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PAGE 8

WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN,
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JUNE 5, 2013

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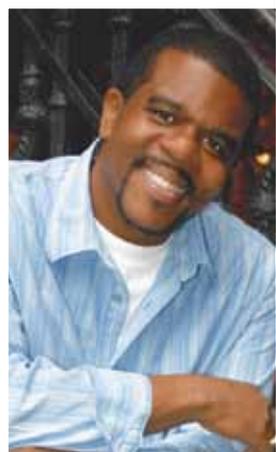
CRIMINAL
LEGAL SERIES
CONCLUDES

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GAY PRIEST
GARY MEIER
COMES OUT

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RICHARD PRYOR'S
GAY SON TALKS
WITH WCT

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This Too Shall Pass Illinois marriage fight continues



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Left: Rep. Greg Harris delivers the bad news that a marriage vote would not happen in the Spring session. Rep. Kelly Cassidy is standing at left. Right: Rep. Deb Mell (left) speaks about her own marriage to Christin Mell, while Christin looks on. Photos by Tim Carroll

The full-court press for marriage equality in Illinois continues this week after a controversial non-vote on the measure May 31 in Springfield. The bill had passed the Senate Feb. 14, but the House took no action by the end of the spring session. Lead sponsor Rep. Greg Harris made a last-minute decision not to call the vote, he said because some legislators asked him to wait until the November veto session. See inside for news, analysis and a guest commentary.



Left: Mercedes Santos and Theresa Volpe and their children Jadon and Ava at the May 31 press conference. Right: Jim Darby (left) and Patrick Bova will be marking their 50th anniversary this July—with no marriage equality. Darby is 81 and Bova 75. They are at a press conference at the Capitol May 31, before the non-vote. Photos by Tim Carroll



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JUNE 22

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JULY 07

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ANDREW VON OEYEN, PIANO

AUG 15/16

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS

THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PLAYS THE SCORE LIVE AS THE FILM IS PROJECTED ON SCREENS IN THE PAVILION AND ON THE LAWN.

JUNE 23

DANIEL HOPE, VIOLIN
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JULY 13



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JULY 15

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ALL THAT JAZZ
Windy City Times spotlights local jazz siren Abigail Riccards (left).
Publicity photo



Juan Torres-Falcon talks about being in the classic production West Side Story.
Publicity photo



Grass Fed isn't the only restaurant reviewed this week, as Savor takes a look at South Water Kitchen.
Photo by Andrew Davis

FLOWER POWER
Jim Edminster muses about everything from pests to recipes in his latest The Fairy Gardener column.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE
Jeff Pedersen and Blair—of the reality show Newlyweds: The First Year—discuss the show, Chicago and age differences.

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS
Find out the latest about Brittney Griner, Cheyenne Jackson and Michael Musto.

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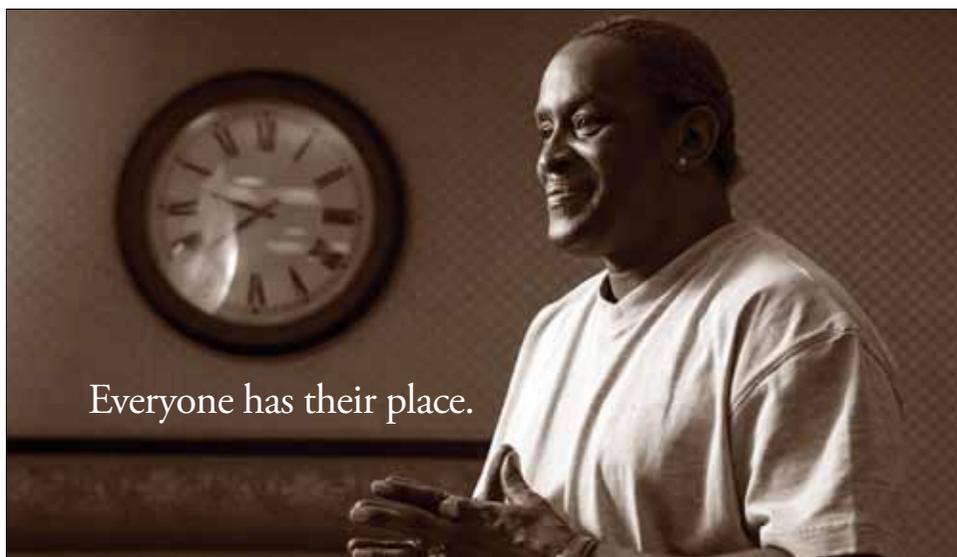
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Open To Thinking

BY NICK PATRICCA



Gay and Catholic?!: Eros briefly unchained

Early Christianity in the West harbored a strong suspicion of human sexuality. It did not single out homosexual acts for special condemnation. All sexual acts were judged, more or less, by the same criteria.

People were not classified as homosexual or heterosexual; acts were. The condemnation of homosexual acts, as such, took place in a context in which these acts were understood as being performed by heterosexual males. There was no concept of constitutive homosexuality, that is, of persons who are defined as 'gay.'

As Gibbon noted in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* the emperor Claudius was the first Roman emperor in 200 years NOT to have sex with men. To show how commonplace and comparatively unimportant the issue of homosexual activity was at this time, historians cite the fact that the troops of Julius Caesar were wont to refer to their leader as the

and textual critical analysis with an astonishingly comprehensive and profound critical analysis of the historical record.

In his address to the Dignity International Convention in 1979, Boswell made this appeal: "It is possible to change ecclesiastical attitudes toward gay people and their sexuality because the objections to homosexuality are not biblical, they are not consistent, they are not part of Jesus' teaching; and they are not even fundamentally Christian."

The 'barbarians,' who repopulated and reinvigorated Roman civilization in the West, were not immersed in the sex-negative, world-weary thinking that dominated the decline of the old Roman empire. These barbarians received the Christian tradition with new eyes, open hearts, and quick minds, producing almost 500 years of astonishing art and thought focused on the idea of friendship in Christian community. Centuries in advance of the troubadour

poets they reclaimed eros as a positive energy in the advancement of friendship. The famous friendship or 'love affair' of Abelard and Heloise (11th century) is a 'heterosexual' example of this tradition as is the 'homosexual' friendship of the

"And the sin of Sodom ... is not anal intercourse, but rape and the refusal of hospitality"

'Queen of Bithynia' and to chant in their marches the ditty: 'Caesar conquered Gaul; Nicomedes conquered Caesar.'

In his groundbreaking work *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (1980), John Boswell (1947–1994) documents a period of time when Western Christendom embraced openly gay bishops and abbots, accepted homosexual activity among the clergy, and even canonized more than a few gay saints, most notably, Anselm of Canterbury. When homosexual activity was condemned among the clergy, the condemnation was part of the general condemnation of all sexual activity as a violation of vows. In point of fact, heterosexual activity was often more severely punished because it involved the prospect of children and knotty legal entanglements, like inheritance rights. For many reasons, ecclesiastical authorities preferred a gay clergy to a married one.

Boswell's contribution to the study of homosexuality is his focus on the historical record. No one, before or since, has so exhaustively investigated and documented the facts of homosexual history in Western thinking and culture. From the middle of the 19th century, scripture scholars had definitively discredited the biblical texts condemning homosexual behavior. The sin of Onan (Genesis) is not masturbation, but Onan's refusal to accept the obligations he inherits under Jewish Law to care for his dead brother's family. And the sin of Sodom (also Genesis) is not anal intercourse, but rape and the refusal of hospitality. Boswell's great achievement was to complement biblical

monk Alcuin (founder of the first school system, 8th century) with Arno, a bishop, as is the legendary friendship of Henry II with his chancellor Thomas à Becket (12th century).

This positive valuation of eros, this proclamation through art and philosophy of a kinship based on shared values in which physical attraction plays a proper role, this spiritual kinship as opposed to blood kinship and feudal fealty, this idea that community is built through the free acts of free persons, this idea of friendship derived from Christian sources and celebrated as a Christian ideal, gravely threatened the medieval establishment because it broke the ties that bind serf to lord and wife to husband and child to parents.

This positive valuation of eros persisted until around 1150 C.E. when, for the first time in Western Civilization, the idea of the homosexual as a 'separate class of person' started to take shape in both civil and ecclesiastical law, and not to the advantage of gay people. A late example of this profound shift can be found in the Napoleonic code, which proclaimed all men equal and to be judged solely on their merit, while at the same time it punished homosexual persons as well as conduct, sanctioned slavery in Haiti, and rescinded much of the pro-woman legislation of the medieval period.

Why is Boswell's work so important? Through his comprehensive and definitive research, Boswell demonstrates this fact: WE ARE A PEOPLE WITH A HISTORY. It is time now to claim that history.

Nick Patricca is professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago, president of Chicago Network and playwright emeritus at Victory Gardens Theater.

Nevada state senator talks about coming out during debate

BY ROSS FORMAN

Nevada state Sen. Kelvin Atkinson (D-North Las Vegas) created a firestorm late last month when he came out during an emotional legislative debate over a measure to repeal the state's gay marriage ban.

"I know this is the first time many of you have heard me say that I am a Black, gay male," Atkinson said at the time.

And so it began, though it wasn't until the following morning when he truly discovered the impact of his words worldwide, not just in his home state.

"I had no expectations when I did what I did," Atkinson said by phone in an exclusive interview with Windy City Times. "I thought the local [media] would pick it up. I thought I would wake up [on] Tuesday with a couple media [interview] requests, and then we'd move on. But instead, I woke up on Tuesday and my [email] inbox, plus my Facebook and Twitter accounts, had exploded—and things still haven't stopped. It's been a whirlwind, but in a good way.

"It really has been crazy, but crazy in a good way. It's been amazing."

He's been doing interviews seemingly non-stop, including MSNBC May 4. He has hundreds, perhaps thousands, of new Facebook friends, and just as many new Twitter followers.

He also has received marriage proposals and countless invitations for dates.

In total, Atkinson said he's received a few thousand correspondences since publicly coming out. "My office never really has a hard time keeping up with [correspondence from the public,] but we really have had a hard time for the past week or so. We had to put a spreadsheet together for this, [including] what we need to do."

Atkinson got home just before midnight April 22 and turned his phone off when he went to bed. The next morning, he already had 180 new friend requests on Facebook.

"There have been some very unique responses, but mostly people asking me for advice, many offering support [for coming out] and being that face to the topic," said Atkinson, who admitted he's been brought to tears from some of the letters he's received since coming out. "It was a personal and professional decision [to come out] because there was a bill involved that we were having a floor session on, and we're happy to see that bill go forward."

The Nevada Senate voted 12-9 to begin the process of repealing the gay marriage ban from the state constitution.

"I didn't [come out publicly] for recognition, or to get any notoriety; I did it for myself," Atkinson said. "As I said on the floor, my family has always known, [including] my 17-year-old daughter and my daughter's mom. To a certain extent, for years, close to two decades, the only thing that's ever mattered to me was that they all knew. Making it a public statement certainly was different for me. I chose to do it at this point, but certainly didn't want to take away from the issue—that we're trying to pass marriage equality in the state, and I'm committed to that."

Atkinson said he wasn't planning to talk that night, but comments from others compelled him to speak. He argued against comments that same-sex marriage threatens other marriages.

"If this hurts your marriage, then your marriage was in trouble in the first place," he said during the legislative debate.

Atkinson said his coming-out, no doubt, surprised some.

"Nationally, I think sentiment has really changed [in support of same-sex marriage,] he



Nevada state Sen. Kelvin Atkinson. Publicity photo

said. "Sentiment has totally shifted from where it was; I think the responses I would have gotten 10 years ago would have been a lot different."

Then again, he admits, he would not have come out 10 years ago.

"I think public sentiment in this state is for [same-sex marriage]. We'll have to see."

Atkinson, 44, is the fifth openly gay member of the Nevada legislature, alongside senators David Parks and Patricia Spearman, and Assemblymen James Healey and Andrew Martin.

Atkinson was born and lived for about five years in Chicago before moving to Los Angeles. "As much as I'd like to claim Chicago, I claim L.A., because that's basically where I grew up," he said—and he's admittedly a fan of the Dodgers, Lakers and Raiders in sports.

Still, he added, "I love Chicago. My mom [Mary] lives in Chicago, with most of her side of the family. I have a lot of cousins, aunts and uncles," who live in Chicago.

"I keep saying that I need to get back there, and I will, soon. I just need to avoid the winter there. My family isn't happy that I don't cheer for the Chicago [sports] teams like they do."

Atkinson has twice attended Black Pride in Chicago, most recently in 2011. He also has been to gay pride parades in Las Vegas, Atlanta, Washington, D.C. and Houston.

"It's funny, I've been to a lot of Pride Parades," over the years, he said, laughing. "I've been to Pride Parades, but never been out at the parades."

"It will be different for me [this year], to go and be open and out."

Atkinson said he opted for Black Pride in Chicago because it has coincided with Taste of Chicago, one of his favorite reasons to visit Chicago. He's been to the Taste about eight times over the past 15 years.

So, senator, are you single or dating?

He laughed and then answered, "I am single right now."

As for Mr. Right, he said, "I like average people; I like people who like to have fun, someone who I have a lot of commonalities with. I love to travel; I love restaurant dining; I'm not huge into the club scene; I like a lot of alone time."

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The Rev. Gary M. Meier. Facebook photo

Integrity, truth inspire gay priest's coming-out

BY CHUCK COLBERT

A priest in the St. Louis Archdiocese has come out, grabbing headlines and generating considerable buzz within Catholic circles and beyond. While many LGBT among the faithful who are laypersons struggle to reconcile their sexual orientation and gender identity with anti-gay church teaching, the Rev. Gary M. Meier faced another difficulty—remaining invisible, silent, and part of a hierarchy increasingly hostile to LGBT people.

"My struggle isn't with being gay," he writes in his book *Hidden Voices: Reflections of a Gay, Catholic Priest*. "It's with the Church's teaching on homosexuality and the way in which the hierarchy is interpreting that teaching regarding the homosexual person, the ordination of gay men, gay marriage, gay parenting, and especially the impact that this teaching has on gay youth growing up in the Church. That's what I struggle with."

During a telephone interview, Father Meier, who is celebrating his 15th anniversary as a priest, elaborated further on his decision to come out. "There just came a point for me, I think, to be a man of integrity and to move and breathe and be who God called me to be that I had to do this," he said. "I feared that at the end of my life and I stand before God, and God's saying 'Why haven't you spoken the truth that I have given you? Why have you remained silent all this time and not said what you know to be the truth?'"

In speaking out, moreover, Meier has no quarrel with priestly celibacy. "I am not partnered, not dating and have been faithful to my vows and commitment as a priest," he said. "I make a point of clarifying that because it seems to be such a big thing with some people. I didn't know people would care."

Asked about the timing now to come out publicly, Meier replied, "Why not now?"

Still, his decision to be openly gay comes at the same time as the second-edition release of Meier's book, first published anonymously in 2011.

His decision also comes as some LGBT Catholic laypersons—even non-gay people—have been denied communion, fired from teaching positions, and removed from parish and music ministry, primarily for being in same-sex relationships or supporting gay marriage.

Openly gay priests are a rarity in the Catholic Church. In fact, there are only two or three in the US who have said they are gay publicly, according to the Rev. James Martin, a Jesuit priest and editor-at-large for *America* magazine.

Nonetheless, he told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "There are hundreds, if not thousands, of celibate gay priests working in the Catholic Church today who are beloved by their parishio-

ners. And there are a number of reasons why almost all of them feel unable to be honest. They are either uncomfortable themselves, or they're told specifically by their superiors not to talk about it."

Meier did not consult with his superior, Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis, before coming out.

For its part the archdiocese issued a measured, short five-paragraph statement, noting Fr. Meier's past one-year leave "for reasons of vocational discernment."

The statement continues, "As a man who experiences same-sex attraction, Fr. Meier has before him an opportunity to be an example and mentor to Catholics in the archdiocese who struggle with the same feelings. Whether he will seize this opportunity to proclaim the Gospel of Life which offers the truth about the beauty and sanctity of human sexuality, is entirely within his control."

But therein lies the rub. Hierarchical truth is one thing, and Meier's truth telling is another.

"I want the truth about homosexuality to be out," he wrote on May 21 for *Huffington Post*. "Homosexuality is not a cross, it's not a curse, it's not an intrinsic disorder; it is a gift, created by love for love."

Meier's post has gone viral, he said, with an outpouring of support voiced on his Facebook page and through private e-mails, as well as hundreds of comments on *Huffington* in response to his posting.

"The shame that we've created in our church is deeper and bigger than I thought," he said over the telephone. "There is no other way to explain why this would be viral."

Meier said he hopes to stay in active ministry. "As a priest, people have given me access to their lives in very profound ways that you can't obtain in any other way," he said. "We are with people in some of the most difficult periods in their lives. It's an incredible privilege to be able to do that."

Meier recalled one letter from a gay youth who told him he had been rejected several times from his church for being gay. "His first correspondence to me said, 'I beg you to pray for me,'" Meier explained. "How desperate can you be to say that. It just breaks my heart."

"I get choked up because here is a kid who is trying to make peace with himself as a gay man and has these hierarchical voices in his head saying he is flawed."

Whether or not Meier returns to pastoral ministry is an open question at this point.

"Whatever I do, it will be advocacy for the LGBT community," he said. "If I can do that as a priest in active ministry, so be it. I can't imagine how that would happen."

Meanwhile, reaction from persons in ministry with LGBT Catholics has been positive.

"Father Gary Meier's decision to come out as a gay man is a great gift to the entire church, to LGBT Catholics, and particularly to other gay priests, many of whom struggle in secrecy and shame," Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, said in an email correspondence.

He added, "Like the millions of LGBT Catholics before him, Fr. Gary is showing that one's sexual identity is not something one should be ashamed of, but, rather, proud of. The fact that he is a priest, a Catholic authority figure, will help so many Catholics, particularly younger ones, know that they do not have to live lives of desperation."

"I hope that Fr. Gary's decision will inspire

other priests to emulate him. So much of the problem with institutional Catholicism's inability to deal with homosexuality comes from the fact that priests are not allowed to lead honest and authentic lives or to discuss their sexuality with others. Fr. Gary's declaration breaks the ice and shatters the myth that open discussion of sexuality will harm the church."

Far from harming it, his decision helps to heal the church.

"I've heard from many people that Fr. Gary has helped to re-inspire them to work for LGBT equality in the Catholic Church. His simple admission is a great beacon of hope."

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Vincent Autin (left) and Bruno Boileau. Photo by Guillaume Bonnet

French gay couple first to tie the knot

The French city of Montpellier witnessed history May 29 when its mayor, Helene Mandroux, officiated the nation's first same-sex wedding in front of hundreds of guests, *CNN* reported.

Vincent Autin, head of the region's Lesbian and Gay Pride association, and Bruno Boileau exchanged vows at a ceremony in the southern city, watched by approximately 500 attendees seated on brightly colored chairs. Autin told *CNN*, "Today the French Republic has given these rights back to us, the ones they had taken away, and it has put an end to an institutional discrimination."

Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, minister of women's rights and a government spokeswoman, was among those attending the watershed event. Approximately 200 police officers were mobilized around the city in light of a May 26 anti-gay-marriage march that drew 150,000 people; however, no official demonstrations were planned.

35 LGBT, HIV groups mark Pride with statement

As the nation marks the opening of LGBT Pride Month, executive directors from 35 LGBT and HIV/AIDS organizations from across the United States released a joint letter committing themselves and their organizations to re-engaging the broader LGBT community in the fight against HIV, according to a press release.

"We are at an important crossroad in our fight against HIV," said National Minority AIDS Council Executive Director Paul Kawata. "The evidence behind treatment as prevention, and expansions in health care coverage that will accompany implementation of the Affordable Care Act, have provided a unique opportunity to end this epidemic, which has ravaged our community for more than three decades."

Among those who signed the letter were

leaders from Family Equality Council, SAGE, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Center on Halsted, PFLAG National, Transgender Law Center and Equality Illinois.

The full letter is at http://salsa.wiredforchange.com/o/5208/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=8020.

Obama issues Pride Month proclamation

President Obama has signed a proclamation naming June LGBT Pride Month.

In part, the proclamation reads, "This year, we celebrate LGBT Pride Month at a moment of great hope and progress, recognizing that more needs to be done. Support for LGBT equality is growing, led by a generation which understands that, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.'"

The statement mentions LGBT-related developments the administration has accomplished as well as work it feels still needs to be done, including the pass of "a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act, as well as the Respect for Marriage Act."

Manning court-martial starts

The court-martial of Army Pfc. Bradley Manning, accused of the largest security breach in U.S. history, began June 3 in Fort Meade, Md.—more than three years after he was arrested in Iraq, according to *USA Today*.

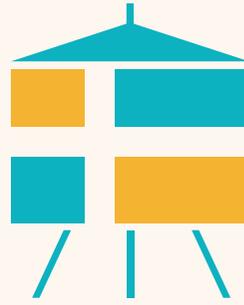
Manning, a member of the LGBT community, has admitted to sending troves of material to the anti-secrecy website *WikiLeaks* and pleaded guilty to charges that would send him to prison for up to 20 years. However, the U.S. military and the Obama administration are also pursuing a charge of aiding the enemy, which carries a potential life sentence.

See photos from the June 3 Chicago protest of Manning's trial at www.WindyCityTimes.com.

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FRI | JUNE 7 5PM-10PM

NORTH STAGE: CLARK & CATALPA

- 5:00 PM DJ Dan Luna
- 7:00 PM 16 Candles

SAT | JUNE 8 11AM-10PM

NORTH STAGE: CLARK & CATALPA

- 11:30 AM Gus Giordano Dance School
- 1:00 PM Bonzie
- 2:30 PM Chicago Spirit Brigade
- 3:00 PM Sidewalk Chalk
- 5:00 PM Stann Champion's Roots Rock Society
- 7:00 PM The Spazmatics

CENTER STAGE: CLARK & BERWYN

- 11:00 AM Steve Sebbly Band
- 12:30 PM Chicago Spirit Brigade
- 1:00 PM Chicago Samba
- 3:00 PM The Joans
- 5:00 PM Angel Melendez and the 911 Mambo Orchestra
- 7:00 PM ABBA Salute

SOUTH STAGE: CLARK & FOSTER

Sponsored by Simon's Tavern

- 2:00 PM Ode
- 4:00 PM 7th Heaven
- 6:00 PM Planet Claire
- 8:00 PM Get Up With The Get Downs

OUT ROCK STAGE: CLARK & BALMORAL

Sponsored by Hamburger Mary's and Gay Chicago TV

- 11:00 AM Mindy Bartlett
- 1:00 PM Ripley Caine & The Full Moon
- 3:00 PM Fatally Cool
- 5:00 PM Software Giant
- 7:00 PM Eric Himan
- 8:30 PM DJ Voxbox

SWEDISH STAGE: CLARK & FOSTER

Sponsored by the Swedish American Museum

- 11:30 AM Opening Ceremony
- 11:45 AM Traditional Maypole Dance
- 12:15 PM Swedish American Children's Choir
- 12:40 PM Nordic Folkdancers
- 1:05 PM Chicago Swedish Men's Chorus
- 1:25 PM Merdula Swedish Choir

SUMMERDALE STAGE: CLARK & SUMMERDALE

Sponsored by Lake Shore Schools

- 11:00 AM Mad Science
- 12:00 PM Ruff n' Stuff Pet Parade
- 1:00 PM Trowbridge Guitar Studio
- 2:00 PM Dream Big Performing Arts
- 2:30 PM Little Linguists
- 3:00 PM Raisin Rhyme
- 4:00 PM LiveWire
- 5:00 PM The Revelettes
- 6:00 PM The Dirty Rooks
- 8:00 PM Torn Soul

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NORTH STAGE: CLARK & CATALPA

- 9:30 AM Hatha Yoga with Bikram Hot Yoga Midwest - Chicago
- 11:00 AM The Ugliers
- 1:00 PM Al Rose
- 2:30 PM Chicago Spirit Brigade
- 3:00 PM The Right Now
- 4:30 PM Windy City Cowboys
- 5:00 PM Rod Tuffcurls & The Bench Press
- 7:00 PM 16 Candles

CENTER STAGE: CLARK & BERWYN

- 11:00 AM Deliverance Singers Gospel Brunch
- 1:00 PM Chicago Spirit Brigade
- 1:30 PM Devin Jake
- 2:30 PM Windy City Cowboys
- 3:00 PM Pyro Fighters
- 5:00 PM Bumpus
- 7:00 PM Rock Candy

SOUTH STAGE: CLARK & FOSTER

Sponsored by Simon's Tavern

- 2:00 PM New Invaders
- 4:00 PM Soundtrack Serenade
- 6:00 PM Expo 76
- 8:00 PM This Must Be The Band

OUT ROCK STAGE: CLARK & BALMORAL

Sponsored by Hamburger Mary's and Gay Chicago TV

- 11:00 AM Jeff Brown
- 1:00 PM Ian Wilson
- 3:00 PM Monica Del Castillo
- 5:00 PM Stephen Leonard Band
- 7:00 PM Sami Crisafe Band
- 8:30 PM DJ Moose

SWEDISH STAGE: CLARK & FOSTER

Sponsored by the Swedish American Museum

- 12:00 PM Nordland Band

SUMMERDALE STAGE: CLARK & SUMMERDALE

Sponsored by Lake Shore Schools

- 11:00 AM Radio Disney
- 12:00 PM Andersonville Suzuki
- 1:00 PM Goodman Theatre's The Jungle Book
- 2:00 PM Toys Et Cetera Kids Talent Show
- 3:00 PM Dream Big Performing Arts
- 3:30 PM Design Dance
- 4:00 PM Laura Doherty
- 6:00 PM Augusta in August
- 8:00 PM Kongfuzi

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LGBT-friendly senior center breaks ground

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

A partnership between Heartland Housing and Center on Halsted brought out Lakeview residents and elected officials for the groundbreaking event of the Midwest's first LGBTQ-friendly, affordable senior-housing development June 3.

The \$26 million development, which repurposes the historic 23rd district Town Hall police station, will contain 79 units and serve as an extension of Center on Halsted's senior services. The building will provide seniors in need of safe housing an affordable living option.

Community members and the press gathered in the bare lot on Halsted Street, close to Center on Halsted, where the future development will stand. Speakers at the event included Executive Director of Heartland Housing, Inc. Michael Goldberg, CEO of Center on Halsted Modesto "Tico" Valle, President of Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights Sid Mohn, Commissioner of Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development Andrew Mooney—who spoke on behalf of Mayor Rahm Emanuel, 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney, state Rep. District Sara Feigenholtz, Vice President of Citi Community Capital Natalie Moretz, and Lakeview residents and potential soon-to-be tenants of the new senior housing project Patricia Pratt and Tom Genley.

"A proud day; a day in which the LGBTQ community has realized a victory and that's criti-

cally important, especially after the disappointing aspects of last week's lack of legislation in Springfield, but it shows steadily and surely we are achieving rights for the LGBTQ community," said Mohn. "The right to affordable housing is something that is being celebrated today."

Pratt described Lakeview as her home and the LGBTQ community as her family. The Center on Halsted is a place where she said she has spent a significant amount of time socializing and making friends.

"I can't wait," Pratt said of the future senior housing. "If I'm possibly one of the recipients, just the fact that it's LGBTQ and for seniors, and some of my friends hopefully will be living in the building with me. I'm looking for the ethnicity, how we're going to get along as LGBTQ, and how it's going to be with the people who recognize that we're LGBTQ and accept us for who we are because it's not only going to be a senior apartment for LGBTQ, but for other people in the neighborhood. I hope that both sides learn from each other."

To address the issue of affordable housing for the LGBTQ community, the city of Chicago selected Heartland Housing and Center on Halsted to develop the site in February 2012. In March 2013, the Chicago City Council passed the land onto the Center and Heartland. Construction on the yet-unnamed development is expected to be complete in the fall of 2014.

The plan for the facility consists of 30 studio apartments, 49 one-bedroom apartments, 4,450 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 20 covered car parking spaces along with parking spaces for bicycles, among other building amenities. Various eco-friendly strategies will also be employed. Gensler designed the development and Power Construction, LLC will be building the site.

Citi Community Capital, the National Equity Fund, Enterprise Community Partners, the Illinois Department of Human Services, LISC Chicago and BMO Harris are supporting the project.

"It came about in 2005, Heartland Alliance released a study on the needs of LGBTQ individuals and that study revealed that one out of five LGBTQ seniors were living in poverty," said Mohn. "On top of their list of needs was the challenge of finding affordable housing. So it's taken us [nearly] 10 years since the release of that study to achieve a solution, that at least for 79 individuals, we'll give them the right to affordable housing."

Feigenholtz said the project speaks volumes. She recalled the neighborhood in the '90s gentrifying and pushing many of the seniors out



A bulldozer takes down the first wall of bricks in what will be come part of the new LGBTQ-friendly senior housing facility at Halsted and Addison. Many more photos online at <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Chicago-LGBTQA-Senior-Housing-breaks-ground/43061.html> ... and see videos at www.youtube.com/user/WindyCityTimes. Bulldozer photo by Tracy Baim

of the community. Adding if there was more awareness around the need for housing back then, there would have been more push for a lot more supportive housing. The LGBTQ community, she said, is mostly at the forefront of new and groundbreaking ideas and this development is just the tip of the iceberg and the community is moving along.

"It's fantastic and it's wonderful to see [it] ... happen right here in my district," said Feigenholtz. "Just one more source of pride for me. I think that it's the first of what I hope will be

many senior projects for the LGBTQ and straight ally community. I think we're going to be just over the moon about how this works out. It's nice to be witnessing the LGBTQ culture, appreciating how important that is and to respect and nurture their elders and to make sure they're not cast aside, to make sure they're not living in little apartments, isolated. This is really the pinnacle model of housing for seniors and I'm thrilled that I can bring home a little bit of resource and that Heartland folks are involved because they do great work."



Heartland Alliance President Sid Mohn. Photo by Hal Baim

Artist visits Center for Legacy Walk event

BY VERNON HESTER

"I believe history is a weapon. It can be wielded as a sword of wisdom and a shield of memory. It is also fleeting and if we are not careful, bits and pieces of it can be lost, destroyed, and even stolen if we are not vigilant."—Steven Reigns from an interview in The Examiner from 2011.

As the first part of his global odyssey Los Angeles native, author, poet, historian, artist and educator Steven Reigns visited the Center on Halsted May 29 as part of a journey with a unique aim: to record through etchings historic commemorations of LGBTQ pioneers worldwide. Reigns started what has been dubbed "The Gay Rub Project" three years ago by collecting markers by tracing the plaques and headstones with crayons over a thin sheet of fibrous paper. His visit here was more prominent than others for two reasons.

The Legacy Walk on Halsted not only dis-

plays dates of the inductees' lives but also their contributions to the worldwide LGBTQ community. Reigns was excited to record the Halsted plaques not only because of their historic value but because the Legacy Walk has the largest, most concentrated and most detailed collection in the world. When the Legacy Walk debuted in 2012—a year after the start of the project—it was the answer to Reigns' dream.

What made this visit doubly special was the participation of high school and college-age LGBTQ youth, a first for the project. Rather than allowing the Legacy Walk to become a dusty historical piece, the involvement of the youth not only educated and inspired them but many onlookers as well.

Reigns will continue making and collecting the etchings, ultimately touring the world and displaying them, giving Halsted's Legacy Walk, among others, and the inductees a global audience.



Steven Reigns (right) with volunteer at Legacy Walk rub. Photo by Vern Hester

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Chicago Dyke March Collective hosts immigration forum

BY YASMIN NAIR

Since 2008, the Chicago Dyke March Collective (CDMC) has held its annual march in locations outside the city's traditional Andersonville neighborhood. The CDMC has also, in recent years, sought to engage communities by organizing forums on topics relevant to the area it marches in.

The Chicago Dyke March is in its second year of being hosted by the Uptown-Argyle neighborhood, home to a significant Asian and Asian-American population and several Asian-American businesses and social service organizations. To reflect issues close to the community's history and present, the CDMC organizers organized a panel discussion titled, "Connecting the Dots: Immigration, Race, Sexuality and Community."

The event was held at 4753 N. Broadway (the Bridgeway Bank Building), at the community space of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice (formerly the Asian American Institute), an advocacy and lobbying organization, on the fifth floor.

Liz Thomson, one of the organizers, introduced the event and Emilia Chico provided a brief history of the nationwide DM movement and Chicago specifics. Vi Ray-Mazumdar, a Dyke March Collective member and staff member at the Center, moderated the remainder of the event with Thomson.

Ray-Mazumdar spoke about the reasons why this year's forum was on immigration, pointing out that "immigration has been part of Asian-American history and present." They (Ray-



Rossette Valladarez and Kristina Tendilla. Photo courtesy of Chicago Dyke March Collective and Liz Thomson

Mazumdar's preferred pronoun) provided some parts of that history, explaining that Asians were prevented from gaining citizenship from 1882-1965, even though Asian immigrants liter-

ally built the infrastructure of the United States, as in the case of the Transcontinental railroad.

According to Ray-Mazumdar, Asians are the largest growing immigration group in the country. There are one million undocumented Asian Americans. Out of the four million immigrants experiencing a backlog in family-sponsored immigration, 2 million are of Asian origin.

Currently, the latest proposed comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) bill excludes provisions for sibling sponsorship and binational couples. This undercuts the goal of family reunification, a principle that's been at the forefront of immigration rights advocates organizing for several years.

The event sought to unpack and demonstrate the complexity of LGBTQ immigrants in particular. A video and brief presentation by Vicki Tai touched upon themes of sexuality, gender and the concept of "home."

Rossette Valladarez and Kristina Tendilla spoke of their lives and work as self-identified queer immigrants. Valladarez is part of the Immigrant Youth Justice League as well as a Dyke March Collective member, and said that "coming out as undocumented and queer was like coming out of two closets."

She spoke of growing up undocumented and being isolated from friends after being told of her status by her mother, who also told her she couldn't bring friends home or tell them of her situation.

Tendilla, from a Filipino-American family, described her organizing around issues like poverty and race. She also spoke of her personal understanding of the sponsorship backlog: Her father's sponsorship of his siblings took over twenty years, and one of her uncles died during the process.

Both emphasized that they drew strength from the support networks of family and friends they've found through their work. Valladarez is putting herself through college at UIC. Tendilla, who works at Benton house, a settlement house community, draws upon her experiences and life to make connections between different the

racial and economic communities in which she finds herself.

The discussion after the panel dwelled on the connections between immigration work in the United States and the current global crisis in immigration, the impact of socio-economic factors in determining immigrant access to resources like education and what some felt was the inability of mainstream groups like Human Rights Campaign to work with immigrants.

More information about the Chicago Dyke March and community events leading up to it can be found at chicagodykemarch.wordpress.com or their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/events/102132403327837/?fref=ts>.

Holocaust museum nat'l tour in Chicago

Marking two decades of honoring the memory of the Holocaust and inspiring citizens and leaders worldwide, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will bring its 20th-anniversary national tour to Chicago Sunday, June 9.

The event will take place at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers, 301 E. North Water St., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Chicago marks the fourth and final stop of the national tour, which, together with the museum's national tribute to Holocaust survivors and World War II veterans, has introduced thousands of people across the country to the lessons of the Holocaust. The June 9 event will honor Holocaust survivors and World War II veterans; bring the history and lessons of the Holocaust to the Chicago community; and thank dedicated area residents for their continued support securing the future of the museum's work.

For more information, visit www.ushmm.org/neveragain.

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Brant Gniewek. Photo by Ross Forman

PASSAGES

Brant Gniewek

BY ROSS FORMAN

Brant Gniewek, who this year was scheduled to run 52 races of varying distances, including marathons, to help others in the fight against cancer, died unexpectedly May 28. He was found by police in his North Side apartment. Gniewek was 30.

Final results from an autopsy have not been released, but preliminary testing show the cause of death was a heart attack, said Blain Gniewek, 34, his oldest brother.

"He was like my best friend beside from being like my little brother. I talked to him all the time," Blain said. "He literally just ran himself to death between the running and the 50 or 60 hours per week of work, etc."

"My brother was the healthiest and most successful of all of us. It doesn't make sense."

Gniewek was profiled in Windy City Times last December, when he told about his "52 For 52" charity. (See www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Brant-Gniewek-Running-52-races-to-fight-cancer/40667.html.)

"I have been very passionate about fighting cancer, and beating it," Brant Gniewek said last year. "As I was planning my races for [2013], I came up with the idea to run one race a week for one person to help raise money for them to fight and beat cancer. After playing around with the idea, I came up with 52 for 52 to help fight cancer. The original idea was to [run] 52 races and raise money, but that turned into starting my own charity: 52 for 52."

Gniewek had run 18 races this year, and al-

ready was registered for eight others.

Blain said his brother's charity will continue, and that family and friends will now run races in Gniewek's memory.

"Brant was extremely dedicated to his charity, 52 For 52, and was always looking for the next race to help others beat cancer," said Craig Wu of Chicago. "He was looking to get '26.2'—the miles in a marathon—tattooed to help him keep focused on what he was doing."

"His bright blue eyes, witty charm and calm confidence will be missed by anyone who was fortunate to have known him. May he find peace. He can finally stop running."

Matt Merkt, of Chicago, said that Gniewek did, in fact, get the "26.2" tattoo, in Roman numerals.

Gniewek was out with friends May 27 and they were scheduled to meet at 8 p.m. for dinner, but Gniewek didn't show. "They figured he had just fallen asleep, so they just let him sleep," Blain said.

On May 28, Gniewek didn't show up for work at the mortgage company where he was a funder, so company officials called his family.

After social-media posts for information about Gniewek's whereabouts went unanswered, the police went to his apartment in Wrigleyville, where he was found, Blain said.

"From what we can tell, he just overdid it. He wasn't sleeping, coupled with everything else," Blain said.

Services were scheduled for May 31-June 1 at Resurrection Funeral Home in Clinton Township, Mich. Gniewek moved to Chicago from his native Michigan in summer 2010.

Gniewek ran his first-ever marathon, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon, in 2011 to support the cancer organization Imerman Angels. He also ran the 2012 Chicago Marathon again to support Imerman Angels, of which he was a member of the charity's professional board.

Gniewek played softball in the predominantly gay Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA).

"He always wanted to be married and have kids, but he never got those opportunities," Blain said. "But my kids—Connor, 10; Emery, 7; Mykia, 4; and Layla, 2—were like his kids; he spoiled them rotten and they are now completely distraught about [his death]. He was a phenomenal uncle."

Gniewek is also survived by another brother, Brad, 32, as well as five other nieces and nephews.

His parents are Terry and Stan.

"I am very excited to take on this adventure in 2013, [though] it will be the hardest thing I have ever done," Brant said in 2012. "It will take a lot of support from friends and family just to get me through the races, and even more support from everyone to raise the money to help in the fight. On top of running, I will be putting in a lot of time getting this charity started. It's a huge challenge, but I am up for it."

For more information on Gniewek's "52 for 52" running challenge charity to support the fight against cancer, visit 52for52tofightcancer.blogspot.com.

PASSAGES

Vinnie Arroyo

BY ROSS FORMAN

Vinnie Arroyo, a longtime, multisport participant and former board member of the predominantly gay Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA), has died after a lengthy illness. He was 41.

Arroyo died from an infection in the stomach that he was battling for almost three years, said his longtime partner Roger Serrano. "He fought hard; he had setbacks, but always managed to get out of them," Serrano said.

Arroyo played softball and volleyball as recently as 2012, and was coaching/scorekeeping for a softball team this season. He is the former director of the CMSA open volleyball league and was on the main CMSA board of directors, plus a key member in the formation of CMSA's flag football league.

"He was a wonderful man, a great guy and great teammate. He was very funny, the life of the party," said Danny Tag, of Chicago. "Vinnie was an important contributor to CMSA. This is a very sad day."

Arroyo was instrumental in the forming of CMSA's flag football league, and one of the league's first referees. He also helped write the league's rules.

"Vinnie had a lot of friends, especially in the [local, gay] sports community," Tag said.

Rob Burton, a 2013 inductee into the CMSA Hall of Fame, was softball teammates with Arroyo. Burton said Arroyo "definitely [was an] instrumental figure in CMSA history."

Phil Runions, who is straight yet played in the local gay softball leagues from 1981-2012, was teammates with Arroyo at times and foes at times, too.

"He was an all-around nice guy who definitely will be missed," said Runions, 54. "Vinnie was a fierce competitor who hated to lose; I think that's why we got along so well."

Arroyo played B-Division softball for years, but recently has been involved in the C-Division.

"Vinnie was very active in CMSA, and will be very sorely missed," said Bill Enright, 48, who lives in Uptown and played multiple CMSA sports for almost 20 years, dating back to 1993. He was friends on and off the fields of play with Arroyo, and even was roommates with him for a period.

"He was very jovial, always with a happy personality. Vinnie was one of those guys who everyone truly liked. Personally, I'm very saddened, as I know a lot of us within CMSA are."

Arroyo and Serrano met in San Diego and their first date was on Halloween, 2007. "[We] went to the haunted trails at Balboa Park [and] he was making fun of me because I was holding his arm the whole time," Serrano said.

Shortly after, they were a couple, Serrano said, and they moved to Chicago in 2008.

"We moved all over the place [in Chicago], from Lincoln Park to Streeterville to Uptown, where we finally settled," said Serrano, 32. "He loved sports, especially softball. That's how I started playing; he was an awesome coach."



Vinnie Arroyo (left) and Roger Serrano. Photo from Serrano

Serrano plays CMSA softball and also runs marathons. Serrano on Wednesday posted on Facebook: "Today I lost my best friend and the best partner I could ever ask for ... I will always love you and remember you ... I know you will always be next to me ... R.I.P."

Enright said Arroyo's biggest contribution to the gay sports scene was the "simple joy he brought to all his teammates and others. All teams he played on enjoyed him being there."

Enright also noted Arroyo's competitive nature, but added, "He kept things in perspective."

Arroyo was a longtime Chicago Blackhawks fan, many locals noted, "and he would have loved" Wednesday's night's game seven overtime win over the Detroit Red Wings in the Western Conference semifinals, played at the United Center, Enright said.

Arroyo and Enright watched the Hawks win the 2010 Stanley Cup together.

Serrano said Arroyo also was a diehard Chicago Bears and Chicago Cubs fan.

"I have too many stories about Vinnie to share, with so many funny moments. I always will remember him and those memories," Enright said.

Arroyo grew up in the Chicago area and attended Kennedy High School. He lived in San Diego for about seven or eight years before moving back to Chicago, Enright said. "Every time we talked while he was [living] in San Diego, he always complained about the food, how he missed Chicago food," Enright said, laughing.

Arroyo worked in the customer service/call centers area, as a customer service manager, "and loved it," Serrano said. "He knew how to treat people, loved to be a good leader and manager," Serrano said. "He helped everyone reach their best. Everyone who knew him knows that he was a kind person, and liked everyone."

Mark Sakalares, a member of the CMSA board, only met Arroyo once and very briefly. Still, Sakalares is well aware of Arroyo's contributions. "No doubt a huge loss and he will be missed by many. He leaves a legacy as a sportsman and great friend to many," Sakalares said.

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BI *in the*
LIFE
Matthew Kopp
TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROSS FORMAN

Age
41

Relationship status
Open relationship with bisexual woman

Neighborhood
Rogers Park

Orientation
Bisexual

Hobbies
Mushroom hunting

Job Title
Dramaturg, playwright, performer at Tellin' Tales Theater, plus an independent artist

Best part of job
"I am working for myself."

Worst part of the job
"Low pay after expenses."

Favorite local restaurant
Tiffen

Favorite movie
Wings of Desire

Favorite TV show
Nova

Little-known fact
Was the captain of his high school football team



Matthew Kopp admitted he's an introvert and needs a lot of time to work on his art, so working-from-home is necessary.

"I needed independent work while pursuing my art," Kopp said. "It sometimes is very difficult to balance being an artist and gaining income."

Plus, Kopp has worked through trauma issues and depression through 14 years of therapy. "The gift of doing so has made me a well-rounded individual and given me great insight as a playwright and artist. It also has led me to working with children with physical and mental disabilities," he said.

Kopp's long-term career goal is to create video installation work for museums. His dream job, he said, is "to have one job as a full-time artist, playwright and performer."

Kopp said his visual art is "expressionistic, existential, and often employs a sense of humor." He sold his first piece of art while in high school, earning \$100, and he also earned a scholarship to the School of the Art Institute in Chicago. His drawings are often on a smaller scale now, and often quite colorful, though he admits he loves producing black & white pieces.



Kopp has written two comedic plays with the theme of bisexuality: "This is not a House" and "Encyclopedia Sexualis."

Kopp also has found a niche buying, repairing and then selling vintage furniture. He has, for instance, two ottomans from the mid-1950s at his north side apartments that he bought for a combined \$50. After spending about \$200 to refurbish, Kopp said he will be able to sell for \$3,000 or \$4,000.



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This Too Shall Pass: Illinois marriage fight continues

BY KATE SOSIN

In a stunning blow to LGBT families, the Illinois House adjourned May 31 without voting on equal marriage.

The Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act may not see a vote until this fall as the bill reportedly fell short of votes. The bill could still be called in the veto session later this year.

The lack of vote came to a shock to many. Chief sponsor Greg Harris previously told Windy City Times that he would 'absolutely' call the bill for a vote and that it would pass.

Backlash against Harris and other Illinois Democrats has been swift and fierce.

But on May 31, a teary-eyed Harris stood up before a crowded chamber and, with a shaky voice, told colleagues the bill lacked the needed votes and would not be called.

"I have to keep my eye, as we all must, on the ultimate prize," he said, noting that colleagues had promised to consider the bill further and that a vote this year remained possible.

"We will be back and we will be voting on this bill during legislature, in this room," he said.

Families and activists watching from the gallery shouted at Harris that he must call the bill, but Harris did not. In the end, those in the gallery and on the floor rose to applaud him.

Rep. Deb Mell also rose to speak alongside her wife, Christin Baker. Mell detailed her marriage for colleagues, from her recent fight against cancer to their TV habits.

"At the end of the day, Christin and I want what you want," said an emotional Mell.

"Today we were hoping that our state could give our union the highest recognition that our state gives people who want to spend their life together, and that is marriage," Mell said.

LGBT leaders said they were outraged over the lack of a vote, regardless of the bill's fate.

"Rep. Harris did not ask the Coalition or any of its members for our input," said Jim Bennett, chair of the Illinois Unites for Marriage coalition. "Every one of us were in agreement that we wanted a vote on this. We were told by one of the lobbyists one hour before it happened. All of us said, 'No, it's unacceptable, we want a vote.'"

Bennett and others expressed disappointment with Harris, an openly gay rep who carried the civil-unions bill to victory. "He promised us a vote, and he failed on that promise," said Bennett.

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois echoed that disappointment, which he directed at the General Assembly as a whole.

"They should be embarrassed of themselves," said Cherkasov.

Rick Garcia, a veteran activist and policy director for The Civil Rights Agenda, said that Harris had failed to follow through.

"Today, we are not only disappointed but angry," he said.

Harris, surrounded by reporters on the House floor after adjournment, called the letdown one of the "hardest" moments of his life.

But he said that colleagues had promised to go back to their districts and work to build support for the bill. He said he hoped the bill would be passed during November's veto session.

"This is the long game," he said. "Fighting for equality in this country is the long game."

Harris also said that he had the votes for the bill but that a group of people backed out.

Underlying his comments were rumors around the Capitol that the House Black Caucus was not supporting the measure.

But state Rep. Ken Dunkin, chair of the Black Caucus, said he felt it was unfair to pin the bill's

failure on his caucus, a perception he attributed to media portrayals of Black lawmakers.

"This is not the Black Caucus' burden," Dunkin said, adding that he felt some lawmakers could have been swayed had the bill been called.

Others suggested that blame lay with Speaker Mike Madigan, who could have compelled lawmakers to cast favorable votes. Some speculated that Madigan quietly halted the bill's progress to save Democratic lawmakers from election challenges in the 2014 primary. If the bill did come for a vote during veto session in early November, it would be close election filing deadlines later that month, cutting down on challenges resulting from controversial votes.

Speaker Madigan, approached in the Capitol rotunda, declined to be interviewed but reiterated his support for same-sex marriage.

"I'm for it," Madigan told Windy City Times. "I'm for the bill."

Hours leading up to the vote had been ripe with uncertainty as the spring legislative session drew towards a close May 31. With the clock ticking on the bill, LGBT organizations and families gathered outside of Madigan's office May 30, in a hastily organized press conference to urge a vote on the bill.

Sponsors had until May 31 to call for a vote on the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, and LGBT groups said they were confident the bill would pass but needed Madigan and chief sponsor Greg Harris to call for a vote.

"We need the freedom to marry, and we need it now," said Bennett.

"A vote has been promised, and it's time to deliver on that promise," he added.

Harris previously told Windy City Times that he would "absolutely" call for a vote on the bill by the end of spring session Friday, and that it would pass.

The May 30 press conference, held against a backdrop of approximately two dozen LGBT organizers and families, aimed to put pressure on Madigan and sponsors to move the bill as the hours left to pass it dwindled.

The press conference signaled a sense of urgency on the part of coalition members as mixed reports circulated in Springfield on the fate of the bill.

Some expressed concern that the bill would not come for a vote by session's end. Others stated that a vote was expected by the day's end.

Pressed on whether the bill had the 60 votes it needs to pass, Bennett said it did.

"We're confident that if that bill is called for a vote there are enough votes to pass marriage in Illinois," Bennett said.

Also speaking at the conference were Jim Darby and Patrick Bova, who will celebrate 50 years together in July, as well as Theresa Volpe and Mercedes Santos and their two children.

But the session ticked on into the evening May 30 without a vote.

In an effort to pressure House leadership, the coalition called on supporters to flood the Capitol to show support Friday morning.

The morning of May 31 opened with excitement in the Capitol as LGBTs were Springfield-bound from throughout the state.

Anti-gay activists also converged in Springfield May 31.

Approximately 30 people gathered in the rotunda of the Capitol building to show their opposition to the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, which would extend marriage rights to same-sex couples.

The gathering came just an hour before an anticipated pro-gay rally in the same location.



About 100 people rallied for marriage equality May 31 in the Capitol rotunda. Pictured are scenes from the event, including Reps. Ann Williams and Sam Yingling speaking to the crowd, and Andy Thayer displaying the rainbow flag. The previous day he had been escorted from the House gallery section for unfurling a flag along the balcony. Photos by Tim Carroll, Tracy Baim and Kate Sosin



Among those at the anti-gay gathering were representatives from the Illinois Family Institute, which has opposed the bill at rallies across the Chicago area in recent weeks.

Pastor Danny Holliday of Victory Baptist Church argued that the state had no right to say what marriage is, and that passage of the bill would change what children were taught in schools.

"If they redefine marriage in the state of Illinois, it will be just like the state of Massachusetts, where they teach children differently," he said.

Sharee Langenstein, a lobbyist for Family PAC and Eagle Forum, and David Smith of the Illinois Family Institute also spoke briefly.

The group prayed as major media outlets looked on. The convening wrapped up without incident.

Following that rally, more than 100 equal-marriage supporters poured into the state Capitol building.

LGBT leaders appeared confident as LGBT families and organizers were invited into Speaker Mike Madigan's box in the House chamber.

LGBTs convened in the Capitol rotunda with banners and flags to show their support for the bill and urge a vote.

But a bus chartered by LGBT groups from Chicago ran an hour late, and approximately 20 people missed the bulk of the rally.

The group sang patriotic songs like "This Land is Your Land" and "God Bless America."

Speakers included bill sponsors Kelly Cassidy, Sam Yingling and Ann Williams.

Bennett drove home the urgency of calling for a vote.

"This is our day," he said. "There is no more time. It has to happen today."

"It's a civil right," he added later. "It's always been our right, and now we're claiming it."

Darby added that he cannot wait any longer for marriage rights. He is 81 years old and wants to get married now.

"Maybe after 50 years, Patrick can make an honest man out of me," he joked.

The Capitol buzzed with excitement as families began to fill the House chamber.

But as the day wore on, hopes waned and rumors spread that the bill was short on votes. Some said they wanted to see a vote regardless of the outcome in order to know who supported it and who did not.

But Harris ultimately declined to call for a vote.



After Rep. Greg Harris spoke, he received hugs and a standing ovation from colleagues. Rep. Kelly Cassidy is at right. Photo by Tim Carroll

The aftermath

The resulting fallout divided Chicago's LGBT community.

A Change.org petition launched called for the removal of state politicians from the Annual Pride Parade. That petition picked up more than 450 signatures.

In a June 1 editorial, Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim called on Harris to step down as the bill's sponsor and not run for re-election if the bill fails in the November's veto session.

"Harris made promises he could not keep," Baim wrote. "In politics, that can be a reason to step down. Harris, who has dedicated his career to LGBT and AIDS issues, deserves the chance to prove his strategy right. If he wins, we all win, and that is all that matters. But if he does not succeed in passing this in the veto session this fall, he should not run for re-election in 2014."



Braidon Neubecker, daughter of activists Lee and David, sat with Rep. Sara Feignholtz May 31. Photo by Tim Carroll



House Speaker Mike Madigan speaking with Rep. Greg Harris before the nonvote. Photo by Tim Carroll

The editorial elicited such strong responses both for and against Harris and Baim that the two later issued a joint statement calling for unity.

"We as a community can work together for the common cause of marriage equality, even if we have differences of opinion on strategy and tactics," the statement read. "We both have a respect for the role that each aspect of the community plays, including elected officials, activists, donors and the media. All those things are needed to achieve full equality. We urge the community to understand that disagreement is part of our work, but we can all still be civil and achieve success. When there are disagreements, it is about politics, it is not personal."

"In the years of ACT UP, the successes against HIV/AIDS came because of work from all sides of the community—those in the streets, those in the suits, those in the media, and those in power. We must unite fiercely as a community and focus our efforts on carrying the beacon of hope and equality for all families, and against those who wish to defeat the full promise of America for all her peoples."

Other sponsors of the bill issued a joint letter, apologizing to families who trekked to Springfield to witness the historic vote, only to be let down in the final hours.

"We want to extend our sincerest apologies to the families who rushed to Springfield in the waning hours of session to support equality in anticipation of this historic vote," the 16 signed sponsors wrote. "You have been an continue to be our inspiration and we pledge to fight together until we achieve full equality for all Illinois families."

Signatories included all four openly-gay representatives. Some sponsors could not be reached at the time of publication, according to Rep. Sam Yingling. Among those not on the letter was Dunkin, chair of the House Black Caucus.

Also speaking out on the shortfall was Attorney General Lisa Madigan, Speaker Madigan's daughter and a contender for governor. Some have wondered how the shortfall on the marriage bill might impact her election chances.

"I believe that passing the marriage equality bill is the only way to fulfill the promise of equal protection under the Illinois Constitution," said Lisa Madigan. "While I have supported marriage equality since my days as a state senator over a decade ago, I have since conducted an extensive legal analysis that has only emboldened my support as attorney general."

"A ban on same-sex marriage violates the state Constitution's equal protection clause. The law does not allow the state or federal government to create a separate class of marriage based on a person's sexual orientation. There is no other way to describe this than to call it discrimination."

Moving forward

It remains unclear when the bill might see a House vote.

Michael Madigan extended the bill's deadline originally set for May 31, through the end of August.

The extension on the bill could offer a small opportunity for passage this summer if the House is called back into session to deal with pension reform.

In that case, however, the bill would need to be amended to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2014, instead of 30 days after it is signed into law. The amendment would need Senate approval as well, another hurdle as the Senate would also need to be called back to Springfield.

If lawmakers want to skirt those requirements, the bill would need House passage by a 3/5 majority, an unlikely possibility as the bill was short of the majority votes it needed to pass in May.



Longtime gay activist Jeff Graubart. Photos by Kate Sosin

Deflated crowd protests marriage vote shortfall

BY KATE SOSIN

Gathered in the rain at Roscoe and Halsted in Boystown, a somber crowd of approximately 100 people turned out to protest the state's failure to pass equal marriage June 1.

Emotions were raw just a day after the Illinois House adjourned without taking a deciding vote on the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, a bill that would have extended marriage rights to same-sex couples.

The lack of vote May 31 stunned LGBT Illinoisans, after the bill's chief sponsor Greg Harris stated that it would "absolutely" be called and that it would pass. When it became clear Friday night that the bill lacked the 60 votes it needed to pass, activists and onlookers urged Harris to call for a vote and put his colleagues on-record. But Harris, the openly gay sponsor credited with passing civil unions, did not call for a vote, and spring session ended. The next opportunity to pass the bill would be November, although an extension granted on the bill could leave an opportunity for action this summer.

In more than a dozen speeches Saturday night, activists who fought for months to pass the bill, blamed Democratic politicians for the loss.

"We were working under circumstances where there was a lack of communication from the House," said Anthony Martinez, executive director of The Civil Rights Agenda, who described himself as "incredibly pissed."

Taking much of the heat were House Speaker Michael Madigan and Harris.

"The truth is there is no one to blame except for the person who didn't call a vote," said Lambda Legal's Jim Bennett, chair of the Illinois Unites for Marriage Coalition, of Harris.

Bennett said that accusations that lack of support in the House Black Caucus doomed the bill were unfair.

He further commented on a Windy City Times editorial by Publisher Tracy Baim, which called on Harris to step down as the bill's sponsor and resign if the bill fails in the November's veto session.

"It's a conversation we should all have," said Bennett, who called the lack of a vote a "profound betrayal." But Bennett said that calls for resignation might be premature, noting Harris's history within the community.

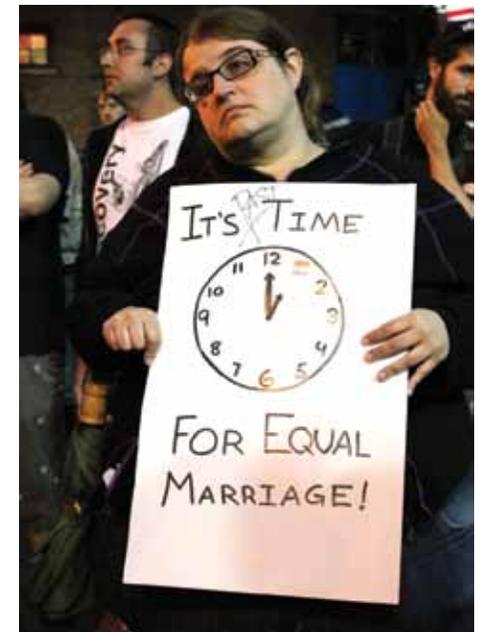
Bennett's comments came alongside a media release from Equality Illinois the same night, stating that the call for Harris to resign was wrong. The release condemned his decision not to vote on the bill.

"But Representative Harris has been our stalwart leader in the General Assembly, masterfully

leading the way for civil unions, funding for AIDS/HIV services, and other important initiatives impacting seniors, women and children," Equality Illinois said in the statement. "Probably no one in that body ached more than he did in announcing his decision."



Above: Illinois Marriage Coalition leader Jim Bennett at the June 1 Boystown rally. Below: Activist Andrea Crain.



Equality Illinois leaders did not attend Saturday night's rally.

Several speakers urged action from grassroots community members, noting that LGBTs had placed undue trust in leadership on the bill.

But despite outrage from many speakers, a solemn and disappointed mood marked the rainy evening protest. LGBT couples stood arm-in-arm together, some of them crying. Others quietly held up homemade signs.

See more photos from the Boystown rally on page 16.

MARRIAGE from page 13

A look back at the fight for marriage

In May 2012, Lambda Legal and the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois (ACLU) filed coordinated lawsuits seeking to overturn the state's marriage ban. They targeted Cook County Clerk David Orr, a longtime LGBT ally, who refused to fight the lawsuits. State's Attorney Anita Alvarez backed Orr, and Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan filed in support of the lawsuits. Without opposition for the lawsuits, five downstate county clerks filed to intervene to fight the lawsuits, headed by the Thomas More Society, a conservative law firm.



ABOVE: Rep. Barbara Flynn Curie hugs Rep. Deb Mell, while Rep. Cassidy, Sen. Heather Steans and Rep. Ann Williams look on. BELOW: Rep. Kelly Cassidy and Rep. Deb Mell console each other after the vote was not called. Photos by Kate Sosin



Rep. Harris addresses the media after the session ended. Photo by Tim Carroll

Those cases were still in the beginning stages when Harris and other lawmakers announced that they would be moving forward with a bill to legalize same-sex marriage.

Emboldened by sweeping successes for LGBTs in November elections, sponsors eyed the state's lame duck session for a vote, a time when outgoing lawmakers are more likely to vote their conscience without fear of reprisal. It was the same strategy used to pass civil unions.

Illinois Unites for Marriage—a coalition of more than 30 groups headed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, Lambda Legal and Equality Illinois—formed to push for the bill. The Civil Rights Agenda, another LGBT Illinois policy organization, also mobilized to build support for the measure.

Senate sponsor Heather Steans led that early January effort, but unexpected absences in the Senate stalled progress on the bill, and advocates made the call to wait for the new session to begin.



On May 31, LGBT families and leaders of the marriage fight were asked to sit in the special box behind Speaker of the House Mike Madigan. Photo by Tim Carroll



Representatives also stood to applaud Rep. Deb Mell after she addressed the House. Photo by Tim Carroll

SIDEBAR

Marriage equality bill sponsors issue apology

ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Dear Marriage Equality Advocates,

Like you, we are incredibly disappointed about what happened Friday in Springfield. But let's not forget something very important: Marriage equality is going to happen.

As a community, we must come together, assess our strategy, and redouble our efforts in the fight for fundamental fairness. This is not the time for us to splinter – for that is exactly what our opponents want.

The more united we are in the coming days and weeks, the sooner the bill will get passed – and the sooner our dream of full equality will become a reality.

We want to extend our sincerest apologies to the families who rushed to Springfield in the waning hours of session to support equality in anticipation of this historic vote. You have been and continue to be our inspiration and we pledge to fight together until we achieve full equality for all Illinois families.

Sincerely,

Christian L. Mitchell
State Representative, 26th District

Greg Harris
State Representative, 13th District

Deborah Mell
State Representative, 40th District

Lou Lang
State Representative, 16th District

Naomi D. Jakobsson
State Representative, 103rd District

Robert F. Martwick
State Representative, 19th District

Robyn Gabel
State Representative, 18th District

Heather A. Steans
State Senator, 7th District

Maria Antonio Berrios
State Representative, 39th District

Kelly M. Cassidy
State Representative, 14th District

Sam Yingling
State Representative, 62nd District

Sara Feigenholtz
State Representative, 12th District

Ann M. Williams
State Representative, 11th District

Mike Smiddy
State Representative, 71st District

Barbara Flynn Currie
State Representative, 25th District

Laura Fine
State Representative, 17th District

Organizers of this letter said that all applicable representatives could be reached by press time.

At the start of the new session, Harris and Steans reintroduced the marriage bill, and sponsors negotiated changes with religious leaders who were worried that churches would be forced to solemnize same-sex marriages.

The measure passed in the Senate on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, but the house was seen as the toughest fight for the bill.



ABOVE: Rep. Ken Dunkin, head of the Black Caucus, speaks after the marriage non-vote. BELOW: Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov speaks to the media after the vote was not called. Photos by Tim Carroll



For months, LGBT leaders anticipated a House vote on the bill, but sponsors struggled to secure the 60 votes needed.

The delay on a vote gave anti-gay organizations time to mobilize, and the Illinois Family Institute began holding weekly rallies against the bill. The Saturday rallies, spread out across the city and suburbs, targeted wavering lawmakers. LGBT groups, including Gay Liberation Network, organized counter-demonstrations to the rallies. Anti-gays largely outnumbered pro-LGBT demonstrators at the rallies, but pro-LGBT demonstrators changed story headlines from protests against marriage to competing demonstrations on the bill.

By late May, however, some had started to worry about lack of movement on the bill. Harris told Windy City Times that he would call for a vote before May 31 and that it would pass.

On May 31, however, that plan fell short.



David and Lee Neubecker with their children Michael and Braiden. Photo by Tracy Baim

More photos from the June 1 Boystown protest of the state's failure to pass marriage equality. All photos by Kate Sosin.



A Halsted party bus rolls past with people screaming "We want rights!" as Richard Streetman speaks at the June 1 rally at the corner of Halsted and Roscoe.



Rick Garcia of The Civil Rights Agenda riles up the crowd.



Lee and David Neubecker give a passionate speech at the protest June 1.



Anthony Martinez (back to the camera) speaks at the Boystown rally.



Rep. Greg Harris polishes his speech about the non-vote May 31. Photo by Kate Sosin

EDITORIAL

Moving forward on marriage equality

BY DAVID ERNESTO MUNAR

Reflection on past struggles—and the sage quotes of great leaders—began to soothe my roller-coaster of emotions.

"The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice."—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

For Illinois' LGBTQ communities, it is devastating to have our dream for full and equal access to legal marriage deferred by a reticent General Assembly. Like it or not, this is the "long arc" of the struggle.

We campaigned for 14 prolonged years before successfully securing an amendment to the state's Human Rights Act banning discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender expression. And just two years ago, our passionate community won the right to form civil unions. On marriage equality, political realities demand we mount an even more tenacious campaign.

We must remain laser focused on a path to victory but already our hurt and anger is turning inward, against our allies and each other, fretfully jeopardizing our unity and effectiveness.

For example, some people are casting blame on the Black and Latino Caucuses for the last-minute erosion of legislative support. As a block, these 30 members wield considerable influence in the 118-member state House, but their districts and views are by no means monolithic. The members include stalwart supporters and detractors of marriage equality. We can win more support among them but only by respecting their diversity of views. Blaming them for the stalled effort might have the opposite effect.

Less talked about, but certainly more significant, is the paltry support afforded the measure by the 47-member GOP caucus (all Caucasian, by the way). Just two Republicans are on record supporting the bill.

No doubt, a legislative setback merits deep evaluation, introspection, and recalibration. Our march toward full and equal marriage will benefit from it but we must resist haste in assigning blame.

"Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan."—John F. Kennedy

Rep. Greg Harris reminded me of this eloquent quote as we lamented the fraying of legislative support for marriage equality as the 2013 Spring Session drew to a close Friday. His decision to postpone the bill's consideration by the full chamber for a day when passage would be assured has caused deep consternation and second-guessing.

Some are blaming him for the stalled campaign for marriage equality. Others question his integrity, leadership and judgment, arguing that a roll-call vote—even on a bill destined to fail—would at least expose our supporters and detractors.

Having worked on legislative affairs for more than 20 years, I am convinced Greg made a heart-wrenching but rational decision. In legislative circles, nothing tarnishes an issue more than a failed vote. Lack of passage on Friday would have certainly ended any prospects of advancing the measure this year but it might have also set back the campaign for years or decades to come.

Once an effort fails on the legislative floor, recovery becomes exponentially more difficult. Lawmakers voting no are reluctant to switch their votes—flip-flopping is political heresy. And supporters resent being made to cast a controversial vote on an effort that guarantees constituents on both sides of the issue will be unsatisfied.

At AIDS Foundation of Chicago, my colleagues, legislative allies and I have worked on many controversial pieces of legislation that required just such calculations. For example, state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz worked tirelessly on sterile syringe access legislation from 1998 to 2003 that inched closer to passage each year. Our field and lobbying campaign and her political acumen (peppered by tenacity and patience) paid off. Though we had aligned the needed votes for passage, nothing was assured until actual votes were cast. We even stationed volunteers at each door as Feigenholtz debated the bill to assure no supporter exited the chamber before casting a vote in favor of the measure.

More than a legislative victory, public health won: By 2008, HIV infections from injection drug use declined by 60 percent.

Earlier this year, two other multi-year efforts finally achieved victory. A coalition of ally organizations prevailed in championing passage of comprehensive sexuality education legislation. And lawmakers finally repealed an antiquated and dangerous measure requiring public health to notify school principals of an HIV-positive student, which can heighten stigma and discrimination and leave the child no better off and often worse.

In legislative advocacy, a coalition can do everything perfectly and still not prevail as witnessed by proponents of pension reform. Many dynamics beyond ones control are at play in marshaling such a diverse and opinionated group of leaders on a single issue.

For our opponents—those who believe in marriage inequality—the sweetest comeuppance will be not only advancing our cause to victory but participating in the democratic process that determines who earns the privilege to represent us in the people's chamber. I am reminded of another emblematic quote about the power of coalition building, unity and organizing:

"Never underestimate the power of a few committed people to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."—Margaret Mead

CRIME OUT

LGBTQs and the Criminal Legal System

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.

Next week will be the last in this series about how LGBTQ people get caught in the system and the challenges they face once there. We will continue to cover these issues after the series concludes.

Additional editing provided by William B. Kelley.

A Windy City Times Special Investigative Series: Week Five

HIV Behind Bars in Cook County

BY MATTHEW C. CLARK

Victor Morales hasn't always been open about his HIV-positive status.

"In county [jail] and prison it wasn't easy, because of how they still visualize HIV, even though these days there's so many medications and so many pills," he said.

When Morales went to jail this time, he said he told them he was HIV-positive. He was given his medications and received HIV treatment.

In April of 2011, Morales was charged with a DUI, and given a two-year probation. In the second year of his probation, he tested positive for marijuana and failed a breathalyzer. He was sent to Cook County Jail.

Morales is 39, gay and Mexican-American. He was diagnosed with HIV in 1997, in Atlanta. He said you can find a lot of work in Atlanta if you're bilingual. But eventually, he returned to Chicago, where he has family.

Morales is one of many HIV-positive people who have gone through jail or prison in the U.S.

"A lot of people are afraid to say they're positive," he said. "They'll just be cool until they get out. I've done that."

His story is not uncommon. It illustrates part of the reason for a recent change at Cook County Jail concerning treatment and care for people living with HIV.

Over the past three and a half years Cook County Department of Corrections (CCDOC) has been transitioning to an opt-out HIV/sexually transmitted infection testing system. Instead of having the right to ask to be tested for HIV, those detained in jail are told they will be tested and given the right to refuse.

Medical practitioners and AIDS advocates in Chicago had long wanted an opt-out system at the jail.

John Peller, vice president of policy for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), has dedicated his career to being an advocate for HIV-positive people and getting them treatment. According to him, one in five people who are positive don't know they are.

Testing behind bars

Identifying HIV-positive people in jail means identifying some of the most at-risk people for contracting the virus, experts say.

So when Peller met newly appointed Cook County Commissioner Bridget Gainer in 2009 at a fundraiser, he told her about opt-out testing, about the one-in-five people who don't know their positive status, and he shared one more statistic that really struck Gainer.

"In national studies, over many, many years, it's a consistent metric that says when someone is informed of their HIV-positive status, they may not seek regular medical care, but 68% of the people change their behaviors to minimize the transmission to another person," Gainer recalled. "So in my mind, regardless of anything like budgets or healthcare, any of that stuff, that to me was the most compelling statistic."

Gainer set up a meeting that week with Peller to discuss the research.

Then, she met with jail officials and other members of the Cook County Board. What seemed like a simple rephrasing of a question, from "opt-in" to "opt-out," would require a

whole new facility, she learned.

Approximately 200 to 350 people are processed at the jail every day.

Part of that intake involves a medical screening.

In the past, detainees were screened right next to one another, with very little privacy.

"People don't like to say that [they are HIV-positive] in front of others, especially when they're in a potentially very violent, all-male environment," Gainer said.

Now, those going through intake are given medical screenings in a larger room partitioned off with glass walls, where staff are able to ask questions with considerably more privacy.

Changing the facility was only the first step. Detainees are typically released within a short time period. For a testing facility to have an impact, the staff would have to get the results the next day.



John Peller from AFC.

According to Gainer, Cook County was able to fund the opt-out program by saving money in the State's Attorney office—a coordinated effort with State's Attorney Chief of Staff Dan Kirk. Gainer said the creation of a separate unit that dealt with conflicts of interest saved the county more than a million dollars in private attorney's fees.

Cook County was also able to implement the system by using the John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County to conduct the lab work, which was less expensive than private-firm testing, and by switching to an electronic medical records system, which allowed for results from overnight testing to be shared with the county jail the next day.

In the new intake facility, those who consent to be tested have blood drawn, which is taken to Stroger. Overnight, a phlebotomist conducts what is called a Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) test, which uses enzyme reactions to detect the presence of HIV antibodies. Since the test is not always accurate, for those that come back positive, a Western Blot test, which also uses enzymes to digest blood particulates so they can be detected, is conducted on those blood samples. Western Blot test results take a week to come back.

Cook County Jail. Photo by Kate Sosin



Anyone who initially tests positive (the results are not 100 percent accurate) is called into a specialized medical care clinic. They are informed of their preliminary result, and a rapid test is conducted to confirm their status.

For many reasons, someone who tests positive may not get results back. The grant-funded tester counselor, who reviews the positive cases the next morning, works Monday through Friday. So anyone processed over the weekend won't get his or her results back right away. Some are bonded out or released the same day they're arrested. A detainee may also be in court, or a unit may be in security lockdown.

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has a unit that, among other things, works to locate those who tested positive but were released from the jail before they were notified.

HIV by the numbers

The gap between those who are HIV-positive (whether they know their status or not), and those who have been getting treatment long enough to have a suppressed viral load is significant.

Using the most recent CDPH data available, from 2010, AFC put together what's called a "treatment cascade" to illustrate this disparity.

In its 2013-2015 strategic plan, AFC shows that of the 35,093 people who are infected with HIV, 28,741 have actually been diagnosed, and 15,520 have accessed care. Only 9,303 have a suppressed viral load.

Peller has another statistic he likes to use to sum up this data: 50 percent of those with HIV aren't in medical care. Dealing with HIV in jails isn't just about identifying those who are positive; it's also about caring for them.

Those in Cook County Jail go one of two places. The first is to prison, under the control of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). The IDOC has recently begun implementing its own opt-out program, and people who are HIV-positive are getting specialized care via a telemedicine program through the University of Illinois.

Otherwise, those detained in CCDOC go back into the community, where concerns about putting a roof over their head, food on the table, and the struggles of daily life often trump specialized medical care needs.

"In a lot of ways, HIV is a symptom of a lot of the problems that low income, people of color face," Peller said.

Follow-up care

One Wednesday afternoon, Dr. Chad Zawitz, a doctor at Cermak Health Services, which serves the jail, sees a patient in his own office.

The patient, an African-American man in his

50s, is living with HIV.

Zawitz—Dr. Z to many of his patients and co-workers—conducts a routine physical, fills out the man's prescription and orders his lab work.

Zawitz is impressed, he says. It is the healthiest he has ever seen his patient.

The patient reports that he has been having a hard time. Zawitz asks him if there is anything he needs. The man needs a coat. Zawitz offers to bring his partner's old coat, which will be his size, next week when the man comes by to get the lab work results. Finally, Zawitz refers his patient to a case manager.

The last time Zawitz saw his patient was at the jail, before he was sentenced to prison. The man was released two weeks ago, and this is his first visit with a doctor on the outside since.

Every Wednesday afternoon at the Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center, Zawitz treats people who have been incarcerated and are living with HIV. The clinic has a special staff consisting of medical practitioners, mental health specialists, case managers, substance abuse counselors, nutritionists and health educators.

In addition to running the clinic, he is also the Director of Infectious Diseases for Cermak Health Services in CCDOC. If an HIV-positive person is detained in the jail, or if someone tests positive at intake, Zawitz is the specialist they see.

For those who test positive within CCDOC, they're scheduled a priority visit at the Continuity of Care Clinic inside the jail. First he finds out if the individual has a doctor.

"If not, well you just met him. I'm your doctor," he said.

Zawitz does an extensive post-counsel by going over HIV/AIDS with his patient, doing a complete physical exam and medical history, and performing a series of baseline lab tests—T-cell count, viral load, chemistry panels, liver function.

"We don't start HIV meds until we have the labs back, and until they have assessment of their readiness to adhere the medicine," he said. "We get a better assessment of their non-medical needs, meaning, are they homeless, do they have access to a support network? You can imagine all the possible needs they have."

Because the jail is a transient place, Zawitz also looks at a patient's next court date and schedules them an appointment for his clinic outside the jail the following week.

The CORE Center clinic is also called the Continuity of Care Clinic.

Zawitz's Wednesday patient has been through the system multiple times. This time, he said he spent a year in prison for shoplifting a coat. At the clinic, the patient receives services that extend beyond getting a physical or a prescription filled.

"I have the easy job. Taking care of medical

Cook County juvenile detention center adopts LGBTQ policy

BY KATE SOSIN

Behind Mykel Selph's desk hangs a printout detailing the differences between being a "boss" and a "leader." The "boss" category, marked with an angry face, notes reliance on authority and fear. The "leader" category, capped off with a smiley, describes a person who generates goodwill and gives due credit.

Selph is not a person you expect to find at Cook County's Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC). It could be her upbeat demeanor, her impatience with imperfection on LGBT issues or the simple fact of her position.

She is the director of the Office of Girls and Gender at JTDC. Five years ago, her job didn't exist, and it was not until after she took the position that her duties came to involve work on LGBTQ issues.

But under her supervision and after years of work by LGBTQ advocates, JTDC recently adopted a 12-page LGBTQI policy that has been hailed as model for the country. The policy is one of few in U.S. juvenile detention centers, and advocates hope it will improve the realities facing LGBTQ youth detained by Cook County.



Mykel Selph. Photos by Kate Sosin

Challenges at JTDC

Research shows that LGBT youth are more likely than straight kids to end up in juvenile detention and face greater challenges once there.

Selph, who is charged with working on LGBTQI issues at JTDC, details the questions that trans issues raise at JTDC: how do you decide if a detainee can wear a blue shirt (like the boys) or a pink shirt (like the girls)? If transgender youth comes in and asks to be called "Nicki Minaj" (a true example, says Selph), what do you call her?

For the most part, the questions boil down to a recurring theme, says Selph: "Trying to balance caring for people's rights in a facility where rights are restricted, it's a very fine line ... How do we allow a transgender kid to maintain their gender identity in a sex-segregated facility?"

Two years ago, Cook County Jail instituted a transgender policy intended to address some of those questions among adults. But transgender youth face additional obstacles that can make policy change tricky.

The jail houses kids ages 10-16, below the age 18 requirement for prescription without guardian consent. Many youth who enter JTDC on hormones have been using street hormones obtained illegally through peers, instead of prescription hormones from doctors. That means that in some cases, JTDC can't legally give youth the hormones they're on.

And LGBTQ youth raise questions about confidentiality, as they may not be out to parents or guardians.

Finally, many LGBTQ young people are still grappling with their identities. Adults, including detention staff, often dismiss LGBTQ youth identity as a phase, making accommodations for LGBTQ youth seem unnecessary to staff.

Up until 2010, those weighing some of the challenges facing LGBTQ youth detained by Cook County were doing so piecemeal.

Sarah Schriber

One who did recognize a need for a more formal effort was Sarah Schriber.

Schriber was working as an attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois (ACLU) representing gay and transgender youth when she started attending a group on girls in juvenile detention hosted by the Health & Medicine Policy Research Group in 2004.

Two years later, she met Shannon Sullivan, then project director for the Coalition for Education on Sexual Orientation (CESO). The two

talked about working together to address LGBTQ bullying in schools.

Schriber had other ideas, too, however. Her work on girls in detention had made her think about the lack of support for LGBTQ youth being detained as well.

In 2008, Schriber left the ACLU and began consulting for the Health & Medicine Policy Research Group and the in Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the organization that subsumed CESO).

She told Health & Medicine that she wanted to work on issues facing LGBTQ youth in detention, and the organization agreed.

In October 2010, Schriber convened a meeting of juvenile judges, state's attorneys, public defenders, community organizers and others who worked with detained youth.

Angela Irvine, an LGBTQ youth and detention researcher, happened to be in town for the Friday meeting, and she presented her research on LGBTQ youth in detention.

Irvine's research, some of the only of its kind, details the ways that LGBTQ youth are pulled into the juvenile legal system because society rejects them elsewhere. Once in detention, LGBTQ youth face additional obstacles.

"People were just blown away," said Schriber. "It was very compelling."

The following Monday, the group got to work. The result was the Illinois Court-Involved LGBTQ Task Force.

At first, their goals were too lofty, said Schriber. But over months, the taskforce dwindled into a small core group, and their goal of implementing LGBTQ policy at JTDC became clear.

Mykel Selph

Mykel Selph had also stumbled upon LGBTQ youth/ detention issues through other work at JTDC.

Selph appears almost out of place among the badges and uniforms at JTDC. She is all at once friendly and familiar. She seems to speak candidly, without fear or reservation. She knows a lot about LGBTQ issues, much more than many gay people. "Cisgender," a term that describes people who are not transgender, is her favorite word, she says. She likes it because it replaces what many people would just call "normal," a word she is not as fond of when talking about trans issues.

In March 2009, Selph started work as the director of gender programming at JTDC. Her expertise had been in mental health, and she previously worked at the Evangeline Booth Lodge, a Salvation Army Uptown housing program.

The move into gender programming was new for her, she said. But it was also new for JTDC.

Juvenile detention facilities have historically been designed for boys, Selph explained. Everything from the services and programs in the detention centers to the physical structures themselves need to be altered to accommodate girls.

"It's a cultural value infused into the operations of a facility," Selph said.

JTDC houses approximately 270 youth. Of those, 20-25 are girls. Seeing that gender-specific programs would benefit a small percentage of detained youth, Selph began working on gender-specific programs for boys, too.

She worked with community organizations, convincing them to use grants to work with detained youth to meet her challenge of limited funds.

But the programs were limited in other ways, said Selph. Among them, JTDC was seeing many lesbian-identified and transgender women.

"It became clear that staff were asking for training on LGBTQ youth," said Selph.

Selph identifies as heterosexual, but LGBTQ issues were not unfamiliar territory. She had long been interested in LGBTQ rights and issues. In undergrad, she wrote several papers on gender and LGBTQ issues. And she had kept up on LGBTQ issues since.

It took some convincing, said Selph, but in summer 2009, JTDC offered its first LGBTQ training to staff working with girls. The following year, JTDC trained all direct care staff, which are those who have the most contact with youth. JTDC also folded the training into its pre-service training for new employees.

Selph also felt that a policy was imperative for JTDC. Without, she said, it was hard to train staff in proper procedures.

"You're getting trans kids, you're getting LGBTQ kids here all the time. You have to give staff something to go on," she said.

Selph was among those to begin early work in 2010 on the JTDC policy with Schriber.

The group looked at policies in New York and Texas, some of the only in the country.

Almost three years later, and their own policy is finally in place.

That has changed what Selph's job is, a job she now thinks may not exist elsewhere in the country. Selph regularly travels around the country to present her work to other detention centers, where LGBTQ issues are less known.

LGBTQ youth in detention

A 2012 study by the Center for American Progress estimates that 300,000 gay and transgender youth are arrested/ detained every year, more than 60 percent of them Black or Latino.



LGBT youth make up at least 15 percent of the juvenile detention population, according to a report by juvenile justice LGBTQ researcher Angela Irvine.

That report, which surveyed 2,200 LGBTQ youth in the system, found that just three percent openly identified as LGBT. Another three percent identified as straight but were assumed to be LGBT because of their gender expression. Nine percent identified as LGBT but were not out. The study also found that among girls booked, 27 percent were lesbian, bisexual or gender non-conforming.

Irvine notes that LGBT youth in detention were twice as likely as straight kids to have been removed from their homes by social workers, put in group homes or to have experienced homelessness.

Experts say that that queer youth are more likely to be arrested and convicted than their straight peers. That trend, they say, often starts with trouble at home where parents may reject queer youth, turning them out onto streets where they commit survival crimes. It can also start in schools where anti-gay bullying can lead youth to truancy.

The Center for American Progress report notes that, "Programs designed to keep children and youth off the streets, such as foster care, health centers, and other youth-serving institutions, are often ill-prepared or unsafe for gay and transgender youth due to institutional prejudice, lack of provider and foster-parent training, and discrimination against gay and transgender youth by adults and peers. As a result, many youth run away from these placements, actions that could also land them in the custody of the juvenile justice system."

And LGBTQ youth face hardships in detention, where gendered facilities and clothing can be difficult to navigate.

The policy

Once in detention, transgender youth especially, present a number of challenges for detention staff.

But detention staff also present a number of challenges for LGBTQ youth, Selph said. Often LGBTQ youth struggle more with lack of acceptance from detention staff than they will with their peers.

"I think the level of, I hate the word 'tolerance,' but the level of respect, awareness, tolerance and lack of awareness is with our adults, is with our staff definitely," said Selph. "I think that we mirror society in being heterosexist just naturally. I don't exclude myself from that. I think we are heterosexist in the way we deal with the kids, in the way we deal with each other."

The new policy, which went into effect in March, is an attempt to correct some of those issues.

The policy lays out basic LGBTQI terms for staff, mandates equal treatment for queer youth, forbids staff from searching youth for the purpose of determining their gender, prevents staff from disclosing a youth's sexual orientation or gender identity to peers and requires JTDC to inform detainees about the policy upon entry. It also states that the director of Girls and Gender (Selph's new title since expanding LGBTQI initiatives) will have resources on hand for LGBTQI youth.

Further, it creates an LGBTQI Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) that must make recommendations on placements, clothing, names and pronouns, and services for each young person who identifies as LGBTQ. The MDT consists of the JTDC's executive director, mental health director, a health services administrator, JTDC's school principal,

Changing the status quo on criminal justice

BY KATE SOSIN

As Illinois pushes for equal marriage, many state LGBTQ organizations will face a serious identity crisis.

What happens to groups that formed to achieve equal marriage and non-discrimination laws? What issues will they fundraise off of? Will they be necessary now? Do they have the buy-in from those most marginalized in order to remain relevant and continue?

Some groups have planned for the end of the marriage campaign, increasingly taking on transgender rights issues in the last couple years.

What few mainstream LGBTQ organizations have worked on, however, are issues facing LGBTQ people in the criminal legal system, where LGBTQ people continue to face the greatest hardships and most extreme forms of discrimination.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the equal marriage movement, working from the premise the LGBTQ people are normal and respectable, has often struggled to make sense of those deemed less acceptable by society: transgender people, sex workers, people who commit crimes and registered sex offenders, to name a few.

Over the last several weeks, our "Crime Out" series has attempted to explore some of those issues facing LGBTQ people locally, nationally and even internationally. Coincidentally, the series has come at the height of the state's push for marriage equality. We hope to build on our coverage of crime issues in future work.

History, like that explored in WCT Publisher Tracy Baim's introduction piece "With Malice Aforethought," tells us that our definitions of justice as LGBTQ people are often at odds with the values of our legal system, especially in Cook County, a longstanding model for systems across the U.S.

That continues to hold true, despite notable progress on LGBTQ issues in courts, jails and prisons. Reports of abuse by jail corrections staff are common. LGBTQ youth, often kicked out of their homes, still face higher rates of incarceration than their straight peers. Transgender women report that police wrongfully profile them as sex workers. Questions remain about the efficacy of sex offender registries and their impact on LGBTQs, especially gay men. HIV notification laws continue to fuel stigma and shame.

The challenges facing queer people behind bars and in courts are myriad and urgent. They raise difficult questions for LGBTQ organizers and policy experts: Is it enough to defend only the innocent when so many are criminalized without options? Can we place faith in institutions that have historically marginalized LGBTQ people? Finally, is it enough to fight for LGBTQ people without connecting their struggles to those of all people working their way through criminal legal systems?

While Windy City Times cannot answer these questions definitively, we offer a few suggestions here:

For all of us

LGBTQ people, like the rest of the population, need access to affirming medical care. This is especially important for people with HIV, transgender people, youth and seniors.

Access to transgender-related medical care would take many transgender people out of harm's way, as some fund expensive but necessary surgeries through sex work, while others turn to illegal street hormones or the dangerous practice of silicone pumping in order to achieve the bodies they feel they need to live.

This should be the priority of policy makers, funders, LGBT organizations and individuals.

For LGBTQ organizations

Mainstream LGBTQ organizations must decide where they stand on issues of criminalization.

The recent case of Kaitlyn Hunt, a Florida 18-year-old facing charges over her relationship with a 14-year-old girl, highlights this fact. WCT writer Yasmin Nair reported that LGBTQ organizations opposed charges against Hunt, stating that she had been singled out as a lesbian, despite the fact that she technically broke the law. If convicted, Hunt could end up on a sex offender registry. But many LGBTQ organizations have not taken a stand against the laws under which Hunt has been charged, claiming her as an exceptional case. Advocates cannot have it both ways. They must push for reform for all people prosecuted under unjust law.

For those in corrections

Institutions that have moved towards adopting LGBTQ-friendly policies are to be commended for their efforts. However, institutions that historically oppressed and abused LGBTQ people cannot be improved with simple policy additions. Abuse that occurred without a policy will continue unless the structures that allow for abuse are changed. A policy cannot correct this, for LGBTQ people or anyone else.

Alarming is the rampant violence and abuse impacting LGBTQ staff and prisoners in the jail systems in Illinois, where staff who interrupt abuse seem at risk from their fellow officers.

Changes from bottom to top

Changes on behalf of LGBTQ people, as well as those with HIV/AIDS, must involve their voices. Institutions that enact procedure to improve the lives of LGBTQ and HIV-positive people often fail to consult with them. The result is often flawed policy that unintentionally disempowers the community it is meant to serve.

There need to be sweeping changes to the laws in Illinois, as well as policy and policy enforcement at the prison level. Windy City Times will continue to monitor these issues in the coming months and years.

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needs is relatively easy," Zawitz said. "It's all the other stuff that's really hard."

The clinic houses case managers, mental health specialists, substance abuse counselors, nutritionists and health educators. To keep clients in care, this team tries to address the myriad problems those who've been incarcerated or detained face: addiction, homelessness, joblessness—poverty, essentially.

In addition, those formerly incarcerated or taken into CCDOC custody who are HIV-positive have access to some social services outside the clinic.

Cynthia Tucker is the director of Prevention and Community Partnerships for the AFC. Since 2005 the Illinois Department of Health has funded a Corrections Case Management Program through the AFC, and Tucker is responsible for coordinating with five case managers who work closely with those getting out of both Cook County Jail and state prisons.

"The re-entry population has a group of really specific things that they need, so we try to cater to those things," Tucker said. "So we try to work with them on many facets."

Case managers are charged with figuring out what works best for each individual. She says sometimes that is food or a cell phone, anything that will help a person be more productive and transition back into the community.

People leaving prison can prepare a little, said Tucker, but the jail can be more challenging. It can be a revolving door, and individuals can be released quickly and easily fall through the cracks.

Since the transition to electronic medical records, the jail has been able to improve the level of healthcare it provides, officials say. It also hopes to address recidivism, and try to find out why people aren't getting treatment.

The opt-out testing program has been in effect for females at the jail since 2011.

Last year, Cook County announced the success of implementing opt-out for male inmates.

That testing, however, has yet to begin in full. When asked for a comment, Cermak Health Services said the program does exist, with all patients having testing for HIV available to them, though not through an opt-out program.

"Initially, when we were preparing to initiate the program, the Health and Hospital System opted to initiate the opt-out process with HIV as the test offered to patients in male intake," said Cermak in a statement. "The process is still proceeding. Female intake is currently offering the full opt-out program. We are planning of having the full opt-out process in the new building."

The new building refers to the construction of a new tower, which will house an intake facility.

Cermak Health Services commented neither on why the opt-out testing wasn't yet fully in place for male detainees, nor about where funding for male opt-out testing is currently going, if not towards testing, by the time this story published.

According to Zawitz, there's no reason why a detainee won't get their medication so long as they know what they take, who their doctor is, or what pharmacy they get it from. If a detainee doesn't have this information, it can take time before the staff is able to identify and verify an individual's medication regimen.

According to Zawitz, this same process is in effect for transgender individuals detained in the jail. If an individual has a prescription for HIV-medication as well as hormones by a licensed physician, the medication will be provided.

Room for improvement

Because sex is not allowed within the jail, neither are condoms, a major shortcoming in the eyes of advocates like Peller.

Peller cites a 2011 study, which showed that greater condom access in a California State Prison Facility did not increase self-reported sexual activity and posed no increased safety risk.

The Sheriff's office said in a statement that while they obviously encourage individuals to practice safe sex, they cannot ignore policies like the Prison Rape Elimination Act, which prohibits sex, and also poses safety and security concerns.

"Any access to condoms program would have to be developed in close consultation with our Federal Monitor under the Department of Justice Agreed Order," the statement read.

Beyond Cook County

While some advocates praise HIV care at Cook County Jail, other parts of the state have a long way to go, say experts.

Arick Buckles is one example, advocates say. Buckles works as a housing specialist at HIV service agency Chicago House.

About two years ago, Buckles submitted to a background check for a job and discovered he had an outstanding warrant in Bureau County, Ill. He was detained and sent back to Bureau to face those charges.

"And that's where the nightmare began, actually," he said. "Upon entering that system, I'd informed the jailers that I was a person who was living with HIV, and I was in need of my life-saving medications, my HIV regimen."

Buckles alleges he never met with a physician. He was there for seven days, all the while his doctor, partner, and friends from Chicago House were calling the jail to get Buckles his HIV medication.

"My needs went unaddressed and ignored that entire seven days, and finally I was released and told to go home," he said. "They made me aware that they could not, I want to say that they could not afford the medications, and so they were going to release me."

After release, Buckles contacted John Knight, director of the LGBT and AIDS project for the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois. The ACLU-IL filed suit in 2012 and amended their complaint to add the name of the privately contracted company that provides medical care for Bureau County Jail, Advanced Correctional Healthcare Inc. (ACH).

Knight said that ACH excludes payments of HIV medications in their contract with the jail.

"I will say that in general there's not much of a contest here," he said. "They know that Arick had HIV, they know that he didn't get his medications for a week. What we don't know is exactly why that happened."

Knight thinks the problem is a lack of state administration or review of the jails statewide, because the individual counties control them. The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) does have a set of standards for jail, and Knight and the ACLU-IL asked for the IDOC to conduct a review to ensure these standards were being met.

According to the administrative code, jails are required to provide a competent medical authority to ensure prescription and administration of medications, as well as provide a doctor to attend to the medical and mental health of those detained in jail.

In a copy of the review, provided by the ACLU, the IDOC found no violations of the standard, which is what Knight finds most troubling.

"Our larger goal is to go to the Department of Correction or, if necessary, go to the legislature and do something about this," he said. "Because if this is not a violation of the standards, then there is a problem."

Knight says that ACH has been named as the defendant in a similar lawsuit in Oklahoma.

Transgender issues and HIV

But while navigating HIV issues behind bars is challenging, advocates say that transgender people face especially difficult hurdles.

Channyn Lynne Parker is trying to address that. Parker is a care coordinator for the TransLife Project at Chicago House.

"Male-to-females are more visible in the public eye ... so therefore that increased visibility usually leads to a lot of systemic oppression," Parker said. "You end up having discriminated housing, employment, medical care, and because of those things trans women of color end up having a fear of seeking help in all of those arenas."

Parker's job is to link these women to health-care. She understands that medical care is the key to ending transmission of HIV. But the TransLife Project also addresses housing, employment and legal services for trans people.

Parker has recently begun a counseling program for trans women housed in Cook County Jail.

"Really what I'm trying to do is for the trans detainees to have some emotional support and to address the whole recidivism issue. We know that most of the trans detainees are not violent offenders. They are really there because they commit what I like to say are survival crimes," Parker said. "They get out and they're still vulnerable. They're still visible, they're still vulnerable, they still lack emotional support, they still

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lack trainings, life skills, and so the cycle just continues. And so I'm hoping that me going into the county is going to address some of those barriers and stop some of that recidivism."

The jail as healthcare provider

The jail now finds itself as a first provider for many who cannot afford or do not use the healthcare system.

"Unfortunately the economic downturn and resulting healthcare cuts have dramatically impacted the jail making it the provider of first resort for any number of health problems, HIV included," the Sheriff's office said in a statement.

"We are working to better identify those with medical and behavioral healthcare needs, including HIV, and developing better transitions to care in the community with the hope that people will continue to access that care rather than cycling through the jail for care."

Mariame Kaba is director of Project NIA, which works on eradicating youth incarceration here in Chicago. For Kaba, healthcare within the jails raises bigger concerns about where our society's priorities are. She said CCDOC is among the most utilized three providers of mental health services in the country.

"To me that's a travesty because it illustrates that jails are primary healthcare providers," she said. "That is not what they should be, that is never what they were intended to be."

"Why is it that we're willing and able to provide healthcare for people when they're locked up and we don't before they're part of the system?" Kaba asked.

Victor Morales, the HIV-positive man who was detained in Cook County, noted the lack options.

"Being an ex-offender, it's hard. We don't have a lot of the resources," Morales said.

He said the first thing he needed upon release was housing, that everything else—a job, medical care—came secondary.

He just moved into a place, after two months. It's a couple blocks from the lake, a studio with lots of sunlight, but a little bit smaller than he's used to, so he's adjusting. After getting his GED, he wants to go to Harold Washington and get a degree in social work.

Morales didn't take his medication regularly while in jail, before he was sentenced and sent to prison. He was part of a recovery program there called Gateway Foundation that deals specifically with substance abuse. In the past a nurse discreetly administered his medicine, but while in Gateway, he was given all his medicine and expected to take it himself. He was scared others would see all his pills, so he hid them and didn't take them.

Morales wants to see jail employees educated about HIV, undoing some of the stigma.

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Selph and a handful of other senior staffers.

Finally, all staff, regardless of whether or not they work with youth, must receive training on the new policy.

For Selph, the most important part of the policy deals with transgender kids. Sexual orientation, while an issue, she said, is less pressing because sex at JTDC is forbidden.

It's too soon to tell how the policy will play out, and determining outcomes may take a while. Most youth spend just 17-21 days at JTDC.

Selph believes the policy does not go far enough, but she does hope it will be an important start. Even as it is now, she says, some staff will not agree with the changes it mandates.

"At the end of the day, we feel a lot," Selph said. "We feel negatively about a lot of stuff we do with our policies, but you do it anyway. That's another one where we just try to work with our staff. You say, the kids are here because they've been accused of doing something that you don't agree with. We don't agree with gang banging, we don't agree with robbing, we don't agree with using drugs, we don't agree with any of those things. But you're still able to see the humanity of the kid behind that. So this can be one of those issues."

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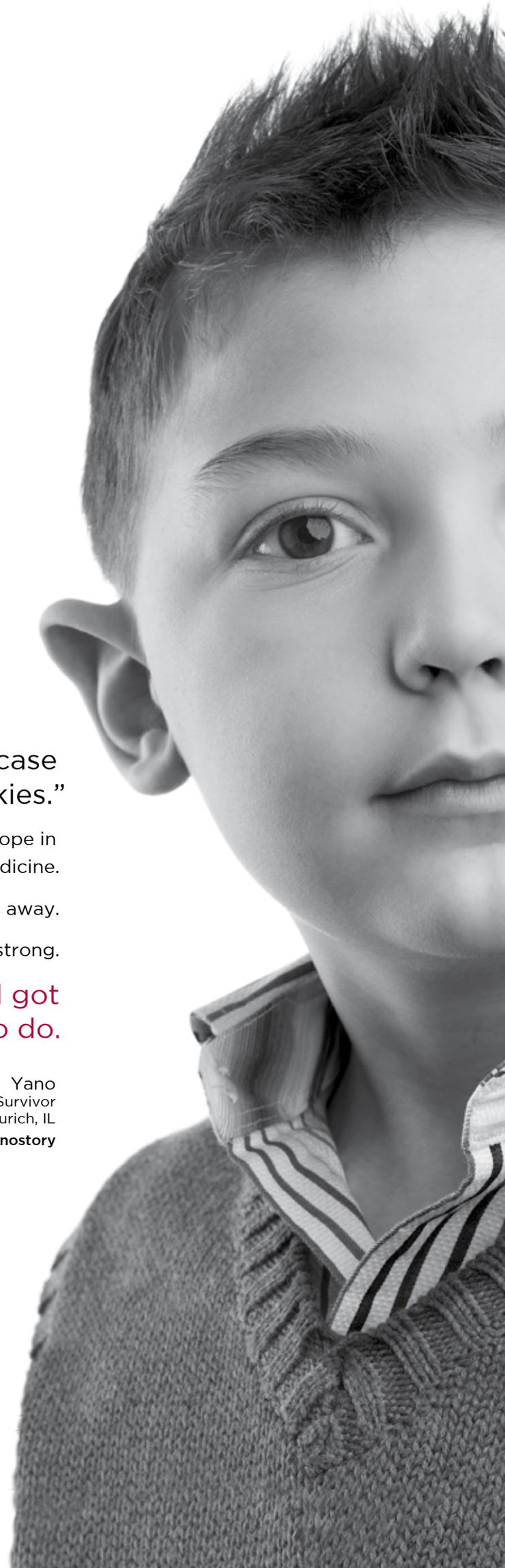
Together, we made the "yuckies" go away.

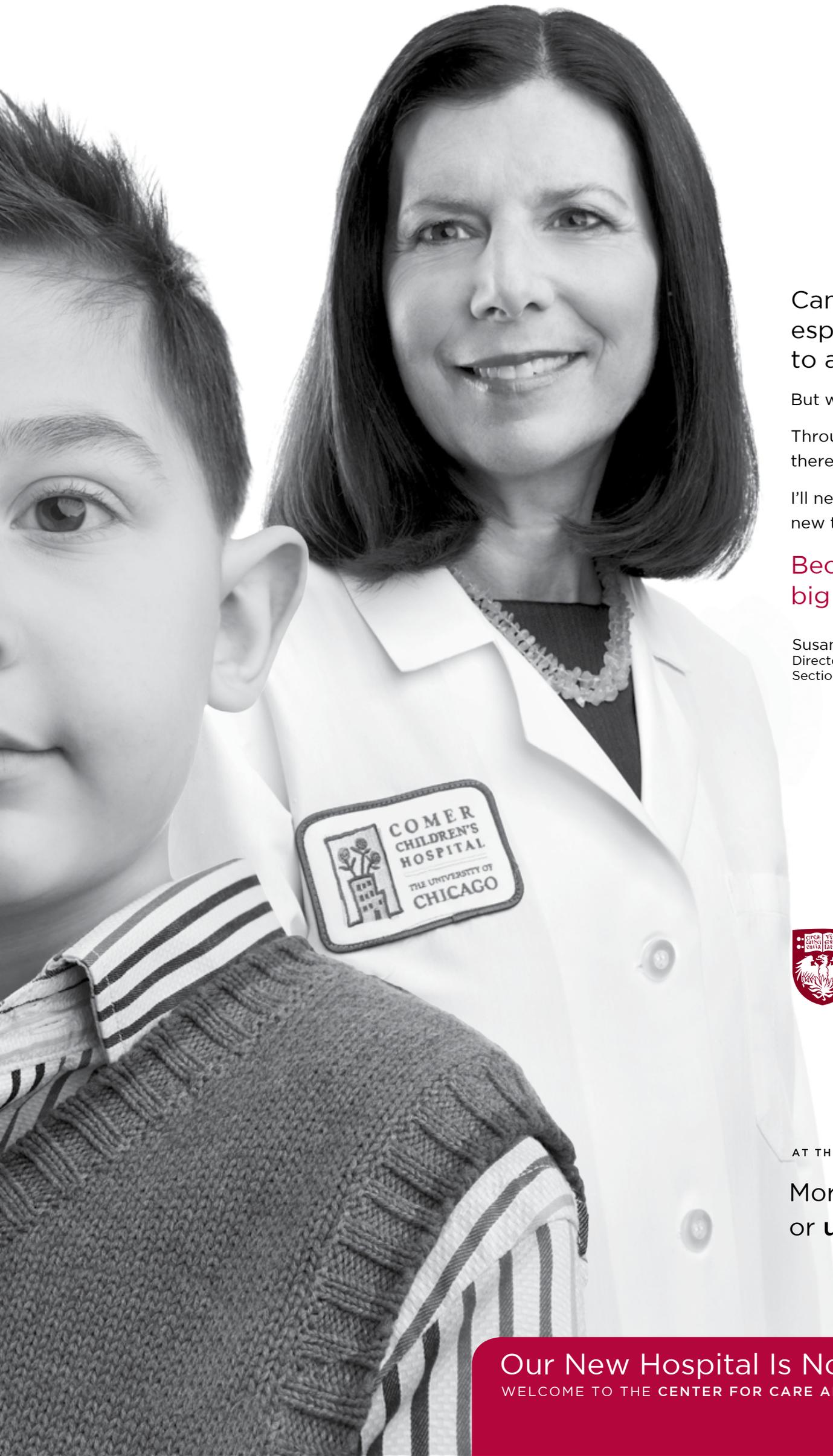
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LETTERS

WINDY CITY
TIMES

VOL. 28, No. 35, June 5, 2013

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Community Marketing, Inc.

Putting it to a vote

The Rainbow Sash Movement (LGBT Roman Catholics), like many other freedom-loving people in Illinois and around the nation, feel frustrated and angry over what happened in Springfield last week concerning the issue of gay marriage. Opposition from Catholic and conservative African-American church groups, led by Cardinal Francis George, outmaneuvered state Rep. Greg Harris, causing him to rise on the floor and tearfully announce that he would not call the bill—and there wasn't enough support after all.

We must challenge those in our political leadership to reflect on how this could have happened. Harris promised a vote on this matter, with the support of House Speaker Michael Madigan. Why not call for vote so we can see who supports us and who does not? While we understand the legislation will be reintroduced in the next legislature, we must question how one can get a hold of the political realities of the situation without a vote.

In our opinion, this community is owed full disclosure over this matter, and those responsible for not calling for a vote should be held accountable for their political decision making. Lacking full disclosure, such political leadership will only be drawn into question among reasonable people in both the LGBT community and among our allies.

The Rainbow Sash Movement is also calling for the community to come out and support our efforts to respond to Cardinal Francis George's platform of bigotry to be held in Boystown. His homophobic attacks against our community are responsible for this recent set back on Gay Marriage. Stand with us outside the Church as we say no to his bigotry from the pulpit of Our Lady of Mt Carmel on Sunday, June 16, at 7 p.m. Bigotry promoted from the pulpit cannot go unchallenged especially when it is held in our community.

Bill O'Connor
 Rainbow Sash Movement

Promises, promises

Some people keep saying state Rep. Greg Harris broke a promise to call the marriage bill for a vote whether it would pass or not. I don't recall any such promise.

Windy City Times quoted him May 21 as saying, "When I put it up on the board, it's going to go up to win," and then added the one-word quote "absolutely" to cite him as saying either that he was "absolutely" ready to call for a vote by May 31 or would "absolutely" call for a vote by then. In its own further words, the paper then summarized his quotes as saying that the bill "will pass by the end of session," yet reported that he "declined to offer a specific date for the vote or a count on the roll call."

Meanwhile, advocacy groups wanted him to call it for a vote regardless, supposedly in order to tell who the opponents and proponents were, since for some reason their own lobbying efforts hadn't been able to tell.

To me, unless more is cited, this seems a very thin basis for saying Harris broke a promise and seems only to indicate that people need to do a better lobbying job and get a better handle on how the legislature works—including the fact that the bill isn't dead yet.

As for personal attacks on Tracy Baim after her decades of hard work in helping build community: I can disagree with her but still respect her. We need to resist the propensity to go over the top when trying to make valid points. Not only does it make the points less persuasive, not only does it breed conflict instead of understanding, but it hurts individuals and betokens (misleadingly in many cases) a most unbecoming viciousness. We've had far too much of that already.

William B. Kelley
 Chicago

Kindness and weakness

To the Editor:

You shouldn't mistake kindness for weakness—quite apropos when Hitler helped Chamberlain on with his coat—but state Rep. Greg Harris's capitulation to his homophobic Democratic colleagues May 31 proved that, at times, kindness and weakness are one and the same.

To be fair, our community has long had problems being truly proud, despite waving the banner of "Pride," Orwellian-speak for "I'm ashamed to have 'Gay' and 'Lesbian' in the name of my festival."

While Chicago's Cardinal George has been railing against this bill, daring the IRS to touch him, the Center on Halsted forbade an elderly man at a SAGE lunch from making an announcement concerning a petition drive to revoke the tax-exempt status of the Chicago Archdiocese because, heaven forefend, it might upset the IRS.

I have been fighting for marriage equality since 1975. I have spent more time in jail for marriage equality than any other male (third to two women who spent almost a year in prison). I have also organized and attended more marriage-equality demonstrations than anyone in the world. In 2009, at a demonstration called when we lost in Maine, I burned a Bible in frustration. For this, I was "forbidden" by Join the Impact to ever attend another demonstration. I started to fight this, but after a subsequent victory assured me that Maine was not the Gettysburg I feared it was, I decided instead to take a long needed rest, convinced that the apologetic and spineless Chicago "activists" could not stop the inexorable course of history. In the worst case, they would render Illinois a national embarrassment. On May 31, that is exactly what happened.

Jeff Graubart
 Chicago

VIEWPOINTS



JOHN
PELLER

Here's to a stronger governing board for the health-insurance marketplace

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—because of poor consumer protections in the bill.

House Bill 3227 (Senate Amendment 2) is backed by our partners, including Campaign for Better Health Care (CBHC), with Sen. Dave Koehler (D-Peoria)—a longtime friend of AFC and champion for helping people without insurance access health care—as the sponsor. 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 can 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.

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. The General Assembly would annually approve the budget for the exchange, even though its operating funds are held outside the state treasury; the General Assembly would control even small details, such as the executive director's salary; and 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 we 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.

HB 3227 passed the Senate 37-19 on May 23. Tellingly, the governor's office's position was "neutral," meaning they neither supported nor opposed the bill. The bill was not called for a vote in the House by the end of the legislative session on May 31, although it could be voted on during the fall veto session.

Meanwhile, the marketplace, which the state-federal government runs, will begin enrolling Illinoisans beginning Oct. 1 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 the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by
Jeff
Pines

THAT '70S SHOW

Windy City Times reviews the production *Homecoming 1972* on page 24.

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What's at steak.
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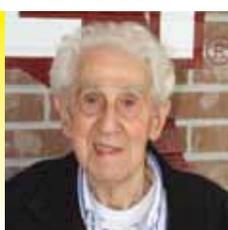
PR photo of sirloin steak
at Grass Fed



PLAYS

'Rainbow' connection.
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Photo of Jon Phillips
by Ross Forman



BOOKS

Pop life.
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SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

A show of 'Pride' for Metzgar

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It would be an easy mistake to assume that outgoing About Face Theatre artistic director Bonnie Metzgar's swansong with the company is going to be the Chicago premiere of Alexi Kaye Campbell's acclaimed British drama *The Pride*, running from June 6 through July 13 at Victory Gardens Theater. Although Metzgar is stepping down after five years as artistic director, it doesn't mean that she's completely parting way with the celebrated Chicago theater famed for focusing on LGBTQ artists and issues.

"My relationship with About Face will definitely continue and I love everyone there," Metzgar said, also expressing excitement for incoming About Face Theatre artistic director Andrew Volkoff in a telephone interview.

"I am planning on staying in Chicago. I have two kids and I'm raising them here," Metzgar said. "I will continue to make theater and will absolutely continue to help About Face in any way I can."

Metzgar has already considerably helped About Face Theatre through her leadership. Metzgar became the company's artistic director in 2008, following her previous work producing Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan Lori-Parks' massive 365 Days/365 Plays project and serving as an associate producer at New York's Public Theater under acclaimed out playwright and director George C. Wolfe.

Although About Face received plenty of acclaim since its founding in 1995, notably helping to develop the Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *I Am My Own Wife*, the

company was dealing with debts when company co-founder and former artistic director Eric Rosen stepped down to take a job with Kansas City Repertory.

Metzgar described her duties as "turning About Face into an institution that was going to be stable, sustainable and had systems that were going to make it viable for years to come."

Under Metzgar's watch, she helped About Face through a company-saving fundraising campaign, developed a strategic plan and guided it through a new data system—the behind-the-scenes institutional stuff that's not always that exciting to boast about but vital. On the artistic side, Metzgar oversaw several world premiere productions like *The Homosexuals*, *The Kid Thing* and *Float* while also launching the xyz Festival of new work and continuing work with the About Face Youth Theatre (which recently remounted its acclaimed 2012 production of *What's the T?*).

Metzgar felt that at this juncture it would be a good time to step aside.

"I'm just hungry to do something new," said Metzgar, mentioning the difficulties of running a theater company and staying out late many nights while also raising her small kids. "It just felt like it was the right time to go."

Metzgar will continue teaching play writing and literature at the University of Chicago, and will devote more time to her own writing and directing on a freelance basis. Metzgar mentioned that she has also developed a forthcoming project that, unfortunately for the press, can't be disclosed at this time.

But before Metzgar gets more time her own future artistic endeavors, her main focus is on



Bonnie Metzgar. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald

staging the Chicago premiere of *The Pride* for About Face. Campbell's drama wowed the critics when it was originally produced at London's Royal Court Theatre in 2008, eventually transferring to New York's off-Broadway Lucille Lortel Theatre in 2010.

"We have been talking about this play for the past three years," said Metzgar, excited to produce *The Pride* under her watch. "I'm really fascinated by this moment in our cultural history in LGBT identity because of the generational divide."

Metzgar said the core of *The Pride* is the question of commitment and what does a queer relationship look like.

The Pride focuses on two intertwined gay relationships separated by half a century. In the 1950s, Oliver (Patrick Andrews) is in love with Philip (John Francisco), a closeted man married to Sylvia (Jessie Fisher) when homosexuality was still officially against the law in Great Britain. *The Pride* also focuses on the first decade of the 2000s, when Philip and Oliver (played by the same actors) are free to enter into a commitment ceremony, but they're having relationship troubles because Oliver insists that part of his

personal gay identity means that he's entitled to having multiple sex partners.

"At this moment in the United States with all of this dialogue in our community around marriage equality, this play is really in some ways talking about the underlying questions of marriage itself and committed relationships and what that means to the LGBT community," Metzgar said.

Metzgar is pleased to be working once again with About Face Theatre artistic associates and actors Andrews, Francisco and Ben Sprunger on *The Pride* with guest artist Jessie Fisher, who is making her About Face debut.

"It's a really special opportunity for me because these are artists that I'm very close to," Metzgar said. "These are actors that I love and who have a long commitment to this kind of, really complex work that I'm drawn to. It's really trying to crack open a really touchy subject."

Metzgar also mentioned her commitment to staying in her adopted city of Chicago for the foreseeable future.

"It's part of the identity of the city that we all go to the theater," Metzgar said. "It's so woven into the fabric of what it is to live in Chicago and be in Chicago is to express yourself artistically through being on a stage and that's just really exciting for someone who has chosen to make a life in the theater and it just makes living here feel so right."

About Face Theatre's Chicago premiere of Alexi Kaye Campbell's *The Pride* runs from Thursday, June 6, through Saturday, July 13, at the Victory Gardens Richard Christiansen Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. Previews run from Thursday, June 6, to Wednesday, June 12. The official opening night is 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 13. The regular run is 7:30 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 5 and 9 p.m. Saturdays and 5 p.m. Sundays. Note that there are no shows Friday, June 14, or Thursday, July 4. There is an added performance 7:30 p.m. Monday, July 8. Tickets are \$20 for previews and \$30 for the regular run. Student tickets are \$15 and there are group rates available. Call 773-871-3000 or visit www.aboutface theatre.com.



The Liar. Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW

The Liar

Playwright: Corneille, adapted by David Ives
At: Writers' Theatre, 325 Tudor Ct., Glencoe
Tickets: 847-242-6000;
www.writerstheatre.org; \$35-\$70
Runs through: July 28

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

It's rare to have *one* 17th-century French play up-and-running in Chicago, let alone two, but that's our pleasant predicament, and both are rhymed-verse comedies. Court Theatre offers Moliere's *The Misanthrope* (1666) through June 9 while *The Liar*, a 1643 Pierre Corneille rarity, plays at Writers' Theatre. Corneille is best-known for tragedy, but *The Liar* demonstrates he was a master of comedy and rich verbal wit. However, this 2010 version is not precisely what Corneille wrote, and American adapter David Ives makes no bones about playing fast-and-loose with the original.

Mixed pedigree or not (Corneille himself based his play on an earlier work), *The Liar* has been delightfully reimagined by Ives and staged with precise vigor by William Brown and a most attractive cast. The title character, Dorante (Nate Burger), is a handsome, dashing compulsive liar. Meeting gal pals Clarice (brunette Laura Rook) and Lucrece (blonde Kalen Harriman) by chance, he pursues Clarice but thinks she's Lucrece. Clarice is the fiancée of his best friend (Michael Perez) but Dorante doesn't realize this, having confused the names. Dorante's indulgent father (Jonathan Weir) arranges for Dorante to marry Clarice, but Dorante weasels out through an elaborate lie, again thinking it's the wrong woman, etc.

Such clichéd plot situations have been the small change of romantic comedy for more than 2,000 years. When they are kept fresh (and they aren't always), it's by the wit and dexterity of master playwrights. Corneille distilled these elements into a social comedy or comedy of manners but Ives has doctored it into a quasi-farce. He's added physical elements not in the original, among them a duel (kept offstage by Corneille), identical twin sisters (both played by Anne E. Thompson) and Dorante's long-lost twin brother (LaShawn Banks).

He's also doctored the language, adding several modern vulgarities, four homages to Shakespeare and low-comedy word play such as rhyming "oyster," "cloister" and "moister," and Isabelle with "visi-bell" and "misera-bell." Ei-

ther Ives or director Brown also has found some ways to break the fourth wall, thereby engaging the audience with a show which never tries to disguise its staginess, much to the joy of the ticket-buyers. I have only two quibbles. First, Dorante's servant—who cannot speak a falsehood—is given little to do and doesn't impact the plot. Second, a two-and-half hour (with intermission) is just a tad long for a play with a rote plot and little substance. Even so, *The Liar* is the funniest adaptation of a classical comedy I've encountered since Scapino, the 1974 update of Moliere created by actor Jim Dale and director Frank Dunlop. For this good-looking show, Keith Pitts designed the graceful blue-and-gold scenery, Jesse Klug the almost-fragrant lighting and Rachel Anne Healey the semi-1640s costumes.

CRITICS' PICKS

Blood and Gifts, Timeline Theatre, through July 28. We got into the Afghani hell of Islamic politics and blood revenge by doing to the USSR in the 1980s what they did to us in Vietnam: backing their enemy, who became the Taliban. It's a sad story written and acted with passion. JA

Seek and Ye Shall Find, Mortar Theatre at Apollo Theater Studio, through June 8. Actor/playwright Sentell Harper masterfully portrays multiple characters in his tour-de-force one-man show exploring qualms and contradictions within Chicago's Gay Black community. SCM

Othello: the Remix, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, through June 15. Hip-hop Shakespearians, 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

Stella and Lou, Northlight Theatre, through June 9. Bruce Graham may be younger than the people he writes about, but he articulates the concerns of those for whom "forever" is less than "before" with an insight and accuracy irresistible to that same rapidly-growing segment of our nation's population. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Homecoming 1972

Playwright: Robert Koon
At: Chicago Dramatists, 1105 W. Chicago Ave.
Tickets: 312-633-0630;
www.chicagodramatists.org; \$32
Runs through: June 23

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Hankie-wringers seeking a good weep will have to look elsewhere than Robert Koon's cliché-free "after the war" play—a genre by now as rigidly circumscribed as Greek tragedy. For one, our ex-serviceman's injuries are relatively minor and were sustained, not under enemy fire, but in a freak off-duty accident. His PTSD does not manifest itself in hallucination-riddled nightmares, but in morning sickness exacerbated by prescription medications. Like all veterans in popular fiction, he has trouble adjusting to "normal" civilian life, but Koon may be the first playwright to question how "normal" that life is.

The stage may be covered with iconic images of the Vietnam war era—Nixon, Kennedy, protest marches, M-16 rifles—but in rural Minnesota circa 1972, pettier issues (draft-deferred college students trade in illegally procured government supplies, while a depressed economy engenders marital discord as spouses are forced to work separate shifts and a pregnant matron considers fleeing to Canada, where abortions are legal) dominate the landscape. Should we wonder that

former-GI Frank finds himself increasingly mistrustful of the unconditional—and uncomprehending—sympathies extended by citizens suffering their own conflicts in a changing society? Or that when he finally lashes out at the anomie, he fully acknowledges his alien status therein?

Koon's play also breaks with formula by not providing tidy resolutions to the problems faced by his characters. We are told that Frank's car has been found abandoned, and his brother, a deputy sheriff, is missing—has the former committed suicide, or is the latter transporting him to jail/therapy/anywhere, as long as it's far away from a home he no longer recognizes? Will sister-in-law Maria take a trip to Winnipeg, and will she return afterward? Will the severely-beaten young black-market entrepreneur continue his business after recovering from his injuries, or will he be replaced by another "Jody"—the name bestowed by soldiers stationed overseas upon their comrades remaining stateside.

Tears for ambiguously defined "heroes" are as cheap as they are plentiful in a country experiencing no on-site military combat since 1865, but persuading audiences to care about the walking wounded is a harder task. This doesn't stop director Kimberly Senior and a cast led by Matt Holzfeind (who wears his olive-drab resignation with uncanny accuracy) lending emotional depth and humanity to familiar personalities still evident today, struggling amid the uncertainty following another war, making us speculate on their fortunes long after we leave the theater.

THEATER REVIEW

Smudge

Playwright: Rachel Axler
At: Ka-Tet Theatre Company at the Athenaeum, 2936 N. Southport Ave.
Tickets: 773-935-6875;
www.athenaeumtheatre.org; \$25
Runs through: June 23

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

What happens when a baby is born so grotesquely ill-formed as to be barely recognizable as a member of its species? For many centuries, it soon died naturally from attendant infrastructural flaws, but nowadays, we have the technology to maintain vital signs in the most severely disabled infants. This

census bureau predisposes him to topological distinctions, declares his offspring female, dubs her "Cassandra," and doggedly proceeds to project interactive responses on his progeny. Mommy Colby, meanwhile, fashions a cuddly-toy out of the amputated remnants of Cassie's onesies and, after a bout of serious postpartum hostility, bonds in synchronicity with the medical, uh, miracle.

There's droll fascination in a bassinet festooned, like a Christmas basket, with glowing tubes, blinking lights and cricket-chirp monitors. If Rachel Axler had made this a horror story, we could easily anticipate little Cassie's transformation into some sort of monster, or if the author's goal was to satirize the propensity of upwardly mobile couples to endow extensions of themselves with special talents, there are plenty of laughs to be



Smudge. Photo by Andrew Cioffi

mixed blessing imposes difficult decisions on parents who must re-assess their definitions of what constitutes a viable human being. Such existential crises are irresistible to modern playwrights, because don't *all* babies initially emerge as alien parasites, demanding our attention and industry, while contributing nothing in compensation for the privileges they receive?

It's been proposed that the innate "cuteness" of the very young encourages us to nurture them, or maybe it's the potential we ascribe to them. Whatever the answer, Nick and Colby Stillman's child is endowed with none of these saving graces, its sole beauty residing in a single eye and the labyrinth of mechanical devices that keep its organs functioning. Daddy Nick, whose job with the

mined from the statistical jargon invoked by number-crunching papa. The play could even be viewed as a family drama, with a doting Grandma Stillman and brother Pete's perfect sons exacerbating the procreative conflicts.

Ka-Tet director Allison Shoemaker and her cast struggle to provide a consistent tone on their nebulous text. Scott Allen Luke and Stevie Chaddock Lambert embrace Nick and Colby's agony as solemnly as if they were doing O'Neill, despite the annoying distraction of the twinkling robot in the room (foleyed by Dan Meisner), while Andrew Marchetti supplies threats or sympathy as the plot requires. Ultimately, our own emotional investment relies on how readily we can proffer unconditional affection to a collage of Crayola-hued hardware.



Aloha, Say the Pretty Girls.
Photo by Alexa Ray Meyers and Chad Shelton

THEATER REVIEW

Aloha, Say the Pretty Girls

Playwright: Naomi Iizuka
At: Writers' Theatre, 325 Tudor Ct., Glencoe
At: The Brown Paper Box Co. at Heartland Studio, 7016 N. Glenwood Ave.
Tickets: \$20; www.brownpaperbox.org
Runs: through June 16

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

Life as a twentysomething is pretty crazy. Trust me on that one.

Okay, so maybe you've been there before yourself: that time in life where the future seems objectively endless, but subjectively, nothing for the future is falling into place (or everything is falling into place) (or bits and pieces are falling into place but we're not sure how we feel about those pieces).

Naomi Iizuka's Aloha, Say the Pretty Girls, now playing at the Brown Paper Box Co., examines this stage of life as a way to explore larger, existential themes of identity how it evolves over

the course of our lifetime.

Although the play incorporates a number of abstract elements, such as characters that change species, it still meshes with the stripped-down production quality of Brown Paper Box Co. The tiny Heartland Studio becomes a box of sorts where time, space and reality are negated, and the only truth is the human experience.

The play begins in New York City following several characters and story lines that all converge or connect over the course of the play. Not an unusual setup, but two actors play both male and female characters and one plays a dog. The relationships that form throughout are temporary at first and then surprising later on. Sexuality proves to be equally as fluid, another way Iizuka illustrates life's lack of permanence.

Most of this eight-person ensemble offers something substantial in this intimate production. Highlights are Christopher Hart as the troubled writer Derek, Pamela Mae Davis as Vivian, a woman who loses everything at once, including her purse, and company member Anna Schutz, who plays the troubled young Billy and bright-eyed Joy. The comedy comes predominantly from Luke Michael Grimes, who is hilarious as both

the quirky schoolteacher Myrna and the tense millionaire Richard.

All the characters represent different examples of identity struggle, so at times it can be challenging for the actors to turn them into meaty, interesting characters, especially when so much of the play is philosophy presented through metaphoric action and theoretical dialogue. Things can get too abstract and consequently a tad dull at times, but the production effectively conveys what the playwright offers.

When you're in your 20s, there's always something missing in life; even those who have found fulfillment in one way are missing it in another or are uncertain about it. And when you do make a bold choice to make a change—like moving to Alaska or getting away for a while to Hawaii or

Borneo as these characters do—the questions keep coming in other forms. The play's characters all respond to their various emptinesses differently, but none reaches a place of clarity. Ultimately, they must find a path to acceptance, which is the essence of understanding identity.

And who better to perform Aloha, Say the Pretty Girls than young actors pursuing their passion and undoubtedly struggling with some of these same issues in their own lives? The production is a good fit for Chicago, which has seen more than a few twentysomethings flocking toward it, hoping to discover the next steps toward the rest of their lives.

SPOTLIGHT



More than 150 directors, designers, actors, musicians and artists from around Chicago and the country are contributing their work for the **13th Annual Sketchbook**, which carries the theme of Destination. Four different programs of short plays and sketches play in rotating repertory. Sketchbook: Destination runs from Wed., June 5, through Sunday, June 30. Performance take place on the third floor of the Flat Iron Arts Building, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave. Festival passes are \$50 (\$32 for students) and individual performances are \$25 (\$15 for students). Visit www.collaboraction.org. Photo by Saverio Truglia

"Savor...every assiduously manicured joke!"
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THE LIAR
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NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Relaxing with Mark Ronson

BY JERRY NUNN

English DJ and prolific music producer Mark Ronson has been linked with some unforgettable acts over the years. Among them are Bruno Mars, Rufus Wainwright, and Duran Duran.

He also works with his own band called Mark Ronson and the Business mixing together A-list singers to help along the way.

His album *Version* included three top 10 hits; also, he won a Brit Award for it. Amy Winehouse's "Valerie," which is on the record, contained a sound that was modern and retro at the

same time, thanks to her vocals and his producing. They were a dream team that didn't even end with her death as he salvaged the last of her musical legacy with demos and the album *Lioness: Hidden Treasures*.

In a Chicago studio, Ronson talked about new music and musicians he has collaborated with in the past.

Windy City Times: Hi, Mark. You must work all the time. Tell me about this podcast you are about to make here in the studio.

Mark Ronson: I have this show on East Village



Mark Ronson. PR photo

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always look back at music you listened to as a kid and think about the bubble gum stuff. But with Duran Duran, their stuff still holds up. As you get old you get a bit more analytical about it, like, "Why did I like them?" It's because they had a rhythm section where these white kids from Birmingham who idolized chic with Nile Rodgers. They had amazing synth stuff from Nick Rhodes. Simon LeBon had the most unique melodies. That is a great thing to aspire to in a band regardless of the genre.

When I met them four or five years ago and we talked about working together my first reaction was giddy excitement but I am a producer and my goal was to re-emphasize all the things that made them great in the beginning. Nothing against the Timbaland album they did, but the strong point of Duran Duran is not throwing up a beat and just having Simon sing on it. The strong point of Duran Duran is having John [Taylor]'s bass lines and Nick's synthesizers.

Boy George was a bit different because I wrote this song with Andrew Wyatt and my friend Alex Greenwald, who I work with a lot, and we wrote this song for my last record. I just had a feeling that Boy George needed to sing on the song. I knew George from his DJing in New York days. He was into the song and we did it. It was crazy I saw him two days ago. Have you seen him with the weight loss?

WCT: I have seen pictures.

MR: It's insane. He looks like a kid. He looks incredible, not that he didn't look great before—he has always had a beautiful face—but it is wild. He's working on his solo record.

WCT: When I interviewed him he was cooking raw food in his kitchen.

MR: He's such a smart guy with a quick wit and sometimes a sharp tongue. In England he has become almost a national treasure. I hope his record turns out really well and it could be a comeback for him. "Somebody to Love Me" was massive in Australia but not a super chart hit in England the thing is people always stop me in a bar to talk about that song with George.

WCT: Rufus Wainwright's *Out of the Game*, which you produced, was amazing.

MR: Thanks.

WCT: Did he come to you or did you go to him?

MR: We just started talking. I hate to keep using the term organic because it sounds like I am opening up a Whole Foods but it was when I was DJing and we started to talk. I was fan of his music but I didn't know it extensively. Between the operas and the Judy Garland album there is a pretty deep body of work. I fell in love with it though. I guess I am a bit of a dork, liner note devouring, fan of music history. I just saw a lineage of Laurel Canyon sounding records from the '70s. I heard Jackson Browne or Fleetwood Mac drums so that is how I wanted it to sound. We went in and cut the record and it was great spending an intense three weeks together. We became very close.

WCT: I saw him perform it live here in Chicago.

MR: I saw it in London.

WCT: Why haven't you worked with singer Paloma Faith yet?

MR: We have been friends for a while. After the success of working with Amy, my initial knee-jerk reaction was not to work on female singers in that vein or even slightly reminiscent of that sound because this is what people expect me to do. I didn't want to be pigeon-holed.

WCT: That makes sense.

MR: Amy Winehouse was pretty territorial. If I had gone and done the same thing, she would have been mad. That was her sound. I just helped her realize it. She had been listening to all these '60s girl groups and wanted to make a sound like that.

I do like Paloma a lot. We have been talking about collaborating on her next record. She's fucking cool, as a person. She's got game. That is what you want to work with someone that has a realized idea of who they are.

You can put a singer with the right writer and

Radio. It is an Internet station that I started doing about six years ago when I still lived in New York. When I moved to London about a year ago I stopped doing it. Part of the charm of doing East Village Radio is the storefront right in the middle of 2nd Avenue. I missed looking for two hours of great independent music every week.

I felt I was suffering a bit even with my DJ skills by not practicing. So I just started doing it again a couple of months ago. Most of the time I do it from London but sometimes I am busy and just look for anywhere to do it.

WCT: Sounds like a big commitment.

MR: It kind of is. It is only two hours a week and when you are living in London that is nothing but when you fly to Chicago for a gig then you have to find a recording studio. It is important to me and there are about 150,000 people listening every week. It is how I discover so many people that I end up collaborating with. I found MNDR who was on the last single from my album "Bang Bang Bang" because I was scouring the Internet for music and found her song and really liked it.

WCT: She told me about your wedding.

MR: That is funny. I was talking to her on the way over here. I haven't seen her in ages and she has moved to L.A.

There is a rapper called Chase N. Cashe who is up and coming, and the same thing happened with him a few weeks ago.

WCT: Do things happen organically for you like that?

MR: Always. It has always been that way. So much comes from DJing also. I met Lily Allen in a club one time after I was done with a DJ set.

In New York during a set is when Puffy and Jay-Z discovered who I was. It was not like someone put me on their records and I was producing albums all of a sudden. That is how I made my name. My reputation in New York is from DJing.

WCT: Have you been around celebrities your whole life?

MR: The stories people get from Googling me are these crazy exaggerations like my mother was breast-feeding me who passed me to David Bowie who then gave me to Elton John or I was sitting in Jimmy Page's car [and he] took me to school. It wasn't quite like that.

My mom liked to party and it was London in the mid-to-late '70s, so there were people around the house.

WCT: Did you admire artists like Duran Duran and Boy George?

MR: I moved to New York in 1983, so I was 6 years old when Duran Duran was at the peak in England. I was really drawn to their music. You

Lesbian composer finds inspiration from partner

BY MATTHEW C. CLARK

"Blue Cathedral," the orchestral work of lesbian composer Jennifer Higdon, is one of her more famous pieces. Beginning with light chimes, soft strings and lilting flutes, you'd never guess this work has had more than 400 performances worldwide.

But as it progresses it grows into a beautiful, powerful and rhythmic presentation, not unlike the trajectory of Higdon's own career. Higdon received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her "Violin Concerto."

Higdon's recently curated piece, "Chiscapes," a four-movement work where each movement has been inspired by a different iconic Chicago building, will be performed June 8-9 as part of the final concert, "City-Scapes," of the 25th Anniversary season of the Chicago Sinfonietta, led by Music Director Mei-Ann Chen and partnered with the Chicago Architecture Foundation.

The composers and their architectural muses include: Armando Bayolo on the Modern Wing of the Art Institute Chicago, designed by Renzo Piano; Vivian Fung on the Aqua building, designed by Jeanne Gang; Jonathan Holland on the S. R. Crown Hall, designed by Ludwig Mies van de Rohe and Chris Rogerson on the Jay Pritzker Pavilion of Millennium Park, designed by Frank Gehry

Higdon's own original work, "River Sings a Song to Trees"—the second movement of her piece, "City Scape," an ode to the city park as a respite from the sometimes-harsh landscape of urban life—will also be performed as part of the concert.

There is little wonder where Higdon found inspiration to write about the green hideaways tucked away in cities. She and her partner, Cheryl Lawson, both grew up in the eastern foothills of rural Tennessee.

That upbringing has also inspired the opera Higdon has been working on, based on Charles Frazier's novel Cold Mountain, which has occupied the last of her 16 months when she isn't traveling.

"Even though it's a Civil War story, I've known people like that, in the 20th century, scarily, and so it just was a natural story," she said. "I recognized the characters, their language patterns, and everything they say and do, it was very familiar."

"A lot of people die and a lot of people fall in love, which seems to be the two big ingredients in opera," she said.

The Santa Fe Opera commissioned Higdon for the work, though she usually writes 10-12 classic composition commissions a year. This is her first opera.

Higdon said growing up and falling in love in rural Tennessee, where her and Lawson first met playing flute together in high school, was an opera of its own. She said the two were still very much closeted at school.

"It was full of the typical teenage drama. Her parents weren't too happy about the whole thing," she said.

Higdon said her parents, whom she described as hippies in the sixties, were accepting of her sexuality. But Lawson's parents, who she said were religious, were not. The two became partners Higdon's senior year. Each lived about thirty miles from the school, in opposite directions.

According to Higdon, the two spent time together in the marching band, which also competed with other schools and won the first trophy for its high school at a regional competition in Alabama. She said they practiced every day for three to four hours, on their feet, playing



Jennifer Higdon. Photo by Candace di Carlo

the Beatles and Elton John alongside the Tennessee Waltz.

Higdon and Lawson became partners when Higdon was a senior, and a year later the two were separated by more than five hundred miles, when Higdon went to school at Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

"We were in love enough, I think the relationships incredibly sustained over being separated for two years and from her parents not being very happy about the fact they were together," she said. "But she hung in there. She knew what she wanted. I'm really impressed. She left home and they didn't give her any support for college, so it was impressive."

The two paid for school by working odd jobs, getting scholarships and taking out loans.

And now the two are accustomed to being separated—Higdon travels for work—but find solace in their home together in Philadelphia.

"I was really running around a lot. I ran between New York, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Vancouver. There was a lot of back and forth between these places," Higdon said. "But it's always good to get back to composing, just to get

back home and kind of focus."

Higdon said writing music isn't easy because it requires exposing one's heart, and having the unconditional love of her partner makes that possible. She said Lawson also helps keep her grounded, and realistic.

"It's amazing how much of a comfort that is, regardless of what happens, whether what you write is awful or good," she said. "And reminding you that you do still need to take out the trash even if you do have a Pulitzer Prize."

"I think that kind of thing is really healthy. I feel extremely fortunate, really to have found someone. It is kind of the cliché of the soul mate but she is really a soul mate."

Higdon said it was a shocking moment when she found out she had won a Pulitzer; she's the only Pulitzer-winning composer she knows of to have come from a marching band background.

Higdon said at times all composers have doubts, but that Lawson was always cheering her own. The night they got the news, sitting at a concert performance, Higdon found herself reflecting on it all.

"Thinking back about Cheryl and I meeting in band, when I think back about how hard we worked to get through college, it was a little bit of an overwhelming experience," she said. "It still is if I think about it."

"And often I think she's inspired a lot of music in a certain sense. It's been interesting writing "Cold Mountain" because it's such a love story, it makes me stop and think about all the drama in high school and you can kind of draw on that sort of connection. It's great to have someone that is a rock. It's really kind of an amazing thing."

"City-Scapes" will be performed Saturday, June 8, at Wentz Concert Hall in Naperville and Sunday, June 9, at the Symphony Center in Chicago. Tickets range from \$26 to \$50, with special \$10 pricing available to students. Tickets can be purchased by calling the Chicago Sinfonietta at 312-236-3681, ext. 2, or visiting www.chicagosinfonietta.org.

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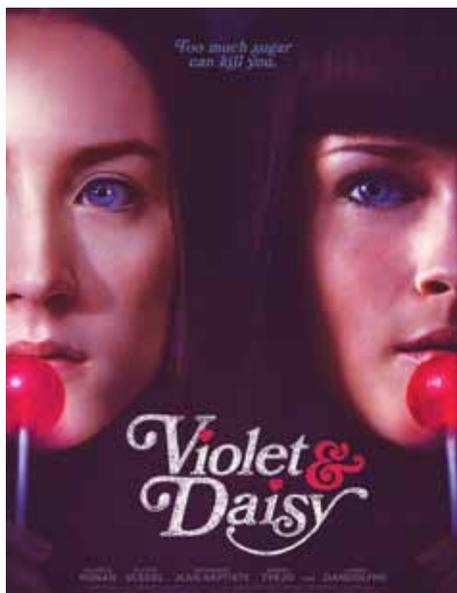
BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT, JR.

Joshua Tree; Violet & Daisy; film notes

After a long successful run on the film festival circuit, out writer-director Matthew Mishory's feature debut, **Joshua Tree, 1951: A Portrait of James Dean**, is finally coming to Chicago for three screenings.

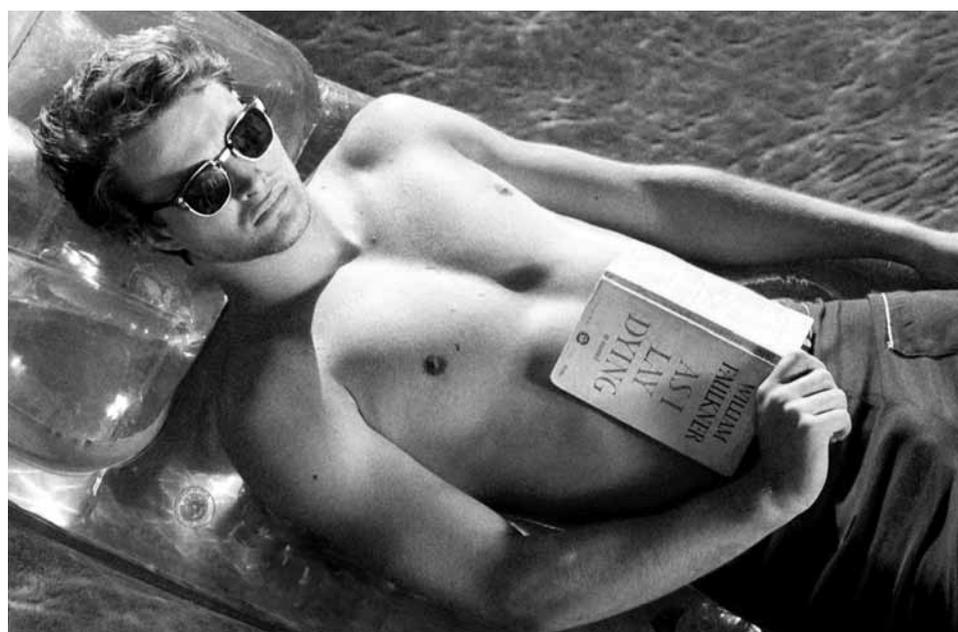
Mishory's film, which was an honorable mention on my 2012 best LGBT movie list, is playing at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., Friday, June 7; Saturday, June 8; and again on Tuesday, June 11. Thanks to its eye-catching, gorgeous black-and-white cinematography (punctuated with flickers of Kodachrome color), moody performances, narrative and music score, not to mention its parade of spectacular beefcake, Mishory's movie is a lyrical, fever dream that casts a potent, homoerotic spell.

Mishory's film—which artfully blends fact and fancy—takes place in the period before James Dean's stratospheric rise to fame. He's played by heartthrob James Preston, who bears a striking resemblance to the late actor and captures Dean's fabled sullen, sexy insolence. After being



immortalized in three bona fide classics (Rebel Without a Cause, East of Eden and Giant) and dying at the age of 24 in a high-speed car crash, Dean has forever after been the personification of the motto "Live fast, die young, leave a beautiful corpse." Aside from his physical beauty, Dean's mumbled acting style and disaffected aura—both hallmarks of the Method—have from the first provided inspiration for the disenfranchised.

Bubbling right under the surface of Dean's persona and performances is the blurring of his sexual identity. Like Brando and Clift, Dean's innate queerness and equal appeal to both straight and gay audiences was and is undeniable. Although this reading might seem fanciful to certain members of Dean's acolytes, it provides inspiration for Mishory, whose movie follows Dean in-between hanging out with friends and lovers while taking acting classes (led by out actor David Pevsner, star of last year's Scrooge & Marley).



Joshua Tree, 1951: A Portrait of James Dean.

But mostly, we follow Dean through a series of imagined sexual encounters—most of them gay—with a bit of rough trade (who takes him from behind before the duo can even make it up the stairs); finally bedding his shy, elegant roommate who nurses a crush on him; and playing S&M games with a has-been starlet who pimps for a predatory agent (yet another partner) whose pool is filled with hunky conquests. By the time the sexed-up Dean tricks with a big-time Hollywood producer (played by Queer As Folk's Robert Gant), he's fully aware of the value of his looks and is ready to make them pay off.

The movie's languorous, cynical tone (there's more than a whiff of film noir here) in which these beautiful specimens loll about, ruminating on the intersection of physical beauty and commerce in Hollywood, is underscored by the film's aforementioned smashing cinematography; use of period, lush romantic standards; and trance-like music score (by Arban Ornelas and Steven Severin, which calls to mind Angelo Badalamenti's scores for David Lynch).

Mishory's film walks the same forlorn street as that of Bruce Weber's 1988 Chet Baker documentary, Let's Get Lost, and shares its palpable fascination for an iconic individual cursed by both beauty and artistic genius—and an equal will to destroy both. For gay audiences, Mishory's movie offers us a delicious difference—Baker was a confirmed heterosexual and gay fantasies about him—which Weber's movie dangled in front of its audience—remained just that. But Joshua Tree, 1951 lyrically reclaims James Dean as one of our own. www.siskelfilmcenter.org

This just in: James Preston, star of the film, will be present for the Tuesday, June 11, screening. He will sign autographs as well as participate in a post-screening Q&A conducted by yours truly.

Of related interest: For those who can't make one of the three Siskel screenings, Wolfe Video is also releasing the film, with the title switched to A Portrait of James Dean: Joshua Tree, 1951 on DVD. The disc includes Mishory's debut short, an homage to the late queer film auteur Derek Jarman.

Geoffrey S. Fletcher, who was the first Black writer to receive the Oscar for Screenplay Adaptation (for Precious in 2009) has now written and directed his own movie. The picture, a black comedy, is called **Violet & Daisy** and follows two teenage assassins, besties who revel in their deep friendship and who chatter their squealing enthusiasm for a Katy Perry like singer named Barbie Sunday as they carry out their latest hit (dressed as nuns delivering pizzas).

In order to buy a dress from the singer's new collection for \$300, they agree to do one final job. But the target, whose name is Michael—played by James Gandolfini in a world-weary, compassionate manner—is not their usual criminal target; rather, he's a guy who offers them home-baked cookies and not only listens to their problems but seems to understand them.

As the gals veer back and forth about whether or not to carry out the job of killing Michael, Fletcher gives us the background on all three characters. We learn why Violet (played with expert tartness by Alexis Bledel) is such a toughie; why Daisy (played with her usual sunny sweetness by Saoirse Ronan), who has such an innocent outlook, would resort to becoming a hired killer in the first place; and why Michael doesn't seem particularly bothered about his imminent demise. As the girls and their intended victim

talk and talk and talk some more, Fletcher's sorta provocative premise—a movie focused on a duo of seemingly innocent, baby-faced teens murdering thugs with their automatic weapons between taking licks on their joint lollypops—wears awfully thin and fritters away long before those suckers are finished. Violet & Daisy plays exclusively in Chicago at AMC 600 N. Michigan beginning on Friday, June 7. www.violetanddaisyfilm.com

Film notes:

After a decade of programming the popular lesbian-themed Dyke Delicious series at Chicago Filmmakers, Sharon Zurek of Black Cat Productions is moving on. Her tenure concludes with the Chicago premiere of **Lesbiana, A Parallel Revolution**, Canadian filmmaker Myriam Fougere's empowering documentary examination of the rise of worldwide rise of lesbian culture throughout the 1980s. A 6 p.m. social hour precedes the 7 p.m. screening at Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N. Clark St., on Saturday, June 8. <http://chicagofilmmakers.org/cf/genre/17>

Celebrating Diversity—the free LGBT film series the Chicago Public Library and the Queer Film Society are co-sponsoring—continues Wed., June 12, at the Humboldt Park branch, 1605 N. Troy St., with a 6 p.m. screening of 2012's lesbian coming-of-age romance *Mosquita y Mari*. A complimentary drawing for several copies of the film, just out on DVD (courtesy of Wolfe Video), will be held. As president of the QFS, I'll be conducting the post-screening Q&A. www.queerfilmsociety.org

Reeling LGBT film fest hires two directors

Chicago Filmmakers—the presenting organization of Reeling, the world's second oldest LGBT film festival—has announced return dates for the festival after its 2012 hiatus. The 31st edition of Reeling, which has been officially rechristened Reeling: The Chicago LGBT International Film Festival, will be Nov. 7-14.

Richard Knight Jr. has been named program director and Gretchen Blickensderfer has been named managing director for Reeling. The duo will split responsibilities for the festival.

In making the announcement, Chicago Filmmakers' Executive Director Brenda Webb said, "Richard will bring a fresh, exciting eye, along with his extensive film knowledge to his selections for the festival. As the founder of the Queer Film Society, film critic for Windy City Times and a filmmaker himself, he has long demonstrated his passion for LGBT cinema. Gretchen's vast experience in the area of arts management, sponsorship and fundraising, especially for the renowned Golden Apple Awards—not to mention her personal commitment to LGBT arts and her own experience as a film critic and writer—make her a superb addition to the Reeling team as well."

Initially, Reeling was looking for a single festival director to succeed Webb, who has held the post since she founded the festival in 1981 (and will continue in her role as executive director of Chicago Filmmakers). But combining the talents of both Knight and Blickensderfer proved irresistible when the opportunity to do so presented itself. "This is a win-win situation for Reeling—having both Richard and Gretchen working in tandem is a tremendously exciting prospect for the festival," Webb commented.

Knight, who is openly gay, has been the film critic for Windy City Times since May 2004. In 2009 he formed the Queer Film Society (QFS), a small nonprofit composed of openly queer film critics, academics, and film historians. The mission of the QFS is to support queer cinema whenever possible. In



Gretchen Blickensderfer.

2012 he co-wrote, co-directed and co-produced *Scrooge & Marley*, a modern-day, queer variation on A Christmas Carol. Knight is a member of the Gay & Lesbian Entertainment Critics Association, the Chicago Film Critics Association, and is a former board member of Open Hand Chicago.

Blickensderfer, a native of Manchester, England, brings more than 16 years of experience as a fundraiser, events planner and public relations director for a wide range of nonprofits across the Midwest to her newly created position with Reeling.

Highlights of her career include planning and execution, for five years, of the Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching for WTTW-11. In addition to being a screenwriter and novelist, she has also been a film critic for Fox59 television and WXNT Radio in Indianapolis. Blickensderfer sits on the advisory board of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. Born male, she transitioned in 2009 and the experience inspired her book, *The Last Circle*.

—From a press release

Mania: The Story ... Cultural Revolution

by Ronald K. Collins and David M. Skover

\$26.; Top Five Books; 464 pages

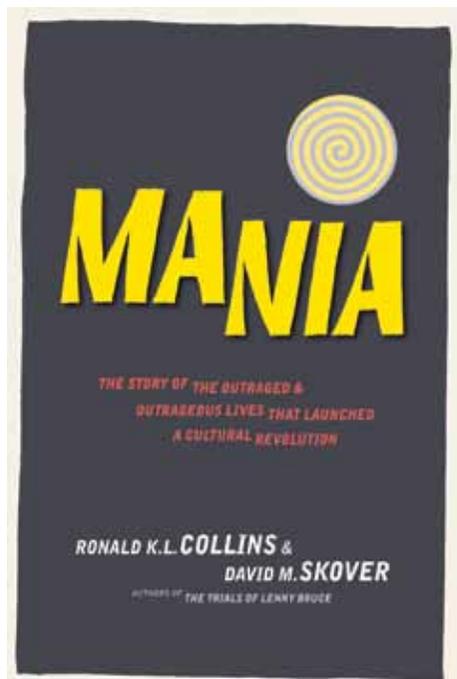
BY TRACY BAIM

Since I really enjoyed their previous book, *The Trials of Lenny Bruce*, I was looking forward to the latest product of the writing partnership of Ronald Collins and David Skover, *Mania*. It's a look at the Beat Generation of mostly men (gay, bi and straight) and the women (and some men) they damaged along the way.

And "damage" could have been an alternate title for this book, because these men were both damaged and damaging. Drugs, sex, jazz and poetry fueled their lives, and they didn't care who they hurt on their way to attaining fame and acclaim. But that same fame burned like a crack pipe through their lives, causing many early deaths, or difficult later years.

The authors use a narrative style to take us through the pre-Beat years of these writers, and their scratching and clawing to get noticed. We hear details of Lucien Carr's murder of David Kammerer (and yet Carr was able to have a full career after serving some time in prison). We hear of William S. Burroughs' famous William Tell-style murder of his wife. And yet he lived a long and successful life. We hear of robberies, suicides, drugs and petty crimes. And yet most skipped the long jail time that would have likely been the end result for people of color and poor people of those decades (1940s-1960s).

Gay writer Allen Ginsberg, who perhaps survived the post-Beat years better than his peers,



is a central figure of the book, which does a terrific job of documenting the censorship trials of his play "Howl," first performed in 1955. This was my favorite part of the book, as this was a key moment of the Beat Generation. The Jack Kerouac tales are far more depressing, and his life was forever plagued by the fame he once thought was the brass ring.

We also meet junkie Herbert Huncke (who turned Burroughs onto heroin; thanks for that), and Bill Cannistra and Neal Cassady, described as "two men who burned to live, one who suffered the consequences of his own reckless antics, and one who never seemed to suffer the consequences of anything."

Since I was born in 1963, most of what these men did in the 1950s seems quite distant to me. But their impact was quite remarkable on subsequent generations, and Ginsberg and Burroughs especially made their later years into careers as sage old gay men. But what I really got from

the book was just how depressing their lives were when taken as a whole, and how atrocious they were to the people they loved, especially the women and children in their lives. The book ends with a recap of what happened to the men, but I really wanted to know what happened to their girlfriends, boyfriends, wives and children. What do their progeny really think of these cultural "heroes."

The book is well-researched and worth the read, if only as a warning bell. These men may have been critical and important, but they also literally got away with, in some cases, murder.

Steinberg to receive Jon-Henri Damski Award

Chicago Sun-Times columnist and author Neil Steinberg has been named winner of the 2013 Jon-Henri Damski Award, which honors individuals whose efforts and accomplishments uphold the principles for which Damski stood during his long career as both an activist and a writer for the LGBT press, announced long-time Damski friend and fellow activist Lori Cannon. Steinberg will receive the award at a ceremony, 7-9 p.m., on Tuesday, June 18, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

"Neil Steinberg's prominent and powerful voice has often been raised in support of LGBT equality, and against hate and bias," Cannon said. "He 'gets it,' and has uniquely portrayed the struggles for fairness in human, and distinctly Chicagoan, accounts of the community's lives and hopes. He's moved people, and increased their understanding in a way no other mainstream Chicago writer has done."

"Neil Steinberg's prominent and powerful voice has often been raised in support of LGBT equality, and against hate and bias,"

Cannon said. "He 'gets it,' and has uniquely portrayed the struggles for fairness in human, and distinctly Chicagoan, accounts of the community's lives and hopes. He's moved people, and increased their understanding in a way no other mainstream Chicago writer has done."

Queer comedy hour returns

R.E.A.C.H.—Risky, Eclectic Artists Comedy Hour—is returning. It's a summer monthly show celebrating LGBTQ awareness, hosted by local stand-up and WBEZ's *Vocalo Radio*'s Brian Babylon.

The initial show will take place Sunday, June 9, at 7 p.m. at UP Comedy Club, 230 W. North Ave.

Acts will include comedienne Ever Mainard, storyteller Caitlin Bergh, burlesque performer Tamale Sepp, solo performer Osiris Khephera, satirical rap group Marson & FYF Crew, GayCo Productions, slam poet Gregory Pickett and DnA. The special guest will be 2012 Windy City Gay Idol winner Robert Hughes.

See http://upcomedyclub.com/show_right.cfm?id=211680&cart for more information.

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TELEVISION

Talking with the talent behind 'America's Got Talent'

BY JERRY NUNN

America's Got Talent returns once again for an eighth season this summer as the top-rated variety show on NBC. This time there are four judges—comedian Howie Mandel, radio host Howard Stern, Spice Girl Melanie "Mel B." Brown and Project Runway's Heidi Klum—all on hand to seek talent for a grand prize of \$1 million.

Nick Cannon serves as host and jokester after replacing Jerry Springer on season four.

For the current season the live shows are now in Radio City Music Hall for the first time. Also, the show visits more cities for the preliminaries than ever.

Windy City Times covered the red carpet as the judges arrived to pick contestants from the Chicago area.

Windy City Times: Hey, Nick. Welcome back to Chicago.

Nick Cannon: Thank you for having me back in Chicago.

WCT: How are the new judges and has there been any fighting?

NC: What would be your definition of fighting?

WCT: Have you had to step in and break things up?

NC: Actual fisticuffs?

WCT: No, but maybe a big argument...

NC: They actually disagree quite a bit because they are all passionate people. They all get along because there is great chemistry there. It is really fun to see four people convince each other and deliberate so it works out really well.

WCT: So the new judges are great?

NC: The new judges are awesome!

WCT: Here comes one now. Hi, Heidi. Welcome to Chicago.

Heidi Klum: Thank you.

WCT: Who are you wearing?

HK: I'm wearing Thomas Wylde.

WCT: Will you be judging fashion and what people will be wearing on the show?

HK: I might tell them a little about their fashion if they are doing not so good. If they do a good job then I will tell them how good they dress but it is really not about clothes. I am looking more for the act, and if they are doing well or not.

WCT: How excited are you to join the panel of judges this season?

HK: It is super-exciting. I love them. I love Howie, Howard and Mel B. We are having such a good time. I love the job even though it is not really a job. It is a lot of fun sitting in an auditorium all day and watching great acts perform. You get paid for it and it's awesome.

WCT: Not a bad way to make a living—and here comes Howard Stern. This is your big sophomore year.

Howard Stern: This is a big second year and we are looking for big talent.

WCT: Does "Chicago got talent?"

HS: Yes, I think Chicago has talent. The Midwest is always a great place to find talent. Chicago has been fun already. Me and the wife got out to dinner last night and we are having fun. The show is great. When you find exciting talent it makes it all worthwhile. I think we will find a superstar in Chicago. Why not?

WCT: Are you excited to work with Mel B. and Heidi this season?

HS: Listen, I love this show. It has been a lot of fun working with the new judges. I love Sharon Osbourne. I miss her but having these two new women with us is a great thing too.

The show is what works. The format is great.



Howard Stern. Photo by Jerry Nunn

I love the idea of finding someone and giving them that big break. I think that still resonates with America.

WCT: Thanks, Howard. I will let you get inside to judge. Hey, Howie. Chicago is a very clean city so don't you worry.

Howie Mandel: Okay.

WCT: What are you looking for this season?

HM: I am looking for something I have never seen before. I'm looking to be dazzled. I want my jaw to drop. Here in Chicago I actually look for comedy. I think this is the city that is famous for that. This is the home of Second City. This is where I did my first HBO special. So I just want to smile and laugh. I want to find a star right here in Chicago.

WCT: Is there any act you don't want to see?

HM: Anything that I have seen before. People come up with the most bizarre insane things. I look for it each and every time that we walk in front of these theaters. This is the heartland of America and it should be the heartland of talent.

WCT: There have been a lot of singers who have won. Do you think that streak will be broken?

HM: Truth be told, season two was won by Terry Fator, who was a ventriloquist. I think the heart and soul of our show is that we are the last bastion of variety show.

This year with the advent of adding two more judges, Mel, an international superstar in her own right, and Heidi, an international marketer and fashion icon, has made it harder for acts to get through because now we need three yes votes instead of just two.

I don't know if it was about a comedian last year as much as it was about people like Horse who had the nerve to get up and call what he

did, getting kicked in the scrotum, talent. Talented people will show up and do everything.

We had more dangerous acts, more exciting acts, more wacky acts and more classic talent than we've ever had before.

WCT: Mel B. who are you wearing?

Mel B.: Dolce & Gabbana.

WCT: What are you looking for in terms of singers?

Mel B.: You know what? Today I just want to be entertained whether you are a singer, dancer or magic act. It might be an animal or danger act, I just want to be entertained first and foremost.

WCT: What made you want to be a part of the show?

Mel B.: Why not? It's America's Got Talent. Everybody loves this show. Everybody watches it. Everybody talks about it.

I was living in Australia and I got offered the job and I said, "Yes." It wasn't even a thought of, "Well, I've got to move the whole family back to LA." I think that I'm part of one of the best shows on TV.

WCT: How does it feel to be a new judge on this season?

Mel B.: I'm thrilled. Me and my family are huge fans of the show. We get to travel America and come to beautiful places like Chicago. Me, Howie, and Nick went out last night to Hub 151 on the rooftop. We had a lot of fun. We went from the jet straight to the club!

WCT: Did having four judges spice things up a bit?

Mel B.: I think it really has, because you know we're four different people. We've all come from different backgrounds and we've all experienced a lot in our own professional career. Sometimes we all agree when the act is amazing. Sometimes, well more often than not, we actually disagree. We've all got valid points because our opinions are coming from a place of professionalism.

So I find that really interesting, and I've learned a lot off these other three judges, especially you, Howie, because I sit next to you. So it's a really, really interesting dynamic and definitely the viewer is going to agree with two or more of us on what we're actually saying.

HM: I personally was concerned, and I thought, "Maybe this is going to be too much." And as it works out, it actually heightened the value of people that go through to even Las Vegas. And I think I said it before and I'm repeating myself, but the fact that they have to get three yes's to go through. Two and two doesn't get you in so it is virtually a no so you need three yes's. You have to appeal to three people.

WCT: How do you think the Spice Girls would have done in this competition?

Mel B.: Oh, God knows. I have no idea. I mean the good thing about America's Got Talent is that it's not a singing show. It's a complete variety show. So I mean we harmonized well as five girls and we definitely have some things that everyone doesn't have. I'm not quite sure how it would rank considering that there's not just singers there. Hopefully we would do well, but I mean we started out 20 years ago.

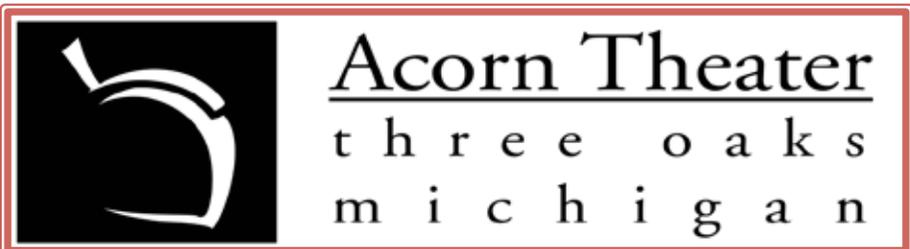
HM: I think they would do well. The reason is—and these are the things we look for—at their time it was original.

It wasn't only four hot women singing and dancing, but there was a message. That message was girl power. A big part of America's Got Talent [is], obviously, America votes. A big part of the voting community are young girls who watch the show and are inspired watching dreams come true. I think they would've really touched a nerve and done really well.

WCT: I have noticed a few gay contestants entering the building as dancers. What did you think of them?

HM: I don't know that the gay contestants are in a different category. I mean your sexual preference has absolutely nothing to do with your talent. I don't think we judge on that and it's not based on that. I think that every gender, race, creed, color is represented on America's

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Charles Busch

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Los Lonely Boys

Wednesday, June 19
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American Idol Finalist

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NUNN ON ONE: THEATER

Richard Pryor Jr. talks 'Lipstick' and his famous father

BY JERRY NUNN

Richard Pryor was an iconic comedian paving the way for many after him with his stand-up commentary on racism and social issues. Comedy Central listed him as the number one stand-up comedian of all time. Through his concerts and movies he entertained generations until his death of a heart attack in 2005.

His son—Richard Pryor Jr.—continues a legacy of performing with a new show in Chicago called Lipstick Goes On Last. This Peoria native, upon graduation, left Illinois to live in Los Angeles and pursued a dream of acting. He became a production associate on the film *The Color Purple* before joining the Navy and being stationed in Virginia Beach, Va. He sneaked off site to perform drag locally. Afterwards he moved to New York City for more acting and now returns to his roots in his home state.

Lipstick Goes on Last tells the story of a family with tons of problems. Their best friend has an in-the-closet husband played by Pryor Jr.

Windy City Times: Hi, Richard. Did you study performing?

Richard Pryor Jr.: No; I studied basics and tried the college thing for a semester but it wasn't for me so I went into the military. I moved to California because I wanted to perform and briefly got into Lee Strasberg. I was accepted there and went there. You know when you are at that age when you are immature and think you know everything? I think about turning back the clock

and what could I do different. It was one of those things. My life was pretty much a learning experience.

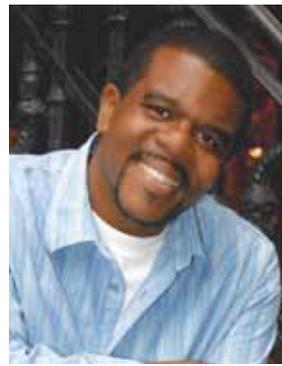
WCT: You were in the Navy when it was the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy time period.

RPJ: Yeah. Those of us that were gay on the ship had a fake newspaper called *The Diva Gazette*. We all had alias names so they didn't know who we were talking about in case someone got a hold of the paper. When we got to a port then we had the gay guide to know where the clubs were. We would come back and talk about who was doing what, who got some and all of that stuff.

WCT: You performing in drag at this time?

RPJ: Yes that was first time that I performed in drag was in the military. I was in Scotland and the song "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" came on so I started lip-synching it—I guess I was a little tipsy, the crowd separated and started watching. Then the next night they let me and my friends in again and I did it again. When we got back to Virginia I decided to try it for real and see what happens. I did it and was really good. The crowd loved me but I didn't win *The Gong Show*—that is what it was called. Katrina Gail Phillips—I will never forget her—was the emcee, and they asked why I didn't win because they were in an uproar. She stated the reason was my toes scraped across the floor off the front of my shoes. I had open-toed shoes on the dance floor. That was how I started.

I never just got up there and just lip-synched



Richard Pryor Jr. Publicity photo

with a big open mouth. I hated people that over did it. I knew the words backward and forward. I was always very theatrical so I would add dynamic things to it. I would add graves and coffins so you would never know what I was going to do. I did "Wind Beneath My Wings" with a dildo!

WCT: Oh, wow.

RPJ: That was my "hero" in the song. Sings, "Did you ever know that you're my hero?" I would pull it out and the dykes would be furious.

WCT: What was your drag name?

RPJ: Rainey McKnight.

WCT: How did you get involved with *Lipstick Goes on Last*?

RPJ: Well, 3 Squares Productions—which is Kathleen Lawler, Suzy Brack and Bobbie O'Connor—started this web series. They asked me to do a cameo on the show. I had previously done a film with Suzy and Kathleen on a film I did called "College Debts" where I played a drag queen in that movie. So they knew my work and when this play came about they asked me to be a part of it. I was living in New York but I signed up. I'm glad I did because it was great working with them. I am also co-producing with them as well now.

WCT: What is involved with co-producing?

RPJ: Everything that nobody wants to do pret-

ty much. [Laughs] There is enough with the acting but it is making sure everything is running right.

WCT: I imagine it gives you some control that you wouldn't have just acting.

RPJ: That is true.

WCT: Tell our readers about your character.

RPJ: My character's name is James. He's married to Rita. Picture it: It is the 1970s and the person he really loves is Bobby, who is married to Vicki. The time period that it takes place in allows no freedom to be with the person that you really love. So even with those desires you get married and have a family. Even though Rita wants to have a family James doesn't give in to that. He really loves her as a friend more than anything but he is in love with Bobby. There is a triangle on who do I choose when being pulled from both directions. Do I follow the one I really love or the one I have to be with?

WCT: You went through this in real life yourself.

RPJ: Yes, I did. I was married and everything like that. The time when I was married I was living a total heterosexual lifestyle. I was in the church and doing what I was supposed to do. I got to a point in my life where I had to be me. You can't live your life for others.

WCT: Your character does that in the play.

RPJ: Yes; unfortunately because of the '70s he is not truly able to come right out and yell and scream to the world who he really loves. Bobby is constantly there and he loves him but can't be with him. If you are fan of the '70s this is the show to see. There is some drama that goes on with these families. It could be compared to *Desperate Housewives* and the cul de sac they live in. Their issues become everyone else's issues. It is a boiling pot of mess!

Read the entire interview at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

United Latino/a Pride holds kickoff event

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

About 75 people attended United Latino/a Pride (ULP) fourth annual pride week kick-off event featuring a fashion show dedicated to the arts at Supreme Novelty Fabrics Company on June 2.

Founded four years ago, ULP is, according to their mission statement, "organized as a community of Latino/a LGBTQIA individuals supporting and connecting initiatives that work to create awareness and celebrate the plurality of our identities."

Their vision is, according to their website, "a vibrant Latino/a LGBTQIA community that is interconnected and positively engaged with society at large. We value inclusivity, respect, visibility, and pluralism."

Daniel Olvera, ULP public relations co-chair, provided words of welcome ahead of the fashion show featuring local queer latino/a designers Mister Junior and Eddie Couture. "This evening is all about the intersection of drag, fashion and gender performance," said Olvera.

Jerry Blossom, Vince Vice, Lupe Ortiz and Joel Campos showcased Mister Junior's creations. Then, a number of trans women and drag queens modeled Eddie Couture's glamorous evening gowns.

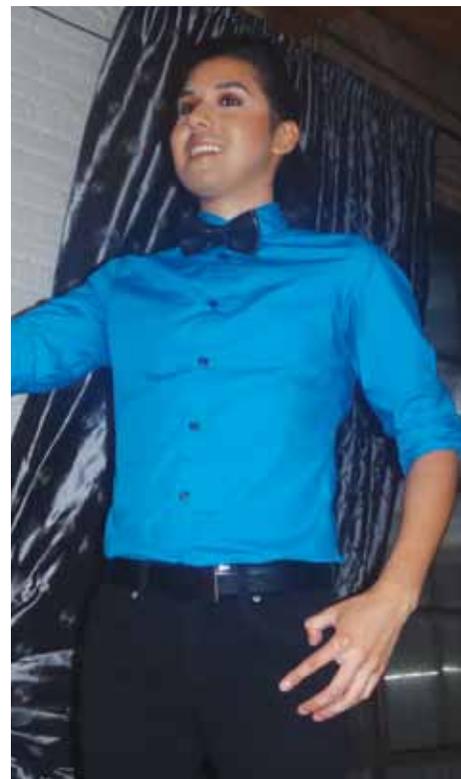
Following the fashion show, Olvera previewed ULP's Pride Week events.

All Pride Week events are free, except the Unite For One Night closing party that will be held Monday, June 10, at Dolphin Chicago Dance Club, 2200 N. Ashland Ave. Other events include a platica and craft party, a trans film and social, a community discussion about spirituality in the Latino/a LGBTQIA, a Marriage 360 panel discussion, a youth leadership summit and talent show, Summerdance, doggie day bar-b-que at the beach, and Cafe Con Allies.

Partners and sponsors for the event include

Sin Cosmetics, Supreme Novelty Fabrics Company, Amigas Latinas, ALMA, Madness Productions, Lambda Legal, The L Stop, La Respuesta, mobilicitizen, Zona Rosa, Pilsen Chicago, Project Acceptance, the Center on Halsted, Youth Service Project, Corazon Community Services and many others.

See www.unitedlatinopride.org, www.facebook.com/UnitedLatinoPride or www.twitter.com/ULPchicago for more information.



Daniel Olvera at the United Latino/a Pride kickoff event. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

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Everyone who completes the survey by June 30, 2013 may enter into a drawing to win one of five US \$100 cash prizes, or designate a non-profit charity to receive the prize.



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TALENT from page 30

Got Talent because it's represented in America.

I couldn't answer that question specifically about the gay community because I'm not even sure what the sexual preference is of most of the people that perform in front of us, nor do I care to know.

Mel B.: No. But some of them have come out and obviously said, "I'm a drag act. I'm gay. I came out to my mom at 10-years-old."

I do actually remember a few of them, and they really do go for it with the hair, the makeup. I love it. Me and Heidi are in our element because we, I mean like everybody on the judging



Heidi Klum. Photo by Jerry Nunn

'Evening with Charles Busch' June 8

The Flesh Hungry Dog Show and The Acorn Theater will host "A Divine Evening with Charles Busch" Saturday, June 8, at 8 p.m. Eastern Time at the theater, 107 Generations Dr., in Three Oaks, Mich.

Tickets are \$30 (or \$50 with round-trip bus transport from Chicago via the gAy list bus); see www.fleshhungrydog.com.

48th Midsommarfest; Wells Street Art Festival

The 48th annual Midsommarfest street festival will kick off Friday June 7, and run through Sunday, June 9. The opening-night celebration will take place on Clark Street between Bal-moral and Catalpa avenues beginning at 5 p.m.

The Joans, Ripley Caine & The Full Moon, Eric Himan, the Sami Grisafe Band, Windy City Cowboys, the Chicago Swedish Men's Chorus and DJ Voxbox are among those scheduled to perform. See www.andersonville.org.

Also, the Wells Street Art Festival will take place Saturday-Sunday, June 8-9, on the strip of Wells Street between North Avenue and Division Street in Chicago's Old Town neighborhood.

Acts include singer Sophie B. Hawkins, The Smithereens, the Beatles tribute band American English and the Jesse White Tumblers. For more, visit www.chicagoevents.com.

panel, we love the gays and it's so nice to see them basking in their celebration of being out. They are so eager to tell you, some of these contestants.

Not that it actually matters if you're gay or straight, but some of them really are excited and happy to be there representing.

One thing that me and Heidi did learn is that that drop to the floor move what's it called?

WCT: The death drop or the shablam.

Mel B.: It is where they literally are standing up one minute and then their legs bend back and...

WCT: And they drop, yes.

Mel B. They're flat on the floor. We've seen a few of those, and boy does that look painful. But there was one guy that nailed it completely!

HM: Is that a gay thing?

Mel B.: Well, no. It's a drag act. It's a thing called a shablam. Well, I can't see you doing it, Howie.

HM: No. I can't shablam. I can't.

Mel B.: There you go.

HM: Enough about the gays. What about the Jews who are performing this year?

America's Got Talent runs Tuesdays on NBC.

Fifth season of 'True Blood' out

The fifth season of HBO's vampire drama True Blood is out on Blu-ray with DVD and digital copy (Blu-ray with HBO Select \$79.98), DVD (\$59.99) and digital download.

According to a press release, the season can be summarized thusly: "A vampire civil war is brewing, Sookie's best friend is dead and an old vampire foe has returned to wreak havoc on the human race."

Among the extras are audio commentaries from producer Alan Ball as well as actors Anna Paquin, Stephen Moyer, Denis O'Hare and others; previews and recaps; "True Blood" Lines—a guide to past and present relationships; enhanced viewing; "Flash-back/Flash Forward;" and "Authority Confessionals," which are all about the institution known as The Authority.

Season six will premiere Sunday, June 16, at 9 p.m. ET/8 p.m. CT.

Chicago Women's Funny Festival June 6-9

Stage 773, founder and producer of the Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival, has announced the 2013 Chicago Women's Funny Festival will take place June 6-9 at 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Performance times are on the hour Thursday, June 6, at 8-10 p.m.; Friday, June 7, at 8-11 p.m.; Saturday, June 8, at 6-11 p.m.; and Sunday, June 9, at 3-8 p.m.

RONSON from page 26

make hits but if I have to have a third person in the room it is hard for me to get excited about it.

WCT: I saw on Twitter the other day that you were looking for Brazilian music.

MR: I was playing in Brazil and looking for that. I knew the bossa nova classics but I was looking for a Brazilian DJs jam. I wanted the cool underground shit to play. I went to listen to all the things people sent back as suggestions in my hotel room. I ended up making a bossa nova version of "The Harlem Shake" that didn't go over too well!

WCT: Are you gearing a set toward Chicago?

MR: Thanks to people like Kanye and Big Sean there is plenty of Chicago in my set most of the time. I haven't played here since I was at Lollapalooza with my band—that was four years ago. I am not sure what the crowd will be like. I don't know if they like Version or if they are there for a trendy club on a Thursday night. I am keeping it a bit open to what I will do.

WCT: Will you be coming back with your band soon?

MR: I am working on that now. I know what the sound of the record is, though. I have spent the last few years working with Rufus and Bruno for other people's records so it has only been the past couple of months that I could work on my own stuff.

WCT: Who have you been spinning recently that you love?

MR: Chase N. Cashe, who I told you about earlier. There is a kid from England called Fryars who is great. The new James Blake song is the best thing I have heard in quite some time. It is my favorite thing I have heard this year so far.

There is so much good music—you have to dig for it!

Gay veteran pleased with play based on his life

BY ROSS FORMAN

Sam Button-Harrison, a 25-year-old straight actor who lives in Edgewater, was admittedly nervous at the world premiere earlier this year of the musical *Under A Rainbow Flag*, based on the life of gay World War II veteran Jon Phillips, a 91-year-old Chicago-area resident.

Sure, there was a "classy" gay scene involving Button-Harrison and, ironically, another straight actor. But actually it was the fact Phillips was watching the performance that made Button-Harrison a wee bit nervous.

"It was a little intimidating when I first found out (I had the role) because I've never played someone who I've actually gotten to meet before. My worries were that he'd come see the show and say, 'That's not me; that's not how I'd do that,' or something like that," Button-Harrison said.

Instead, Button-Harrison was right on in the role, pleasing himself and making Phillips proud.

The play—which *Pride Films and Plays* produced and David Zak directed, with music direction by Robert Ollis—ended its Chicago run April 21. The musical was up for 2013 non-Equity Jeff Awards for Best Musical, Best Director (Zak), New Work (Leo Schwartz), Music Direction (Ollis), and Supporting Actor (James Nedrud). It won for New Work and for Best Production-Musical.

"As I've gotten to know Jon, he's one of the nicest people I've ever met. It's been fascinating to have this wealth of information and stories to draw from," Button-Harrison said. "It's been really valuable having Jon and all of his stories, and it's been really amazing how much of myself I could find in Jon, and really focus on those parts."

Button-Harrison said playing a role long before he was even born was not too challenging, and with both actor and the real Phillips carrying Midwest roots, that seemed to help, he said.

Phillips said he saw himself in a whole different light through the play.

"I think the biggest thing that I got out of [the play] was, the friendship with Jon, who is now kind of a mentor to me," Button-Harrison said. "I didn't have a lot of issues connecting with [the character I was playing] because I do feel like Jon and I are very similar in a lot of ways. We're both just nice guys who enjoy getting to know people, and are open-minded. I think I was able to find a lot of myself in the character."

Playing gay was not an issue for the actor, who has a lesbian sister and many gay friends through his musical theater background.

But there was a "classy [gay] sex scene," he said.

"I remember the first time that actor and I [practiced] that scene," Button-Harrison said. "We busted out laughing midway through because we're both straight and, well, neither of us really knew how it worked. It wasn't something that was awkward; we just weren't too familiar with it."

A Des Moines native who has lived in Chicago for two years, Button-Harrison said the play was "a blast," and "a great show to be a part of."

"We got a lot of great feedback on the play, which I think has something for everyone—happy moments, sad moments and everything in between. It's a love story that covers every aspect of love," Button-Harrison said. "My parents came and watched the show. Sure, it may have been a little weird for them to see some of the [gay] things that happened in it, but they came out after watching the play truly loving it. Jon is such a fascinating person. He's met everyone, has befriended so many people in his life."

Phillips said the play "helped clarify who I was," and added that Button-Harrison "had an innate sense of what the gay Jon Phillips would be like.

"I've loved more men than I've loved women, and in his case, he's loved more women than he's loved men; I'm sure there's a form of love with male friends, just different from the men I loved. He did such a good job," Phillips said.

For the original interview with Phillips, see www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Chicagoan-Jon-Phillips-reflects-at-91-on-a-life-well-lived/41192.html.



Sam Button-Harrison (left) and Jon Phillips. Photo by Ross Forman

Gay Games Chicago 2006 anniversary celebration July 13

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. There will be special giveaways of GGVII merchandise.

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.

"Chicago 2006 was conceived, managed and executed by the largest group of community organizers and volunteers ever assembled by Chicago's LGBT community—almost 5,000 people in all," said Kevin Boyer, former co-vice chair of Chicago 2006. "From the enthusiastic entry of more than 11,000 athletes at the Soldier Field Opening Ceremony, the full week of camaraderie, to the Closing Ceremony at Wrigley Field with Cyndi Lauper, everyone who was there has a special memory about the 2006 Gay Games."

The special display to be unveiled at the Center on Halsted was designed by David Woody, Director of Design & Development at Chicago's Museum of Science & Industry and a member of the Chicago 2006 Board, with support from Tracy Baim, publisher of *Windy City Times* and co-vice chair of Chicago 2006. The display contains photos and artifacts from the event.



Cyndi Lauper at Gay Games 2006 ceremony. Photo by Steve Becker

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Grass Fed

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I don't make my way to Wicker Park too often (and the neighborhood has significantly changed from the arty area it was in the '90s, now with stores such as Marc Jacobs). However, eateries such as **Grass Fed** (1721 N. Damen Ave.; www.grassfedbucktown.com) make the trip worthwhile—and beckon you to return. (Despite the URL, this is a Wicker Park establishment to me.)

Below are three reasons why Grass Fed can put a smile on your face:

1. The space: It helped that it was sunny the day I visited, but this space is extremely light and airy, which can put anyone in a good mood. The walls are very white, again keeping it airy, and the place is cute—almost too cute. In addition, the front and back doors were open, keep-

Sirloin steak at Grass Fed.
PR photo



ing things breezy. (However, the accessibility also brought in one unwanted patron: a pigeon that, according to Chef Jason Myers, walks in almost daily.)

2. The chef: Myers, who moved to the United States 13 years ago from Australia and has worked in San Francisco, is one of the most laid-back and friendliest individuals you'll ever meet. (When my dining companion was running late and I asked how late this place stays open, Myers responded, "Until the last person leaves"—although I'm not sure how serious he was.) When asked what he brings from Australia to his cooking at Grass Fed, he said, "Honestly, it's just a relaxed attitude."

3. The food: The menu is divided into "Day" and "Night" options (similar to breakfast/brunch and dinner, respectively), and has certainly expanded from its earlier days. "Day" items include everything from bread pudding "French toast"

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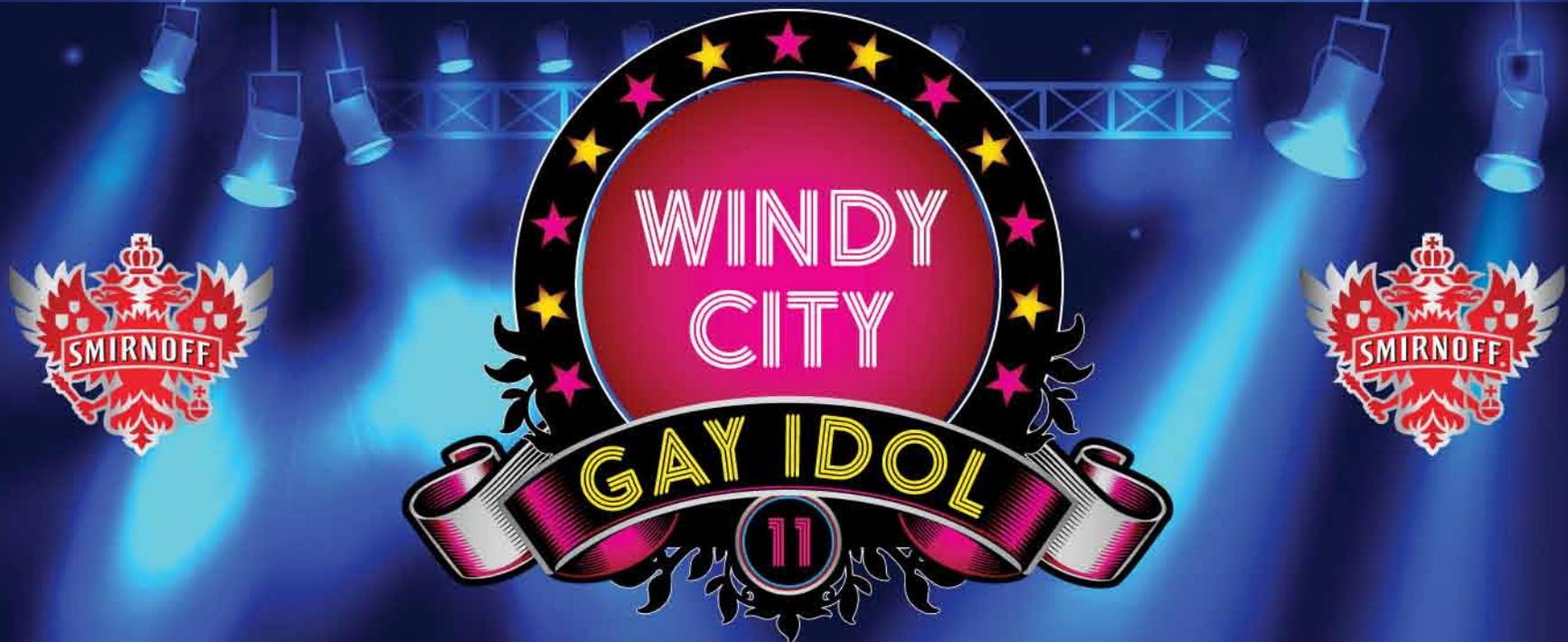
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Wed., June 5

Music in the Library: shhh...OUT! Lakeside Pride Jazz Ensemble Each member of the band, which includes trumpets, trombones, saxophones, and rhythm, is LGBT or an ally. Pop, swing, Latin, and Broadway. Conducted by Omar Fong-Bances. 6pm, 312-747-4850, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S State St., www.chipublib.org

Spring Wine Tasting Party An evening in good taste. Sample more than 99 wines from around the world. Your \$20 contribution benefits Equality IL PAC. Bottles and cases will also be available for purchase (subject to availability). 6pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St., www.sidetrackchicago.com; www.eqil.org

Gay Liberation Network meeting Chicago's multi-issue, LGBT direct action group calling attention to equality and liberation for LGBTs, against America's wars, supporting labor and immigrant rights, and more. 7pm-9pm, 312-543-7552, Berger Park Cultural Center, 6205 N. Sheridan Rd., www.gayliberation.net

Book Study: Homosexuality & the Bible "Homosexuality & the Bible" a four-part series led by Pastor Rachelle Brown of aChurch4Me, MCC on Wednesdays in June. 7pm, 773-951-4268, United Church of Rogers Park UMC, 1545 W. Morse Ave., www.achurch4me.org

Susan Nussbaum, author Good Kings Bad Kings 2012 Winner of the PEN/Bellwether

Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction, explores the complicated and punishing lives of those in an institution for juveniles with disabilities. This passionate novel challenges our ideas about what it means to be disabled. 7:30pm, The Swedish Museum, 5211 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Thursday, June 6

"How to Survive a Plague" screening, rapid HIV testing Center on Halsted, Chicago Dept. of Public Health, IL Dept. of Public Health and ViiV Healthcare host an HIV testing seminar, screening and free, rapid HIV testing all day in observance of National HIV Testing Day. Register or obtain information at HIVrsvp@centeronhalsted.org or by phone. 5pm, 773-472-6469ext.403., Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

BMO Harris Bank's Pride Kick Off Guest speaker, LZ Granderson, popular CNN and ESPN columnist, openly gay father and Christian who received GLSEN's 2013 Hero Award. 5:30pm-8:30pm, 331-281-6081, BMO Harris Bank 8th Floor Auditorium, 111 W. Monroe St., https://www.signup4.net/public/ap.aspx?eid=bmof21e&oid=130

Queer Contra Dance Contra dance is a centuries-old New England folk dance tradition, the kind of dancing seen in Jane Austen movies, Queer contra dance takes the traditional division of the dance into "gentlemen" and "ladies" and gives it a queer twist.. This month, Old Time Appa-

lachian dance tunes. Sliding scale admission of \$0-10. 6:30pm-9:30pm, St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Logan Square, 2649 N. Francisco Ave., www.facebook.com/contrachicago

American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) gay veterans Monthly meeting. 7pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., http://www.averchicago.org

About Face Presents THE PRIDE Set in London, Alexi Kaye Campbell's time-shifting play maps gay-rights movement from the repression of the fifties to the freedom of today through two love triangles. Previews: \$20, Regular run: \$30. \$15 students. Group rates available. 7:30pm, Victory Gardens Richard Christiansen Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave., www.aboutface-theatre.com

Chicago Women's Funny Festival Celebrating sketch comedy, stand up, solo, vaudeville, improvisational, musical and more with the best in local and national female comedienne. \$14-\$15. Through June 9. 8pm, 773-327-5252, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave., www.stage773.com

The Amazing Acro-Cats! Performing domestic cat troupe delights and astounds with remarkable feats of agility pushing carts, riding skateboards, rolling barrels, ringing bells, turning on lights, walking tight ropes, jumping through hoops, knockabout acts. Through June 9. 7pm-8:30pm, National Pastime Theatre, 941 W. Lawrence Ave., www.circuscats.com

Friday, June 7

LGBT Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention The Community Health Program at Asian Human Services will host the workshop on breast and cervical cancer risk factors and incidence rates in lesbian and bisexual women; preventative measures; when and where to go for free screenings; and discussions on barriers LGBT individuals frequently encounter in the healthcare industry. Info: Sana Yousuf syousuf@ahschicago.org; 3pm-5pm, 773-293-8498, Suite 700, 4753 N. Broadway, www.ahschicago.org

48th Annual Andersonville Midsom-

marfest Great music, arts and crafts, delicious food and drink and sunshine at Andersonville's annual street fair. Musical acts include: 16 Candles, The Spazmatics, ABBA Salute, Rock Candy, DJ Moose, Kongfuzi and more. See www.andersonville.org for full schedule. Through June 9. 5pm-10pm, Clark Street between Foster and Catalpa, www.andersonville.org

"Downton Prairie Avenue" to benefit Chicago House A Downton Abbey-themed evening at the historic Keith House in Chicago's Prairie Avenue Historic District. Come dressed for a special evening of food and music celebrating the Elegant Edwardian Era with wine and music, 7pm dinner from Sweet Symphonie catering and servers Mr. Howe and Mrs. Easton. This is a formal, five-course dinner such as would be served in a great house or estate c. 1920. Two choices per course. \$150. Reserve by phone or email. editor@windycitymediagroup.com . 6pm, 773-387-2394, Keith House, 1900 S. Prairie Ave.

Ride for AIDS Flywheel Fundraiser with Rodney Becker Join Rodney Becker for a private Spin Class at Flywheel Chicago with instructor Candy Morales! 7:30pm-9pm, Flywheel, 710 N. State St., http://rideforaids.kintera.org/rodneybecker

The Chicago League of Lady Arm Wrestlers: XVI Celebrating their "Sweet 16." Over-the-top outfits, open bar, shady referees and audience participation in a wild, crazy, theatrical event. Chicago bands The Black Laces and The Lucky Shiners. Benefits Sideshow Theatre Company and Community Counseling Centers of Chicago. 10pm, Logan Square Auditorium, 2539 N Kedzie Blvd, Chicago, http://www.cllaw.org

Saturday, June 8

Printer's Row Book Fair The Midwest's largest free outdoor literary event, drawing more than 125,000 book lovers each year.



BANK ON IT Thursday, June 6

LZ Granderson (above) will speak at BMO Harris Lion's Pride Kick-Off at the bank's auditorium, 111 W. Monroe St.

Photo from Granderson

Meet the hard-working Women & Children First staff at the Lil' Lit Park, where kids and parents enjoy storytelling, costumed characters, performances, sing-alongs. W&C will also have the books of Melanie Benjamin, Pat Byrnes, Kevin Guilfoile, Adam Levin, Peter Orner, Libby Fischer Hellman, and other writers at the Wyndham Blake Hotel venue; 10am-10pm, Dearborn Street from Congress to Polk streets, www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/books/printersrowlitfest/.

The Essential Comic Book Queer Reader Panelists from the popular Comic Book Queers (CBQ) podcast discuss important

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DISH from page 34

to "Green Eggs, No Ham" to asparagus salad to smoked chicken burger.

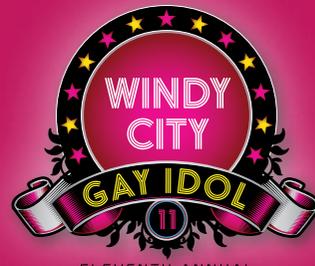
I'll have to come back to try a couple of those items. In the meantime, I was impressed with the selections on the "Night" menu. Among the appetizers are crispy duck confit (with frisee and chorizo-lentil vinaigrette), and the slow-roasted baby eggplant, both of which were absolutely delicious. Of course, I could've just eaten the caramelized onion and buttermilk biscuits (served with blue cheese and honey butter) by themselves, and I would've been happy.

Entrees are similarly impressive. The sauteed whitefish was succulent and not "fishy" at all, while the grilled grass-fed New York strip steak (with brown-butter gnocchi, spring onion, peas, trumpet royal mushrooms and chimichurri) certainly could've stood on its own. However, the sides accentuated the very tasty beef. (By the way, the beef is sourced from Wisconsin grass-fed and pasture-raised cows, hence the name.) Other offerings include crispy pork schnitzel, roasted half-chicken and goat cheese white grits. By the way, I couldn't get enough of the butterscotch pudding—meaning that the place pretty much has you covered in terms of appetizers, entrees and desserts.



Porter mussels at Grass Fed.
PR photo

In addition, check out the drinks. The Springboard (pineapple-infused rum, mint simple syrup and lime juice) is just as refreshing as it sounds, but there are unique items such as The Lip-Smacker, which contains cantaloupe juice—not found in too many establishments.



SPIN
Sun., June 2

- 1) Finalist Liz Felton is sex in a sensible sweater.
- 2) Finalist Jeff Marshall digs deep.
- 3) Artist (and former Windy City Gay Idol finalist) Mark Ortega entertains with his new hit, "Boystown."
- 4) (L-R) Judge Joel Kim Booster; finalists Jeff Marshall and Liz Felton; judge Jerry Nunn; hostess Sofia Saffire; artist Mark Ortega; DJ Chaz.

Photos by Kirk.
More photos at facebook.com/windycitygayidol

Pick up next week's issue for a special guide to the semifinals. Sat., June 15 at Sidetrack.



BILLY MASTERS

"Without naming names, I certainly think there are a couple of people out there who have not come out in the spirit of protecting their careers and livelihoods. It's probably a little bit more difficult going that way."—Michael Douglas talks about gay actors who remain in the closet.

I recently declined a close friend's invitation to see the remake of *The Great Gatsby*, saying that I've always had problems with Leonardo DiCaprio's believability in a period piece: "I don't know—I thought he was really good in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*." Yes, dear readers, these are the people in my life. I patiently pointed out that it was Matt Damon and Jude Law in that film. My friend sniffed, "Matt Damon, Leo DiCaprio—same thing." Sigh.

Matt Damon turned up in a period piece of his own, courtesy of HBO's *Behind the Candelabra*. In the *Liberace* biopic, we're introduced to the character of Scott Thorson in a gay bar. Oozing all the raw masculinity of a young Kristy McNichol, Damon neither looks 17 nor a resident of 1977. Although I've often thought he came off



Billy has opinions of the HBO movie *Behind the Candelabra* (with Michael Douglas, left, as *Liberace*, and Matt Damon, right, as Scott Thorson).

as gay in numerous films (including the aforementioned "Ripley"), I didn't buy it here. That feeling of artifice extended to Michael Douglas, but I found this more acceptable since *Liberace* often came off as a caricature of himself. (Personally, I found Victor Garber's interpretation from the 1988 made-for-TV movie far more satisfying.) I didn't dislike the film; I was just never fully engrossed. Part of that blame may lie with Steven Soderbergh, who directs with all the subtlety of a sledgehammer. But at least I was entertained—as were the 2.4 million people who watched the premiere (the highest ratings for an HBO film in over a decade).

In my opinion, the film was handily stolen by the dashing Cheyenne Jackson. Yes, this is curious praise for someone whose dialogue consisted of six words ("Like anyone would give a shit"). But throughout the first portion of the film, his presence is palpable and he says more with his attitude, eye roll and lip-curl (perfected during the Broadway run of *All Shook Up*) than he could with pages of dialogue. I've always

been perplexed by Jackson—a stunning man who I've felt has never exuded the star quality I believe his gifts warrant. This tantalizing glimpse gives me hope that he may be fulfilling his promise.

Another television biopic is heading our way, but I suspect it will be met with somewhat less critical acclaim. Lifetime decided to turn the story of Anna Nicole Smith into a film, which will air June 29. This one stars Agnes Bruckner, who you'll recognize from dozens of TV series but never knew her name. This film may not help. But I'm intrigued by the supporting cast, which includes the once-dashing Cary Elwes as Anna's stepson F. Pierce Marshall; Martin Landau as her mom, Virgie. As with many of Landau's films, this could go either way. It could be Ed Wood or it could be BAPS!

The Life Ball in Vienna is one of the biggest HIV/AIDS fundraisers in the world. It's always a glittering event, and this year was no exception. With the theme "1001 Nights," Adam Lambert debuted his new single, "Love Wins Over Glamour" in appropriate garb and accompanied by an extensive harem. But he was upstaged by Barbara Eden, who took the stage in her *I Dream of Jeannie* costume and looked better than ever. We'll have photos of them both on BillyMasters.com.

You may know sexy swimmer Michael Holtz as a champion athlete and a former Mr. Gay USA. But he's also helped raise more than \$1 million for a variety of community organizations. For his latest challenge, he's out to conquer television. Holtz is participating in TNT's new competition series *72 Hours*. He's in the second episode, entitled "Lost Coast of New Zealand," which premieres June 13. Three teams of three have to follow clues to locate a briefcase filled with \$100K in under 72 hours. So it's kinda like a low-budget *The Amazing Race* on a tighter schedule. Good luck, Mikey!

Since we haven't heard anything about Nick Gruber in a while, I thought I'd do some poking. I discovered that the former porn pup broke up with his latest paramour, John Luciano. Since then, he's been back in touch with his ex, Calvin Klein. Sources say CK recently flew Nick to Mexico for a private vacation at a resort. Does this sound familiar? *Liberace* met Thorson when he was under age, showered him with gifts, paid for plastic surgery and soured on him after drugs became involved, leading Scott to write a tell-all. Could be a case of history repeating.

Could it be that a recently married man has not left his same-sex escapades behind? So say sources close to the bad boy who tell me that his restlessness resulted in leaving his spouse to fend for herself at a charity event while he spent the night in the company of not one but two of his ex-roommates. While this might have simply been a pleasant guys' night out, people who saw the trio felt they were more than a bit chummy. Well, boys will be boys.

When we've got an item that's not only blind but dumb, it's definitely time to end yet another column. But let's wrap things up the way we started—with a quick story about Leonardo DiCaprio. He was responsible for raising quite a bit of money at "Cinema Against AIDS" which was an amfAR benefit at the Cannes Film Festival. Someone bid \$1.5 million to go on a Virgin Galactic space trip if they were seated next to Leo. I'll go one better—I'll pledge the same amount if they leave Leo up in space! To find out if I'm successful, keep an eye on www.BillyMasters.com, the site that's always looking to the stars. If you've got a question (like where on Earth I'll raise \$1.5 million if someone takes me up on my offer), feel free to send a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before HBO announces its next flick, *Behind the Briefs: The Calvin Klein Story*. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

The Sidetrack Anniversary Celebration:
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CALENDAR from page 36

LGBTQ moments in Comic Book history, how portrayals of LGBTQ characters in comic books have changed over time and a reading list. Chicago Authors Room, 7th floor. 2pm-3:30pm, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S State, Chicago, <http://www.chipublib.org> more information

Chicago Dragons Bachelor Auction Been itching for a date with a rugby player, but didn't know where to start? Here's your chance! The Chicago Dragons present the 2013 Bachelor Auction, featuring a lineup of ten sultry bachelors paired with ten, amazing date packages. Entry is \$20 and includes 2 drink tickets. Who knows what or who you might walk home with! 5pm-8pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St., <http://chicagodragons.org/>

Dancing with the Queer Stars Diverse ballroom dance competition where local queer stars team up to compete in ballroom style dance. Dancers include CC Carter, Rondala Kelly, Jackie Boyd, E3 radio's Anna Deshawn. Co-hosted by Dancing With The Queer Stars 2010 Champ Trina Truluv. \$20 advance, \$25 for VIP, unlimited wine. At door \$30. Tickets online. Benefits Anita Davis Dance Kids. 7:30pm, 773-807-3546, 2215 S. Michigan Ave., <http://www.dancingwiththequeerstarschicago2013.eventbrite.com>

The Sound of a City includes Jennifer Higdon The Chicago Sinfonietta partners with the Chicago Architecture Foundation for City-Scapes, the final concert of the 25th Anniversary Season, celebrating the character of American cities through music. \$40-\$50; 8pm, 312-236-3681, Wentz Concert Hall, Naperville, www.chicagosinfonietta.org

A Divine Evening with Charles Busch The Flesh Hungry Dog Show and The Acorn Theater host Busch, author and star of such plays and films as *Die Mommie Die*, *Psycho Beach Party*, *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom* and the Tony-nominated *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*. Tickets are \$30 (or \$50 with round-trip bus transport from Chicago via the gAY list bus) available online. 8pm, The Acorn Theater 107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks, Mich., Tickets: <http://www.fleshhungrydog.com>.

Sunday, June 9

Ladies Wine & Arts Painting Party Brought to you by Center On Halsted and ladies of Sapphic Adven-

tures. Come celebrate the pride month with sweeping bands of color and spontaneity in a fun and stress-free environment. \$25 includes all materials and two glasses of wine. Space limited. Details online. 1pm-4pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., www.sapphicadventures.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>

Joan Baez co-headlining shows with Indigo Girls. More information TBA; 7:30pm, Ravinia Festival, Highland Park, Tickets: <http://ravinia.justbuytickets.com>

Monday, June 10

Lesbiana: A Parallel Revolution, Chicago premiere, Dyke Delicious 1980s lesbian culture, interviews with the key players, activists, writers, philosophers, teachers, carpenters, nurses, an intricate and intimate portrait of the voices behind the movement and the liberating feeling that women-loving-women was the source of their strength. 7 social hour, followed by screening. 7:30pm, Studio Be., 3110 N Sheffield Ave., <http://chicagoflmmakers.org/cf/genre/17>

Tuesday, June 11

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

Wed., June 12

Book Study: Homosexuality & the Bible "Homosexuality & the Bible" a four-part series led by Pastor Rachelle Brown of aChurch4Me, MCC on Wednesdays in June. 7pm, United Church of Rogers Park UMC, 1545 W. Morse Ave., www.achurch4me.org

St. Sukie de la Croix Keynote speaker for the Diversity Committee's first annual Gay Pride Day. Music by Ben Jenkins and Eszdee Darnell. 1pm-3pm, Veterans Hospital, Social Activities Room, Bldg 104, 1900 E. Main St., Danville

Lesbian hopes to get back into the game

BY ROSS FORMAN

Denise Michel already has the 2014 calendar circled for Gay Games 9 in Cleveland, although she doesn't know yet how she'll be able to compete at the quadrennial, eight-day sporting extravaganza.

Life took a dramatic turn in 2012—and she's actually endured countless medical woes over the past 12 years. Last summer, though, Michel was blowing out blood clots for six weeks, and in November she experienced "stroke-like symptoms," she said.

But things really turned south for Michel in October 2010, when she went to her doctor for a routine physical exam. She had been feeling fine, and even was playing basketball a few days prior.

"The goal [of that physical exam] was to stop breast tumors from returning, which date back to 2001," Michel said. "The doctor pressed over areas where I had been experiencing pain, including my right ovary. It was painful, so painful, from my head to my feet."

The tumors had returned, and she was quickly in a near-fatal situation—with an ovarian tumor that had a significant blood supply.

"It was pretty intense there for a while," said Michel, 44, a former Chicago resident now living in Santa Fe, N.M.

"The journey, especially over the past year, is almost impossible to describe."

But Denise and Jill will try. In their soon-to-be-released book, *The Soul's Whip*, Denise and Jill share their personal journals and pictures from the two-year period in which Denise discovered she had an ovarian tumor and failing adrenals. The book is a mix of an amazingly true journey, an incredibly bleak prognosis, and plen-

ty of sweet and tender moments.

"We hope the book is inspiring. Even if you get knocked down, keep getting back up and make the most of what you have," Denise said.

Denise said in late March that she has come around enough medically that she can—and has—returned to work full-time. She even has been riding a stationary bicycle for up to 30 minutes a day.

"I seem to be healing very quickly now, so that's a good thing," Denise said.

Added Jill, "It's been a huge transformation for both of us. When we first got together, I didn't believe in natural or holistic healing; I thought it was a bunch of crap. But when I saw it work on Denise, I really started paying attention to it. I've realized how powerful DreamWeaving Technique is. The fact that Denise developed it through her own experiences is truly amazing. At first, I was devastated, terrified when I heard she had a tumor, and immediately went into denial and dealt with it in unhealthy ways, be it with my diet, or not being honest with her, or any number of ways to try to get away from the situation."

Eventually, the two had a serious heart to heart talk, "to see how we wanted to live our lives," Jill said.

Since then, it's honesty all the time, even if it is hard to say or hard to hear, Jill said.

"The transformation, from where we both were in 2010 until today, wow, we're completely different people," Jill said. "When you hear that the love of your life could die, that really sends your world into a downward spiral. That really was tough on both of us, but what a gift we've been given," with her continuing medical recovery.

Denise said she's been "living in a delicate bal-



Jill (left) and Denise Michel. Photo from the couple

ance on DreamWeaving Technique, [including] sporadic acupuncture treatments, and supplements since I have intensely unfavorable reactions to pharmaceuticals, thus the blood clots and stroke-like symptoms,"

Denise added, "We can now see that these amazing supplements are most likely keeping me alive, as witnessed by the response I had when I ran out of two of them [earlier this winter.] Running out of supplements spurred me on to look deeper to find the true cause of my illness. If we found the cause according to DreamWeaving philosophy, I'll heal and be competing in Cleveland in 2014. Nonetheless, my hope is that we will get back to the process of capturing our experience on the written and/or electronic page."

In addition to teaching DWT classes and working with patients, the two will be teaching this summer at Golden Acorns Summer Camp of Living Arts and Culture in New Mexico, which works with children ages 5-11 in world cultures, healing arts, sustainable gardening, stewardship of the earth, compassionate communication, meditation practice and much more, according to the camp's website.

Denise won two gold and one bronze medal at the 2006 Games in Chicago, competing in martial arts, her only other Games, "but I'm not sure I can take that kind of impact anymore," she said.

"I've already registered for two martial arts events in the senior black belt division. I'm a fighter," Michel said. "Let's see if I can turn an external fight into a dance the way I did with healing. I'm hopeful for a complete recovery."

"Competing in the Gay Games in 2006 was one of the highlights of my life. I really want to compete in Cleveland, regardless if I win or lose. I'll just do my best."

"I'll just have to see what I'm capable of. The 2014 Gay Games are a big goal, a big motivator for me, and for my wife, Jill, who has never been to the Gay Games."

The Gay Games in Cleveland will be golden for Michel regardless of how, or where, she finishes. Just attending and competing is her goal, her motivation. Jill also is now training to run her first 13.1-mile half marathon. She'll be competing in the half-marathon at the 2014 Gay Games.

"The reason we're writing the book is to pro-

mote individuals to view life as a whole. We also want to encourage everyone to look at things openly and honestly and to remind people to appreciate their good health," Denise said. "If I didn't have my wife by my side, I don't think things would have turned out as they did. We really had each other's backs."

"The Soul's Whip has love, romance, betrayal, adventure, laughter, and a few moments where I appeared to be 'mostly dead,'" Denise said. "It's okay to laugh at that ..."

Jill then added, "We've been through too much to not have a sense of humor."

Denise and Jill can be reached via their website, www.radianthealthinc.com.

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LANDLORD'S OBLIGATION TO RETURN SECURITY DEPOSITS

Q. I am planning to move out of my apartment during the spring. I expect to have a problem with my landlord in getting my security deposit refunded when I move. What is my landlord's responsibility under the law to return my security deposit?

A. Chicago's "Residential Tenant and Landlord Ordinance" applies to all residential, rental real estate located within the City of Chicago. The law establishes responsibilities for landlords not only in leasing apartments but in handling their tenants' security deposits (the law does not apply, however, to owners of buildings of six units or less AND owner occupied).

The landlord must pay interest to his tenants. And the landlord is obligated, within 30 days of the end of each 12-month rental period, to pay any interest due to the tenant by cash or a credit against the rent.

When a landlord receives a security deposit from a new or existing tenant he is obligated to give a receipt to the tenant showing the date received, the amount of the deposit and the name of the person receiving it.

The security deposit cannot be used for the last month's rent although it is a very common practice. Under the law the tenant must pay the last month's rent even though they plan to move at the end of the last month. When the apartment is vacated the landlord has 45 days within which to return the security deposit to the tenant plus any interest.

Your landlord may deduct from the security deposit any unpaid rent and a reasonable amount necessary to repair any damage to the property. If the apartment is damaged and your landlord wants to deduct money from the security deposit to pay for the repairs the landlord must within 30 days after the tenant vacates the apartment deliver or mail to the tenant an itemized statement of the damages caused to the premises and the estimated or actual cost of repairing each item. If the items have been repaired the landlord must attach copies of the paid receipts for the repairs or replacements.

If the landlord or the landlord's agent (management company) fails to comply with the city ordinance or refuses to return the security deposit the tenant can take the landlord to court and recover an amount equal to two times the security deposit plus interest with court costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

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CLLAW XVI June 7

The ladies of the Chicago League of Lady Arm Wrestlers (CLLAW) are celebrating their "Sweet 16" Friday, June 7, at 10 p.m. at Logan Square Auditorium, 2539 N. Kedzie Ave.

Brought by Sideshow Theatre Company, CLLAW's 16th match will feature lady arm wrestlers decked out in over-the-top outfits, a cash bar, shady referees and audience participation. All proceeds from CLLAW XVI will benefit Sideshow and this match's partner charity, C4: Community Counseling Centers of Chicago.

Tickets for CLLAW XVI are \$10; visit www.claw.org.



CLLAW.
Photo by
James
Rand

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