

CHEYENNE JACKSON TALKS ABOUT HIS NEW MUSIC

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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

JULY 24, 2013

VOL 28, NO. 42



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QUEER

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? Language and the LGBT movement

BY YASMIN NAIR

The word "queer" has been around since the 16th century and at first meant simply something out of order, mis-aligned, with occasional references to mental disorders. Over the years, it gradually took on a term of abuse directed at those considered sexually deviant.

In more recent years, "queer" has been reclaimed by many as both a symbol of defiance and empowerment.

But the term is a contested one, with some segments of the LGBT community insisting that the word can only be a slur, a reminder of violent homophobia. Others use it as an umbrella term, in lieu of the "alphabet soup" that's often used to evoke a community so complex that no term seems capacious enough.

As Pride 2013 approaches, "queer" has been a part of the LGBTQ lexicon for nearly 30 years. Television shows like Queer Eye for the Straight Guy and Queer as Folk have been enormously popular, and it would seem that the word is well on the way to acceptance.

Yet, mainstream newspapers still don't use the term, preferring "gay and lesbian" or "LGBT." (If the Q is left in, it's explained as "questioning" and sometimes "queer.")

Windy City Times took a look at the use and re-uses of "queer," with an eye to understanding what it means for those who choose it as a self-identifier. Who's queer today? Does queer go beyond sexuality and gender identity? What does it mean for anything or anyone to be queer?

The origins of "queer"

The first uses of "queer" as a way to push back against

its implied stigma came about in the early 1990s. A 1990 conference at the University of Santa Cruz was defiantly titled "Queer Theory."

At the same time, "queer" was a term used by various activists groups, including Queer Nation. Several members of various LGBT grassroots organizations, like ACT UP, also openly identified as "queer."

Still reeling from a devastating AIDS epidemic, AIDS activists in particular used "queer" to indicate their defiance of a homophobic political system that allowed the deaths of so many. They reclaimed the term to indicate that they would no longer be ruled and overwhelmed by the stigma that sought to push them underground.

One of the clearest expressions of this defiance was seen in a still-widely circulated and anonymously written manifesto, first circulated at the 1990 New York City Pride Parade.

Entitled "Queers Read This," the broadside was directed at the prevalence of homophobia and discriminatory medical practices that caused the AIDS crisis. It spelled out why the word "queer" was necessary in a segment titled, "Why Queer."

It stated, "Using 'queer' is a way of reminding us how we are perceived by the rest of the world. It's a way of telling ourselves we don't have to be witty and charming people who keep our lives discreet and marginalized in the straight world. We use queer as gay men loving lesbians and lesbians loving being queer. Queer, unlike GAY, doesn't mean MALE."

Acknowledging the darker history of "queer," it went on, "Yeah, QUEER can be a rough word but it is also a sly and ironic weapon we can steal from the homo-

phobe's hands and use against him."

For many who came of age at the height of the AIDS epidemic, "queer" helped to test the boundaries of desire, to contest the idea that sexuality was confined to or defined by the gender of one's sexual partners. For many, this dislocation of gender binaries was deeply connected to the larger political project of dismantling oppressive political structures.

"Queer" was, in every way, an emphatic middle finger to the eras of Reagan and Bush, a time of heightened political and cultural conservatism from which, many still argue, the country has yet to recover.

But historians caution and remind us that while the use of "queer" in public discourse is relatively recent, the political impulses it signifies have been around much longer. The political project that "queer" can signify has been around longer than the reappropriation of the term itself.

Alyssa Samek, 33, visiting assistant professor of rhetoric at the Department for the Study of Culture & Society at Drake University, researches lesbian feminist activists and their work in the 1970s. She points out that lesbian feminists were challenging heterosexual conceptualizations of the family.

Even the key feminist issues of today, including pay equity, were debated and discussed amongst lesbian activists, who pointed that these issues had different implications for lesbians and gay men. In a phone interview, she said, "Even the radical cry of 'We are everywhere,' that came out at the time, that was a rec-

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Photos on cover (left, from top): Photo of Cheyenne Jackson by Karl Simone; photo of Lauren Marie Fleming (a.k.a. Queerie Bradshaw) from Paige Thelen; photo of John Kohlhepp from Kohlhepp; photo of Dave Awl courtesy of Awl

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A PITCH IN TIME
Singers such as Solange (left), R. Kelly and Bjork took part in the Pitchfork Music Festival.
Photo by Jerry Nunn



The annual Disability Pride Parade took place Saturday.
Photo by Jamie Anne Royce



The late disco icon Sylvester is part of this week's Pop Making Sense.
Photo by Peter Brill Fantasy Archives

STORMIN' MORMON
The Book of Mormon's Pierce Cassedy chatted with WCT about the show.

LOCAL COLOR
The Lesbian and Gay Veterinary Medical Association held its meeting in Chicago, GLAAD featured Wilson Cruz and Lambda Legal showed its "Ambition" at a separate event.

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS
Find out the latest about Miranda Lambert, Igor Stravinsky and Magic Mike.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

ROCK THE BOAT



Chicagoans get ready to row at the World Outgames.
Photo from Alex Zilka

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BY TANIA UNZUETA CARRASCO

Compromises (or The Queer v. the Immigrant)

"There will be another day."

It hurt to hear these words from Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., as he explained his colleague Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., why he should withdraw his amendment for the comprehensive immigration reform bill (SB 744) regarding equality for same-sex couples, last May. Durbin along with other senators from both parties explained that if this provision were to be added to the bill, the 'good faith' collaboration amongst the parties would fall apart.

As New York Sen. Charles Schumer, D-NY, put it, "As much as it pains me, I cannot support this amendment if it will bring down the bill. I'm a politician. That means that I have chosen my life's work within the constraints of the system to accomplish as much work as I can. I accept the tough choices; the painful, necessary imperfection of compromise, which is at the heart of government."

Leahy ended up withdrawing the amendment, saying that he understood

ried, I could become a legal permanent resident faster than any immigration bill promises, and regardless of whether an immigration bill passes. But this makes me feel like I would be leaving my family behind, and so I've refused to make a decision until I know what happens with immigration reform this year.

I know immigrant rights advocates have been having conversations about compromises for months now. The theme of inclusion—who gets left out—of immigration reform, has been a big one going beyond same-sex couples. Among the groups being singled out are people with certain misdemeanors (or more than three misdemeanors of any kind), those who cannot prove continuous employment for 60 days, people who have been deported in the past, etc. Various estimates say that anywhere between 5-7 million people, out of the 11 million; will actually qualify for legal status under the Senate bill.

Then, in its final version, the Senate bill included approximately \$38 billion on

equipment and personnel to secure the Mexico-U.S. border. For some, this part of the bill was too much, and several national organizations have made declarations against the bill. The Border Network for Human Rights released a statement entitled "This bill doesn't represent us any longer." In early July, a congressman from Rep. Filemon Vela, D-Tex., quit the Congressional

"The theme of inclusion—who gets left out—of immigration reform, has been a big one going beyond same-sex couples."

the reasoning presented, and the immigration bill went forward without equality for same-sex couples. This, of course, is a moot amendment post-Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which includes access to federal immigration benefits.

But Leahy's words felt like such a perfect encapsulation of how I feel my queer self has been forced to stand opposite and against my undocumented immigrant self (along with community, family), particularly as it comes to policy and politics.

So for example, when this Leahy amendment was being discussed, I was disgusted at the idea that the senators were arguing in favor of a homophobic bill. Any bill that excludes people based on their sexual orientation is homophobic. Plus, it specifically denied rights to my partner and me, so it felt personal. But I also wondered, can I put my rights as priority, if this means that the bill will not pass, and that my family will not have the opportunity to stop being undocumented. I remember telling my partner, "How can they ask me to choose between us, and my family."

After the Supreme Court decision on DOMA, my partner and I have had conversations about what it could mean for my legal immigration status. If we get mar-

Hispanic Caucus after their endorsement of the Senate Bill.

There are those who support the bill as well. Most of these organizations usually acknowledge the negative aspects, express how disappointed they are that this had to happen, and continue the discussion on how now it needs to go to the House, and the struggle continues. They want legalization, and the bill is the way to get it.

Between the time I am writing this and when you read it, there may have been many changes to the bill (if it is still alive), but we know that it will not get more inclusive, or less focused on enforcement. And I don't know if I want to compromise this time. If there is one thing that I have learned living and organizing undocumented and queer, is that organized communities can fight together and win outside the law. I say this not in an abstract way, but rather thinking about the successful organizing against individual deportations when lawyers have failed, for example.

In a recent conversation with my mom, she said about the bill, "They have already decided. We can only organize for what will come either way." For now, that's my compromise. We organize either way (and some of us, get married).

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

Support, but no specifics, from IOC Sochi statement

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The International Olympic Committee has released to Windy City Times a statement acknowledging the passage of anti-gay laws in Russia, where the next Olympic Games are scheduled to take place. IOC said that it will "work to ensure" that the Sochi Games take place without discrimination against LGBT participants.

But the statement from the Lausanne, Switzerland-based organization was short on specifics, only reiterating support for gay athletes and opposing any discrimination against them.

"The International Olympic Committee is clear that sport is a human right and should be available to all regardless of race, sex or sexual orientation," said the statement. "The Games themselves should be open to all, free of discrimination, and that applies to spectators, officials, media and of course athletes. We would oppose in the strongest terms any move that would jeopardise this principle.

"As you know, this legislation has just been passed into law and it remains to be seen whether and how it will be implemented, particularly as regards the Games in Sochi. As a sporting organization, what we can do is to continue to work to ensure that the Games can take place without discrimination against athletes, officials, spectators and the media. Wider political issues in the country are best dealt with by other international organizations more suited to this endeavor."

Legislation prohibiting the dissemination of "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" in Russia passed in late June. Activists suggest that the law will give authorities a wide berth in interpreting what "propaganda" actually en-

tails, and fear that even so much as a public declaration of being gay would be in violation of the law. Foreigners are subject to the rule as well; they can be fined, detained for 15 days and deported.

Some organizations had been urging IOC to come out more forcefully against the laws. In mid-June, after the legislation had passed the Duma, Boris O. Dittrich, advocacy director of the LGBT Rights Program at Human Rights Watch, asked IOC to "to press the authorities to state publicly that, as Olympic Host, Russia will ensure, without distinction, the safety and the freedom of expression and association of all athletes, coaches, fans, and others who will attend the Sochi Games."

Some participants, however, have said they will not be threatened by the rule. Blake Skjellerup, an out speedskater from New Zealand who also competed in the Vancouver games, has said he will take part, wearing a rainbow pin. "If that gets me in trouble," he told *vocativ.com*, "then, I guess, so be it."

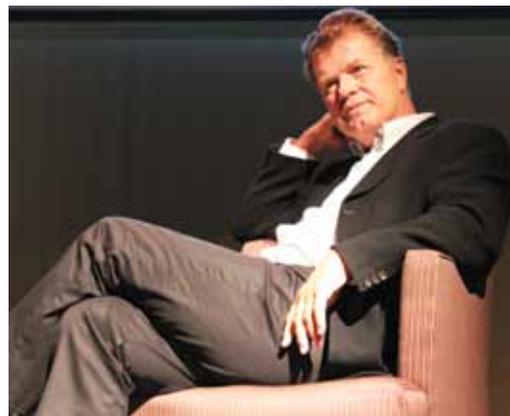
IOC issues statement on Olympics in Russia

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The International Olympic Committee has released a statement to Windy City Times acknowledging the passage of anti-gay laws in Russia and calling for the acceptance of all athletes. The winter Olympic games are in Sochi, Russia in 2014, and there have been calls for a boycott of the event from some LGBT activists.

The IOC said that it will "work to ensure" that the Sochi Games take place without discrimination against LGBT participants.

But the statement from the Lausanne, Switzerland-based organization was short on specifics, only reiterating support for LGBT athletes and opposing any discrimination against them.



Boris O. Dittrich, advocacy director of the LGBT Rights Program at Human Rights Watch, has been pressuring the IOC to ensure the safety of everyone. Photo by Kate Sosin

Cameroon activist found dead, tortured

In Cameroon, authorities are investigating the torture and killing of LGBT-rights activist Eric Ohena Lembembe, according to a Human Rights Watch release.

Lembembe, executive director of the Cameroonian Foundation for AIDS, was found dead at his home in Yaounde July 15. According to one friend, Lembembe's neck and feet appeared to have been broken, and his face, hands and feet had been burned with an iron.

U.S. Department of State Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf issued a statement that read, in part, "The United States actively promotes respect for the human rights of all people, including LGBT individuals, in Cameroon and around the world. We will continue to support activists, like Mr. Lembembe, who stand up for the human rights of all people, regardless of who they are or who they love."

On June 26, unidentified attackers burned down the Douala headquarters of Alternatives-Cameroun, which provides HIV services to LGBTI people.

Weddings in Britain to start in 2014

A bill to allow same-sex marriage in England and Wales is now law, though the unions aren't expected to take place until 2014, according to CNN.

Queen Elizabeth II has given her assent to the landmark bill, which the British House of Commons passed July 16. The law does not come into force immediately because government departments need time to make changes.

Evan Wolfson, founder and president of Freedom to Marry, said in a statement that "[t]his victory makes 18 countries on five continents in which gay people can now share in the freedom to marry."

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Lisa Gilmore leaves the Center amid program changes

BY KATE SOSIN

In a 2012 interview, Center on Halsted CEO Modesto "Tico" Valle predicted that Lisa Gilmore would be the organization's next CEO. But after nearly eight years with the Center, Gilmore has resigned her position. That announcement comes alongside major changes in services and programs at the Center.

Gilmore's departure is among the most significant staff changes at the organization in recent years. She was among the Center's longest-serving and most publicly visible employees.

Gilmore started at Horizons Community Services (now Center on Halsted) as an intern in 2005 and most recently worked as the Center's director of education and victim advocacy.

Her last day was July 12.

"I feel like I've had a lot of really awesome opportunities that have come to me at the Center," Gilmore told Windy City Times.

Gilmore declined to go into detail about her decision to leave but said, "It's come to a time where I have realized it's time for me to move on and figure out what is next for me."

Gilmore said she is looking at creating a statewide project for LGBTQ people in smaller communities outside the city.

In a statement released to Windy City Times, the Center said it wishes Gilmore the best.

"Under Lisa's leadership, the Education and Victim Advocacy Department, as well as the Anti-Violence Project, flourished and helped sustain and build upon Center on Halsted's national presence," the Center said. "She served on the governance committee of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, of which Center on Halsted is a founding member. Lisa has a deep-rooted career pushing for social change and advocating for the least represented voices; and, she will continue to be successful in her future endeavors, no matter what they may be."

In an interview celebrating the Center's 5th anniversary last year, Valle told Windy City Times that he felt Gilmore could be the next CEO of the organization. But Gilmore's clout in Chicago's LGBT community extended beyond her seniority at the Center. Gilmore maintained positive relationships with many younger queer-identified activists who tended to be otherwise skeptical of the large organization.

Gilmore's departure comes at a time of restructuring at the Center, most significantly to the organization's education and victim advocacy program, which Gilmore oversaw. That program aimed to prevent and respond to violence—offering support to survivors, including court accompaniment. Elliott said that court accompaniment services have ceased due to a shortfall of funds.

That shortfall is due at least in part to the conclusion of a pilot grant from the Cook County State's Attorney's office, said Tom Elliott, spokesperson for the Center.

In addition, Gilmore's position and two others in the program will not be rehired, said Elliott.



Lisa Gilmore. Photo by Hal Baim

"Lisa's position as it was formerly structured will not be filled," said Elliott. "We are restructuring the Education and Victim Advocacy department into a new program, called Advocacy and Community Engagement, to better reflect the growing need for advocacy efforts and education and involvement of the community on the issues that affect our community most."

According to Elliott, Gilmore's title and role would have changed had she stayed on. Filling that role will now be Jane Merrill, a former fellow at the Center who worked under Gilmore. The position of Anti-Violence Project (AVP) manager, formerly held by Anne Huffman, will not be filled either.

According to Elliott, the Center is restructuring the program due to feedback from community members, who asked the Center to amp up its community advocacy efforts. The new program is being spread out over the mental health program, Elliott said. But that shift will not result in new hires.

"The clinical work will be done by Mental Health staff and the related policy/advocacy work will be done by the newly formed Advocacy and Community Engagement Department," said Elliott.

The Center's crisis hotline has also stopped functioning 24 hours a day. The line will serve as a referral system, said Elliott. Elliott said that victims of violence can leave messages, which will be returned by the next business day. He said the switch comes alongside efforts to im-

prove the Center's referral system to other agencies.

The Center remains part of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, a network of anti-violence projects that tracks hate violence around the country.

Finally, the Center has discontinued its Breakfast Program, the weekday programming offered to queer youth, many of whom otherwise went without a morning meal. Elliott said that a grant awarded to Howard Brown Health Center allowed that organization to offer breakfasts, and that the Center ceased its program to avoid duplicating services. The Center's programming, however, has moved to the afternoon, Elliott said. Youth do receive food at the Center in the evening.

Elliott said that the changes in programming do not represent cutbacks in services, but reflect shifts in the organization's goals towards advocacy in addition to direct service.

Merrill echoed that statement.

"There are some things that we're simply no longer able to provide, but it's also restructuring," said Merrill.

That advocacy piece is less political than it is personal, said Merrill. While the Center will continue to provide direct service, Merrill said, employees are being pushed to empower clients to advocate for themselves.

"Our services are not going to solve the entire problem," said Merrill. "It's good to be less dependent. ... We're on the theory that people know best what issues are important to them."



Caroline Staerk on a panel with Jim Bennett. Photo by Kate Sosin

Staerk leaving Equality Illinois

BY KATE SOSIN

The campaign to pass marriage equality in Illinois is losing one of most active leaders.

Caroline Staerk, field director of Equality Illinois, is stepping down after more than five years with the organization.

Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov confirmed Staerk's departure in a statement. Cherkasov said he was personally grateful for Staerk's contributions to the LGBT movement.

"Not only we—her colleagues—but everyone Caroline touched felt inspired by her commitment to LGBT equality," Cherkasov said in the statement. "In every corner of the state, there are people for whom Caroline is the voice of Equality Illinois and of the marriage equality movement. And so many people have gotten involved in our work because they heeded Caroline's call."

Staerk said the decision to leave was personal.

"I want to focus on my family," she said. "I tend to be a work-aholic."

Staerk called her departure "bittersweet" as advocates continue to fight to legalize same-sex marriage in Illinois, an effort she has been instrumental in.

"I would have liked to see this through to the end," Staerk said, adding that she would likely remain active as a volunteer with the Illinois Unites for Marriage coalition.

Staerk plans to remain in Chicago. She does not have a new job lined up, she said.

Staerk's commitment to passing the bill has been underscored by her personal decisions. The former union organizer has been holding off on marrying her fiancé Charles Harper until same-sex couples are able to wed.

"When I made the commitment, I said 'full marriage equality,' and I think it's important to stick with it," Staerk said in a 2011 interview with Time Out Chicago.

Staerk will remain on staff during the search for her replacement. Her last day is July 31.

A celebration for Staerk will be held at Sidetrack Aug. 2 at 5 p.m. The event is open to the community.

Violets are blue ...

Jan Dee
custom jewelry

Rustin focus of library series

The newly opened Chicago Public Library's Edgewater Branch, 6000 N. Broadway, has launched an ongoing series called "Modern Lives & Movements."

Focusing on a different topic every two months, Modern Lives & Movements is an interrelated series of film screenings, book discussions and author talks. Through July and August, the series will focus on civil-rights activist and organizer Bayard Rustin.

The events will be:

—Tuesday, Aug. 6, at 6:30 p.m.: There will be a discussion of John D'Emilio's book, *Lost*

Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin.

—Saturday, Aug. 17, at 2 p.m.: There will be a conversation with D'Emilio, who will discuss how Rustin's career as a social justice and peace activist speaks to the current moment. D'Emilio is a professor of gender and women's studies and history at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and author of numerous books such as *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*.

See www.ChicagoPublicLibrary.org.



Back row (L-R): Jack Johnson, Norman Sanfield, Jody Bedore and Don Friedman. Front row (L-R): Charles Katzenmeyer, Amy McFadden, Carrie Barnett, Brad Tucker and Mary Ann Smith. Not pictured: John Orwat, Derek Truesdale and Don Landers. Photo by Chester Munro

Gerber/Hart announces new board members

After an extensive board development process involving the Executive Service Corps (ESC) and an independent board recruitment task force, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives announced the addition of eight new board members at its July 16 board meeting.

New members include Carrie Barnett, Don Friedman, Jack Johnson, Charles Katzenmeyer, Amy McFadden, Norman Sanfield, Mary Ann Smith and Derek Truesdale.

Current board members are Brad Tucker, Jody Bedore, John Orwat and Don Landers. [The G/H press does not mention Karen Sendziak, longtime board member and past president, so it appears as if she is no longer on the board.]

Tucker will remain president of the organization. Bedore will remain vice president and interim/acting treasurer. John Orwat will continue as the organization's secretary.

The board meeting started with a tour of the new library by head Librarian Stef Potter, which gave board members an opportunity to understand the processes and functions of the Library and Archives as well as an overview of the resources needed to maintain and grow the collections. The board also discussed numerous items relating to the work remaining to open the library to the public, fundraising, programming and volunteers.

Tucker said that as the Board evaluates the needs and wants of the community and the organization there may be several other board positions added. Volunteers are also needed to serve on board level committees and as volunteers at the Library. To get more information, volunteer or donate to Gerber/Hart Library and Archives go to www.gerberhart.org.

Sendziak to remain curator of Gerber/Hart archives

BY KATE SOSIN

The archives of Chicago's LGBT library will remain in the care of the organization's former president, who stepped down amid allegations that she had kept the collections inaccessible to the public.

Karen Sendziak, former board president, is no longer a board member, current President Brad Tucker confirmed. However, she remains the volunteer curator of the archives and special collections, Tucker said.

Sendziak resigned her post as president after the library moved locations, prompting public outcry that the organization had become shut off from the LGBT community. A Windy City Times investigation found the library falling out of compliance with non-profit law. The organization further faced accusations that it had failed to organize and protect archival material.

Tucker and others associated with the library have been working to change the library's image and renew community trust. The library announced new board members July 17, after an extensive search, and the organization has vowed transparency moving forward.

"It's a whole new future," Tucker told Windy City Times.

According to Tucker, some of the archives have

been moved into the library's new Rogers Park home, while other material remains in an Edgewater storage facility.

"There is still a considerable amount of stuff that's in outside storage that will probably remain there for a while," said Tucker.

Tucker said that archives remain in storage so that they can be appropriately processed as they are filtered back into the archives. He added that board members were waiting on keys to access the stored archives and that they expect access within the week.

"Right now Karen [Sendziak] has all the keys," said Tucker.

Asked if he had a response to concerns about Sendziak continuing to oversee the archives, Tucker said that the organization is committed to making archival material accessible to the community.

"The archives have always been well-protected," he said. "We have done a really poor job of processing and making them available to the public."

Tucker said that the library's reopening was dependent on a business license application, and he declined to give an estimated date for the reopening. The library has been closed since it moved locations in spring 2012.

Lakeview hit by iPhone robberies

BY KATE SOSIN

A string of recent weekend iPhone robberies in Lakeview has 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney cautioning area residents.

According to Erin Duffy, director of community outreach for Tunney's office, the neighborhood saw six or seven robberies July 12-14.

"There were a string of robberies throughout the neighborhood between 1 a.m. and 5 p.m.," said Duffy.

Duffy said that iPhones appeared to be the target and that some of the robberies occurred at gunpoint.

Tunney posted on his Facebook page that police had arrested six in connection with the robberies and that two others were in custody for other robberies.

Police could not immediately confirm the robberies, as addresses for the incidents were not immediately available.

Duffy said that the neighborhood has seen other robberies over the summer, but that the past weekend may have seen more than is usual. She added that residents have also been noting crimes with greater interest due to a handful of area crime blogs.

Interest in crime in the area, home to the city's official gay neighborhood, turned controversial in 2011, after residents reported an uptick in violent crime and youth advocates accused residents of scapegoating LGBTQ homeless youth.

Tunney urged residents to attend upcoming

Community Action Policing meetings. Beats 1923 and 1925 will meet Aug. 7 at the 19th District Police Station, 850 W. Addison Ave., at 7 p.m. Beats 1924 and 1933 will meet Aug. 8 at Illinois Masonic Hospital, 836 W. Wellington Ave., at 7 p.m. Beats 1935 and 1932 will meet Aug. 12 at New Life Church, 1110 W. Lill St.. Beat 1934 will meet Aug. 7 at 850 W. Addison Ave.

Residents can look up what beats they live in at <https://portal.chicagopolice.org/portal/page/portal/ClearPath/Get%20Involved/How%20CAPS%20works>.

Gay man found guilty in wife's murder

BY KATE SOSIN

A man who prosecutors say murdered his wife in a plot with his brother in 2009 is awaiting sentencing after he was found guilty in June, a spokesperson for the Cook County State's Attorney's office confirmed.

Darron Brewer, 26, will face sentencing Aug. 7 after he allegedly killed his 22-year-old wife Kenyata Collier-Brewer. According to multiple reports, prosecutors say that Brewer was gay.

According to DNA Info, Brewer and his brother, Djuan Powe, allegedly murdered Collier-Brewer in a fake carjacking to collect on her life insurance policy.

Brewer, who faced trial before Judge Stanley Sacks, was found guilty June 28, according to the state's attorney spokesperson. Powe was also convicted.

QUEER from cover

ognition that sexuality often goes unmarked; the slogan was a way of marking it and making it recognizable. It was a really important queer moment."

Samek was speaking on behalf of the National Communication Association, which launched a Pride-month campaign to initiate a larger public conversation around the evolution of "queer."

Samek, like many who use the term, acknowledged that it still remains a painful term for those who've experienced it as a homophobic slur.

For her, one way to explain it to ask people to think of how "queer" provides a way to understand and move away from heteronormativity, a term even younger than "queer" but which has recently been circulating more widely. "Heteronormativity," Samek said, "refers to the ways in which our society is structured around a gendered division of labor, and the relationship between men and women, masculine and feminine, into relationship dyads."

Pointing to the ways that people often try to refer to her partner as her "wife," despite her showing no inclination to use the term, she emphasized that heteronormativity can exist or be read into gay/lesbian relationships. In the current climate, mainstream gay activists often discuss LGBT life in terms of how normal and therefore acceptable it is. So widespread is this phenomenon that scholars have also begun to theorize "homonormativity," the idea that even non-heterosexual politics now takes on normalizing strategies.

For Samek and many others who identify as queer, the word allows them to consider what she called, "a way of engaging the world that challenges the automatic assumed binaries, and of radically challenging the structures of society."

That was clearly evident in the years of the AIDS crisis, as activists sought to make "queer" a way of radically reconceptualizing the world itself. But we're now in an age where that political energy has long dissipated, where AIDS work is now firmly ensconced in the world of lobbying, and where LGBT activism takes on issues like marriage and inclusion in the military.

So, who now identifies as queer and what are the cultural and political reasons they might do so?

Queer like us

Today, "queer" appears in both academic and activist contexts. Queer theory and queer studies are so pervasive that few departments are lacking in scholars who take on queer issues in nearly all disciplines.

Judith Butler's now-iconic 1990 work, *Gender Trouble*, is considered a founding text of queer theory, and has proven to be a key philosophical text on the anti-essentialist nature of identity. More recently, queer studies, which deploys cultural and sociological work in addition to queer theory, has yielded work like that of Margot Weiss, whose book *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*, is an anthropological study of S/M communities (an interview with Weiss is soon to appear in WCT).

Because "queer" is often so identified with academic work, it's frequently dismissed as too elitist or removed from "real life."

But today's queers, spanning various generations, are less concerned with a rigid, textual



La Tony Alvarado-Rivera. Photo by Ed Negron

understanding of "queer" and more interested in using the term and its meanings to craft lives and politics that most reflect the different kinds of fluidity they seek.

For many, like La Tony Alvarado-Rivera, 32, who also identifies as gender-non-conforming (GNC), "queer" was a way to move away from what they/he/she [preferred pronouns] saw as a more constricting and white-dominated form of gay politics.

The Chicago-based youth worker initially came out as gay, but "I quickly realized that was not a term that acknowledged my full gender spectrum; for me gender is fluid."

Alvarado-Rivera joined About Face Theater as a youth. There, adult mentors exposed them and their cohort to documents and documentaries about ACT UP and Queer Nation.

"For me, 'queer' was a term I needed to hear; 'gay' felt very boxed-in, with its connotations of whiteness and class privilege," said Alvarado-Rivera, who often speaks about what they and many other LGBTQ people of color have criticized as the racism and classism of the mainstream gay movement.

They continued, "For me, 'queer' was more radical and inclusive of multiple issues, whereas 'gay' speaks mostly to marriage equality rather than economic or racial justice."

Bending the rules of gender and gender presentation are also part of being queer for Alvarado-Rivera. They frequently conduct workshops and seminars in Spanish-only spaces, in a huipil, a traditional Mexican dress, with a full beard and nail polish.

While conventional gay wisdom assumes that traditional Latino/a spaces are likely to be hostile to such appearances, Alvarado-Rivera points out that their presence and presentation invokes both questions and dialogue. For them, queerness and gender-bending combine to create "beautiful, radical, and powerful" spaces.

Not everyone who identifies as queer can do so in their work and daily lives and Ramsey, 23, still finds it a struggle to be completely accepted by co-workers in their Michigan Avenue retail store where they work. A recent graduate, Ramsey—who uses "they" pronouns, and identifies as both queer and genderqueer—was born cisgendered and has known they were not primarily attracted to men since they were 16.

As they grew older, they found themselves attracted to people across a range of genders, including trans and genderqueer people. They

began to research the term "queer," which they finally adopted because it had, for them, the most potential to also express a political perspective.

"Queer is probably more what I lean towards," Ramsey said, "Genderqueer is more about my body, queerness is about my politics." A queer theory class where they watched a documentary about different AIDS movements and the drive to take the term back made them think about the political uses of the term.

Like Alvarado-Rivera and many other queers, Ramsey questions the focus of the gay movement: "Marriage equality is important, but I'm more interested in addressing homelessness and trans politics." They work with mostly tolerant cisgender people who still have a hard time understanding their identity. A co-worker, told about Ramsey dating a trans person, said in exasperation, "I thought you were only attracted to women—you just don't know what you want, do you?"

This sense of not being readily understood by mainstream society, even one that's rapidly growing more accepting of gays and lesbians, is one queer-identified people know well.

Bonn Wade, 40, is the director of the TransLife Center, and also on the advisory board for the LGBTQ Host Home Program. They identify as genderqueer on the transmasculine side or, as they put it, "swimming with masculinity."

For them, queerness isn't only about their self-presentation but about creating and crafting a life and home that is intentionally non-heteronormative and outside the boundaries of "normal" family life. This often means living in unconventional family systems comprised of chosen family, people not only related by blood, and across generations.

According to Wade, they and their partner are often met with quizzical looks but, "we live our lives in very intentional ways. We think about our resources, our space, our money, who lives with us, in ways that resist the traditional heterosexual style nuclear family life."

In a gay community where such bonds are often frowned upon because of the stigma of inter-generational friendships, Wade and their partner think about queerness as a way to address issues of class, race, and economic justice.

Also in Chicago, Jaz, a twentysomething transqueer, sees "queer" disrupting and redefining both racial and political paradigms. They moved here from the South, the child of an Irish-German-American mother and an African-American father, and grew up thinking of "queer" as a derogatory term.

"I always thought 'queer' might be the last word I hear," they said in a phone interview, "and I only came to it when I was about 21."

Jaz has been a part of the anti-war movement, and links "queer" to their politics: "There is that association with queer in politics in a way that GLB isn't, there's a radical element to the queer community, but also an elitist side to it."

The elitism that Jaz refers to is what many bring up in critiques of the term, in accusations that it's too grounded in queer theory. Jaz refuses to let their queerness be defined by the more

textual explanations of "queer" which, they said, "leads to a special snowflakism among the more privileged members, there's a self-indulgent nature to it."

Jaz said, "I'm going to take their shit and use it for what it does for me. I use 'queer' because I do in a sick sort of way relish what was theirs and making it mine and tweaking it."

For Jaz, "queer" is a means of fighting for change on the ground, and to challenge what they see as normative gay politics. Living on the South Side, "I often see cars pass by, with that equal sign sticker, but equality doesn't mean the same thing to everyone," they said.

They continued, "A trans, Hispanic woman living in this neighborhood has a wildly different life experience than most of the white, gay men in those cars. That word ignores the multiple layers of race and class privilege as far as organizing and activism go. Nobody gives a shit about marriage here, or at least it's simply not a pressing concern."

But "queer" is also contested and contentious territory, even for those who have or continue to use it as a key identifier. Some question how radical "queer" has remained, even as they seek to understand and articulate it.

Vincent Chevalier, 29, is a Canadian visual artist based in Peterborough, Ontario and well known for often autobiographical work which explores the themes of being HIV-positive and public sex.

Chevalier came to "queer" as a theater student in his early 20s, which was also when he was first diagnosed as HIV-positive. Over the following years, he found himself rejecting what he saw as a tokenizing impulse in the art world, to mark his work (and of others like him) as emblematic of queer work.

For Chevalier, "queer" can be another way to subsume radical politics, if it remains on the level of a label only. He works frequently in social media and especially Tumblr, and is interested in how people use #queer to mark their posts: "It's a very quick but not very complex way of communicating a lot. So, if you say, I am this thing [queer], you can align yourself with a whole social group and a history, which is important but people might also be tokenizing it."

Pointing to what politics on the ground could look like, he continued, "Having a sense of community is very different when you're marching in a parade or having sex with other men in the dark."

Chevalier doesn't dismiss the importance of what "queer" can be for people, but wonders, "Maybe the people that are screaming loudest that they are queer are not necessarily doing the radical work."

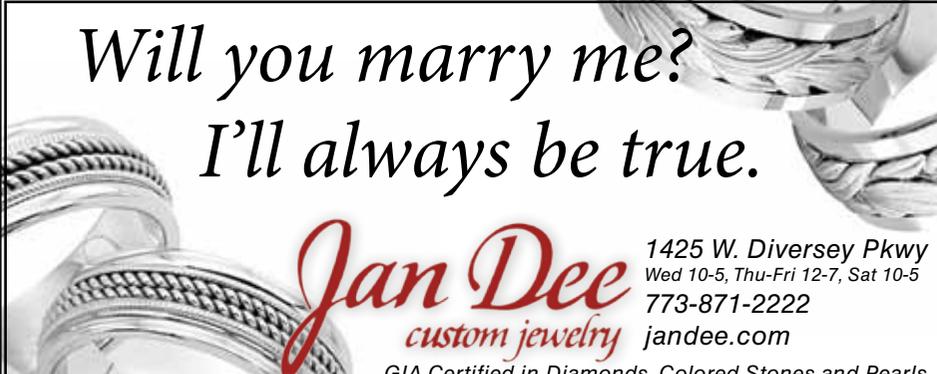
What Chevalier points to is echoed in a cautionary note struck by Samek. Asked what it would take to shift public discourse and newspaper reporting to include the word "queer" in all its complexity, she said, "This would be a turning point, to a realization that there was a way to think about sexuality, gender and radical politics at the same time."

She said, "The danger is that 'queer' could become yet another 'covering term,' a catch-all phrase that implies too many similarities within a number of issues."

But there are, she points out, benefits to that: "It would open up avenues to think about and see a more radical history. It would mean, for instance, that Stonewall wouldn't be read as a singular moment, led by gay men, but that the drag queens and the sex workers, folks who were abused and pushed back against police brutality, would be recognized. It would mean that everything that boiled up at Stonewall—class, race, gender identity and performance, would be seen clearly."

Approximately 30 years after "queer" first began to circulate as a defiant reappropriation, it remains a potent tool for many, even those who were not even born in the 1980s. Present-day queers are refashioning "queer" to think through issues like nationality, war, gender identity, class and race. "Queer" is likely to be a contested term for years to come, even amongst those who use it, but it may well be here to stay.

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Marriage-coalition manager and the 71-vote goal

BY KATE SOSIN

Illinois Unites for Marriage—the coalition pushing the state's same-sex marriage bill—has announced an aggressive campaign to bring marriage equality to the state, and at the center of that effort is a new campaign manager.

John Kohlhepp, a longtime campaign organizer and union lobbyist, has been tasked with passing The Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, after the bill fell short of the 60 votes in needed to pass before Spring session in May.

Now, Kohlhepp said, \$2 million has been budgeted for the 113-day push, with 15-20 organizers being hired to pass the bill by an ambitious 71 votes.

Windy City Times sat down with Kohlhepp, who is openly gay. Just a day into the job, Kohlhepp provided some of the most specific information on efforts to pass the bill in a bold and expensive strategy.

Windy City Times: So tell me about your role as campaign manager.

John Kohlhepp: The partners that formed the coalition and the endorsing organizations that worked with the coalition, probably smartly, chose to work a Springfield strategy while they were in session. My background tells me that field strategy, which involves putting people in-district to do work with voters and activate them around issues that they care about, impacts legislators if you're in session or not.

The campaign that I'm building now reflects the fact that legislators have both said they want time to hear from constituents and that they are now home in their districts.

So, I'm creating a plan and hiring a team that will go out and engage the voting public in targeted districts around the state to build activist teams that express the silent majority's desire to pass marriage equality.

WCT: What does that look like?

JK: The first thing that we do is we hire 15 organizers, a field director, one or two deputy directors. The staff, under the direction of the field director and myself, will go out into their targeted districts, which run all the way from the Wisconsin border to East St. Louis. The campaign previously identified hundreds of thousands of people in the state who took action by contacting their legislator or sent emails etcetera in support of marriage equality. We'll take the contacts we already have in these districts. The organizer goes in and does one-on-one meetings to take people from where they are to where a campaign that's going to pass marriage equality will need them to be.

From these people is where we will find a volunteer base in these districts. We need to take the silent majority and give it an opportunity to express its desire to pass SB10. This group of people is the group of people that will probably help us win in each district.

WCT: What does the timeline for this look like?

JK: We have 113 days from today to pass the bill ... 113 days from now is the second day of the second week of veto session. If we do not have the votes by midnight on the second day of the second week of veto session, we will most likely not pass marriage equality in 2013.

WCT: Senate President John Cullerton said that it may make more sense to wait to pass the bill in January during the regular session, that if you do it in veto session you get an effective date of June 2014, whereas if you do it in January, it can take effect in 30 days.

JK: Our goal is get 71 votes in veto session.

WCT: You want 71 votes?

JK: Yes; 71 means you don't amend it. It means that in 30 days, marriages can start.

WCT: How are you going to get 71 votes?

JK: You work hard. Seventy-one, that's the goal. If we can't get to 71, then the steering committee [of the coalition] needs to have a conversation about whether or not we pass the

bill in veto session or wait until January or February or March or April or May of next year.

Once you're in the January timeframe, you're not in a special session. You're in regular session again. So while the bill can be called at any point ... the legal reason of, "hey let's wait for January" is a decent one because it says in 30 days marriages can begin. But the same people who are saying, "let's wait until January because I'll know who my primary opponent is," will say, "Let's wait until March because my primary will be over." Then you will have other people who will say, "I can't take the vote because I will be in my general election cycle... Why not wait until veto session?" The cycle that you end up on is an electoral cycle, and it's not a cycle that we get to pick the date that the bill passes.

The best strategy is to be able to work with Greg Harris and the other sponsors to ensure that during veto session, they have a roll call of 71 or more, so that they can go to the speaker and say, "Mr. Speaker, we do not need to amend this bill. Mr. Speaker, put the bill on the board. We are passing the bill today."



John Kohlhepp. Photo from Kohlhepp

That is the best strategy to work for. I'm not saying we're going to get there. I'm saying it's the best.

WCT: If they couldn't get 60 over the course of months, what makes you able to get 71?

JK: I'm putting organizers in 30 to 40 districts in the state. The more resources we have, the more organizers we hire, the more districts we have. There's a clear majority in the state of Illinois to pass marriage equality. Let's go out and let these representatives hear from their constituents, and then it's up to them.

WCT: What are some the challenges in getting this done?

JK: The challenges are political and policy-based. The political challenges are whose running for governor. Both on the Democratic and Republican side, we will have decision makers running, and that will impact both of their party's representatives in the House.

The other, it's not about politics so much, it's about policy. While we are seeking the civil rights of civil marriage, the Supreme Court has decided to strike down one of the key tenants of the Voting Rights Act, and the Trayvon Martin decision seems to reinforce the arrogance of the Supreme Court's decision.

Read the full interview online at www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Illinois-marriage-coalition-hires-manager/43710.html.

Are you one of the many HIV positive people who also struggle with chronic loose stools?

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Talking with the ladies behind the BlogHer conference

BY SARAH TOCE

Around the same time as AOL chatrooms and instant messaging (remember them?), blogging became the new “It” thing to do in households criss-crossing America—and around the world. It was basically a new age media cornucopia of possibilities. Need a roommate? Check out the chat board. Looking for an old friend from high school? Search Classmates.com.

If you don’t remember a time before Facebook and Twitter, I’m not sure what to do with you.

A few ladies got together in the mid-2000s to seek out like-minded women who shared a wealth of knowledge technologically, but were nowhere to be found in human form. Poof! BlogHer was born.

According to the conference’s official website, in 2005, BlogHer Co-founders Elisa Camahort Page, Jory Des Jardins and Lisa Stone held a conference to answer the question, “Where are all the women who blog?” Today, BlogHer conferences bring together thousands of these women from around the world to discuss, inspire and connect with each other.

Windy City Times put together a roundtable discussion featuring the top brass at this year’s BlogHer conference.

Windy City Times: As a strong female role model, was there a specific event that enabled you to find your inner strength?

Deb Rox (Deb on the Rocks): In my 20s I felt pretty disconnected until I started volunteering and signed up to work on an early rape-crisis/domestic-violence hotline. That was when things clicked for me and I found more understanding and internal and community strength than I knew I had been missing.

That was decades ago, but I can still picture the cramped training room where we listened for the 40-hour session about all sorts of anti-oppression thinking and empowerment techniques that I had never been exposed to before. Training about responding to violence against women and the subsequent work I did in that emerging field helped me understand our culture, myself and how to be with others.

Deborah Goldstein (Peaches & Coconuts): The first spoken-word event I did forced me to present my written words aloud and receive reac-

tions in real time, on real faces, right in front of me. I don’t shy from public speaking usually. My sales background provided a particular type of presentation acumen, but reading my own creative writing in front of strangers introduced me to a special brand of vulnerability. In 2010, I was selected to read a piece at BlogHer’s Voices of the Year community keynote along with 14 chosen bloggers in front of hundreds of my peers. It was a terrifying and exhilarating experience which gave me the confidence I needed to write that memoir.

Kailynn Barbour (GingerSass): I’ve spent the past five years being involved with the LG-BTQQIA community at Rutgers University in New Jersey. My involvement started with me trying to find someplace to fit in and come to terms with my sexuality, and it evolved into me being an unintentional student leader and activist on campus.

After the Tyler Clementi incident at Rutgers, which threw many of my circles and communities into national spotlight, I became a support system for many of my friends and student leaders in more visible leadership positions on campus. Ultimately, however, it was the unfortunate suicide of my friend and mentor that forced me to find my inner strength and to be strong for not only myself, but for my friends reeling from her death as well. In a weird way, her death actually led to a year of self-discovery for me, which eventually led to me starting my blog, GingerSass.

Lauren Marie Fleming (Queerie Bradshaw): My very first BlogHer changed QueerieBradshaw.com from a blog I updated occasionally to a multi-platform brand. It not only convinced me to take my websites, online writing classes and consulting business as seriously as I would a physical office space, but it also gave me the skills and connections I needed to make it happen.

If it weren’t for BlogHer, I’d have never had the idea to turn my blog into a memoir, and now, two years later, I have an agent shopping my book. Information I got from BlogHer’s Blog to Book seminars helped me every step of the way. There’s also something wonderful about seeing a large group of women helping each other make it as businesswomen, instead of seeing each other as competition, something I saw too often in my other career fields.

Stacy Jill Calvert (Geek Till You Drop): I have had many amazing experiences throughout my professional career, but my most recent accomplishments are pivotal in the next phase of my life. I was diagnosed with adult ADD [attention deficit disorder] five years ago and was able to document that struggle in a film that I produced last year called A Million Directions. One portion of the film details my problems as a young woman in college because of my inability to concentrate.

This summer, I am happy to say that I am graduating with my M.S in media management from Southern Illinois University. I’m returning in the fall to continue my education by pursuing the MFA in media arts. This degree will allow me to continue down this creative path, but also allow me to pay it forward and help the next generation of media makers learn how to express themselves.

WCT: Professionally speaking, what challenges do you feel you have faced and overcome being a strong businesswoman?

DR: Challenges for women entrepreneurs are like pool balls: There are lots, but we just have to hit them with a hard break and then knock them off one by one. I’ve had to teach myself a lot, but now that I am a development and communications consultant for both businesses and non-profits, teaching myself about everything



Left: Lauren Marie Fleming (Queerie Bradshaw). Right: Stacy Jill Calvert (Geek Till You Drop). Photos courtesy of Paige Thelen

turned out to be great training that helped me gain a facility with working with lots of different clients, vendors or problems.

DG: I am my own worst enemy. I am risk-averse by nature which bodes well in certain, dangerous situations. In the business world and creative world, however, being risk-averse is a career-stopper. My experience has proven that women, in general, take fewer risks than men. Whether that has to do with confidence or fear of failure or a feeling connected to and responsible for others, I’m sure I couldn’t say, but the most successful people in business and the arts are those people who take risks. When I truly believe that I have nothing to lose, and I recognize that success far outweighs failure, I can ignore my inner voices and focus on the task at hand. I can’t say enough about working with creative coaches and other writers who provide perspective and invaluable feedback. They have kept me on track and challenged me to work harder and expect more. In addition to writing, I’ve teamed up with a sensational group of writers and editors to launch VillageQ.com, an online destination where the LGBTQ community and our allies support and celebrate queer families. I could not have imagined myself in this role had I not worked with these talented individuals in the blogging world. Connection is essential in all industries.

KB: I recently graduated with my master’s in education. I’m searching for a teaching job while balancing my online identity and performing poet identity with my teaching identity. While I’m extremely proud of the identity and following I’ve developed online as a blogger and performing poet, it has actually presented me with unexpected challenges in finding a job. It’s still a struggle, but I’m starting to receive interviews from schools that have been un-phased by my multiple identities and successes ... or haven’t Googled me yet!

LF: I went to law school and, as much as that boosted my knowledge base and made me a better businesswoman, it had the unfortunate side effect of reinforcing the concept that there was one spot for a minority in each firm. This led to the idea that we were each other’s competition, not support system. I love BlogHer Keynote Speaker Randi Zuckerberg’s concept of encouraging women to grab a seat at the table and lean in to each other for support, instead of seeing each other as threats. Women in business are starting to move forward and bring others with them to the top.

SC: I feel that the one thing that I have found in the past few years is my own voice. When I was younger, I was afraid to speak up, afraid to voice my own opinion. Once I found the strength to do that, it has helped me immensely

in not only my professional life, both other aspects as well.

WCT: What challenges still exist?

DR: Financial equity is still a challenge for women founders and business developers. Finding champions and investors means dissolving some old ways of thinking in the systems with access to resources, ramping up creatively and building strong networks and pipelines of our own. In mentoring other women and LGBT business owners I also see that we continually have to coach ourselves to stop riding the brakes. We’re often working without a net and with external pressure to stay small so it takes courage, but allowing momentum to build without self-limiting is powerful.

DG: My biggest challenge has always been settling for the calm that follows success. Every time I achieve a goal, I hear my inner voice saying, “Ok, now you can put your feet up because you accomplished what you set out to do. You don’t need to prove to anyone that you can do more than that. You’re good.” But if I’m not working towards something, I eventually feel lost. That’s when I need my support network to help me rally on take on the next challenge.

KB: I regularly struggle with the intersection of my identities as an educator, a poet, a blogger, and an out lesbian woman. All four identities are a huge part of who I am, but when they intersect, despite all of the progress that our country has made, they are met with some hesitation. Only 21 states have laws that ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, which means I could be fired in 29 states for being a teacher who happens to be lesbian. Luckily I live in one of those states that protects my rights, but I still bet that a lot of school districts Googled my name upon receiving my application, saw the pages and pages of me being listed as an “out lesbian poet,” and moved on to a different applicant. There has been a lot of excitement and momentum in the United States these past few weeks, but that doesn’t mean that queer people don’t face any challenges. Marriage equality certainly isn’t the only challenge existing in our country right now, and it won’t be the last for LG-BTQQIA Americans.

LF: Naps. My love of naps is still my biggest challenge as someone who works from home.

SC: There are a lot of challenges for queer women in business and that includes having our voices heard. However, I believe that the blogging community has opened that door for many of us and will continue to do so.

Read the entire conversation at www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Candid-roundtable-with-ladies-of-the-BlogHer-Conference/43765.html.

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Chicagoan part of 'LGBT Lawyers Under 40'

The National LGBT Bar Association has announced its selections for the Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40 class of 2013.

The list includes Amy Crawford, a partner in the Chicago office of Kirkland & Ellis. According to the law firm's website, Crawford's "practice focuses on complex commercial litigation, consumer class actions, professional liability, and labor and employment litigation."

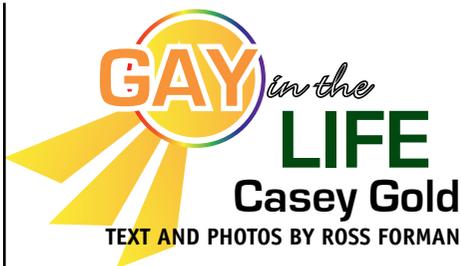
The awards will be presented at a ceremony at the 25th Anniversary Lavender Law Conference & Career Fair, held Aug. 22-24 in San Francisco.

Latin@ Pride Picnic July 27 at Humboldt Park

Orgullo en Accion will host the Latina/o LGBT PRIDE Picnic Saturday, July 27, in Humboldt Park near the corner of Humboldt Drive and Division Street 12-8 p.m.

The event is free and intended for all, including allies, family and children. Attendees are encouraged to bring food and grills.

Visit www.orgulloenaccion.org.



TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROSS FORMAN

Age
23

Neighborhood
Uptown

Relationship status
Dating Michael Craig

Job
Runs an automotive detailing service, Gold Standard Auto Detailing

Hobbies
Cooking and baking—"I always show up to every party with a homemade treat."

Favorite movie
Spaceballs

Favorite TV show
Law and Order SVU

Four people (living or dead) who you'd like to have dinner with
"I would have to choose my four grandparents."

Little-known fact
"I love to read history books, [particularly] from the turn of the century. Great books I have recently read [include] Devil in the White City, Sin in the Second City and When Harlem was in Vogue."

Cleaning cars is very therapeutic for Casey Gold, who has been detailing cars since his high school days in the northwest suburbs—before he could even legally drive.

"It gives me a few hours to be myself, focus on doing a good job, and I can turn my phone off," he said. "My father suggested that I [clean] other people's [cars] and charge them for it. Eight years later, it's the longest relationship I have had."

Gold's car cleaning has led to, well, some unique finds, such as old French fries, fishing lures and more. He once was working on a Hummer and found a McDonald's chicken nugget stuck in the seat. "When I threw it on the ground, it shattered," Gold said, laughing. "I definitely reconsidered my eating habits after that ... but that did not last very long."

Gold said his long-term goal is to work at a company "that believes in changing the world for the better and have fun doing so," he said, adding that he wouldn't be opposed to serving as the COO for an advertising agency. "I have a background in the agency world and loved every minute of it. And I have managed to keep my auto detailing service above ground, so I think that I could be the boss very easily and do it well."

Gold's car cleaning business has led to countless questions over the years about which cars he'd suggest for future purchases.

"I make happy clients because having a car detailed improves your gas mileage and resale value," Gold said. "Also, I get to work on my tan, [cleaning shirtless.] Enough said."

For more information about Gold Standard Auto Detailing, visit <http://goldstandardautodetailing.com/index.htm>.



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VIEWPOINTS

WINDY CITY
TIMES

VOL. 28, No. 42, July 24, 2013

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founded Sept. 1985, and *Outlines newspaper*,
founded May 1987.PUBLISHER & EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Tracy Baim

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER Terri Klinsky
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 NATIONAL SALES Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863
 SENIOR WRITERS Bob Roeher, Rex Wockner, Marie J. Kuda, David Byrne, Tony Peregrin, Lisa Keen, Yasmin Nair, Erica Demarest, Matt Simonette
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 DISTRIBUTION: Ashina, Allan, Dan, John, Renee, Sue and Victor
 WEB HOSTING: LoveYourWebsite.com (lead programmer: Martie Marro)

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(773) 871-7610 FAX (773) 871-7609
 e-mail: editor@windycitymediagroup.com or
 Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

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

Community Marketing, Inc.

TRACY
BAIMChicago Sister
Cities should cut
ties with Moscow

The anti-gay law in Russia that bans gay "propaganda" has been condemned internationally by a wide range of people and institutions, including the U.S. State Department. The crackdown is even leading for calls to either boycott the Olympics in Russia (the Winter Olympics are in Sochi in 2014), or have some kind of visible LG-BTQ support at the games.

The Chicago Sister Cities International program includes Moscow among its 28 partner cities. It is time for the City of Chicago and the Chicago Sister Cities International group to condemn the Russian law, and either suspend or cancel its

Sister Cities relationship with Moscow.

Chicago Sister Cities International is now part of World Business Chicago, a non-profit with deep government connections. The honorary chairman of Sister Cities International is President Barack Obama. The honorary chairman of Chicago Sister Cities is Mayor Rahm Emanuel. Emanuel is also the chairman of World Business Chicago.

The entire Sister Cities International organization should be involved in putting pressure on sister cities in Russia to work against this anti-gay law.

As the International Business Times noted, "RUSA LGBT, a Russian-speaking American association for members of the gay community, has called for a boycott of the Sochi Olympics. It said gay athletes and spectators would not be safe in Russia after a law passed last month in Russia's Parliament and signed earlier this week by President Vladimir Putin banned 'propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations' and established steep fines for anyone equating the value of same-sex relationships with those between individuals of the opposite sex. Foreigners charged with such 'propaganda' could be subject to arrest, 15 days in jail, deportation and fines up to \$3,000."

SCOTT
BANEThe cost of denying
marriage equality

There are plenty of people who object to marriage equality. But there are plenty more—LGBT and straight—for whom marriage equality provides a public recognition of something they've known all along: That same-sex people form stable, lasting unions at just about the same rate that heterosexual people do. Arranging ourselves in pairs seems to be something that we homo ... sapiens like doing.

As people of Illinois debate marriage equality, I've thought about F.O.

Matthiessen and the cost of keep same-sex marriage in the shadows. Matthiessen was a well-regarded American literature scholar at Harvard. His work is mostly lost to history now, except in scholarly circles, but again and again, he promoted fairer and more just communities in his writings and progressive political activism. Born to privilege, Matthiessen grew up in Illinois, where his grandfather was head of the company that made Big Ben alarm clocks and a three-time mayor of LaSalle. Matthiessen State Park in Oglesby about two hours west of Chicago, is named in honor of the family patriarch.

What is less known today is that beginning in 1924, the younger Matthiessen became involved with an American Impressionist painter, Russell Cheney, in a relationship that lasted more than 20 years and looked a whole lot like a same-sex marriage. Against the odds, the law, convenience, tradition and social expectations, Matthiessen and Cheney were determined to share their lives with one another, and in many instances they found some measure of implicit acceptance in private from family, friends, and neighbors, despite their twenty year age difference. (Cheney was the elder.) Broader public recognition of homosexuality, let alone same-sex relationships, was unthinkable at the time, but Matthiessen and Cheney found some degree of accommodation in private.

Very soon into their relationship Matthiessen even used the word marriage in a letter to Cheney to describe their relationship: "Marriage! What a strange word to be applied to two men!

Can't you hear the hell-hounds of society bay-ing in full pursuit behind us?" In 1930, the two men bought a house together in Maine, which remained their home base until Cheney's death. Two men setting up house together no doubt raised a Yankee eyebrow or two. But by 1936, Matthiessen and Cheney were established well enough as a couple in their hometown that a profile of Cheney in connection with one of his exhibitions in Boston, the local paper came right up to the boundary of public acknowledgment by describing the two men as "partners."

But Matthiessen and Cheney could not cross over the sharp line between private acceptance in select circles and broader community-wide declaration. Despite their pioneering spirit, life did not end happily for Matthiessen and Cheney. Cheney died of thrombosis in 1945. Matthiessen had lost the most important relationship of his life, a relationship that profoundly influenced who he was as a person, a writer, and a thinker, but in the days before marriage equality, publicly and professionally, Matthiessen had to hide his grief, or at least dissemble over its depth. Many of Matthiessen's friends, students, and colleagues knew the truth, but to the larger world Matthiessen had simply lost his good "friend" and housemate.

Many spouses who have lost partners and survived say that the grief nearly killed them, but

having to hide one's grief will almost certainly kill a person. In Matthiessen's case, it did just that. Matthiessen held on long as he could. He wrote a several more books, including a monograph on Cheney's painting. The review of the book in The New York Times described Matthiessen as Cheney's "companion"—another bold statement to make in 1947. Then in 1950, suffering from a profoundly deep depression; aggravated by accusations of being a Communist sympathizer, Matthiessen leapt to his death from a 12th story hotel window, near North Station in Boston. His colleagues, friends, and students—nearly all of whom were straight—were devastated, and quickly published a memorial volume in Matthiessen's honor.

Matthiessen's tragic end makes plain that denying recognition of intimate personal relationships between consenting adults carries an enormous cost for everyone. We benefit when other people recognize publicly how much a loved one means to us, and they benefit, too. For a lot of people, it's a relief to affirm something in public that they've known in private all along. So who knows? Maybe Matthiessen's home state will become the latest to support marriage equality.

Scott Bane is a freelance writer in New York City at work on a book about Matthiessen and Cheney.

Reporting the crime

Dear Editor:

My concern in writing this letter to the editor is bittersweet. We, as a social-justice movement, have achieved much: however, sadly, we continue to be reminded of the bigotry that is embedded in our society against the LGBT community. Most recently a lesbian couple was attacked and robbed by a group of men in Chicago on Saturday night, and police are calling it a hate crime, according to the Chicago Tribune.

These women need our support in terms of love and whatever else we can give, that includes prayer.

The women, at their first opportunity, contacted the Chicago police. This is what any responsible, law-abiding citizen should do. Hate speech is now against the law and beating people up for being different is also against the law.

Sadly, for to many of us, we let these incidents slide by because they are either to

distasteful to address, or out of fear that we will be identified within the frame work of a "gay crime."

Recently Ald. James Capplemen was called a "faggot alderman" and the first question on my mind was, "Did the alderman call the police to report this incident?" If we do not use the laws that are made available to us than we become part of the problem. I would encourage the alderman, because of his visibility, to use these incidents as a teaching moment on how not to hate people.

I would love to hear what the preachers at the local churches were preaching from the pulpit the following Sunday in the victims' neighborhood. Hate has to be identified and rooted out, and that includes our religious organizations such churches. When hate appears in religious institutions it is hidden in all types of pious levels of rhetoric, such as Cardinal Francis George calling LGBT people morally disordered.

Joe Murray
 Rainbow Sash Movement

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by
Nicole
Rivelli

'LIKELY' STORY

Kristen Wiig and Darren Criss co-star in the movie *Girl Most Likely*. See a review on page 16.

DISH

Yes, Michigan.
Page 18Photo of Pastries at Harbert
Swedish Bakery by Meghan Streit

THEATER

'Fallow' man.
Page 14Photo from *Fallow*
by Lee Miller

MUSIC

Awl of fame.
Page 22Photo of Dave Awl
courtesy of Awl

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Returns and revivals

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

A friend of mine who isn't an avid theatergoer always bemoans the fact that by the time he finally gets around to seeking out tickets for a much-buzzed-about local Chicago show, it's typically closed.

But this summer, casual theater fans have fewer tardy excuses to cling onto since so many acclaimed productions from previous seasons have transferred, extended or are about to be revived again.

Here's a rundown on acclaimed shows that have risen up like the phoenix, or shows that have stuck around longer than the usual sell-by-date. But hurry fast, since some of the shows mentioned will be closing soon. (Or might actually be closed by the time you read this.)

Transfers aplenty

One problem that many theaters face with a set subscription season of plays is that when one show proves to be a runaway hit, it will have to close to make way for the next production. Sometime the hit shows can extend a week or two to meet some of the audience demand. But more often than not in live theater, once they're gone, they're gone.

This is why Chicago theater fans should consider themselves lucky that so many producers took the leap of faith this summer to transfer successful productions into stand-alone theater runs in other venues.

One notable success story is Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company's take on Tennessee Williams' classic memory play *The Glass Menagerie*. Director Hans Fleishmann re-imagined the pivotal role of Tom as a homeless tramp, which made the character's regrets for the past even more poignant.

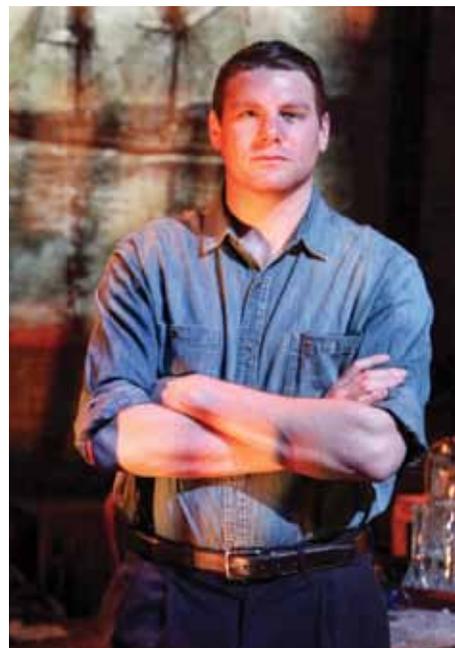
Mary-Arrchie's take on *The Glass Menagerie* was a sold-out sensation at the company's usual

home at Angel Island, so the production's transfer (complete with the original cast) to Theater Wit was a blessing for those who couldn't get in. The production just announced its final extension through Sunday, Aug. 25. Visit www.theaterwit.org for more information.

Another transfer of note is Albany Park Theater Project's *Home/Land*, which is playing through Sunday, July 28, in the plush digs of the Goodman Theatre's Owen Theatre space as part of its biennial Latino Theatre Festival. *Home/Land* was a collaborative effort of text, movement and music to explore the effects of America's immigration laws on people, and it was a sold out success when it was launched in January 2012. Visit www.goodmantheatre.org for more information.

I was going to mention Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre's hit transfer of the 1995 Broadway revue *Smokey Joe's Café* as another transfer example, since the Roger's Park-originated production was extended through Sunday, Aug. 4, at the Royal George Theatre Cabaret. Alas, the extension was cut short and the show's closing was pushed up to Sunday, July 21.

Of course, one long-standing way to catch acclaimed shows you may have previously missed is by getting tickets to the Chicago Park District's Theater on the Lake, now in its 61st season. Lately, this venue's summer season is slotted specifically to bring back last season's shows from Chicago's thriving storefront theater scene. Three shows remain: The Den Theatre's production of Jane Anderson's *Red State vs. Blue State* drama *The Quality of Life* (July 24-28), Jackalope Theatre's production of Zayd Dohrn's immigration drama *Long Way Go Down* (July 31-Aug. 4) and Chicago Physical Theater's *The Chi-Town Revue* featuring *Honeybuns* (a comedy-filled show running Aug. 7-11). Visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com for more information.

The *Glass Menagerie*. Photo by Emily Schwartz

Rainbow resurrection

Three upcoming revivals are sure to be of interest to LGBTQ audiences in one way or another, due to the out authorship, the campy tone or serious subject matter.

First out of the docket is another revival of *The Birds* by Hell in a Handbag Productions. This spoof of the iconic 1960s Alfred Hitchcock film will now literally play next to Lake Michigan at Berger Park and Cultural Center in Edgewater from Aug. 8 to Sept. 15. But what makes this revival so exciting is that original film star Tippi Hedren is slated to make a cameo appearance in the production on Saturday, Sept. 7. Hell in a Handbag is even auctioning off a chance to appear alongside Ms. Hedren as a fundraiser for her animal charity, The ROAR Foundation/Shambala Preserve. Go to www.handbagproductions.org for details.

Another production making a return is Alex Paul Young's dance- and poetry-filled drama *Pink Milk*, which is inspired by the tragic life and scientific foresight of gay British mathematician and World War II codebreaker Alan Turing. *Pink Milk* previously played at Fringe Festivals in New York and Chicago, but now it's receiving a full-fledged production running Aug. 10 through Sept. 7 courtesy of Oracle Productions and the newly formed company White Elephant. Visit www.publicaccessstheatre.org for more details.

Perhaps one of the biggest and most anticipated return engagements is William Brown and Doug Frew's hit 2010 play *To Master the Art*, which is about the early married life of late celebrity chef Julia Child. Tickets are already on sale for this return engagement of the Time-Line Theatre sold-out hit play, now under the auspices of Chicago Commercial Collective and Broadway in Chicago at the Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place. The limited engagement begins Sept. 10. Visit www.broadwayinchicago.com for more information.

Extensions (but not for very much longer)

There's still also time to catch two shows in Chicago that previously received plenty of acclaim in the U.K.

The time-switching drama about gay life in 1958 and 2008 called *The Pride* is Bonnie Metzgar's final production as outgoing About Face Theatre artistic director. *The Pride* runs through Sunday, July 28, upstairs in Victory Gardens Biograph Theater. Visit www.aboutfacetheatre.com for more information.

The Q Brothers' *Othello: the Remix* is a hip-hop remix of Shakespeare's great tragedy, and it has the distinction of being the only American production in the 2012 Globe to Globe festival that featured all of Shakespeare's plays performed in different languages by international companies at the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. *Othello: the Remix* continues through Aug. 4 at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Visit www.chicagoshakes.com for more information.



The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

Playwright: Rachel Sheinkin;

Songwriter: William Finn

At: Theatre at the Center, 1040 Ridge Rd., Munster, Ind.

Tickets: 219-836-3255 or

www.theatreatthecenter.com; \$38-\$42

Runs through: Aug. 18

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Those quirky adolescent spellers of The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee are back, and this time they're ideating their tricky words at the Theatre at the Center in Munster, Ind.

Now if you're familiar with this Northwest Indiana theater, you're right in thinking that it's a tad spread out for this intimate two-time Tony Award-winning musical from 2005. For instance, two of the previous times that this clever musical comedy played the Chicago area were in smaller venues like in 2006 at the renamed Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place (featuring the original Broadway direction of James Lapine) or in 2010 at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Ill.

So in director David Perkovich's production, some of the smaller comedic bits can get swallowed up when played out on such a large canvas. The clever material by composer William Finn (Falsettos) and playwright Rachel Sheinkin (Striking 12) still is effective and fun, but the comedy focus on certain bits gets dissipated.

And based upon the opening night performance, the people tasked with finding audience members to make up the four guest spellers on stage might want to find more milquetoast people. Now you can't entirely control how the improvisational aspect of the show, which is one of its built-in hallmarks, but the feistiness and comedic jibes from some of the selected guest spellers pulled focus. The cast also should memorize the exact stage exit for each of those guest spellers so they can easily get back to their correct seating area.

But aside from these venue and improv casting hiccups, Spelling Bee is largely solid at Theatre at the Center.

Nicole Miller as the parentally neglected Olive Ostrovsky tugged all the right heartstrings, while Landree Fleming was fun as the lisping Logainne Schwartzandgrubbeniere, whose two gay dads (doubled up by Bear Bellinger who also plays the defiant "comfort counselor" Mitch Mahoney and Patrick Tierney who also plays the

spacey home-schooled contestant Leaf Conebear) pressure her to succeed.

Cory Goodrich's lovely soprano voice soared in the ensemble numbers as the spelling judge Rona Lisa Perretti, working well with the vice principal Douglas Panch of Jake Mahler (who could have been a bit more tightly wound).

There was also solid work from the spelling contestants of Rose Le Tran as overachieving Marcy Park, Jonathan Wagner as William Barfeé with the magic spelling foot and Frank J. Paul as the upstanding Chip Tolentino (though the change in his song featuring the word "distraction" in place of "erection" is one sign of prudishness).

So while Theatre at the Center's take on Spelling Bee might not surpass any memories of previous Chicago-area productions, it still gets the essential job done.

CRITICS' PICKS

The Liar, Writers' Theatre (Glencoe) through Aug. 11. A 17th-century French-verse comedy, by tragic author Corneille, is sheer delight as freely adapted by modern American David Ives and performed "con brio" by an attractive, energized cast. JA

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged, Eclectic Theatre Company at Metropolis Performing Arts Centre in Arlington Heights, through Aug. 10. The zany cast of Adam Kander, Andrew Pond and Michael Woods are what make this oft-produced comedy loads of fun. These guys are also performing the recently updated edition of the show. SCM

The Glass Menagerie, Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company at Theater Wit, extended through Aug. 25. You may think you know this Tennessee Williams classic forwards and backwards, but a "memory" play can undergo significant changes when the narrator remembers more than we ever did. MSB

Othello: the Remix, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, through July 27. 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. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Fallow

Playwright: Kennell Lin

At: Steep Theatre, 1115 W. Berwyn

Tickets: 1-868-811-4111;

www.steeptheatre.com; \$20-\$22

Runs through: Aug. 17

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Aaron, a privileged Anglo college student, takes a summer job as a beekeeper in Maine. Come fall he follows the bees to Texas rather than returning to Cornell. A full year passes as Aaron (Brendan Meyer) migrates as a fruit picker to California where he is brutally murdered (we are told) by several Latino co-workers. He's dead when the play begins but it takes a while to figure out, for Aaron writes and reads letters to his mother in which his life view evolves to embrace the natural world and his less-privileged colleagues in a Steinbeck-esque way.

But Aaron never mails those letters which explain so much. Why he doesn't mail them never is explained satisfactorily, except that the play isn't really about Aaron, but about his mother, Elizabeth (Kendra Thulin). Eventually reading the letters, Elizabeth abruptly flies to California to see the now-imprisoned men who killed Aaron. Elizabeth's journey is ill-advised as there are pieces to the Aaron puzzle she doesn't know. Deep in grief, she's in no condition to process what she discovers when she meets Happy (Jose Antonio Garcia), an immigrant Mexican to whom Aaron gave a large sum of money.

As directed by Keira Fromm, Fallow offers engaging performances in a somewhat off-putting play. Pithy individual scenes are acted with energy, tension and occasional charm but the play's structure is distracting and its theme difficult to grasp. For example, there are three characters who appear only once each—a no-no of contemporary playwriting—among them a college girl with whom Aaron flirts to no apparent dramatic purpose. Why is this character there? The other one-scene characters serve purposes for Aaron, but it's not Aaron's play. Elizabeth has only Happy off of whom to bounce, and the curious circumstances of their meeting are never explained (initially she has no idea who he is but he knows who she is).

The play focuses now on Aaron and now on Elizabeth, now on the dying-off of America's honeybees (a truth) and now on Anglo/Latino racism (cutting both ways). However, the key actions and relationships of the play aren't seen. We don't see what happens to Aaron or why, we don't witness Aaron's crucial evolving friendship with Happy, we never see a moment of interaction between mother and son. Fallow raises points and issues without delving into any of them and Lin simply doesn't tie his disparate ideas together. The play does not lack intelligence but connectedness. Its intimate and emotional moments stand quite separate from each other.

The graceful but spare physical production of beehives and grass combines the talents of Dan Stratton (set), Heather Gilbert (lighting), Alison Siple (costumes), Kevin O'Donnell (music/sound) and Samantha Umstead (wigs/make-up).

THEATER REVIEW

Rooms: A Rock Romance

Playwright: Music and lyrics by Paul Scott Goodman, book by Miriam Gordon and Paul Scott Goodman

At: Broken Nose Theatre at the Flat Iron Arts Center,

1579 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets: 479-774-3429;

www.brokennosetheatre.com; \$15-\$30

Runs through: Aug. 11

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Music, of all the arts, may be the most effective at conveying emotion—as human beings, we hear sounds before we see objects, and only much later do we recognize words. So if you're going to tell a romantic story, music is the logical medium, and a two-character musical renders the narrative even more efficient—since don't all lovers exist in a universe wholly focused on themselves?

The lovers in Paul Scott Goodman and Miriam Gordon's minimalist song-cycle are a pair of Glaswegian youths—sullen working-class Ian, bunkered down in his room strumming angry social-protest melodies on his guitar, and wholesome privileged Monica, whose father declares her "Glasgow's answer to Barbara Streisand." On the recommendation of a classmate, Monica appeals to Ian for help in writing a bat mitzvah song. This leads to the Catholic lad being invited to his co-composer's home for a Shabbas celebration, where Monica proposes that they style themselves a punk-New Wave duo (this is the late 1970s, by the way). First prize in a local contest takes them to London, and from there, to America and a gig at New York City's CBGB.

Oh, but the course of love and success needs its obstacles, too. Not for nothing is the show's physical action built on 90 minutes of opening and closing doors (hence the title "Rooms"). Ian has a drinking problem, and Monica has an eating disorder. The latter also appears not to have heard of birth control, even in 1977, with the sexual revolution well under way. Chafing under conflicting career goals, Boy and Girl part company after a disastrous (but typical for the era) U.S.



Rooms: A Rock Romance. Photo by Taryn Goodge

debut, only to reunite years later, healthier, wiser and ready to essay the uncertain path of intimacy towards a lasting contentment.

What makes this well-worn formula enjoyable is that director Benjamin Brownson and vocalists Matt Deitchmann and Hillary Marren attack their score with a full-throttle ebullience to awaken vivid memories of our own once-impetuous ambitions, their powerhouse vocals catalyzed by piano-man/music director Austin Cook and his stageside band. On a balmy summer night in Wicker Park—at one time, headquarters to the ripped-fishnets-and-safety-pin coterie to which Ian and Monica aspire—who can resist the optimism of a high-velocity anthem proclaiming, "All I Want Is Everything"?



Beaten. Photo by Anthony Aicardi

THEATER REVIEW

Beaten

Playwright: Scott Woldman
At: Artistic Home, 1376 W. Grand Ave.
Tickets: 866-811-4111;
www.theartistichome.org; \$28-\$32
Runs through: Aug. 11

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

"Once something like this gets into a family, it doesn't go away," the elderly Eileen Simmons declares grimly. The misfortune she laments is, indeed, passed down from one generation to the next, but while its manifestations may be physical, its source is the fairy-tale myth dictating that every woman requires a husband and children to render her complete.

Consider the history of the all-female Simmons/Sinclair household: Eileen married a Prince Charming who abused her. After leaving him, her low-wage bartender job, assured her easy access to male company and mind-bending substances. Her daughter Madelynne, vowing not to repeat these mistakes, married a Humble Jack and proceeded to abuse and reject *him*. Madelynne's white-collar skills now support her invalid parent and teenage daughter—barely—but young Chloe has become increasingly reclusive following a fall down the stairs precipitated by a quarrel with her boyfriend—or not. Furthermore, the once-enthusiastic law student has begun to resist her mother's relentless efforts to steer her toward financial and marital success.

Scott Woldman may be the first playwright to challenge one of our society's most deeply-embedded beliefs. Certainly it's rare to hear some-

one suggest that the solution to domestic strife might *not* lie in simply trading a "bad" spouse for a "good" one. So accepting are we of "soul-mate" scenarios that we accept Chloe's upward-mobile beau and her nerdy boy-buddy at face value, never questioning the pressure imposed on the former in the pursuit of his designated social role, or the incentive for the latter to manipulate his peers' romantic notions in service of his own selfish fantasy. When Chloe and her wronged swain refuse to perpetuate a dynamic grown dysfunctional through misuse, their abstinence is presented to us, not as healthy pragmatism, but tragic despair—even though, by then, we are fully cognizant of our narrators' biased perspectives.

Artistic Home could have also ignored uncomfortable speculations, playing their multifaceted text as a standard-issue weeper or creeper. Under the direction of Katherine Swan, however, Kathy Scambiaterra, Kristin Collins and Kathryn Acosta deliver complex, slyly nuanced performances highlighting the contradictions of relationships crippled by frustration and resentment. The men who chafe under their unachievable responsibilities are likewise granted depth and humanity by Joe Wiens and Conor McCahill. Theatergoers looking for no-brain melodrama can allow themselves to be fooled by the cozy kitchen and Wal-Mart wardrobes, but those unafraid to take a second look at our closely held social customs will be better rewarded.

SPOTLIGHT



When it came time for out composer **Ricky Ian Gordon** to record his song collection *Silver Rain* based upon the celebrated poetry of out Harlem Renaissance writer Langston Hughes, he turned to soprano **Nicole Cabell**, the 2005 winner of the BBC Singer of the World competition and an alumna of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center. So if you're a *Silver Rain* fan, be sure not to miss Cabell in concert at the Ravinia Festival with Gordon himself playing the piano. Nicole Cabell and Ricky Ian Gordon perform 8 p.m. Tuesday, July 30, at the Ravinia Festival's Martin Theatre, 418 Sheridan Rd., Highland Park. Tickets are \$40-\$60 for reserved seats, \$11 for lawn seating and \$75 for a combined ticket and dinner package; call 847-266-5100 or visit www.ravinia.org. Photo of Cabell courtesy of Ravinia Festival



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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT, JR.

Fruitvale Station; Girl Most Likely

In light of the not guilty verdict in the Trayvon Martin case, it's not hard to see why audiences have embraced **Fruitvale Station**, the fact-based story of the last day in the life of 22-year-old Oscar Grant, yet another young African American male killed amidst tragic circumstances. Critics have also heavily praised the film, the feature debut of 27-year-old Ryan Coogler. And the movie certainly has its share of compelling moments—especially as it heads into the last sequences surrounding Grant's death. But it's also more than a tad manipulative that shading could have helped alleviate.

Early in the morning hours of Jan. 1, 2009, Grant and his girlfriend Sophina were heading back to their Oakland home on the BART train after celebrating New Year's Eve with friends in San Francisco. After an altercation on the packed train, two white transit officers detained Grant and several of his friends on the platform of the Fruitvale stop. As recorded by cellphones and video cameras of the train's passengers, Grant was shot in the back by one of the officers, Johannes Mehserle, and died later that day from his wounds. Mehserle's claim that in the midst of the escalating situation he thought he was reaching for his Taser instead of his gun was accepted in court and he received only a two-year sentence for involuntary manslaughter—a verdict that, not surprisingly, sparked outrage and protests.

Coogler's film (which he also wrote) begins with the actual cellphone footage of Grant being shot and then flashes back to show his final day. Oscar (played by Michael B. Jordan in a career-defining performance) rises with a troubling premonition but his worries are soon displaced by the need to again convince the gorgeous So-



Fruitvale Station. Photo courtesy of The Weinstein Company

phina (the luminous Melonie Diaz) that a recent incident of infidelity was an anomaly. But Sophina isn't so sure Oscar can be trusted and neither does Oscar's mother, Wanda (Octavia Spencer, Oscar winner for *The Help* who also produced *Fruitvale*, along with *Forrest Whitaker*).

There are reasons for this—Oscar has had a couple of stints in jail and his road to recovery and his relationship with Sophina and his mother has been shaky. He's a bit of a hothead and is still lying to Sophina—about losing his job and the fact that he's resorted to selling pot to make ends meet. Although Oscar keeps making mistakes he wants to turn his life around, and his relationship with his infant daughter is solid.

For a while Coogler has kept the manipulation mostly in check (an incident with a dog hit by a car which Oscar witnesses being a major exception) but with the scene where Oscar picks up his daughter from day care, the balance unnecessarily tips. From that point, every goodbye, every conversation—no matter how benign—is weighed with the knowledge that it will be Oscar's last and Coogler can't resist stressing this. By the time the young couple head out for their New Year's Eve celebration there's almost a sense of the lamb going to the slaughter.

Coogler redeems his film with the actual incident that begins on the train ride home from an evening of fun and fireworks in San Francisco. Oscar's friends come on to two young women, who promptly kiss and cuddle, making their preferences clear. The other passengers are loudly supportive of the women but in the next moment Oscar is spotted by a hated fellow ex-con and things quickly escalate, leading to their horrendous conclusion.

Flawed though it is by overstating the obvious, *Fruitvale Station* is also sensitively acted and well-intentioned—and has the bonus of offering a thought-provoking alternative to the mammoth superhero blockbuster (take your pick) playing next door.

Based on the savage reviews and no doubt less-than-stellar box office for *Girl Most Likely*—SNL alumna Kristen Wiig's follow-up to the massively successful *Bridesmaids*—there's apparently not much room in the hearts of moviegoers for a gentle, female-driven comedy. With its plethora of whacked-out, eccentric characters and sometimes hard-to-believe situations, some of the negative criticism is admittedly warranted.

And yeah, the movie—written by Michelle

Morgan and helmed by Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini (HBO's *Cinema Verite* and *American Splendor*)—does have its sitcomish roots. But it also provides lots of laughs and surrounds Wiig with a great supporting cast for her to underact with—including Annette Bening, Matt Dillon, *Glee*'s Darren Criss, Bob Balaban and stage actor Christopher Fitzgerald. What it skips on—and here I'm going to sound as prudish as *Grandma Moses*—is foul language (not one F-bomb is spewed), crude situations (mostly) and vulgarity, hence the movie's gentle spirit (in itself, a reason to recommend it).

The story follows Wiig as Imogene, a girl from the trashy side of the tracks in New Jersey who has always dreamed of a big career in Manhattan as a renowned playwright. After initial promise, Imogene's once-potential career is floundering, she's been fired, her snooty boyfriend has moved on and her snobbish gal pals are doing their best

to ditch her. Imogene stages a phony suicide attempt and wakes up in the psych ward with only one option—returning home to Jersey in the custody of her sexed-up, gambling-addicted mother (Bening). Once there, Imogene finds that mom has rented out her room to a wannabe singer (Criss), her brother, who runs a crab shack on the boardwalk is still obsessed with his odd aquatic/science experiments, and that mother has taken a new lover—a purported CIA agent named George Bouche (Dillon). The scene is set for a broad class-conscious comedy with a lot of sight gags and droll one-liners from Wiig and company.

Subtle it ain't, and it's easy to see that Wiig is going to need to expand her underplaying shtick to keep the attention of movie audiences but *Girl Most Likely* is also a lot more entertaining than the majority of its critical raspberries would suggest.

Out gay actors get Emmy nominations

Out actors Jane Lynch and Jim Parsons are among those who received nominations for the 65th Primetime Emmy Awards, according to *TheWrap.com*.

Lynch has been nominated for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series for playing Coach Sue Sylvester on Fox's *Glee*. She's up against six other nominees, including *Modern Family*'s Sofia Vergara and Julie Bowen.

Parsons was again nominated for his role as Sheldon on the CBS comedy *The Big Bang Theory*. He's up for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series against Alec Baldwin (*30 Rock*), Jason Bateman (*Arrested Development*), Louis C.K. (*Louie*), Don Cheadle (*House of Lies*) and Matt LeBlanc (*Episodes*).

Two other openly gay actors—Zachary Quinto and John Benjamin Hickey—are competing for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Miniseries or a Movie for, respectively, *American Horror Story: Asylum* and *The Big C*: Hereafter. Other nominees in that category include James Cromwell (*American Horror Story: Asylum*), Scott Bakula (*Behind the Candelabra*)

and Peter Mullan (*Top of the Lake*).

Speaking of *Candelabra*, Michael Douglas and Matt Damon received nominations for portraying Liberace and his companion Scott Thorson, respectively.

Outstanding Comedy Series nominees are *The Big Bang Theory*, *Girls*, *Louie*, *Modern Family*, *30 Rock* and *Veep*. Drama-show nods went to *Breaking Bad*, *Downton Abbey*, *Game of Thrones*, *Homeland*, *House of Cards* and *Mad Men*. The *Amazing Race*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *Project Runway*, *Top Chef* and *The Voice* were all nominated for Outstanding Reality-Competition Program.

History was made as online-only shows (through Netflix) got in the mix. *House of Cards* and *Arrested Development* received nominations.

The Emmy Awards will air live on CBS on Sept. 22 with Neil Patrick Harris returning as host. Harris (replacing Kate Mara) announced the nominations with *Breaking Bad*'s Aaron Paul July 18, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*.

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MUSIC

Cheyenne Jackson on feeling blue and being 'Behind the Candelabra'

BY TERRI-LYNNE WALDRON

Cheyenne Jackson is a Broadway veteran who has starred in *All Shook Up* and *Xanadu*. On the big screen he co-starred in the Academy Award-nominated film *United 93* and on the small screen in *Behind the Candelabra*, *Glee* and *30 Rock*.

He is now ready to show his personal and poignant side on *I'm Blue, Skies* his first CD of original music. The openly gay singer, songwriter and actor talked musical collaborations, working with Michael Douglas and the attention from female fans.

Windy City Times: *I'm Blue, Skies* is your first full-length CD of original music. Why was now the right time to release it?

Cheyenne Jackson: I have a lot of change going on; I have a lot of growth as a person. Music is everything to me and I've always written music, but I have never shared it. My muse and one of my best friends, Sia, was the cata-



Cheyenne Jackson. Photo by Karl Simone

lyst for me focusing on my writing and sharing that. She and I started writing together and we wrote maybe five or six songs, three of which made it on this record. I have always written poetry and I have a way with melody and a hook but she helps me with threading that together and with streamlining and I found out I had the knack for it.

WCT: So how did you develop your songwriting?

CJ: Through Sia's help I got somebody's attention at Sony/ATV Music Publishing and they signed me to a developmental artist writing deal. They paired me up with some great folks and some collaborations were magical where you know when you get in the room and you have an idea and it springs back and forth between each other and it's an electric thing.

WCT: Why the comma between the words "I'm Blue" and "Skies?"

CJ: That's definitely on purpose and thought-out. There was a lot of thought about the comma and if it would be confusing. I have quite the melancholy side and a lot of my songs have sad-

ness, and a thread on the entire record which is a sad sound and something that a lot of people can relate to, which is life and love. Blue for me means happiness, blue is my favorite color and, as a little kid, I was always in blue. I wanted to be like "I am the blue beautiful sky that's above me," but also you're talking to the sky: "I'm blue."

WCT: In the video for the song "She's Pretty, She Lies" you are involved in a combative relationship with a woman. A YouTube comment wondered why your love interest is female since you are gay. Do you think that your videos have to be literal and reflect your sexual orientation?

CJ: Oh gosh, no. I am an artist and a storyteller, and I think that's absolutely ridiculous and kind of obnoxious. I don't think of myself as a "gay singer"—I think of myself as a person who sings and who happens to be gay. When I'm thinking of a video for a song I don't think about it in terms of that, I think about it in terms of how this will relate to the story that I want to tell in the song.

WCT: Is there a style of music that is not in your wheelhouse, or can you sing any genre?

CJ: Thank you. I can't do really really hard rock music because it's just not the way my voice is. For instance, when *Rent* was around I auditioned many times and I just don't have that raspy quality to my singing voice.

WCT: You got accolades for your acting in HBO's *Behind the Candelabra*, starring Michael Douglas and Matt Damon. What was it like working with them?

CJ: I know Matt a little from working on *30 Rock*. He's a lovely, amazing, kind and professional actor. Michael was wonderful and he was in it to win it and he was focused. I really just jumped at the chance to work with director Steven Soderbergh and Michael Douglas just because that's a no-brainer. I knew my part wasn't huge, but I knew that just being on set with these fantastic artists would only be a great experience.

WCT: Tell me about the upcoming film *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*, co-starring Gena Rowlands.

CJ: It is based on a play and it is about a former Broadway chorus boy who goes back to his hometown in Florida to take care of his mom who is dying of Alzheimer's. She dies and he's there in his childhood home and he has nothing to do in life except that he used to dance. So he starts teaching dance at this dance school which caters to older wealthy retirees. My first client is Gena Rowlands and it is basically hate at first sight. It's a wonderful story about opposites, life, love, right, wrong and forgiveness. It's my first lead in a multimillion-dollar movie.

WCT: You are openly gay and married. Do women come on to you, thinking that they can turn you around?

CJ: [Laughs] It's happened a couple of times but most people know the deal.

WCT: You have been quoted as saying, "I don't get big parts because I'm open."

CJ: That was a little bit taken out of context and it was also said many years ago. I don't know if I don't get parts because of being gay but I am sure there are parts that I haven't gotten because I'm openly gay. If that's the reason that I don't get the part, then I don't want to be a part of that project anyway.

I've been out for almost 20 years now and I've always lived my life openly and honestly. If I am the right person for the part then they will know that and it will be based on my merit, reputation and talent.

For more on Cheyenne Jackson, go to www.cheyennejackson.com.



CGMC's 'Some Like It Hot' July 29 at Laugh Factory

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus (CGMC) is extending its 30th season into the summer with two performances of a new cabaret show entitled "Some Like It Hot."

The show will take place Monday, July 29, at 7:15 and 9:30 p.m. at Laugh Factory, 3175 N. Broadway.

Song selections include swingin' standards like *Night and Day* and *Another Hot Day in Harlem*, showtune favorites like *Too Darn Hot*, and current hits from Adele and Esperanza Spalding.

Tickets are on sale for \$25 for general admission and \$50 for VIP seating (7:15 p.m. show only)—both with a two-drink minimum. For tickets and more information, visit www.laughfactory.com/clubs/chicago/date/2013-07-29.

Brandy, Otis Clay, Monifah in African arts festival

The 24th anniversary of the African Festival of the Arts will take place Aug. 30-Sept. 2 in Washington Park, 5100 S. Cottage Grove Ave.

Among the scheduled entertainers are singing superstar Brandy, along with blues/soul legend Otis Clay, TV One's R&B Divas Monifah

and Syleena Johnson, and others.

Brandy's hits include "Sittin' Up in My Room" "Almost Doesn't Count," "The Boy Is Mine" (a number-one duet with Monica) and "Put It Down" (a duet with Chris Brown that came out this year). A recent interview with her is at www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Brandy-discusses-Whitney-reality-TV/41171.html.

Singer Monifah has made news of her town, coming out as a lesbian on the show *R&B Divas*. In an interview with *The Advocate*, she talked about past same-sex relationships as well as attempts to reconnect with her adult daughter, who disapproved of her mother's relationship with partner Terez.

The event will also feature spirituality, quilting and fine arts pavilions; a drum village; and a beer and wine garden.

The tax-deductible admission is \$10 in advance, \$20 at the gate or \$30 for a four-day weekend pass; and \$5 for seniors and children under 13. Family and group discounts are also available. See africanfestivalchicago.com.

'Naked Boys' composer at Davenport's Aug. 4

Shelly Markham—composer of the award-winning song "It's About Time" and a contributor to the long-running musical *Naked Boys Singing*—will perform at Davenport's 1383 N. Milwaukee Ave., on Sunday, Aug. 4, at 4 p.m.

Markham has written special musical material for many popular television series, including *Friends*, *The Nanny*, *Golden Girls*, *Gimme a Break* and *Touched By An Angel*, and scored the PBS production of *Charley's Aunt* starring Charles Grodin.

There is a \$15 cover charge with a two-drink minimum and reservations are recommended. Call 773-278-1830 or visit www.DavenportPi-anoBar.com.

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Michigan Harbor Country Dining Guide

BY MEGHAN STREIT

If the daily grind of city life has you itching for a getaway, hop in the car this weekend and head to Michigan's Harbor Country. The quaint cluster of lakeside towns is less than a two-hour drive from Chicago, but it's enough of a change of scenery that you will still feel like you got away.

The clean white sand beaches, brilliant sunsets and the many stunning and luxurious lakefront homes have earned Harbor Country the designation as "The Hamptons of the Midwest." I don't know about that, but Harbor Country is charm-

ing and picturesque in its own right—and worth visiting again and again. In between visits to the honest-to-goodness vineyards and wineries (yes, in the Midwest!), stops at the quirky antique shops and lazy afternoons on the beach, you're going to need to eat something, and I'm here to direct you to the best food in town.

Redamak's, a kitschy burger joint in New Buffalo, is one of the first eateries you'll see as you enter Harbor Country on Red Arrow Highway. It's arguably the most famous restaurant in the area, so it's worth a stop if you've never been. However, there's a better burger to be had up

the street at **Stray Dog Bar & Grill**. In addition to killer burgers and addictive crispy fries, you also can get one heck of a Reuben here. It's worth noting that Stray Dog serves food until midnight, which comes in very handy since the sun doesn't set until about 9:30 p.m. in summer and many restaurants close by 10:00 p.m., forcing beachgoers to choose between watching the sun sink into the water over one last cocktail or eating dinner that night.

For upscale pub food, try **Red Arrow Roadhouse** for a filling lunch or dinner. The house-made potato chips appetizer, smothered with melted blue cheese, sour cream and scallions, is a gooey, delicious sign of what's to come. Sink your teeth into equally decadent entrées like four-cheese mac spiked with BBQ rib meat or a pulled pork sandwich, drenched in barbecue sauce and piled high with caramelized onions.

It's not all burgers and BBQ on this side of the lake. There are also a few upscale spots serving elevated cuisine that could rival restaurants in Chicago (but these are beach towns, so nice shorts and sundresses are perfectly fine for dinner). The patio at **Bentwood Tavern** is a lovely place to spend a warm summer evening. Located on the New Buffalo Harbor, it's one of the few restaurants offering waterfront dining. Granted, you'll be looking at docked boats rather than waves crashing on the shore, but it's a nice enough view and the service is delightful. The tuna and avocado tartar is spectacular, especially when you spoon it onto crunchy wonton chips. With steaks, seafood, salads and wood-fired pizzas, there's a little something for everyone here—and every bite I had was well above average.

Now about those vineyards—no, it's not Napa or the Loire Valley, but yes, there are indeed rows of grapes that get turned into wine right here in Michigan. Some of the local wines are a tad on the sweet side, but plenty of them are highly drinkable. If you're doing a tasting tour, make **Tabor Hill Winery & Restaurant** your last stop. After your wine tasting, buy a glass of your favorite varietal and head outside to sip it while you walk through the vineyards until sundown. Wine is the star of the show here, so I recommend a dinner made up of several glasses paired with a few appetizers to share. The polenta fries

with white truffle aioli are exquisite and go nicely with Tabor Hill's Traminette, a semi-dry white wine with subtle apricot and peach flavors.

If you want to rub elbows with the locals and the fancy-pants Chicagoans who own summer homes in Harbor Country, you will find them at **Tosi's**. This hidden (literally) gem is tucked away on a dark residential street in Stevensville. Inside, it's the kind of red-leather booth Italian joint where the owner walks around and asks how you like your meal. You must order the malfati, a crazy good concoction of doughy gnocchi-like spinach "rolls" covered in creamy béchamel sauce and slathered in a hearty meat ragu. This dish is the best thing I've tasted in Harbor Country, and I have searched far and wide. Seriously, don't even consider ordering anything else here.

Wherever you decide to have dinner, I'd skip dessert at the restaurant and opt for an old-fashioned ice cream cone at **Oink's Ice Cream and Yogurt**. Pick your favorite flavor (there are plenty of tempting ones like Georgia Peach and Mackinac Island Fudge yogurt) and then grab a bench outside and look up at the stars—they're phenomenal out here.

After a day full of sun, wine, and too much good food, you'll probably go to bed thinking you will never, ever eat again. But, you will, the next morning, in fact. Drive right on by **The Casual Chef Café at The Pumpnickel Inn** because there is nothing that extraordinary being served that can compensate for the out-

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nightspots

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Wed., July 24

Smithsonian Exhibit Exploring Human-Animal Bond Rolls into Chicago Smithsonian mobile exhibit explores the human-animal bond. Through July 25. 1:45pm, Museum Campus near the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, <http://animalconnections.com>

The Gay Divorcee - Cabaret Show With gay marriage, comes gay divorce... and great gay break-up songs by Melissa Etheridge, Aretha Franklin, Janis Joplin, Pink, Adele, Cher. One woman turns to her musical divas for guidance and strength through her breakup. \$12, two-drink minimum; 8pm-9:30pm, 773-278-1830, Davenport's Piano Bar and Cabaret, 1383 N Milwaukee Ave, <http://davenportspianobar.com/>

Q&A Trivia w/ Kwizmaster Kirk Williamson Join Nightspots' own Kirk Williamson as he challenges the audience with a variety of questions while bartender Jeff serves up \$5 Rukk cocktails. Get your team together, because the first-place team receives a \$25 @mosphere certificate. Drink prizes for second and third place teams as well. 8pm-10:30pm, @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St., www.facebook.com/qatrivia

Crystal Waters LIVE Billboard dance sensation Crystal Waters will be joining Progress Bar for a live performance, including hits like "100% Pure Love" and "Gypsy Woman." Showtime is at 11 pm sharp. Come early and bring your dancing shoes. No cover. Progress Bar, 3359 N. Halsted

St. 9pm, Progress Bar, 3359 N. Halsted St., <http://www.progressbarchicago.com>

Thursday, July 25

HealthMinder Day by BlogHer Opening with a live interview with Secretary of Health & Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, a full day for health and wellness enthusiasts, professionals or bloggers. Tracks: Fitness & Nutrition bloggers, special needs parents, caregivers, women sandwiched between two generations, creating and adhering to personal boundaries. Register online. 8am-5pm, Sheraton Chicago, <http://www.blogher.com/healthminder-day-blogher-13>

LCCP reunion If you worked at, were on the board of directors or a volunteer. See some old friends, check out some photos and hear about an important announcement for the founders of LCCP. To RSVP contact Kara at VolunteerLCCP@howardbrown.org; 6pm-8pm, 773-388-8864, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd.

14th Annual Creative Arts Therapies Benefit Concert The Creative Arts Therapies Department will showcase research, practice and performance as therapy. Serving adults with traumatic brain injury. 7pm-9pm, 312-369-7697, The Dance Center of Columbia College, 1306 S. Michigan Ave. Chicago, <http://www.colum.edu/academics/dcat/index.php>

A Cole Porter Songbook Cole Porter's sophisticated music and notoriously witty lyrics come alive in unique Theo Ubique

style under the direction of 4-time Jeff-award winning director Fred Anzevino. 7:30pm-9:30pm, 800-595-4849, No Exit Cafe, 6970 N. Glenwood Ave., <http://www.theo-u.org/>

Asians and Friends Chicago Fundraiser to help out a HIV-prevention cause in the Philippines. It's the first time AFC and Filipinos and Friends Chicago collaborate; 7:30pm, Atmosphere Bar, 5355 N. Clark St.

Friday, July 26

The FIXX & Wang Chung English New Wave band, The FIXX. 8pm-11pm, 630-962-7000, Arcada Theatre, 105 E. Main St., Saint Charles, Ill., <http://www.oshows.com>

Cocktails For Canines \$10 at the door includes complimentary champagne from 8-9 pm and a raffle ticket for the evening's grand prize. All door and raffle proceeds benefit the loving dogs of FOUNDCO Chicago. Great music, fab raffle and prizes, and Gator, the donation dog. Help support a groundbreaking local rescue dedicated to Chicago's most medically and behaviorally-challenged dogs. 7pm-10pm, Parlour on Clark, 6341 N. Clark St., <http://www.parlouronclark.com>

Espirito del Fénix (Spirit of the Phoenix) Flamenco Chicago's 10th Anniversary showcase featuring 25+ Flamenco Chicago students in addition to the work of choreographer/artistic director Rosetta Magdalen, bailaor Sean Arana of Ensemble Español, cantaor Miguel Cuchna, and guitarristas Tomás Kimball and Humberto Carrizales. 8pm-10pm, 312-787-0940, Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St., <http://flamencochicago.com>

Gordon Edmund: Out of His Mind & Into Yours Psychology, hypnosis and magic trick perception, mystify, and alter reality. Based on audience participation. Edmund may call you up on stage and read your mind, challenge your beliefs and focus on how fun and exciting messing with the mind can be. Fridays through Aug.2. \$25. 9pm-10pm, 847-677-7761, Gorilla Tango's Skokie Theatre, 7924 Lincoln Ave., Skokie, <http://www.gorillatango.com>

Mary's Fight Club: Lauper vs. Lennox w/ Voxbox Annie Lennox and Cyndi Lauper have both made pop music herstory, their careers spanning four decades. Join DJ Voxbox in celebration of these two very special ginger divas' music and careers, and dance to their greatest hits! 9:30pm, Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St., <http://www.hamburgermarys.com/chicago>

Saturday, July 27

Taste of Lincoln Avenue The summer happening that is Taste of Lincoln Avenue, one of Chicago's most popular summer street fests, celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2013. Through July 28. 12pm-10pm, North Lincoln Avenue between Fullerton and Wrightwood, <http://www.chicago-events.com/event.cfm?eid=117>

LPL Camping and Rafting Trip Wisconsin Wilderness Weekend Lincoln Park Lagooners invade the Glacier Wilderness campground, raft the Wolf River through Menominee Indian Reservation, explore countryside and Nicolet National Forest. Friday to Sunday plan \$130; Thursday arrivals add \$30. Rafting equipment rental \$40 per person. Register online. 12pm, northern Wisconsin, <http://www.lplchicago.com/>

Orgullo en Acción Latina/o LGBT PRIDE Picnic Free, intended for all; allies family children welcomed. Attendees are encouraged to bring food and grills. Children's play area, community art project, grilling, main stage performances, dancing and community building. 12pm-8pm, Humboldt Park near the corner of Humboldt Drive and Division, <http://www.orgulloenaccion.org>

Farewell to bartender Justin Jacobs Say "Byyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy" to Justin as he moves back to the Sunshine State. His last shift is 12-7 pm, so come see him off in style. The Sofo Tap, 4923 N. Clark St., <http://www.thesofotap.com>



KOZ & EFFECT

Saturday, July 27

Out saxophonist Dave Koz (above) will perform at Country Club Hills Theatre.

PR photo

Out performer Dave Koz Eight-time Grammy nominated saxophonist performing with Mindi Abair, Gerald Albright and Richard Elliot in support of his new CD, Dave Koz and Friends Summer Horns. 7pm, Country Club Hills Theatre, 4200 W. 183rd St., Country Club Hills, <http://www.countryclubhillstheater.org/>; Tickets: <http://gotpride.com/z8kh>

Sunday, July 28

PFLAG monthly meeting Quarterly meeting of area PFLAG groups. Contact oakpark.pflag@gmail.com; 3pm-4:30pm, First United Church of Oak Park, 848 Lake St., Oak Park, <http://www.pflag.org>

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SAT., SEPT. 7, 2013, 11AM-1PM

JOHN D'EMILIO

No Race-Baiting, Red-Baiting, or Queer-Baiting: The Marine Cooks and Stewards Union from Depression to Cold War

John D'Emilio teaches at the University of Illinois Chicago. A pioneer in the field of the history of sexuality, he has written or edited more than half a dozen books, including a history of pre-Stonewall activism and a biography of Bayard Rustin. A former Board chair of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, he was the founding director of its Policy Institute. In the 1930s, the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union became a multi-racial, left-wing, and queer-friendly labor union. How was this possible? What happened to the union? And why has this history not come down to us? Based on the research of Allan Berube, who was working on a history of the MCSU when he passed away unexpectedly in 2007, this talk with visuals will attempt to recreate this little known and inspiring episode in radical queer history.



SAT., OCT 12, 2013, 11AM-1PM

E. PATRICK JOHNSON

**Gathering Honey:
Oral Histories of Black Southern Women
Who Love Women**

E. Patrick Johnson is the Carlos Montezuma Professor in the Department of Performance Studies and African American Studies, Northwestern University. As a follow-up to Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South—An Oral History, E. Patrick Johnson has begun working on a new oral history on black lesbians of the South, tentatively entitled, Honey: Black Southern Women Who Love Women—An Oral History. In his presentation, Johnson will discuss the challenges to conducting oral histories of black same-gender-loving women based not only on gender differences between his subjects and himself, but also the content of their stories. In addition, Johnson will share some of the women's stories through performance.

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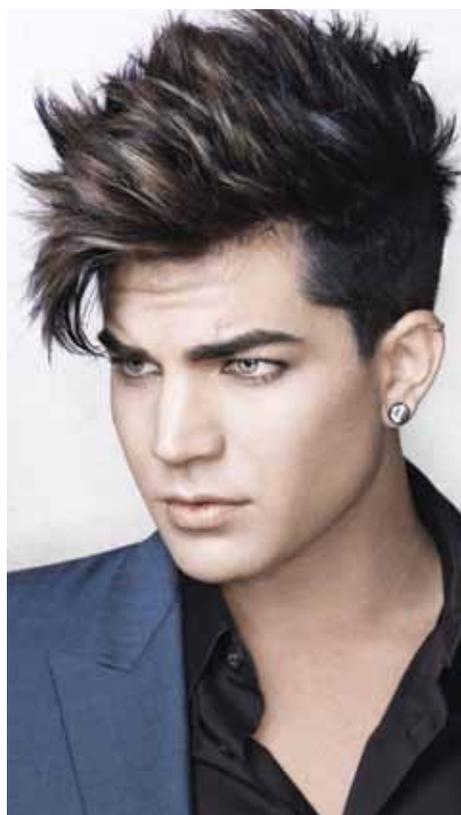
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BILLY MASTERS

"When faced w malicious gossip I take a moment to experience the loss of the person I thought was my friend... Then I say fuck em :-)"—Kirstie Alley tweets this comment, widely considered to be about ex-friend and ex-Scientologist, Leah Remini.

You know I hate to name-drop. (Who am I kidding? I LOVE to name-drop.) But sometimes, I need to respect my famous friends' privacy—at least if I want them to remain my famous friends. So I can't tell you whose guest room I'm staying in on the luxurious Island of Capri. I could give you a hint—I could mention that this legendary lady of the silver screen burst into our collective consciousness sashaying down a Neapolitan street. But, no, I've said too much. If I go on, I might end up sleeping with the fishes ... or, at the very least, with a dolphin.

It was only a matter of time before someone came up with a gay angle to the Trayvon Martin shooting. But even I was surprised that it came



Adam Lambert is making all kinds of entertainment news, Billy says. Photo by Lee Cherry

from Rachel Jeantel—Tray's friend who seemed to have enormous difficulty staying awake on the witness stand. Last week, she revealed to Piers Morgan that when Martin told her he was being followed, she suggested that perhaps Zimmerman was gay and was going to rape him! Remind me to call her next time I need reassurance and am only armed with a bag of Skittles. She said, "For every boy or every man who's not that kind of way, seeing a grown man following them, would they be creeped out?" At least Jeantel is consistent—she's as impressive an interview as she was a witness.

Ryan Murphy took a break from filming *The Normal Heart* in New York to tweet some news: "I am thrilled to announce that the super talented Adam Lambert is joining the cast of *Glee* this fall." Lambert responded, "I'm so excited!! :-)" Although this would imply that Lambert will not be joining the judging panel of *American Idol*, don't be so sure—he could pull double duty since they both are on FOX.

Regardless, this TV gig is coming at the perfect time since Lambert just walked away from his RCA recording contract last week. Apparently, the label wanted his next project to be a CD of '80s covers. Adam balked, as did many of his fans who took to the Internet to express their dissatisfaction about the proposal. (It should be noted that while most of the fans prefer original

material, they think if he did such a collection, the result would be impressive.) In discussing the break, Lambert said, "While there are lots of great songs from that decade, my heart is simply not in doing a covers album."

Clay Aiken (runner up to Ruben Studdard on "Idol") will be spending the tail end of the summer in Maine. He'll be headlining the Ogunquit Playhouse's production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" July 31-Aug. 25. Thank God I'll be back from Europe in time to catch the show during his final week.

A few months ago, I told you about an upcoming HBO series starring Jonathan Groff as a video-game designer living in San Francisco and looking for love online. The unnamed gay-themed show still has no name, but Groff recently shared some details about the premise: "The show hopefully will express all facets of gay life. We're all different types of people. There's lots of people who have anonymous sex. There's also people looking for love. There's people looking for an open relationship. There are also the queens. There are those you wouldn't know were gay. It's the gay experience." In other words, something for everybody.

In yet another instance of life imitating art, Groff finds himself once again looking for love—he and Zachary Quinto broke up a few months ago. While some say the relationship simply ran its course and the long-distance aspect had become problematic, others say it could have survived—if Groff didn't insist that the couple remain monogamous. Hmmm. We hear that Quinto (eight years Groff's senior) felt such constraints were unrealistic given their geographic situation, so the two parted. Whatever the reason, the bottom line is that two cute, successful gay men are now available. In a way, the timing was fortuitous. Groff has been best friends with Lea Michele since their *Spring Awakening* days and he immediately flew to her side during the aftermath of Cory Monteith's death.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Parker in Cincinnati: "I read about a rugby player getting caught sending out nude photos of himself. Is he cute, how big is his dick, can you post the photos and who is he?"

I think this beautifully illustrates the ranking of importance to the typical gay male—looks, dick size, photos and name ... as an afterthought! The rugby player in question is 21-year-old George Burgess, who plays for the South Sydney Rabbitohs. Yes, he's very hot, has an amazing body and a penis that doesn't disappoint. No one is sure how these selfies ended up public, but George doesn't seem embarrassed—in fact, he should be enormously proud!

Certainly I'm happy to post them (yes, plural) on our website. There's another aspect of this story that I find fascinating. Apparently, George is one of FOUR brothers who play rugby professionally. There are brothers Luke and Sam, and then twins Tom and George. And as it turns out, they all play for the same team—at least the same rugby team. Sexually, I'm told that at least one of them (Luke) is gay. So, the ratio is now down to one in four. Incidentally, Luke's position on the rugby team is listed as "scrum-half"—which looks like something you'd see in his brother's nude snaps on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm bringing you a bushel of Burgess balls, it's definitely time to end yet another column. I'm suddenly reminded of Tom and Max Evans—they're the brothers who play rugby in the UK and also do some of the hottest nude modeling I've ever seen. It must be something about rugby—or something about www.BillyMasters.com, the site that gives you the whole scrum or no scrum at all! If you'd like me to interpret other sports terms, write to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before we discover if Clay will be wearing the traditional loincloth when he appears in "Joseph." So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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Getting social with the Pansy King: Talking with Dave Awl

BY JORJET HARPER

Writer, performer, and social media maven Dave Awl has been a presence in the Chicago fringe theater scene for over two decades, since moving to Chicago from his hometown of Peoria in 1988.

An early member of the Neo-Futurists experimental theater company and founder of the groundbreaking Pansy Kings, he also created and hosted a series of eclectic events called The Partly Dave Show. Awl's interest in social media was an outgrowth of his theater and nightclub experience. An expert in social media communication, he is the author of *Facebook Me!* and has written regular articles on social media topics for CreativePro.com. In recent years Awl has worked as a consultant for arts groups, businesses, and individuals to help them build their social media presence; he also teaches workshops on Social Media Marketing for Small/Local Businesses, Artists, and Entrepreneurs.

Windy City Times: What was the Chicago fringe performance scene like in the late '80s and early '90s?

DA: One of the best things about those days was that space was cheap and plentiful. That meant that if you had a crazy idea for a show, you could put it together on a shoestring budget and make it happen. Late night theater was a new concept, so a lot of great theater spaces were sitting empty after 10 p.m. And if you didn't need a full-fledged theater space, you could usually find a bar or a cafe that would let you put on your show for a cut of the door. That allowed so much strange, wonderful, and inventive stuff to happen and it made Chicago's theater and performance scene really special in those years.

WCT: Were LGBT issues tackled in the show in the early days?

DA: The first year or so that *Too Much Light* was running, there weren't any gay cast members yet. Ted Bales joined the cast in late 1989, and I followed a few months later. We really wanted to put the show on the map in the LGBT community, and let it be known that it was gay-inclusive. The Neo-Futurists marched in the Pride parade for the first time in 1991, and we started the annual tradition—still going strong—of doing a special *Queer Pride* edition of the show for Pride week, "30 Queer Plays in 60 Straight Minutes," as a benefit for a local LGBT organization.

I made it a point to out myself to the audience in every performance. In the early 90s you didn't see a lot of openly gay people on TV or in movies, and it was still considered risky for actors to come out. I always had in mind Harvey Milk's



Dave Awl. Photo courtesy of Awl

idea that we have to come out because when people realize that someone they know and like is gay, that's when they start to support us.

WCT: What was the genesis of The Pansy Kings?

DA: In early 1994, there was a night when David Kodeski and Edward Thomas-Herrera (David's boyfriend) and I were talking about what a great job the women performers in town had done of creating vehicles for themselves like the *Big Goddess Powwow*. The *Powwow* was a huge event created by Lisa Buscani and Paula Killen that featured a lineup of Chicago's best female performance artists, and they played to packed houses. We agreed that it would be great to have something similar for Chicago's gay male performers. So I went away and thought about it and came up with the name *The Pansy Kings' Cotillion*. We called it "the ultimate sampler pack of Chicago's gay male performance scene."

I created, curated and produced the first few *Pansy Kings* shows myself. We had the first *Cotillion* in October 1994 at the Neo-Futurarium and it was a sold-out hit. In addition to David and Edward and myself, the bill included Robert Rodi, Kurt Heintz, Honey West, Patrick Tretten-ero, and John S. Connors, among others. And our emcee was *Nightlines'* "Fey Ways" columnist Dominic Hamilton-Little at his absolute campiest.

WCT: What led to your deep interest in social media?

DA: When the Internet arrived in my life in 1995, I got involved in a bunch of communities online that were organized around specific interests—bands, or authors, or subjects like vegetarianism or lefty politics that attracted people who were on a similar wavelength. I loved the way it would take a bunch of fans and network them into an organized community.

In those days, mailing lists were the main tool—you'd subscribe to a mailing list and then a listserver would let members post messages to the whole group. Around 1997 I started a mailing list for *The Neo-Futurists*, to give us a way to communicate with our fans and share news with them. That was a lot of fun, so I started a community for my favorite author, Russell Hoban, and another one for people who went to *Planet Earth*—a weekly *New Wave* dance night started by DJs Dave Roberts and Kristine Hengl (who later went on to open *Late Bar* in the Avondale neighborhood).

Planet Earth took place at several different nightclubs around town over the years, and it's still going—these days it happens every Saturday night at *Late Bar*. *Planet Earth* always drew a very diverse and LGBT-inclusive crowd. The people there were fascinating, but we didn't really know each other at first, even though we saw each other on the dance floor every week. So the geek part of my brain realized that an online community could be the ultimate icebreaker. I

started a Yahoo! Group called *Planet-Earthlings* and passed out little invitations to join it at the nightclub. Within a few months, I could look around on the dance floor and I knew everyone's name.

A very close-knit group formed out of that—and in fact a few years later, when I had some trouble with a moving company I'd hired, I posted an emergency message to the *Planet-Earthlings* group and 13 people turned out on a Monday night to help me finish the move before I had to be out of my old apartment. When people say that Internet friendships aren't "real" friendships, I think they're full of beans. I've seen firsthand how online communities can create powerful bonds between people.

So a few years ago, when Facebook and Twitter began to take off, they felt like the next step forward in that regard—and I was interested enough to start writing about social media. Last year I started offering a three-week class on social media marketing at *Late Bar* in the early evening before it opens for business. I teach a new session of the class every couple of months.

Dave Awl can be reached at hellothere@awlpoint.com. His next three-week class in social media marketing for small/local businesses, Artists, and Entrepreneurs begins Aug. 6. For more information, visit Dave's website at <http://awlpoint.com>.

Read the full interview with Dave Awl at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

SPORTS

Force advances to national title game

BY ROSS FORMAN

Next stop, San Diego.

The Chicago Force is California-bound for the Women's Football Alliance (WFA) national championship game for the second consecutive year after its 46-27 win Saturday night, July 20, over the Boston Militia in the national conference championship game. The title game will take place Saturday, Aug. 3.

The Force moves to 11-0 and has reached the playoffs 10 of the team's 11 years. The Militia ends its season 10-1.

The Force will face the Dallas Diamonds for the championship as the Diamonds defeated the Central Cal War Angels 27-6 to claim the American Conference championship. The Diamonds had five shutouts in their eight regular-season games, and outscored their regular-season opponents 456-20. The Diamonds are in their 10th year and have won four national championships.

Chicago and Dallas met for the 2008 Independent Women's Football League (IWFL) Championship in Chicago, and the Diamonds triumphed.

"This is amazing," Chicago two-way star Darcy Leslie said Saturday after the rain-filled



The Force's Jessica Javelot in Saturday's game. Photo from Linda Bache

game. "I am so proud, so relieved that we won; it's a great feeling."

Chicago and Boston have played for the National Conference championship three consecutive years, and the Force has won the past two seasons.

"We really were firing on all cylinders tonight," Leslie said.

CALENDAR from page 20

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>

Monday, July 29

St. Louis Pride Fest Pride Ride (Bike Ride) Cycling event will be the first day of the St. Louis Pride Fest. 7am-11am, 620-875-6262, St. Louis Pride 2013, <http://teamsaintlouis.org/>

Marriage Community Meeting Marriage supporters from across the area are coming together to re-commit to securing marriage equality. Hear updates about the statewide legislative efforts, develop plans for effective community-led advocacy, and help build the campaign that will bring respect and dignity to same-sex couples in Illinois. 6:30pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>; Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/ilunitescommunitymtg>

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, "Some Like It Hot" Chi-

cago Gay Men's Chorus 30th season goes into the summer with a new cabaret show with swingin' standards like *Night and Day*, *Another Hot Day* in Harlem, *Too Damn Hot*, and current hits from Adele and Esperanza Spalding. \$25 for general admission and \$50 for VIP. VIP reception 6 pm. First show 7:30pm. 9:30pm, The Laugh Factory Chicago, 3175 N Broadway, <http://www.laughfactory.com/clubs/chicago/date/2013-07-29>

Tuesday, July 30

Drag Race with Frida Lay Chicago's only amateur drag contest, hosted by Frida Lay! A hit at Roscoe's since its premier in 2000. 10am, Roscoe's, 3356 N Halsted St, <http://www.roscoes.com>

Wed., July 31

Women's Empower Hour with Stephanie Lieber Stephanie Lieber, Chair of Lynn Sage Cancer Research Foundation (LSCRF), and Vice President of Individual Giving at Chicago Children's Museum (CCM), host a discussion and Q&A on "Having Fun with Fundraising" at a complimentary luncheon. To RSVP for this complimentary event, please e-mail events@metcapbank.com. 11:30am-1pm, Metropolitan Capital, 9 E.

Ontario St., Chicago more information

Gathering Our Nuts: A Party for the Sidetrack Squirrels Softball Team In the Glass Bar. \$20 at the door includes two drink tickets and a chance to win prizes including tickets to Lollapalooza, plus many more prizes. 7pm-10pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St, Chicago, <http://www.sidetrackchicago.com> more information

JUBA! Masters of Tap and Percussive Dance Chicago Human Rhythm Project, in association with MCA Stage, begins three programs featuring extraordinary foot drummers and percussive arts masters. 7:30pm-9:30pm, 312-542-2477, Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 East Chicago Ave., <http://www.chicagotap.org>; Tickets: <http://www.mcachicago.org/performances/now/all/2013/1011>

Sunday, Aug. 4

Shelly Markham Award-winning composer of Unofficial Gay Marriage Anthem *It's About Time & Naked Boys Singing*. Songs performed by Windy City Chorus & Broadway's Karen Mason; 4pm, Davenport's Piano Bar and Cabaret, 1383 N Milwaukee Ave., <http://www.davenportspianobar.com>

Friday, Aug. 9

Macy's Passport Presents Glamorama "Fashion in a New Light" Nine-time Grammy Award winner Sheryl Crow and performance group *Cirque du Soleil*. \$75 for show only; \$175 & \$285 for show and after-party; \$1,000 for the VIP show and after-party. (The after-party is on the Harris' rooftop terrace.) Presale for American Express card members runs May 30-June 5; as of June 6, tickets will be sold at the Harris box office. 8pm, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph St.; www.macys.com/glamorama

Saturday, Aug. 10

Northalsted Market Days The 32nd annual Northalsted Market Days, the largest two-day street fair in the Midwest that takes place on Saturday & Sunday, August 10-11. 11am-10pm, 773-584-6631, Between Belmont and Addison on Halsted Street, <http://www.chicagoevents.com>

CONNEXIONS

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Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas. He is a longtime advocate for and member of the LGBT community, and is involved in several charitable groups, community associations, and professional organizations. Ray is a member of Clark Hill PLC, a full-service law firm consisting of a diverse team of attorneys and professionals committed to our clients and our communities.

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