

MARTINA NAVRATILOVA TALKS ABOUT LIFE, OLYMPICS

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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

NOV. 13, 2013
VOL 29, NO. 7



www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



TOM HARKIN'S ROLE IN THE SENATE'S PASSAGE OF ENDA

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Greg Harris: What went right on marriage

BY KATE SOSIN

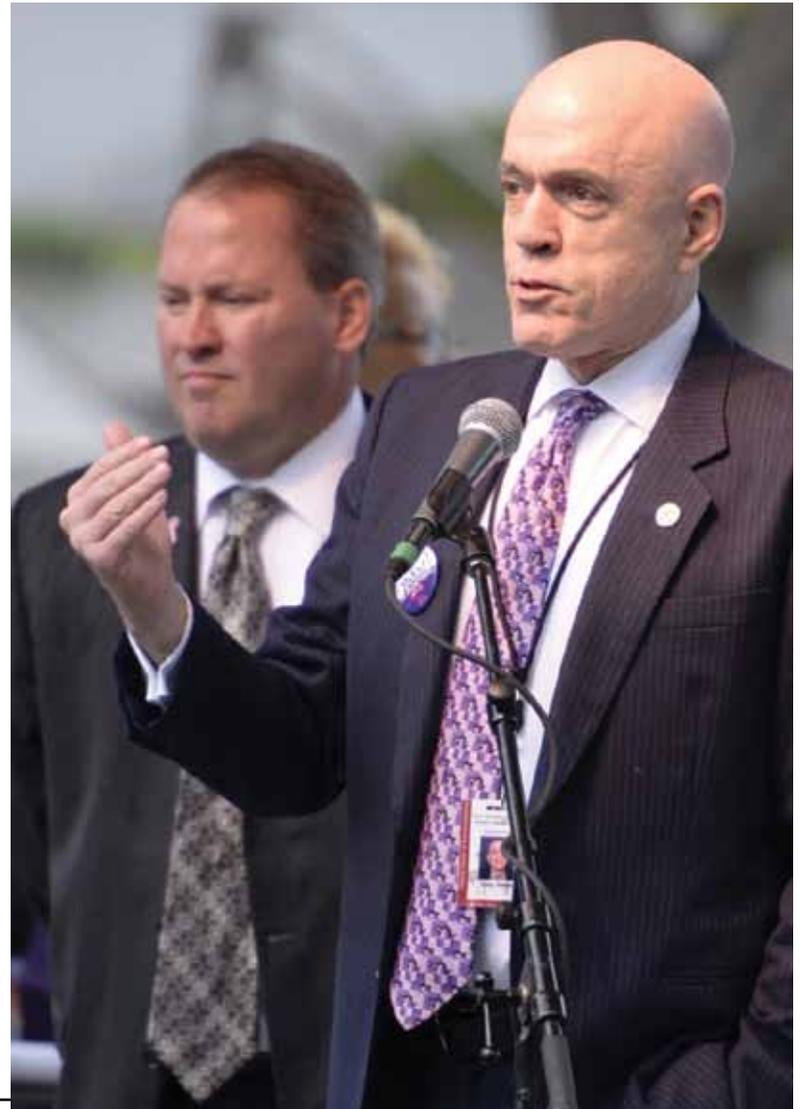
In May, detractors of openly gay Rep. Greg Harris, angry that he had not called for a vote on marriage equality, pointed out that the man who would have enjoyed the glory for the bill's passage would carry the blame for its shortfall.

Harris had declined to call for a vote on the bill before session ended in May

because he doubted that the bill had the votes to pass. He was keeping a promise to call the bill only when he had the votes, but some felt he was doubling back on another to call the bill before spring session ended. Harris told supporters that his colleagues vowed to back the bill during fall veto session.

On Nov. 5, Harris stopped being the man

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IAN HARVIE SUPERHERO AMONG REELING'S FILMS

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Left: From the Oct. 22 March On Springfield. Photo by Tim Carroll Photography. Right: Rep. Greg Harris speaks at the march. Photo by Matt Mills

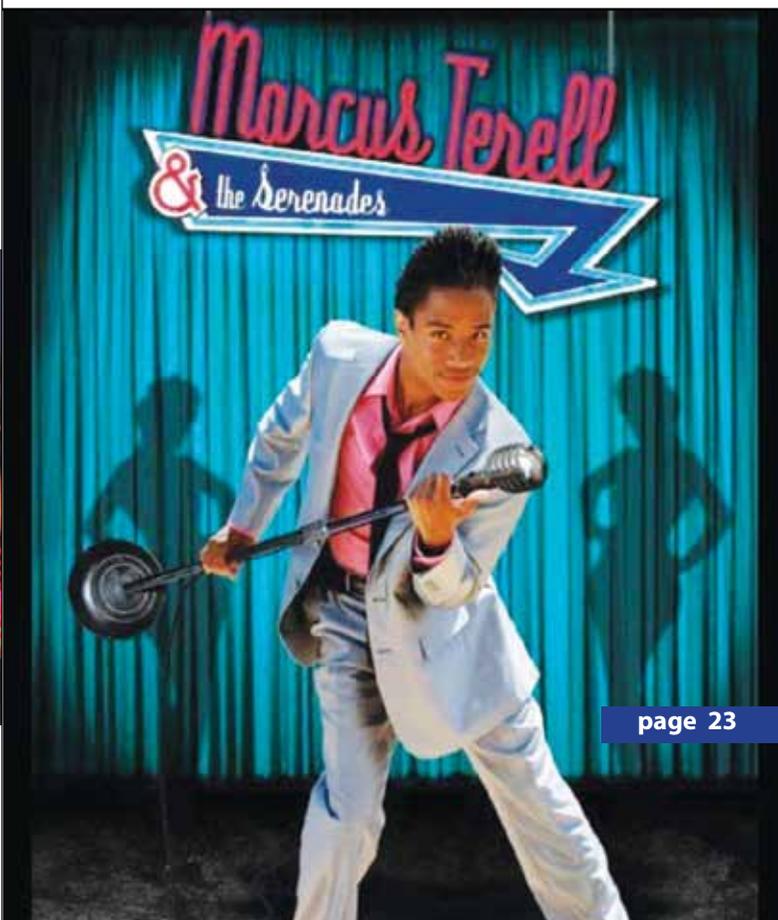
MARCUS, MEL B AND MUSIC

Windy City Times talks with former (and possibly future) Spice Girl Mel B, who discusses talk shows, the series America's Got Talent and her new music. Also on the bill is openly gay singer Marcus Terrell, who performed at the recent Springfield rally for marriage equality. Photo of Mel B by Alexander George



LGBTQ WOMEN'S GROUP SHE100 LAUNCHES

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Photos on cover (left, from top): Publicity photo of Martina Navratilova; official headshot of U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin; photo of Ian Harvie from Reeling31 staff; photo at SHE100 launch party courtesy of organization



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THE FEAST WITHIN

DIFFA'S "Dining By Design" had the theme "Beauty and the Feast."

PEIRCE-ING INSIGHT

Film director Kimberly Peirce talked about remaking Carrie at a Chicago Humanities Festival appearance.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Find out the latest about Sia, Samuel L. Jackson and Angela Lansbury.

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THE REEL THING

The 31st edition of the international LGBT film fest Reeling kicked off Nov. 7 (left).

Photo of Reeling's Richard Knight Jr. and Brenda Webb by Jerry Nunn



Project Runway's Nina Garcia hosted an event at Emporio Armani.
Photo by Jerry Nunn



Austin Baidas has made history as an openly gay person in Gov. Pat Quinn's administration.
Photo from Baidas

BURN RUBBER



The 17th Mr. International Rubber Weekend took place, mostly at the Center on Halsted.
Photo by Andrew Davis

Jim Bennett of Lambda Legal and the Illinois House Passing SB10
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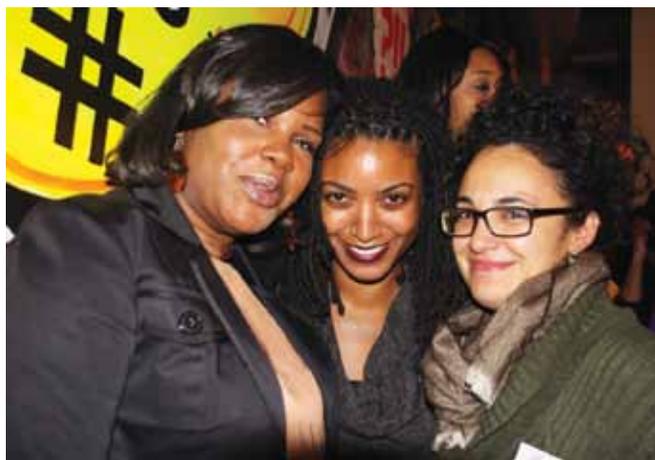
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SHE100 LGBTQ women's group launches

Chicago's newest LGBTQ group, SHE100, had their first mixer "SHE100 Official Coming Out Party" Nov. 8. The event was a celebration of SHE100 to inspire more women to join the group. "The turnout, en-

ergy and diversity was great, and SHE100 is really excited about its future," said organizers.

SHE100 is an active LGBTQ women's community whose work, presence and advocacy aim to strengthen the greater LGBTQ community. Organizers stated, "SHE100 was founded in 2013 in response to a widely observed but little acknowledged truth: LGBTQ women are present but far less visible than LGBTQ men when it comes to charitable, philanthropic and community endeavors in Chicago. SHE100 was formed to increase the volume of LGBTQ voices and to influence positive change."

Founding board members are Angela Barnes, Maia Benson, Amy Bloom and Brooke Skinner.

For more information, email sheonehundred@gmail.com or visit www.she100.org.

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Cultural Q's

BY FRANCESCA ROYSTER



Is there a "Queer Agenda?" and should there be?

"I envision a politics where one's relation to power, and not some homogenized identity, is privileged in determining one's political comrades. I am talking about a politics where the nonnormative and marginal position of punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens, for example, is the basis for progressive transformative coalition work. Thus, if any truly radical potential is to be found in the idea of queerness and the practice of queer politics, it would seem to be located in the ability to create a space in opposition to dominant norms, a space where transformational political work can begin." — Cathy Cohen (2005)

A few weeks ago, a colleague tells me that he's had it with the "queer agenda." He's gay and doesn't want anything to do with queer. Coming of age at a time when "queer" was a common slur used against him, his fit with queer as an identity has

Every Easter when I was growing up, we'd dress up in our pastel sundresses and unseasonably springy sandals (and heavy wool coats—this being Chicago) and make our annual trip to Church. On these outings, I'd find my mind wandering to the different facial expressions of the Virgin Mary statues and to the smell of incense, which I wanted to burn in my bachelorette pad when I grew up. I honestly believed that my wandering, curious approach to Church was what God wanted. Otherwise, why would She have made me queer—and with such a short attention span? Like Shug Avery's belief that God made flowers because He wants us to love the color purple, I figured that God and I had a deal, whatever the priest said.

I identify as queer, despite the fact that there are many aspects of my life that might be called homonormative: I am civil unionized to my partner Annie, and we've had a committed relationship for more than 14 years. Together we adopted Cecelia last year, and we own our own home. I am a tenured faculty member in a Catholic institution

"In my mind, queerness has always been marked by its defiance of definition."

and I actually like my job very much. And maybe because of this, I think it's even more important to align myself with others in opposition to dominant normative structures and to support the flourishing of genders and sexualities.

Cathy Cohen and others have pointed out that historically queer activism has assumed unmarked privilege around whiteness, cis-genderism and class. But at its best, "queer" can reach beyond individualism and privilege to cultivate the kind of world where we can all live freely. And that can include bringing to light the links between heteronormativity and legal and judicial structures; between sexual violence in all of the ways that it has been institutionalized, from domestic spaces to war to the Prison Industrial Complex. Being queer for me means calling a system of apartheid when I see it, whether in South Africa, the West Bank, or the South Side of Chicago.

"Checklist? Proper?" I think, a little shocked.

In my mind, queerness has always been marked by its defiance of definition. I think of the merry, not-so-proper band of queers summoned by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick back in 1993, including "pushy femmes, radical faeries, fantasists, drags, clones, leatherfolk, ladies in tuxedos, feminist women or feminist men, masturbators, bulldaggers, divas, Snap! Queens, butch bottoms, storytellers, transsexuals, aunties, wannabes, lesbian-identified men or lesbians who sleep with men, or people able to relish, learn from, or identify with such."

When it comes to political movements, along with religious ones, I've always embraced the right to pick what I like, and ignore the rest. Maybe this is because I'm an optimist by nature. Or maybe it's the influence of my mother, a pro-choice, divorced Catholic, who supported sex education, and gay rights.

and I actually like my job very much. And maybe because of this, I think it's even more important to align myself with others in opposition to dominant normative structures and to support the flourishing of genders and sexualities.

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"Queer" has work to do, and to do that work means being in coalition with others who might not fully agree with all of our beliefs. And that means taking a risk on the behalf of others as well as ourselves, and yes, having an agenda—or maybe multiple agendas, as we let our imaginations run free.

Unlike my colleague, I don't see queer as a separate or opposed identity from the rest of the LGBTIQ rainbow. Each identity can be in conversation with each other, joined in a stance of active questioning and in defiance of homogeneity.

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).

McAuliffe, Annise Parker among political winners

Although all was quiet on the Illinois front regarding elections Nov. 5 (with marriage equality standing front and center statewide), voters made their voices heard in political races in various other cities and states.

In Virginia's gubernatorial race, Democrat Terry McAuliffe defeated Republican Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli in what turned out to be a nailbiter (47 percent to 46 percent), according to CBS News. Among other things, Cuccinelli campaigned to defend Virginia's anti-sodomy law, launching a new website meant to scare parents into believing the law would protect children, Advocate.com noted.

The other governor's race saw New Jersey's Chris Christie easily winning re-election. Christie's victory makes him the only Republican governor considering the presidency and serving with a Democratic legislature, according to a Minneapolis Star-Tribune item.

Also, Bill De Blasio was elected New York City's first Democratic mayor in two decades. With 99 percent of precincts reporting, De Blasio had 73 percent of the vote compared with 24 percent for Republican Joe Lhota, former chief of the metropolitan area's transit agency.

Lesbian Annise Parker won re-election for a third and final term as Houston's mayor, according to KTRK.com. Hall's concession came after only 8 percent of precincts reported Parker had taken 50 percent of the votes. However, as more votes were counted, Parker's lead continued to grow.

Parker was first elected in 2009. She won her second term in 2011 after holding off five challengers. Term limits prevent Parker from running for a fourth term.

In addition, Ed Murray appeared to win his race, becoming Seattle's first gay mayor, ABC



Lesbian Annise Parker was re-elected mayor of Houston.

News noted. Murray is a longtime state lawmaker who for years led efforts to legalize gay marriage in the state.

Atlantic City, N.J., has a gay mayor as well: Republican Don Guardian, who defeated incumbent Lorenzo Langford, according to Press of Atlantic City. Unofficial results from the Atlantic County Clerk's Office showed Guardian with 3,066 votes to 2,904 for Langford, with all 21 districts re-

porting. Guardian joked during his speech about his partner, Louis Fatato, bringing him back to normal by having him cook and clean.

In Michigan, Royal Oak voters approved a human rights ordinance banning discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation and other factors, making the Oakland County

community the 30th municipality in the state to add such a law to its books, according to the Detroit Free Press. According to the Oakland County Elections Division, 53.96 percent of voters favored the proposal. A similar ballot measure failed in 2001 by a two-to-one margin.

—Andrew Davis

Quinn selects Paul Vallas as running mate

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn has chosen Paul Vallas to run with him as lieutenant governor in next year's election, according to NBC Chicago.

Vallas, a former chief of Chicago Public Schools, ran for governor in 2002 and narrowly lost to Rod Blagojevich. Vallas now serves as the superintendent for Bridgeport Public Schools in Connecticut.

Current Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon announced earlier this year that she would not seek another term in the same post.

This is the first year the General Assembly required Illinois' gubernatorial candidates to run with their lieutenant governor picks. The rule was changed after a situation in 2010 in which Scott Lee Cohen won the nomination and was then pushed off the ticket.

CDC taking over HIV program for gay men

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be taking over "Testing Together," the first-ever couples HIV-prevention strategy and program for gay men, and will be rolling out the program to 21 major cities at 70+ HIV testing sites nationwide, according to a media release.

The program enables male couples in the United States to learn their HIV status together and develop a customized HIV prevention and care strategy. Current HIV testing programs focus on individuals; however, it's estimated that one-third to two-thirds of new HIV infections came from main partners among gay couples.

Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health developed the program, with funding from the M·A·C AIDS Fund.

Transgender Day of Remembrance Nov. 20 at Center

The national Transgender Day of Remembrance is Wed., Nov. 20.

In Chicago, one event will be held at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., 6:30-8 p.m.

There will be a reception and welcome address with light food and refreshments, a reading of names, videos and performances by several prominent members of the trans community. This free event is open to the public.

A week before the event, Center on Halsted will tie purple ribbons in the trees outside its building to commemorate the lives of trans* community members who have lost their lives as a result of anti-transgender hatred or prejudice.

Howard Brown Health Center, Broadway Youth Center, Chicago Women's AIDS Project, Chicago House Trans Life Center and Center on Halsted are jointly hosting the event.



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U.S. Senate passes ENDA

BY LISA KEEN,
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

On Nov. 7, the U.S. Senate approved the flagship piece of legislation that the LGBT community has fought for almost two decades.

The 64-to-32 vote marked the first time the Senate has approved the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). The only other Senate vote, in 1996, failed on a vote of 49 to 50.

ENDA seeks to add language to the federal Civil Rights Act to prohibit employers from taking adverse employment actions against employees or job applicants based on "sexual orientation" and "gender identity." It applies to employers with more than 15 employees but exempts some employers based on the degree to which they are involved in religious activities.

While the bill is not as comprehensive as the original legislation introduced by the late Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.) in 1974 and championed by the late Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) beginning in 1996, it is considered to be both a critical step toward securing equal rights for LGBT people and a powerful symbolic asset.

The major hurdle now is the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. House Speaker John Boehner has repeatedly said he would not bring ENDA to the floor for a vote in the House, saying he does not believe the legislation is necessary and that it would lead to frivolous lawsuits.

That looming hurdle did not dampen the enthusiasm of senators praising the senate for its passage of the bill.

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), who took the lead on ENDA in the Senate after the death of Kennedy, praised Kennedy's leadership and that of others in both political parties.

"From the Declaration of Independence to the Constitution to our battles over slavery, our battles over gender discrimination, race discrimination, we have fought to capture that vision of equality and liberty and opportunity and fairness embedded in our founding documents and our founding vision," said Merkley, at a press conference after the first two votes were secured. "We've taken a huge stride today in that direction."

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), who championed the bill in his senate committee, said, "Today

is an historic day." He noted that the Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1994.

"Now, we have sort of finished the trilogy," said Harkin, who also praised Merkley's leadership on ENDA.

"We wouldn't be here without Jeff Merkley," said Harkin. "He spearheaded this whole effort." And Harkin called Senator Tammy Baldwin's involvement "instrumental."

The passage of ENDA on Nov. 7 came after the Senate first rejected an amendment to dramatically expand the number of employers who could claim a religious exemption to ENDA. The amendment, introduced by Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Penn.), needed 60 votes to pass.

Section 6 of the original bill stated, "This Act shall not apply to a corporation, association, educational institution or institution of learning, or society that is exempt from the religious discrimination provisions of title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964." On Wednesday, the Senate approved, by voice vote, an amendment from six Republican senators led by Senator Rob Portman (R-Ohio) to ban state and local governments from "retaliating against religious groups that take action only permissible because of the religious exemption clause" in ENDA. It was approved by voice vote Nov. 6. While LGBT groups were not enthusiastic about the Portman amendment, they didn't oppose it.

But nearly every LGBT group and supporter opposed the Toomey Amendment. It sought to expand the exemption to include entities "managed by a church or religious organization, officially affiliated with a particular religion, or [that] teach a curriculum directed toward propagating a particular religion." It would also apply to organizations with "both religious and secular functions."

Speaking on behalf of his amendment Thursday morning, Toomey said ENDA "makes a strong stand" for equality. But he said religious freedom is also an important value. He said he thinks his amendment "strikes an appropriate balance." He said he was concerned the courts have not been consistent in recognizing which religious institutions should enjoy the religious exemptions that currently exist in the Civil Rights Act. ENDA amends the Civil Rights Act to include "sexual orientation" and "gender identity."

Harkin spoke in opposition to Toomey's amendment, saying that changing the existing language of the Civil Rights Act will call into question language that employers are already familiar with and know how to comply with. He said the Toomey amendment "officially affiliated with a particular religion" to discriminate.

"This is a new term that is undefined in the text of the amendment and could lead to thousands of pro-profit businesses being allowed to discriminate," said Harkin. He said an employer might be considered "affiliated" simply by receiving a newsletter from a religious group. "It threatens to gut the fundamental purpose of ENDA," said Harkin.

Baldwin, the senate's only openly gay member, said the current religious exemption in ENDA is a "very carefully negotiated bipartisan" religious exemption. She urged the Senate to reject Toomey's amendment.

The Senate did so, by a vote of 55 to 43.

The Senate then voted 64 to 34 to approve a procedural motion to close debate on ENDA. (All roll call votes are available on the senate website approximately one hour after they are recorded.)

ENDA supporters were clearly hoping for a robust vote in support of the underlying bill and were heartened that not one senator, over the course of four days of allotted debate time, spoke in opposition to ENDA.

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) did express concern

about the addition of language to protect people on the basis of gender identity. Flake indicated he had prepared an amendment that did not make it to the floor, but suggested that his concerns were addressed.

"When I voted for ENDA in the House in 2007, it did not contain the provisions with regard to gender identity," said Flake. "Those added provisions have concerned me in terms of potential costs of litigation or compliance. I still have concerns, and I hope that as we work through the process and this bill moves onto the House that we can find ways to make sure that employers can implement these provisions in a way that is reasonable and proper."

Thanking Baldwin for working with his office on "these issues," Flake said, "I have a better appreciation for what needs to be done and what we can do with this legislation as it moves

through the process."

Baldwin, speaking at the press conference after the first two votes were taken, said "For folks, like myself, in the LGBT community, the opportunity to be judged in the workplace by your skills and qualities, your loyalty, your work ethic, is an important pronouncement for this nation."

She talked also about the "symbolic impact" of the vote.

"When we something is wrong and it shouldn't be done," said Baldwin, "that sends a powerful message to prevent discrimination in the first place."

"This is a really tremendous milestone," said Baldwin, "a day I will never forget in my service in the Senate."

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Hawaii House passes marriage-equality bill

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The Hawaii House gave final approval Nov. 8 to a marriage equality bill, putting Hawaii on track to become the 16th state plus the District of Columbia to allow same-sex couples to marry. The tally was 30 to 19.

The voting and amendment process was a raucous one, with numerous calls for recess as member wrestled over rules, time limits and disputes over fair play. All the while, the sound of protesters chanting and pounding on things could frequently be heard in the background on the web stream and grew louder as the moment for the final vote neared.

Local reporters on the scene were posting Twitter notices that suggested the atmosphere outside was sometimes very tense, despite the use of barriers to separate supporters and opponents. The Honolulu Star-Advertiser also noted that Gov. Neil Abercrombie entered the gallery at about 3:40 in the afternoon—to cheers and booing from visitors in the gallery.

The intensity of public interest in the bill has been extraordinary, by the standards of the nine other states where a marriage equality bill has been passed. One openly gay legislator, Rep. Jo Jordan, announced earlier in the week that she was voting against the bill. Speaking on the floor last night, she said she has been "blasted" for saying she is opposed to the bill but that she does not want to be "the poster child."

"I can not rise up benefits with the possibility of eroding religious protections and freedom of conscience," she said.

But there was no shortage of straight legislators to stand up for the bill. One, Rep. Mark Takai, said his office received 7,200 messages in favor of the bill and 6,300 opposed. He said he has personally has been the target of many "hateful tactics" for supporting the bill. Several of the pro-marriage equality representatives said they had received death threats and one opponent said she was "verbally assaulted" by a prominent gay activist.

Rep. Tom Brower—a single straight man who lives in Honolulu—said, "This bill does not redefine marriage for God or the church. It does not make gay the new straight."

"How many more gay people must God create before we realize he wants them here?" asked Rep. Kaniela Ing.

The bill now goes back to the state Senate for concurrence, a vote that many expect to go through without debate on Tuesday, Nov. 12. Even though Abercrombie has promised to sign the legislation, due to go into effect Dec. 2, there may be additional battles ahead.

In response to a legal challenge from an opponent of the bill, a state circuit court judge in Hawaii said Thursday that, if the

legislature passes and the governor signs the marriage equality bill, he would entertain the challenge to the new law. According to the Star-Advertiser, Judge Karl Sakamoto indicated he thinks the bill may be in conflict with a constitutional amendment voters passed in 1998. That amendment read, "Shall the Constitution of the state of Hawaii be amended to specify that the legislature shall have the power to reserve marriage to opposite-sex couples?"

The opponent who filed the legal challenge was Rep. Bob McDermott, who led the opposition on the floor. He has attempted numerous tactics to delay consideration of the bill throughout the House proceedings. He offered an amendment to create a task force to study impact of allowing same-sex marriage before voting on the bill, characterizing it as a "way out" of the divisions that have erupted among the people of Hawaii. But Brower said the measure would perpetuate the division already evident over the issue.

Opponent Rep. Richard Fale said that the bill has caused more divisions than it is worth, saying reports estimated the state would gain \$270 million from allowing same-sex couples to marry there.

Opponent Rep. Sharon Har added that it would likely hurt the economy because Asian tourists would be less likely to come.

"This is not about money, this is about equal rights," replied bill supporter Rep. Cynthia Thielen.

The task force amendment was defeated by voice vote.

Rep. Gene Ward then introduced an amendment to give an "opt out" for teachers and parents of children for any school curriculum acknowledging same-sex marriage.

"We don't have to go to Massachusetts to see their curriculum," said Ward. "The momma bears are demanding, 'Protect our kids,'" said Ward. He continued, talking about a curriculum that he found troublesome that used explicit terms to discuss sex, such as "penile sex, penis entering vagina."

McDermott said Ward's amendment was necessary to prevent gay couples from filing a lawsuit when curricula examples of families don't include same-sex families.

But bill supporter Rep. Roy Takumi said regulations are already in place that enables parents to opt out of curricula they are uncomfortable with.

The vote in Hawaii caps off a dramatic week for LGBT individuals, a week that began with Illinois clearing its marriage-equality law Nov. 5 and the U.S. Senate, for the first time in the bill's 19-year history, approving the Employment Non-Discrimination Act on Nov. 7.

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Illinois Unites manager looks back on campaign

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Supporters of gay marriage in Illinois came several steps closer to the end of a long, winding road Nov. 5 when the General Assembly passed the Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Marriage Fairness Act 61-54.

The vote culminated several years of work from many politicians, activists and other supporters, on SB10's behalf, as well as months of speculation as to when the vote would actually take place. The bill's chief sponsor, State Rep. Greg Harris, would not publicly say when to expect a vote.

But Harris privately told colleagues the evening of Nov. 4 that the vote would happen the following day, according to Illinois Unites for Marriage Campaign Director John Kohlhepp.

Harris had called together members of the steering committee for Illinois Unites for Marriage, as well as State Rep. Kelly Cassidy and State Rep. Sam Yingling. "We decided at that point to call the bill, and the next morning, Greg started to move on it," Kohlhepp said. "There are behind the scenes phone calls, and so forth, that go on."

As with many significant votes, rumors were rampant as supporters tried to conceive of the most rational strategy for the session. Tuesday morning, word circulated that the bill would be

called in late afternoon. It turned out to be the first order of business Tuesday afternoon, when a vote was called on an amendment to SB10.

The amendment passed, signaling to supporters that the original bill likely would as well.

By that point, Kohlhepp said, "The debate was about how far over 60 we would be, not whether we were at 60. We knew that as soon as the Speaker engaged with the bill, with the governor and the mayor, and everybody else pulling in the same direction as everybody else, that we would get there."

House Speaker Michael Madigan sat alongside former Rep. (and current Alderman) Deb Mell for much of the debate. Near the end of the afternoon, he spoke on its behalf, citing Pope Francis' recent calls for tolerance.

Madigan was "incredibly engaged" through much of the campaign, Kohlhepp said. "The speaker was our ally." Rep. Thaddeus Jones and Rep. Michael D'Amico both told Chicago Sun-Times that they had met with Madigan about SB10, and each voted in favor of the bill. Madigan ultimately claimed that he was able to persuade about five to 10 members to vote for SB10; he was criticized by many supporters for doing too little during the push for a vote in the spring.

Kohlhepp had lobbied for SB10 in his work for Council 31 of American Federation of State,

County and Municipal Workers in the spring.

When Harris said in May that he would not be calling a vote, "I was broken-hearted like everybody else," Kohlhepp said. "There was a whole lot of emotion for me, as with everybody else, and I sat on the side of the chamber just crying. I couldn't believe that it hadn't passed, that it hadn't been called."

He thought that the campaign needed someone with a skill set like his, and he was hired to be Illinois Unites' campaign manager, taking a leave of absence from AFSCME.

"The consensus was we needed to run an outside game that engaged constituents of targeted legislators, as well as an inside game, which was lobbyists and all the internal political machine that exists here on both sides of the aisle," Kohlhepp said.

He spoke frequently in public on building targeting districts statewide from "Wisconsin to East St. Louis."

"Everyone really had the sense that that's what was needed," according to Kohlhepp. "Constituent contact, no matter what the issue, really drives a legislator's thinking, and the campaign was built to drive thousands of constituents—because that's what those legislators called for. They'd asked to go home to their districts and speak to their constituents."

"We chose our target list very carefully," he added. "So there really are no surprises."

The campaign had announced a fundraising goal of \$2 million. Kohlhepp was unable to answer what the actual amount was. "We are still

counting," he said, adding, "But we are very close to our goal. There wasn't anything we wanted to do that we couldn't do because of our finances."

Many politicians would have preferred to wait until January or March for a vote, so unopposed House representatives would not have to worry about a primary challenger should they vote in favor of SB10.

"The truth is, there always is a difficult political reality," Kohlhepp said. "It was now or never," Kohlhepp said. "We built the campaign based on Harris' floor speech [May 31, saying he would bring the bill up in the fall veto session], and we helped to fulfill that promise."

Momentum from events such as the Oct. 22 March on Springfield "created a sense of movement," Kohlhepp said. "It bought us at least two crucial votes." He would not reveal who the votes belonged to, but said one legislator was persuaded by the sight of supporters marching around the Capitol.

He said all throughout the campaign that there was no "Plan B"—had the bill not been called in the fall veto session, Harris and the coalition would essentially have been back to the drawing board come 2014.

"But these people were incredible—they passed this bill," said Kohlhepp. "Everybody had a part to play, and in the end, they came through. That came along with some incredible leadership from Greg Harris. He kept his promise, and we should be thanking him for working tirelessly on this."

Illinois Unites' John Kohlhepp.
Photo by Hal Baim



County and Municipal Workers in the spring.

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Marriage suit's fate unsure, despite SB10

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Darby v. Orr, the lawsuit filed by several area couples against the Cook County Clerk's Office, might still be pending, despite the passage of same-sex marriage legislation Nov. 5.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs had said they would move to dismiss the lawsuit should SB10, the Religious Fairness and Marriage Equality Act, be signed into law. Gov. Pat Quinn announced that he would sign the bill Nov. 20. As late as Nov. 5, James Bennett—Midwest regional director for Lambda Legal, which is representing the plaintiffs along with ACLU Illinois—said Darby is "moot."

But he and other attorneys began to have more conversations about the later start date of SB10. The legislation, as originally written, called for a start date 30 days after the governor's signature. But the bill passed through the House during a veto session, with less than a three-fifths majority in the legislature. According to the Illinois State Constitution, that means the legislation can't take effect until June 1, 2014, which is now the earliest Illinois same-sex couples can marry.

Bennett said Nov. 7 that the legal team was weighing options in order to consider whether the lawsuit might be able to prompt marriages to begin sooner. By not being able to marry until

June 1, "the couples are still being harmed," according to Bennett.

"We're certainly not automatically dismissing the lawsuit while there is still a constitutional violation going on," said Camilla Taylor, marriage project director for Lambda Legal. "We are discussing our options with our clients."

"The case is certainly not moot yet," added ACLU Illinois LGBT and AIDS Project Director John Knight. "These people are enduring daily harm by not being able to marry—some of our plaintiffs are advanced in years and have health issues, and are concerned about having to wait so long."

Knight added that he hoped the attorneys would know how they would proceed by the week of Nov. 11. Hearings for Darby are scheduled to continue Nov. 14.

The lawsuits were filed in mid-2012. Cook County Clerk David 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.

The Thomas More Society filed a motion Nov. 7 to stay all further proceedings, contending that the lawsuit should be dismissed as moot. The court order only stayed the matter until Nov. 14, however. The case is being heard by Judge Sophia Hall, who is openly lesbian.

HARRIS from cover

who failed to call for a vote in May and became the force behind the passage of marriage equality in Illinois. With just one vote to spare, Harris called for a passed SB10, the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act. The bill's passage will result in same-sex marriage in Illinois in June 2014.

Harris took a few moments with Windy City Times to reflect on what changed between spring and fall that led to the bill's passage and the second-guessing he did in-between.

Windy City Times: What changed between May and November?

Greg Harris: I think two major things changed. Certainly the ruling in the Supreme Court made it very clear to many of my colleagues that we have done all the things in the state that we can do with civil unions. ... Once the Supreme Court ruled in June and struck down those portions of DOMA [the Defense of Marriage Act], people clearly understood that each and every day that went by, there were harms that were being done to their constituents who could not get social security benefits, who were not able to get veterans benefits, who could not even be at home with a sick child with family medical leave. So, that was one huge thing.

The other major thing that changed was the tremendous mobilization across the state of families, of faith leaders, of community leaders who came forward and said the time is now and it's the right thing to do.

WCT: When did you know that the votes were there to pass this?

GH: Certainly when we put it up on the board, I knew that the votes were there. I had been working with Speaker Madigan over the weekend, who had been really making the case to some of my colleagues that this was the right thing and the right time.

WCT: Rep. Naomi Jakobsson left her dying son to come vote for this bill. What did you say to her after this vote?

GH: I think all of us should just be terribly indebted to her and respect her and family for making this decision that she needed to get here. She was one of the first co-sponsors of the marriage bill to sign on because this is so important to her family. She had the courage to do what she did and for her family to say

Gay Liberation Network celebrates marriage bill

BY MATT SIMONETTE

About 60 people braved the cold on Nov. 7 for Gay Liberation Network's celebration of the same-sex marriage bill at the corner of Halsted St. and Roscoe St.

The event capped several protests that GLN staged in recent weeks, calling on Rep. Greg Harris and House Speaker Michael Madigan to call a vote on SB10. The group dropped a banner in the Capitol rotunda shortly after the March on Springfield rally Oct. 22 and picketed outside picketed Harris' district office twice.

Despite the week's victory in Springfield, there was little love for state politicians at the rally. GLN Co-Founder Andy Thayer laid the success at the feet of grassroots protesters who came out to publicly support SB10.

Politicians were "the ones who pushed the buttons, but they're not the ones who made it happen," said Thayer, adding that just a few weeks back, many believed that the bill was, for the moment, dead.

"In two weeks, we turned that around," Thayer said. "...We said to the legislature, 'we are watching you.'"

Thayer brought his partner, Aldo Hernandez, to the stage and said that they would be married in June. The two stood together on the stage for the rest of the rally, as supporters came to speak at the open microphone.

Activist Andrea Crain remembered back to when the LGBT community was energized by the passage of Proposition 8 in California. "Just five

years later...this is a reality and I still can't get my mind around this," said Crain.

Marquell Smith of Inclusive Community Project, who took part in a "banner drop" with GLN at the Capitol early this year, said, "Why we won this year is because people started to unite," adding, "We have to credit the unity of this community."

"It still seems strange even tonight we have to vote for this love," said Kim Beckmann of Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches. "The news would have us think that all churches were against this. But there's a momentum in this country... and a lot of room on the 'love train.'"

Bob Schwartz of GLN said that, despite the joyous news of SB10, the group's work would continue, as they had plans for two more actions. The first is to protest a banquet organized by Peter LaBarbera's organization, Americans for Truth, at Christian Liberty Academy, 502 W. Euclid Ave., in Arlington Heights on Nov. 16 at 5:30 p.m. The second will protest a dinner honoring Cardinal Francis George's retirement on Dec. 18 at the Drake Hotel, 1000 N. Michigan Ave., at 6 p.m.

The Nov. 7 GLN rally was earlier billed as either a celebration if SB10 passed or a call to action had it failed.

Thayer said that, on Nov. 5, he had a banner hidden in his coat in the Capitol, ready to drop in the House chamber should SB10 not pass.

"It read, 'Where's Mike?'" Thayer said. "I think Madigan would have gotten the message."



Secretary of State Jesse White with Laura Ricketts, a key activist and donor for marriage equality. She backed Illinois Unites efforts as finance co-chair, and supported the March on Springfield, where this photo was taken. Photo by Hal Baim

How do I get an upgrade? and other marriage FAQs

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Now that same-sex marriage is well on its way to being reality in Illinois, likely starting next June, LGBTs can look to a number of organizations for help should they begin to start planning for marriage.

You can contact ACLU Illinois at 312-201-9740 or Lambda Legal at 312-663-4413 for help about the state law. Additionally, Equality Illinois has published a booklet, "Marriage Rights in Illinois," that goes over numerous key questions. It can be found online at www.eqil.org.

Here are a few key questions and answers, culled from information provided by advocacy organizations. Many logistics of the same-sex marriage law are still being worked out, so the following should not be construed as legal advice; please consult with your legal advisors, accountants or advocacy organizations to see how the law might apply under specific circumstances.

—When will marriages begin?

Marriages can begin June 1, 2014.

—Who can get married?

A couple is eligible to marry if they are 1) age 18 or over; 2) not already legally married to someone else or each other; 3) not closely related; and 4) legally competent to enter into a civil contract.

—How do I obtain a marriage license?

Both parties must go to a county clerk's office to obtain a marriage license. Cost varies by county, but usually falls between \$15-40. The license is valid for 60 days (during which time a marriage must be performed by a recognized officiant), and only within the county through which the license is obtained. There is a one-day waiting period before the license is effective.

—Will civil unions still exist when same-

sex marriages begin in Illinois?

Yes. Couples will still be able to obtain a civil union should they wish for that instead of a marriage.

—If I am already in a civil union in Illinois, how do I "upgrade"?

Couples in civil unions can either marry through regular channels—obtaining a marriage license and having a marriage ceremony performed—or, during the first year after marriages begin, they can simply apply for a marriage certificate from their county clerk's office that will mark the date of their civil union as the date of their marriage. There is no fee for the marriage license for couples already in a civil union. Civil unions entered into outside of Illinois can also be upgraded in the same manner.

—Can out-of-state couples marry in Illinois?

Couples may marry in Illinois as long as their state does not declare same-sex marriages to be "void." Not all states that prohibit same-sex marriages declare them as "void." Clerks may ask out-of-state couples to sign an affidavit before marrying that their state does not declare same-sex marriages to be void.

—Will out-of-state marriages be recognized in Illinois?

Yes. Illinois law recognizes marriages already legally performed in other states.

—Will other states recognize Illinois marriages?

As long as the state recognizes same-sex marriages, yes.

—What happens if we must divorce?

You will follow the same procedures set up for opposite-sex couples. Note, though, that some procedures concerning child support and custody may differ, depending on your circumstances.

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Marriage equality: How they voted and what it means

BY KATE SOSIN

Sponsors of the state's marriage equality promised surprises when SB10 saw its day on the House floor, and on Nov. 5, they delivered.

LGBT leaders predicted that the bill would have bipartisan backing and support in other unlikely places.

The bill managed to pick up Republican support, Democratic support from one lawmaker who voted against civil unions and a yes vote from a lawmaker who publicly opposed the bill.

Here's the full roll call and the votes we think stood out:

Standout votes:

Tom Cross (R-97th): Cross, a candidate for Illinois Treasurer and a longtime House Republican Leader, voted "no" on civil unions. Cross told the Daily Herald that he spoke with people in his life, including his father who is a retired minister, before deciding to cast his yes vote.

Luis Arroyo (D-3rd): Arroyo voted for the bill in committee but said he would vote against the bill on the floor. He reiterated that stance to Windy City Times when questioned further. But advocates refused to give up on Arroyo, insisting that he could be moved to a position of support. In the end, they were right.

Patrick Verschoore (D-72nd): Verschoore

YES VOTES 61 (58 Democrat, 3 Republican)



Daniel Burke (D-1st)



Ken Dunkin (D-5th)



Cynthia Soto (D-4th)



La Shawn K. Ford (D-8th)



Ann Williams (D-11th)



Sara Feigenholtz (D-12th)



Greg Harris (D-13th)



Kelly Cassidy (D-14th)



Lou Lang (D-16th)



Laura Fine (D-17th)



Robyn Gabel (D-18th)



Robert Martwick (D-19th)



Michael Madigan (D-22nd)



Elizabeth Hernandez (D-24th)



Barbara Flynn Currie (D-25th)



Christian Mitchell (D-26th)



Robert Rita (D-28th)



Elgie Sims, Jr. (D-34th)



Maria Antonia Berrios (D-39th)



Jaime Andrade (D-40th)



Keith Farnham (D-43rd)



Ed Sullivan, Jr. (R-51st)



Scott Drury (D-58th)



Carol Sente (D-59th)



Sam Yingling (D-62nd)



Mike Smiddy (D-71st)



Camille Lilly (D-78th)



Ron Sandack (R-81st)



Naomi Jakobsson (D-103rd)



Deb Conroy (D-46th)



Natalie Manley (D-98th)



Elaine Nekritz (D-57th)



Kathleen Willis (D-77th)



Arthur Turner (D-9th)



Edward J. Acevedo (D-2nd)



Esther Golar (D-6th)



Emanuel "Chris" Welch (D-7th)



Michael Zalewski (D-23rd)



Will Davis (D-30th)



Andre Thapedi (D-32nd)



Frances Ann Hurley (D-35th)



Kelly Burke (D-36th)



Al Riley (D-38th)



Martin Moylan (D-55th)



Michelle Mussman (D-56th)



Stephanie Kifowit (D-84th)



Emily McAsey (D-85th)



Lawrence Walsh, Jr. (D-86th)



Linda Chapa LaVia (D-83rd)



Jehan Gordon (D-92nd)



Jack Franks (D-63rd)



Patrick Verschoore (D-72nd)



Silvana Tabares (D-21st)



Thaddeus Jones (D-29th)



Marcus C. Evans, Jr. (D-33rd)



Fred Crespo (D-44th)



Tom Cross (R-97th)



Anthony DeLuca (D-80th)



Luis Arroyo (D-3rd)



John D'Amico (D-15th)



Jay Hoffman (D-113th)

voted against civil unions and was not endorsed by Equality Illinois. But he voted marriage equality Nov. 5.

Anthony DeLuca (D-80th): DeLuca was a longtime target for advocates. He voted for civil unions and was endorsed by Equality Illinois. But March 2011, Chicago Heights Patch reported that DeLuca said he would oppose an equal marriage bill. In the end, his yes vote was seen as crucial to the bill's passage.

Rita Mayfield (D-60th): Mayfield voted present on civil unions and vowed to do the same for marriage after months of back-and-forth with marriage equality advocates. She says her best friend is gay and that she couldn't bring herself to vote against the bill despite pressure to do so in her district. LGBT advocates targeted her heavily for that reason. Still, Mayfield remained on the fence until the end.

Republican yes votes:

- Tom Cross (R-97th)
- Ron Sandack (R-81st)
- Ed Sullivan, Jr. (R-51st)

Democratic no votes:

- Monique Davis (D-27th)
- Daniel Beiser (D-111th)
- John Bradley (D-117th)
- Charles Jefferson (D-67th)
- Frank Mautino (D-76th)
- Katherine Cloonen (D-79th)
- Jerry Costello, II (D-116th)
- Eddie Lee Jackson, Sr. (D-114th)
- Mary Flowers (D-31st)
- Sue Scherer (D-96th)

Breakdown of Black Caucus votes:

- Yes:**
- Will Davis (D-30th)
 - Ken Dunkin (D-5th)

- Marcus C. Evans, Jr. (D-33rd)
- La Shawn K. Ford (D-8th)
- Esther Golar (D-6th)
- Jehan Gordon (D-92nd)
- Thaddeus Jones (D-29th)
- Camille Lilly (D-78th)
- Christian Mitchell (D-26th)
- Al Riley (D-38th)
- Elgie Sims, Jr. (D-34th)
- Andre Thapedi (D-32nd)
- Arthur Turner (D-9th)
- Emanuel "Chris" Welch (D-7th)

No:

- Monique Davis (D-27th)
- Mary Flowers (D-31st)
- Eddie Lee Jackson, Sr. (D-114th)
- Charles Jefferson (D-67th)

Present:

- Derrick Smith (D-10th)
- Rita Mayfield (D-60th)

PRESENT



Derrick Smith (D-10th)



Rita Mayfield (D-60th)

ABSENT



Mike Fortner (R-49th)

NO VOTES 54 (10 Democrat, 44 Republican)



Monique Davis (D-27th)



Renee Kosel (R-37th)



Jeanne Ives (R-42nd)



Patti Bellock (R-47th)



Sandra Pihos (R-48th)



David McSweeney (R-52nd)



Brandon Phelps (D-118th)



Thomas Morrison (R-54th)



JoAnn Osmond (R-61st)



Barbara Wheeler (R-64th)



Timothy Schmitz (R-65th)



Michael Tryon (R-66th)



Charles Jefferson (R-67th)



John Cabello (R-68th)



Joe Sosnowski (R-69th)



Robert Pritchard (R-70th)



David Leitch (R-73rd)



Don Moffitt (R-74th)



John Bradley (D-117th)



Frank Mautino (D-76th)



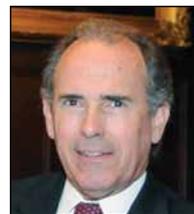
Katherine Cloonen (D-79th)



Jim Durkin (R-82nd)



Rich Brauer (R-87th)



Keith Sommer (R-88th)



Brian Stewart (R-89th)



Tom Demmer (R-90th)



Michael Unes (R-91st)



Norine Hammond (R-93rd)



Jil Tracy (R-94th)



Wayne Rosenthal (R-95th)



Raymond Poe (R-99th)



Bill Mitchell (R-101st)



Josh Harms (R-106th)



John Cavaletto (R-107th)



Charles Meier (R-108th)



David Reis (R-109th)



Mike Bost (R-115th)



Jerry Costello, II (D-116th)



Darlene Senger (R-41st)



David Harris (R-53rd)



Adam Brown (R-102nd)



Chad Hays (R-104th)



Dan Brady (R-105th)



Brad Halbrook (R-110th)



Daniel Beiser (D-111th)



Dwight Kay (R-112th)



Eddie Lee Jackson, Sr. (D-114th)



Mary Flowers (D-31st)



Kay Hatcher (R-50th)



John Anthony (R-75th)



Sue Scherer (D-96th)



C.D. Davidsmeyer (R-100th)



Dennis Reboletti (R-45th)



Michael McAuliffe (R-20th)

Gov. Quinn signing of marriage bill set for Nov. 20

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Gov. Pat Quinn announced Nov. 7 that he would sign SB10, the legislation that would bring same-sex marriage equality to Illinois, on Nov. 20 at 3:30 p.m. at University of Illinois (UIC) Forum, 725 W. Roosevelt Rd.

In a statement, Quinn said, "Marriage equality is coming to Illinois. I look forward to signing this landmark legislation on November 20 and celebrating a big step forward with the people of Illinois."

The announcement follows SB10's passage in the Illinois legislature on Nov. 5.

In a Nov. 4 interview with WBEZ, Quinn implied that the signing would occur before Thanksgiving, and that he wanted LGBT Illinoisans something to be "grateful for."

Quinn spoke at the March on Springfield rally Oct. 22 and hosted a reception following SB10's passage.

Some supporters have suggested that at least an additional signing ceremony should take place in Springfield, given that Illinoisans from

across the state, not just Chicago, took part in advocacy and lobbying efforts.

Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim, founder and co-chair of the Oct. 22 March on Springfield, is calling on organizers to further consider a statewide event.

"I really urge those planning the marriage bill signing ceremony not to make it just in Chicago," Baim said. "We worked so very hard on the March on Springfield to make this a statewide effort. Let's make the signing one, too."

Also of note, Nov. 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance, a time to remember the people lost to violence against transgender people. "They should do some kind of recognition of the date and address the issue by allowing someone to speak to the issue, and have a moment of silence for victims of transgender violence," Baim said.

For registration information on the Nov. 20 event, visit <http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/equality/Pages/default.aspx>.



Gov. Pat Quinn. Photo by Tim Carroll Photography

Rep. Jakobsson's son dies

BY KATE SOSIN AND TRACY BAIM

Illinois reps. voting for marriage equality Nov. 5 may have cast tough votes, but perhaps none was tougher than Naomi Jakobsson's.

Jakobsson, a co-sponsor of the bill, left the bedside of her dying son to vote for the bill, a crucial vote on a bill that squeaked by with just one vote to spare.

Jakobsson's 46-year-old son Garret was in hospice.

The Urbana rep. left his bedside for the Capitol Tuesday to cast her vote, returning to find her son had passed ten minutes before she returned, said her friend Rep. Sara Feigenholtz.

House Majority Leader Barbara Flynn Currie announced the death and led her colleagues in a moment of silence Nov. 6.

Jakobsson's office issued a statement saying her son would have wanted her to make the trip to cast the vote.

"Equal protection under the law is important to everyone in my family, including Garret," said Jakobsson. "This was a vote that was important to my whole family, one that I felt I could not miss, and I know my son was proud of my decision."

State Rep. Greg Harris, chief sponsor of the bill, stated: "Naomi Jakobsson is an amazing woman. Kind, caring and courageous. She was among the first to sign on as a sponsor to marriage equality, and has been a champion for this and many other issues of justice and fairness in Central Illinois, and across our state."

Jakobsson's vote was essential. The bill passed with just 61 votes, one more than was needed. A test vote on an amendment to the bill immediately before turned up just 59 votes, signaling a close vote was at hand.

Feigenholtz described Jakobsson's family as diverse and committed to social justice. The Chicago Tribune reported that Garret was among eight children.

Feigenholtz said she had no doubts that Jakobsson knew she made the right decision.

"For those of us who know and love Naomi, Naomi is a very simple, heartfelt human being, and I think she demonstrated the quality of what this meant," said Feigenholtz. "I think she and her husband reflected on what [Garret] would have wanted."

* A sweet and distinctive spin on a holiday standard.*
Alonso Duralde, author, "Have Yourself a Movie Little Christmas"

* This touching and clever Carol is sure to be a queer Christmas classic! *
Mike Wood, Instinct magazine

* This Christmas Carol will gayly ring in the Holidays and so it should! *
Janet Davies, ABC-7 News



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**TRACY
BAIM**

Life after marriage (equality)

Now that we have passed marriage equality in Illinois, many people wonder, "What's next?"

This was the Holy Grail sought by some Illinois residents going back to the 1970s, when two women were arrested trying to get a marriage certificate in Cook County.

Marriage equality is not just a very real need for some LGBT couples, but it is also a symbolic victory for the rest of society. While many whites never married people of color, and vice versa, the U.S. Supreme Court 1967 decision in *Loving v. Virginia* that banned anti-miscegenation laws was a critical ruling even for those who never felt the sting of those bans. The lifting of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" did not affect every gay person directly, but it did as a whole. And, of course, it changed things for their straight colleagues, too.

Not every law that impacts social change directly helps every person in those categories. Marriage is not for everyone, LGBT or straight. But you bet it is an important symbol of social progress and change. Straight people, even those who love us, don't always "get" us through our gay lens of pride parades and cultural diversity. But when it comes to the traditions of marriage, they really do have a better sense of us. I have witnessed the changes on the faces of relatives and friends attending same-gender weddings, and it is real.

That is why the right wing continues to fight marriage equality to the bitter end. They know our marriages will not cause one heterosexual divorce. But it will ease the heteronormative pressure placed on people who are different, as they grow up witnessing this inclusive social revolution. I can't imagine the impact it would have had on me to witness a gay wedding in 1976, as I entered high school. My nephew attended my ceremony with my partner of 18 years when he was 15, and he is the coolest straight boy around, participating in his school's gay/straight alliance, attending LGBT events and cheering me on in my work for equality.

But there are two major things about being LGBT that continue to dent our arc in its search for justice: internalized homophobia and familial homophobia. Sarah Schulman writes about this in *Ties that Bind: Familial Homophobia and Its Consequences*. This is the damage that occurs in families, something that all of the societal acceptance in the world can't easily unpack. There are families who try to cure their LGBT youth, are violent toward them, kick them out and shun them. Yes, Virginia, even in 2013, our LGBT youth must face some of the same obstacles we did.

So a victory on marriage equality is important, but it is not the end. It is the beginning of a new era, perhaps, but one that still will be a particularly personal and difficult battle for some of our community's most vulnerable. And because we won marriage by a narrow margin, we know that our enemies are not fully defeated. They have children, sisters, brothers, grandparents and others in their families who are right now being ostracized, not fully accepted as human beings. Marriage will not solve this, but it has helped move society forward as they see the images of our more complete lives, as they attend

those weddings, and as our families become more real.

So what is next for Illinois? We learned a lot of things during this march toward equality. We learned what works, and what does not, in seeking change. We confirmed that absolute power only concedes to pressure, not acting nice. We learned that the grassroots LGBT and allied communities have a lot of power, and that power will not be ignored either by our enemies or our allies—and also not by top-down organizations (locally or nationally) who think they know what is best for us.

Another important lesson to take away from this is how amazing our allies were on this issue. From unions to feminist leaders, civil-rights groups to churches, students to immigrant-rights workers, this was an amazing alliance of groups and people. Can we take this coalition and mold it into a permanent form? What would that look like? We would have to disagree at times, but come together on important coalition projects. We would show up for others as they showed up for us.

I am interested in continuing this dialogue. Perhaps there can be a Bayard Rustin Institute for Social Justice in Chicago, where individuals and groups can come together to learn from one another, network, and "show up" for causes, legislation and events. We don't need to create a huge institution to accomplish this work, with bloated budgets and salaries. The March on Springfield was done all-in for less than \$50,000, with no staff and no permanent infrastructure. People who care about these issues can be creative and find ways to work together in a complementary way, and work separately when that is needed.

The LGBT community can bring great ideas to the overall work of social justice. We know this because LGBTs have always done so. Many were not as courageous as Bayard Rustin, so they did their work from the closet. But many more were out and proud as LGB or T, and fought for decades for the rights of others. Well, we need to now do this even more boldly, working across boundaries to find creative solutions. If we do this, perhaps we will continue to earn the respect and support of our allies.

So what is next on our "LGBT agenda" in Illinois? Let me end with my own Top 15 list:

1) AIDS and general LGBT healthcare issues; there is work toward an "AIDS-free generation" but we are not there yet, and there are many other healthcare needs of this community.

2) Homeless LGBTQ youth need food, shelter, education and jobs.

3) LGBT seniors have many needs, including housing. The new senior housing facility will be great, but it will house just a few dozen people.

4) Violence of all forms in our community, including domestic violence and anti-LGBT violence, needs to be continually addressed.

5) Transgender resources are needed, especially for those facing increased threats of violence, job loss, and homelessness.

6) Family values—making sure the new marriage law is fully implemented and that all related laws are brought in line.

7) Poverty is a very real issue for LGBTs, just as it is for the overall society. As a community, we can provide resources to help our own, through grants, training and services. We also should back the \$15 minimum wage movement, as it would transform this nation.

8) Immigration is an LGBT issue, because of the millions of LGBTs and their families who are living in limbo with current immigration laws.

9) Racial and geographic segregation in our communities is no better than it was in the 1970s, and we need to figure out how to better work across our differences.

10) Substance abuse has always been an issue in the LGBT community, in part because of internal and external homophobia. We need more resources.

11) Suicide is an issue facing all generations

of LGBTs. Sometimes it is connected to harassment, but more often it is about making proper resources available, including mental health services.

12) Bullying itself is an issue, whether on an NFL team or in a high school. It can lead to many problems, including violence and murder.

13) Religion still has power in this country, including the power to damage people from the inside. The work our religious allies do on LGBT rights is admirable, and should be acknowledged and supported.

14) The Employment Non-Discrimination Act is needed, without religious compromise. It's not OK for someone to refuse to hire or serve a person based on their race or gender, and it should not be OK based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

15) Finally, history is important to me. I would not be where I am today without the work and support of thousands of people who came before me. We need to make sure we are supporting efforts to document our community, including The Legacy Project. In many cases, it is the only way the next generation will learn our stories.

There are ways to prioritize these concepts, but the bottom line is there is much more to do, and we must not rest on the victory of marriage equality. It is grand and it is great, but it is not the end.

What's on your agenda? Email me at editor@windycitymediagroup.com.

Letters: Poll position

To the editor:

Catholics all around the world are being asked their opinion of church teachings on divorce, same-sex marriage and contraception to inform a Vatican synod on the family by next October. The survey has been sent out to all the bishops' conferences, including the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops, requesting that the survey be disbursed as far as possible. This has never been done in preparation of a Vatican a synod.

Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, the secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, has asked the bishops to distribute the questionnaire as widely as possible to their priests and parishes (including lay people) for local input.

The document says that the social and spiritual crisis, "so evident in today's world, is becoming a pastoral challenge" as the Church seeks to minister to families and encourage the faith.

The survey reflects the pope's pledges to move away from what he called a "Vatican-centric" approach toward one where local church leaders are more involved in decision-making.

The poll findings will help set the agenda for an extraordinary synod, or meeting, of the presidents of national bishops conferences in October 2014.

The Rainbow Sash Movement believes this to be a significant step to further the conversation within the Church, around issues of social justice. Such a survey will create buzz around the issue of LGBT Social Justice Rights and in our opinion can have positive affects.

We think this is good and should be supported.

Joe Murray
Rainbow Sash Movement

VOL. 29, No. 7, Nov. 13, 2013

The combined forces of *Windy City Times*, founded Sept. 1985, and *Outlines newspaper*, founded May 1987.

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CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Jean Albright
DISTRIBUTION: Ashina, Allan, Dan, John, Renee, Sue and Victor
WEB HOSTING: LoveYourWebsite.com (lead programmer: Martie Marro)

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WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP,
5315 N. Clark St. #192, Chicago, Illinois 60640
U.S.A.
(MAILING ADDRESS ONLY)

Windy City Times Deadline every Wednesday.
Nightspots Deadline Wednesday prior to street date.
OUT! Resource Guide ONLINE
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Community Marketing, Inc.

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo from Snap Incorporated

UP IN THE AIR

Ben Wardell (left) and Michel Rodriguez Cintra make up the dance duo The Nexus Project. Read more below.

BOOKS

Dorie days.
Page 21Photo of author Dorie Clark
courtesy of Clark

THEATER

'Kate' expectations.
Page 18Photo from Kate and Sam...
by Patriac Coakley

SPORTS

Net gain.
Page 21

PR photo of Martina Navratilova



DANCIN' FEATS

The Nexus Project: Growing by leaps and bounds

BY VICKI CRAIN

The location is not convenient. The venue doesn't have continuous heat. There is only seating for 30 audience members. The stage is small in a vast, open warehouse space. And yet what is created and shared in an evening of the full-length The Nexus Project works. It not only works, but it is one of the most clever, honest, open, daring and unique performances to come around in a long time. Oh, and there's some fiercely fantastic dancing too.

The evening begins simply with Benjamin Wardell, the project's instigator, saying, "Hello everybody." The intimate setting, which Wardell and Michel Rodriguez Cintra created, is complete with hanging quilts serving as wings to the stage and providing a colorful contrast to the white, open space while also holding in the sound.

Fleece blankets adorned with woodland creatures wait on chairs for the audience to use as cushions, blankets or capes. Stacks of fluffy socks on a table encourage the audience to take off their shoes, relax, and stay a while. The performers themselves refresh wine, which is included with a donation of \$5 or more.

It feels more like a quiet evening around a campfire with 30 close friends than a dance concert, except instead of a fire in the center, there is gravity-defying partnering paired with intense, extreme dancing. One notable section has Cintra running in circles constantly around the space as Wardell gives a 12-minute monologue about memories from his childhood that leave the audience and the dancer in tears. Another deemed "the Climbing section" drops jaws as Wardell performs an extended section of

floorwork with Cintra standing (or climbing) on top of him.

The Nexus Project, a venture of Snap Incorporated, started nearly two years ago as an idea by Wardell, a former dancer at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, to explore male duets. His "two-man show" eventually turned into a groundbreaking way of creating. Once he chose his partner Cintra, they worked with 12 different local choreographers who set duets on the duo in varying styles from contemporary to jazz to breakdancing. The second part of the creative process involved Wardell and Cintra "re-contextualizing" the choreography by remixing the movement phrases and changing up the music. Eventually, they added in storylines and text.

The two dancers had never worked together before beginning on Nexus, but now are fast friends. "He's my emergency contact," said Wardell. "It was intriguing to go into the project not knowing each other. I've never had as thorough a partnership with anyone. I've gotten to know him so well. We took a six-week break over the summer and when we came back, we had to talk for an hour and a half to understand where we were. There was no way we could dance together without knowing what was going on; we were way past that physical interaction. It's subtle enough that his mood affects how I partner him."

Another interesting aspect in the male partnership is the dynamic in the dancing. In a male/female partnership, the man has a distinct role to play. Here they switch things by partnering each other, but the openly gay Wardell takes the more traditional male part doing the majority of the lifting and manipulation of Cintra, who is straight.



Ben Wardell. Photo from Snap Incorporated

Wardell was particularly intrigued by the limitless possibilities with Cintra in particular, who is known for his Michael Jordan-like hang time in his jumps and his acrobatic attack. "The upper body strength ratio (with men) makes a huge difference in what you can do," he said. "And his magical jump makes a huge difference in partnering options. The scale of physicality that we can achieve...some of that is male/male stuff, but some of that is him. He's a freak of nature."

Choreographers of original source material include Francisco Avina, Nicolas Blanc, Autumn Eckman, Jonathan Fredrickson, Daniel Haywood,

Ron de Jesus, Khecari (Julia Rae Antonick and Jonathan Meyer), Harrison McEldowney, Matthew McMunn, Julia Rhoads, Penny Saunders and Robyn Mineko Williams.

The Nexus Project is holding performances at Mana Fine Arts, 2233 S. Throop Ave., through Sunday, Dec. 1. Performances are Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays at 5 p.m. Tickets are pay-what-you-can. Reservations are encouraged at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/480070. (Note: There will be no performances Saturday, Nov. 16, or Friday, Nov. 22.)



The Peacock. Photo by Alex Hand

THEATER REVIEW

The Peacock

Playwright: Calamity West
At: Jackalope Theatre Company
 at City Lit in Edgewater
 Presbyterian Church,
 1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
Tickets: 773-340-2543;
www.jackalopetheatre.org; \$5-\$15
Runs through: Dec. 8

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Eleanor is dead, to start.

She hanged herself in her off-campus apartment three weeks before the start of our story, leaving fellow student-author Nan the sole woman in a New England university writers workshop dominated by young males aspiring to the Norman Mailer cult of masculinity characterizing American literature in 1946. This is not the starting point of our play, however. Calamity West instead launches her narrative from the scene of its decisive confrontation, involving a bottle of whiskey, a Christmas wreath, a bleeding head wound and a prosthetic leg detached from its owner.

If that doesn't immediately grab your attention, it provides incentive to stick around for the flashback acquainting us with the circumstances leading up to this crisis. Nan, you see, writes two-fisted adventure yarns of soldiers suffering battlefield atrocities. She even, herself, boasts a damaged leg—injuries associated with her man heroes like General Santa Anna or Captain Ahab—compounding her classmates' resentment of her undisputed artistic talent. Her envious comrades, by contrast, are preppy pretenders—with one lonely romanticist—mired down in gender-nebulous precocity that they attempt to disguise through testosterone posturing. (The noisiest of the bunch sniggers at a smuggled volume of Henry Miller, but flees in terror when Nan quotes Walt Whitman at him.)

"A story can work on many levels," insists Calvin, speaking of his own Tolstoy-wannabe scribbles, "You don't have to get it all in one read." This observation may also be applied to West's densely-constructed portrait of youths chafing under postwar trauma. On the surface, it can be viewed simply as a feminist polemic of butch girls bullied by effete boys (even the likewise repressed professor eventually demands that his star pupil write less mannishly). Playgoers versed in scholarly fashions of the era may also

recognize the literary underpinnings (think Melville) of the punishment inflicted on those who challenge predetermined social roles.

Jackalope Theatre has forged its reputation on microcosmic suspense preceding incendiary violence, an aesthetic fulfilled by Marti Lyons' direction of the ensemble led by AJ Ware as the laconic heroine (whose mystery is enhanced by a costume ensuring designer Samantha Jones a Jeff nomination next spring), and featuring multi-layered characterizations by Tim Martin, Nate Wheldon, Jack Miggins, Ed Dzialo and Andrew Burden Swanson as her silent-generation peers. Don't expect to walk away with it all after just one read.

CRITICS' PICKS

All My Sons, Eclectic Full Contact Theatre at the Athenaeum, through Nov. 17. Not just your classroom classic, Arthur Miller's parable of family values gone wrong still packs plenty of punch when its actors are unencumbered by academic baggage. MSB

The Killer Angels, Lifeline Theatre, through Nov. 24. Gettysburg, 1863: three days of slaughter that turned the tide of the Civil War. This skillful adaptation of Michael Shaara's novel, with period songs, brings heart and soul to officers and enlisted men alike in a beautiful ensemble production. JA

Miss Saigon, Paramount Theatre, Aurora, through Nov. 24. I may have issues about the work itself, but director Jim Corti's production of this 1989 updating of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* to the Vietnam War era is unquestionably a strong and dramatic one. SCM

The Wedding Singer, Haven Prod at Theater Wit, through Nov. 17. Wedding-industry employees remain oblivious to the romance right in front of them until a madcap chase to Las Vegas supplies the requisite suspense to happily conclude this unabashedly sentimental comedy. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge
 and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Port Authority

Playwright: Conor McPherson
At: Writers' Theatre at Books on
 Vernon, 664 Vernon Ave., Glencoe
Tickets: 847-242-6000;
www.writerstheatre.org; \$35-\$70
Runs through: Feb. 16, 2014

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

For men, the power of attraction almost always has a sexual component. Only rarely do men respond first to an uber-attraction in which sexual possibilities are secondary. *Port Authority*, set in contemporary Dublin, offers three who do. They tell their stories as interlocking monologues tinged with rue and outright regret but laced with humor.

Kevin, 20, is living on his own for the first time, not very successfully, with two rock band male flat mates and one female, Clare. Dermot is a career-challenged, alcoholic forty-something husband/dad who unexpectedly connects with his boss' wife. Joe is a widower living in a retirement home who questions whether his attraction to his next door neighbor 50 years ago was disloyal to his wife or sinful in God's eyes.

A true heir to the great Irish literary tradition, playwright Conor McPherson gives each character different cadences and vocabularies, extracting layered poetic richness from seemingly everyday speech. Kevin, not yet completely formed as a man, is more intuitively thoughtful than his male mates. Dermot talks and walks with

swagger to counter his fears and failures. Joe is older, wiser and good and seems to have no issues except regrets. McPherson forges little links between the three narratives but they are clever rather than necessary. The question nagging all three is: could there have been more? Were Clare, the boss' wife and the woman next door, in fact, their destined soulmates? What would the cost have been to find out? As Joe puts it about his brief encounters with his neighbor, "I loved someone I didn't know."

Port Authority is an intimate play presented in a 50-seat theater with a small platform stage and three stools. Under skilled veteran director William Brown, the actors stroll through the audience as they deliver their highly personal stories. Big histrionics? No way. John Hoogenakker, as Dermot, is the loudest as called for by his substance-addled character. He speaks the fastest and prowls like a beast. Patrick Clear, as Joe, is the quiet one and perhaps the most ordinary, disappearing into his woolen sweater, and yet he's the one who most deeply questions what might have been. Fenton's Kevin, though, is the center of the play because he's the one who still has all his possibilities in front of him. Performed as an appealing good kid a girl could bring home to meet the folks, Kevin still has time to learn from his bad choices, and what may have been a missed opportunity with Clare.

Port Authority is a beautifully performed hour and 40 minutes of splendid language and unusual male introspection, as three men explain themselves not for what they have done but for what they did not do.

THEATER REVIEW

Elegy

Playwright: Ron Hirschen
At: Victory Gardens Biograph,
 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.
Tickets: 1-773-871-3000;
www.victorygardens.org; \$42
Runs through: Dec. 1

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

The universe of dramatic literature encompasses a number of plays about survivors of The Holocaust who bury their concentration camp memories beyond recollection, or so they hope. In Ron Hirschen's *Elegy*, Helmut (David Wohl) is one such Jew, a New York pastry maker in the 1970s, originally from Berlin, who survived Auschwitz. In most such plays, the survivor is forced to dredge up horrific memories and confront the issues they represent, from survivor's guilt to loss of faith to despair. *Elegy* follows suit with a slight twist. The antagonist confronting Helmut is his son, Jerry, an emotionally fragile college student sick of having his parents (his mother, Hilde, also survived The Holocaust) describe him as "a miracle" in whom they have invested all their hopes. The twist is that the tool Jerry (Justin Leider) uses against his dad is poetry, indeed his father's own poetry written before the war.

At least in part, *Elegy* seems intended to serve a didactic function. It's an exceedingly spare play, running just 75 minutes, without an extra syllable let alone an unnecessary sentence. It's performed with four actors on a minimal set for easy presentation in a variety of venues such as schools, synagogues, community groups or even churches. The live cellist (Bill Meyers) who plays Beethoven between scenes is a lovely flourish, but recorded music also would work.

Generally, it's good for a play to be lean and pared down, but *Elegy* is scrawny to the point of being schematic, it's characters reduced nearly to stereotypes by the absence of emotional material to flesh them out, despite the use of the poetry as a linguistic and emotional mechanism.

Helmut is emotionally unavailable to his son, or at least undemonstrative, yet Hilde

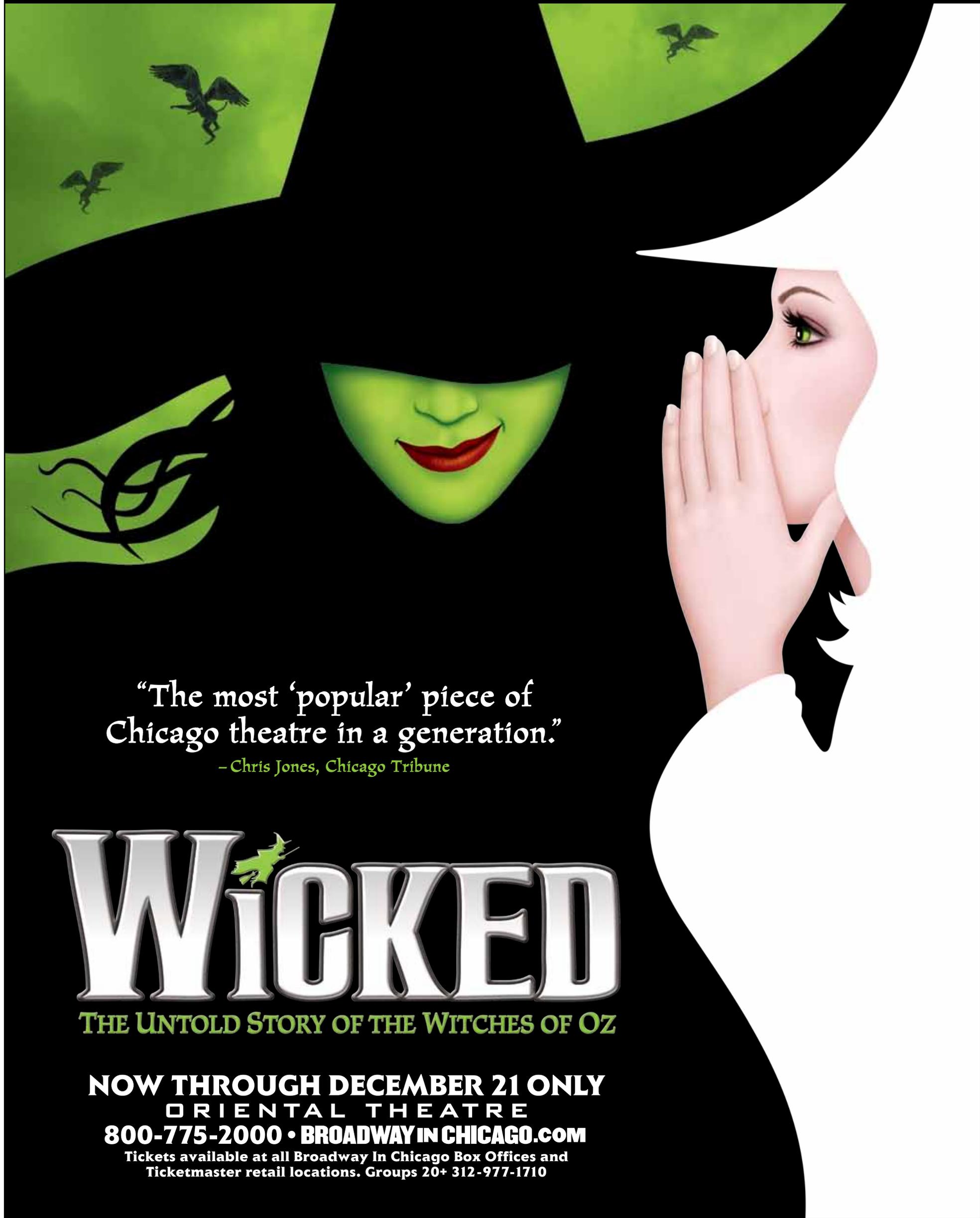


Elegy. Photo by Anthony Robert La Penna

tells us he was a passionate and vibrant young man and artist. But we do not see that passionate young man, even though there are flashbacks to pre-Holocaust 1938 Berlin which reveal how Helmut and Hilde (Iris Lieberman) met and courted. We cannot measure Helmut's journey because we do not see him as he used to be. Also, we don't learn quite enough about Jerry to understand what's driven him to suicidal thoughts and a shrink's couch. Finally, while his father's poetry may be a new discovery, surely Jerry has asked his parents many times about their Holocaust experiences and their families. How has Helmut avoided the subject? The play doesn't fill in the logical gaps.

Under director Dennis Zacek, the players are extremely sympathetic; they play good people after all. Admired Chicago veteran Bernard Beck completes the cast as Helmut's father, seen in flashbacks. However, the actors need more words and emotions to make *Elegy* the profound experience it might be.

TAKING THE WINDY CITY BY STORM



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Kate and Sam Are Not Breaking Up. Photo by Patriac Coakley

THEATER REVIEW

Kate and Sam Are Not Breaking Up

Playwright: Joel Kim Booster

At: The New Colony at the Flatiron Building, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets: 773-413-0862;
www.thenewcolony.org; \$20
Runs through: Dec. 14

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Kate Thomas and Sam Lewis play lovers in *Ghost Hunter*, a series of immensely popular young-adult novels and films. They are also a real-life couple, their every step publicized by Hollywood media for the consumption of envious adolescents, but lately, rumors have circulated that the duo may be separating. One day, Kate and Sam find themselves kidnapped by a pair of self-proclaimed fans—Bill, a thirtysomething recluse and, Becky, a teenage blogger who announces “Nine out of 11 therapists think I’m a sociopath!” long after we have already concluded this on our own. These celebrity-worshippers are bent on reuniting the objects of their adoration—by force, if necessary.

You’re not alone in suspecting that you’ve previously encountered this scenario. Joel Kim Booster’s workshop-worn premise, while as serviceable as any for putting people in a room together, proceeds along likewise familiar lines:

Kate and Sam squabble over an escape plan, bossy Becky bullies phlegmatic Bill, the inevitable gun makes its appearance—complications leading us to wonder in what classroom this training exercise started its journey to the New Colony stage.

As it turns out, several. *Kate and Sam Are Not Breaking Up* is the product of collective input by author, director and performers—a situation rather like that of the proverbial elephant and the six blind men, each focused on their immediate purview. This makes for considerable time devoted to expository details establishing the locale and characters before the action begins to travel in a recognizable direction to create the tension that comes only after the risks, and the stakes involved therein, have been identified.

You’d expect a show running a bare 90 minutes (with an intermission) to be honed to its last second of onstage time, but since its gestation process apparently excluded assessments of the overall dramatic arc, we are unable to believe that we are viewing anything but a board game for would-be playmakers. What we *can* believe, however, are the depths of calculation and compassion brought by the consistently underrated Mary Williamson to Kate’s stratagem securing her survival during the last 30 minutes of a comic-book thriller as artificial as the culture it proposes to criticize.

SPOTLIGHT



About Face Theatre is launching its new Out Front Series of free public readings and workshops with a starry bang. That’s because out Tony Award-winner Levi Kreis (Million Dollar Quartet) is co-starring with Kristina Valada-Viers in *Billie and Billy*. It’s a drama about two city dwellers who form an unexpected bond despite their differences in gender, sexuality and ethnic backgrounds. *Billie and Billy* features a script by About Face Theatre artistic associate Paul Oakley Stovall plus original music by Brad Simmons. *Billie and Billy* plays 7:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 16 and 17, at American Theater Company, 1909 W. Byron St. 4139 N. Broadway St. Tickets are free, but reservations are strongly recommended. For more information, call 773-784-8565 or visit www.aboutfacetheatre.com.

REELING LGBT FILM FESTIVAL

Reviewing the films: Week two

BY STEVE WARREN

Here are reviews of some of the movies that will be shown at Reeling: The Chicago LGBT International Film Festival Nov. 13-14.

A closing-night reception will be held at the Stan Mansion, 2408 N. Kedzie Ave. The movies being shown Nov. 14 are *Ludwig II*, *Reaching for the Moon* and *Ian Harvie Superhero*.

—*Hawaii* (Nov. 13): *Hawaii* is frustrating enough to give blue balls to female viewers! If filmmaker Marco Berger wanted to recycle a title that had been used before, *The Big Tease* would have been a better choice. Eugenio (Manuel Vignau) and Martin (Matteo Chiarino) look in each other’s eyes and crotches for a full hour and a quarter before a little drunken groping threatens to get something going; but that’s a false alarm and there’s another half-hour to go.

It wouldn’t be so bad if something else were happening, but *Hawaii* is a random collection of scenes of unconsummated sexual tension between the two men. Eugenio is a serious version of “the only gay in the village” in *Little Britain* sketches and Martin never questions his hermitlike existence or asks, “What’s there to do around here?” Despite a long list of things I disliked about *Hawaii*, I must admit to a certain fascination that kept me from being completely bored by it.

—*Reaching for the Moon* (Nov. 14): *Reaching for the Moon* might have been made in 1951, when its story begins, if they had made movies then about lesbian triangles without substituting a man for the woman in the middle. Miranda Otto even looks like Susan Hayward, who might have played Elizabeth Bishop then. A renowned poet (I had to look her up, too), she goes to Brazil to visit Vassar classmate Mary (Tracy Middendorf), who is living with Lota (Gloria Pires). Soon the shy, uptight New Yorker has replaced Mary in Lota’s affections and settled in, while Lota helps Mary adopt a child to keep her around too. What could go wrong, right? Surprisingly little for several years, it turns out, until Elizabeth becomes an alcoholic and Mary a bitch. Well-acted and beautifully filmed, the movie’s



Ian Harvie Superhero.

weak point is the screenplay, adapted from a novel based on Bishop’s life.

—*Ian Harvie Superhero* (Nov. 14): Why will an Out on Film audience be watching, let alone laughing hysterically at, a stand-up comic talking about having sex with his girlfriend? A) Because he’s funny; B) for the guys, because he’s cute; and mainly C) because Ian Harvie is “the ‘T’ in ‘LGBT.’” A frequent opening act for the film’s executive producer, Margaret Cho, who’d better bring her A-game when she follows him, Harvie is personable, filthy and self-effacing—but not self-deprecating. His solid hourlong set answers most of your F-to-M transgender questions in an amusing way before an appreciative audience in his Maine hometown. This would be one of my all-time favorite comedy concert films without the unnecessary 10 minutes of post-show material.

Visit <http://reelingfilmfestival.org> for more information.



From left: Alex Newell, Nikki Blonsky, Cameron Deane Stewart and Ally Maki in *Geography Club*.

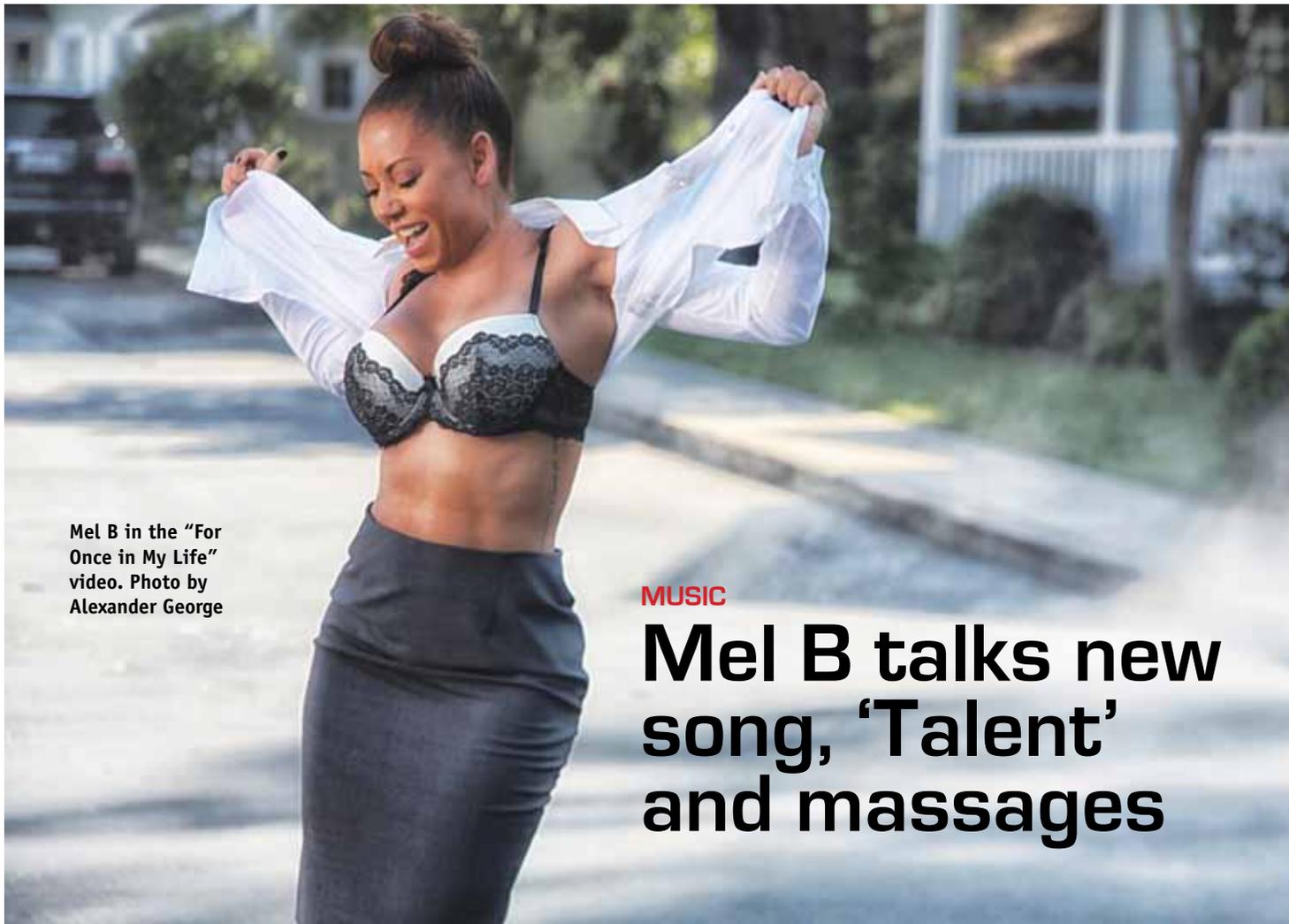
‘Geography Club’ at Facets Nov. 15

Geography Club—a film about LGBT teens that stars, among others, *Glee*’s Alex Newell—will screen at Facets Cinema, 1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Nov. 15.

Starring Cameron Deane Stewart (Pitch Per-

fect), Justin Deeley (*Drop Dead Diva*, 90210), Scott Bakula (*Behind the Candelabra*) and Nikki Blonsky (*Hairspray*), the 83-minute movie looks at contemporary teenagers as they discover their own sexual identities, dreams and values.

The movie also screened at the Reeling International LGBT Film Festival Nov. 10.



Mel B in the "For Once in My Life" video. Photo by Alexander George

MUSIC

Mel B talks new song, 'Talent' and massages

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Mel B is back—and, apparently, the "B" now stands for "busy."

The onetime (and possibly future) Spice Girl has been doing everything from serving as judge on TV's America's Got Talent to guest-hosting on the Today Show. Now, she has returned to her first love—music—with the infectious dance single "For Once In My Life."

Windy City Times: How are you doing today?

Mel B: I'm very good. I just dropped the kids off at school.

WCT: I've spoken with a lot of different people—but I don't believe I've talked with someone who's performed at an Olympics ceremony. You performed in front of billions of people last year in London.

Mel B: I'm glad nobody told us [The Spice Girls] that.

Don't forget that the Olympics is a charity-based event, so you don't get paid for it. It's very iconic. We just decided that it had been a while since we performed together so we made it happen.

WCT: So how nervous were you at that moment? You were used to performing in front of large crowds...

Mel B: Oh, it wasn't even the large crowds—I had the opening line! All the girls were like, "Do NOT screw this up, Melanie. If you don't get the timing right, the whole song is off." I was, like, "Damn!" It was kind of cute.

WCT: It seems like you're everywhere right now. I've seen you on the Today Show. Have you thought about getting your own talk show?

Mel B: You know, I'm always thinking about that. I've certainly thought about it, but is it actually going to happen? Who knows? It's kind of a hard one to pull off.

WCT: Who would like to interview?

Mel B: I've interviewed so many interesting people—Harrison Ford, Prince. I'm kind of spoiled in that department.

WCT: Switching over to music, when I heard the title of your new song I thought you were remaking the Stevie Wonder song.

Mel B: [Laughs]

WCT: Then I listened to it, and I've seen the video several songs. What is the song about?

Mel B: I just wanted to create a song, create a vibe. Listen to it and it makes you happy. For those three minutes and 30 seconds, I want you

to let go and dance around your front room, or on a Friday night just dance around with your girlfriends before you go out. It's a feel-good song.

I finished a taping of America's Got Talent on a Tuesday around 11 p.m., and I went into the studio that night. I co-wrote it with some [people]. Three days later I did the video. Then I said, "I have a video and song—what do I do?" I have no major label backing me, no radio tour, no nothing—so I just released it.

WCT: I thought the video set looked familiar...

Mel B: Yeah—it's the Desperate Housewives set! I'm a big fan of this show. Also, I didn't want to go to four different locations because that could take forever to shoot.

WCT: There's also a scene in the video where you basically kiss yourself. I thought it was about self-acceptance.

Mel B: You know, however you want to take it you should take it. But the whole premise of the song is about feeling good about yourself. Who does want to kiss themselves when you're feeling so great?

WCT: There's also a segment with your hair in the video. What's going on there?

Mel B: Oh, I just wanted to do something different. I wanted to make it into a bob and making it curly again. [Laughs]

WCT: And then you were on Ellen wearing that same outfit—while making the video.

Mel B: Yes. I went on Ellen during my lunch break. I popped over and did the interview.

WCT: So is there going to be a whole album?

Mel B: Well, because I'm not backed by a label I don't want to put pressure on myself. I'm in the studio tomorrow night. All I know is that I've got that fire in my tummy again. I hadn't had it in eight years. Now I've got that passion back; I just want to do more and more music.

WCT: When you did you first realize you had a gay following?

Mel B: It was with the Spice Girls when we had our first number-one song—and it was in Japan. Just looking at the diversity of fans: straight, gay, bisexual, trisexual. It was nice seeing people from so many walks of life, especially in a conservative country, showing us love. It was really nice.

WCT: I know many people prefer the Spice Girls hits like "Wannabe" although I'm a fan of the later songs like "Tell Me Why" and "Holler."

Mel B: Yes, we changed our music over the years, but I think it all works. We write our own music and it has to grow a little bit; you don't want to stay in the same place.

WCT: Absolutely—and the music becomes boring after a while. [Mel B laughs.]

By the way, I asked people on Facebook if they had questions for you. One person wanted to know how you'd characterize your time on America's Got Talent.

Mel B: I had such an amazing time. Heidi Klum has been my friend for the last 10 years so I already knew her. It was my first time meeting Howard [Stern] on set, but he interviewed me 18 years ago with the Spice Girls so I've kept kind of an on-and-off relationship with him over the years. We all got along like a house on fire; Howard invited us all over to his apartment, which he never does. My kids came down to the set and said hello—we created our own little vibe. We spent four days a week together.

WCT: So you'd definitely do another season?

Mel B: Oh, yeah—I hope they rehire me.

WCT: You've mentioned your kids. How much does having kids inform your career choices?

Mel B: I always say I have four different lives: the life with my kids, life with my husband, my life by myself (as in relaxing) and my career—in that order.

WCT: How do you find time to relax?

Mel B: Oh my God; I try to find time to do something, whether it's a mani-pedi or a facial.

WCT: That's great because people usually don't take enough time for themselves.

Mel B: It's about once or twice a month, but you have to look good. You have to have that facial! You have to have your nails done.

WCT: I think massages are great.

Mel B: I don't find massages relaxing at all. I work out so much that my body's kind of tense. Getting a massage can be painful—plus I find myself counting down until it's done.

WCT: To each his or her own, but I'll take a Thai yoga massage any day.

Mel B: [Laughs]

BY LARRY KRAMER
directed by Nick Bowling

the normal heart

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BOOKS

Jim Elledge discusses late gay artist Henry Darger

BY JASON CARSON WILSON

Images might say a thousand words. Determining exactly what they're saying depends on who one asks.

Words can brand the creative person, who conjured or captured them. Author Jim Elledge's book, *HENRY DARGER, THROWAWAY BOY: The Tragic Life of an Outsider Artist*, (published by Overlook Press) chronicles the life of late gay Chicago artist Henry Darger.

Darger died in 1973. His dark art prompted people to project meanings on his creations and pass judgment on him.

Elledge recalled seeing a Darger painting that featured girls with penises. Critics wrote off Darger as a pedophile or killer, while Elledge, a Kennesaw State University English professor, got a different vibe.

"When there's no evidence, it's pretty drastic. It was reason enough to spend 10 plus years to research and write the book," he said.



Jim Elledge.
Photo courtesy
of Elledge

Elledge initially planned to write an essay about Darger's *Girls With Penises*.

A desire to write a book critiquing Darger's art burned until Elledge realized he knew nothing about art. So, Elledge settled on writing Darger's biography.

"He was very obsessive about these images. They appear over and over ... in about half of his paintings," he said.

The exact meaning of images of abused children and "girls with penises" (better known as Vivian Girls) isn't known. However, Elledge offers an educated guess.

"It's not really girls that he's actually thinking about, but Vivian belles, fairies, pansies, queers, or queens."

Elledge's research revealed Darger's art delved into a sad and horrific period in his life.

Darger's father sent the then-12-year-old to the Illinois Asylum for Feeble-Minded Children in Nov. 1904 in Lincoln, Ill. The younger Darger had been masturbating since age 6.

Elledge even found the asylum application. In it, the elder Darger said Henry engaged in "self-abuse."

He was at the asylum until he ran away in 1909. Darger's father died, while he was confined. Elledge said his father's decision didn't dampen the younger Darger's view of him.

"He wrote an autobiography, when he was in his 70s. He only had good things to say," Elledge said. "My guess is that nobody ever told him. People did a lot of things to him like that and never explained anything."

Physicians, as early as 1850, believed masturbation was a symptom of homosexuality or "masturbic insanity," according to Elledge. That myth was prevalent until the 1940s. Castration was considered one of the alleged cures.

The author discovered this in a 1,000-page report, resulting from state legislature committee probe of the asylum, which opened several cans of worms.

"That investigation sort of set off other investigations," Elledge said. "That ended up being key to understanding his paintings."

Investigation testimony included asylum inmates noting that most boys who were confined weren't mentally disabled. Some were promiscuous. Some were truants.

And, some were criminals. Other inmates included older men, who couldn't be accommodated by the state's prisons. Elledge recalled another vivid image from Darger's paintings.

"There are images of the individual children being sliced open by adults," Elledge said.

With that said, Darger didn't just express himself with a paintbrush. He used the power of the pen, writing several novels.

Elledge said his writing provided a window into his troubled childhood. In one novel, he said Darger shares a conversation between two children: Whenever a girl is raped, she is ripped open.

"What Darger was painting [and writing] were his own experiences," Elledge said. "It has given me a huge appreciation for Darger as a human being."

Essentially, according to Elledge, Darger's novels and art became metaphors for his trials and tribulations. Though the history continued haunting him, his creations allowed Darger to "become victorious" over his demons.

"He didn't let his past get in the way of his need to write and paint," Elledge said.

Neighbor David Berglund made the Darger discoveries. His landlord tapped Berglund to clean out the hoarding artist and writer's abode.

Apparently, fulfilling the need to create didn't involve sharing his work. Elledge believes Darger never exhibited or sold any of his work. Dusty diaries and journals—lying around his apartment at 851 W. Webster St.—contained his writings.

Darger's debut exhibit occurred in 1977, four years after his death.

"Basically, it's an accident that we even know about Henry Darger," Elledge said.

Darger lived at 851 W. Webster St. from the fall of 1932 (after moving from 1035 W. Webster St. in 1921) until he entered a nursing home shortly before his death. Despite his graphic images, horrendous childhood, Elledge learned Darger wasn't a hermit or a pedophile.

"I hope people come away [with the fact] that he wasn't anything from the sort," Elledge said.

Darger and William Schloeder shared a nearly 50-year relationship. That really resonated with Elledge.

"He was not only loved, but loved another person," he said. "I felt like uncovered something really important."

BOOKS

BOYS anthology gives voice to gay, queer and trans men

BY ROSS FORMAN

Zach Stafford has a love-hate relationship with Boystown, the predominantly gay section of Lakeview anchored by various bars.

"I moved [to Chicago] thinking [Boystown] was this magical land of love and community and so much more," said Stafford, now 23. "In every way, I over-romanticized it. Sure, it is a place that is filled with love and community, but it is so much more than that. It's a place that hurts; it's a place that is extremely problematic; it's a place where I find myself looking forward to being, and then the next day waking up and hating that I was there."

Boystown, said Stafford, is "pretty complicated."

"But, through all of my feelings, and these feelings change a lot in regards to Boystown, I do at the end of the day respect it, and I am thankful that it led me to Chicago because I truly think I found home here, and that would have never happened without Boystown."

Stafford, who lives in the Edgewater neighborhood, is a writer and behavioral research associate at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital. He was born in Nashville, Tenn., and moved to Chicago in 2008 to attend DePaul University.

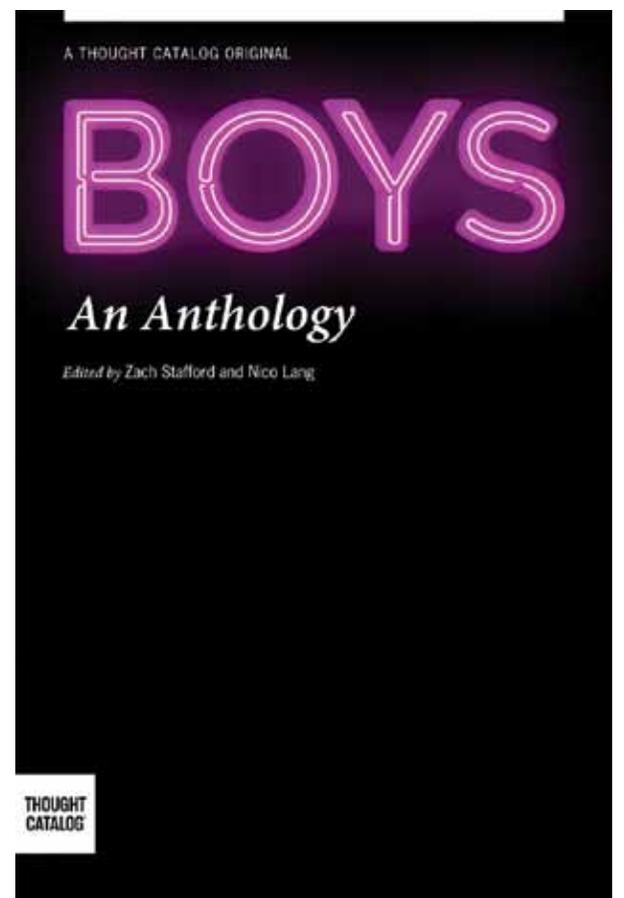
"I come from a school of thought that really believes in visibility, while understanding that being visible is just one step in a long walk," Stafford said. "My whole life, I have been harassed for being not 'Black enough,' or being 'too gay,' or numerous other things that are connected to my identity. Where I am from, if you are 'other,' then you should just lay low and try not to make too much noise. I think that is [wrong.] So, I have worked very hard to be loud, to keep my head high, and to not only be visible but create work that seeks to challenge all of those people [who] always told me I wasn't good enough or told me to shut up."

"I hear so many stories of boys that look like me, who were told similar things, and have been hurt or died because of it, and my heart breaks more and more each time these stories come up. But it pushes me to work harder because I realize, again, that there is still so much work to do, and I want to be a part of getting it done. For me, writing has been one way that I can do that."

His latest writing venture certainly is boy-focused. Stafford and fellow Chicago resident Nico Lang are the editors of *BOYS*, a new anthology that the two curated and edited. The book is a compilation of 19 original essays from emerging and well-known gay, queer and bisexual men from around the world, talking about a broad range of topics, all told in the first person.

Contributors include trans icon and adult entertainer Buck Angel, 1Girl5Gays personality JP Bevilacqua, Noah Michelson of The Huffington Post and others.

The 200-page book is being sold online as an eBook (Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobel, iTunes), and in late October will be



available at Barnes & Noble stores and local bookstores worldwide.

"My co-editor and I love working with new writers, helping get their work out there," Stafford said. "So, over the years we have met some pretty amazing people while writing online and for different outlets. One day we were talking about how awesome it would be to have an anthology out there that showcased not only people from an amazingly diverse background [who] still fell under the LGBT umbrella, but also a diverse set of stories. I joked at the time that we should just take a note from Lena Dunham and call it 'BOYS,' find the writers, and, well, the rest is now a book."

Their *BOYS* project spanned four months, which certainly was a "grueling" stretch, Stafford said.

"I literally worked on it every day, spoke to at least one writer once a day, and even carried around each version of the manuscript in a pink binder I took almost everywhere," Stafford said. "For me, it literally consumed most of my time for a good part of 2013. We were working on a really tight deadline [to be

Turn to page 24

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CHICAGO HUMANITIES FESTIVAL

Lesbian tennis icon Martina Navratilova on life's hurdles, Olympics

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL BLICKENSERFER

Martina Navratilova has spent a life fighting and winning battles. On the tennis court, a career that spanned more than three decades netted her 59 Grand Slam titles and nine women's singles titles on the grass at Wimbledon. In her personal life, she faced leaving her family in Czechoslovakia at a young age, overcoming breast cancer and coming out as a lesbian.

On Nov. 9, Navratilova talked candidly about the changes and adaptations she had to make personally, physically and professionally in or-



Martina Navratilova at the CHM event. Photo by Ben Gonzales

der to keep coming away with match point. Her interview, in front of a live audience, was a part of the Chicago Humanities Festival at the UIC Forum.

Navratilova left Communist-controlled Czechoslovakia in 1975 at 18. She wanted to play in the U.S. Open. "Just to get out of the country, you had to get permission from the interior ministry," she remembered. "They [The Czech Tennis Federation] said 'no' but I was independent, and a trouble maker and defiant." Navratilova left without permission. While she was excited

about the freedom to play tennis whenever and wherever she wanted, she knew she could not go back and see her family without facing jail time. It was years before she saw them again.

In 1981, her career was flourishing and she had a lover, basketball star Nancy Lieberman. It was also the year that Navratilova came out as a lesbian. "Male reporters wouldn't ask a male player if he was gay," she recalled. "But it was certainly OK to ask women players. The press put more and more pressure [on me]."

Fear of being disqualified from U.S. citizenship, along with a scandal that outed Billie Jean King and cost all of her endorsements, had kept Navratilova in the closet. Two days after she received her U.S. passport, a New York Daily News Reporter asked her if she was a lesbian, but Navratilova still refused to talk to him, citing the WTA's (Women's Tennis Association's) advice that she could lose her sponsorships. "And the next day it's in the paper," she said. "Martina can't come out because.....!"

Navratilova acknowledged that, in 32 years, times have changed in the United States. "You were ostracized once for being out, now you're ostracized for being a homophobe," she said. "It's ironic. People are in the closet about being anti-gay."

However, regarding the effects of the Russian anti-gay legislation on athletes competing in the 2014 winter Olympics in Sochi, Navratilova believes the International Olympic Committee has taken a backward stance. "They're certainly not supporting their gay athletes and, to me, if you don't support a gay athlete, you're not supporting any athlete," she said. "I think there should be a lot of kissing going on. The athletes need to be safe about being able to speak."

Navratilova's partner is Russian and she wondered whether they would ever be able to visit with their two children. But, as with every challenge she has faced in life, Navratilova has stayed positive. "Tennis is the epitome of that," she said. "You lose a point and you've got to get over it. I always say attitude is a choice. You can either be miserable or you say, 'This is really tough, but this is what I'm going to do about it.'"

Read an interview with Martina Navratilova at <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Tennis-icon-Navratilova-talks-Chicago-career-Czech-food-/45090.html>.

She Writes to present Chicago women authors

My Three Sisters Publishing presents She Writes Chicago Thursday, Nov. 14, 7-9 p.m., at American Junkie, 15 W. Illinois St. It's an event featuring Chicago women writers.

Hosted by author Jillian Conley, WCIU's Aly Bockler, B-96 radio personality Showbiz Shelly and 103.5 KISS FM radio personality Jordan, the event aims to bring Chicago women writers together in recognition and in celebration of their work. Promotional hosts include Chicago Blogger Network and Women Empowerment.

The night includes a red carpet, cocktails and filming for a documentary. All proceeds will benefit My Three Sisters Literacy initiative, which brings books to underfunded classrooms and Charity 4 Life, which assists street kids in Third World countries.

Raffle prizes include books from several of

the featured authors, dinners out, spa packages, personal trainer sessions and more. A booklet designed and printed by My Three Sisters Publishing will be handed out to guests attending. This booklet includes photos and accomplishments of the featured writers.

Tickets are \$10-\$20; visit <http://www.fan-fueled.com/Event/Details/6321-she-writes>. For more info, email jillianconley@yahoo.com.

Olympia Dukakis in 'Rose' Nov. 16

Olympia Dukakis will star in Rose, a concert reading by Martin Sherman, at Moraine Valley Community College on Saturday, Nov. 16, at 7:30 p.m.

She will read the one-woman play in the Dorothy Menker Theater, in the Fine and Performing Arts Center, 9000 W. College Pkwy., Palos Hills. Tickets are \$35-\$40; visit www.morainevalley.edu/fpac, call 708-974-5500 or stop by the box office.



Dorie Clark. Photo courtesy of Clark

BOOK REVIEW

Reinventing You
by Dorie Clark
\$25; Harvard Business Review Press; 240 pages
BY SALLY PARSONS

To succeed in today's job market and build a career, the author contends, you'll need to continually reinvent yourself. In *Reinventing You*, she provides the tools to do it. And, if experience counts, Clark's own background proves her approach works. Clark is a consultant and speaker for clients including Google, Yale University and the World Bank, and an adjunct professor of business administration at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. She has been a journalist, documentary filmmaker, and presidential campaign spokesperson. She is quoted frequently in media, including NPR, the BBC, and U.S. News and World Report. She is a columnist for Mint, India's second-largest business newspaper.

In *Reinventing You*, an engagingly written self-help book, Clark provides guidelines for answering the questions, Who do you want to be? and What do you need to do to get there? She suggests the process should include discovering what might be holding you back, researching your destination, test-driving your plan, skills development, finding a mentor, leveraging your points of difference, building your narrative, and introducing your

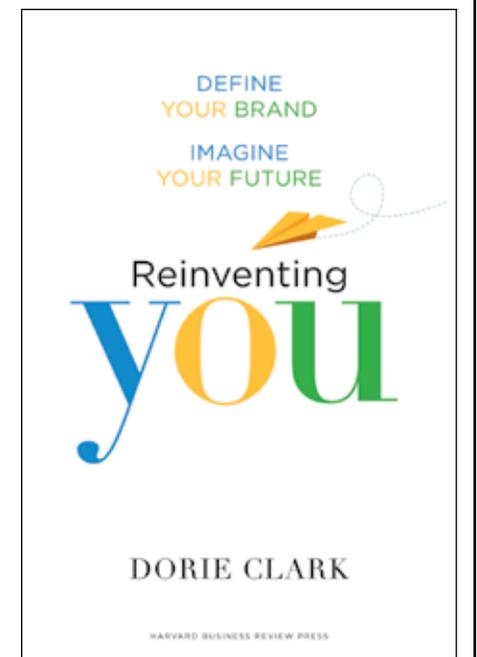
new brand. Each chapter has helpful exercises ("Make a list of the things about yourself that most surprise people") and summation points. At the back is a self-assessment and a list of questions for book discussions.

Clark makes clear her book is not about spin or claiming you're something you are not. She says it's about "taking control of your life and living strategically." What that means to her is "...defining your goals, working hard and ethically to get there, and then making sure that people notice once you do."

Reinventing You is enhanced by Clark's examples from successful re-inventers she has studied or interviewed—including Mark Zuckerberg, Al Gore and others, as well as a peek into her own achievements in rebranding herself. A notable example Clark highlights is the success of hotelier Chip Conley, who is openly gay. As Clark recounts, Conley decided to use his identity as a gay man as a source of strength. "If you're gay or lesbian, you have to figure out how to walk into a room and make yourself comfortable in an environment where you feel like you're different," says Conley.

Readers can key in "Dorie Clark" on YouTube, where she is featured in multiple lectures about business success.

A former board member of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, Clark was the Liaison to the GLBT community for Somerville, Massachusetts. Clark has consulted for MassEquality, Massachusetts' statewide GLBT political organization, and was a recipient of the Young Democrats of Massachusetts' GLBT advocacy award.



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WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES



Honey Butter Fried Chicken

BY MEGHAN STREIT

Believe the hype, y'all. **Honey Butter Fried Chicken** really is that good. It's worth the drive, worth the lines, worth every last gram of saturated fat. If you have taste buds, you won't be disappointed by this place.

The Avondale space is unassuming on the outside—except for a line that will inevitably be winding out the front door for the foreseeable future. On the inside, you might expect to see kitschy Southern décor in a nod to the cuisine, but the dining room is decidedly urban, with exposed brick, lots of clean lines and a bunch of different kinds of reclaimed wood. My favorite element is the old banquet chairs, which are redesigned with slabs of grainy wood where ugly red pleather used to be. What I really love about Honey Butter is the feeling you get when you step inside. This kind of a restaurant could easily feel overly trendy or like you have to be a hipster to eat there. But, it doesn't. It feels grounded and authentic. Everyone working at the place seems genuinely happy to be there, and completely jazzed about fried chicken.

Speaking of fried chicken, it only takes a bite to understand why these folks are so damn happy. You'd be cheerful too if you got to eat this stuff everyday. There's a thick layer of breading

on the chicken and it's fried perfectly crispy, not too greasy and not too dry. Each bite starts off rich and buttermilk-y and finishes with a nice hint of spice and salt.

The chicken itself is plump and super juicy, which is no doubt thanks to the salt, sugar, spice and citrus brine it's soaked in before it gets fried. And yes, the rumors are true—the chicken has no bones. Don't worry, it's not gross mass-produced chicken that's been genetically modified to grow boneless. Quite the opposite. It's happy chicken: locally sourced, hormone- and antibiotic-free. The good folks at Honey Butter simply remove the bones before frying it up and serving it to you. That means there is nothing standing between you and bite after juicy bite. Frankly, I think it's brilliant.

And then, there's the eponymous honey butter. Sweet, sweet nectar from the poultry gods. Listen up. This fried chicken is damn good all on its own, but when you slather it with fluffy whipped honey butter that glistens as it melts, the flavors combine to give you the ultimate salty/sweet mouth-gasm. It's like eating at Willy Wonka's Chicken Factory—it's so magical that you can't help but overindulge.

If you're in the mood for a cocktail, there is a nice selection of craft beers and several clever cocktails that play off of the down-home theme. The "damn good sweet tea" is spiked with whiskey and sold by the pitcher. The "hill pop" combines house made lemonade with bourbon. It tastes like a grown-up and liquid version of sweet tart candy, and is nice to sip while you wait for your chicken.

Oh, and there are side dishes. Really, really good ones. One of my favorites is the slaw, an upgraded and modern version made with kale and yogurt cumin dressing. It's cool and refreshing and dried pomegranate gives it a tart little kick. Mac 'n cheese is a must-have for me when



Honey Butter Fried Chicken. Press photo

I'm eating fried chicken. Honey Butter's rendition of the creamy classic is made with pimento cheese, which gives it a pungent and memorable flavor. Depending on the day, you'll also find a few special side dishes. Recently, schmaltz smashed potatoes have been gracing the menu. Nothing like a little clarified fat to make mashed potatoes even more decadent. The fragrant rosemary gravy they're doused in provides an herby contrast to the creamy potatoes. You won't need more than a few spoonfuls of these guys, but they sure do taste delicious with the out-of-this-world fried chicken.

Honey Butter Fried Chicken is very quickly endearing itself to Chicagoans, and for good reason. The food is special and inspired, without an ounce of pretense. And that, in my book, is a recipe for success.

Honey Butter Fried Chicken is located at 3361 N. Elston; call 773-478-4000 or visit www.honeybutter.com.

Do you need some more Sugar & Spice in your life? Follow me on Twitter: @SugarAndSpiceMS—for inside scoop and commentary on Chicago's dining scene.

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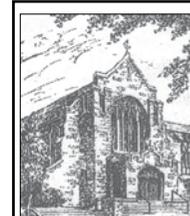


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MUSIC

Singer Marcus Terrell talks marriage equality, music and food

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Out singer Marcus Terrell was a featured performer at the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality rally Oct. 22.

A newcomer to Chicago, Terrell has performed on cruise ships, reality shows and music venues for 10 years. Terrell is also heading into the studio to record his first EP "Get Up!" in the coming weeks.

Marcus Terrell and The Serenades will also be performing on New Year's Eve at The Hard Rock Live in Hollywood, Florida and they are currently in rehearsals for an evening of burlesque using elements from the musicals Moulin Rouge and Chicago.

He spoke to Windy City Times about his life, music career and love of food.

Windy City Times: You just returned from performing on a cruise. What was that like? This wasn't your first time performing at sea. How long have you worked for Royal Caribbean International?

Marcus Terrell: It was great. Marcus Terrell and the Serenades has been performing on cruise ships for about a year and a half and this was the first time I ventured off on my own.

WCT: You're new to Chicago. Where did you grow up? What made you decide to move here? What discoveries have you made since moving here?

MT: I grew up in Kansas City, Mo., and I've been in Chicago for about six months. I really like Kansas City and it's a great place to grow up but I think Chicago offers a little more variety, culture and diversity. I actually lived in Los Angeles for four and a half years prior to moving to Chicago. I was looking for a place that was a happy medium between Los Angeles and Kansas City and I found that here in Chicago, plus I love the Midwestern hospitality of the city.

I love to eat. Inside this skinny body is a fat boy at heart so my favorite places are about restaurants and eating. I like Ann Sather and Yolk a lot. Aside from that, one of the coolest experiences for me is seeing Prince perform at the fantastic City Winery.

I also went to my first Pride Parade this past summer right after I moved here. I had so much fun and I was stunned to see so many people in attendance.

WCT: Was there a moment when you knew singing would be your career path?

MT: I don't think there was a moment because I feel like I've always known I'd be a singer. I started singing in church from the time I was about 6 or 7 years old. I fell in love with it so much that I didn't want to stop singing. Artistry isn't always easy and there are always ebbs and flows and high and lows and I've realized that there really isn't anything else that I want to do other than sing so I've gotten comfortable with that over the last three or so years.

WCT: How would you describe Marcus Terrell and the Serenades to someone who hasn't heard of you before?

MT: That was my biggest struggle in the past because I would tell people that I'm trying to do Motown with a new feel but no one understood that so now I tell people that I see us in the same genre as Bruno Mars.

WCT: You mentioned Bruno Mars. Are there any other musicians or artists who strike your fancy?

MT: Cee-Lo Green, Raphael Saadiq and Kansas City native Janelle Monae. I am obsessed with Beyonce. Growing up in church, my influences were in gospel music and the sound of musicians like BeBe and CeCe Winans. I also love James Brown, Little Richard and Elvis Presley.

WCT: What exactly is Back to Reality?

MT: Back to Reality is the name of my show



Marcus Terrell at City Winery benefit for the March on Springfield in September. Picture by Mike the Great Photo Guy

and it showcases my journey through the ups and downs of reality TV. Even though I'm tired of talking about my reality show experience the interest hasn't died down so I thought I could incorporate all of those experiences into a show that has a storyline, theme and flow.

WCT: You said before that you are a fat boy at heart and love food. Tell me more about that.

MT: I like to eat before I perform. Most singers say that they can't eat before they go onstage but I like to feel full on stage because I want to feel like a big fat Black woman who can sing for days. When I performed in Hairspray in Kansas City, I would literally eat in between acts because how can you perform a two-hour show hungry? Food is always on my mind and I have to have a plan in my head of what I am going to eat before I get out of bed.

I can't sing without gum in my mouth. I don't chew it while I'm singing but I do I hide it under my tongue.

WCT: You've been performing at various Chicago venues, including the benefit to support

the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality at the City Winery. Have you made any connections with other musicians? What was it like performing at the March on Springfield and why is it important for you to perform at marriage equality events? What kind of feedback did you get after your performance?

MT: Talking to other singers it's apparent how connected everyone is here in Chicago and working with Stephen Leonard and Sami Grisafe has been really great. I'm really happy to be a part of that community. Stephen, Sami and I performed a song together at the march.

Performing at the march was not only a positive experience, but an empowering one as well. Five years ago, I would've never imagined that I would feel strong enough or confident enough to stand up and represent my community in such a powerful way. The keynote speakers, especially Bishop Carlton Pearson, really struck a chord with me. I grew up in the Black Pentecostal church and often times faced scrutiny

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CALENDAR

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WINDY CITY
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nightspots

Wed., Nov. 13

3rd Annual Over the Rainbow, a benefit to raise money and awareness for those who struggle with cancer within the LGBT community. Performers include Matt Alber, Molly Callinan, Cyon Flare, Sami Grisafe, Tajma Hall, Sharrise Hamilton, Stephen Leonard, Circuit Mom and Chadwick Stadt. Silent auction. Proceeds benefit Gilda's Club Chicago. Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, 7-10 p.m. www.sidetrackchicago.com.

Reeling: Free to Love (LIBRES PARA AMAR) Free to Love chronicles an important chapter in the history of the LGBT movement in Puerto Rico. 6:30pm-8:30pm, Puerto Rican Arts Alliance, www.reelingfilmfestival.org. Tickets: http://reelingfilmfestival.org/?page_id=1141

Reeling: Hawaii Sexual tension runs rampant as two young men slowly discover their attraction for one another during a long hot summer in the Argentinian countryside. 9pm-11pm, Logan Theatre, www.reelingfilmfestival.org. Tickets: reelingfilmfestival.org.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Orientation Attending an orientation is a great way to learn more about what it takes to become a licensed foster parent and to help you determine if foster and/or adoptive parenting is the right decision for you and your family. 6pm-8pm, 855-WeFoster, Little City, 700 N. Sacramento Ave., Suite 201, www.littlecity.org/foster

Thursday, Nov. 14

Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street, cast includes Windy City Times' own Scott Morgan. 8 p.m. Nov. 14-16 and Nov. 21-23, with 2 p.m. Sunday matinees Nov. 17 and 24. \$5 preview 8 pm Thursday, Nov. 14. \$20 benefit Saturday, Nov. 16, includes post-show reception. All other performances are \$10 general admission, \$8 for students and seniors with a \$6 group rate for the performances on Nov. 15, 17 and 21-24. Tickets 847-635-1901. Oakton Community College, 1600 E. Golf Road, Des Plaines.

She Writes, Chicago women authors. My Three Sisters Publishing presents. Hosted by author Jillian Conley, WCIU's Aly Bockler, B-96 radio personality Showbiz Shelly and 103.5 KISS FM radio personality Jordan. Red carpet, hosted cocktails and filming for a documentary. Benefits My Three Sisters Literacy initiative, which brings books to underfunded classrooms and Charity 4 Life, which assists street kids in Third World countries. 7-9 p.m.

Tickets \$10-\$20. American Junkie, 15 W. Illinois St. www.fanfueled.com/Event/Details/6321-she-writes. For more info, email jillianconley@yahoo.com.

A Cancer Fundraiser & Birthday Party for Art "Chat Daddy" Sims 6-10 pm at Nouveau Tavern, 358 W. Ontario St. For info, see Art Sims on Facebook.

River North Dance Chicago's Fall Engagement The season begins with the company's Fall Engagement, Nov. 14-17, treating audiences to three premieres, RNDC welcomes back Adam Barruch, Kevin Iega Jeff and Ashley Roland. 6pm-9pm, 312-334-7777, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph St., http://www.harristheaterchicago.org.

Reeling: Closing Night Ludwig II (Film + Party) The story of the gay "Mad King Ludwig," the 19th-century Bavarian monarch known mostly for his lavish fairytale castles and his solitary nature, has been elevated to almost mythical status. 6:30pm-8:30pm, Logan Theatre, www.reelingfilmfestival.org. Tickets: reelingfilmfestival.org.

Reeling: Ian Harvie Superhero In his debut comedy concert film, the world's first FTM transgender stand-up comedian, takes a sex positive look at his transition from his own unique perspective. 9:30pm-11:30pm, Logan Theatre, www.reelingfilmfestival.org. Tickets: reelingfilmfestival.org/.

Friday, Nov. 15

Full-time MBA program at the Kellogg School of Management LGBT Preview Day. Register at www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/programs/fulltimeimba/admissions_events/prospectivestudentevents.aspx.

Gay Film Weekend at Center on Halsted. Pride Films and Plays 4th annual, features enhanced staged readings of the finalists in the 2013 Great Gay Screenplay Contest. Hoover-Leppen Theatre through Nov. 17. Kickoff reception 6pm. www.pridefilm-sandplays.com.

Master Class Terrence McNally's stage biography of legendary opera diva Maria Callas. Inspired by a series of master classes conducted by Callas at the Julliard School, this sparkling, rich play with incidental music by Verdi, Puccini and Bellini puts the diva back onstage as she coaxes and inspires her "victims" while she rivetingly regales us with secrets professional and personal of her own. 8pm-10pm, 800-595-4849, No Exit Cafe, 6970 N. Glenwood

Ave., www.theo-u.org.

Rocky Horror Picture Show Film with Live Cast WOWMS presents THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW at 27 Live in Chicagoland — Movie with Live Cast 8pm-11:45pm, 855-927-5483, 27 Live, www.27live.com .

A 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. Through Dec. 7. 8pm, TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington Ave, Timelinetheatre.com.

Saturday, Nov. 16

Protest against Illinois Family Institute and Americans For Truth About Homosexuality anti-gay fundraiser banquet. 5:15pm - 7pm at Olympic Park Swim Center, 660 N Ridge Ave, Arlington Hts. Questions to Alex Forgue at alexforgue.mchs@gmail.com .

Olympia Dukakis will star in *Rose*, a one-woman play by Martin Sherman, in the Dorothy Menker Theater, in the Fine and Performing Arts Center, 9000 W. College Pkwy., Palos Hills. *Rose* is a portrait of a feisty Jewish woman who has survived some of the major events that shaped the 20th century. Tickets are \$40 for the general public and \$35 for students and seniors. Visit www.morainevalley.edu/fpac, call 708-974-5500 or stop by the box office.

HRC's Chicago VIP Reception, Gala and Dinner. Celebrate, support and engage in the momentum of the LGBT movement. Optional VIP reception at 5 p.m., silent auction and general reception at 6 p.m. The dinner program will begin at 7 p.m., followed by live entertainment. After Party following the stage program; 6pm, Fairmont Chicago, 200 N. Columbus Dr., www.boxofficetickets.com/go/date .

Ladies Fall Social Party. Dancing & Live Band Food, drink, dancing, live music in the Northwest Suburbs. \$50 per person for 3hrs unlimited well drinks, domestic beer, soda & water, 2hrs appetizer buffet, DJ 7 - 9 pm. 6:30pm, 847-577-4663, H.O.M.E Bar, 1227 N. Rand Rd., Arlington Heights

EdgeAlliance's The YOU Ball EdgeAlliance hosts its 21st Annual The YOU Ball gala at Venue One. The party benefits EdgeAlliance's supportive housing programs providing children, families and adults with a greater quality of independence. 7pm-11pm, 773-359-0122, Venue One, 1044 W. Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60607, www.edgealliance.org . Tickets: youball2013.ticketleap.com/edgealliance/t/eaevent-platform/.

OTTER at The SoFo Tap From the creators of DILF at The SoFo Tap comes OTTER at The SoFo Tap, hosted by Gary Gangi with music by DILF's DJ Moose, OTTER is the party you've all been asking for. 9pm, The SoFo Tap, 4923 N Clark, Chicago, www.the-sofotap.com/?

Sunday, Nov. 17

Brunch Gone Wild Miminbar's Sunday "Brunch Gone Wild" features decadent breakfast items that change weekly and with the seasons. Voted top 10 places for brunch by OpenTable 11am-3pm, Miminbar, 3341 N. Halsted St., www.miminbarchicago.com/#brunch/cdx9 .

Northalsted Sunday Funday North Halsted comes alive with Sunday-Funday festivities and activity. See what all of Chicago Land is enjoying. Come straight to Halsted 11am-11pm, Halsted/Belmont to Halsted/Waveland, www.northalsted.com .

Monday, Nov. 18

Pub Stumpers Trivia Mondays Teams of 1-4 players can sign up with a chance to win a Crew gift card. Prizes awarded to top three teams. Class time is 8pm. 8pm, Crew Bar & Grill, 4804 N. Broadway, www.worldsgreatestbar.com .

Disco Bingo Disco Bingo at M7 Bar. Have fun Win prizes 8pm-11:45pm, Circuit Nightclub, 3641 N. Halsted St., www.facebook.com/circuitclub .

Tuesday, Nov. 19

Divas: Music and Video. Celebrate the women we love to listen to and watch. 3pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., www.sidetrackchicago.com .

The Lakeview Orchestra: Bach, Humor & Haydn Acclaimed harpsichordist Jason Moy performs Bach's timeless Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, accomplished mime performers Alex Suha and Noel Williams perform to the music of Otto Nicolai and Johann Strauss, and Haydn's light and witty Symphony No. 88 rounds out the program. 7:30pm-10pm, The Nettelhorst School 3252 North BRD. way, Chicago, Illinois 60657, lakevieworchestra.org . Tickets: lakevieworchestra.org/performance/bach-humor-haydn

Pop Quiz Trivia Bring your smartest friends and test your knowledge of random trivia every Tuesday night at Hamburger Mary's Rec Room. 8pm-10:30pm, Hamburger Mary's, 5400 N Clark St., www.hamburgermaryschicago.com .

Wed., Nov. 20

Transgender Day of Remembrance. Find events at www.glaad.org.

Gov. Pat Quinn to sign marriage bill. Event will take place at the UIC Forum, 725 W. Roosevelt Rd., at 3:30 p.m.

The Call: Show Tunes Wednesday Curtains Up Start your evening with an after work cocktail Enjoy news, weather, sports, entertainment news and videos until 9pm, followed by your favorite Broadway and silver-screen hits 9pm, The Call, Chicago, 1547 W Bryn Mawr Ave., www.callbarchicago.com.

Friday, Nov. 22

Original "Loose Chick" starring in hour



'SUN' SETTING

Through Dec. 7

A Raisin in the Sun is at TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington Ave.

Photo by Lara Goetsch

long performance based on her experiences through life. Guest Chicks Tamale & Gandlyn Ross will be featured this month. Juicy, gutsy, balsy, cutting edge look at life through the eyes of three femme fatales. 7:15 pm. Uncharted Books, 2630 N. Milwaukee Ave.

LGBTQ Kids, Eldercare Issues Program; November National Caregiver's Month. Join diverse members of the LGBTQ community, share their experiences of their aging parent(s) and eldercare issues. 5:00-7:30 p.m. Free and open to the public. Light refreshments provided. Registration recommended, but not required at bit.ly/19Kp2I1. University of Illinois at Chicago, 1007 W. Harrison St.

Lillstreet's 38th annual holiday season party. 6-10 p.m. Free. Lillstreet Art Center, 4401 N. Ravenswood Ave. lillstreet-gallery.com/holiday-art-fair/ .

Wed., Nov. 27

We Three Lizas. Previews: Wednesday, Nov. 27 at 7:30 pm, Friday, Nov. 29 at 7:30 pm, Saturday, Nov. 30 at 7:30 pm, and Sunday, Dec. 1 at 3 pm. Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Sunday, Dec. 1

TransActions presents the Legends Lunch All Star Awards, a World AIDS Day Ceremony in association with the Chicago Department of Public Health. 1-6pm. Mayne Stage Theater, 1328 W. Morse Ave. Joy Morris mzjoy773@yahoo.com or 312-513-3878.

BOYS from page 20

published in the] fall [of] 2013, so we really had to hustle, which was really difficult [since] both Nico and I have many other things going on.

"BOYS was not done just because we had so much [free] time, but quite the opposite. [Still], we both felt like it was a book we really wanted to put out right now."

They originally aimed for 20 subjects to spotlight, but one person didn't make the deadline, so it dropped to 19. Neither Lang or Stafford objected to 19. In fact, they embraced the odd total.

"Nico and I spent weeks before announcing the book discussing who we had worked with in the past and would love to work with again, who are people we admire, and who are people we think would have an amazing story to tell," Stafford said. "During the initial meetings with writers to see if they were interested and what they would like to write, we were connected to other writers, too. People who were friends of friends who had agreed to be a part of the book. So, I guess it was all really like this intentional and organic process."

"I hope the book gets into the hands of a boy like me when I was younger, [living] down

South, one who can't even imagine what a life would be like being openly gay, living in a place like Chicago or even in his hometown, and eventually becoming a boy who likes other boys so unapologetically. I hope he reads it and not only sees himself represented in the pieces, but meets other people who will eventually become his friends as he gets older. And then I hope he goes off and starts to write his own story, gather his own group of boys, and they create work that is similar.

"I hope the book allows others to not only find a community, but to be inspired to build their own."

Stafford said his highlight of the book was reading the essay called, "Confessions of a Snow Queen," about a Southeast Asian-American man who confesses to only dating white men, realizes the problems within that, and goes to India to "find himself."

"This essay really struck a chord with me," Stafford said. "It was amazing to read this story and sit back and be like, 'Damn. I have had these same thoughts. I have had such similar feelings. But at the same time I haven't.'"

"One of the first anthologies I remember reading that I still think about to this day is called, 'Waking Up American' by Angela Jane Fountas. I remember reading that and literally carrying it



Zach Stafford. Photo courtesy of Stafford

around with me for weeks and weeks, because I related so much to the stories. The anthology is about bi-cultural people living in America, and this essay gave me similar feelings and in turn always reminded me why I love anthologies so much."

Stafford said he definitely envisions the book as a continuing project, republished regularly with new essays from new writers. "I think this book can really become, and should become, a project about capturing the lives and personal stories of the boys within the LGBTQ communities around the globe, and told by the people who have experienced the stories written," he said. "I think that would be so powerful. I mean, for decades and decades our stories have been hushed, and when they've been told they have been by outsiders, historians, scientists, etc. I would love to be able to create a project that is guided by the communities that are being represented. It would actually be a blessing."

A portion of sales of BOYS will benefit the Lambda Literary Foundation, Stafford said. "They work so hard to preserve LGBTQ literature while also encouraging and supporting writers who identify as LGBTQ," he said. "I was so excited when they agreed to allow us to donate proceeds from the book to them."

BILLY MASTERS

"Don't you know lots of people like that? I do. I've seen those little girlie boys from Thailand—they're quite fabulous."—Sharon Osbourne tells Arsenio Hall about her experiences with people having both male and female genitalia.

I, Billy Masters, being of relatively sound mind and having body fat in the mid-teens, declare this my last will and testament. Yes, this could very well be the last column you read from me. Not because I want to stop writing to you, Lord knows, but because I could die on the operating table. For the first time ever, I am going under the knife. One would think that my maiden surgery would be something completely elective to enhance my slightly fading beauty. But like Joan Collins, I am much more afraid of surgery than I am of growing older. No, this surgery is one that is far from elective, but also far from fatal. On the other hand, my surgeon did just point out to me that there are "no guarantees," so I'd better make this column a good one ... just in case.

Let's start with what I think is an important topic. I've seen Jack Andraka featured on both 60 Minutes and The View. He's the 16-year-old scientist who has come up with a way to detect pancreatic, lung, and ovarian cancer that costs three cents and takes five minutes to run—this means it is 168 times faster and 26,000 times less expensive than the current test. Why am I bringing this up? Because he's also GAY! I'm not outing him—he's openly gay. In fact, it's the first thing he brings up in an online interview: "Being an LGBT teen in science right now is kinda lonely. Looking around at scientists it's



Cheyenne Jackson is a very busy guy, Billy says. Photo by Karl Simone

like, wow, there are no other gay people. And I'm like, "Come on, guys—science. We can go outside of like fashion design and stuff. It doesn't matter who you like, what gender you are, where you come from, none of that matters. It's just your ideas that should count." An insider at 60 Minutes told me, "We didn't mention he was gay because it wasn't relevant to the story—and it might have turned some people off." Shame on you, 60 Minutes. LGBT teens like Jack Andraka make me feel like the world is in pretty good hands.

In the never-ending quest to find a television project for Cheyenne Jackson, there are two pilots he's attached to (three if you count the one from Delta). Jackson has been added to the cast of an Alicia Silverstone pilot for Lifetime called HR—where she plays the director of a human resources department (hence, "HR"). This is a guest role that could become recurring. This

would be a reunion for Cheyenne and Alicia, who co-starred in the short-lived Broadway play The Performers, where Cheyenne played a porn star. Jackson has also been cast in Ryan Murphy's pilot for HBO called Open, which is about a group of five friends played by Michelle Monaghan, Scott Speedman, Wes Bentley, Anna Torv and Jennifer Jason Leigh. Jackson's role is described as a "handsome meth addict." Hmm ... that could explain the video of him masturbating on BillyMasters.com. He was doing research.

Making a smooth transition to the rollicking world of gay porn, Trenton Ducati just signed a three-month contract with Michael Lucas. While that in itself is not notable, the details are intriguing: "I am so excited to be sharing my first non-condom scene with the world. I have been waiting a long time for the opportunity to film this type of scene." This is ironic because only six months ago, Trenton sent out the following tweet: "How about giving and taking education and promoting safe sex practices and doing your barebacking at home, especially if like you say they get paid 250 dollars. Shit, I will pay them that much to stop." Either he had no takers or too many. Anyway, I suspect he's getting more than \$250 from Lucas Entertainment.

But Trenton doesn't simply call this barebacking: "The term I want to use going forward is 'informed bareback.' It's not about denying risk or forgetting a condom or not wanting to use one in the heat of the moment. It's not at all careless. On the contrary, it relies on explicit, open communication and status sharing among the models. That makes it possible to give fans the kind of sex scenes they have been craving, while creating a space for performers that ensures them full information and consent." What I think he's saying is that if he wants to get a ride home from someone who is drunk and he's willing to take the risks, then he should be able to. You also have the right to check him out on BillyMasters.com.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Benjamin in Atlanta: "I have a non-penis-related question. Kate Jackson was supposed to release an autobiography called The Smart One that was available for pre-order on Amazon. The date has changed several times and is now February 2014. Do you know who or what is holding it up?"

Who are you to say this isn't penis-related? Watch how I turn an innocent question about Kate Jackson into a cornucopia of cock. But, first, your question. On Charlie's Angels, Kate may have played the smart one, but in real life she's been plagued with a myriad of problems. However, she was determined to write her story, and on Aug. 3, 2010, it was announced that her autobiography would come out May 3, 2011. That quickly changed to Oct. 11, 2011. After several more delays, I'm told the publisher is now listing this for release on Feb. 1, 2015! Why the long wait? The biggest problem is that Kate hasn't written anything more than the outline, perhaps because she is having great difficulty remembering much of her past. My hope is that she doesn't gloss over her first marriage to sexy Andrew Stevens—who went on to produce and star in a number of softcore porn releases. Samples of his prolific body of work can be found on BillyMasters.com.

When I've written more about Kate Jackson than Kate Jackson herself, it's definitely time to end yet another column. I do hate to think I could die on the operating table and my final story would have been about Kate Jackson. So, while I'm being wheeled into surgery, I'll write a bit more that will eventually show up on www.BillyMasters.com, the site that speaks for itself—even from the great beyond. If you have a question for me and don't have a Ouija board handy, drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I'm exorcized (or, for that matter, exercise). So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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because of the lifestyle that I was "choosing" to live. I would continually take on these feelings of guilt and shame which was easy because I wasn't conducting myself in a Godly manner within my lifestyle. It's great to see leaders like Bishop Pearson stand up and show the community there is another way.

I used to be the person that said I don't care about gay marriage. I was in a five-year relationship with someone who wasn't a U.S. citizen and I couldn't provide him with the rights and benefits of marriage under the Constitution. That inability is probably the biggest reason why we aren't together right now and that changed the way I feel about marriage equality so that is why I decided to perform at the benefit and the March on Springfield.

Since the performance, I've had a few people stop me in the streets just to say "good job." I've only been in Chicago for about six months so it's really nice to feel like I'm a part of the community already.

WCT: As an out gay performer do you have any advice for other entertainers who are still closeted? Has being out impacted your career (negatively or positively)?

MT: I understand that when you are a celebrity or a public figure there is a certain kind of expectation to come out and be an advocate but we shouldn't expect that of celebrities or public figures. I wish there were more Black gay celebrities who were out of the closet but I don't think it's a requirement.

I feel like when we go about our lives and it's not about waving the flag and being in people's faces we can have a positive effect on society although activism is also important.

I performed with an *a cappella* group in Branson, Mo., for about three and a half months and when I decided to leave the group a woman ticket seller said, 'Great now that that gay guy is leaving I'll sell your tickets.' In that community, I never declared that I was gay so that was an eye-opening experience.

WCT: Is there anything else you want to share with WCT readers?

MT: My life is an open book and, more importantly, I don't have any food allergies.

See www.twitter.com/marcusterell, www.facebook.com/marcusterelltheserenades, and www.youtube.com/marcusterell for more information.

Artemis Singers winter solstice concert Dec. 6-7

Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus, will present its winter solstice concert, "A Midwinter Night's Journey," at 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6, and at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 7, at the Ethical Humanist Society, 7574 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie.

The chorus will perform "A Midwinter Night's Journey" on two nights because the group's Jan. 19, 2013, concert at this venue sold out.

Founded in 1980, the 35-member Artemis Singers specializes in music written or arranged by women.

Tickets for "A Midwinter Night's Journey" are a suggested donation of \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door for adults. Tickets for seniors age 65 and older and for children age 12 and younger are a suggested donation of \$10. Visit <http://artemismidwinter.brownpapertickets.com>.

Chicago Dragons' 'Miss Ruck-n-Maul' Nov. 16

The local gay rugby team The Chicago Dragons will hold its annual drag-show fundraiser, "Miss Ruck-n-Maul," Saturday, Nov. 16, at 5 p.m. at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

The Dragons aim to raise money to get to Sydney, Australia, to participate in the 2014 Bingham Cup.

Tickets are \$20 and include two drink tickets; purchase at the door or online at rucknmaul2013.bpt.me.

Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC



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

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