, are you man or woman enough for the 2013 MazdaSpeed3?

**What we liked about the 2013 MazdaSpeed3:**

- The potent engine and involving driving experience makes for an exhilarating street-racer
- The new full-size navigation screen front and center on the dashboard
- The utility you get from any five door hatchback model, and did we mention the turbo?

**What we’d change about the 2013 MazdaSpeed3:**

- It could use a little bit more rear legroom as competitors offer more space
- Mazda should shoot for a “Top Safety Pick Plus” rating for the redesign of the MazdaSpeed3
- Less notchiness in the stick shift, if possible, as the regular 3 Skactiv’s unit is perfectly weighted

Read the entire article at [www.Gaywheels.com](http://www.Gaywheels.com).



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# PRIDE MONTH CALENDAR

as of Fri., May 17

compiled by PRIDEChicago

www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org • PrideChgo@aol.com • 773-348-8243

Call phone number listed on each event to verify date and time. To add an event, contact PRIDEChicago: PrideChgo@aol.com The calendar includes Pride events whose coordinators have sent a listing form or press release to PRIDEChicago for inclusion.

**MAY 30 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "Out & Proud in Chicago." On the eve of the kickoff of June Pride Month, WTTW repeats the critically acclaimed show featuring historical coverage of LGBTs in Chicago. 8 p.m. on 11.1 WTTW HD. This is one of several LGBT related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. Narrated by actress and Chicago native Jane Lynch. www.wttw.com

**JUNE (various dates) - BOOK STUDY** - "Homosexuality & the Bible" on Wednesdays in June in the main sanctuary of United Church of Rogers Park UMC, 1545 W. Morse Ave. (enter on Ashland). 7 p.m. Four-part series led by Pastor Rachelle Brown of aChurch4Me, MCC. www.aChurch4Me.org, 773-951-4268.

**JUNE (various dates) - CENTER ON HALSTED** - during June Pride Month the Center will be hosting many events. Location: 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

**JUNE (various dates) - GAY LIBERATION NETWORK** - during June Pride Month the group will be coordinating an organizing meeting (6/5 at 7 p.m.); a solidarity action for Bradley Manning (6/8 at 12 Noon); a call-in show on Chicago Cable Network 21 (6/14 at 6:30 p.m.); an action (on the day of the DOMA Supreme Court decision at 7 p.m.). For locations and more information: www.gayliberation.net, lgbtliberation.net, 773-209-1187.

**JUNE (various dates) - GRACE COMMONS** - During the month of June, Grace Commons will be examining Biblical expressions of gender that are out of the "norm," including the Prophet Deborah, eunuchs, Jesus' view of gender roles and Joseph. Schedule will include: Holy Conversation (6/2); Taize Vespers (6/9); Dinner Church (6/16); Poetry Vespers (6/23); Pride Sunday Testimonials (6/30). All services are at 5:30 p.m. at the Grace Commons location in St. James Church, 6554 N. Rockwell. Each service followed by a potluck dinner. www.gracecommons.net

**JUNE (various dates)- PLAY** - "Late Nite Catechism" by Nuns 4 Fun Entertainment at Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted St. Thursdays and Saturdays. 8 p.m. \$30 (discounts available).www.nuns4fun.com, info@nuns4fun.com, 312-988-9000.

**JUNE (various dates) - PLAY** - "Same Sex Different Gays: A Musical Tale of Relationships" by the ph Comedy Theater, 1515 W. Berwyn Ave. 9:30 p.m. \$15 adults; \$10 students. www.whatisph.com, info@whatisph.com, 773-961-8214.

**JUNE (various dates) - SHOW** - "Burlesque is More," billed as a "steamy-hot burlesque and improv show" and "Improv Theatre proves funny can be sexy" by the Annoyance Theatre, 4830 N. Broadway. Director Mick Napier says that everything from traditional feathers and corsets to T-shirts, uniforms, safety goggles and prop guns (!) are included. \$15. www.theannoyance.com, 773-561-HONK (4665).

**JUNE (various dates) - PLAY** - "The PRIDE" by About Face Theatre at Victory Gardens Richard Christiansen Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. 7:30 p.m. (Thurs. and Fri.); 5 p.m. & 9 p.m. (Saturdays); 5 p.m. (Sundays). \$30 (\$20 for previews; \$15 for students; group rates at 773-871-3000). Two story lines, fifty years apart. Set in London. The time-shifting play maps the progression of the gay rights movement from the repression of the '50s to the freedom of today through the fate of two twisted love triangles. The play is presented through July 13 (no show on July 4). www.aboutface theatre.com, tickets@victorygardens.org, 773-784-8565.

**JUNE 1 - PRIDE CONCERT, DANCE** - "Amazon Women Rise" by the Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus, at Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N. Broadway. 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.. The chorus will sing "Shooting Star," "Amazon" and "Fishing" to celebrate lesbian community and culture. Also, lesbian parodies of two well-known songs: "Favorite Dyke Things," a twist on "My Favorite Things" from "The Sound of Music;" and "I Enjoy

Being A Dyke," a take-off on "I Enjoy Being a Girl" from the Broadway musical "Flower Drum Song." The dance with live DJ immediately follows the concert. Suggested donation: \$15 advance (adults); \$20 (door); \$10 (seniors 65 and older); \$10 (children 12 and under). Ticket price includes admission to concert and dance. Accessible. www.artemissingers.org, 773-764-4465.

**JUNE 1 - CHORAL CONCERT** - "It's About Time!" by Windy City Performing Arts at Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 1650 W. Foster Ave. 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. Windy City Gay Chorus and Aria present songs capturing the spirit of love, romance and marriage from around the world featuring the world premier of the song "It's About Time" sung by Karen Mason. For ticket information: www.windycitysings.org

**JUNE 2 - WINDY CITY GAY IDOL** - "Wild Card Night" - 11th annual competition by Windy City Media Group at Spin, 800 W. Belmont Ave. 8 p.m. sign-in; 9 p.m. start. Open to all amateur singers age 21 and above, regardless of sexual orientation. www.facebook.com/windycitygayidol, wcmgpromotions@gmail.com

**JUNE 2 - WNBA** - "Pride Night & the Chicago Sky" at Allstate Arena, 6920 Mannheim Rd., Rosemont, IL, 5 to 7 p.m. \$25 (includes Sky Pride Bag). (also August 18). www.chicagosky.net, tickets@chicagosky.net, 866-SKY-WNBA.

**JUNE 6 - WORKSHOP** - "What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?" - identifying your true career directions, by Judi Lansky of Lansky Career Consultants. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. No charge, but advance registration required. www.lanskycareerconsultants.com. For location/information and required advance registration, call: 312-494-0022.

**JUNE 7 - BENEFIT DINNER** - "Downton Abbey-themed" evening of food and music celebrating the Elegant Edwardian Era. This is a fundraiser for Chicago House's new transgender housing project. Location: the historic Keith House at 1900 S. Prairie Ave. \$150 (capacity: 20 people). 6 p.m.: wine and music. 7 p.m.: formal five course dinner. Guests may choose to attend in period dress and may assume a persona appropriate to the time period and atmosphere. Reserve at editor@windycitymediagroup.com or 773-387-2394.

**JUNE 9 - LADIES WINE & ARTS PAINTING PARTY** - by the Center on Halsted and Sapphic Adventures. 1 p.m. \$25 includes all materials and two glasses of wine. Space limited. Celebrate Pride Month with sweeping bands of color and spontaneity in a fun and stress-free environment. No prior painting experience necessary. For details: www.sapphicadventures.org

**JUNE 9 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "Love Free or Die," part of the Independent Lens series features the story of Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson. His consecration, the first of an openly gay man in any Christian denomination, deeply divided the church and put his life in danger. 10 p.m. on 11.2 WTTW Prime. This is one of several LGBT related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. www.wttw.com

**JUNE 9 - WORSHIP SERVICE & PRESENTATION & ROUNDTABLE** - with Judith Kotze (director) of I.a.m. (Inclusive and Affirming Ministries-South Africa) at St. Luke's Lutheran Church Logan Square, 2649 N. Francisco St. 10:30 worship service; Noon presentation and roundtable. Worship service info: www.stlukesls.org. Presentation and Roundtable info: www.osisa.org/lgbti/regional/inclusive-and-affirming-ministries-iam, office@stlukesls.org, 773-235-5420 (info for all three).

**JUNE 12 - GATHERING** - "Living Into God's Invitational Love: Learning More and Welcoming LGBTQIA Folks and Families" by Friendship Presbyterian Church, at Norwood Park Train Station, 6088 Northwest Highway. 12:30 p.m. www.fpcchicago.org, 773-631-8262.

**JUNE 13 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "Ellen DeGeneres: The Mark Twain Prize" features Ellen receiving the nation's highest comedy award at the Kennedy Center. 9 p.m. on 11.1 WTTW HD. This is one of several LGBT-related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. www.wttw.com

**JUNE 13 - WORKSHOP** - "Stop Looking, Start Finding" a great job in this economy, by Judi Lansky of Lansky Career Consultants. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. No charge, but advance registration required. www.lanskycareerconsultants.com. For location/information and required advance registration, call 312-494-0022.

**JUNE 15 - SAPPHO'S SALON** - 5-year anniversary celebration presents '80s Prom. Lesbians and their friends are encouraged to dust off their '80s prom dresses and tails and join Sappho's Salon for this '80s Prom. Location: Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark. 7:30 p.m. \$10 cover. Prizes and refreshments offered. www.womenandchildrenfirst.com, 773-769-9299.

**JUNE 15 - WINDY CITY GAY IDOL** - "Semi-Finals" - 11th annual competition by Windy City Media Group at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. 2 p.m. door; 3 p.m. start. Open to all amateur singers age 21 and above, regardless of sexual orientation. facebook.com/windycitygayidol, wcmgpromotions@gmail.com

**JUNE 15 - MUSIC/DANCE/ARTS** - "The Next Generation of Queer: Young queer voices and bodies join for an evening of all-ages entertainment" by aChurch4Me, MCC at Overdier Hall, 1545 W. Morse Ave. 7 p.m. All-ages evening of expression through music, dance and arts. A portion of the proceeds benefit The Crib, a youth ministry and shelter of the Night Ministry. \$15 adults; \$7 students. www.aChurch4Me.org, MCC 773-951-4268.

**JUNE 16 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "Two Spirits." part of the Independent Lens program. The show deals with the life and death of Fred Martinez, one of the youngest hate crime victims in modern history who was murdered at age sixteen. It also explores the ancient Native American two-spirit tradition. 10 p.m. on 11.2 WTTW Prime. This is one of several LGBT-related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. www.wttw.com

**JUNE 17 - SUMMER CAMPS** - For Near North Montessori School, 1434 W. Division St. 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. Camps available by the week, ages 4-12. (Camp continues through August 9). www.nnms.org/summer, programs@nnms.org, 773-384-1434.

**JUNE 18 - WORKSHOP** - "Too Young To Retire: What's Next?" by Judi Lansky of Lansky Career Consultants. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.. No charge, but advance registration required. www.lanskycareerconsultants.com. For location/information and required advance registration, call 312-494-0022.

**JUNE 19 - GATHERING** - "Living Into God's Invitational Love: Learning More and Welcoming LGBTQIA Folks and Families" by New Hope United Methodist Church, at 7115 W. Hood. 7 p.m. www.newhopechicago.org, 773-775-1215.

**JUNE 20 - AUCTION & PARTY** - "2013 Birdhouse Art Auction & Cocktail Party" by Chicago House at Room & Board Chicago Store, 55 E. Ohio St. 6 to 9 p.m.. Tickets: \$70 advance; \$80 door. Proceeds benefit Chicago House's ongoing efforts to provide housing and support services to Chicago's LGBT and at-large communities. www.chicagohouse.org, bconnor@chicagohouse.org, 773-248-5200, ext. 303.

**JUNE 20 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "David Geffen: American Masters." (part of the American Masters series) features David Geffen, who is an agent, manager, record industry mogul, Hollywood and Broadway producer, and billionaire philanthropist who helped shape American popular culture for the past four decades. Geffen donates to numerous LGBT organizations and causes. 9 p.m. on 11.1 WTTW HD. This is one of several LGBT-related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. www.wttw.com

**JUNE 22 - CHICAGO PRIDE FEST** - A street festival by Northalsted Business Alliance (NBA) on Halsted St. from Addison to Grace. 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. \$7 suggested donation. (Two-day fest continues June 23, from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.). The festival is being held this year one week BEFORE the Pride Parade that is scheduled for Sunday, June 30. For festival information: www.northalsted.com, info@northalsted.com, 773-868-3010.

**JUNE 22 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "Anyone and Everyone" features parents who have a son or daughter who is gay. It depicts families from all walks of life. Individuals from such diverse backgrounds as Japanese, Bolivian, and Cherokee, as well as from various religious denominations such as Mormon, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Hindu and Southern Baptist share intimate accounts of how their children revealed their sexual orientation and discuss their responses. First aired in San Diego in 2007, it also shows PFLAG meetings. 10 p.m. on 11.1 WTTW HD. (Repeated on June 30 at 10:30 p.m. on 11.2 WTTW Prime). This is one of several LGBT-related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. www.wttw.com

**JUNE 22 - CHORAL PERFORMANCE** - by the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus and chorus alumni. The chorus has announced that they will be performing at Chicago Pride Fest. It's the CGMC's 30th anniversary reunion that includes a dinner, cocktail reception, etc. For a schedule of anniversary events and performance information: www.cgmc.org

**JUNE 23 - ECUMENICAL WORSHIP** - "Draw the Circle Wide" by the Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches, at First UMC Temple, 77 W. Washington. 6 p.m. reception/choir rehearsal; 7 p.m. worship. All are invited to participate in an intergenerational mass choir with one rehearsal at 6 p.m., before the 7 p.m. service. Fellowship and refreshments available at both 6 p.m. and after the service. A dialogical message of hope and welcome by Bishop Wayne N. Miller, Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA (Lutheran). www.chicagowelcomingchurches.org, info@chicagowelcomingchurches.org

**JUNE 23 - CHICAGO PRIDE FEST** - A street festival by Northalsted Business Alliance (NBA) on Halsted St. from Addison to Grace. 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.. \$7 suggested donation. (Second day of a two-day fest). The festival is being held this year one week BEFORE the Pride Parade that is scheduled for Sunday, June 30. Fest information: www.northalsted.com, info@northalsted.com 773-868-3010.

**JUNE 23 - WORSHIP SERVICE** - "Service of Celebration" by the Congregational United Church of Christ, 1001 W. Kirchoff Rd., Arlington Heights, IL. 10:30 a.m. www.congucc.org, 847-392-6650.

**JUNE 25 - PRIDE OPEN MIC** - Annual Pride Month event by Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark St. 7 p.m. Every year, seasoned pros and first-timers share their work. So join well-known and newbie queer writers and share your words out loud! Sign up for a three-minute reading slot either by calling the bookstore or stopping by. This year's host: Robert MacDonald, co-author of "The Field Guide to Gay and Lesbian Chicago." www.womenandchildrenfirst.com, 773-769-9299.

**JUNE 26 - WINDY CITY GAY IDOL** - "Finals" - 11th annual competition by Windy City Media Group at Mayne Stage, 1328 W. Morse Ave. 6 p.m. door; 8 p.m. start. Open to all amateur singers age 21 and above, regardless of sexual orientation. facebook.com/windycitygayidol, wcmgpromotions@gmail.com

**JUNE 27 - WEEKEND PRIDE PARTY** - "Backlot Bash" - 10th annual event starts today with a comedy kick-off at Mayne Stage, 1328 W. Morse Ave. (Backlot Bash continues on June 28, 29 and 30) For a list of performers, hours, cost, age requirements, etc.: www.backlotbashchicago.com

**JUNE 27 - AWARDS CEREMONY** - "30 Under 30 Awards" sponsored by Windy City Media Group, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Center on Halsted and Chicago House. 5:30 p.m. The awards honor 30 outstanding young (under 30 years old) LGBT individuals (and allies). www.windycitymediagroup.com, andrew@windycitymediagroup.com, 773-871-7610.

**JUNE 27 - TRIBUTE** - "Music With Pride: A Tribute to Gay Composers" by Team to End AIDS Chicago at Lakeview Presbyterian Church, 716 W. Addison St. 7 p.m. \$10 (suggested donation) at the door; free-will donation accepted. http://musicwithpride.splashthat.com, musicwithpride@gmail.com

**JUNE 27 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "Stonewall Uprising: American Experience." Historical coverage of the Stonewall rebellion that is credited with kicking off the modern day LGBT rights movement. 9 p.m. on 11.1 WTTW HD. (Repeated on June 30 at 9 p.m. on 11.2 WTTW Prime). This is one of several LGBT-related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. [www.wttw.com](http://www.wttw.com)

**JUNE 27 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "Schoolboy to Showgirl: The Alexandra Billings Story." 10:30 p.m. on 11.1 WTTW HD. This is one of several LGBT-related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. [www.wttw.com](http://www.wttw.com)

**JUNE 28 - GATHERING** - "Living Into God's Invitational Love: Learning More and Welcoming LGBTQIA Folks and Families" by Edison Park United Methodist Church, 6740 N. Oliphant. 7 p.m. [www.edisonparkumc.org](http://www.edisonparkumc.org), 773-792-3030.

**JUNE 28 - WEEKEND PRIDE PARTY** - "Backlot Bash" - 10th annual event in the parking lot behind Cheetah Gym, 5238 N. Clark. (Backlot Bash continues on June 29 and 30). For a list of performers, cost, age requirements, etc.: [www.backlotbashchicago.com](http://www.backlotbashchicago.com)

**JUNE 28 - PRIDE BBQ & SHABBAT BEACH SERVICE** - by Congregation Or Chadash, 5959 N. Sheridan Rd. 6:30 to 8 p.m. (Picnic); 8 to 9 p.m. (Shabbat Beach service); 9 to 10 p.m. (Closing Reception). Free, potluck kosher-style (no pork, shellfish, or meat and milk mixed in the same dish), BYOB. Come meet our incoming Rabbi Cindy Enger and say farewell to our outgoing Rabbi Larry Edwards. [www.orchadash.org](http://www.orchadash.org), [orchadashchicago@gmail.com](mailto:orchadashchicago@gmail.com), 773-24-JEWS2 (773-245-3972).

**JUNE 28 - RECEPTION** - "Pride & Joy" - Twentieth annual event by the Center on Halsted and the Friends of the Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame. Location: Center on Halsted rooftop, 3656 N. Halsted St. Time: 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. \$20 includes four drinks and light hors d'oeuvres and entertainment. 21+. [www.glhallowfame.org](http://www.glhallowfame.org), [info@glhallowfame.org](mailto:info@glhallowfame.org), 773-281-5095.

**JUNE 29 - CHICAGO DYKE MARCH** - Includes a rally and march at north side location. For information: [www.chicagodykemarch.wordpress.com](http://www.chicagodykemarch.wordpress.com)

**JUNE 29 - COACHING GROUP** - "Choose Life: Coming Out with Peace, Purpose and Patience" by Rev. Jacki Belile, a lesbian Baptist minister and spiritual life coach (of Living Well Ministries), 6554 N. Rockwell. 1 to 3 p.m.. \$25. Rev. Belile hosts this supportive coaching group for all who seek the blessing of authentic living. Pre-registration by June 27 required at [www.livingwellministries.net](http://www.livingwellministries.net)

**JUNE 29 - GATHERING** - "Sober & Proud" - Pride Month event by Alexian Brothers Housing and Health Alliance (formerly known as Alexian Brothers AIDS Ministry) at 825 W. Wellington St. 6 to 11 p.m. Suggested donations accepted. [www.alexianbrothershousing.org](http://www.alexianbrothershousing.org), 773-327-9921.

**JUNE 29 - PRE-PARADE SHOW** - "Miss Gypsy U.S.A. Chicago (drag show) presented by Hideaway Nightclub, 7301 W. Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park, IL. 10:30 p.m. [www.hideawayinforestpark.com](http://www.hideawayinforestpark.com), [hideawayinforestpark@gmail.com](mailto:hideawayinforestpark@gmail.com), 708-488-9382.

**JUNE 29 - PRIDE WALK & RUN** - "Proud To Run" 32nd annual event includes a 5k run and 10k run and 2-mile fun walk. Proud To Run is presented in association with Frontrunners/Frontwalkers Chicago in Lincoln Park, Montrose Avenue at Simonds Drive (east of Lake Shore Drive, at the lakefront). 8:04 a.m.. Fee to participate benefits local organizations. Awards ceremony and raffle at 10 a.m. [www.proudtorun.org](http://www.proudtorun.org)

**JUNE 29 - WEEKEND PRIDE PARTY** - "Backlot Bash" - 10th annual event in the parking lot behind Cheetah Gym, 5238 N. Clark St. (Backlot Bash continues on June 30). For a list of performers, hours, cost, age requirements, etc.: [www.backlotbashchicago.com](http://www.backlotbashchicago.com)

**JUNE 29 - WORSHIP SERVICE** - "Pride Parade Mass" by Dignity Chicago at 3338 N. Broadway. 5 p.m. [www.dignity-chicago.org](http://www.dignity-chicago.org), [dignitychicago@gmail.com](mailto:dignitychicago@gmail.com), 312-458-9438.

**JUNE 30 - LIVE RADIO BROADCAST** - of the Pride Parade by WCPT AM & FM- Chicago's Progressive Talk on 820 AM, 92.5 FM, 92.7 FM and 99.9 FM. Noon to 3 p.m. Cathy Richardson and Ellen Miller will bring you all of the action with special surprise guests. [www.chicagoprogressivetalk.com](http://www.chicagoprogressivetalk.com), [web@newswebradio.net](http://web@newswebradio.net), 773-792-0400.

**JUNE 30 - PARADE TELEVISION SHOW** - 10th annual by ABC 7 Chicago. Parade Day is capped off each year with ABC 7 Chicago's one-hour show presenting taped highlights of that year's parade.

Check local television listings for the time.

**JUNE 30 - "Pre-Pride Rally and Spiritual Send Off"** by Metropolitan Community Churches at the Fairmont Hotel, Moulin Rouge Room. 8:30 a.m. [www.aChurch4Me.org](http://www.aChurch4Me.org), MCC: 773-951-4268.

**JUNE 30 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "Stonewall Uprising: American Experience." Historical coverage of the Stonewall rebellion that is credited with kicking off the modern-day LGBT rights movement. 9 p.m. on 11.2 WTTW Prime. This is one of several LGBT-related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. [www.wttw.com](http://www.wttw.com)

**JUNE 30 - WORSHIP SERVICE** - for Pride Sunday by Holy Covenant United Methodist Church, 925 W. Diversey Pkwy., 9:30 a.m. [www.holycovenantumc.org](http://www.holycovenantumc.org), [office@holycovenantumc.org](mailto:office@holycovenantumc.org), 773-528-6462.

**JUNE 30 - TELEVISION SHOW** - "Anyone and Everyone" features parents who have a son or daughter who is gay. It depicts families from all walks of life. Individuals from such diverse backgrounds as Japanese, Bolivian, and Cherokee, as well as from various religious denominations such as Mormon, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Hindu and Southern Baptist share intimate accounts of how their children revealed their sexual orientation and discuss their responses. First aired in San Diego in 2007, it also shows PFLAG meetings. 10:30 p.m. on 11.2 WTTW Prime. This is one of several LGBT-related shows on WTTW HD and WTTW Prime during June Pride Month. [www.wttw.com](http://www.wttw.com).

**JUNE 30 - CHICAGO 44th ANNUAL PRIDE PARADE** - Line up at corner of Broadway and Montrose. Step off from the Broadway and Montrose

corner at 12 NOON, proceeding south on Broadway (to Halsted); then south on Halsted (to Belmont); then east on Belmont (to Broadway); then south on Broadway (to Diversey); then east on Diversey (to Cannon Drive) in Lincoln Park. Coordinated by PRIDEChicago. [www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org](http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org), [PrideChgo@aol.com](mailto:PrideChgo@aol.com), 773-348-8243.

**JUNE 30 - UNITED BLACK PRIDE** - Beginning this week are numerous events scheduled for the LGBT Black Pride celebration. [www.ubpride.com](http://www.ubpride.com)

**JUNE 30 - WEEKEND PRIDE PARTY** - "Backlot Bash"- 10th annual event in the parking lot behind Cheetah Gym, 5238 N. Clark St. For a list of performers, hours cost, age requirements, etc.: [www.backlotbashchicago.com](http://www.backlotbashchicago.com)

For travel to the parade and other pride events  
ride the CTA/PACE/METRA.  
[www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) (1-312-836-7000)  
or [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com) (1-312-322-6900)



PAID ADVERTISEMENT

# CMSA Golf Open Registration Party

Roadhouse 66  
3330 N Clark St  
Saturday, June 1  
2p.m.-6p.m.

League registration opens June 1 and  
closes at midnight on June 15

Registration \$50 at party,  
\$60 June 2-9,  
\$70 June 10-15

Rounds are 9 holes in length  
played anytime Tue-Sun  
at Sydney Marovitz along the lakefront.  
Championship is 18 holes in length.

**1st Annual  
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or email [golf@chicagomsa.org](mailto:golf@chicagomsa.org)



## Nat'l Restaurant Show unveils trends, speakers

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Food service professionals (including restaurateurs, caterers and others) descended upon McCormick Place May 18-21 for the NRA (National Restaurant Association) Show 2013.

There were many events to keep attendees occupied. There was the International Wine, Spirits & Beer (IWSB) event, the World Culinary Showcase, a hydroponic garden, award presentations for innovations. Starbucks Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz delivered the keynote presentation, "Transforming Companies for the Future: Balancing Profit with a Social Conscience."

And, of course, there was the exhibit. Covering tens of thousands of square feet, there were hundreds of vendors exhibiting everything from flatware to refrigeration units to table skirts to trends in food such as sweet-potato fries. (Thanks, Nice Blends!) Just a few of the hundreds of vendors included:

—RAAW (<http://raawfoods.com>): RAAW's natural juices are made from select fruits and vegetables; flavors include Very Berry Wheatgrass, which tastes a whole lot better than it sounds.

—No Kid Hungry (DineOutForNoKidsHungry.org): One in five kids in this country struggle with hunger. This organization aims to stack the odds in the children's favor.

—IMIDUS ([www.imidus.com](http://www.imidus.com)) and MoPro ([www.mopro.com](http://www.mopro.com)): These businesses want to



help restaurants' visibility. IMIDUS employs a loyalty/gift card program and well as a point-of-sale language and currency system. MoPro (which had a gaggle of telegenic people dressed like doctors) creates a business' website, video, mobile, photos, social media, online ordering tools and more for \$199 a month.

—Chicago Sweet Connection Bakery (<http://sweetconnectionbakery.com>), Al Gelato Chicago ([www.algelatochicago.com](http://www.algelatochicago.com)) and Noble Chocolates ([www.noble-chocolates.com](http://www.noble-chocolates.com)): All three companies—two local, the other based in Belgium—displayed delicious offerings. The proof is in the pudding, uh, chocolate cup.

—Dining By Candlelight ([dleight.com\): Restaurants and related businesses can set the mood with a wide variety of eye-pleasing items.](http://www.DiningByCan-</a></p>
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—BIA Cordon Bleu: The esteemed manufacturer of porcelain and stoneware dinnerware and other items was on hand.

—Top Cellar ([www.topcellarapp.com](http://www.topcellarapp.com)): I first encountered an iPad wine list at Chicago Cut Steakhouse. The Top Cellar app customizes restaurant's wine lists and other menu items so any diner can look like an expert.

—Body Works ([www.BodyWorksForMe.com](http://www.BodyWorksForMe.com)): These bottle shots involve what the vendors said are natural herbs to help you in one of six areas: wellness, sleep, relaxation, performance, sport



and energy.

Celebrity chefs, of course, were part of the show. Among those were lesbian chefs Cat Cora and Anne Burrell as well as others such as Rick Bayless and Marcus Samuelsson. Anthony Bourdain (Kitchen Confidential and the TV series No Reservations) hosted the third annual Restaurants Rock industry celebration, the official after-party of the NRA show and IWSB, on May 19 and had a book-signing the following day.

Photos of the exhibit by Andrew Davis ([Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com](mailto:Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com))

## CLASSIFIEDS

### ARTISTS

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: SKOKIE ART GUILD'S 52nd ANNUAL ART FAIR. July 13th & 14th, 2013.** Fine art. Prizes and awards. Held on the Village Green, 5211 W. Oakton St., downtown Skokie, IL. APPLY NOW. For applications or information: [skokieart@aol.com](mailto:skokieart@aol.com) or 847-677-8163. [www.skokieartguild.org](http://www.skokieartguild.org) (7/3/13)

### BEAUTY SPA SERVICES

**MEN SPA SERVICES** - Mens Custom Facial \* Mens Waxing \* Costume and Camouflage Make-Up \* Body Wraps \* Detoxing \* Teeth Whitening. [www.RitzyBlueSpa.com](http://www.RitzyBlueSpa.com), 312-985-7142. 40% off All Services Discount Code: GLBC (10/16/13-26)

### CAMPING

Have you got the camping blues?

Come join us in Homer, MI. Campground seeking investors.

\$3,000 investment gets you 3 years of camping plus 1% of campground sales each year.

Contact Bill at [billybearbigrig@yahoo.com](mailto:billybearbigrig@yahoo.com) or 517-240-5405

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**CHESTNUT CLEANING SERVICES:** We're a house cleaning service for homes, small businesses and small buildings. We also have fabulous organizational skills (a separate function at a separate cost that utilizes your assistance) for what hasn't been cleaned in many months or years due to long-term illness, depression, physical/mental challenges, for the elderly, if you have downsized and more. Depressed about going home to chaos? We can organize your chaos, straighten out your chaos, help you make sense of your chaos and finally clean what is no longer chaos. Can we help you? Bonded and insured. Chestnut Cleaning Service: 312-332-5575. [www.ChestnutCleaning.com](http://www.ChestnutCleaning.com) (11/20/13-52)

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**COUNSELING AND CLINICAL HYPNOTHERAPY:** Providing help to individuals and couples in our community since 1987. I specialize in relationship issues, spiritual issues, childhood trauma, and recurrent patterns that inhibit potential. Starla R. Sholl, LCSW, PC, 773.878.5809, [www.starlasholl.com](http://www.starlasholl.com) (8/21/13-26)

### DUI CLASSES/EVALUATION

**DUI CLASSES & EVALUATIONS** Chicago L00P, SOS and Court Approved. Illinois & Out of State. Groups M to Th 6-8:30pm. All other times by appointment. Ph: 312-254-5085 [www.anchorcenters.com](http://www.anchorcenters.com) (6/7/13-4)

### DECK CARE

**EXTERIOR PAINTING AND DECK STAINING. LATEX AND OILS.** House painting, complete prep work and power washing, re sealing loose cracks, and re finish with acrylic latex. Protect your DECK. Keep your wood hard. Water blast, sand, and seal with PENETRATING OIL stains. Free Estimates. 847-444-1482. (7/3/13)

### HELP WANTED

**HANDYPERSON WANTED.** My Partner and I bought a single family home in Andersonville. We are looking for a person to cut our grass, handle deliveries, meet service providers, light maintenance. Contact Dan at [globalassistance@aol.com](mailto:globalassistance@aol.com) (5/29/13-2)

### HOME IMPROVEMENT

**Basement get flooded?** We can help put it back together again! We also do Painting, carpentry, tiling and Deck Repairs. "A" rating with Angie's List, "A+" with BBB. Licensed-Bonded-Insured, One year Warranty. Free Estimates! Andy OnCall 773-244-9961. 847-328-3100 [www.getandy.com](http://www.getandy.com) (8/1/13-52)

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### LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was filed by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. FILE NO. D13134284 on the APR 29 2013 Under the Assumed Name of Cynspired Marketing with the business located at 1520 W. Carmen Ave #1 Chicago IL 60640. The true name(s) and residence address of the owner(s) is: Cynthia Holmes, 1520 W. Carmen Ave #1 Chicago IL 60640 (5/22/13-3)

### LEGAL SERVICES

The Law Office of  
**Alexander Weaver**  
312-588-5005  
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### PIANO & VOICE LESSONS

**PIANO & VOICE LESSONS** - in my studio or your home offered by young, gay, professional with Master's in music. Andersonville, Boystown and Near Northside. Take lessons with a neighborhood teacher. All ages welcome. Jonathan at 646-418-4043. (6/12/13-13)

### SERVICES AVAILABLE

**STOP YOUR FORCLOSURE NOW!** WILLIAM H. RANSOM, Attorney at Law, CALL NOW (312) 953-9120 or [whrlaw@aol.com](mailto:whrlaw@aol.com) - 19 years Litigation Experience - Credit Cards Accepted - Payment Plans Available (9/25/13-26)

### SPIRITUALITY

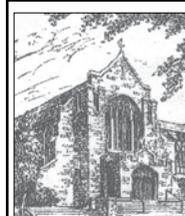


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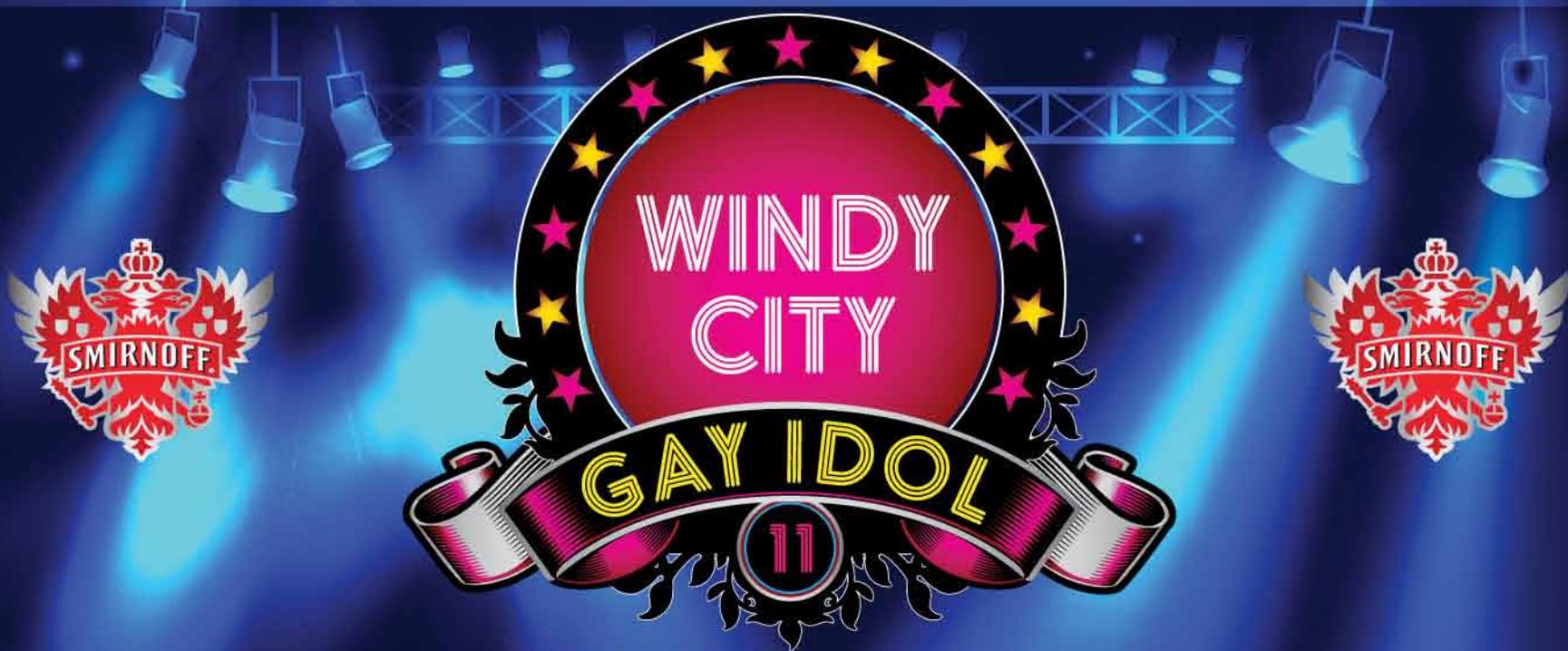
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Atonement Episcopal Church  
5749 N. Kenmore  
[www.ChurchOfTheAtonement.Org](http://www.ChurchOfTheAtonement.Org)  
Sundays at 11 A.M.

### WINDOW TREATMENTS

**WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH THOSE WINDOWS?:** Call me! I take care of it all from design through installation, customizing to your needs. JOSEPH RICE Interiors, Inc. Full Decorating Services with a specialty in window treatments for over 25 years. 773-271-2361. [www.JosephRiceInteriors.com](http://www.JosephRiceInteriors.com) (5/29/13-26)

# WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP PRESENTS



ELEVENTH ANNUAL

## CHICAGO'S BIGGEST GLBT CONTEST NOW IN ITS 11TH YEAR!

THE FINAL REGULAR PRELIMINARY AT

### CREW

4804 N Broadway

THU., MAY 23

9:30PM START

Singers sign up at 8:30pm

**\$5 SMIRNOFF COCKTAILS**

**\$6 KETEL ONE & TANQUERAY COCKTAILS**

GET WILD AT WILD CARD NIGHT AT

### SPIN

800 W Belmont

SUN., JUNE 2

9PM START

Singers sign up at 8pm

**\$5 SMIRNOFF COCKTAILS**

**\$6 KETEL ONE, DON JULIO & TANQUERAY COCKTAILS**

WIN TICKETS FROM RAVINIA, BROADWAY IN CHICAGO AND MORE!!!

HOSTED BY **SOFIA SAFFIRE**

**\$100 to singer with most votes each night!** Top Finalists advance to the Semi-Finals!

**SIDETRACK** 3349 N Halsted **SEMI-FINALS**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 15** \* 2pm door / 3pm start

**MAYNE STAGE** 1328 W Morse **FINALS**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26** \* 6pm door / 7pm start

FOR MORE, VISIT [FACEBOOK.COM/WINDYCITYGAYIDOL](http://FACEBOOK.COM/WINDYCITYGAYIDOL) OR EMAIL [WCMGPROMOTIONS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:WCMGPROMOTIONS@GMAIL.COM)



\* WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP INCLUDES WINDY CITY TIMES, NIGHTSPOTS, WINDY CITY QUEERCAST AND WINDYCITYMEDIAGROUP.COM \*

# calendar

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## Wed., May 22

### The Growing Economic Power of Women

Beth Brooke will share her perspectives on one of the key drivers of growth in today's global economy - the economic empowerment of women and implications for business. 7:15am-9:15am, 312-263-3500, Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St., [http://http://centennial.executivesclub.org/season-schedule#may\\_2013](http://http://centennial.executivesclub.org/season-schedule#may_2013)

### Lambda Literary Awards finalist reading

Nine finalists for the 2013 Lambda Literary Awards will read from their work: Anne Laughlin (Runaway), Marty McConnell (wine for a shotgun), Lania Knight (Three Cubic Feet), E.M. Kokie (Personal Effects), Ramon H. Rivera-Servera (Performing Queer Latinidad: Dance, Sexuality, Politics), Chris Paynter (Survived by Her Longtime Companion), C.P. Rowlands (Jacob's War), Lewis Wallace, and Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim (Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America). 7pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., [www.lambdaliterary.org](http://www.lambdaliterary.org)

### Can a Pill Revolutionize Sex for Gay and SGL Men of Color?

All-ages, free community talk show directed to young gay men of color and their allies. Discussion with the panelists and audience around sex, love, lust, and a new FDA-approved form of HIV protection called PrEP. Casual reception 6pm with appetizers from Hearty Boys. 7pm performance by ButtaFlySoul. 6pm-9pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St.

### Inaugural Women for Toni Preckwinkle event

Progressive women unite to support reelection of Cook County Board President. Host committee Christy Webber, Laura Ricketts, Dr. Cheryl Watson-Lowry, and Ronda Locke. \$1000 - \$150. RSVP [womenfortoni@gmail.com](mailto:womenfortoni@gmail.com) or by phone. 6pm-8pm, 773-960-7212, Christy Webber Landscape Headquarters, 2900 W. Ferdinand St.

## Thursday, May 23

### Kick off Bear Pride Weekend at Sidetrack

Hot rods, grease monkeys and music video beats. Show us your ink, we'll share ours. Presented by Absolut OUtRageous. 3pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St., [www.sidetrackchicago.com](http://www.sidetrackchicago.com)

## 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.. 8:30pm sign up, 9:30pm start; 8:30pm, Crew Bar & Grill, 4804 N Broadway, <http://goprider.com/z81w>

### Skin Trade with Chi Chi LaRue

The official Grabbys weekend kickoff party, Skin-Trade at Hydrate with DJ Chi Chi LaRue. \$5 donation going to Chicago House; 9pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, Chicago, <http://www.grabbys.com>

### IML: The Roast of Woody Woodruff, IML 2012 and Nick Elliott, IMBB 2012

The Roast of Woody Woodruff, International Mr. Leather 2012 and Nick Elliott, International Mr. Bootblack 2012. See them off with a laugh before the new guys come in. Ticket required. 7pm-10:30pm, Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave., Chicago, <http://www.leatherarchives.org>

## Friday, May 24

### The Improvised Sondheim Project

Completely improvised, spontaneous musicals in the style of composer Stephen Sondheim with a suggestion from the audience and the muse of Mr. Sondheim to guide them. \$15. 10:30am, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave., [www.stage773.com](http://www.stage773.com)

### Weekly lunch and discussion

West Suburban Senior Services LGBT Seniors Program also offers free case management and mental health counseling to LGBTs 55 and up in the Western Suburbs. 11am-2pm, 8300 Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park, [www.wseniors.org](http://www.wseniors.org)

### International Mr. Leather Vendor Mart

A full Weekend Market "Pride Pass" is available for a donation of at least \$10 and will provide immediate access to the Vendor Market during open hours. Through May 27. 12pm-7pm, Marriott 540 N. Michigan Ave., [www.imrl.com](http://www.imrl.com)

### Queer Prom 2013

Presented by Homofrecuencia, Radio Arte. Tickets (Purchased at the door day of the event): \$10 for students/youth (with valid student ID), \$20 adults. Queer Prom is dancing, food, information booths about LGBTQ resources, and performances. A space for LGBTQ youth and allies to celebrate fearlessly and unapologetically who they are, our

communities, and prom. National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th St. 7pm, National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th St.

**IML: Opening Ceremonies** Event includes the introductions of contestants and judges. Doors open at 8pm, show begins at 9pm Single tickets available ONLY at 5th floor Ticket Sales Desk, Marriott Downtown Mag Mile, 540 N. Michigan Ave. 8pm-11pm, Vic Theatre, 3145 N Sheffield Ave., [www.imrl.com](http://www.imrl.com)

**Cathy Richardson, solo** Get up close and personal with the singer/songwriter when she performs solo and acoustic at the Acorn. Opening Act: Naomi Ashley. In celebration of their 10-year Anniversary on Memorial Day Weekend. 8pm, Acorn Theater in Three Oaks, Mich., [www.acorn-theater.com/](http://www.acorn-theater.com/)

**So You Think You Can Drag?** Audience picks the winner, so bring your friends. \$3 Long Islands, \$12 Domestic buckets, \$12 mixed drink pitchers. 11pm, Club Krave, 13126 S Western Ave., Blue Island, <http://www.clubkrave.com>

## Saturday, May 25

**Nettelhorst French Market** Enjoy the freshest flowers, vegetables, fruits, breads, meats, and crafts from local farmers, at this weekly farmers market in the heart of Boystown. 8am-2pm, Chicago Nettelhorst French Market, 3252 N Broadway, [www.bensidounusa.com](http://www.bensidounusa.com)

### Grabbys Host Chi Chi LaRue and Honey West

host the 2013 Grabby Awards. Featuring Brent Corrigan, Tommy Defendi, Greg Grove, Trenton Ducati, Max Ryder and Michael Brandon. 6pm-11pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., <http://www.grabbys.com>

### Pam Ann

The air hostess with the mostest is flying into Chicago, and hilarity is expected with a title like "Cockpit!" Pam Ann is the alter ego of Melbourne native Caroline Reid, born from the travel industry with a pinch of Austin Powers, a smidge of Dame Edna, and a dash of Kathy Griffin; 8pm, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph St., <http://goprider.com/z899>; Tickets: <http://www.harristheaterchicago.org/performers/pam-ann>

### Blowoff DJ Bob Mould and DJ Richard Morel

rock Chicago's METRO IML/Bear Pride weekend; 11pm, Cabaret Metro 3730 N. Clark St., <http://goprider.com/z88u>; Tickets: <http://www.metrochicago.com>

## Sunday, May 26

**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)

**Northalsted Sunday Funday** North Halsted comes alive with Sunday-Funday festivities and activity. See what all of Chicago Land is enjoying. Come straight to Halsted! 11am-11pm, Halsted/Belmont to Halsted/Waveland, <http://www.northalsted.com>

### Hambingo for Team To End AIDS

Please join Team To End AIDS (T2) Marathoners Jerry, Yossi, & Kevin at HAMBINGO at 8 p.m. We're each trying to reach our fundraising goals; all proceeds will go directly to T2 & The AIDS Foundation of Chicago. 8pm-10pm, Hamburger Mary's, 5400 N Clark, Chicago, <https://www.facebook.com/events/518637971511752/>

### IML: 35th Annual International Mr. Leather Contest

See who will emerge victorious from contestants from all over the world to become IML XXX5. Entertainment by hot recording artist, Beverly McClellan. 5pm-9:30pm, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph St., [www.imrl.com](http://www.imrl.com)

## Monday, May 27

### 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)

### The Black & Blue Ball

Presented by IML and Revolution. DJ Matthew Harvat and DJ Ralph Rosario. The party of all parties to wind up Memorial Day/IML weekend. Tickets available at the door. Castle Nightclub, 640 N. Dearborn St. 8pm, Castle Nightclub, 640 N. Dearborn St., <http://www.circuitmom.com> more information

### Homos A Go-Go at Laugh Factory

New premier queer comedy showcase, featuring the best gay and gay-friendly comics in the city and around the world. Produced and hosted by the Chicago's favorite actor and comedian Scott Duff, the monthly comedy extravaganza will kick off with the hilarious Jessica Helem. 8pm, 773-327-3175x1, The Laugh Factory, 3175 N. Broadway., <http://www.laughfactory.com>; Tickets: <http://www.laughfactory.com/clubs/chicago>

### Tips for a Hassle-Free Relationship for Gay Men

Workshop; 1pm-5pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., <http://blueskyhealingcircle.org>

## Tuesday, May 28

### Ross Mathews

Reading from his new book, Man Up! 12pm, Macy's, State St., Chicago, <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/matthews-mans-up/42840.html> more information

### Ross Mathews-second appearance

Out author, comedian, actor has a new book: Man Up! 8pm, Park West Chicago, 322 W Armitage Ave., <http://jamusa.com>

### Out at Wrigley National Anthem Contest

Sing the national anthem at Wrigley this summer. Out at Wrigley presents the annual National Anthem Contest. Arrive by 8pm to sign up. Free to enter. 9pm-10pm, Bonsai Bar & Lounge, 3503 N Halsted St., <http://www.outatwrigley.com>



## LEATHER LIVING May 24-27

International Mr. Leather (IML) events will take place in various venues throughout Chicago.

Photo of IML 2012 Woody Woodruff by Verdell Shannon

## Wed., May 29

### Aaron Belkin, book signing and lecture

Bring Me Men: Military and the Benign Facade of American Empire, 1898-2001 explores the topic of masculinity in the military. Belkin was a leader in the fight to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." 6pm-8pm, 312-374-9333, The Pritzker Military Library, 104 S Michigan Ave., <http://www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org/home/aaron-belkin.aspx>

### Portrait of Jason

Restoration of independent documentary. Exuberantly funny, but also crucial missing link between African American and LGBT history. From 1966, when Hollywood could barely acknowledge homosexuality as anything but a joke, the brave, uncensored testimony of a queer, black hustler who built his life around transgressing the boundaries of segregated, pre-Stonewall America. 7:30pm, Portage Theater, 4050 N Milwaukee Ave., <http://www.northwestchicagofilmsociety.org>; Tickets: <http://www.portagetheater.org>

### The Bachelors: staged reading of a screenplay

An improbable business venture conceals a great love. Based on a true story, The Bachelors introduces us to Bob Neal, a London decorator who returns to his failing Wisconsin hometown in 1934 and hires a local man to help him restore a historic rock cottage. \$10 Pride Films & Plays production. 7pm-9pm, 1-800-838-3006, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont, Chicago, Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com>

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### CONDO FOR SALE

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## DS TEQUILA CO. Thu., May 16

- 1) Finalist Maria Pahl takes the crowd to "the edge of control."
- 2) Finalist Ryan Tang gives 'em many reasons to vote him in.
- 3) Judgey Magoos.
- 4) (L-R) Finalists Maria and Ryan; hostess Sofia Saffire; judges Scott Ferguson, Mary Hollis Inboden, and Homer Marrs; Creagh of Creaoque; assistant Curlene Ribbon; photographer Kirk Williamson.

Photos by Kirk/Anthony Meade.  
More photos at [facebook.com/windycitygayidol](http://facebook.com/windycitygayidol)

Look for photos from Windy City Gay Idol at Crew in the next issue of Nightspots.



# BILLY MASTERS

"Who hasn't dated a gay dude? He didn't tell me, but I just sort of figured it out. There were weird things he would say. He once tried on my heels. ... That was a pretty big indication."—Gabourey Sidibe shares her thoughts about Jason Collins' coming out, vis-à-vis how his former fiancée might feel.

When I started this column almost two decades ago, there were weeks when you couldn't find enough stories. These days, the column often writes itself. I knew it was going to be a good week when I read the following headline: "Margaret Cho says John Travolta is gay!" Most of my job was already done. Now, to fill in some of the blanks. Cho made some statements during the Melbourne leg of her Australian tour. Apropos of nothing, she talked about working with Travolta on Face/Off when she said, "I'm going



Drop Dead Diva (starring Brooke Elliott, above) is back from the dead, Billy says. Photo courtesy of Lifetime

to get in trouble, but I'll just tell you. He's not just gay. He doesn't just like men. He is like Oscar Wilde gay. Like Lord Byron gay. That kind of crazy, incredibly flamboyant gay." Although the story was picked up by most outlets, the websites of some major newspapers coincidentally took the story down in a matter of hours. Enough said.

This story made me wonder what is going on with all those lawsuits against Travolta. At last count, there was a hooker, a masseur and a cruise-ship worker. It seems that's only the tip of the iceberg. The website Gawker claims to have unearthed copies of insurance company claims against Travolta's production company from four different parties claiming sexual assault—including a physical therapist, a driver and a stunt double (interestingly enough, the stunt double worked with Travolta on Face/Off—so perhaps Cho knows more than she's telling). Allegedly, those claims show that more than \$80K was paid out to two of these individuals. Interesting, *n'est ce pas?*

Last week, the TV networks announced details of the upcoming season. I'm sad about the cancellations of Smash, Go On, Malibu Country, The New Normal, 1600 Penn and Whitney—although I can't say any of them surprised me. A

few shows are returning with some changes. Two and a Half Men will be down a half, as Angus T. Jones will not return—not surprising given his recent religious fervor. The third installment of American Horror Story, subtitled "Coven," has added two of my favorite ladies—Patti LuPone and Angela Bassett. Since they'll star alongside Jessica Lange, Kathy Bates and Gabourey Sidibe, I suspect that will be Must See TV.

Three of my favorite shows are coming back—one, from the dead. Although Lifetime cancelled Drop Dead Diva a few months ago, the producers initiated some cost-cutting to ensure it would return for a fifth season, which starts June 23. But at least one cast member is MIA. Carter MacIntyre, the most recent guardian angel, has been replaced by Justin Deeley, who was on the newly cancelled reboot of 90210. I must confess I knew nothing about Justin, but was pleased to discover he has an extensive body of work—as an underwear model. The first obvious thing I recognized is his stunning body ... which he, happily, enjoys displaying. But I did learn some things that surprised me. For instance, he enjoys

a thong, has a smattering of hair on his ass, and is circumcised. For more in-depth details (such as measurements), you'll have to check out BillyMasters.com.

The most shocking news of the week was that a portrait of a nude Bea Arthur sold for \$1.9 million. Actually, there's several shocking aspects to this story—that Bea Arthur posed for a nude portrait, that someone painted a nude portrait of Bea Arthur, that someone wanted to buy a nude portrait of Bea Arthur. We've discovered that one of those things is not true. As it turns out, Bea Arthur did not pose for the portrait ... I say with a sigh of relief. The artist, John Currin, did this work in 1991 and it was being sold as part of an auction at Christie's, where it was described as "nostalgic and repelling." Isn't that nice? Remind me to post some nudes of myself someday.

Someone who is getting ready to show some skin is Ian Ziering—late of Beverly Hills, 90210 (the original) and Dancing with the Stars. He's accepted an offer to strut his stuff with the Chippendales at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas for the month of June. "I am so excited to be a part of this iconic worldwide organization," he said. "It's really a dream come true! I am passionate about health and fitness, so I've kept in shape, and dancing is something I've always enjoyed, so I figured why not?" He

follows in the illustrious footsteps of Joey Lawrence and Jake Pavelka, not to mention my beloved Jeff Timmons (who leads the first single from the re-formed "98 Degrees"). Although it was reported that he was out of shape when the offer came in, he's lost 25 pounds and toned up his 49-year-old body considerably in the past two months. He even made sure to have a photographer on hand to document the results ... which are rather impressive, as you'll see on BillyMasters.com.

When Ian Ziering is newsworthy, it's definitely time to end yet another column. We have one last item that was confirmed as we went to press—after 28 years, Michael Musto has been let go from The Village Voice! With circulation and ad revenues down, the paper has been making cuts left and right. As far as I'm concerned, "The Voice" without Musto is like "The Tonight Show" without Carson—it may continue, but it will never be the same. Like many other writers, I must confess that without Michael Musto there would be no Billy Masters. I'm excited to see what he'll tackle next. Whatever that is, you can be sure I'll cover it on [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com). And if you have a question, drop a note to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before I figure out where to hang that painting of Bea! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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\$20 incl. 2 drink tickets & door prizes

+ Afterwork Show Tunes in MainBar/GlassBar 5-9pm

Saturday, May 25 • Open 1pm-3am

**Bear-eoke 2pm**

Sunday, May 26 • Open 1pm-2am

**Show Tunes 4-9pm**  
**Retro 60s & 70s 9pm**

Monday, May 27 • Open 1pm-2am

**Famous Bear BQ 1pm**  
Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am

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# Chicago Sky opens season May 27

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Sky has never had a winning season in its seven years in the WNBA, and has finished 14-20 each of the past three seasons.

But now they're talking playoffs, even going deep into the playoffs.

The Sky held its annual Media Day May 9 in north suburban Deerfield with players, coaches and staff on hand—and all were optimistically talking about making the playoffs, finally.

"You always come into the season with high expectations, and to make the playoffs. With that said, and from the look of things, I think we have everything we need to make the playoffs," said center Sylvia Fowles, who was second on the Sky last season in scoring (16 points per game average).

"We're going to be as good as we want to be, and we look good on paper; we have what it takes. But paper doesn't matter. We have to have that dog, that fight in us," said forward Swin Cash, who was third on the team in scoring (10 points per game) last season. "We should be [in the playoffs] this season, no doubt about it."

The team's top scorer last season, Epiphany Prince (18 points per game), is back for her fourth WNBA season, along with returners Courtney Vandersloot, Eshaya Murphy and Tamera Young, among others.

Plus, the team is optimistic rookie Elena Delle Donne, out of the University of Delaware, will have a huge impact on the team, and the league. She was the second pick overall in the 2013 WNBA Draft and was a two-time All-American who finished her college career with 3,039 points, which ranks fifth in NCAA women's bas-

ketball history.

"Elena is going to open things up for me; she will help me a lot," Fowles said. "My personal goal is to dominate, and I didn't do that much last year. I will help out however needed—rebounding, scoring, doing whatever. I think this is going to be our year."

"[Delle Donne] is so talented. I'm so excited to see her develop into an All-Star and one of the greatest to ever play this game," Murphy said. "She definitely will complement Sylvia really well. ED is like the girl version of Kevin Durant, KD, [of the Oklahoma City Thunder]. I'm so excited for this season. This has to be the year we make the playoffs, and I think we can go far in the playoffs. I think we can really make [team] history this season."

"As cliché as it sounds, the sky's the limit for this team—and am so excited to be a part of this team, to help however needed."

The Sky opens the season Monday night, May 27, at Phoenix. Chicago's home opener is Friday night, May 31, against Connecticut at the All-state Arena in Rosemont.

The regular season runs through mid-September.

"We have some newcomers who can add an element [to the team] that we were missing [last season] from a skill set, plus, they can complement what we have [returning,]" said Sky coach Pokey Chatman. "The disappointment [of not making the playoffs ever] will be a driving, motivating force for these players. They are driven to make the playoffs."

Chatman said the team's offense is vastly improved over 2012. Her biggest worry is, naturally, injuries, especially with 34 regular-season games being played over 92 days.



The Chicago Sky's Sylvia Fowles. Photo courtesy of the Sky

"One of the biggest challenges will be, all of the changes in the Eastern Conference," she said, noting new coaches in Washington D.C., Connecticut and New York.

As for the 2013 breakout player, Chatman tagged Vandersloot, now in her third WNBA season and an Eastern Conference All-Star during her rookie season.

"We have the pieces to make the playoffs. We just have to stay healthy," said Ruth Riley, in her second season with the Sky and her 13th in the league. "The strength of this team is, we have some great playmakers. Elena is going to help a lot."

Tamera Young, a five-year WNBA veteran, added, "The team looks good. We have to get the chemistry down, and then can be as successful as we want to be, and we definitely can make the playoffs. The [team's overall] size is a strength, and we have many versatile players, able to play multiple positions. It's very frustrating not making the playoffs. This is my sixth season in the league and I've never been to the playoffs."

The Indiana Fever is the defending WNBA champion, featuring Finals MVP Tamika Catchings, a former Stevenson High School standout in north suburban Lincolnshire. The Fever comes to Chicago for games on Aug. 6 and Sept. 6.

"This could be a special team," said Allie Quigley, a newcomer to the Sky with has played four years in the league. She also played at DePaul and is a Joliet native.

"This is awesome to have this chance. I'd love to play on any WNBA team, but Chicago is just the icing on the cake. I came to Sky games as a fan while in college. Sitting in the stands [years ago as a fan,] I always thought it would be awesome to one day play for the Sky."

"This is a dream."

The team is hoping its 2013 dream will be fulfilled in the playoffs.

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## COMING OUT A WINNER WHEN SELLING YOUR HOUSE

With the real estate market glutted with properties the three biggest mistakes I see sellers make are the following:

**Overpricing.** The greatest mistake that sellers of real estate make is overpricing. The problem with pricing a house is that no house is worth a specific dollar amount. Accept the reality that the market has changed and your house is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it.

The way the price is set can determine several factors about the sale: how quickly the house will sell; how difficult it will be to find a qualified buyer; and how much you will stand to gain from the proceeds. Some owners feel that they can get away with overpricing their property at the start and then lower the price if they have a negative response from the market. Unfortunately, by that time the house has been on the market a long time; it has become "shopworn."

Every potential buyer asks two questions: "What's the price?" and "How long has it been on the market?" The longer the house has been on the market, the more the seller loses his or her ability to negotiate from a position of strength. The buyer smells blood. The seller and the price immediately become vulnerable. A buyer will not pay a premium price if he or she believes the property is hard to sell or not in demand.

**Slow Lawyers.** Real estate brokers often call lawyers "the deal-breakers." Most often lawyers foul up deals by their lack of a sense of urgency. They're not at the office, they can't be found and they don't return your phone calls. Every day the lawyer delays, the less likely that the deal will proceed to a closing.

**Disclose, Disclose, Disclose.** Sellers should make a complete disclosure of everything known about your house. Remember, the point in selling a home is to end the seller's financial obligation for the property. That's why it's best for the seller to make a full disclosure to their buyer so the seller won't have to worry if they will be sued after the closing. And insist that the buyer have the house inspected. If the buyer knows about a defect and there is written evidence such as an inspection report, the chances of a lawsuit decrease.

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The Force's Jessica Javelet runs during Saturday's game versus the Crash. Photo by Steph Smith

## Force mashes Indy Crash 82-20

The women's professional football team the Chicago Force clinched its division title May 17 by crushing the Indy Crash 82-20 in Indianapolis, Ind.

Chicago set franchise records for single-game totals in points scored (82), most passing yardage (501) and most touchdowns scored (12). The Force led 48-6 at halftime.

Chicago remains undefeated at 6-0, while Indy fell to 2-5 overall.

The Force have a bye week over the Memorial Day weekend, and then return home June 1 to take on the Kansas City Titans at 5 p.m. at Evanston High School's Lazier Field.

For tickets and more information, visit [www.chicagoforcefootball.com](http://www.chicagoforcefootball.com) or call 872-222-5078.

## Gay Games Chicago 7th-anniv. celebration

Athletes, artists, volunteers, friends and family are expected to attend the unveiling of a permanent legacy to the 2006 Gay Games (which took place in Chicago) at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., on Saturday, July 13, 1-4 p.m.

Former participants and volunteers are encouraged to wear their Gay Games Chicago uniforms, T-shirts, medals, pins and more to the free event.

Representatives of Cleveland+Akron 2014, the site of the 9th Gay Games, will be on hand to answer questions about that event, scheduled for Aug. 9-14, 2014. Those who register at the event will save money on their registration fees.

# 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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