

PAGE 6

**GOP
CANDIDATE
DAN
RUTHERFORD
TALKS
LGBTS**

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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**WCT
REVIEWS
THE FILM
'THE BUTLER'**
PAGE 16



Trans actress liven's 'Orange'

BY JERRY NUNN

Laverne Cox really proves you can do it all; now, the actress plays transgender inmate Sophia Burset on the new Netflix series Orange Is the New Black.

She became the first African-American trans woman to produce and star in her own series with VH1's TRANSform Me. That show was nominated for a GLAAD Media Award and is the first to star three trans women. VH1's I Wanna Work for Diddy was another first that Cox starred in, making her the first African-American trans-gender woman in a reality show.

Cox starred in the independent film Musical Chairs, playing a paraplegic transgender woman looking for love. Other film credits include Carla, The Exhibitionist and 36 Saints.

She moved on to television with guest roles on

NBC's Law & Order, HBO's Bored to Death and Law & Order: SVU. The awards keep coming with Out Magazine's Out 100 in 2010 and was named one of the most influential trans people in America in the Inaugural Edition of Trans 100 this year.

Contributing to the Huffington Post Cox is keeping her voice heard on a regular basis now as a writer.

Windy City Times chatted with Cox about Jodie Foster, brother M. Lamar and life on the set of Orange Is the New Black.

Windy City Times: Hi, Laverne. How are you?

Laverne Cox: I'm wonderful.

WCT: Great. Can you talk about how you auditioned for the role in the first place and how much was written for you?

LC: When I auditioned, I auditioned with the scene from episode one and then we did the bathroom scene from episode three. So those scenes didn't really change much at all from the audition

Turn to page 22



**GYMNAST
JOSH DIXON
LOOKS
FORWARD**
PAGE 19



**TAKING A
LOOK AT
'FLASHDANCE:
THE MUSICAL'**
PAGE 14



MARKET MOMENTS

Northalsted Business Alliance's Market Days drew thousands to Chicago's Boystown neighborhood this past weekend. See our spread of bright, sunny photos.
Photo by Jerry Nunn.

page 10

I'm a 'Yes' for Marriage Equality



PAT QUINN
Governor of Illinois



LISA MADIGAN
Attorney General of Illinois



JOHN J. CULLERTON
Senate President of Illinois
6th Senate District



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12th District



KELLY CASSIDY
State Representative
14th District



DEB MELL
Alderman
33rd Ward



BRIDGET GAINER
Cook County Commissioner
10th District



JAMES CAPPLEMAN
Alderman
46th Ward



JOE MOORE
Alderman
49th Ward



MICHELE SMITH
Alderman
43rd Ward



AMEYA PAWAR
Alderman
47th Ward



SCOTT WAGUESPACK
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32nd Ward



TOM TUNNEY
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BILL FOSTER
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5th District



JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Congresswoman
9th District



PROCO JOE MORENO
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1st Ward



LOU LANG
State Representative
16th District



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Board of Review



this week in
WINDY CITY TIMES

NEWS

Russia to enforce anti-gay law	5
GOP candidate Dan Rutherford	6
Marriage arguments; Springfield	7
S. Side forum; Lakeview crime	8
Bussen; Dodin	9
Market Days photos	10
Gay in the Life	11
VIEWES: Gowani, Segal	12

ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS

Dancin' Feats	13
Theater reviews	14
Knight: The Butler	16
Steve Grand show at Hilton	17
Gymnast Josh Dixon	19
Billy Masters	21

OUTLINES

Dish, classifieds	18
Calendar Q	20
Laverne Cox of 'Orange ... Black'	22

Photos on cover (left, from top): Photo of Dan Rutherford by Kate Sosin; still of Oprah Winfrey and Forest Whitaker in *The Butler* from The Weinstein Company and Dimension Films; photo of Josh Dixon from *Dixon*; image of Jillian Mueller in *Flashdance: The Musical* by Jeremy Daniel. Main photos: Photo of Laverne Cox by Hao Zeng; Market Days photo by Jerry Nunn

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GLAM BAM

Macy's Passport Presents Glamorama featured Sheryl Crow (left) and Cirque du Soleil.

Photo by Jerry Nunn



In Bent Nights, Vern Hester checks out Bettye LaVette's book, *A Woman Like Me*.

Photo by Vern Hester



The classical trio Il Volo chats about musicals and Barbra Streisand.

Photo from Vincent

ALPINE SOUND

WCT talks with Alpine's Phoebe Baker about the band's dynamics—and the Spice Girls.

ADULT EDUCATION

Read a review of the book *Not Your Mother's Meatloaf: A Sex Education Comic Book*.

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

Find out the latest about Dustin Lance Black, Rosie O'Donnell and Sharon Stone.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

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Game 3 (Game 2 winner vs. #1) 8:30 p.m.

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Game 5 (Game 2 winner vs. #1) 7:00 p.m.

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Cultural Q's

BY FRANCESCA ROYSTER



What I Love About 'The Fosters'

The jumbled warmth of an unmade bed. Steam rising over a cup of coffee. Syrup oozing over a plate of pancakes. A refrigerator plastered with children's photos. The opening credits of ABC Family's new series, *The Fosters*, just finishing its first season, take us through several quick shots of everyday family life in progress.

But it's the final shot: two hands—women's hands, brown and white and clasping tight on top of a comforter, that is the most striking, the most unexpected. For me it captures what this show does best: a rush of intimacy and shared desire and its necessary place in this family portrait. *The Fosters*, produced by Jennifer Lopez, is powerful because it portrays the ordinary and extraordinary in the life of a queer family, and it does so by making the intimacy between its two mothers its anchoring strength.

Despite the hypervisibility of teen sexuality, and lesbian sexuality (at least the "Girls Gone Wild" kind), there are very few representations of either group in popular culture that allow for a realistic treatment of desire or emotional complexity.

The Fosters isn't afraid to portray a mature lesbian relationship along with the lives of its teen protagonists. Parents Lena and Stef, together for 10 years, debate

ing. I admit I'm not used to feeling like a television network "gets me." While ABC Family is not perfect, at least some of its shows, including *The Fosters*, and *Switched at Birth*, feature multiracial, multicultural casts and some realistic dramatic situations. For example, *Switched at Birth* is the only show currently on television that portrays the complexity of deaf culture and politics. Like the best Young Adult Literature, these shows appeal to teens and adults, because they attempt to capture some complexities that young people face, sometimes alone, sometimes with the help of supportive adults. In one recent episode of *The Fosters*, foster daughter Callie is stalked by her past foster brother, Liam. She must decide whether to reveal his sexually predatory treatment of her in order to save another young woman now in his household, risking being labeled by the foster care system as sexually volatile, which could have her sent to a group home. The show gives room for vulnerability, confusion and a lack of clear answers.

The Fosters doesn't erase sexuality, or play it for laughs. It presents a family joined across lines of class and color, and it doesn't erase the differences between them. Sure, the kids and the adults are cute and mostly good-natured, but their lives are

"If previous representations of the nuclear family embrace self-sufficiency and individuality, *The Fosters* provides an image of positive interdependency."

also messy. In the midst of the coziness of this household, the show also offers a critique: their lives aren't untouched by the systemic violence of a corrupt child welfare system, the foreclosure crisis, internalized racism, unfair U.S. policies of citizenship, religious bigotry or homophobic bullying. The boundaries of family in *The Fosters* is porous and their lives

"lesbian bed death," the pros and cons of marriage versus domestic partnership, the importance of maintaining friendships with past lovers, the dynamics of butch/ femme, even the appeal of a woman in uniform. Lesbian politics are enfolded with the rest of family life.

Along with its mothers, the show expands its definition of queer family, including foster children (Callie and Jude), adopted children (twins Jesus and Mariana) and a biological son, Brandon. The family is multiracial, comprised of Latinos, whites and an African American, intertwining racial and queer political issues. As Mariana tries on dresses for her Quincenera, we watch her negotiate a Latina saleswoman's discomfort with her mothers. Later, Mariana admits that she is ashamed of being given away by two women. Lena, who is mixed-race African American and (presumably) white, struggles with her own mother's envy and dismissal of her as inauthentically Black.

ABC Family's current advertising slogan is "A New Kind of Family," which is intriguing.

include deep connections to ex-lovers, students, coworkers and friends. If previous representations of the nuclear family embrace self-sufficiency and individuality, *The Fosters* provides an image of positive interdependency.

The Fosters has raised some conservative hackles. For example it has been boycotted by the group One Million Moms for "pushing an agenda that homosexuality is acceptable." And it will probably be debated in the public sphere beyond its first season. Indeed, the show seems to welcome it. In one episode, the *Fosters* are joined for dinner by one of their sons' girlfriend and her traditional Latino parents. Stef's father also joins them. He struggles with the fact that his daughter has left a "perfectly good marriage" to a man to be with a woman. Conspiratorially, he asks the visitors if they disapprove of this lesbian-led family. The other couple declares, "Of course not. What could be more Christian than family?" *The Fosters* hijacks the discourse of family values and changes it for the better.

Francesca Royster is a Professor of English at DePaul University, where she teaches courses on Shakespeare, Popular Culture, gender, race, sexuality and performance. Her books include *Sounding Like a No-No: Queer Sounds and Eccentric Acts in the Post-Soul Era* (University of Michigan Press, 2013) and *Becoming Cleopatra: The Shifting Image of an Icon* (Palgrave, 2003).

Russia confirms Olympic enforcement of anti-LGBT measure

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The government agency controlling Russia's police force confirmed Aug. 12 that it would be enforcing the anti-gay law during the 2014 Winter Olympics.

The Interior Ministry statement, according to Russian news agency RIA Novosti, said that, "The law enforcement agencies can have no qualms with people who harbor a nontraditional sexual orientation and do not commit such acts (to promote homosexuality to minors), do not conduct any kind of provocation and take part in the Olympics peacefully."

The statement further attempted to downplay the perception of discrimination, saying that discussion of violating the rights of gays and lesbians was "totally unfounded and contrived."

Alexander Zhukov, head of Russia's National Olympic Committee, also said, "If a person does not put across his views in the presence of children, no measures against him can be taken."

Zhukov's comments, however, point to a major uncertainty—Russian police officers have a wide berth in defining what constitutes "putting across views." The International Olympics Committee said Friday that it had been waiting for "clarification" on the enforcement of the laws.

Meanwhile President Obama said Aug. 6 on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno that the country "wouldn't tolerate gays and lesbians being treated differently." Later in the week he added that a boycott would nullify the time and training that LGBT athletes invested in their Olympic goals.

"One of the things I'm really looking forward to is maybe some gay and lesbian athletes bringing home the gold or silver or bronze, which would, I think, go a long way in rejecting the kind of attitudes that we're seeing there," Obama said in a press conference Friday.

But many commentators continue to urge for a boycott. Actor Stephen Fry wrote an open letter to the IOC and British Prime Minister David Cameron Wednesday that said "an absolute ban on the Russian Winter Olympics of 2014 in Sochi is simply essential. Stage them elsewhere in Utah, Lillehammer, anywhere you like. At all costs, Putin cannot be seen to have the approval of the civilized world."

Out journalist Masha Gessen, who had spent much time in the U.S., wrote in the Guardian Monday that she was leaving Russia. "My family is moving to New York. We have the money and documents needed to do that with relative ease—unlike thousands of other LGBT families and individuals in Russia."

Before the Aug. 12 statement, gay Olympian Johnny Weir says he's prepared to get arrested at the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, On Top Magazine reported. Speaking with CBS News, the figure skater talked about if the Olympics should be boycotted over Russia's recently passed anti-gay law. Weir—who married his Russian-American husband, Victor Voronov, in 2011—said that he would go, because "that's what I'm trained to do and that's what I've devoted my life to." President Obama recently said that the United States should not boycott the Olympics over the measure.

Great Lakes lesbian fraternization charge thrown out

BY KATE SOSIN

A controversial fraternization charge involving a lesbian couple at Naval Station Great Lakes in Illinois has been dismissed.

Chief Petty Officer Sabrina Russell had been facing a court-martial trial for her relationship and civil union to Petty Officer 1st Class Jodi Geibel.

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

But Russell's attorney, Eric Montalvo, argued that such relationships are common in the military. He said his client was targeted because she was a lesbian and because Geibel reported a sexual harassment complaint within the command.

Lt. Matthew Comer, a spokesperson for Naval Services Training Command, previously told Windy City Times that the charges were unrelated to Russell's sexual orientation or the harassment complaint.

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

But a military judge granted Montalvo's request to dismiss the case on the grounds that prosecutors failed to prove the relationship was "prejudicial to good order and discipline," according to a Chicago Tribune report.

According Montalvo, Russell and Geibel began dating when the two were still the same rank. Russell never supervised Geibel, he said.

Montalvo said the relationship was made public after another service member discov-

ered a photo of the two on Russell's phone and began sharing the image.

Social Security to pay gay couples

The U.S. Social Security Administration has begun "processing some retirement spouse claims for same-sex couples and paying benefits where they are due," according to a press release.

Carolyn W. Colvin, acting commissioner of Social Security, said that the development has occurred primarily because of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision rendering Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional. She added that "in the coming weeks and months, we will develop and implement additional policy and processing instructions."

The payments are limited to couples residing in states that recognize full marriage equality for same-sex couples. The Social Security Administration specifically emailed Windy City Times that "we are paying claims when the individual:

- was married in a state that permits same-sex marriage, and
- is domiciled at the time of application, or while the claim is pending a final determination, in a state that recognizes same-sex marriage.

"For all other claims that do not meet this criteria, we are holding them until we receive further guidance from the Department of Justice. We do, however, encourage individuals who believe they may be eligible for Social Security benefits to apply now to protect against the loss of any potential benefits."

—Andrew Davis

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ELECTIONS '14

GOP gubernatorial candidate Rutherford talks LGBT support

BY KATE SOSIN

If more Republicans were like Dan Rutherford, Illinois Democrats might not take the LGBT vote for granted. Rutherford, state treasurer and a GOP gubernatorial hopeful, has backed more LGBT legislation in his career than many of the state's Democrats.

Rutherford has been active at Equality Illinois events—attending the organization's gala, stopping by the politician pride reception before Sunday's parade and participating in an LGBT political forum with openly gay Rep. Greg Harris last fall.

So consistent has his support for LGBT rights been that many have speculated that the Pontiac, Ill. native is gay himself (Rutherford says he is not gay).

And yet Rutherford presents a challenge for LGBT activists because he opposes equal marriage, a position he has stated repeatedly.

Rutherford threw his hat into the race for Illinois governor in June. Windy City Times sat down with him in early August for a conversation on marriage, the future of his party and just why he backs LGBT issues.

Windy City Times: What do LGBT people need to know about Dan Rutherford?

DR: I think it's important to understand my background. For 25 years, I have been president of ServiceMaster Corporation and responsible for our global expansion. In that, it took me as a young man to all over the world, and I'm from central Illinois.

WCT: Pontiac, Ill.

DR: Pontiac, yeah. So, now I'm going to parts of the world. What that did is it allowed me to go into places in the world multiple times that I just never would have experienced. So I really became quite understanding of diversity.

I did not become a career legislator. And that's an important component because I didn't have to get reelected to have a good life. I already had a good career, was simultaneously in the private sector. So, I was actually able to have a confidence level in my role in government to look at life and things and really do what I thought was the right thing to do.

I think that first came about in our discussion regarding substantive issues and the community, was the Human Rights Act.

WCT: You voted for it in the early '90s, long before it became law in 2005.

DR: The first time it came up, I did vote for it. It was one of those things that I really thought long and hard about. And the other thing was, I read the bill. I stepped away from the emotion and went with the practicality. As I recall, it was dealing with discrimination with regards to housing, financial credit, public accommodations. There was three or four or five things, and as I stepped back, I just thought, "this does not make sense to not have this as part of it." So I voted for it. And yeah, I got some grief.

WCT: Have you had political reservations about backing LGBT issues?

DR: First of all, I think if you're consistent, that's important. I would rather vote yes or no on issues consistently, as opposed to voting present.

WCT: Was there backlash?

DR: I experienced minimal backlash during the moment. In my campaign for the senate, there was, in the primary, an aggressive opponent, that was basically supporting the hardcore agenda. But even at that, it was part of the business.

WCT: But you have not supported same-sex marriage.

DR: If you don't mind, let me put the info in-between there. Civil unions came up, and this is one of those things that I stepped back, and I really analyzed it. The part I don't think a lot of people understand is it's not just for same-sex but for opposite-sex.

I voted for it, of course. I was the only Republican in the Senate to vote for it. Did I get some grief? Yeah. But it was one of those things that I thought in my heart, it was the right thing to do.

Now, we'll go to gay marriage. The difference for me there is the religious component.

Now, I think something else has happened with regards to the bill. I think the Supreme Court's ruling did add a very fair, debatable component in this. The tax consequences, I think that is a consideration to have weighed in. So what happens is, that has added a further component to this that lends itself to discrimination.

Now, I am what I am. I support civil unions. But the religious standpoint of marriage, it's just not where I'm at.

WCT: But we're talking about civil marriage here, not religious.

DR: I just think that it's just not at that point yet from a religious standpoint that I can support it.

WCT: What religion do you practice?

DR: I grew up as a Methodist.

WCT: It sounds like you are evolving on same-sex marriage. Is that a fair statement?

DR: I think that there's a lot of things evolving out there. I think that when the Supreme Court ruled, and this is a matter-of-fact accounting sensitivity ... but I think that did add a component with regards to the tax situation.

WCT: Is the Republican Party changing? Should it?

DR: I think the party should change. I think the party should evolve. I think it's going to take people like myself to help the party evolve. When I voted for the human rights bill in the early 90s, there was only a few of us. And when we moved forward to eventually pass it, there was more of us. And as we moved into consideration of the civil unions bill, there were some of us.

Equality Illinois was one of the hosts at the



Dan Rutherford.
Photo by
Kate Sosin

Republican National Convention for one of the receptions.

WCT: You took a lot of heat for that.

DR: I got some flack because the question was put in a way that caused me to have a sound bite that probably wasn't how it was intended to be. If people don't want to participate, then I understand, but everybody did. [Laughs]

I was the chairman of the Romney campaign for Illinois. There are cocktail parties the companies and labor groups and organizations host, and they are all a sponsor for some piece of it. Equality Illinois approached us and said they would be interested in hosting a part of one of the afternoons or evenings, and I said, "As far as I'm concerned, great."

So to answer the question, yes, I think my party needs to be more tolerant. I think they need to be more tolerant of the gay and lesbian community. They need to be more tolerant to the ethnic minority community. I think they need to be more tolerant with regards to the immigrant community.

I'm not saying that to be negative on my party. I'm just saying that if we allow gay rights, guns and abortion to be the definition of the difference between a good Republican and a bad Republican, we will be the party of the perpetual minority.

WCT: So what makes a Republican a Republican?

DR: I'll tell you exactly what it is: Government, stay out of my wallet and out of my purse. The difference between the Democrat Party and the Republican Party needs to be about government spending and economics and maybe start to get into some of these social benefit programs.

You know what I think we got to do to help the crime rate in the City of Chicago? I think we need get the employment rate down in African-American wards below 80 percent. What do we need to do about school funding? I think we broaden the tax base, get more people to work. You got a bigger tax base, then you don't have to go out and raise taxes.

WCT: What is your stance on funding for AIDS services and the Affordable Care Act?

DR: I think that the AIDS prevention programs, I think you will see that historically, I have been supportive within the context of the overall finances of the state. Again, AIDS prevention isn't just for the gay and lesbian community. Preventative is a lot better to try to work with as opposed to dealing with now a situation that, from a government standpoint, is going to be abundantly more expensive.

In regards to Obamacare, it's the law of the land. I'm not going to be one of these run-around trying to whatever... it's the law of the land. The sensitivity I have though is what we're getting ourselves into in state obligations in the future. So there is the part about the Obamacare that the federal government is going to pick up, and X numbers of years down the road, they're going to take down their percentage. At that point, the government of Illinois is going to have to do a number of things: One, pick up the difference in cost or two, cut off the services. Well, neither will be reasonable.

WCT: What will be your top three priorities as governor?

DR: Jobs, jobs, jobs. There is nothing more important that I can do as the governor of the State of Illinois than to help get the unemployment down.

WCT: Why is Dan Rutherford the best governor for Illinois?

DR: I probably have as great of an understanding and appreciation for the diversity of this state as anybody, Democrat or Republican. And I think that comes from my real life experience.

I think that I come from a private sector that has dealt with small businesses and large businesses. And I think there's an advantage in having been a citizen legislator as well. I know the process, I know the people.

WCT: Your support for the LGBT has put you in the spotlight. Conservative bloggers have speculated you are gay. How do you define your sexual orientation?

DR: I'm not gay.

WCT: Can you talk about your relationship to the community?

DR: I get it. This kind of thing happens in politics. I've been when I'm invited. Equality Illinois has their reception in Springfield. I'll go to that. They hosted receptions and Republican National Conventions before. I'll go to that. There's an annual gala. I've been to it, I haven't recently, but I've been to it. I haven't been in the gay Pride Parade but I've been to the elected officials' reception prior to it. I'll go where I'm invited and be there.

WCT: Is there anything you want to add?

DR: Just to emphasize the fact that I'm the one Republican [running for governor] that's won a statewide race. I'm the only one.

Analysis of Supreme Court marriage decisions Aug. 22

"What the Supreme Court Rulings on DOMA and Prop 8 Mean for You" is the subject of a free event at the Center on Halsted Thursday, Aug. 22, 3656 N. Halsted St. The event is presented by James E. Elvord, first vice president-financial advisor with RBC Wealth Management and co-sponsored by Windy City Times and Center on Halsted.

The main speaker for the program will be Bill Ringham, vice president-senior wealth strategist for RBC Wealth Management. The law firm of Clark Hill PLC in Chicago will also present at the program, represented by Ray Koenig and Leslie Gutierrez, who are both attorneys at the firm.

There is a reception with wine and cheese at 5:30 p.m., followed at 6:15 with the presentation and at 7:15 there will be a Q&A.

RSVP to James E. Elvord at 312-559-1738 or james.elvord@rbc.com.



Illinois court hears marriage arguments

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A Cook County Circuit Court judge heard oral arguments Aug. 6 in a motion to dismiss a lawsuit brought about last year on behalf of 25 couples seeking the right to marry in Illinois.

Darby vs. Orr and *Lazarro vs. Orr* were filed against Cook County Clerk David Orr in mid-2012. Lambda Legal and ACLU Illinois are representing the plaintiffs. Orr, who is in favor of marriage equality, has refused to defend the state's marriage ban, so the Thomas More Society, a conservative law firm, is representing five opposing county clerks in the matter.

Special State's Attorney Paul Benjamin Linton said Aug. 6 that the state's marriage ban, passed in 1996, was put in place to "codify what was obvious" and "make explicit what was implicit"—that Illinoisans believed marriage was an institution reserved for a man and a woman.

"It passed overwhelmingly and few legislators spoke about the bill when it came up for a vote," he said, adding that it was unfair to ascribe dubious motives to the legislation's authors.

According to Linton, the state has a compelling interest in promoting relationships that result in "responsible procreation." He dismissed the observation that infertile men and women can still marry by saying that the idea can be "subject to exception, but that exception does not negate it." He added the state has a responsibility to promote the idea of stable, mother-father households.

"This is a common sense view by society," Linton said.

Camilla Taylor, marriage project director of Lambda Legal, said that the defendants are basing their arguments on assertions outside the original complaint and incorrectly grasping the ideas behind the law. She pointed out, for example, that a study the defendants utilized to undermine the idea of same-sex parents had been discredited by the journal it had appeared in.

Children living with two same-sex parents is an idea "beyond scientific dispute," she said. "We must accept as consensus that kids with same-sex parents do just fine."

According to Taylor, the plaintiffs are seeking access to a "birthright, which is the freedom of choice. Freedom means nothing if the government the right to deny Jim Darby the right to marry Patrick Bova, his partner of more than 50 years."

John Knight of ACLU added that the state had no compelling or rational interest in banning same-sex marriage and failed to explain how it was strengthening the institution of marriage by doing so.

"Laws that burden lesbians and gay men are more likely to be rooted in stereotypes," Knight said. "In the end all this law does is hurt the marriage status of same-sex couples."

Judge Sophia Hall said that she would issue her ruling about the dismissal Sept. 27.

Springfield outreach for marriage-equality march

BY TRACY BAIM

I was happy to spend some time in Springfield the day before the Aug. 8 State Fair parade and launch of the multi-day fair in the state's capital. Springfield resident Buff Carmichael and I are two of the co-chairs of the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality Oct. 22, so we held a variety of meetings with the city and community members.

Among those we met were Scott Cross of OFA Springfield, who has great ideas about March outreach; Jonna J Cooley, Ph.D., executive director of Phoenix Center, which has its big annual gala a few days before the Oct. 22 March on Springfield; and residents from central Illinois at a community meeting the First Church of the Brethren hosted.

Union activists Jim Dixon, Tom McLaughlin and Matt Berry agreed to take on logistics for the March, based on their experience on large-scale rallies and Marches in Springfield.

LGBT area groups and allied organizations will be planning some ancillary events around the March on Springfield, so we hope Chicagoans and others plan to be in town for a few days to enjoy the great LGBT and tourist attractions. And stay for Oct. 23, which should be the first full day of the legislative veto session.

Also during the quick visit, I got to see the finished float for the parade entry of CORAL, the Coalition of Rainbow Alliances. They have a long winning record at the State Fair Parade, and Bert Morton gave me a sneak peek of the float. The next day, it won the Governor's Sweepstakes Award, the top prize. Congrats again to CORAL.

Visit <http://www.marchonspringfield.org>.



CORAL float in the State Fair parade in Springfield. Photo by Tracy Baim



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From left: Jasmine Davis and Aisha Truss-Miller. Photo by Matt Simonette

South Side forum looks at practice of 'stop and frisk'

BY MATT SIMONETTE

An Aug. 8 forum questioned Chicago Police Department's (CPD's) use of "stop-and-frisk" tactics, wherein officers detain individuals they suspect of criminal activity and search them for weapons.

Some elected officials and policy advocates have called for an aggressive expansion of stop and frisk in order to quell the number of murders in the city. Such an explicit policy has been in place in New York City, but on Aug. 12 a federal judge ruled it unconstitutional.

Even without an official policy in Chicago, however, participants in the discussion, held at the Arts Incubator, 301 E. Garfield Blvd., described police actions that left them feeling both bullied and annoyed by the prospect of being randomly stopped by CPD officers. They maintained that Chicagoans of color are largely detained and searched on the basis of their race, not reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing.

Aisha Truss-Miller of Affinity Community Services described two occasions when she was stopped and frisked by CPD. The first occurred on the North Side, when she and a white friend were walking to Target and took a shortcut near a CHA facility. A police officer, suspecting a drug deal, demanded to see lease papers. When they could offer no proof as to why they were there, they were detained for several hours. Truss had to appear in court twice in order to be cleared of any wrongdoing.

Truss-Miller's second stop took place on the South Side, on her birthday. A man in a passing car stopped her to ask for directions. Then, suddenly, "The police swarmed down on me like I was making a bomb in the middle of the street."

She was dressed to go out, so the officer insinuated that she was a sex worker. He repeatedly asked her, "You know what you look like?" She was let go after he found a U-Pass CTA card, indicating that she was a college student.

Karen Sheley of ACLU of Illinois said that police officers usually have higher "hits"—finding evidence of wrongdoing—when white suspects, with whom they are likely to be more diligent, are stopped. When persons of color are stopped, the rate of successful hits drops down to 12 percent.

ACLU used the Freedom of Information Act to obtain arrest records and try to redact an estimate of how many stops led to arrests in Chicago, Sheley added. "It's hard to analyze how often it is done—because no separate records exist, we can't tell how well it works."

Not finding anything on your person is no guarantee of an apology or even respectful treatment from the officer, said Jasmine Davis of First Defense Legal Aid. Oftentimes they will just get more agitated.

"If you're a police officer, and if you don't find anything, it should be the highlight of your day," said Davis.

Andrea Ritchie, a New York City attorney and organizer, described how excessive stops there led to protests and pushback from the community. Andy Thayer of Gay Liberation Network said that Chicagoans so often are incapable of effectively building coalitions to challenge the police because, "In this town, people are afraid to take on City Hall."

"That may be true, but I would encourage you look beyond that—remember, we have a billionaire mayor," said Ritchie. "It's about the strength of a coalition. It's not an incorrupt system in New York."

Davis found the police tactics analogous to those of gangs. "Guys standing out on streets will stop you and do what they call 'checking' you—they ask who you are and where you're from too."

Stop and frisk, she said, adds to fear and suspicion that many people of color have of the police. "It just separates the police from the community."

Truss-Miller said that "quality of life" policing—the current justification for stop and frisk—is a new incarnation of laws that have already been determined to be unjust. "In the 1980s, we had 'disorderly conduct,' then in the 1990s, we had 'gang ordinances'—this is the same thing."

Activists to protest McDonald's Olympics sponsorship

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A Chicago-area activist group is planning a protest against Oak Brook-based McDonald's Corporation over the fast-food giant's sponsorship of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games.

Members and supporters of StonewallAgain plan on marching at McDonald's headquarters, 2111 McDonald's Dr., Oak Brook, on Saturday, Aug. 17, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

The group is calling on McDonald's to cease its support of the Games to take a stand against Russia's harsh new anti-LGBT laws. In a deal that lasts through 2020, McDonald's pays about \$100 million to be sole retail food sponsor for each pair of Olympics in a four-year period.

The protest will "tell McDonald's Corp. to stop sponsoring the homophobic Sochi Winter Olympics. Russia has implemented laws to arrest and deport anyone who is or they suspect is gay," according to StonewallAgain's Facebook page.

The organization's founder, Mike Lackovich, said that he had become dismayed with the situation in Russia and tried in vain to get contact with McDonald's, which has so far remained silent on the matter.

Lackovich compared the persecutions to Nazi Germany in the 1930s. "This is history repeating itself," he said. "McDonald's should be working with the IOC in order to find an alternative venue."

Olympic sponsors, who also include Coca-Cola and Procter & Gamble among others, are beginning to come under fire for their participation. In an Aug. 9 radio interview with Michelangelo Signorile, Human Rights Watch Director of Global Initiatives Minky Worden suggested that the International Olympic Committee and their sponsors had carefully tracked the legislation but chose to look the other way.

"If they had leaned on [Russia] before the law was signed, it would not have been signed. That is absolutely true," said Worden.

McDonald's had not yet returned calls for comment by press time.

Lakeview officials in hot seat over area crime

BY KATE SOSIN

It's not the crime rates that Lakeview residents want addressed: it's the perception.

That's the message that a packed room at the District 19 police station had for District Commander Elias Voulgaris Aug. 8.

More than 75 people filled the Community Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) meeting Wednesday night. The crowd took Voulgaris to task for what residents say is an ongoing crime problem in the neighborhood, which encompasses Boystown, the city's official gay neighborhood.

Residents reported a seeming increase in graffiti and robberies, among other concerns.

Voulgaris countered that area crime rates are down from last year and offered statistics to that effect. But residents said that it was perception of an uptick in incidents that led neighbors to feel unsafe. They offered their own statistics—official numbers that place Lakeview beats among the top crime areas.

Voulgaris acknowledged that residents were not satisfied, but said that comparing beats was counterproductive because Lakeview encompasses a heavily-populated entertainment district.

"I'll accept criticism, but I need constructive feedback," Voulgaris told the room.

Complaints about crime in Lakeview are hardly new. Concerns tend to spike every summer as crime rates rise with the temperature. Two years ago, the neighborhood was rocked by controversy after a string of high-profile violent crimes set residents on edge and stirred a debate over racial profiling in the neighborhood.

Those tensions live on as some feel that area service providers working primarily with LGBTQ youth attract trouble to the neighborhood.

Among organizations on the defense has been the The Night Ministry, which operates a small LGBTQ-friendly youth shelter called "The Crib."

Residents voiced concerns about the shelter at an Aug. 5 meeting with The Night Ministry and 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney. Some say that the shelter is disrupting the neighborhood, increasing the number of young people loitering outside Lakeview Lutheran Church, where the program is held.

They also singled out Tunney for not taking a firm stand on The Crib. But Tunney said that he was committed to making changes.

Tedd Peso, government relations manager for The Night Ministry, said that the organization is taking resident concerns into consideration.

He added that the organization would be meeting in the coming days to discuss a response to resident concerns.

Other topics at the meeting ranged from complaints about cyclists not following traffic rules to police handling of major events like concerts.

Largely, residents said they wanted to see more police walking Lakeview streets, and they pressed Voulgaris on how they could see that change through.

Voulgaris said he would accept responsibility for cutting down on crime, but added that residents needed to work at that too, putting away their iPhones when walking home and reporting crimes and graffiti.

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From left: Rev. Joseph Lofy, Rev. Barbara Zeman, lay minister Mike Hogan, DignityUSA's Marianne Duddy-Burke. Photo by Tracy Baim

Jim Bussen memorial service held

A memorial service was held for longtime Chicago activist Jim Bussen Aug. 10. DignityUSA Executive Director Marianne Duddy-Burke spoke about his life, and friends told stories about his contributions to Catholic and LGBT activism. Jim's sisters came from out of town to attend the service. The memorial was held at Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Andersonville. Presiders were Rev. Barbara Zeman and Rev. Joseph Lofy, with lay minister Mike Hogan. The Dignity Chicago Choir and Musicians performed, directed by Jill Goldsmith. Guest musicians were Anne Marie Lewis and Jennifer Lowe. See Bussen's obituary at www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/PASSAGES-James-A-Bussens-dies/43607.html. Videos, by Tracy Baim, are at http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Jim-Bussen-memorial-service-held-/44026.html.

New ownership for Arlington Heights veterinary clinic

Diane Dodin, DVM, has purchased the Prospect Animal Hospital, 2326 E. Rand Rd. in Arlington Heights, Ill. The clinic will host an Open House Sunday, Aug. 18, Noon-3 p.m., with refreshments, free pet/owner photographs and free give-aways. Dodin, with a decade of veterinary experience, is also a longtime volunteer veterinarian at area animal shelters and clinics, including Red Door Animal Shelter. She has donated her time to help countless animals in need. "I am very excited to serve the Arlington Heights and Northwest Chicago and suburban communities." Dodin said. "This is an ideal location to work from, with many animal lovers in this region." Dodin finished her undergraduate degree at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, Pa. She obtained her veterinary degree from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine and finished her clinical year at the University of Illinois in 2003. She has written columns on veterinary issues for Windy City Times and is active in the LGBT area sports leagues, including helping to organize teams for the soccer division at Gay Games VII in Chicago. Prospect Animal Hospital focuses on dogs and cats. Call 847-253-8351, or see www.prospectanimalhospital.com or on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ProspectAnimalHospital.



Diane Dodin. Photo by Sam Hamilton

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Market Days 2013 hits Halsted

The Northalsted Business Alliance presented Market Days 2013 on August 10 and 11 and things were bigger than ever for the largest two-day festival in the Midwest. Located on Halsted between Belmont and Addison, the festival spanned six city blocks and provided entertainment for the massive crowd. Artists on three stages included Wilson Phillips, Erasure's Andy Bell, Aaron Carter and Wonder Woman herself, Lynda Carter.

Booths with vendors selling art, food, and clothing lined the festival. Market Days marks the end of the summer for many Chicagoans and this annual event turns Boystown upside down for the weekend.

Stay tuned to www.northalsted.com for information about next year's fest.

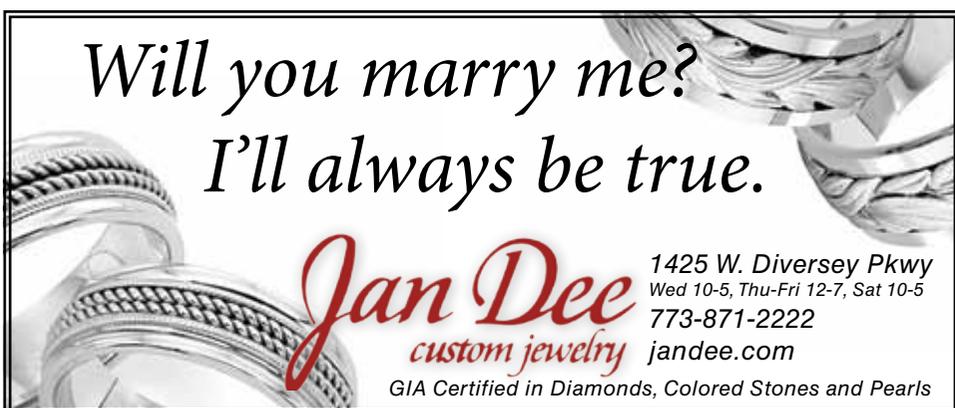
Text by Jerry Nunn, photos by Jerry Nunn and Ed Negron. Many more photos available at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



One of the highlights this year was the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago booth having U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) and Illinois Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon officiate faux marriage ceremonies in support of marriage equality in Illinois. Photo courtesy of John Litchfield



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GAY *in the* **LIFE**
Chris Boyd
 TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN
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Age
29

Neighborhood
Hyde Park

Relationship status
Engaged

Job
Barber at Orlando's Barber Studio

Hobbies
Going to the gym, playing video games, reading, music, and going to the movies

Favorite movie
Love & Basketball

Favorite TV show
Modern Family

Four people (living or dead) who you'd like to have dinner with
"My mother (passed), grandmother (passed), President Obama and Dr. [Martin Luther] King"

Biggest obstacle overcome
"It was getting over my mother's death. Even though she isn't here physically, she's with me spiritually."

Little-known fact
"I love collecting gym shoes; I have close to 200 pairs."

Chris Boyd truly loves being a barber: Every day is different, every haircut is different, and all clients are different. Plus, "I'm the boss," he said.

"The best part of the job is when a client comes to me asking for a service and isn't quite sure what they're looking for," he said. "I love to take what they have given me and turning it into something special that exceeds their expectations. Putting a smile on a client's face is what makes this job terrific."

And yes, he added, "The banter can sometimes be insane in the shop. It all depends on the age-group that's [the shop] in at the time."

Boyd said the biggest job challenge he faces is dealing with the different personalities that sit in his chair. "I'm a basically shy and quiet type of guy, so, if I am dealing with someone that's loud and likes to talk, I can get uncomfortable fairly quickly," he said.



Boyd met his partner, Michael, in 2008, while living in Orlando, Fla. Michael took the simple approach, simply telling Boyd: "You're cute."

"We [will] have been together five years this October," Boyd said. "Michael proposed [last] December. We are waiting, and hoping, to set a date once Illinois passes marriage equality."



Boyd showcases his sporting passion on the flag football fields, and Michael often is videotaping the action.

"Playing CMSA sports allows me be with other great guys in the gay community and I don't have to worry about being judged or dealing with petty stereotypes. And there is also great camaraderie, as well as great camaraderie," Boyd said. "The funniest thing that has happened since playing flag football happened while playing in the Pride Bowl this year [this past June]. I caught a pass and stopped running because I thought I had made it to the end zone. As it turned out, the end zone was another 10 yards away. After hearing my teammates yelling for me to run, I eventually made it and scored a touchdown."

Boyd will be on a Chicago team in the national Gay Bowl in October.

"I'm looking forward to helping bring the trophy back to Chicago," he said.



Football photos by John Cox Photography

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Reconciling identities: LGBT South Asians and immigration reform

This past Fourth of July weekend, I attended what will remain as one of the most unique and influential conferences of my life—DesiQ. Hosted by Trikone for the past four conferences, DesiQ brings together the international South Asian LGBTQ community and its allies for a conference every five (or so) years. Since "coming out" to my family nearly 10 years ago, I have immersed myself into queer spaces over time and am now a young veteran.

Thanks to the elders of our community, I am also an informed resource for young people and peers on being South Asian, queer, and a child of Muslim immigrants. The discussions that took place at DesiQ on immigration in particular have come at a critical time for this issue, and I am honored and humbled to be working on it in these historic times. In Washington, D.C., as the attention turns from the Senate to the House on comprehensive immigration reform, the realization that I am part of a national conversation that will have ramifications for years to come.

According to the Center for American Progress, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer undocumented immigrants are more likely to be male, younger, less likely to be Hispanic, and more likely to be Asian. To identify as LGBTQ and be a South Asian immigrant is also not a one-track narrative, and issues such as H1B professional work visas, asylum, racial and religious discrimination, the need for legalization and a reduction in visa backlogs are leading concerns surrounding immigration reform for the South Asian LGBTQ community.

While India and China graduate nearly 1 million engineering students annually, it is no surprise that many H1B visa holders are young, South Asian men who immigrate to the United States on their own, often without any family ties. Among South Asian women in the sciences, technology, math and engineering, a disproportionate portion of them identify as lesbian or

bisexual. Naturally, immigrating alone provides space for exploring one's self without familiar and cultural pressures from back home and in turn allows one to be more comfortable in openly identifying as LGBTQ.

This also, however, creates dread of returning to the homeland once an H1B visa holder has come out of the closet and become a part of the ever-diverse American LGBTQ community. With the recent ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), this can fortunately be amended for couples where one partner is a US Citizen. Access to permanent residency, thus, is a key necessity for visa holders to live independently and continue contributing to the communities and safety nets they have created here. Because same sex marriage is not legal in South Asian countries, questions still remain about the affects of the overturning of DOMA on whether provisions in the Senate bill allowing work authorization for the spouses of non-immigrant H1B visa holders will apply to same-sex spouses.

Asylum

Similarly, the issue of asylum closely affects South Asian communities, particularly those from Muslim-identifying countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, which tend to be less welcoming of queer-identified individuals. As the US provides a safe space for asylum-seeking immigrants, we must consider the one-year filing deadline that remains in our laws and the strain that places on individuals who could return to living in often violently homophobic communities if they miss the filing window.

Racism, religious intolerance and national security?

The South Asian experience in the past 12 years has been characterized by a heightened sense of racism and Islamophobia. With concerns over racial and religious discrimination loopholes in policies for national security needs, coupled with heightened hate crimes and surveillance of the Muslim and Sikh communities, we need increased judicial discretion and fairness. For queer South Asians particularly, navigating these identities and the triple-minority-discrimination is a struggle. Personally, if I had not met older queer South Asian immigrants to seek guidance from, maneuvering racism, homophobia, and Islamophobia simultaneously would have remained a struggle waged in isolation. Should these elders and next generation individuals be deported or rejected permanent residency, our support systems will actively disintegrate.

happening over the past 10 years. In the 2004 and 2008 elections, same-sex marriage was a wedge issue that led many Black socially conservative voters to vote against gay rights. However, before the 2012 election, President Obama "evolved" to support gay marriage last year, and Black support for LGBT rights has taken time to grow as well. Just as Obama has evolved on issues such as marriage, Black voters have as well, with African-American support for gay marriage doubling from 26 percent to 51 percent, according to a survey from the Pew Research Center.

Although many African-American ministers are still anti-gay, there is still a shift towards progress with more religious leaders being more open-minded towards their LGBT parishioners. Keith Boykin wrote in the Huffington Post last November that Black LGBT people "were coming out, getting married, challenging their churches, defining their own identities, and creating institutions to support and sustain them." By creating their own safe spaces and being unapologetic about who they were, Black LGBT people forced their families and churches to reexamine their beliefs about LGBT people.

Black civil-rights groups like the NAACP have included gay rights as part of their agendas for

Legalization

While improvements to the immigration system continue and with DOMA now nullified, South Asian LGBTQ immigrants are relying on the passage of a sensible immigration bill.

Accounting for one-tenth of the undocumented population of 11 million, Asian Americans account for nearly 1.5 million undocumented immigrants, including those from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. With 240,000 of them hailing from India alone, India has become the seventh highest country of origin for undocumented individuals in the United States.

Queers have been legalized through the striking down of sodomy laws and now DOMA, and in turn have been proven to invest our energy and time in building our informal and formal networks, and economies, into stronger systems. Legalization is thus needed for our members to live without fear of the authorities, without fear of how to finance their family's livelihoods, and with a stronger sense of community within the United States.

Keeping families together

Current immigration law designates green card quotas per country, no matter how populous the country nor how long the list.

Of the top seven countries with the largest backlogs, five of them fall in Asia, with India as the third and Bangladesh as the seventh highest. This also means that applicants from India wait much longer for permanent residency than those from almost every other country.

While the current Senate bill unfortunately removes the family reunification categories of adult married children and siblings, it takes efforts to reduce immense green card backlogs. With 4.3 million people caught in these backlogs, waiting to be reunited with their loved ones, nearly 2 million are Asian. Considering the safety and support networks queer individuals rely on, this means strides for the queer South Asian community. As we continue to push for sensible and comprehensive immigration policy reform, we must address the reduction of these backlogs and allow for the reunification of families within the next decade.

Fayzan Gowani is an immigration consultant for the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA). In 2011, she was part of a groundbreaking contingent of Asian American, South Asian, Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander (AAPI) LGBTQ young, emerging leaders to be invited to the White House for a special AAPI LGBT briefing.

at least 20 years. Outreach between LGBT and Black organizations have certainly helped the increase of mutual respect. The NAACP fought for marriage equality, while many LGBT organizations openly protested the not-guilty verdict of George Zimmerman in the Trayvon Martin trial. The coalition between the two communities shows the connection between the civil rights of Black and LGBT people.

The simple act of coming out can be revolutionary. As the late great Harvey Milk said, gay people should come out to "break down the myths, destroy the lies and distortions." Just by coming out, Raven-Symoné has proven that anybody can be gay, including a former Disney Channel star. The bravery of other Black LGBT people such as Jason Collins, Frank Ocean and Brittney Griner helped Raven-Symoné and other Black LGBT youth feel more comfortable with coming out.

When more Black people come out in the United States (and even across the Diaspora in the Caribbean and African countries), they are making the world safer for others to come out and challenge anti-gay laws and beliefs. In the African-American community, it proves that being gay is not a "European" or "white" idea.



ELLA
VINCENT

Why Raven Symone's coming-out helps Black LGBTs

TV star Raven-Symoné unofficially came out on Twitter by saying she can finally get married, referring to the defeat of the defeat of Proposition 8 and the Defense of Marriage Act. The That's So Raven star not only outed herself; she helped the Black LGBT community come out more as well. While a former child star coming out may not undo decades of homophobia in the Black community, it is part of the evolution of support of African-American support for LGBT rights.

Although there is still anti-gay sentiment in the Black community, change has been slowly

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo from The Weinstein Company and Dimension Films

HAUNTED FOREST

Oprah Winfrey and Forest Whitaker co-star in Lee Daniels' *The Butler*. Read the film review on page 16.

DISH

The ring's the thing.
Page 18

Photo of onion rings at Clark St. Dog
by Andrew Davis



THEATER

Stop and (Van) Gogh.
Page 14

Photo from *Inventing Van Gogh*
by Greg Inda



SPORTS

Josh-ing around.
Page 19

Photo of Josh Dixon
from Dixon



DANCIN' FEATS

Jeremy Plummer takes his craft to new heights in Dance for Life

BY VICKI CRAIN

Jeremy Plummer, 35, is flying high. He is a successful dancer, teacher, choreographer and aerialist who happens to be openly gay. He choreographs for the Royal Caribbean cruise line, including their first all-aerial show. Last month he received the Chicago National Association of Dance Masters 2013 Artistic Achievement Award. And he survived a tragic physical accident that doctors said should have killed him. "It's going well," he said of his life. "I can't complain."

This month, Plummer participates in Dance for Life (DFL), an annual multi-company dance performance that benefits the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, the Dancers' Fund and Chicago House. This year's show boasts performances from DanceWorks Chicago, Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, River North Dance Chicago, Thodos Dance Chicago as well as independent artists Abigail Simon and Mauro Villanueva. The evening closes with a world premiere finale choreographed by Randy Duncan.

Plummer grew up in a small town in Indiana and began taking tap classes at 5. "My Mom said I was very rambunctious and she needed to give me something to get my energy level down," he said. "I was bouncing off the walls." Tap classes progressed to jazz, tumbling and ballet. His teacher took him to dance workshops on weekends, but dance wasn't something he thought he could do as a career.

After one year of college, he began to look for alternatives. At 18, he moved to Chicago after receiving a scholarship to study at Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago (now Giordano Dance Chicago).

While dancing as an apprentice there, he heard another local company was looking for a male dancer. Plummer auditioned and joined River North Dance Chicago, where he spent several years honing his craft. "I had all of these amazing, mature artists to look at," he said. "I learned so much there. It really opened my eyes."

He eventually decided to leave company life and go out on his own as a choreographer. "Once I got in, I thought that would be it and I would have this feeling of 'I'm there,' but it never came. I just didn't feel done. That's when I realized that what I really wanted to do was create."

Plummer filled his time teaching and choreographing, making a name for himself and developing as an artist. In 2002, while on a vacation cruise, his life took an unexpected turn. While cliff diving in Barbados, Plummer hit a sandbar headfirst at low tide and broke the C5 vertebra in his neck. "It changed everything," he said. Two months immobilized in a neck brace left him emaciated and weak. "I was skinny, but I had nothing to back it up. It forced me to find something. I'd always wanted to get into aerial, so I went to Vegas for a couple of weeks and trained."

In 2005, he incorporated C5: Create with no limits, his production company that fuses aerial arts with dance. C5 has numerous corporate clients, including Royal Caribbean, as well as making new work for dance performances including DFL, where they have collaborated for many years with choreographer Harrison McEldowney



Jeremy Plummer. Image by Cheryl Mann Photography

to create a unique blend of high-energy dance and aerial work.

Plummer met McEldowney while at River North. The two dated for a few years and now work together artistically. The non-couple—Plummer is single—live together in Uptown. "I'm the organized list-maker," said Plummer. "His artistry has always been chaotic, but we'll push each other to get it done." Their DFL collaborations have evolved over the years going from incorporating a small aerial stunt like Plummer flying over the audience on silks to last year's show-stopper, Red, White and Black that had male dancers bounding with difficult dance steps on bungee chords.

After the success of last year's work, "Jerison" (as one friend has named them) was invited to create another world premiere to close the first

half of the show again this year. With only three weeks to prepare and rehearse the dancers, time is of the essence. "It's going to be fun. It will be a little bit nutso, like everything we do."

The details of the new work are top secret, but expect to be surprised as Plummer says its something they have never done at DFL before. Having been involved in DFL for so many years, one would think it could get old. Not for Plummer. "I'm so grateful to be a part of it," he said. "I'm not at a place where I can write a big check to the cause. This is my chance to really put everything I do into something so important. That's huge."

Looking back on his life-changing accident, Plummer is nothing but grateful. "A friend said to me, 'That accident was so good for you, because you're so much more pleasurable to be around.' He's blunt, but to come back and do what I'm doing and then again some, is just amazing."

Dance for Life presented at The Auditorium Theatre at Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy., Saturday, Aug. 17, at 8 p.m. A pre-performance gala will be held at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave., beginning at 5 p.m. Tickets are \$50-\$75 for performance only and \$200-\$500 for gala reception and premiere seating at the performance; call 312-922-5812 or visit www.danceforlifechicago.com.

Also this month:

The seventh annual **Chicago Dancing Festival** takes place at various downtown venues Tuesday, Aug. 20, through Saturday, Aug. 24. Tickets are free, but reservations are required. All week-night events are sold out, but unused tickets will be released 15 minutes prior to the performances.

The Celebration of Dance at Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park on Saturday, Aug. 24, at 7:30 p.m. is free and open to the public. A gala performance and benefit will be held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave. on Wed., Aug. 21. Gala tickets are \$250; visit www.chicagodancingfestival.com.



Jillian Mueller in *Flashdance: The Musical*. Photo by Jeremy Daniel

THEATER REVIEW

Flashdance: The Musical

Playwright: book by Tom Hedley and Robert Cary, music by Robbie Roth, lyrics by Robert Cary and Robbie Roth
At: Broadway in Chicago at the Cadillac Palace, 151 W. Randolph St.
Tickets: 800-775-2000;
www.broadwayinchicago.com; \$18-\$85
Runs through: Aug. 18

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Hamlet's most physically strenuous scene comes right at the end, when the melancholy Dane must execute a lengthy sword-fight, followed by more strong-arm action—all after several hours of likewise athletic activity. The role of Alex Owens in this screen-to-stage adaptation requires Jillian Mueller to act, sing and dance for over two hours, and then finish up with a terpsichorean solo turn accomplished in its cinematic prototype by four stunt doubles and a bevy of special effects. Who can blame the audience for starting their applause barely 10 minutes into the show, during a grueling four measures of triple-time running-in-place?

Applause is also due co-adapters Tom Hedley and Robert Cary for improving on the former's 1983 fairy tale of an 18-year-old blue-collar Cinderella who toils as a welder during the day and go-go dances at night, catching the eye of her industrial workplace's owner, whose privileged connections facilitate her entry to a prestigious ballet school. In 2013, however, not only is Alex Owens past her teens, but her boss—now identified as the steel-mill founder's grandson—is well under 30, rendering their romantic attachment more plausible. The spunky lady also rebuffs her smitten employer's initial attentions with sufficient conviction to dispel any suspicions as to her intentions.

Most noticeable, though, is the story no longer being just about them, its social context having been expanded to include the denizens of Alex's world—factory hard-hats, proprietors and employees of the skin trade (both wholesome and sleazy), the street dancers Alex mimics and the ballerinas she envies. We hear about their economic troubles, their reasons for doing what they do, their hopes for a better life and their epiphanies regarding what constitutes that life.

Nostalgic playgoers may lament the complexity of the dramatic universe, but this isn't the '80s any more—taking your passion and making it happen doesn't just mean taking off your bra to impress a rich boyfriend.

Robbie Roth's syrupy Broadway-generic melodies can't match the adrenaline-pumping urgency of the score's original MTV rockers (except for "My Turn," whose tempo mirrors that of "Maniac"), but Sergio Trujillo's direction and choreography for this dazzling *de facto* pre-New York try-out delivers enough oomph to proclaim its budget for Irn-bru in the dressing rooms money well spent.

CRITICS' PICKS

Bedroom Farce, Eclipse Theatre Company at Athenaeum Theatre, through Sept. 1. Several of the 1970s attitudes may be dated, but director Nick Sandys oversees a hilarious take on Alan Ayckbourn's British comedy involving four largely heterosexual couples and set in three very different bedrooms. **SCM**

The Glass Menagerie, Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company at Theater Wit, 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**

Simpatico, A Red Orchid, through Aug. 25. Michael Shannon and Guy Van Swearingen tear up the stage in Sam Shepard's dark comedy about sex, power and men not as smart as they think they are. In fact, the entire cast is great! Promise anything to get a ticket to this SRO show. **JA**

Uptown Opera, Genesis Ensemble at the Preston Bradley Center (on Lawrence Avenue), through Aug. 18. Phil Maniaci's song cycle pays homage to the urban immigrant experience in the Chicago neighborhood where the Genesis Ensemble's invokes Steinbeck-sized grandeur on a coal-mine refugee budget. **MSB**

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Inventing Van Gogh

Playwright: Steven Dietz
At: Strange Bedfellows Theatre at City Lit in Edgewater Presbyterian Church, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
Tickets: 773-340-2038;
www.strangebedfellowstheatre.com; \$20
Runs through: Aug. 24

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Three years before the start of our story, art professor Jonas Miller set out in search of Vincent Van Gogh's last self-portrait, a mythical "lost" work whose discovery the scholar hopes to accomplish by re-tracing his subject's footsteps with a devotion that may have spurred him to commit suicide in imitation of his quarry. Our story, itself, begins in the studio of Patrick Stone, whose inspiration has stalled under the loss of his mentor and the estrangement of the latter's daughter. Setting the plot in motion is a crooked art authenticator seeking a hungry young painter to fabricate what he will then sell as the legendary canvas. Soon Patrick's workplace is buzzing with activity—along with the ghosts of Vincent Van and HIS troublesome acquaintances.

Certain artists—Caravaggio, Bosch, Toulouse-Lautrec—seem always to have an intoxicating effect on writers proposing to delve the mystery of their creative impulse. The most incendiary of them all, though, is the linseed-slinging Nether-

lander whose manic genius fuels romantic imaginations to this day. Playwright Steven Dietz may attempt to frame his topic in provocative McGuffins, but this only grounds the action for a short while. Soon Patrick finds himself playing host to furious debates between the sensitive Vincent and boorish Paul Gaugin, not to mention a bevy of quarrelsome sponsors and sweethearts, all catapulting us through time at a velocity to induce vertigo in the most ardent Tom Stoppard fan.

Well, why write about antic visionaries, if *not* to go a little mad? Director Aaron Henrickson never leaves us to wander alone and confused amid Dietz' historical polemics, nor does his valiant cast, led by Patrick Cameron and Riley McIlveen as brothers-of-the-brush whose ideals span continents and centuries as they struggle to lend form to the fleeting formless, while retaining their integrity in the face of mercenary corruption. Indeed, as the reluctant impostor embraces his mission—not for the money, but to fulfill his teacher's lifelong quest—he extends his spiritual kinsman what comfort he can from his 21st-century vantage, even as he also contrives to foil his patron's fraudulent plan.

Introducing us to our dramatic universe are a number of artists (names listed in the playbill), invited by the Strange Bedfellows to set up their easels outside the auditorium and exercise their craft in real time over the evening's duration. Thus are we immersed in an environment teeming with inventive actualization—heavy stuff, that artistic impulse.



Invasion!
 Photo
 from
**Silk Road
 Rising**

THEATER REVIEW

Invasion!

Playwright: Jonas Hassen Khemiri;
Translator: Rachel Willson-Broyles
At: Silk Road Rising at The Historic Chicago Temple Building, 77 W. Washington St.
Tickets: 312-857-1234, ext. 201,
 or www.silkroadrising.org; \$35
Runs through: Sept. 1

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Silk Road Rising poster artist Andrew Skwish certainly created an apt illustration for the full-scale Chicago premiere of Jonas Hassen Khemiri's Obie Award-winning play *Invasion!* It's a Rubik's Cube featuring styled images of people who could be Arab, South Asian, Persian and more.

Skwish's multi-peopled image also matches the writing style of Khemiri, a novelist and playwright of Swedish and Moroccan heritage, who offers up plenty of uncomfortable situations and incidents around Western prejudice and perceptions toward Arab or Middle Eastern people in *Invasion!*

So don't go expecting a linear plot for *Invasion!* (although some characters reemerge in others' stories as the play progresses). What Khemiri and his translator Rachel Willson-Broyles present are an intermission-less series of fragmentary sketches and scenes that riff on how Middle Eastern or Arab people cope with immigrant assimilation, being labeled as "exotic" and their fears of being racially profiled as dangerous. And throughout

much of the play, many people bring up the name Abulkasem, which goes through a wild array of uses and interpretations.

Khemiri definitely enjoys pushing emotional buttons, which provides a lot of fodder for director Anna C. Bahow and her cast of four actors to dramatize on stage. Each actor takes on multiple roles, and you'll soon see why they aren't given names (or headshots, for that matter) in the program.

At the opening performance, Omer Abbas Salem had taken over the roles usually played by Dan Johnson, who was dealing with a foot injury. But Salem fit right in alongside Kamal Hans, Glenn Stanton and Amira Sabbagh—all clearly relishing the chance to give voice to such a wide array of people who often get instantly labeled or written off with suspicion.

There's a likely gay uncle from Lebanon, condescending continuing education student colleagues and even an imagined interpreter who twists what is being said into pure terrorist speak to frighten Americans.

The stylistic diversity and ideas in *Invasion!* certainly prod a lot of thinking but, as a piece of drama, *Invasion!* can leave you wanting. It's like Khemiri is throwing all sorts of ideas and viewpoints things out there and is just leaving it up to audiences to decide what sticks or rings true. This makes *Invasion!* come off as a short-attention span jumble that is deliberately dizzying and will make you work to form the play coherence in your head.

Silk Road Rising certainly deserves praise for tackling such a challenging work and performing it so well. Just be sure to leave your expectations for something linear at the door.

THEATER REVIEW

Cabaret

Written by: John Kander (music), Fred Ebb (lyrics), Joe Masteroff (book)
 At: Light Opera Works, Cahn Auditorium, 600 Emerson St., Evanston
 Tickets: 1-847-9205360;
 www.LightOperaWorks.com; \$32-\$92
 Runs through: Aug. 25

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

I saw the original 1966 Cabaret in its pre-Broadway tryout in Boston, where I was in school. I'd been invited backstage afterwards, and as I walked down the hallway, Joel Gray (the original Emcee) was just a few feet in front of me with his father, Mickey Katz, a popular comic bandleader. They walked with arms around each other's shoulder and I heard Gray ask, "Did you like it, Pa? Did you like it?"

Of course Pa liked it, and everyone liked it. There were some typical pre-Broadway changes to be made, and Jill Haworth as Sally Bowles clearly was the weakest link in a superb cast, but even so it had "hit" written all over it. It was an unusual show, which began without an overture, with the curtain up and a large mirror reflecting the audience. In addition, Cabaret had a pointed political message at a time when the Great Depression and World War II were vivid memories for most adults.

Today, the magnificent film version is far more familiar than the Broadway original. Indeed, subsequent stage revivals were altered to be more like the film, as well as increasingly sexual.

They also turned the Emcee into *the* starring role, which it definitely was not at first.

It's a great pleasure, then, that Light Opera Works (LOW) is staging the Broadway original, complete with original orchestrations by Don Walker and the roles of Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz fully restored. It confirms that Cabaret is solidly within the tradition of book-and-number Broadway musicals, and that the skill and complexity of its writing and structure are top-notch. Filled with rue and doomed people, Cabaret still produces goose bumps driven by a vivacious, varied and ever-fresh score.

However, LOW couldn't resist the Emcee as star, making him a silent observer in scene after scene, his rouged porcelain face a clown at one moment and a death's head the next, a complex mix of decadence and threat. Fortunately, Rudy Hogenmiller projects charisma as the Emcee. Although now chiefly occupied with offstage duties, he retains the dancing and singing agility the role requires.

Indeed, the entire company is solid and appealing, and musical values are first-rate, as ever at LOW. The well-matched couples are Jenny Lamb (Sally Bowles), David Schlumpf (Cliff Chamberlain), Barbara Clear (Fraulein Schneider) and Jim Heatherly (Herr Schultz), all performing with force and charm under director/choreographer Stacey Flaster and conductor Roger L. Bingaman (both LOW veterans).

With the serious physical limits of Cahn Auditorium, the scenic design by Angela Weber Miller relies on flown flats and curtains and furniture carried from the wings. It's serviceable but without dazzle. Stephen Ptacek's sound design is clear, well-balanced and natural.



Cabaret.
 Photo by
 Jasmin Shah

SPOTLIGHT



Summer is slipping away, so don't miss your chance to experience theater in the great outdoors while you still can. After its fine West Virginian interpretation of Shakespeare's Cymbeline earlier this summer, First Folio Theatre turns its attentions to Richard Nash's 1954 classic melodrama **The Rainmaker**. See if a mysterious stranger really can convince a drought-stricken town whether or not he can produce vital rain during the Great Depression. The Rainmaker continues through Sunday, Sept. 1, at the Mayslake Peabody Estate, 1717 W. 31st St., Oak Brook. Performances are at 8:15 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. Tickets are \$30-\$37. Call 630-986-8067 or visit www.firstfolio.org. Photo by Melissa Carlson



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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT JR.

Lee Daniels' *The Butler*; film notes

In light of his first two directorial efforts—the incredibly bleak *Precious* and the tawdry, drive-in homage *The Paperboy*—Lee Daniels' *The Butler* is a surprising move toward the mainstream. The film, a sort of CliffsNotes overview of the civil-rights movement seen from the vantage point of a silent witness to history—an African-American White House butler who served under seven presidents—is a large-scale, middle-of-the-road work that is entertaining and moving in the way that many other movies about the struggle for race equality have been, with one major difference: Daniels' film is told entirely from the perspective of the Black characters.

Unlike *The Help*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, *Mississippi Burning* and other countless movies of this ilk, there are no white best friends, no white children and no white sympathizers who relate the story of the struggle of their Black counterparts. One has to reach back to Spielberg's *The Color Purple* in 1985 to find a mainstream movie about Black history told from the same perspective. That rarity alone is entirely refreshing and earns Daniels' movie a pass that its often mawkish and stereotypical moments wouldn't otherwise deserve (though its performances greatly help it).

"We have no use for politics in the White House," Cecil Gaines is told upon entering service under Eisenhower in 1957 by his tough major domo of a boss. And in the ensuing years that's exactly the dictum that Cecil follows. Before that we have seen Cecil's unexpected journey to that life-changing moment. The character, beautifully essayed by Forrest Whitaker in a performance of incredible grace mixed with flashes of fire, is based on the real life of Eugene Allen. Daniels and co-screenwriter Danny Strong embroider Allen's unique story with inventions



Jane Fonda and Alan Richman as Nancy and Ronald Reagan. Photo from The Weinstein Company and Dimension Films



Terrence Howard and Oprah Winfrey in Lee Daniels' *The Butler*. Photo from The Weinstein Company and Dimension Films

that unnecessarily push the envelope—although they are never less than entertaining.

The movie begins with a melodramatic sequence that is jaw-dropping and stereotypical with the young Cecil Gaines watching as his father is murdered in a Georgia cotton field after protesting after the sneering white plantation owner (Alex Pettyfer) has had the gall to rape his wife (Mariah Carey) in earshot of his helpless father and the other workers. Vanessa Redgrave takes momentary pity on the boy and moves him into the house, teaching him the art of service in the process. As the years pass, Cecil's talents eventually bring him to the attention of a White House aide de camp, and his decades-long gig at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue commences.

Once ensconced in the new job, Daniels' movie begins to incorporate a great deal of welcome humor. Cecil's fellow workers—the hilariously profane sexual braggart played by Cuba Gooding, Jr. and the more cautious but equally fun Lenny Kravitz—and Cecil's wife and neighbors offer relief from the painful reality of the civil-rights struggle. Oprah Winfrey, returning to movies after a 16-year absence, is especially welcome as Cecil's tart-tongued, ever-patient wife, Gloria. Gloria is a sister under the skin to Winfrey's Sofia, the character she played in her Oscar-nominated turn in *The Color Purple*.

Gloria is big fun—a drinker and smoker in a sky-high beehive dancing to infectious soul records on the phonograph, temporarily playing footsie with next door neighbor lothario Howard (Terrence Howard) to stave off boredom. She's also full of piss and vinegar as she waits around for Cecil to return his attentions to her, and to at last invite her to visit the White House. When the invitation finally comes—courtesy of Nancy Reagan (Jane Fonda, in the best of the high-wattage actors playing the presidents and their wives)—it's almost as emotionally satisfying as the moment when Cecil finally sees the light as far as his eldest son's radical politics are concerned.

The contrast of Cecil's conservative views with that of his militant son, Louis (David Oyelowo), who goes from being arrested as a Freedom Rider to becoming a member of the Black Panthers. This helps to offer a double-sided look at the movement from the late '60s into the early '70s, the bulk of the picture's 132-minute running time. Including Robin Williams, James Marsden, Liev Schreiber, John Cusack and Alan Rickman as Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Reagan, respectively (Ford and Carter are skipped over), will no doubt draw in audiences. However, most are reduced to a couple of cameo scenes, gone before one has a chance to move beyond taking in the make-up and vocal inflec-

tions each brings to these historical figures, with the result being not much more than stunt casting.

And yet—given the film's unique Black perspective, historical sweep (scattershot as it sometimes is), as well as the often heartfelt performances, Lee Daniels' *The Butler* certainly satisfies while bringing this talented filmmaker a shot at bringing his decided queer sensibilities to a much larger audience the next time out.

Of related interest: *The Intruder*, a little-known black-and-white 1962 drama starring a pre-Star Trek William Shatner, is screening Wed., Aug. 14, at the Patio Theater, 6008 W. Irving

Pelofsky at Laugh Factory Aug. 22

Comedian, actress and so-called "superhero to the gays" Shawn Pelofsky will be at Laugh Factory Chicago, 3175 N. Broadway, on Thursday, Aug. 22, at 8 p.m.

Pelofsky has been seen on shows like *Community*, *Lip Service*, *Chelsea Lately* and *Last Comic Standing*, and has worked with stars like Will Ferrell, Richard Lewis, Bill Maher and Margaret Cho.

See www.laughfactory.com/clubs/chicago.

Madonna birthday tribute Aug. 15-17 at Davenport's

"Lucky Star: Madonna at 55 and Beyond," a birthday tribute to the superstar singer featuring Melissa Young, will take place Aug. 15-17 at Davenport's, 1383 N. Milwaukee Ave., at 8 p.m.

More than 20 of Madonna's songs, spanning her 30-year career, get musical makeovers.

There is a \$15 cover and a two-drink minimum. Visit www.davenportspianobar.com or call 773-278-1830.

Artemis Singers' new members night Aug. 22

Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus, will hold its new members night at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 22, for women to meet the singers and see what the chorus is like. No audition is required.

The nonprofit chorus specializes in performing music written or arranged by women. Artemis Singers is looking for new singers with

Park Rd. The movie follows Shatner's character, a white supremacist with a huckster's charm, as he travels to the Deep South in order to fan the flames of racial intolerance and stop integration of the local school. This was a personal project—a rare one—from independent producer/director Roger Corman and the behind-the-scenes story of the troubled filming is as fascinating as what's on the screen. Presented in 35mm (as usual) by the Northwest Chicago Film Society; <http://www.northwestchicagofilmsociety.org>

Film notes:

Jodie Foster is no stranger to thrillers. Currently in theaters as the villain in the dark yet elegant sci-fi thriller *Elysium*, Foster also starred in director David Fincher's thriller *Panic Room* in 2002, albeit in a very different kind of role. As the fiercely protective—and very intelligent—mother of a teenage diabetic (Kristen Stewart), Foster plays a recently separated woman who uses her gray cells to outwit a gang of thugs desperately trying to get at her and the daughter, locked in the title enclosure during a botched home-invasion robbery. Fincher's inventive use of the camera, considering the claustrophobic setting and Foster's terse performance, are must-sees. The film is being screened as part of a month long celebration of Fincher's movies at the Gene Siskel Center, 164 N. State St., on Sat., Aug. 17, and Thursday, Aug. 22. www.siskelfilmcenter.org

Openly gay French Canadian auteur Xavier Dolan's debut film, 2009's *I Killed My Mother*, is finally getting a U.S. DVD release (courtesy of Kino Lorber). The movie stars Dolan as a sophisticated, tantrum-throwing teenager battling daily with his tacky but fierce single mother (the rapturous Ann Dorval) while hiding his gay boyfriend from her in the process. Dolan's assured debut at age 21 (he was 16 when he wrote it) has launched a critically hailed film career spanning four queer-themed movies to date. (His latest, *Tom at the Farm*, will debut at the Toronto Film Fest later this month.) Highly recommended.

all levels of musical skill. Music sight-reading ability is not mandatory.

The chorus soon will begin preparing for its Dec. 6-7 winter solstice concert performances at the Ethical Humanist Society, 7574 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie.

Email info@artemissingers.org or call 773-764-4465 for details and location of the Aug. 22 rehearsal.

Kate Bush tribute Aug. 21

On Wed., Aug. 21, The Whistler (2421 N. Milwaukee Ave.) will play host to "Song of Summer: A Kate Bush Tribute Night," a party celebrating the British singer-songwriter's career in honor of the 35th anniversary of the release of her debut album, *The Kick Inside*.

The third edition of a Kate Bush Tribute Night in Chicago will feature live performances from artists including Kyle Greer and Distant Cities.

The event is free and will begin at 9:30 p.m. See <http://whistlerchicago.com>.

David Bowie exhibition at MCA Sept. 2014

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago has been announced as the U.S. venue for the world tour of the "David Bowie is" exhibition that London's Victoria and Albert Museum is organizing.

"David Bowie is" will show September 2014-January 2015.

More than 300 objects (including costumes, photography and album artwork) will be brought together for the exhibition. See www.mcachicago.org.

Steve Grand plays private show at Hilton

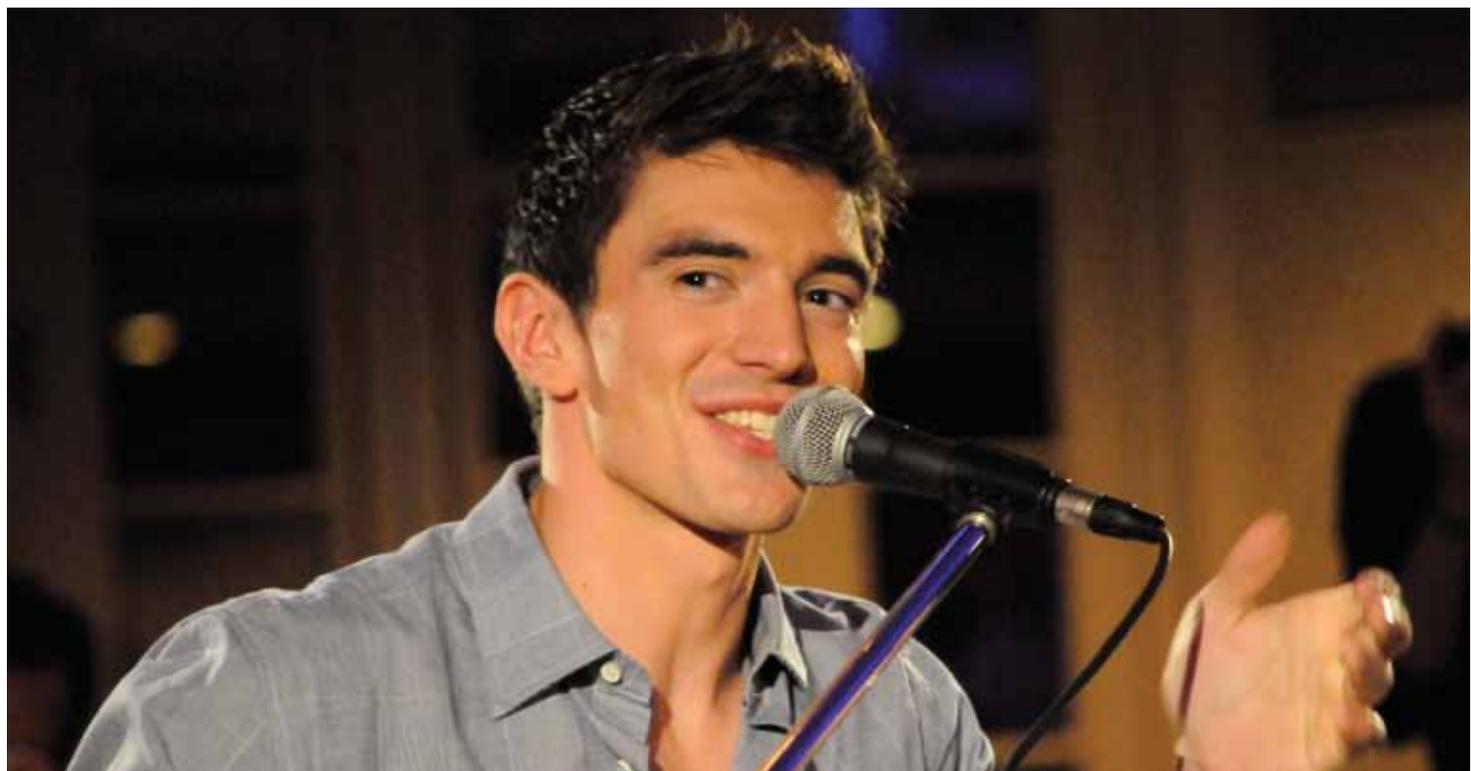
Before playing at Northalsted Market Days, out country-pop star Steve Grand gave a private concert at Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave., on Aug. 9.

The evening started with a Q&A with Grand and OUT Magazine Editor-in-Chief Aaron Hicklin. Hicklin asked Grand questions from fans as far as Iran, and the topics ranged from the singer's workout regimen to his advice for people who are newly out to when fans can expect an EP or CD. (Regarding the last item, he optimistically said in a month or so.)

Hilton—the hotel sponsor of Market Days and a chain with its "Stay Hilton. Go Out" package for LGBT travelers—also presented a donation to Point Foundation, which provides scholarships and mentors to LGBTQ students. A current Point Scholar, Kevin Ferenchak, shared his backstory with the audience—and said story included being physically attacked so badly he ended up in the hospital. Ferenchak (a former Windy City Times 30 Under 30 honoree) is currently in his last year of medical school and has a boyfriend of three years.

Grand, 21, then played several songs, including covers of Lady Gaga's "You and I" and Sir Elton John's "Your Song" as well as his own hit, "All-American Boy,"—the song with the video that went viral. In between songs, Grand engaged in banter with the audience, conveying an earnestness that charmed attendees.

Text by Andrew Davis; photos by Hal Baim
Note: To read a pre-show interview with Windy City Times, visit www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



Steve Grand in concert at the Hilton Chicago. Photo by Hal Baim

Kreis starts campaign for Tenn. organization

Openly gay singer Levi Kreis has started a campaign for Knoxville, Tenn., not-for-profit service agency Positively Living that revolves around his single "Love Revolution (feat. QBoy)," according to a press release.

The campaign involves a remix competition of the song, which is a tribute to a young gay boy caught in the middle of the Stonewall Riots. Submissions are due Sept. 3; see www.Vision9Records.com.

On Sept. 10, the winning remixes will be released on the Love Revolution Remix EP; all of the proceeds (from sales Sept. 10-Nov. 4) will be donated to Positively Living. Winning DJs will also be included in the music video and featured on a special commemorative poster given to Positively Living upon donation.

Positively Living provides housing and care for persons that are homeless and suffering with HIV/AIDS, mental illness, addiction or physical disability.

Kreis is originally from Tennessee; he currently lives in Chicago.



Levi Kreis. PR photo



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Clark Street Dog and Bar

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I must have passed by **Clark Street Dog and Bar** (www.clarkstdog.com; 3040 N. Clark St.) hundreds of times during my time in Chicago. However, I'd never tried it.

Well, after recently going there, I have kicked myself for not having visited sooner.

Yes, it's (at least partially) what one might expect: It has stomach-filling items such as grilled chicken sandwiches, Italian beefs, grilled cheese sandwiches, French fries and the Clark Street hot dog along with desserts like chocolate chip cookies. However, in a nod to ever-changing times, there are also options such as the veggie dog and the vegetable Philly sandwich. (By the way, the original Philly is the best I've had outside of Philadelphia.)

Easy-on-the-eyes owner Angelo Velliotis (who took over from his father almost five years ago) said that, regarding the menu, Clark Street Dog and Bar "is not into gimmicks." He's right: What you see (and order) is what you get—and that's a good thing. As for the clientele, it's made up of everyone from Cubs fans to tourists to the



Halsted Strip crowd (as Boystown is mere steps away).

As for the bar, a lot of fun can be had there, but be careful: Some of the drinks are quite deceptive. For example, the "root beer beer" definitely tastes like root beer, which could trick some people into thinking they can drink more than they should. The same can be said of the joint's pickleback shot, a \$5 combination of a shot of Jameson and a shot of pickle juice. It may not sound appetizing but the effect is amazing: The pickle juice cleanses the palate, and any taste of the whiskey is gone.

Clark Street Dog and Bar has been around for more than three decades. It should be around for at least three more—complete with pickleback shots.



Images from Clark Street Dog and Bar, including the pickleback shots (above left) and owner Angelo Velliotis (below left). Photos by Andrew Davis



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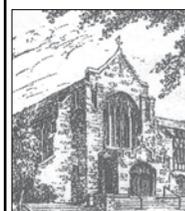
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Josh Dixon dreams of Olympic stardom in '16

BY ROSS FORMAN

Josh Dixon takes his next step on the road to the 2016 Summer Olympics when he heads to Connecticut in mid-August for the 2013 P&G Gymnastics Championships at the XL Center in Hartford. The four-day competition serves as USA Gymnastics' national championships.



Josh Dixon. Photo courtesy of Dixon

For Dixon and others, the event is the "re-ranking of the national team," he said. "It will be exciting because this is first year of a brand new four-year cycle. There will be some new faces and some returning [competitors]."

"My goal is to be within the top five overall," and he will participate in all six events in Connecticut.

Dixon, 23, is a San Jose, Calif., native, who earned fame—and two NCAA team national championships—at Stanford. He is openly gay and was a participant in the 2012 U.S. Olympic Trials.

"Everyone has to re-earn their spot on the [U.S.] National Team, based on a complex point system," Dixon said of the 15-person squad. "This meet also is our selection for the 2013 World Championship team," running Sept. 25-Oct. 7, in Antwerp, Belgium.

"The year after an Olympics, [the] World Championships are not team-based, and my strengths play into a team-format competition, whereas since it's strictly an individual World Championships, they are looking more for event specialists and top all-around [performers] in the country.

"I'm pretty confident in my ability to be a top three finisher at our national championships on three events, but, in the grand scheme of things, I am not sure how that will play out on the world stage.

"I think I have a good chance, but think I need to focus on hitting two-days' worth of competition, and then the results will pan out."

Dixon said returning to the U.S. National Team is "crucial" for competing internationally. "You have to be on the 15-person U.S. National Team to go anywhere outside of the U.S., and also represent the U.S., for a six-month period until the next re-ranking, in February [2014]."

"I really have to build my name domestically and internationally in order to really be in the mix and in contention for 2015-2016.

"This is where it all starts."

Because his goal is clear: wear red, white and blue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016 at the Games of the XXXI Olympiad—especially since Dixon admittedly was "disappointed" that he did not qualify for the 2012 Games in London.

Dixon was a seven-time All-American at Stanford, who earned worldwide headlines coming out while still in college, especially since he was romantically tied to a varsity swimmer at the school.

"Stanford was an experience like no other; I wouldn't trade it for the world and I would

do it again in a heartbeat," Dixon said. "You're surrounded by such a diverse student-body, by so much greatness inside and outside of the classroom; it's just a really, really unique environment, one that definitely challenges you mentally and physically. Being an athlete at Stanford is added pressure. There are so many brilliant people at Stanford, in so many different fields. You definitely are humbled immediately by who and what you're surrounded by," on campus.

Dixon's Stanford squad won the national championship in 2009 and again in 2011.

"The experience of winning with such a tight-knit group of guys is such a remarkable experience, something that is very rare," he said. "Our team title in 2011 was the school's 100th national championship, which was very exciting."

Dixon said coming out when he did, while still in college, "helped" in gymnastics "because I wasn't carrying that burden anymore."

"So much of what we do [in gymnastics] is mentally taxing, and so much energy for me was spent worrying about coming out, problems of how I would be accepted on my team, by my teammates, by my coaches, my peers, my competitors.

"Coming out allowed me to be me, and was a huge stepping stone in my journey in gymnas-

tics. I now think I can be a positive voice for change, a positive role model for younger and older athletes, and non-athletes."

Coming out was not an issue at Stanford, he said. In fact, Dixon said his teammates "were just happy for me to be me and have a certain level of confidence, which I had not portrayed before [coming out]."

When asked if he now is single or dating, Dixon laughed. "That's a good question. I am currently single. My time spent in the gym training, plus competing, is not very conducive to having a very strong relationship," he said. "The person from [my] senior year [at Stanford] still has a strong presence in my life, but we're not exclusive or dating."

Since coming out, Dixon said he's only received "positive" reactions, especially "how inspirational my story has been to others," he said.

"Not much has changed," since coming out, Dixon said. "I'm still the same person; I just like guys. Plus, I'm more comfortable with who I am."

Read the entire article on Dixon at www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Josh-Dixon-dreams-of-Olympic-stardom-in-2016/44027.html.

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Wed., Aug. 14

Lost in Space: ALCC's Annual Summer Party Join AIDS Legal Council of Chicago for its annual summer benefit. Lost in Space will offer attendees a chance to explore the galaxies through amazing cocktails, food, and prizes, plus a spectacular silent auction with more than 150 items from businesses from across Chicagoland. 6pm-9pm, 312-608-5697, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St., <http://www.aidslegal.com>; Tickets: <http://www.lostin.space2013.eventbrite.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 ROKK 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, Atmosphere Bar, 5355 N. Clark St., <http://www.facebook.com/qatrivia>

103.5 Kiss FM's Pump Boy Lee Live Set High Vis Wednesdays presents Pump Boy Lee live set. Hosted Vodka Bar 10pm-12am; 10pm, Grandbar, 1600 W. Grand Ave., <http://chicagoedmhousemusic.blogspot.com>

Thursday, Aug. 15

Construction Exhibition Columbia College Chicago's Averill and Bernard Leviton A+D Gallery presents, curated by Sabina Ott, an

exhibition about how artists invent new realities by challenge old constructs of race, gender and national identity. 11am-5pm, Averill and Bernard Leviton A+D Gallery, 619 S. Wabash Ave., <http://www.colum.edu/adgallery/>

Transformative Justice & The Trayvon Martin Case: A Consideration Discussion of the not-guilty verdict in the trial of George Zimmerman for killing 17-year old Trayvon Martin. Panelists: Dr. Erica R. Meiners, Professor of Gender and Women's Studies and Education at Northeastern Illinois University; Dr. Beth Richie, Director for the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Dr. Traci Schlesinger is an Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies of Sociology at DePaul University. Register online. 6pm-8pm, Jane Addams Hull House Museum 800 S. Halsted St, <http://trayvonmartinjustice.eventbrite.com/>

Team Chicago Gay Games Countdown The evening will focus on Chicago area LGBT sports teams, Gay Games Q&A and a Karaoke Smackdown to top it all off. Info: KyleChang@TeamChicago.org or 312-286-7444. 7pm-9pm, Crew Bar & Grill, 4804 N Broadway, <http://teamchicago2014.org>

A Cole Porter Songbook Cole Porter's sophisticated music and notoriously witty lyrics come alive in unique Theo Ubique style; 7:30pm-9:30pm, 800-595-4849, No Exit Cafe, 6970 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago, <http://www.theo-u.org/>

Melissa Young in Lucky Star: Madonna at 55 A Birthday Tribute starring Melissa Young through Aug. 17. Over 20 of Madonna's songs. 8pm-9:15pm, 773-278-1830, Davenport's Piano Bar and Cabaret, 1383 N Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, <http://www.davenportspianobar.com>

Friday, Aug. 16

The Kinsey Sicks in America's Next Top Bachelor HousewifeCelebrity Hoarder Makeover Star Gone Wild. America's Favorite Dragapella Beautyshop Quartet will celebrate their 20th anniversary with this over-the-top new musical. Two performances only at Mayne Stage. 7pm-9pm, 773.381.4554, Mayne Stage, 1328 W. Morse Ave., <http://www.maynestage.com>

Midsummer Fashion Show Benefits the Center for Gender, Sexuality & HIV Prevention at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Memorial Hospital. LUX MGMT and 900 North Michigan Shops partnering for an exclusive fashion-show fundraiser. Only 150 tickets available, with a \$10,000 fundraising goal. 7pm-9pm, Tickets: <http://www.fanfueled.com/midsummer2013>

Mary Gray Kaye. 80, author of A Winged Thing, and Holy The essayist and poet set her story of Genny and Jon on the streets, beaches and campuses of Chicago, in its cafes, libraries and parks where obsession and talent blossom. 7:30pm-9pm, Women & Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark St., <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/>

Chronologica: Three Decades of Madonna Madonna's birthday is Aug. 16 and DJ Moose is spinning three decades of her best ... in chronological order. August 9-16 also marks the one year kickoff to next year's Gay Games in Cleveland, Ohio. Team Chicago Athletics and Culture (TCAC) is a non-profit organization with a mission to promote, educate and encourage Chicago-area organizations, groups and individuals to participate in the Gay Games. In collaboration with DJ Moose and Mary's Attic, TCAC is kicking off the one-year countdown to Gay Games 2014 with a fundraiser benefit and registra-

tion party. Doors open at 7 pm for a suggested donation of \$20. Drawings will be held throughout the evening for some really cool memorabilia, autographed first-edition books and more. The majority of funds raised will go toward the TCAC participant scholarship program. 8pm, Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark St., <http://www.hamburgermarys.com/chicago>

Don't Blink: A Doctor Who Burlesque Travel through time and space with The Doctor and his companion, Cort, in their silliest, sexiest and most "lady-like" adventure yet. \$28-35. 9pm-10pm, 773-598-4549, Gorilla Tango Burlesque, 1919 N. Milwaukee Ave., <http://www.gorillatango.com/who>

Saturday, Aug. 17

Xplore Urban Race 5k race that incorporates solving clues and completing unique challenges, while competing for a cash prize. Unconventional way to stay active and social while getting to know this unique city. 1pm-6pm, 508-612-8995, Monk's Pub Chicago, <http://xperienceadventures.com/>

2013 Dance for Life Experience the best dance Chicago has to offer as six of the city's top dance companies join together for one spectacular night on stage in this year's Dance for Life. 44th Ward Alderman Tom Tunney will serve as this year's honorary emcee. 8pm-11pm, Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, East Congress Parkway, <http://www.danceforlifechicago.com>; Tickets: <http://www.danceforlifechicago.com/tickets>

OTTER w/ host Gary Gangi Ot-ter [ot-er] noun: A gay man who rocks facial and body hair, but is somewhat smaller in frame than a bear. Hosted by special guest Gary Gangi with music by DILF's DJ Moose, OTTER is the party you've all been asking for, happening on the 3rd Saturday every month starting at 9 pm. 9pm, The Sofo Tap, 4923 N Clark St., <http://www.thesofotap.com>



LUCKY STAR Thurs.-Sat., Aug. 15-17

Several birthday tributes to Madonna (above) will take place, including Melissa Young's shows at Davenport's, 1383 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Cover photo

thesofotap.com
McDonald's protest A Chicago-area activist group is planning a protest against Oak Brook-based McDonald's Corporation over the fast food giant's sponsorship of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games. 11pm, McDonald's headquarters, 2111 McDonald's Dr., Oak Brook

Ashley Morgan & CSB - Anything Goes: A Drag Revue Join Ashley Morgan, the Chicago Spirit Brigade, Coco Sho-Nell, Dominique Diamond, Priscilla Darling, Morgan Sapphire, Roxie Stone, Vivian DeJour, Amanda Lynn and special guests Ida Slappedher, Dik Ryder and Kiki Moy-

Turn to page 22

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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, Honeypot: 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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For more information, please email: editor@windycitymediagroup.com or lkarlic@centeronhalsted.org

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BILLY MASTERS

"Not sure who first thought up this yoga business. But there are several poses that have little to no regard for testicles."—Sexy Arrow star Stephen Amell tweets these comments after a recent yoga class, which I must be sure to check out when I return to L.A.

I suppose the big news of the week is that Wolverine came out of the closet. Well, the Aussie actor who plays him came out. No, I don't mean Hugh Jackman. I mean Troye Sivan, who played Wolverine as a little cub in X-Men Origins: Wolverine. The 18-year-old released a video saying, "On Aug. 7, 2010, I told my family that I am gay. And on Aug. 7, 2013, I wanted you guys to know that I am gay. It feels kinda weird to have to announce it like this on the Internet, but I feel like a lot of you guys are genuine friends of mine. I share everything with the Internet. Whether or not that's a good thing, I don't know but this is not something that I'm ashamed of." Bravo.



Ryan Gosling just might make *The Place Beyond the Pines* worth buying, Billy says.

When I saw actor Ben Whishaw on the London stage several years ago, I knew he was the real deal and have been happy to follow his enormous success as an actor. While everyone has regularly speculated about his sexual preference, Whishaw is routinely taciturn when discussing his private life. However, he made an exception last week and had his rep issue the following statement: "Ben has never hidden his sexuality, but like many actors he prefers not to discuss his family or life outside of his work. Due to speculation, I can confirm that Ben and Mark entered into a civil partnership in August 2012. They were proud to do so and are very happy." The Mark in question is Australian composer Mark Bradshaw, who wrote the score for the 2009 film *Bright Star*, which starred Whishaw as poet John Keats.

Amber Tamblyn isn't gay, but she'll be playing one on TV. Next season, she'll join the cast of

"Two and a Half Men" as the illegitimate gay daughter of the dearly departed Charlie. At the moment, she's only scheduled to be on five episodes, but the network has an option to keep her for the full season if things work out. Not a bad plan, since the show is currently down half a man.

Sharon Osbourne is returning to the UK version of *The X Factor* after leaving in 2008. She explained how she and Simon (the show's executive producer) orchestrated her return: "I said, 'If I suck your dick, can I get the job?' And he said, 'Of course'. It was very simple." The story is a lot more funny now than when she said it last month.

Calvin Klein's former/current paramour Nick Gruber has only been back in New York for a few weeks and is already being questioned by the police. He was at a nightclub in the Hamptons when, he claims, a stranger randomly grabbed his crotch—something you'd think he'd be used to by now. Gruber punched the guy and a fight ensued. The two men were dragged outside when Gruber allegedly downed a security guard and fled the scene, which was described by a witness as a "bloodbath." The blood likely belonged to the other guy, who was taken away in an ambulance. A spokesperson for the club claims that "Nick left before around six police cars arrived. Around 20 police officers started a full-scale manhunt." The next morning, Nick went to the police station to answer questions about the incident and will return on Sept. 26 with witnesses. Plus ça change...

Believe it or not, this leads into this week's "Ask Billy" question beautifully. Robbie in Boston writes, "I love Ryan Gosling and know he's not gay...but I don't care. I heard there was a nude scene in *The Place Beyond the Pines*, which will be on the DVD release. Do you know anything about it? Is it worth buying?"

I guess it comes down to this—have you ever fantasized about seeing Ryan Gosling totally buff, bleached out, sporting tattoos and stripping prior to being thrown into prison? If the answer is yes, then this might qualify as porn for you, because I've just described the scene in question. It may very well be worth the investment (the film was released on DVD and Blu-ray last week). Of course, since a photo is worth a thousand words, I'm sure seeing the entire scene on BillyMasters.com is priceless.

As a little bonus this week, we'll share one more video of a very muscled, very tattooed, very naked guy. This time it's porn star and escort Ray Dalton. And while he might not be as universally known as Gosling, he certainly has a following. And after seeing this video, I understand why. Somehow he managed to be filmed jerking off on a subway platform on the Upper West Side of Manhattan! I'm not sure how many tokens you need for that ride, but perhaps you'll be able to figure that out while watching it on BillyMasters.com.

When a lesbian can replace half a man, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Before I close, I must take a moment to acknowledge the passing of the legendary Eydie Gorme. Not only was she an amazing singer, she was also a helluva gal. I enjoyed many evenings with both Steve and Eydie. The last was at the 60th birthday party of lawyer to the stars Mark Sendroff. At that time, I took a photo with the couple. When I turned to walk away, Eydie stopped me and said, "When you take a photo with someone you really like, always take two. You never know when the fuck you'll see 'em again!" I'll be seeing you, Eydie. There's less of a question when you'll see me—each and every day on www.BillyMasters.com, the site that's always worth a second look. If you need me to see to any of your other needs, send the details to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before another Wolverine makes a startling announcement. So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

CALENDAR from page 20

enne, for a night of theatrical drag entertainment. 9:30pm, *The Call* (Chicago), 1547 W Bryn Mawr

Sunday, Aug. 18

Momosa: A Cocktail Brunch for LGBTs and their moms Supporters of LGBT equality, attend and invite family members. All proceeds benefit the critical work that Equality Illinois is doing in the fight for full LGBT equality in our state. \$35 online and \$40 at the door. 11am-2pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St., <https://www.facebook.com/events/491528220928019/>; Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/momosa2013>

Angelina Ristorante "Gay Church" Brunch Known in Boystown as "Gay Church" this Sunday tradition brings cute people & tasty food together! Join Zany Philip, Straight Graham, Cute Bryan, Bottle-Popping Justin, Pretty Teresa, Charming Daniel, Super Model Jayson, and Benny the Harry Potter look-alike for this loud and delicious celebration. CASH ONLY; 11am-2:30pm, Angelina Ristorante, 3561 N Broadway, <http://www.angelinaristorante.com/>

Fall Queer Clothing—Swap Clothing Exchange Trading skirt and heels for slacks and loafers? Intended as a safe and fun space to exchange clothes for trans- and gender-variant individuals, the event is open to all queer-affirming allies. No donation of underwear, swimwear or stained clothing. No bags supplied. Free. 3pm-6pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Jazz Service with Lucy Smith Quartet Every Sunday jazz service with communion. Pre-service music begins at 3:50 pm. Validated parking, \$8, available at 900 N Michigan lot. Entrance on Walton or Rush streets. 4pm-5pm, 312.787.4570, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Michigan & Delaware, <http://www.fourthchurch.org/jazz/index.html>

Monday, Aug. 19

Live Band Karaoke with Amy Armstrong Every Monday night at 10pm in the Front Bar, hosted by the one and only Diva, Amy Armstrong (www.AmyFred-dy.com); 9pm, Roscoe's, 3356 N Halsted St, <http://www.roscoes.com>

Tuesday, Aug. 20

Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry An array of

acclaimed artists from Chicago and beyond tell the powerful story of an African-American family living in a crowded apartment on Chicago's South Side during the 1950s. Previews Aug. 20-25. Through Nov. 17. 7:30pm, 773-281-8463x6, TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington Ave., <http://timelinetheatre.com>

Chicago Dancing Festival Highlights this year include two Chicago Dancing Festival Commissions. Free. Through Aug. 24. 7:30pm, Various downtown venues, <http://www.chicagodancingfestival.com>

Wed., Aug. 21

Song of Summer: A Kate Bush Tribute Night The music and mood of British songstress Kate Bush with live musical salutes by Distant Cities and Kyle Greer. Three Bush-phile DJs. No cover. 9:30pm, The Whistler, 2421 N. Milwaukee Ave., <http://whistler-chicago.com/events/song-summer-tribute-kate-bush>

Thursday, Aug. 22

What Supreme Court Rulings on DOMA, Prop 8 Mean for You Hosted by Windy City Times, Center on Halsted and James Elvord, First Vice President-Financial Advisor. Presented by Bill Ringham, Vice President-Senior Wealth Strategist, RBC Wealth Management. 5:30-6:15 wine and cheese reception, 6:15-7:15 program, 7:15-7:30 Q&A. Unable to attend? Call Jim Elvord for summary. Seating limited. RSVP to james.elvord@rbc.com; 5:30pm, 312-559-1738, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St.

Artemis Singers new members night Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus, will hold new members night. Meet the singers and see what the chorus is like. No audition is required. Music sight-reading ability is not mandatory. Email or call for details and location; 7pm-9pm, 773-764-4465, Email info@artemissingers.org for location, <http://www.artemissingers.org>

2013 National Pro Fastpitch Championship Series Nation's top professional softball teams will come to Rosemont to compete at the home to the NPF's 2011 Cowles Cup Champions the Chicago Bandits. Tickets by phone or online. 7pm, 615-232-2900, Jennie Finch Way, The Ballpark at Rosemont, <http://www.profastpitch.com>

ORANGE from cover

process to shooting. It does seem that the writers start to write for our voices. I was talking to another actor on set and he was saying that learning his lines got easier over time and I think part of the muscle of working all the time.

I think the writers are also writing based on our voices and knowing how the cadence of how we speak, so I think it's a combination.

WCT: How was it working with Jodie Foster as a director on a few episodes?

LC: Jodie was incredible. Jodie is such an actor's director for obvious reasons. She's a brilliant actor herself and she was really generous. It was really like a master class working with her. She was incredible and it was a dream come true to get to work with someone of that caliber. It made me raise my game. I hope I did.

WCT: Your brother, M. Lamar, was also on those same episodes.

LC: Yes, I love my brother so much and he's been my moral compass over the years. I run things by him and we're twins so we've literally known each other our entire lives.

There's a wonderful bond that we share and there's a tremendous amount of respect that we have for each other as artists and as human beings. So I'm really grateful that I got to share a little bit of this show and this moment with him.

WCT: In what ways are you similar to your character, Sophia?

LC: As an actor, the shell of the character might be different than my own. She might talk differently or walk differently, but who I am and her emotional life is very much my own.

I relate to Sophia's feelings of guilt around her sacrificing everything, her family, her freedom to be true to who she is, and to live in her authentic self.

She's paid an awful price for that in terms of her family, there's some guilt around that, and she hasn't been able to resolve fully, particularly her relationship with her son Michael. She hasn't been able to resolve the guilt around that yet.

I can certainly relate to the conflict between being true to myself and that potentially being difficult for the people in my life around me.

The discrimination that she experiences in prison being taken off her hormones is something that I unfortunately I've had the same moments in my adult life, where I've been denied some health care because I'm trans and that was really difficult for me. I was able to advocate for myself, but that's definitely something that I very much relate to. Sophia advocates for herself as well in prison.

WCT: Are we approaching a watershed moment for transgender people in acting?

LC: I would like to say I hope so, but it was

funny because about six years, Candis Cayne had, for me, was a watershed moment on Dirty, Sexy, Money which she became the first trans woman to have a recurring role in a primetime series and that moment was such a huge inspiration for me. I really believe I wouldn't be here if it weren't for her and for that show just deciding to cast a trans woman to play that part.

That moment inspired me to get an agent. I had been trying to have a substantial career as an actor for a long time and began to believe it was possible six years ago because of Candis Cayne.

WCT: Do you ever feel alienated being the one transgender person on the set and what helps you in that moment?

LC: I've often been the only trans person in a room and on the job. I'm just myself. For me the way I handle it is I try to be as authentically myself as possible. I also try to set boundaries in terms of what it can be talked about and not talked about.

I like to be open, but I also try to set a tone where inappropriate questions are not allowed to be asked. I'll put someone in their place if they overstep a boundary but in a loving way.

I'm just another person who's there to do their job and get along with everyone.

WCT: What constraints do you feel as a trans actress?



Laverne Cox. PR photo

LC: The constraints really come from the outside, you know? As an artist I think it's really important not to put any kind of limitations or constraints on myself. I think they come from an industry that has in their mind that trans women can't play just gender women, that people aren't going to connect to trans characters or that shows aren't going to have good ratings if there's a trans character on it, things like that.

I think the industry has to change and I think their ideas have to begin to change about who trans people are and what it means to have trans folks playing ourselves and playing characters that are written as trans on television.

I'm hopeful that Orange is the New Black will change the game of it in those terms.

WCT: This role goes hand in hand with your being an activist?

LC: It does in a way. I try to ideally separate them because as an artist I feel like I just have to be true to the work and true to the character. I can't feel encumbered by oh, that's not politically correct or oh, I might piss off people if I take this role or if the character says something like this. The work has to be unencumbered by politics. It has to be unencumbered by agenda in a way.

It has to be about humanity and telling human stories. That's why I love being an artist because I think ultimately telling human stories is what gets us somewhere politically when we can tell different stories and humanize people that actually does advance the politics.

WCT: Where do you see Sophia going forward?

LC: I really do trust and believe in our brilliant writing team. Her relationship with her son, I'm curious about that and her relationship with the other inmates. I don't want to predict or say. I just know that it's going to be fantastic because I know that we have a brilliant writing team and I know it's going to be amazing. I can't wait.

WCT: When are you visiting Chicago?

LC: Actually, I might be we're working on it. We're talking to a university about speaking there later in the fall. So I might be there in the fall, but it's not confirmed yet. So I can't say until it's confirmed.

Look for Laverne in the meantime at lavernecox.com and on movies.netflix.com to stream the entire season online.

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