

JD SAMSON  
TALKS ABOUT HER  
LATEST ALBUM  
PAGE 16

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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STATE SEN. KYLE  
MCCARTER FILES  
CHALLENGE TO  
GAY MARRIAGE  
PAGE 7

## Skater competes in women's derby



Joseph L. Simonis.  
Photo by Ross Forman



BY KATE SOSIN

For Joseph L. Simonis, it wasn't a lifelong passion realized, a personal test of strength or a political statement. It was a way for her to guide the rudders of a second puberty, to hang onto a body in the process of the change.

Simonis is one of the first transgender skaters to compete with the Windy City Rollers, the Chicago-based women's derby league (Simonis points out that she does not typically use labels like "transgender.")

She is in her second year with the league and has steadily moved up in the local derby scene, often unintentionally challenging tradi-

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PLANNED  
PARENTHOOD  
MARKS 40TH  
ANNIVERSARY  
OF ROE V. WADE  
WITH CEO  
CAROLE BRITE  
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GAY DIRECTOR  
EDGAR BARENS  
HAS AN OSCAR-  
NOMINATED  
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## STAR-STUDDDED



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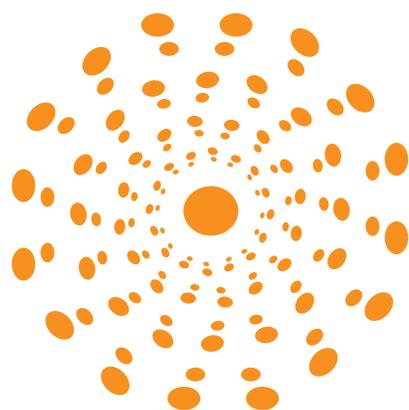
Windy City Times talks with two very big-name stars this week: actor Greg Kinnear (page 22) and former boxer Mike Tyson (on page 19). Kinnear talks about his new show, *Rake*, while Tyson ruminates on his one-man show and smooching Robert Downey Jr.



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**WINDY CITY TIMES**

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Images on cover (left, from top): PR photo of JD Samson; official head shot of state Sen. Kyle McCarter; photo of Carole Brite by Gretchen Blickensderfer; photo of Edgar Barends courtesy of HBO

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**'SUMMER' DAZE**

Openly gay Jay Michael (left) is on the Chicago-based reality show 100 Days of Summer.

Photo from Bravo



WCT chats with Arvin Chen, director of the gay film Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?



Chicago House held its annual 'Absolut Wrapture' in Willis Tower. Photo by Ed Negron

**FEELING THE HEAT**

In its latest Bent Nights column, WCT looks at performances by Betty Who? and the Reverend Horton Heat.

**BOWLED OVER**

People in New York will have their choice of Broadway or the Super Bowl. WCT's travel article shows what's happening.

**THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT**

Find out the latest about The Wanted, Boy George and Sofia Vergara.

plus  
**DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

**NORM-FITTING**



Chicago Foundation for Women held a forum on gender norms. Photo of Natasha-Smith Walker, Riki Wilchens, K Sujata, Jess Kane and Anne Rickleff by Gretchen Blickensderfer

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# Dramatic developments in challenge to Va.'s ban

BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The attorney general of Virginia announced on Jan. 23 that his office will no longer defend the constitutionality of the state's ban on same-sex marriage.

At a press conference, Attorney General Mark Herring told reporters his legal analysis of the state's constitutional ban has determined the law violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection and due process and that it discriminates against gay people on the basis of sexual orientation.

Addressing critics who say he should defend all state laws, regardless of whether he believes they are unconstitutional. Herring said that would be violating his oath and noted that his predecessors, including Republican Ken Cuccinelli, refused to defend other state laws they believed to be unconstitutional.

"Having determined after thorough and rigorous analysis that this unconstitutional law infringes on Virginia families," said Herring, "I have a duty and authority to protect them and their rights. It does not mean the case will end or that the ban will go undefended or unenforced. Until the courts can rule on the matter, [the] state registrar Janet Rainey will continue to enforce the current ban, but neither she nor I will defend its constitutionality."

The announcement comes fewer than three weeks after Herring was sworn in and just one week before a federal judge in Norfolk is set to hear arguments in the first of two lawsuits challenging the ban in federal court in Virginia.

A spokeswoman for Herring told the Richmond Times Dispatch, "We will file a brief that will change the commonwealth's legal position and we will argue along with the plaintiffs." The state's solicitor general is expected to present Herring's position when the court hears oral arguments.

Supporters of marriage equality were elated. "It is a critical and important development when the attorney general—the keeper of the federal and state constitution in the commonwealth—joins us in arguing that barring same-sex couples from marriage is clearly unconstitutional," said Greg Nevins, counsel in Lambda Legal's Southern Regional Office based in Atlanta. Lambda and the ACLU are representing same-sex couples in one of two lawsuits currently challenging the Virginia ban in federal district courts.

"This is a great day for the Commonwealth of Virginia," said Ted Olson, who is leading the other Virginia lawsuit. "Attorney General Herring's actions today have brought Virginia that much closer to the quintessential American ideals of equality under the law and the freedom to pursue happiness. We are grateful for his leadership and look forward to working with him to strike down Virginia's odious marriage ban."

In another development, plaintiffs' attorneys submitted the Jan. 21 Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in *SmithKline v. Abbott* that found heightened scrutiny is required for cases involving disparate treatment based on sexual orientation. They ask the judge to apply that reasoning in the summary judgment hearing "or, in the alternative," grant a preliminary injunction against enforcement of Virginia's ban against the two plaintiff couples in this case.

Herring's announcement on Jan. 23 represented a climax in an intense political drama



Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring.

over same-sex marriage in Virginia in recent months. Democrat Herring, who voted for the ban when he served as state senator in 2006, won election last November against Republican Mark Obershain, who opposes same-sex marriage, by fewer than 200 votes. In fact, Herring only last August shifted his position on allowing same-sex couples to marry, telling the Dispatch, "I would not want the state to tell my son or my daughter who they can and cannot marry."

Just one day before Herring took office, then Republican Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli issued an official advisory opinion that the governor "may not direct or require any agency of state government to allow same-sex couples to receive joint marital status for Virginia income tax returns."

Herring's spokeswoman, Ellen Qualls, told the Dispatch, "The attorney general has a strong interest in the courts adjudicating this matter, which will ultimately be decided by the United States Supreme Court."

On Jan. 31, Judge Arenda Wright Allen of the U.S. District Court for Eastern Virginia, is scheduled to hear arguments at a summary judgment hearing in *Bostic v. Virginia*. Famed attorneys Ted Olson and David Boies, who led the American Foundation for Equal Rights' successful challenge against California's Proposition 8, are heading the Norfolk legal team. It is not yet known whether today's announcement might require postponement of that January 30 hearing.

The initial named defendants in *Bostic* are now State Registrar of Vital Records Janet Rainey and Norfolk Circuit Court Clerk George Schaefer.

The amended brief submitted by Herring under Rainey's signature today states that "marriage is a fundamental right protected by the federal constitution" and that current Virginia law "improperly denies same-sex couples access to" that fundamental right, "without legal justification, and therefore violates the federal constitution guarantees of due process of law and the equal protection of the laws."

The court also granted intervenor status to Prince William County Circuit Court Clerk Michele McQuigg on Jan. 17, noting that plaintiffs did not object.

A second lawsuit, *Harris v. Virginia*, led by Lambda Legal and the ACLU, is pending before a U.S. District Court for the Western District.

"The Commonwealth of Virginia has too often argued on the wrong side," said Herring, referring to historic cases on desegregation in

1954, on interracial marriage in 1967, and on women entering the Virginia Military Institute in 1996.

The same legal principles that applied in those cases apply in this case today," said Herring.

Referring to his 2006 vote in favor of the ban on same-sex marriage, Herring was blunt.

"I was wrong to stop short of marriage equal-

ity," said Herring, but he added his decision was "not based on my policy preferences" but "based on my thorough analysis of applicable law and the constitutional questions raised by this case."

"Virginia is, in many ways, the cradle of democracy," said Herring, noting that many of the nation's early presidents and authors of key government documents, including the constitution, were written by Virginians.

"Too many times in our history our citizens have had to lead the way on civil rights while our leaders have stood against them," said Herring. "It is time for the Commonwealth to be on the right side of history and the right side of law."

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## Anti-gay prejudice kills straights, too

BY BOB ROEHR

Anti-gay prejudice is bad for heterosexuals' health, decreasing life expectancy by about two and a half years, according to a new study [i] published in the American Journal of Public Health.

The analysis was based upon 20,226 detailed interviews from the General Social Survey, conducted between 1998 and 2008, and cross-linked with the National Death Index.

The findings on decreased life expectancy parallel those made earlier with regard to white prejudice toward blacks. Researchers who later looked for biological underpinnings to explain why prejudice might shorten life expectancy found that persons with high levels of racial prejudice showed increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol when they interacted with a person of the other race.

Cortisol is a key "fight or flight" hormone and can be protective in dangerous situations. But chronic activation contributes to cardiovascular disease, which was the leading cause of premature death among persons with the highest levels of prejudice.

"Prior research has indicated that anti-gay prejudice harms the mental and physical health of sexual minorities. This study extends these findings to show that anti-gay prejudice also negatively influences the health of heterosexuals," wrote lead author Mark Hartzenduehler and colleagues at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health.

### Lactobacillus identified in neovagina of male-to-female transgender women

Another study [ii] has upended the general belief that a neovagina created from penile tissue during gender-reassign surgery cannot support lactobacillus. It found the organism in 47 of 63 (75 percent) of the transgender women who participated in the study.

Lactobacillus is a broad family of bacteria that can support healthy gut and vaginal ecology. An imbalance can lead to vaginal yeast infections and leave women more vulnerable to HIV infections. Some variants of the bacteria also are used in the production of food products ranging from yogurt, to beer, to sourdough bread.

Previous research in a transgender population had looked for lactobacillus using culture techniques and had found only very low rates of occurrence, about 4 percent. But this study, in Vienna, Austria, used the more sensitive PCR technique that amplifies the DNA of the bacteria.

It only looked for the presence of various strains of lactobacillus; it did not attempt to measure the number of organisms or their impact on tissue health.

Sources:

[i] Anti-gay prejudice and all-cause mortality among heterosexuals in the United States. Hatzenduehler ML, Bellatorre A, Muennig P. Am J Public Health. 2014 Feb; 104(2):332-7. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2013.301678. Epub 2013 Dec 12

[ii] Molecular detection of Lactobacillus species in the neovagina of male-to-female transgender women. Petricevic L, Kaufmann U, Domig KJ, Kraler M, Marschalek J, Kneifel W, Kiss H. Sci Rep. 2014 Jan 17; 4:3746. doi: 10.1038/srep03746.

## Indiana House amends bill banning same-sex marriage

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Members of the Indiana House, on Jan. 27, voted 52-43 to amend HJR-3, a bill that would enshrine the state's marriage ban in its constitution, removing a provision that forbade "civil unions or other similar arrangements." If passed by the House, the amended resolution moves to the state Senate. If the bill is successful there, the bill will have to pass through the legislature again in 2015 or 2016 before going to Indiana voters.

"We are relieved that, at least for now, discrimination will not be enshrined into Indiana constitution," said Lambda Legal Marriage Project Director Camilla Taylor. "Indiana law already prohibits marriage for same-sex couples, and this effort is cruel and unnecessary. Same-sex couples and their children in Indiana need the dignity and protections of marriage, and shouldn't have to see their lives deemed as less worthy of respect or recognition than other families. We congratulate the hard work of Freedom Indiana and the hundreds of Hoosiers that have fought so hard for fairness and equality. We are hopeful that this resolution, that seeks to harm gay and lesbian couples and their children, will be defeated or at least delayed by the Indiana Senate."

The bill seemed to have been on the fast track after it passed to the House floor from the House Elections and Apportionment Committee Jan. 22. House Speaker Brian Bosma had the bill moved into that committee after it stalled in the less-conservative House Judiciary Committee.

Bilerico.com reported that Andrew Markle, an openly gay Republican candidate for state representative, resigned from the GOP in response to Bosma's power play.

Markle wrote on his Facebook page, "As an openly gay male and a conservative, I find it deplorable that the state would choose to take such extraordinary measures to disenfranchise me and my fellow LGBT brothers and sisters." Markle added that his campaign would continue without his GOP affiliation.



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## BOOKS

# Political powerhouse Rebecca Sive on the GOP, women's rights

BY SARAH TOCE

As a writer, public speaker and political strategist for women in politics, Rebecca Sive is setting the trend for successful female entrepreneurs from New York to L.A., Chicago to the Bay Area, and everywhere in between.

Her distinct brand of no-holds-barred straight talk coupled with serious brainpower and constitutional wherewithal have landed her numerous awards and accolades. Rebecca is currently on tour promoting her bestseller *Every Day Is Election Day: A Woman's Guide to Winning Any Office, from the PTA to the White House*.

**Windy City Times: You've been named one of the Feminists Who Changed America: 1963-1975 (University of Illinois Press, 2006). Where do you find the inspiration to keep evolving and working in the women's rights movement?**

Rebecca Sive: I was inspired by my mother and father, who were always involved in various community betterment and progressive political activities. In college, I read Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood is Powerful*, which was enlightening and inspirational. As a young woman, I learned about feminist heroes like Ida B. Wells, Jane Addams, Golda Meier, and Shirley Chisholm. I thought I might emulate their work. I was also fortunate to work with Bella Abzug, Betty Friedan, Addie Wyatt, and many other Second Wave women leaders and politicians, who continue to inspire me.

**WCT: Since you were the chair of the NARAL Foundation, how does the Republican male politics of today's society sit with you?**

RS: My twin-issue commitments, since I first became a women's-issue organizer and feminist activist during college, are women's re-



Rebecca Sive. Photo by bSMART

**of their own bodies and reproductive organs?**

RS: My advice is this quote from Thomas Jefferson: "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." You can't ever take for granted the fact that abortion is legal in the U.S. since, in the adult lifetime of many women activists today (myself included), it was not. "Eternal vigilance" means engaging in reproductive rights advocacy, including only supporting political candidates who are pro-choice.

**WCT: Politics and women's rights. How closely are these two items related, in your opinion?**

RS: They are as closely related as once can imagine since—in one of the first political acts of our nation, the writing of the Constitution—women were excluded, and it was close to another 150 years before an amendment to it (finally) gave us the right to vote.

**WCT: You were one of the founders of EMILY's List. The tagline of EMILY's List states: "Supporting pro-choice Democratic women running for congress and governor." Obviously, this is an important issue close to your heart. What inspired the creation of EMILY's List?**

RS: I was honored to be the first organizer of EMILY's List in Illinois and counted among my colleagues the D.C. women who initially set-up EMILY. When those first organizing meetings were held, it was clear (this was during the period immediately following attempts to amend the Constitution to prohibit abortion), that more pro-choice women-electeds were desperately needed. That was the motivation to create EMILY.

**WCT: If another list were invented as a spin-off for women right now, what might it be called and why?**

RS: Well, I think there are any number of good ideas out there for women's political organizations. Certainly, every state could usefully have an organization like EMILY's List. That would be a great boon to pro-choice Democratic women who want to run for office, since getting trained and raising money are so important and EMILY does both those things so well.

**WCT: How did your book—Every Day Is**

**Election Day: A Woman's Guide to Winning Any Office, from the PTA to the White House—come about?**

RS: I was inspired to write *Every Day Is Election Day* after the 2008 election, when it became clear that a woman [Hillary Clinton] could run a mainstream race for the presidency, changing the political realities for women so positively. Clinton's campaign also coincided with a time when I was reflecting on my work as an advisor and strategist for women-led progressive organizations. I concluded the time was right to share the wisdom and experience of feminist political activists, so that successive generations could be motivated and guided to become feminist public leaders and politically influential.

**WCT: Can you give us some insight about the contents of Every Day Is Election Day?**

RS: The book is advice about how to build a public presence and political influence, intertwined with the wisdom and illustrative stories of women, from a range of experiences and backgrounds, who've done this already. The women I interviewed—and whose stories I tell—are from all over the country and of differing racial and ethnic backgrounds, holding a variety of different types of offices. Consequently, the book makes the case that valuable and important political work is happening everywhere, providing a political opportunity for every woman who wants one.

Also, their (and my) advice is well-suited to any woman who seeks a presence in the public square—whether as an elected or appointed official, a campaign staffer, a head of an advocacy organization, a government staffer, or as a business leader. The book includes a comprehensive resources section, so that readers know where to go for various kinds of information. I'm also pleased that my publisher is offering terrific bulk order organizational discounts, so that the book is affordable for book groups, clubs, training programs, etc.

[Note: Call 800-888-4741 for bulk order organizational discounts.]

**WCT: Who are some of your favorite "Women to Watch in Politics" right now?**

RS: I'm always keen on watching women running for the U.S. Senate, since the position is so important and the term is long enough for a woman—just like a man—to build up some real accomplishments and power. I'm also very interested in watching women who seek execu-

tive offices, e.g., governorships or mayoralties. Since only five states have a woman governor now, and none of the big three U.S. cities have a woman mayor, this is a good place for all of us to watch, learn and be helpful.

**WCT: There is a tour in support of this book. Why was that an important step to take?**

RS: In the course of writing *Every Day Is Election Day*, I found enthusiasm all over the country for increasing the number of women political leaders. At the same time, my years of consulting had taught me how important it is for women to share their advice and experiences as widely—and deeply—as possible. Consequently, I was delighted to tour to support the book. And, I will tell you, it's been quite gratifying. Women everywhere are excited to be a part of this history-making time for political women.

**WCT: Looking ahead to 2016, will we see another Clinton administration?**

RS: Last summer, I was thrilled when I read a list of women, Republican and Democrat, who were considered prospective candidates for the presidency in 2016. Who would have dreamed we'd reach this day! Certainly, Hillary Clinton is at the top of any list, but until we know whether she will run or not, it's not possible to assess further. In the meantime, we can all work to develop the positive political climate women candidates at every level need and deserve.

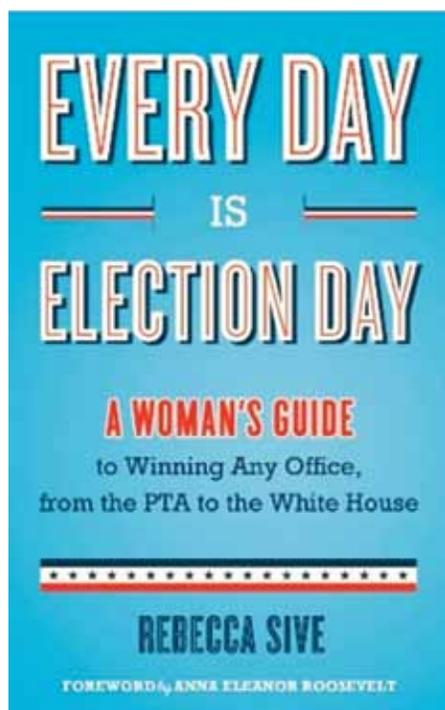
**WCT: If not Clinton, is there another female powerhouse that might be able to step up to that podium?**

RS: On lists I've seen—of Democratic women who are considered front-runner possibilities in 2016 (after Hillary Clinton)—are U.S. senators Amy Klobuchar, Elizabeth Warren and Kirsten Gillibrand.

**WCT: What is the best advice you have ever given to a candidate?**

RS: I think the best advice for a candidate is the best advice for anyone who seeks public influence and power: seek the office for a substantive reason and then be willing to give your all to that effort. Power and influence for their own sake don't really help women and girls. And, no one wins without understanding *Every Day is Election Day*.

**Further information about Every Day Is Election Day: A Woman's Guide may be found at [www.rebeccasive.com](http://www.rebeccasive.com). Rebecca is on Twitter @RebeccaSive.**



productive autonomy and economic security. Consequently, I've always been engaged with projects and political candidates who favor these two policy positions. It's also important to remember that, particularly back in the '70s and '80s, some Democratic (as well as Republican) candidates were anti-choice, requiring pro-choice activists to lobby them to change positions. We need to always pay attention. That won't change!

**WCT: What advice might you give to young women fighting the system to have control**

## Equality Illinois PAC issues endorsements

The Equality Illinois Political Action Committee (PAC) has issued its early endorsements of legislative candidates running for office in the March 18 primary election who have strong voting records on LGBT issues, particularly regarding the freedom to marry, according to a press release.

Endorsed candidates for the Illinois Senate include Sen. Daniel Biss (D-9), Sen. John J. Cullerton (D-6), Sen. Bill Cunningham (D-18), Sen. Don Harmon (D-39), Sen. Linda Holmes (D-42), Sen. Mattie Hunter (D-3), Sen. Mike Jacobs (D-36), Sen. Steven Landek (D-12), Sen. Terry Link (D-30) and Sen. Andy Manar (D-48).

State rep candidates receiving endorsements include Rep. Edward J. Acevedo (D-2), Rep. Jaime M. Andrade Jr. (D-40), Rep. Luis Arroyo (D-3), Rep. Maria Antonia "Toni" Berrios (D-39), Rep. Daniel J. Burke (D-1), Rep. Kelly M. Burke (D-36), Rep. Kelly M. Cassidy (D-14), Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia (D-83), Rep. Deborah Conroy (D-46), Rep. Fred Crespo (D-44), Rep. Keith Farnham (D-43), Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-12), Rep. Laura Fine (D-17), Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-8) and Rep. Jack D. Franks (D-63).

Others are Rep. Robyn Gabel (D-18), Rep. Esther Golar (D-6), Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-92), Rep. Gregory Harris (D-13), Rep.

Elizabeth "Lisa" Hernandez (D-24), Rep. Jay Hoffman (D-113), Rep. Frances Ann Hurley (D-35) and Rep. Thaddeus Jones (D-29). See the full list at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

## McHenry County College to host Pride conference

Pride, the LGBTQ club at McHenry County College (MCC), will host its first conference, Pride: The Changing Perception of the LGBTQ Community, on Saturday, April 12, at the college at 8:30 a.m.-4:15 p.m. The conference will be held in conjunction with the annual drag show on Friday, April 11, which starts at 7 p.m.

Pre-registration for the drag show and conference will be available starting in March: the drag show and conference \$25, conference \$20. On-site registration will be \$25 for the conference, and \$35 for the drag show and conference. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

There will be three sessions during the day with a variety of speakers discussing LGBTQ issues. The plenary speakers will be Chicken Lips, a gay couple from Denver who present motivational ideas in a humorous manner. They will also do two sessions during the day. Speaker will include MCC faculty and staff as well as speakers from Equality Illinois, PFLAG and PTI (Parents of Transgender Individuals).

# Right-wing legislators file marriage challenges

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Legislators last week filed new bills in response to the November passage of SB10, the Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Marriage Fairness Act, which will bring marriage equality to the state as of June. The bills were filed by state Sen. Kyle McCarter, R-Lebanon, on Jan. 21 and state Rep. Josh Harms, R-Watseka, on Jan. 22.

McCarter's bill would repeal SB10 altogether and define legal marriage as being between a man and a woman.

The bill states, "A marriage between 2 individuals of the same sex is contrary to the public policy of this State."

McCarter has long advocated against gay marriage. In 2011, he filed a bill that would have amended the state's civil unions bill to Catholic Charities and other faith-based organizations the right to refuse services to same-sex couples. In 2013, when SB10 was being debated in the senate, he lamented that the legislation would result in businesses such as florists and bed and breakfasts not wanting to serve gay couples ultimately having to close.

Marriage equality advocates said that the bill is a play to McCarter's conservative base in his home district.

"I think we're all going to be happy when gay and lesbian couples can legally marry," said Ed Yohnka of ACLU Illinois. "This proposal won't do anything to stop that."

"This is an exercise in frivolity as far as I'm concerned," added Anthony Martinez, executive director of The Civil Rights Agenda. "I think most people understand that in the current General Assembly this bill will not prevail."

But Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, said that no matter how ineffective McCarter's bill ultimately is, it underscores that marriage equality opponents are "not giving up and they're not closing shop."

He added that extremists in both houses might either attempt to overturn SB10 or try "chipping away at it, bit by bit, looking for smaller ways to undermine it. It was a pattern we saw after civil unions."

Indeed, Harms' legislation, HB 4263, is intended to broaden exemptions SB10 spells out for religious organizations.

The bill "provides that no religious organization, including a school, is required to provide religious facilities for a marriage solemnization ceremony or celebration associated with the solemnization if the solemnization ceremony or celebration associated with the solemnization ceremony is in violation of its religious



State Sen. Kyle McCarter.

beliefs."

The bill furthermore establishes that the term "religious facilities" applies to "places of worship and school buildings but does not include nonsectarian educational facilities."

Although SB10 states that religious organizations cannot be legally compelled to perform same-sex marriages, opponents to the bill maintained that the bill would open the doors to widespread litigation if church-owned facilities did not allow them to take place there.

"I am disappointed that the state of Illinois has now redefined marriage by allowing gay couples to marry," Harms told the Paxton Record on Nov. 7. "I still firmly believe that marriage is a religious institution between one man and one woman. Senate Bill 10 does not protect any private citizen with religious objections and businesses will be forced to host, cater, or otherwise serve gay weddings, even if their religion forbids it."

Harms referred HB4263 to the House Rules Committee.

Neither McCarter nor Harms returned requests for comment left with their offices.

## Bail set at \$2 million after Naperville murder

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A 21-year-old man is being held on \$2 million bond after being charged with the murder of a Naperville man with whom he'd just moved in, the Chicago Tribune reported.

Grant Muren has been charged with murdering Charles Clarke, 55, who lived in a townhouse in the 1100 block of Vail Court. Clarke's girlfriend found his body Jan. 22.

Clarke and Muren met through Craigslist, where Clarke had advertised for a roommate, according to Assistant State's Attorney Tim Diamond. Muren moved in Jan. 21, the day of the murder.

According to prosecutors, Muren, who is charged with first-degree murder and concealment of a homicide, said he attacked Clarke after they'd been sexually intimate. Muren allegedly choked Clarke to death after a long struggle, then flooded the residence with natural gas and tried to destroy his lease paperwork in a toaster.

## LGBT caucus panels at MPSA confab April 3-6

The Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) will hold its 72nd annual conference April 3-6 at the Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St.

There will be several LGBT-related caucus panels at the event. Among them are "Testing Backlash: The Influence of Political Institutions on Public Attitudes Toward Gay Rights," "Putting the LGBT in International Human Rights," "Why are the Kids Alright?: The Origins of Young People's Liberalism on Gay Rights" and "Coming Out For LGBT Issues: Issue Selection in Congressional Elections."

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

## Chicago Public Library named best in country

A new international study ranks the Chicago Public Library (CPL) number one in the United States and number three in the world, ahead of Shanghai (5th), Singapore (7th), New York (9th), Beijing (13th), Hong Kong (17th) and London (30th), according to a press release.

The empirical study ranked the core services of public libraries across the globe and was released by the Information Science Department of the Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany. The study is at [http://www.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Institute/Informationswissenschaft/siebenlist/Lehre/PS\\_I2/libri-2013-0024\\_63-4-295-319\\_Mainka\\_Stock.pdf](http://www.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Institute/Informationswissenschaft/siebenlist/Lehre/PS_I2/libri-2013-0024_63-4-295-319_Mainka_Stock.pdf).

Brian Bannon is the openly gay commissioner of CPL.

## ABA meeting to look at diversity, anti-gay laws

The Defense of Marriage Act and anti-gay legislation during the Sochi Olympic games are chief among diversity law issues that will be explored at the 2014 American Bar Association (ABA) Midyear Meeting Feb. 5-10 in Chicago's Swissotel, 323 E. Upper Wacker Dr., and the Hyatt Regency, 151 E. Upper Wacker Dr.

Among the programs on the schedule are "Hot Topics in Diversity Law," "DOMA Overruled: Implications for Health Care Plans and Other Employee Benefits" and "Olympian Troubles: Responses to Russia's Anti-Gay Legislation During the Sochi Winter Olympics."

In addition, the Stonewall Awards will take place Feb. 7. Three lawyers who have advanced LGBT legal issues will be recognized. Honorees are Judge Elaine Kaplan of the United States Court of Federal Claims, retired Justice Jim Nelson of the Montana Supreme Court and Stephen Whittle of Manchester Metropolitan University.

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

## Or Chadash receives JUF grant

Congregation Or Chadash's Hidur Keshet program is a recipient of the first round of \$5,000 Breakthrough Fund mini-grants from the Jewish United Fund (JUF)/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

Congregation Or Chadash, 5959 N. Sheridan Rd., serves Chicago's LGBTQ Jewish community, as well as its friends and allies.

Hidur Keshet will create a space for LGBTQ Jewish individuals to connect with the extended Jewish community through program content that links gay history, gender identity, and Judaism.

The first round of mini-grants aims to kick-start a range of efforts quickly. The ultimate goal is to award \$1 million in Breakthrough Fund grants annually for new programs.



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# Spotlighting TGI athletes

BY ROSS FORMAN

**[Note:** As a disclaimer, the author switches pronouns in the article because Joe requests that folks use what pronouns/gender she was using at the time.]

Joe Simonis was a standout, honored, multi-sport athlete at Mundelein High School.

Start with football, where Simonis spent two years on the Mustangs' varsity team, playing offensive guard and tight end. As a wrestler, Simonis was a three-year varsity athlete in four different weight classes. He even was a conference champion, sectional-qualifying wrestler who was recruited to continue on the mat at the Division III level. Simonis also was a member of the Mundelein track and field team for a year, competing in the shotput.

In addition, while growing up in the northwest suburbs, Simonis played baseball, mostly catcher and first base, and wore the Mustangs' baseball jersey as a freshman and sophomore.

"I wasn't really very out as ... anything [in terms of sexual orientation or gender identity], until after [playing high school] sports," Simonis said. "At that point, [being labeled] gay probably was the closest thing, but I didn't do a lot of specific identity usage."

Others perceived Simonis to be gay at the time, and she admits now to being bullied as an athlete, particularly on the football and wrestling teams.

That's part of the reason Simonis stepped away from sports when he went to college.

"I liked [sports], but I was not feeling super safe and comfortable," Simonis said.

Simonis graduated from Mundelein in 2002 and then the University of Illinois in 2006 and Cornell University in 2013.

And Simonis wanted back into sports a couple years ago while living in Ithaca, N.Y.

Enter roller derby, the seemingly perfect, queer-friendly sport for Simonis, a transgender and genderqueer woman.

"With derby, it allowed me to be both queer and an athlete in the same space—and not be queer in queer spaces and never talk about sports and be in the closet about my queerness in athletic spaces," Simonis said.

She moved to Chicago last January, and now calls the Uptown neighborhood home. She is 29 and a postdoctoral research fellow at Lincoln Park Zoo.

Simonis is a skater for the Windy City Rollers and the Chicago Red Hots.

"It's really empowering to be queer and an athlete," Simonis said. "Even though derby is really queer-friendly, I didn't really know a lot of other trans athletes. Sure, I knew other transgender people, but most of them were not athletes."

So Simonis stepped forward to aid and align those who fall under the small trans-athlete banner. Simonis is the founder of the Trans, Gender Non-Conforming and Intersex Athlete Network—driven to build community, empower advocacy, and promote sports.

The group, which currently has about 60 members from around the world, brings trans, gender non-conforming, and intersex (TGI) athletes together to facilitate interactions, support each other, find opportunities and resources, and build partnerships while also working across divisions to promote the inclusion of all people into athletics. In addition, the group's Facebook page and website state: "The group is not driven by specific agendas or topics, but rather exists to facilitate interactions and build community.

We hope that these interactions will empower advocacy, activism, and positive change."

"There are a lot of difficulties that trans people have to deal with in day to day life and athletics bring out lots of them," Simonis said. "For example, navigating gender-segregated bathrooms and locker rooms, having people use appropriate names and pronouns, and generally being accepted as how you identify. For me, it's nice to know other people who I can talk to who might have had to deal with similar experiences. It's great to have a real supportive team, league, but that only goes so far. Sympathy only goes so far; empathy needs to be there at some point.

"The big goal of the organization is to provide space for people to come together, and not completely have an agenda, but let it



Joseph L. Simonis. Photo by Ross Forman

be this space, build community and foster advocacy and activism."

Simonis also is hoping the network provides a positive image of TGI athletes, and she said the network is now creating original content, such as profiles of out TGI athletes.

Simonis said she knows of at least 100 other "moderately competitive" athletes who are transgender, gender non-conforming or intersex. "These are people at various levels of athletics, from international Olympic-level to small-time recreational leagues," Simonis said. "One of the things about me was, never seeing anyone like me, or anyone like who I thought I was, in any kind of cultural narrative, at all."

Simonis added, "It's weird when the gender that you don't really feel that you belong to provides you to access to things that you want, [such as sports, in Simonis' case], yet the gender that you feel you belong in more closely would cut you off from access to that. That's the mindset I was in [playing sports in high school], trying to reconcile all of this stuff, and that's difficult." "The goal with this work is to hopefully make it less difficult for the next generation of TGI athletes."

For more information, go to: [www.tgiathletenetwork.com](http://www.tgiathletenetwork.com).

## ATHLETE from cover

tional ideas about gender along the way.

Simonis is relatively new to the sport. She was in her fifth year of graduate school at Cornell University studying ecology and evolutionary biology when a transgender friend of hers told her about his roller derby league in Ithaca, New York.

"He was talking about skating, and I was like, 'that's really cool,'" Simonis remembered. "For me, sports were a huge thing growing up for most of my life, but in particular during first puberty, it was a huge way for me to belong in a group of people, get a hold of my body as I grew almost a foot in a year," she said. "I didn't realize that's what I was looking for but I was."

Simonis grew up in the small residential town of Mundelein, Ill., the youngest of three kids.

He (Simonis prefers masculine pronouns when talking about the past) took after her older brother Andrew, she says. He wrestled and played baseball and football. Around age six, he started to feel different in ways that were hard to understand. His last year of high school, he told his parents he was gay. In grad school, she told them she was trans.

She was at a dance party one night in grad school when she came across a girl promoting local derby tryouts. She took a flyer, pretending it was for a friend.

The next day she confided to a friend that she had been thinking a lot about roller derby. The two decided to try out together.

For Simonis, trying out meant navigating the tricky waters of coming out as trans.

Simonis read the rules. The Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA), the international governing body of derby leagues, had a policy that would allow Simonis to compete. That policy, which has been criticized by some trans athletes, Simonis included, requires that a trans athlete submit a physician-signed letter, stating that the athlete has hormone levels that are "medically acceptable" for a female.

However, Simonis also knew that joining a league might not be that simple. A lot of all-female leagues had yet to see trans athletes and had yet to adopt their own policies. Simonis would likely be a test case.

"I spent about two hours writing the most nervous ridiculous email," she said.

The process took months, and Simonis had to press the issue. After a number of meetings and a vote, Simonis started training with the Ithaca League of Women Rollers (ILWR).

Derby proved a new challenge for Simonis, who had never strapped on skates for sport before.

"And then to try skating while you're racing around a track and trying to hit someone, while not being hit, trying to keep track of how close you are to other players and to the track... Getting mechanics and fundamentals right is a challenge," she said.

She worked through trainings, but never made it to competition with ILWR.

That year Simonis accepted a position at Lincoln Park Zoo as postdoctoral fellow in Population Biology, analyzing animal populations.

Simonis moved to Chicago and started over in derby, this time with the Windy City Rollers (WCR).

The WCR policy allowed for Simonis to play. That policy was more general than the WFTDA policy, except for inter-league play where the WFTDA policy would take precedent.

"It is the policy of the Windy City Rollers that we will not discriminate based on a woman's sexual orientation, transgender status, or race," the WCR policy states. "WCR members have a right to maintain their own privacy, without

interference from WCR as an organization. We will adhere to all WFTDA rules and regulations regarding inter-league play."

Simonis started out with Haymarket Rioters, a farm team for derby newcomers learning the basics.

Megan Twibell (known as Sara Problem on the track) was the new skater program coach when Simonis started.

"I like to say that Derby players are like Tang or wine," Twibell said. Some players are instantly good at the sport, while others take longer to hone their skills. "Joe is Tang," she said.

Simonis showed a knack for derby from the start, Twibell said.

Simonis also joined the Chicago Red Hots, a new team that competes under USA Roller Sports.

A knee injury with the Red Hots set her back a few months, but Simonis used that time to start coaching and continue learning about the sport.

In October, Simonis competed with the Red Hots at the USARS National Championships. The team took fourth place.

This year, Simonis moved up in the ranks at Windy City Rollers when she was drafted to the Double Crossers, on the league's four home teams.

Amanda Miller (Cruel Whip on the rink) is Simonis' home team captain. (Miller also competes with Simonis on the Red Hots.)

Miller called Simonis a great addition to the team. Part of that, she said, has been Simonis' patience. But Simonis is also dedicated to learning and discussing the rules of derby, something not every player loves.

"She has the mindset and determination and the understanding that you're not going to be awesome your first year," Miller said.

Simonis said she is in for the long haul. "I have a feeling that I can be a really good skater, but I'm not there yet," she said.

Having a transgender skater has raised new questions for some in the league, Miller admitted. Simonis is not the first trans skater in the league, but like Miller, many of skaters haven't had personal experiences with transgender people.

"A lot of these discussions just haven't happened before," Miller said.

And while Windy City Rollers has a trans policy that aims to be welcoming, Miller also wonders about the next steps for the league in becoming more inclusive.

Wendy Vestevich sits in the executive board of WCR. She notes that the WCR policy and the WFTDA are different.

"Our policy does allow for self-identified female skaters to try out and be on the league for home team play," Vestevich said.

But for skaters who wants to compete on inter-league bouts, WCR defers to WFTDA policy.

Miller is a representative for Windy City Rollers on WFTDA. In March 2011, The Chicago Outfit, another Chicago derby league under WFTDA, also adopted a transgender policy. Such conversations among different WFTDA leagues have raised questions about the governing policy.

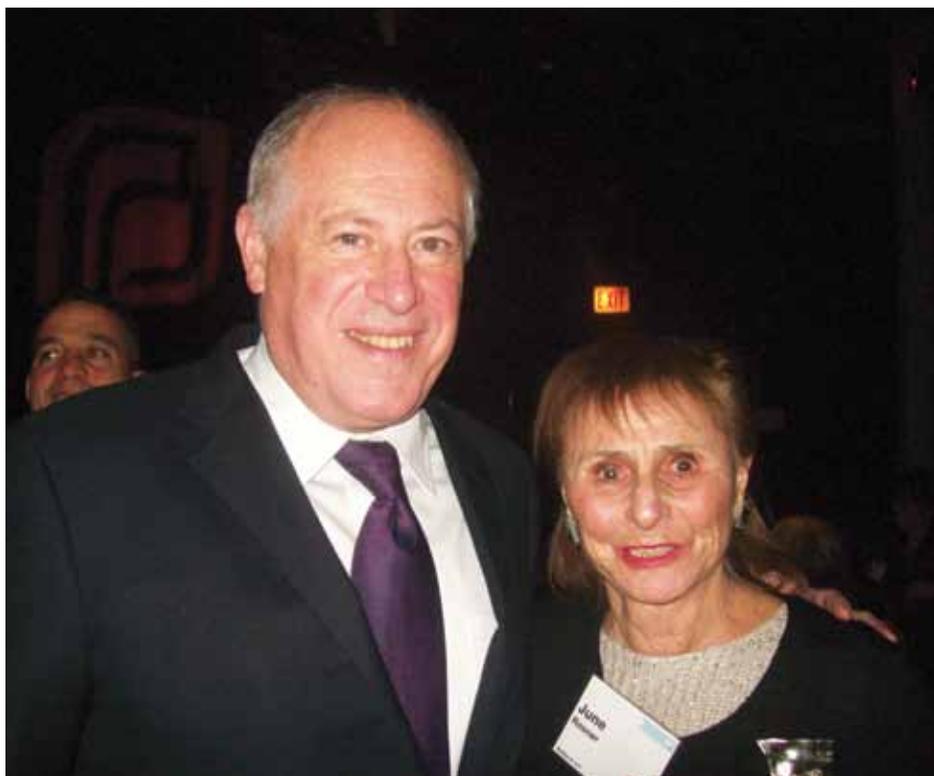
"It seems that we should be getting [WFTDA] to adjust that policy as a whole," Miller said.

Simonis conceded that being the lone trans skater on the track can feel a little lonely at times. But the league has also provided her with an important space, both physically and emotionally.

"I really enjoy being physically active, and I'd way rather be active as part of a team than by myself...It's just more fun to me," she said. "And holy hell to be welcomed into a women's team sport is so empowering and validating, I can't even begin to describe it."



/windycitymediagroup



Gov. Pat Quinn and June Rosner—the wife of Dr. Marvin Rosner, who performed the first legal abortion in Illinois—at Planned Parenthood's event. Photo by Gretchen Blickensderfer

## Planned Parenthood, civic leaders mark 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*

BY GRETCHEN BLICKENSDERFER

In 1971, two years before *Roe v. Wade*, abortion was legal for 10 days in Illinois. The late Dr. Marvin Rosner performed the first legal abortion in the state. After a federal court overturned a law banning first-term abortions, one of Rosner's patients asked him for the procedure.

On Jan. 23, more than four decades later and on the 40th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, Rosner's wife, June, braved the freezing temperatures and a small gathering of protesters outside of the Bottom Lounge in Chicago in order to join Planned Parenthood Action Illinois (PPIA) to mark the anniversary of the legal decision.

Rosner was joined by the board, staff and supporters of PPIA along with a who's who of Illinois civic leaders, including Gov. Pat Quinn and U.S. Dick Durbin.

In remembering the repercussions to her husband in 1971, Rosner told Windy City Times: "He was threatened. They painted a swastika on his hospital. The opposition called in the middle of the night claiming to be from the butcher's union. I was so proud of him, but it was really scary. I was worried for my children and I was worried for him."

According to PPIA President and CEO Carole Brite, the organization is about keeping women and families healthy. "We are the biggest preventer of the need for abortion," she told WCT. "So we invite our opponents to come and join us in offering effective birth control."

WGCI radio personality Loni Swain kicked off the event by introducing PPIA Vice President for Public Policy and Education Pam Sutherland. "Tonight we have a lot to celebrate," Sutherland said. "What if we lived in a state like Texas? They refused to take 30 million dollars in federal funding just to let cowboy Gov. Rick Perry keep Planned Parenthood from getting one penny to provide birth control."

On the stage behind Sutherland was a line of who she termed "champions for women's health." They included Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle; U.S. Reps. Jan Schakowsky, Mike Quigley, Robin Kelly, Brad Schneider and Bill Foster; Durbin; Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon; state Sens. Heather Steans, Michael Frerichs, Toi Hutchinson and Dan Kotows-

ki; and state Reps. Barbara Flynn Currie, Scott Drury, Robyn Gable, Greg Harris, Camille Lilly, Sara Feigenholtz and Dan Williams.

"Here is why we're going to win," Schakowsky said, referring to statements by Republicans like Mike Huckabee who she claimed had said that women could not control their libidos without the help of government. "Women all over this country aren't going to take the kind of disrespect that comes in words and in legislation. We're going to mobilize those women and, starting in 2014, we're going to take back our bodies and our congress."

Preckwinkle reminded the audience of the "national and state efforts to turn back the clock and take our rights away." She added that standing up for access to reproductive health care is not easy. "But some elected officials are ready to step up and do the right thing," she said. To that end, she presented the Richard J. Phelan Profile in Courage Award to Lilly for being the chief house sponsor of legislation that requires public school sexual health education classes to be complete, medically accurate and age appropriate. "It took three years," Preckwinkle said. "Despite outrageous and unfounded accusations about what the legislation might do, Representative Lilly remained committed and shepherded the bill through the house in May of last year."

In accepting the award, Lilly thanked PPIA and her colleagues. "The smile that you see on my face is the joy that so many people are receiving today knowing they have information to help them make better decisions," she said.

Off stage, Lilly remembered her fight for the bill. "It was a challenge," she said. "I had no idea that something that seemed so common sense to me, like education and information for young people that empowers them to make better decisions, would be so difficult."

Brite honored Lilly for her courage. "It is looking fear in the eyes and saying 'get the hell out of my way,'" She asserted. Brite denounced political challengers to both Lilly and the activities of the PPIA. "They are that special kind of politician we call 'gynoticians,'" she said. "Every time one of these gynoticians makes inaccurate statements about women's health, we will be there to call them out."

Brite presented the Dr. Marvin Rosner Award for Lifetime Achievement to Durbin. "He stood

up on the floor of the senate and spoke out in support of Planned Parenthood," she said. "He told our patient's stories. He explained to his colleagues what it would mean to the women of Illinois and the teens of Illinois if Planned Parenthood were to be defunded. He will do everything in his power to preserve the right of women to access affordable, preventive health care."

Durbin remembered Emily Taft Douglas, the first woman Democrat elected to the Illinois Congress and author of the 1969 biography of Margaret Sanger who opened America's first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, N.Y. In 1921, Sanger founded the American Birth Control League, which later became Planned Parenthood. "I reflect on what Margaret Sanger did," Durbin said. "Arrested many times, a woman who understood what the dangers were. She was a nurse who wanted to make sure that other women would have choices in their lives. Planned Parenthood is here today and your support of it continues in that great tradition: empowering women, educating women and families on reproductive health."

Outside of the Bottom Room, Durbin's detractors claimed that he should know better. "We're here to protest the nation's largest abortion chain, responsible for over 300,000 abortions every year," said Executive Director of the Pro-Life Action League Eric Scheidler. "Planned Parenthood's abortion business is growing and growing while their other services are all going down."

But Durbin had an answer for them. "Thank God we live in a country where people can peacefully express their views," he said. "But if you want to reduce the number of abortions, then reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies. If you want to reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies, don't try to defund the good work being done by Planned Parenthood."

Off-stage, Durbin told WCT that more women in elected office is essential. "Their voices give

a perspective which many men don't have," he said. "I think that the emergence of more women in the senate, in the house and in legislatures is a positive development. I have found most of my values line up pretty well with progressive women and we have great coalitions. They have been allies for the causes I believe in."

The event was capped off courtesy of an appearance, via Skype, of Saturday Night Live alum and National Board of Planned Parent Advocates member Jane Curtin. "It seems as though the other voices are getting very loud," she said. "Todd Akin talking about how we can miraculously shut down when we are being raped and we won't get pregnant. It kind of makes us like a crime stopper or a super-hero."

Curtin cautioned the audience that with people, like Akin, demanding to take women's rights away, the honest truth must be told about women's health. "They believe that they're the ones who can speak for you," she said. "They can't. They are lacking empathy and they are lacking information."

For more information about Planned Parenthood Action Illinois, go to [www.ppiaction.org](http://www.ppiaction.org).

### 'Fireside Chat' with Joey McDonald Jan. 29

Activist Joey McDonald will be featured in a talk that continues the "Fireside Chat" series at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

The event will take place Wed., Jan. 29, at 7:30 p.m. McDonald will discuss his community history, his life history and his community work.

There is a suggested donation of \$5. For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/events/604313896272075> or [www.CenterOnHalsted.org](http://www.CenterOnHalsted.org).

# That's So GAY!

## AN LGBT TRIVIA NIGHT

**Fri., February 7**  
**Bountiful Eatery**  
 3312 N. Broadway  
 Game starts at 7 pm

**Chance to win prizes and have great fun!**

Hosted by  
**"KWizmaster"**  
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**& Tracy Baim**

featuring questions from  
 the exciting new game



**For more on the event:**  
[www.meetup.com/SceneFree/events/161156402/](http://www.meetup.com/SceneFree/events/161156402/)

[bountifuleatery.com](http://bountifuleatery.com) • [thatsogaygame.com](http://thatsogaygame.com)

## 2014 Planning Calendar

Windy City Times presents here some highlights of the first half of the 2014 calendar year in Chicago. Check back next week for the second half of the year. See full details and many more events in the online calendar for Windy City Times, posted here: [www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/chicago/events/upcoming.php](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/chicago/events/upcoming.php).

Make sure to send your calendar listings to this email as soon as you have events: [calendar@windycitymediagroup.com](mailto:calendar@windycitymediagroup.com).

Groups can also post their own events here:

[www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/chicago/events/postanevent.php](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/chicago/events/postanevent.php).

### Saturday, Feb. 8

— Equality Illinois Gala, annual Freedom Awards Gala

### Sunday, Feb. 9

— Chicago Her HRC Presents: Va~Va~Vaudeville

### Wednesday, Feb. 12

— Lincoln's Birthday (state holiday)

### Friday, Feb. 14

— Valentine's Day  
— The Vagina Monologues: Eve Ensler's epic taboo-breaker  
— Chicago Danztheatre Ensemble and Fulton Street Collective

### Monday, Feb. 17

— Presidents' Day

### Friday, Feb. 28

— Kiss for a DIFFArence Winter Ball: Celebrate, DIFFA AIDS benefit

### Saturday, Mar. 1

— Lavender University: Lourdes Torres Making Familia from Scratch: Towards a History of Latina Lesbian Organizing in Chicago.

### Sunday, Mar. 2

— On the Red Carpet Oscar event and fundraiser for Center on Halsted

### Sunday, Mar. 3

— Casimir Pulaski Day

### Wednesday, Mar. 5

— Ash Wednesday

### Saturday, Mar. 8

— A Champagne Toast to Jazz Royalty  
— shhh...OUT! Lakeside Pride Jazz Ensemble's Annual benefit

### Sunday, Mar. 9

— Daylight Savings Time starts

### Thursday, Mar. 13

— 2014 Impact Awards Chicago Foundation for Women

### Saturday, Mar. 15

— Chicago Flower & Garden Show: Do Green. Do Good. Navy Pier  
— Women of the Western Suburbs Dance in Mount Prospect  
— Congregation Or Chadash Annual Purim Celebration

### Monday, Mar. 17

— St. Patrick's Day

### Tuesday, Mar. 18

— Primary elections

### Saturday, Mar. 22

— Frontrunners/ Frontwalkers Chicago Fun Run/Walk

### Saturday, Mar. 29

— Center on Halsted's Human First Gala, Union Station  
— Strike Out Hunger Bowling Benefit for Vital Bridges

### Saturday, Apr. 5

— Lavender University LGBTQ programs: Anne Balay Steel Closets: Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Steelworkers  
— Congregation Or Chadash Annual Gala

### Friday, Apr. 11

— National Day of Silence/Night of Noise to call attention to the silencing effect of anti-LGBT bullying and harassment in schools

### Saturday, Apr. 12

— British Invasion: Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band

### Sunday, Apr. 13

— Palm Sunday (Christian)

### Tuesday, Apr. 15

— Passover begins

### Saturday, Apr. 19

— Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame Celebrity Bowl to benefit the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame

### Sunday, Apr. 20

— Easter Sunday  
— Miss Continental Plus & Elite Pageants 2014 (through April 22)

### Tuesday, Apr. 22

— Passover ends

### Wednesday, Apr. 23

— Lambda Legal's Bon Foster Civil Rights Celebration

### Thursday, Apr. 24

— Dining Out For Life: Dine Out, Fight AIDS

### Monday, Apr. 28

— Yom HaShoah (Jewish)

### Saturday, May 3

— Lavender University LGBTQ programs: Timothy Stewart-Winter: From Civil Rights to Gay Rights in Chicago

### Monday, May 5

— Cinco de Mayo

### Sunday, May 11

— Mothers' Day

### Friday, May 16

— AIDS Foundation of Chicago Spring Event  
— IDAHO Day: International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia

### Saturday, May 17

— Springfield, Illinois, Pride

### Friday, May 23

— International Mr. Leather 2014 (through May 26)  
— Bear Pride 2014 (through May 26)

### Saturday, May 24

— Chicago Memorial Day Parade: Lakeside Pride Freedom Marching Band will march with the Chicago Chapter of the American Veterans for Equal Rights  
— Grabbys gay adult film awards

### Monday, May 26

— Memorial Day

### Sunday, June 1

— United Latin@ Pride week (through June 7)

### Friday, June 6

— Andersonville Midsommarfest Annual summer street festival (through June 8)  
— PrideFest Milwaukee (through June 8)

### Tuesday, June 10

— A Rainbow Rhapsody: shhh...OUT! Lakeside Pride Jazz Ensemble, annual Pride Concert

### Saturday, June 14

— Windy City Gay Idol Semi-finals Competition at Sidetrack

### Sunday, June 15

— Fathers' Day

### Thursday, June 19

— Juneteenth Day

### Saturday, June 21

— Chicago Pride Fest (through June 22)

### Wednesday, June 25

— Windy City Gay Idol Finals Competition at Mayne Stage

### Thursday, June 26

— 15th Annual 30 Under 30 Awards Thirty by Windy City Times at Center on Halsted

### Saturday, June 28

— Dyke March  
— Proud to Run 10K run and 5K run and walk

### Sunday, June 29

— Pride Parade Chicago Noon, Montrose/ Broadway

## Gacy survivor Dati on life and new book, I Am Me

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

As a 9-year-old, Patrick Dati's life changed forever when serial killer John Wayne Gacy raped him in the men's bathroom of the now defunct Goldblatt's department store on a winter morning in January 1972.

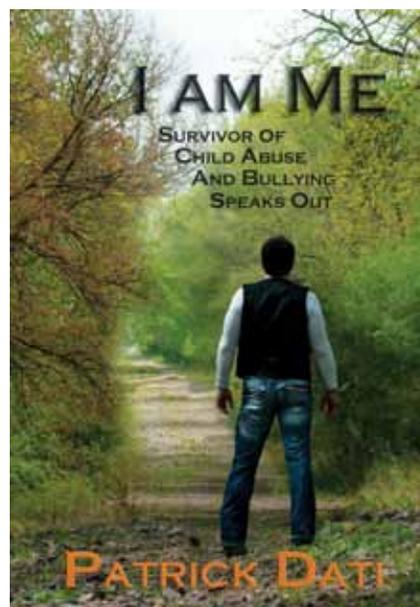
It took Dati, who is openly gay, 35 years to reveal this information; he details that event as well as other events that have shaped his life in his debut book, *I Am Me: Survivor of Child Abuse and Bullying Speaks Out*.

The genesis of the book began about six years ago when Dati's psychiatrist suggested that he write his thoughts down in a diary so he could release therapeutically what he'd gone through. Dati started writing the diary; then about three-and-a-half years ago his best friend and mentor Bob, who is a writer, asked to read and review his diary. About three weeks later Dati got together with Bob, who insisted that Dati's story would be a New York Times bestseller that would help save lives if he turned his diaries into a book.

"In March of last year Bob retired from his job and he offered to take on the manuscript again," said Dati. "He knows me better than anyone else in my life. We found a technical writer who could take the manuscript and translate it into a book format. From there we found a publisher and the book has been out for about three weeks. I've had a number of people reach out to me and thank me for the book already."

The book begins with a prologue where Dati shares how Bob, who is also gay, helped him break free from the constraints that Dati's family and society put on him. Dati also recounts the years of anti-gay abuse and bullying that he faced at the hands of his older brother, Marco, beginning at the age of 5 as well as what happened to him on that fateful day when Gacy raped him.

Dati chose the title of his book because



"I am finally myself after all of these years." He prefers to think of himself as a survivor, not a victim.

"I really appreciate the opportunity I've been given to be a voice for the LGBT community by sharing my story," said Dati.

The most important lessons Dati wants readers to glean from reading his memoir is not to hide who you really are as a gay person because by being closeted he made his life miserable. "I wanted to please the people who I thought loved me," said Dati.

With the book Dati also wants to be the voice of all of the Gacy victims who lived and feel like they can't come forward about what Gacy did to them. He has heard from two of



Patrick Dati. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

Gacy's victims who found Dati's website and reached out to him via Facebook to thank him for what he is doing, however, they haven't come forward.

"Eighty-five percent of men and boys don't come forward about being abused. I want to show them don't be ashamed, don't be fearful of what people think and come forward. You can survive this," said Dati.

Through his website [www.youandmecan-stopbullies.com](http://www.youandmecan-stopbullies.com), Dati noted that he has heard from many people who have been bullied, abused and/or molested/raped.

An advocate for several organizations, Dati does a radio show once a month for the National Association of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse and is a member of the speakers bureau of Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network [RAINN]. "Where I lead with my advocacy is to tell people that it gets better and you need to have hope," said Dati.

"My technical writer does social work with individuals such as myself and what we are looking to do is an educational book for parents, teachers and the general public about the warning signs to look for when a child has been abused or bullied," said Dati of his future writing plans. "For example, after Gacy raped me in the third grade my grades dropped and that caused me to have to repeat third grade. I developed obsessive compulsive disorder [which wasn't diagnosed until I was an adult] as a result of the rape."

Along with his desire to continue writing, Dati has plans to become a public speaker.

Today Dati shares his life with his partner, Greg, and his 17-year-old daughter from a previous marriage to a woman. "My life is amazing. It will be two years in August 2014 since I met Greg. We met on a Sunday when I took a bike ride along the lakeshore to clear my mind since I was writing my book at the time; I thought I had finished my last chapter, which is different now," said Dati.

**Dati will be holding book signings at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., on Feb. 21 at 6-9 p.m., and the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., on March 22 at 12-3 p.m.**

**I Am Me is available in both book and Kindle formats at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and at Unabridged Bookstore, 3251 N. Broadway. Visit [www.youandmecan-stopbullies.com](http://www.youandmecan-stopbullies.com) for more information about the book and Dati.**

**GAY** *in the*  
**LIFE**  
**Rachael Prior**  
TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN



Rachael Prior has worked in a variety of settings: military to corporate to independent. "I've found that I thrive and find happiness in the service industry," she said. "I've spent years as a bartender and a server, and in managerial roles in restaurants, and wanted to expand my knowledge and learn more about something I love to do, which is cook."

She received a certificate from Le Cordon Bleu in culinary arts and is now seeking a BA. She did her externship at The Purple Pig among various stages in restaurants around Chicago.

"I find that being a cook is a very rewarding profession that tests many different aspects of who I am," Prior said. "There is nothing mundane or repetitive about it, and I continue to learn more about myself and my abilities, as well as what I need to improve every day. There are bad days as well as great days, but the bad days are what push me to be better all the time. I work for very accomplished and knowledgeable chefs and that's the best setting anyone who aspires to get into this profession can ask for and be thankful for."

Prior said being a cook certainly has its challenges, starting with self-confidence. "The hours are long and you have to learn to sacrifice a lot of your personal life in order to get the experience you're going to need to move forward and succeed," she said. "I miss a lot of functions with the kids' school and Jess and I lose a lot of time together, but thankfully she supports me and we both know it's something I've always wanted to do and the reward will be great."

Prior added, "The decision to follow my heart and dive into something that isn't exactly glamorous has been, thus far, the most rewarding experience I've had to date. It's not easy by any means but for me, it's a no-brainer. I have so much to learn in this crazy career and I'm extremely lucky to have had the experience at The Purple Pig and now at the club I'm at now being pushed every day to do better. I'm also very lucky to have a supporting family that puts up with the long hours and loves me. What more could I want?"



Rachael (right) with partner Jessika.

<b>Age</b> 36	<b>Favorite TV show</b> Modern Family
<b>Neighborhood</b> Andersonville	<b>Favorite pizza toppings</b> "I love a good old fashioned veggie pizza with fresh ingredients."
<b>Relationship status</b> Partners with Jessika Newman, 31, a clinical liaison. The two have been dating since February 2011, and got engaged New Year's Eve 2012. Their wedding is Aug. 31, 2014, in Springfield.	<b>Favorite Chicago restaurants</b> Hopleaf, Calo's and Tanoshii. "We like to keep it simple and local—and also The Bongo Room or Pauline's for weekend brunch," Prior said.
<b>Kids</b> Christopher, 6; and Lucas, 4	<b>Favorite color</b> Green
<b>Job title</b> Cook at a private club in downtown Chicago	<b>Dream vacation destination</b> Cancun
<b>Hobbies</b> Hosting dinner parties	<b>Little-known fact</b> "I can juggle and am a huge Dave Matthews Band fan."



## CIVIL UNIONS & WEDDINGS AT THE KEITH HOUSE

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### NEXT LECTURE

**SAT., FEB. 1, 2014, 11AM-1PM**

**BETH RICHIE**

**Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation**

Beth E. Richie, PhD is an anti-violence activist and author working in several social justice movements. She is a Professor and Director of the Institute For Research on Race and Public Policy at UIC. This lecture will focus on the ways that the prison industrial complex has served to exacerbate violence against Black women. The emphasis will be on intimate partner abuse as well as systematic violence and the role that race, class, gender, sexuality and other markers of social disadvantage put people in the path of the punishment industry. It will include the redemptive possibility of prison abolition as philosophical and practical solution.

**UPCOMING LECTURES**

**SAT., 3/1/14**  
**Lourdes Torres**  
Making Familia from Scratch: Towards a History of Latina Lesbian Organizing in Chicago

**SAT., 4/5/14**  
**Anne Balay**  
Steel Closets: Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Steelworkers

**SAT., 5/3/14**  
**Timothy Stewart-Winter**  
From Civil Rights to Gay Rights in Chicago

**\$25 PER LECTURE**

<https://community.centeronhalsted.org/lavenderuniversity>

## VIEWPOINT



**DANA  
RUDOLPH**

## Creating change as an LGBT parent

I'm heading to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change conference in Houston, Texas, this week, which brings with it a host of questions: Will I feel any different in a city whose mayor, Annise Parker, is also a lesbian mom? What childcare arrangements will I make for my own son while I'm gone? Are there really cowgirls in Texas? What does it mean to create change?

As a parent, the disruption to my family's schedule looms large in my mind. My spouse, who is perfectly capable of taking care of our son and making meals for the week, nevertheless works longer hours than I do. I'm hardly the only parent who will be dealing with this, though, so I say a prayer to the gods of work-life balance and figure out what time it will be in Texas when I have to phone my son to wish him a good night.

Even while making preparations to go to the conference, though, I see reasons we need to create change in the world. I count myself lucky that my son's school provides an affordable and convenient after-care program, where he can stay until my spouse gets home from her job. I wonder, though, how many parents must regularly risk leaving young children home alone because they cannot afford either having a parent stay home or paying for childcare. I remember that LGBT families are twice as likely to be living in poverty as married, opposite-sex parents with children—and more so for families of color, according to UCLA's Williams Institute.

I'm also arranging for my son to go to a friend's house one day after school while I'm gone. I do the same in return when his friend's parents are unavailable. It seems an obvious neighborly swap—but I realize I am blessed with non-homophobic neighbors willing to entrust their children to me. I wonder how many parents cannot make neighborly childcare arrangements because of homophobia, or racism, or ableism, or any other form of prejudice. For families struggling economically, this multiplies an already harsh burden.

For LGBT families, creating change starts with our simple visibility and ripples outward as we gently or assertively challenge assumptions, demand inclusion, and find ways to build bridges. It continues as those ripples intersect with those of other people working for social justice, and builds as we try to be good allies to others and teach our children to do the same.

One of my favorite examples of how to create change comes from Mayor Parker. She invited Houston-based mega-church evangelist Joel Osteen, who has said homosexuality is not "God's best," to offer the opening prayer at her inauguration in 2010. "You don't build bridges with people who disagree with you by ignoring them or pushing them away," she told San Diego Gay and Lesbian News. That's a lesson for all of us, whether operating in the political arena or simply talking with a neighbor. If we can find a common ground—in Parker's case, a desire to do good for Houstonians—we can begin to make progress. For parents, that common ground may often be simply that we are parents who want to do the best for our children, even if we disagree about what that entails.

Not that change is easy. We parents, though, should be particularly good at dealing with it, for children are changing from the moment they come into the world. Some are changes we trigger—teaching them to ride a bike, say—others happen because of the inevitable process of growing up. We encounter sudden

change, like a decision by one's child to adopt a new hairstyle, and we learn patience when change is slow. ("How many times have I told you to clean your room?")

What we don't often have is time. We may feel guilty or frustrated that we cannot devote the time we'd like to social justice or political causes. I say we need to readjust our expectations and do what we can, whether at the personal level (having a conversation with a neighbor, relative, or teacher, say) or in the wider world. Make a manageable commitment with yourself to do one small thing, regularly, if that's what you can manage. Write a one-paragraph review for your favorite online bookstore about an LGBT-inclusive children's book you've read, for example. Leave a comment once a week or once a month on a parenting blog, offering your thoughts on an issue. Or donate a few cans of food to your local soup kitchen. Of course, if we have time and inclination, there are plenty of more extensive ways to volunteer (or be paid) to create change. But we shouldn't hesitate simply because we think that our efforts aren't enough.

As parents, too, a major part of our effectiveness as change agents is through our children. Not that we should live vicariously through them or push them into activism if that is not their thing. We can, however, try to raise children of caring and character, trusting that they will in turn work to make the world a better place in their own ways.

As for cowgirls in Houston, we'll just have to see.

(My day-job employer, the National SEED Project at the Wellesley Centers for Women, is a sponsor of Creating Change this year. All opinions here are my own, however.)

**Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), an award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBT parents.**

## LETTERS



**KIM  
FLOWERS**

## Indiana needs you

A proposed gay-marriage ban in Indiana is dragging LGBT Hoosiers back while the rest of the country is moving forward.

Indiana law already bans equal marriage, but this isn't enough for our lawmakers; they want an amendment in the constitution. After some dirty politics—including a name switch (from HJR-6 to HJR-3), a vote delay, and even a committee change—the House Elections and Apportionment Committee passed the ban by a vote of nine to three on Jan. 22. Now it will move to a full House vote and then to the state Senate; if it continues to pass, from there it will go on the Indiana ballots in November. According to local news reports, red-clad opponents to the legislation in attendance at the House Chambers burst out in laughter after testimony that gay marriage would lead to polygamy. A gay U.S. Air Force vet was also escorted out of the chambers for making a thumbs-down gesture.

We need help from anyone who's willing. There have been people suggesting we reach

out to LGBT groups in Chicago. Education about HJR-3 is one of the main challenges. Misinformation and lies are everywhere. Some Indiana citizens are confused and think HJR-3 would legalize gay marriage. These people tell me and other gay friends, "Good luck! I hope it passes!" Others say Lambda Legal and the ACLU are not helping us at all because they "won't touch Indiana." (This is not true, because I contacted representatives and asked!)

Like many states in this country, the younger generation of Indiana is supportive of gay marriage. Many of the older citizens are not as backward as they are made out to be, either. Maybe it would be a good thing for HJR-3 to make it to the polls, so our citizens can show our lawmakers and the rest of the country how we really feel. If HJR-3 is shot down, it will still be illegal for gays to marry. If it passes, the few rights we do enjoy—such as domestic-partner benefits (in some, but definitely not all companies), co-parent adoptions (technically not legal here, but sometimes allowed), hospital visitations and even the right to plan our spouses' funeral—could also disappear.

Send letters and viewpoints to  
Andrew@  
WindyCityMediaGroup.com.  
Items may be edited for  
length or clarity.

Freedom Indiana is the organization at the forefront of this battle, and it has been doing a fantastic job. "Reject HJR-6" signs and stickers popped up all over the state, and after our beloved lawmakers changed the name of the proposed ban, were replaced with new signs saying "Reject HJR-3." Contrary to what the rest of the nation may believe, there is a large and thriving LGBT community in Indiana. We have gay bars/clubs, two Pride festivals, choirs, bands, dance groups, an annual Film Fest, bookstores, Indiana Youth Group, and so many drag queens. Indianapolis, Fort Wayne and Muncie are definitely the gay-friendliest cities.

But some of the negative things you might hear about our state are true, as well. For example, most small towns do not offer LGBT youth groups or support in any way. I was one of those kids at a small rural school afraid to come out until I was 18, and I had a friend who was disowned after he came out—and he later committed suicide. There are times I feel (perhaps incorrectly) that some LGBT people in other states don't realize how good they have it, and don't know how much some of the rest of us still have to struggle. Proponents of HJR-3 claim they are doing this for families and children, but they are ignoring the gay children, and the children of gay parents, who are already suffering. We are here, our families are here, and we need help.

For more information, go to <http://www.freeindiana.org/>.

**Kim Flowers is a YA author from Indiana. See <http://kimflowersbooks.weebly.com>.**

## WINDY CITY TIMES

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**ASSISTANT PUBLISHER** Terri Klinsky  
**MANAGING EDITOR** Andrew Davis  
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(773) 871-7610 FAX (773) 871-7609  
e-mail: [editor@windycitymediagroup.com](mailto:editor@windycitymediagroup.com) or [Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com](mailto:Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com)

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

Community Marketing, Inc.

## GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

## COME TO THE 'CABARET'

Photo  
by  
Peter  
Coombs

Cabaret (above) is in the Spotlight. See page 15.

## THEATER

'Dragon' along.  
Page 14

Photo from *The Golden Dragon*  
by Jonathan L. Green



## DISH

Having a 'Look.'  
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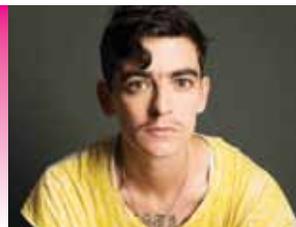
Mitchell's ice cream at *First Look*  
for *Charity* preview by Andrew Davis



## MUSIC

Jawin' with JD.  
Page 16

JD Samson. PR photo



## SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

# Opposites attract in Aimée and Jaguar

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Northwestern University's production of Lillian Groag's drama *Aimée and Jaguar* is a world premiere that isn't quite a world premiere. It may be the first fully-staged production of this based-upon-a-true-story tale of two women who fall in love under the Third Reich in World War II, but American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco ultimately has the right to produce the "professional world premiere" of *Aimée and Jaguar* for a future season.

Nonetheless, playwright Groag, a native of Argentina, is happy to be working again with director Joseph Hanreddy (former artistic director of Milwaukee Repertory Theater) on *Aimée and Jaguar* in Evanston.

The true story behind *Aimée and Jaguar* is an intriguing one that would initially appear mismatched on paper. It involves Lily Wust, a German soldier's wife and a mother of four, and Felice Schragenheim, a Jewish woman living on the edge with fake identification papers. Their love affair was previously documented in a book of interviews conducted by Erica Fischer, and was later adapted into a 1999 art-house film called *Aimée and Jaguar*. (These were the names of endearment that they gave each other.)

Both Groag and Hanreddy had seen the film, but their intension behind creating a stage version of *Aimée and Jaguar* was not to copy the movie. And though neither artist is gay, the story of *Aimée and Jaguar* is one that speaks to both of them.

"The first thing for me was to really write a play about the nature of love," Groag said during a recent telephone interview. "I'm in-

terested in why this person and not another person. How do we pick, if you pick, our love interests—and by that I mean erotic, sexual and romantic love. How does that happen? And what are the perfect circumstances for a grand passionate love affair versus something chaste and sedate?"

"One of the things that I like so much about the play is it really does explore the contradictory nature of attraction and love in the two central characters who are such polar opposites," Hanreddy said. "If it was today, there would be no online dating service that would have matched them up. They were a couple whose love for each other was genuine and passionate, but objectively they virtually had nothing in common."

According to Hanreddy, the students working on *Aimée and Jaguar* are really enjoying the experience and identifying with the characters.

"The majority of characters in the play are about the students' age and so it's something that they connect to, and much of the play is about youth and youth being curtailed," Hanreddy said. "The circumstances in which they fall in love during the dying days of the Third Reich and the Nazi clampdown on everyone that was deemed undesirable is sort of a cauldron or crucible that just intensifies everything about life. So it shines a bright light on this relationship when no one, under this Allied bombing attacks that were happening every day, could imagine that they would survive."

In addition to being a playwright, Groag is also an esteemed international opera director (her credits for Chicago Opera Theater include Handel's dark comedy *Agrippina* and his oratorio *La Resurrezione*). Though Groag bemoans



*Aimée and Jaguar*. Photo by Nick Gertonson

the fact that her writing sometimes comes secondary to her directing duties, Hanreddy sees her directing experience as a bonus.

"I enjoy talking with her about the way in which we're connecting and telling the story and what the story has to say and the design solutions," Hanreddy said. "She has a ready understanding of stagecraft and so I enjoy those conversations."

Groag is also happy to be expanding the repertory for lesbian and bisexual stories in the theater as an unintended consequence of writing *Aimée and Jaguar*. It was something she

only realized at a workshop reading of her play at American Conservatory Theater when a lesbian stage manager personally thanked her for tackling the story.

"There's a fistful of plays, especially on Broadway, about gay men, gay men coming out, and almost nothing about women," Groag said. "That became a secondary interest because it wasn't something I knew about, and I think it should be corrected."

And though *Aimée and Jaguar* is often billed as a "lesbian romance" (Hanreddy jokes that it's always recommended to his lesbian friends who are Netflix subscribers), Groag and Hanreddy are working to make the case that it's one that anyone can identify with and understand.

"It's a love story between two women that completely universalizes the notion of love," Hanreddy said. "So that straight couples or gay men or anybody can watch the way and apply what they're seeing to their own feelings and experiences."

***Aimée and Jaguar* plays from Friday, Jan. 31, through Sunday, Feb. 9, at Northwestern University's Josephine Louis Theater, 20 Arts Circle, Evanston. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Playwright Lillian Groag appears in two post-show talkback discussions on Jan. 31 and Feb. 2. Tickets are \$25, \$22 for seniors and \$10 for students. Call 847-491-7282 or visit [www.communication.northwestern.edu](http://www.communication.northwestern.edu).**



The Mandrake. Photo courtesy of Guy F. Wicke

## THEATER REVIEW

### The Mandrake

**Playwright:** translated by Christopher Kidder-Mostrom from the play by Niccolo Machiavelli  
**At:** Commedia Beauregard at the Raven Arts Complex, 6157 N. Clark St.  
**Tickets:** 800-838-3006;  
**www.cbtheatre.org;** \$25  
**Runs through:** Feb. 9

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

If Niccolo Machiavelli hadn't written *The Prince*, thereby coining the catch-phrase, "The end justifies the means," and if weaselly public officers weren't still invoking that same slogan in defense of their shady tactics, there would be no reason for us to remember a 16th-century play titled *The Mandrake*. Nowadays, political theorists looking to art in illustrating their ideas make film documentaries, but in 1525, they wrote plays, the continuing popularity of which are often based more in their author's reputation than any inherent aesthetic value.

This doesn't mean that great plays can't be founded on social sermons (consider George Bernard Shaw). No one can say that Machiavelli doesn't make a coherent case for a virtuous wife becoming an adulterous whore in order to give her infertile husband the progeny he desires, with the hearty co-operation of the would-be sperm donor and his sidekicks, along with assorted moral advisors—the hapless matron's mercenary clergyman, frivolous mother and cuckolded spouse, himself—who also urge her toward patently immoral conduct for the (all together, now) *greater good*.

In order to ensure that we follow every step of his argument, Machiavelli leaves no opinion unexplored, making for a text closer to Plato's symposiums than to the Roman comedy we associate with the period. Modern productions typically adopt motifs drawn from the later playwrights refining the neoclassical comic form—Goldoni, Moliere and, of course, Shakespeare—but despite the Commedia Beauregard company's record of reaching across boundaries both chronological and geographical, director Lisa Cantwell appears not to trust the merits of Christopher Kidder-Mostrom's new translation, instead instructing her actors to play it as flat-out live-action-cartoon farce, often at the expense of anchoring the hijinks in an integrated universe.

The results are not without their clever

touches: After withdrawing into Friar Timoteo's church vestry, Liguria—whose motley gown and insatiable appetite identifies her as the author's harlequin surrogate—later emerges snacking on the communion bread and wine, and when the lovesick Callimaco ("I'm an all-out passion stampede!") disguises himself as a minstrel, his song is an acoustical arrangement of Daft Punk's "Get Lucky." The scenes involving Neil O'Callaghan's unflappable valet and Lina Chambers' sunny-faced Renaissance-rapping widow also project charm and imagination in quantities sufficient to overcome the production's overall collegiate ambience.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**The Children's Hour**, Pride Films and Plays at Collaboration at Flat Iron Arts Building, through Feb. 9. Lillian Hellman's play was all about sex in 1934, but nowadays it's about surviving the hostility of a homophobic community, and this smart production makes sure that we know it every minute. MSB

**The Little Prince**, Lookingglass Theatre, extended through March 16. There's lots of theatrical spectacle to marvel at in Rick Cummings and John Scouliar's creative adaptation of Antoine de Saint-Exupery's beloved children's book about an otherworldly child who meets a stranded aviator. SCM

**Port Authority**, Writers Theatre, through Feb. 16. Exquisite acting, and commonplace speech elevated to poetry, infuse this tender and introspective piece about three Irishmen of different generations who bare their rueful souls about the women who got away. JA

**Tribes**, Steppenwolf Theatre, through Feb. 15. Our hero can't hear, his brother can't speak, and nobody except his girl friend will listen to either one of them—Nina Raine's messy play about messy families has been extended to Valentine's Day, so you have no excuse to miss it. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge  
and Morgan

## THEATER REVIEW

### The Golden Dragon

**Playwright:** Roland Schimmelpfennig;  
**Translator:** David Tushingham  
**At:** Sideshow Theatre Company at Victory Gardens' Richard Christiansen Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.  
**Tickets:** 773-871-3000;  
**www.sideshowtheatre.org;** \$20-\$25  
**Runs through:** Feb. 23

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It's not every day that an African-American male gets to act the role of a blonde female flight attendant with a Scandinavian-sounding name. But then *The Golden Dragon*—now having its Chicago premiere courtesy of Sideshow Theatre Company—seems to go out of its way to defy dramatic expectations and to emphasize the idea that any actor can take on another's persona via the power of storytelling.

And storytelling is essentially what playwright Roland Schimmelpfennig's *The Golden Dragon* is all about. Five actors, performing David Tushingham's English translation, take on all the roles of characters in and around a popular pan-Asian restaurant named *The Golden Dragon* in a major unnamed modern-day German city.

Schimmelpfennig slices, dices and mixes his multiple narratives like a jumbled stir-fry, repeatedly uncovering and concealing plot strands involving undocumented restaurant workers, dissatisfied customers who live nearby and a folk parable of the carefree cricket who seeks help in winter from insidious ants. All these stories eventually become intertwined in a sinister fashion, hinting that fantastical

stories told to moralize are often grounded in cold, hard and unflinching truths.

Let's just say that Schimmelpfennig's *The Golden Dragon* will not be to everyone's taste. The play seems crafted to deliberately alienate audiences with its use of choppy dialogue, spoken third-person stage directions and an ending that finds no justice for two disempowered victims caught up in the cruel cogs of unfettered globalization.

But all these nonrealistic devices also provide a complex and fascinating framework for a theater company to try and visualize it all onstage. I'd say that Sideshow Theatre's production, co-directed by Jonathan L. Green and Marti Lyons, largely succeeds at speedily keeping up with Schimmelpfennig's one-act script that has no patience for narrative stragglers.

Immensely helping out to clarify the scattershot storytelling is the nimble steering of lighting designer John Kelly and sound designer Christopher M. LaPorte, who both give vital clues to who we're with and where. William Boles' busy unit set also aids with a solid and creatively visualized framework to contain the many plot threads within *The Golden Dragon*.

Cast members Deanna Myers, Matt Fletcher, David Lawrence Hamilton, Daria Harper and Noah Sullivan do not get a lot of time to linger in their many characters. But the cast does palpably get across the pain, hurt and longing that festers inside the various characters.

In unconventionally casting roles the actors normally wouldn't play, *The Golden Dragon* gives them a chance to find some empathy in another person's shoes. And that could also be what the play itself seems to be pleading with its storytelling, even if there is no recourse for the victims in and around *The Golden Dragon*.

## THEATER REVIEW

### Rasheeda Speaking

**Playwright:** Joel Drake Johnson  
**At:** Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Ave.  
**Tickets:** 773-334-7728;  
**www.rivendelltheatre.org;** \$30  
**Runs through:** Feb. 15

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Some playwrights shun agendas. They don't tell a story or teach a lesson, but simply lock a few characters into a room, assign them a premise, and record the results. Actors and directors love this kind of play, because it allows them to analyze the text at great length before imposing their individual interpretations thereupon. Audiences, too, are enamored of the (comfortably brief) post-show discussions generated thereby.

Joel Drake Johnson's room is the reception area of a clinic, where Ileen Van Meter has been given a raise and promoted to "manager" of the two-person office after eight years of mothering her smug employer and his needy clients. Her co-worker of six months, Jaclyn Spaulding, carries out their assigned duties capably, but comes up short on the warm-and-cuddlies, and so Dr. Williams wants her replaced—indeed, has already picked a candidate for the soon-to-be vacated post. Ah, but since Jaclyn is African-American, her exit must be carefully orchestrated, and so (white) Ileen is instructed by her (white) boss to find—or

even fabricate—justification for dismissal. The approval-seeking Ileen tries to comply, but gradually falls prey to conflicting loyalties—a dilemma not shared by Jaclyn, who refuses to leave without a fight.

Are we to view this as a cynical diatribe on the tolerance of dishonesty (which the doctor himself prescribes) in corporate-medical circles? A guide to occupational survival through slimeball machinations, a la David Mamet? Is it a history of minority-group upward mobility, and will Jaclyn's trashy Latino neighbors someday adopt her tactics to their own advantage? Is it a misogynistic snicker at catty competitive women, with old-school Ileen nudged out by ambitious Jaclyn, or a diatribe on infantile male authority figures? Or is it a parable of epiphany, as Jaclyn—having endured the humiliation of being branded a "Rasheeda" (the current epithet for a low-level, service-sector, working woman of color)—comes to accept a display of affability as the price of escape from the copy-center ghetto?

Rivendell director Sandy Shinner and a cast led by Tara Mallen and Ora Jones as the warring desk-dwellers, flanked by Eric Slater and Lorraine Freund, delve the intricacies of their superficially recognizable, but ultimately indistinct, personae for the 90 minutes before Johnson runs out of questions he raises, but never answers. The show's publicity conveniently identifies its theme as "post-racial America," however—a topic always good for convening a quick symposium before everyone goes home.



Rasheeda Speaking. Photo by Joe Mazza/Brave Lux



The Tennessee Williams Project. Photo by Matthew Gregory Hollis

**THEATER REVIEW**

**The Tennessee Williams Project**

**Playwright:** Tennessee Williams  
**At:** The Hypocrites at the Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division St.  
**Tickets:** 773-525-5991;  
**the-hypocrites.com;** \$28-\$36  
**Runs through:** March 2

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

The Hypocrites are offering three times the Tennessee in a most intriguing combination of one-act plays by the incomparable Tennessee Williams. The artistic decision to pick these three of the numerous one-acts that Williams wrote between 1937 and 1982 is left almost entirely to the intellect, but making the connections is part of the fun.

Director Matt Hawkins (Jeff Award winner for The Hypocrites' production of Cabaret) has creatively designed an entire full-length play experience, which moves the audience through a series of three consecutive stages, each space carefully crafted and decorated. The one-acts are all stitched together in a metaphoric sort of way through one actor, Patrick Gannon, who takes on three different lead roles (four if you count a gender change) that have a kind of spiritual connection to each other.

The Tennessee Williams Project plays its best card first – the Queen. The New Orleans-set And Tell Sad Stories of the Death of Queens is both the longest and most engaging of the three, and centers on the story of a blossoming dysfunctional relationship that is no good for either character yet tragically sweet. “Candy” Delaney (Gannon) is a lonely transvestite landlord and interior decorator who seduces a sailor named Karl (Joseph Wiens) into being her “platonic” companion. Karl’s apparent confusion about his own sexual identity along with his desperate financial situation makes this a volatile yet captivating relationship. Gannon is totally charming both in and out of drag, and the intimate configuration of the stage amplifies both the humor and the tension in his performance and in the entire play.

Part two moves into the bizarre with The Remarkable Rooming House of Mme. Le Monde. Gannon swaps a wig for a series of fastening devices to play Mint, a paraplegic living in the attic of the titular London rooming house, who gets around with only a series of rings and has a reputation for sexual misconduct. “Rooming House” could well be the most bizarre work of Williams’ career. In fact, it wasn’t produced until after his death. This play utilizes physicality, lighting and staging to its advantage, but doesn’t last long enough for anything to settle in amidst its Little Shop of Horrors vibe. The similarly hopeless, lonely characters marred by cruel circumstances, do, however, allow it to effectively bridge the other plays.

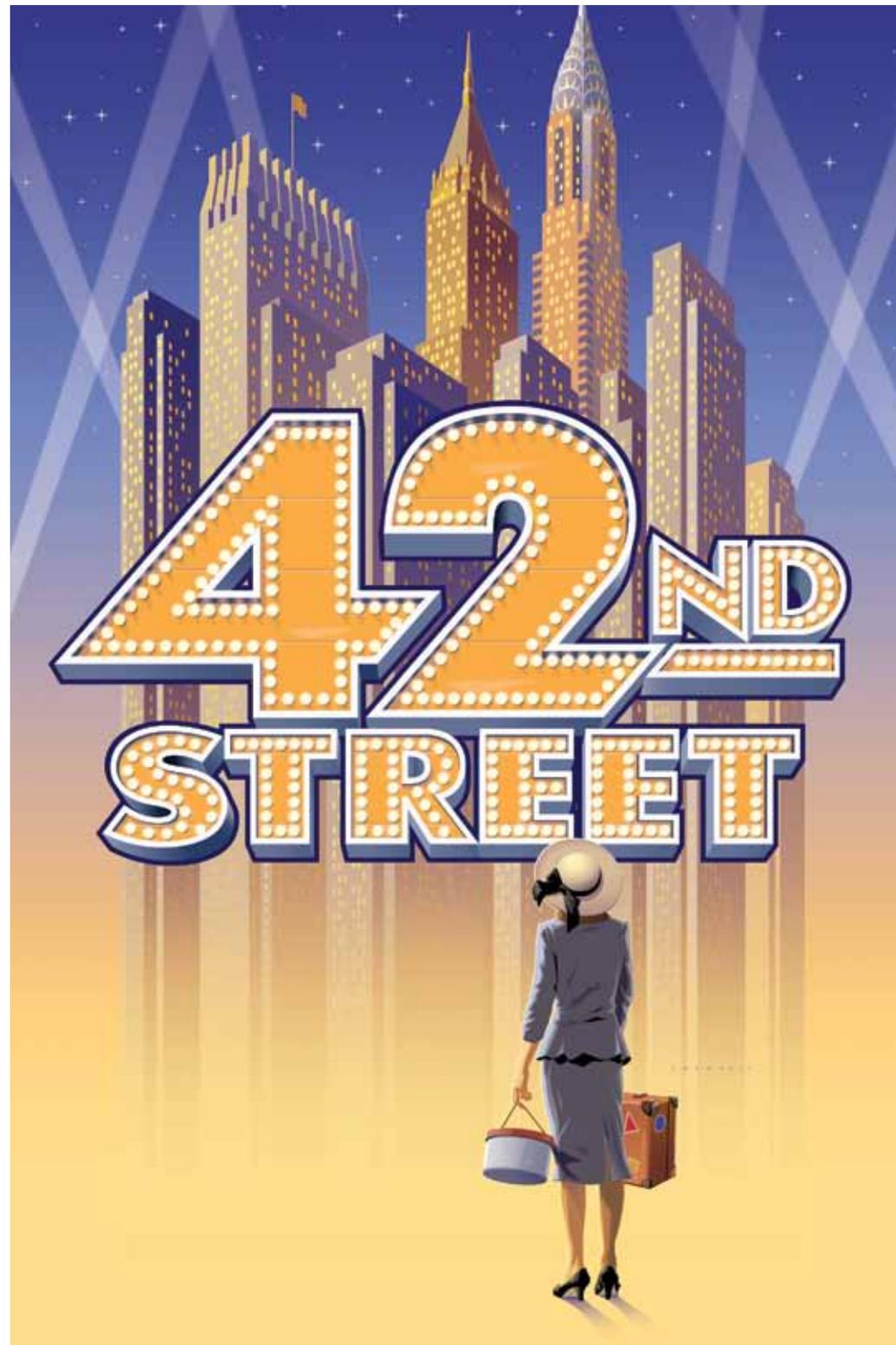
The finale, The Big Game, is set in a hospital room and uses injury and medical misfortune as a way of exploring sad but profound ideas about dreams and purpose. Although devoid of dramatic conflict, it offers more of a range of interesting characters, namely Nurse Fussy (Mary Redmon), and provides a quiet change of pace, a chance to meditate a bit more on the entire experience.

And “experience” most aptly describes what Hawkins and The Hypocrites have done with this project. Although the order of the plays goes against typical three-act structure and doesn’t satisfy in that sense, it does work logically in terms of communicating themes and ideas and linking the plays together. No matter: The Tennessee Williams Project will appeal to all types of theatergoers with its unique three-stage setup and certainly spur a number of conversations among Williams’ fans both casual and well acquainted.

**SPOTLIGHT**



Out actor Alan Cumming rose to fame in the United States as the star of a 1998 Broadway revival of the Kander and Ebb musical **Cabaret**. Cumming will soon reprise his role of the Emcee opposite Michelle Williams in a Broadway revival of the revival, but before then you can catch Cabaret closer to home in a fine Marriott Theatre production in Lincolnshire. The Marriott largely uses the 1998 script, which is more explicit about the characters’ sexuality, along with some welcome inclusions from the 1966 original version. Cabaret continues through March 16 at the Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Dr., Lincolnshire. Performances are at 1 and 8 p.m. Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays; 4:30 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; and 1 and 5 p.m. Sundays. Admission is \$40-\$48 (excluding tax and handling fees) with discounts available for seniors and students at select performances; call 847-634-0100 or visit [www.marriotttheatre.com](http://www.marriotttheatre.com) for more information. Photo by Peter Coombs



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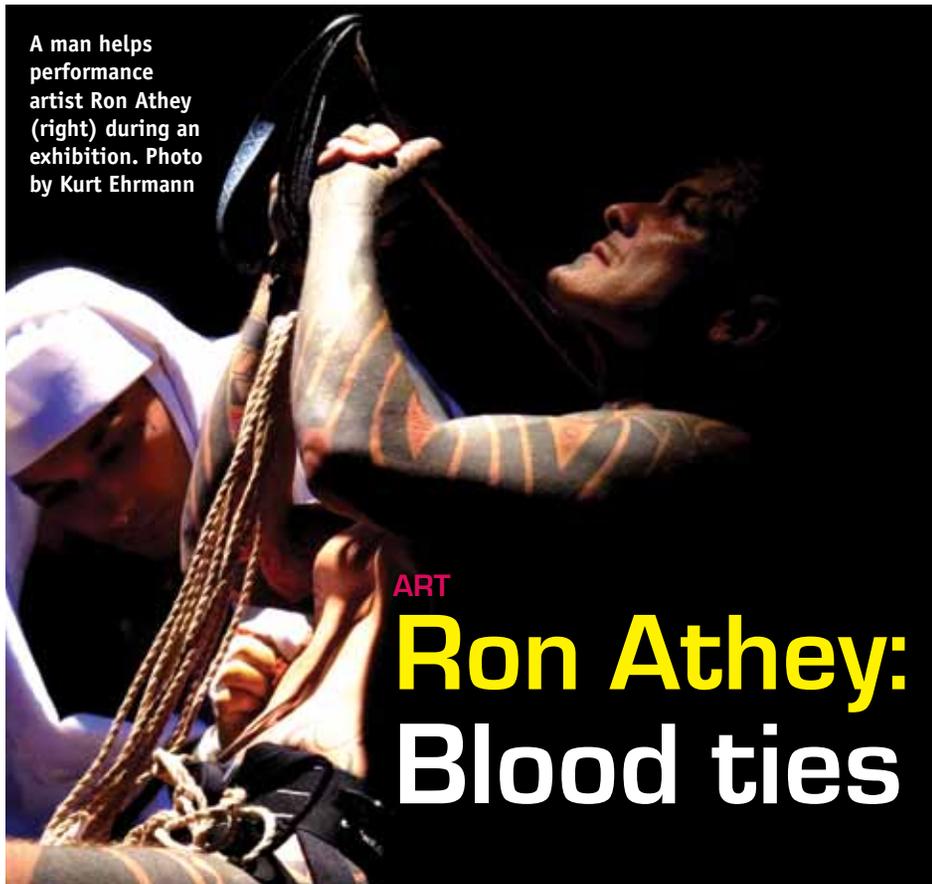
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A man helps performance artist Ron Athey (right) during an exhibition. Photo by Kurt Ehrmann



ART

## Ron Athey: Blood ties

BY JOE FRANCO

Pissing off U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms is a good sign that you have done something with your life.

When Ron Athey performed his "Four Scenes in a Harsh Life" in Minneapolis in the early '90s, he did not expect the backlash from Helms to dismantle the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Athey's controversial work, along with artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe, spawned the conservative Republican movement to defund and destroy the NEA. His work has since then and has always been on the edge of the intersection of fine and performance art.

Athey lived in Southern California and attributes his fascination with the human body as a medium to the body-conscious milieu of that region. "I think my fascination with the body is also representative of the time that I grew up in and came out of—the '70s," Athey told Windy City Times. "Now it is also a matter of AIDS and aging and my defiance against both. I still have action in this body!" Athey also attributed his use of the human body as an artistic medium to his captivation with passion plays. "These are plays that conjure up other moments and other places," said Athey. "Using the human body also gives one a feeling of how things transfer from one body to another."

"AIDS is always present," Athey said about his work. "It wasn't until the mid-'90s that there was any effective treatment that could prolong life. Before that, we were living under a cloud of death."

Chicago and Athey have a long relationship, as he performed one of his first collaborative pieces at the Randolph Street Gallery in 1993. He is now back with the Defibrillator Performance Art Gallery and Mana Contemporary Gallery on South Throop Street performing the final installment in his "Incorruptible Flesh" series called "Messianic Remains."

Athey hinted that "the piece will be a reflection of the preserved and sexualized corpse." The performance begins with 20 minutes of audience participation—specifically, of attendees touching or "anointing" Athey's body. The rest of the performance is meant to evoke Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs by Jean Genet. The book, when published in 1943 was as provocative then as it is now with meditations on death and ecstasy. "I am performing the ritual of the text," said Athey.

Athey will also be collaborating with Jon Jon and Sage Charles to bring "Sebastiane" to life. St. Sebastian's image and the iconography surrounding the early third-century saint are not foreign to gay culture. "This is the archetypal

play of St. Sebastian as Adonis," said Athey. "He is also the saint who many prayed to during times of the great plagues and death. I want to bring his image back."

Athey, again finding his muse in other mediums, points to the popular painting subject of "St. Sebastian Tended by Irene." He said, "This is a resurrection myth. It is through St. Irene's washing and anointing of the body of St. Sebastian that his rebirth comes about."

While in Chicago, Athey will also be signing his first book, *Pleading in the Blood: The Art and Performances of Ron Athey*, a retrospective of Athey's body of work, spanning nearly three decades.

His new book is a path in another direction. Athey is and always has been an independent and self-made artist. "Branding is a dirty word," he said. "So many pop artists of this era are really just destroying art. They are not furthering a discussion on the evolution of the culture in which they are being made!"

Athey himself is an autodidactic, having no formal education or training after high school. "I was part of a generation in the '70s that said, 'If you want to be an artist, then go be an artist.' You just have to go out and do it."

Athey said he believes that the greatest obstacle to art made and done in our time is stagnation: "We are all so concerned with who went to school where. We begin to pay for a brand and forget about what it is all supposed to be about. Artists need to stop waiting around for a boring curator to give them a chance and just collaborate and open a space. It's all about cultivating the local talent."

Athey's piece "Messianic Remains" can be seen Friday, Jan. 31, and Saturday, Feb. 1, at the Mana Contemporary Gallery, 2233 S. Throop St. His lecture and book release are Tuesday, Feb. 4, at 6 p.m. at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 280 S. Columbus Dr. See [www.RonAthey.com](http://www.RonAthey.com).

NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

## JD Samson's 'Labor' days

BY JERRY NUNN

Outspoken lesbian singer/songwriter JD Samson continually works on new projects and is constantly touring. Her groups, MEN and Le Tigre, have gained their own unique loyal followings over the years. She has worked with notable artists like The Cars, Peaches and Christina Aguilera.

Samson appeared in the movie *Shortbus*, co-founded a performance art group called Dykes Can Dance, and released JD's Lesbian Calendar with photographer Cass Bird.

Nunn gave Samson a call the day her tour opened on the road.

**Windy City Times:** Hi, JD. How have you been since we talked last? Sounds like you have been busy.

JD Samson: Oh my gosh, yes!

**WCT:** We chatted at Berlin Nightclub after your last gig here.

JS: I guess it was last year maybe. I usually go to Chicago like three times a year or something.

**WCT:** Talk about your new album, *Labor*.

JS: Well, our new record came out Oct. 22 [of last year]. Since then we have not been touring that much. We have been doing shows in town and a few choice shows out of town when they come up. We put the record out ourselves so we have been really busy doing the business side of things as well as the creative side, which has been fun but a new side of the project.

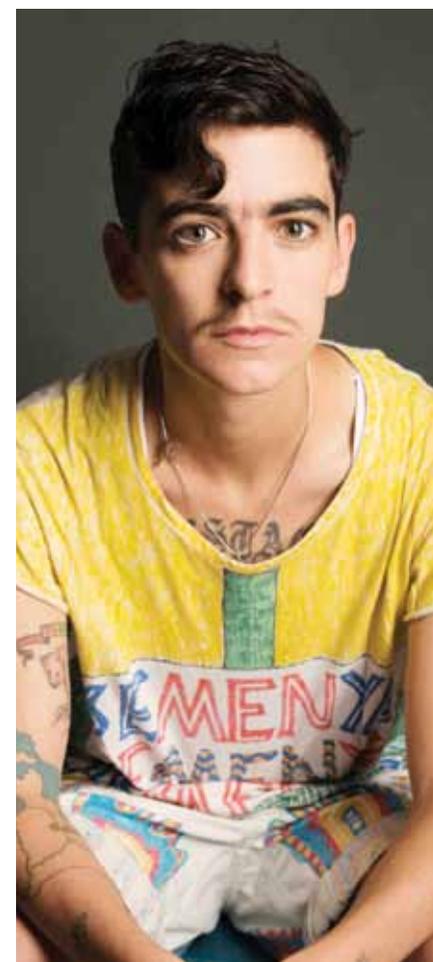
**WCT:** The latest single is "All The Way Thru?"

JS: Yes, but today there will be a premiere of a new track as well. We are excited about that. We wanted to put something out before this tour so we could drum up some more excitement. That is what people do these days they just put stuff out.

**WCT:** Do you like the dynamic of being with a band as opposed to being a solo artist?

JS: I really like collaboration and I am a people-pleaser. I love getting support from other people on a project. I think that is a really big part of it. I love the idea of sharing information and trying to build something together. Maybe it comes from my history of community work. I think that is really important to me.

It has been interesting. This band has changed so much since the beginning. In the beginning it was a collaboration with side people from different groups. It has now whittled itself down to myself and Michael O'Neill and a rotating cast of people that play with us onstage. I know the bigger col-



JD Samson.

laborations have been happening with the producers. That has been pretty cool since we hadn't really worked with different producers before. I love the production aspect of the work so that kind of collaboration is really stimulating to me.

**WCT:** You have been doing a lot of Scissor Sunday parties in New York. Are they lesbian parties?

JS: The intention with the first party that I started two years ago was that it would be a lesbian tea dance. It was in the West Village then wound up being a total gay guy party, which is awesome. It is packed all the time and great. I am thankful for that and now is pretty mixed. Every party is completely different. Sometimes the guys come early and the girls come late or mixed the whole time. It really depends on who is DJing. I have always loved that vibe of it doesn't matter who is here but we are all happy and having fun. It is a family-style feeling since it is Sunday from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. It feels a little like church.

Samson sings at the Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western Ave., on Jan. 31. Visit [emptybottle.com](http://emptybottle.com) or call 773-276-3600 for tickets and information.

See [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com) for the entire interview.

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# Gay director talks about Oscar-nominated documentary

BY GARY M. KRAMER

Edgar Baren's *Prison Terminal: The Last Days of Private Jack Hall* is a somber and fascinating short documentary film that explores a unique hospice center at the Iowa State Penitentiary.

Chronicling the last two weeks in the life of Jack Hall, a decorated soldier who went to prison for 21 years for murdering a drug dealer, Baren's film prompts a reconsideration of how end of life care issues are being handled for prisoners. The out filmmaker spoke with *Windy City Times* about his film, which opens Jan. 31 at the Music Box Theatre ([www.musicboxtheatre.com](http://www.musicboxtheatre.com)).

**GMK: How did you come to learn about the story of Jack Hall and the Iowa State Prison Hospice?**

Edgar Baren's: I didn't seek Jack out from the get-go; it was a random thing. By the time Iowa State Penitentiary approved me to



Edgar Baren's. Photo courtesy of HBO

sensationalization of prisoners (e.g., MSNBC's *Lockup*). These are people who made horrible mistakes—and there are monsters—but I wanted to humanize the prisoner. This program incorporated the prisoners in hospice care.

This one is unique and it has great ramifications by using the prisoners in this program. I wanted to know the inmate who was dying, why the inmates who helped were doing it, as well as about the doctors and nurses. My goal was to show these programs work, that they don't cost anything and they need to be expanded. There are 75 hospices in the 1800 correctional facilities, and only 25 use inmates. Long term sentences mean that the aging prison populations are dying in jail. The cost of keeping elderly prisoners is expensive.

**GMK: You are a gay filmmaker. Was there a reason you chose not to tell a gay story?**

EB: I don't shy away from gay issues, and some of my film work has been [for the community]—I did a series of public service announcements—but none of my larger films are gay-themed. My next documentary started with a queer topic. I love doing films on criminal justice. It's become my cause. I feel that society needs to open their eyes and we can't

**Knight at the Movies will return next week.**

visit, I stationed myself in the infirmary, as I was highlighting the hospice program. I got to know the inmate volunteers, who are also orderlies. Jack was a long-term patient. Three months into my stay, I realized he was one to focus on, and got to know his story. He was perfect, because he could have been anybody.

**GMK: What dictated your approach—you mix interviews with observational moments—to tell Jack's story?**

EB: It's a hybrid [cinema] verite. I was in a quandary. I wanted to make it observational, but I need information from people. The verite provides a buffer between the talking heads and the observational footage. People lose track that they are in a prison, but you get these little reminders, like when Jack is shackled.

**GMK: What was your goal in making this film?**

EB: My first goal was to humanize the prisoner. What's happening in the media is the

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by Lillian Hellman  
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lock people up and throw away the key. I guess it is my calling. These people have no voice. I was brought up to question things and be political, and not take what the government was saying as truth. I was also brought up to be compassionate. I was taught to listen—and that's one of the best tools for a documentary filmmaker.

**GMK: Did you ever feel in danger in the prison?**

EB: I wasn't sure if I should tell the guys I was gay. A week into it, I told Herky [one of the inmate orderlies]. I can't lie and dodge him and ask them to be open with me. He said [my being gay] wasn't a problem. I thought it would be, but it wasn't. There are certain things that you don't talk about in prison. Herky said that he had my back, totally. He told me he told

folks "What you're doing is going to help them die with dignity." They wanted me to do their story.

**GMK: What has been the impact of the experience of being nominated on your life and work as a filmmaker?**

EB: I don't think I prepared myself for this. I'm flabbergasted by this sudden attention the film is getting. Other folks who have been nominated or won, said that my life will or might change the way of getting funding, and people will be interested in your projects. I'm bracing myself. Nothing drastic has happened yet. It's crazy. My friends are more flipped out than I am. But this is actually happening. When I got the cover letter from the Academy, it gave me chills.

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## Gay, lesbian critics honor 'Slave,' Franco, Tomlin

The Gay and Lesbian Entertainment Critics Association (GALECA) has announced the winners of its annual Dorian Awards Jan. 21 in Hollywood, Calif., according to a press release.

The winners were in 21 categories spanning film and television.

In the area of film, *12 Years a Slave* was named Film of the Year over such competition as *Dallas Buyers Club* and *Blue Is the Warmest Color*. However, Matthew McConaughey of "Dallas" won for Film Performance of the Year (Actor), beating co-star Jared Leto. Cate Blanchett won for Film Performance of the Year (Actress) for *Blue Jasmine*.

*Blue Is the Warmest Color* won Foreign Language Film of the Year honors and *Bridegroom* was named Documentary of the Year.

Television was also honored. The Liberace

movie *Behind the Candelabra* and the series *Orange Is the New Black* tied for TV Drama of the Year, while *Girls* won for TV Comedy of the Year. Dame Shirley Bassey won for TV Musical Performance of the Year for singing "Goldfinger" at the 82nd Academy Awards in 2013. "Orange" also won for LGBT TV Show of the year.

Emphasizing the different nature of this event, GALECA named Rachel Maddow Wilde Wit of the Year and James Franco Wilde Artist of the Year. The We're Wilde About You (Rising Star Award) went to trans actress Laverne Cox while Lily Tomlin received the Timeless Award.

There were also awards such as Campy Flick of the Year (which I'm So Excited! won) and Unsung TV Show of the Year (HBO's *Getting On*).

GALECA's annual toast—attended mainly by members but open to winners, nominees and their representatives—will be held Sunday, March 9, in Hollywood, Calif. See the full list of winners at <http://galeca.com>.

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## First Look for Charity preview

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Recently, there was a media preview at McGrath Acura, 1301 N. Elston Ave., for the cuisine and spirits that will be served at the Chicago Auto Show's First Look for Charity.

If the preview's any indication, the attendees at First Look will have a lot more to look forward to than eye-popping vehicles.

There were tasting stations, with samples of items such as Bub City's pulled pork and cole slaw, along with its chocolate peanut-butter cup; and Devon Seafood's shrimp ceviche (shrimp with poached sweet potatoes, fresh corn and black bean salsa, and served with white corn chips). Among other restaurants offering tasty items were ZED451, Roy's, Mitchell's Premium Ice Cream & Candies, and even the Mid-USA Falun Dafa Association (which offered honey noodles).

Regarding spirits, I may have fallen in love with a new brand of vodka: American Harvest, an organic brand from the same company behind Grey Goose. Also, there were Gentleman Jack and Jack Daniel's Single Barrel; and Tres Agaves Tequila. (An aside: Jack Daniel's rep Armando Zapata filled my head with many inter-



Images from the Chicago Auto Show's First Look for Charity preview. Photos by Andrew Davis



esting facts, including that Frank Sinatra was buried with a bottle of it.)

The tuxedo-mandatory event First Look for Charity will take place Friday, Feb. 7, at 7-11 p.m. at McCormick Place—the night before the public can view the vehicles at the Chicago Auto Show. Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago, Clearbrook, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, and Special Olympics IL-

linois are just a few of the charities the event is benefiting this year.

**Tickets are \$250 each; see <https://www.chicagoautoshow.com/first-look-for-charity/buy-tickets>.**

**The Chicago Auto Show will take place Feb. 8-17 at McCormick Place.**

## Luxbar (take two)

BY ANDREW DAVIS

The Gold Coast eatery Luxbar (18 E. Bellevue St.; [www.luxbar.com](http://www.luxbar.com)) has retained a lot of things but has made a big change: There's a new executive chef, Shaun Connolly, who has worked at Rokit Ranch Productions, Nightwood, Epic, Terragusto and Takashi, among other stops.

Regulars shouldn't worry—Connolly has left the restaurant's famous fried chicken and Snickers pie (a monstrous concoction of peanuts, vanilla ice cream, snickers pieces, hot fudge and caramel sauce) alone. However, he has incorporated his own experiences—and tasteful penchant for simplicity—into the menu.

A recent sponsored meal at the restaurant

showed that Connolly is a welcome addition. The tuna tartare is the best I've had in ages and the Skuna Bay salmon (with farro and grilled mushroom vinaigrette) was cooked perfectly. However, I must admit that my favorite items were the side dishes: the creamed kale and the candied sweet potatoes.

Other attractive options include the prime ribeye beef bourguignon, which was quite savory. (The versatility of the menu, however, is evident, with dishes ranging from Lake Superior whitefish to corned-beef hash.) There are also some tantalizing burger choices—fitting for an eatery in the Gibsons Restaurant Group.

In addition, bartender Choo paired our items with drinks such as the Grapefruit 4 Ways and The Serum. Also, one would be remiss not to try Choo's Famous Winter Remedy, a concoction of strained rye whiskey (soaked in apples for two weeks), raw sugar and other ingredients.

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## NUNN ON ONE: PERFORMANCE

# Mike Tyson on raising pigeons and kissing Robert Downey Jr.



BY JERRY NUNN

Mike Tyson—the man, the myth, the legend—is the former heavyweight champion of the world holding the record for holding multiple titles at only 20 years old. He was later inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame and the World Boxing Hall of Fame.

This native New Yorker appeared in the Hangover movies, playing himself and entertaining a whole new generation in the process.

A pigeon lover by heart with fists of gold, Tyson wanted to set the record straight in his own words with a one-man Broadway show. Mike Tyson: Undisputed Truth went on a 36-city national tour that brought him to Chicago last year. Directed by Spike Lee, the piece displays both his professional and personal life on stage through confessions. HBO featured the show on a television special this past November to rave reviews.

Last summer he created a boxing promotion company called Iron Mike Productions with a huge roster of fighters to continue his tradition.

Tyson returns to our neck of the woods with his show giving audiences another chance to see his big hit in person. Get to know the king of TKO in this Nunn on One interview.

**Windy City Times:** Hi, Mike.

Mike Tyson: Hey, buddy. What's going on?

**WCT: I saw your show at the Cadillac Palace Theatre when you were last here. How was your experience being in Chicago?**

MT: I have some close friends in Chicago. It was just great to be able to spend time with them.

**WCT: How has the show developed since that time?**

MT: It changes all the time. It just depends on the people.

**WCT: Do you feed off the audience?**

MT: A hundred percent, yes. I ad-lib a great deal. It is scripted some but there are now more ad libs than the script!

**WCT: Are you more comfortable speaking in front of people now?**

MT: It is funny that you say that because if I was giving a speech in a room about business I don't know if I would do as well at entertaining somebody as I do at talking about my life. It is two different things. When I went to Hong Kong to give a speech for a multibillion-dollar corporation, it was different. There wasn't an entertainment perspective in the air, you know?

**WCT: How did Spike Lee help you develop the show?**

MT: He just made it where I am by myself. You see before I had a rock band with me, a vocalist, and a classical piano player. I am doing it all by myself now.

**WCT: So he just told you didn't need all the extra stuff?**

MT: Yes.

**WCT: Do you have a favorite movie of his?**

MT: Jungle Fever.

**WCT: That's a good one. What has been a surprise reaction from the audience so far with the Undisputed Truth?**

MT: Some people said it has changed their [lives]. I am sure people have experienced things in the show but have not felt comfortable talking about it. I am not trying to glorify myself. A lot of it is about being honest and telling all of my flaws and how I have overcome my adversities.

**WCT: I was surprised you had been bullied when you were younger and that was covered in the show.**

MT: Oh, yeah. Any way a human being can be abused they got me. There are some really evil people out there.

**WCT: With being on Twitter you probably have to deal with some haters even these days.**

MT: Hey, that doesn't bother me. I can deal with that but there people right there with physical confrontation in life that would do anything to a human being that can be done.

**WCT: Is it hard reliving these stories night after night?**

MT: When I did my book it was really hard. When I was on stage it wasn't too hard because I was being very objective. It wasn't me Mike Tyson but a guy performing Mike Tyson's life.

**WCT: So talk about writing the Undisputed Truth book.**

MT: Writing the book I had no idea it would get the fan response that it did. It became an international best seller in quite a few countries. I was just very grateful for that.

**WCT: You are returning to Chicago at the UIC Pavilion Feb. 7 as a boxing promoter. How is that project going for you?**

MT: It is starting off slow but it's picking up. I am just grateful because being Mike Tyson it picked up quicker. It is normal for it to start off slow.

**WCT: Who are you promoting?**

MT: I have many. There's a guy named Erickson Lubin who was a prospect for the Olympics in 2016 but he signed with me. He's real talented. I got Claudio Marrero, who is a 126-pounder who is fighting in there.

I am just really looking forward to all of this that is coming forth. There will be a crew of new fighters and it just all looks good.

**WCT: That must be the fun part—to go out and recruit people.**

MT: Absolutely.

**WCT: Are you still vegan?**

MT: I am not vegan but I am kind of like it. I don't drink milk or stuff like that. I do eat some fish.

**WCT: I have a vegan animal-loving friend that I brought to your show at the Cadillac, and it meant a lot to her with all of your pigeon references. When did your attachment to pigeons start?**

MT: When I was 8 years old. One of my first fights happened over a pigeon. Someone stole my bird and killed him!

**WCT: That's terrible. You have pet pigeons currently?**

MT: I will always have some until the day I die.

**WCT: What are their names?**

MT: They don't have names. It is just what you do to have them. I can't explain it. When I am dead and 90 years old, I will have pigeons with me. Someone is going to have to come take them from me when I die. It is like a culture.



Mike Tyson.

**WCT: We will make sure they go to a good home. [Tyson laughs.] Did you have fun at the Golden Globes? It looked like you had a blast.**

MT: I had a ball!

**WCT: You just ran around and met celebrities all night?**

MT: Yeah. I hung out with them and took pictures with them.

**WCT: Do you have a favorite Hangover moment from the movies?**

MT: I liked the second one when I was singing and dancing. That was funny!

**WCT: You live in Vegas, so do you gamble when you visit a casino like Horseshoe?**

MT: Not at all. Not even a little bit.

**WCT: On the improvised movie Black and**

**White were you truly surprised when Robert Downey Jr. kissed you?**

MT: Well, it was a surprise. The director wanted me to really hit him and I didn't want to. He said, "You gotta real do this shit, man! If you want to be an actor then you have to smack the shit out of him!" It did look real, didn't it?

**WCT: People think it was real.**

MT: It was real—a real smack. When he was on the floor he was kicking me and I yelled, "Ow!"

**WCT: He's a character in real life. I met him at a dinner.**

MT: People don't realize he has had an amazing comeback. His comeback is right up there with mine.

**WCT: Yes, and truly great to see. You are up for an NAACP Image Award with Undisputed Truth for Outstanding Variety Series Or Special.**

MT: Yes, I am nominated. I was watching the preview on television and Jamie Foxx was on there. I was like, "Whoa!"

**WCT: Congrats on that, Mike!**

MT: Thank you.

**WCT: Do you want to have more updates to this show or make a whole other show someday?**

MT: I would like to do another show and produce shows. It is going to be interesting. Mike Tyson: Undisputed Truth took on a life of its own. We are in at least ten other countries, countries that don't even speak English! We are going to try to put a hold on this and do some new stuff but we will see.

**WCT: Have you had a favorite place you have travelled to so far?**

MT: Mannn, I have been to a bunch. I was just in Dubai and back. I think we are going to England, France, the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries. I can't even believe it!

**WCT: To think this whole idea for this Truth project came out of you seeing Chazz Palminteri's one man show A Bronx Tale in New York.**

MT: Yeah—isn't that crazy? The person that was inspired is now bigger than the person that inspired him. Nobody knows who Anne Sullivan is but everyone knows who Helen Keller is. It is like that!

**Get ready for Tyson to talk your ear off Saturday, Feb. 8, at The Venue, 777 Casino Center Dr., Hammond, Ind. See [www.horse-shoehammond.com/shows.html](http://www.horse-shoehammond.com/shows.html).**

**For more on the upcoming Friday Night Fight in Chicago, visit [www.ironmikeproductions.com](http://www.ironmikeproductions.com).**

## Jan. 30 'Out at CHM' event looks at house music

Chicago History Museum's "Out at CHM" series will kick off its 11th season with "The House That Chicago Built," a look at house music and its relationship with the LGBTQ community.

The talk will take place Thursday, Jan. 30, at the museum, 1601 N. Clark St. There will be a reception at 5:30 p.m. and program at 6:30 p.m.

DJ Alan King, one of Chicago's original house music DJs and a member of the crew The Chosen Few, will lead the discussion, joined by other house music DJs and artists.

Admission is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members; see [https://services.chicago-history.org/auto\\_choose\\_ga.asp?area=129](https://services.chicago-history.org/auto_choose_ga.asp?area=129).

## Bowie tribute to benefit Crib

Stardust The David Bowie Tribute Band will perform Friday, Feb. 14, at 8 p.m. at the Underground Lounge, 954 W. Newport Ave.

Now in its 16th year of production, Stardust features vocalist, Lair Scott, as Ziggy 2000 and includes Tooth\_Eye, Alex James and Ross Markers. Appearing along with

Stardust will be Queer Fest America comix Darren Marshall and Kate Cullen as well as Matt Duhaime from the band Moxie Motive, Psycho Sister, Spizzarri, Tutu and the Pirates and a solo performance by Tooth\_Eye.

Queer Fest America is sponsoring the 21-and-over event. The cover charge is \$5; proceeds will benefit The Crib, a homeless youth shelter.

## Orchestra, pro-gay violinist at Harris Theater Feb. 7

The Grammy-winning chamber orchestra Kremerata Baltica—led by violinist and Artistic Director Gidon Kremer—returns to the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St., on Friday, Feb. 7, at 7:30 p.m.

The orchestra will perform works by Benjamin Britten, Mieczyslaw Weinberg, and Dmitri Shostakovich, including Shostakovich's provocative and seldom-heard comic opera Antiformalist Rayok.

Kremer's advocacy for human rights and social justice has been well-documented in recent months, including speaking out against Russia's anti-gay law.

Tickets for the performance are \$15-\$30; visit [www.HarrisTheaterChicago.org](http://www.HarrisTheaterChicago.org) or call 312-334-7777.

# CALENDAR

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nightspots

## Wed., Jan. 29

**Affinity volunteer orientation** Please bring a dish and/or beverage to share. For question about the group, contact Peaches at [volunteer@affinity95.org](mailto:volunteer@affinity95.org) 6:30pm - 7:30pm Affinity Community Services 1424 E. 53rd St. Suite 306 <http://www.affinity95.org>

**Inside Leather History, A Fireside Chat with IML Den Daddy Joey McDonald** Live on-stage interview to discuss his personal history and Leather community involvement. \$5 suggested donation. 7:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St., <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

**Red Cup Party** Every Wednesday. Featuring DJ Cooper Thomas and tasty drink specials. 9:00pm Scarlet Bar 3320 N Halsted St., <http://www.scarletbarchicago.com>

## Thursday, Jan. 30

**The House that Chicago Built** The 11th season of Out at CHM launches with an exploration of Chicago's role in the birth and impact of house music and its relationship to the LGBTQ community. The program includes a live DJ set and a conversation with DJ Alan King of the legendary DJ crew "The Chosen Few." 5:30pm - 9:30pm Chicago History Museum 1601 N Clark <http://chicagohistory.org/planavisit/upcomingevents/out-at-chm> Tickets: [https://services.chicagohistory.org/auto\\_choose\\_ga.asp?area=129](https://services.chicagohistory.org/auto_choose_ga.asp?area=129)

**Red/White: A Wine-Tasting Benefit** Sample fine wines from around the world while helping out homeless animals in Chicago. 7:30pm - 9:00pm Fine Wine Brokers, 4621 N. Lincoln Ave., <http://www.reddoorshelter.org/events.php> Tickets: <http://www.reddoorshelter.org/events.php>

## Friday, Jan. 31

**Majesty Of Flesh: Ron Athey** Defibrillator Gallery in collaboration with Hook Torture Gallery and Mana Contemporary present Incurruptible Flesh: Messianic Remains followed by a reception/talk-back. See Feb. 1 for a second event 8:00pm - 11:00pm Mana Contemporary, 2233 S. Throop St., Chicago 773-609-1137 <http://www.dfbml8r.org/exhibit/ron-athey> Tickets: <http://ronathey.eventbrite.com>

**Aimee and Jaguar** A new play based on a true love story in World War II Germany. As war-torn Berlin crumbles, a romance kindles between a mother of four with a husband away fighting for the Nazi cause,

and a Jewish girl living on fake IDs and uncertain of her next meal. Written by Northwestern alumna Lillian Groag and directed by Joseph Hanreddy, the play was adapted from a book of interviews by Erica Fischer, author of "Aimee and Jaguar: A Love Story, Berlin 1943." Through Feb. 6. 8:00pm <http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2014/01/northwestern-premieres-new-play-aimee-and-jaguar.html>

## Saturday, Feb. 1

**Frontrunners/Frontwalkers Chicago Fun Run/Walk** A club for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transexuals and friends who are interested in running and walking together along Chicago's great open lakefront, meeting twice weekly, on Saturdays at 9am and Tuesdays at 6:30pm 9:00am Totem Pole in Lincoln Park <https://www.facebook.com/groups/52950773133/>

**Actors Training Center Presents Actors Trifecta with Steppenwolf, Goodman and Chicago Shakespeare Casting Directors** Each student will work a classical monologue with Bob Mason (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), and a comedic and dramatic monologue with either Adam Belcuore (Goodman Theatre) or Erica Daniels (Steppenwolf Theatre). Learn to respect the demands of each medium and what the Casting Directors who make Chicago theater happen look for in an audition. 9:30am - 5:30pm The Wilmette Theatre 1122 Central Ave. Wilmette, IL 60091 847.251.8710 <http://www.wilmettetheater.com> Tickets: <http://www.wilmettetheater.com>

**Lavender University LGBTQ programs: Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence and America's Prison Nation** How prison industrial complex has served to exacerbate violence against Black women. Beth E. Richie, PhD is an anti-violence activist and author working in several social justice movements. Lavender University is a 9-month lecture series featuring top academics and activists in the LGBTQ community, working on a wide range of research topics and interests. 11:00am - 1:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Lavender-University-launches-LGBTQ-programs/43375.html>

**Rodeo Pride: Photography exhibit featuring gay rodeo circuit** Blake Little: Photographs from the Gay Rodeo, which tells the story of an often ignored part of American Western culture. 12:30 pm, Indy Men's

Chorus performs. 1:30 pm, Blake Little special program featuring Little, curators and gay rodeo participants. 3 pm Informal gallery talks with visitors 12:30pm - 5:00pm Eiteljorg Museum 500 West Washington Indianapolis, IL 46204 317-636-9378 <http://www.eiteljorg.org>.

**Request Concert** One-woman, wordless play about an intensely solitary woman. Through Feb. 2 4:00pm The Side Project Theatre 1439 W Jarvis Ave <http://www.thesideproject.net> Tickets: <http://www.thesideproject.net>

**CAKE Chicago, LGBTQI Arts Showcase: A night of Comedy and Music** Hosted by: Ripley Caine. Featuring: Congress of Starlings, comedian Ashley Thornton, Jackass Magnets are an all-female indie rock power trio 7:00pm The Red Line Tap, 7006 N Glenwood <https://www.facebook.com/CakeChicago>

**Ron Athey** Athey is an iconic figure in contemporary art and performance. He, Jon John, and Sage Charles will perform, Sebastiane, and Jon John will show a work of his own, The 2 of Us. Online donations of \$30 earn a ticket. Advance tickets online. These performances contain extreme images and subject matter. 8:00pm Mana Contemporary, 2233 S. Throop St., Chicago <http://www.DFBRL8R.org> Tickets: <http://ronathey.eventbrite.com>

## Sunday, Feb. 2

**12th annual "Breaking into the Business"** Carole Dibo, artistic director of the Actors Training Center (ATC), is offering a one-day workshop for those who want to break into Chicago TV, theater and film. Guest speakers will include top industry professionals. 10:00am - 2:30pm The Wilmette Theatre 1122 Central Ave. Wilmette, IL 60091 847-251-8710 <http://www.wilmettetheater.com> Tickets: <http://www.wilmettetheater.com>

**Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago** Meeting every Sunday from 10:30 to noon, featuring a speaker on a variety of topics—personal ethics, education, psychology, politics, philosophy, medical care, equal rights, the environment, etc., followed by a coffee hour. Free and open to the public. Also Sunday School, weddings, service projects, book group, film group. 10:30am - 12:00pm Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago 7574 N. Lincoln Ave. Skokie, IL 60077 <http://www.ethicalhuman.org>

**Scott Duff hosts LGBT radio talk show** LGBT-specific talk show "Out Chicago" on politics, entertainment, celebrity gossip 11:00am - 1:00pm WCPT 820 AM

## Monday, Feb. 3

**Chicago Bisexual / Queer Community movie night** Every other Monday, a movie that deals with bisexuality in some way 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>  
**HambINGO** Join Mary's for "HambINGO



## RAISING CAINE

### Saturday, Feb. 1

Ripley Caine (above) will host CAKE Chicago at The Red Line Tap, 7006 N. Glenwood Ave.

Mary's" every Monday night at 8pm downstairs in the dining room, with your host, Velicity Metropolis calling the balls. You know this ain't your church bingo! 8:00pm Hamburger Mary's 5400 N Clark <http://www.hamburgermaryschicago.com>

## Tuesday, Feb. 4

**Ron Athey lecture** Iconic figure in the development of contemporary art and performance. In his frequently bloody portrayals of life, death, crisis, and fortitude in the time of AIDS, Athey calls into question the limits of artistic practice. A book signing will immediately follow with Pleading in the Blood: The Art and Performance of Ron Athey. 6:00pm The School of the Art Institute of Chicago Columbus Auditorium, 280 S. Columbus Dr., Chicago <http://www.saic.edu/vap/current/ron-athey.html>

**Frontrunners/ Frontwalkers Chicago** A club for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transexuals and friends who are interested in running and walking together along Chicago's great open lakefront, meeting twice weekly, on Saturdays at 9am and Tuesdays at 6:30pm 6:30pm Totem Pole in Lincoln Park <https://www.facebook.com/groups/52950773133/>

## Wed., Feb. 5

**Pride Films and Plays LGBT filmmakers discussion** Pride Films and Plays invites Chicago LGBT filmmakers for an informal gathering and discussion. RSVP online 7:00pm Location, 1411 W. Wilson Ave., Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/265874480231175/>  
**Bisexual Queer Alliance Chicago meeting**

**and elections** Everyone is welcome. Make a difference in the local bisexual community and around the world. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

## Saturday, Feb. 8

**Auto show** Admire new vehicles at the Chicago Auto Show, where exhibits are spectacular due to the large size of McCormick Place convention center. 9:00am McCormick Place West Building 2301 S. Indiana Ave. <http://www.chicagoautoshow.com>

**Equality Illinois Gala, annual Freedom Awards** Hosted by Colonel (IL) Jennifer Pritzker, IL ARNG (Ret.). Transgender Chicago filmmaker Lana Wachowski will be presented with the 2014 Equality Illinois Freedom Award. Chicago Urban League will be honored for spreading the message of fairness and equality. The league is also involved with the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus and supports activities at the Center on Halsted in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. The evening begins at 6pm with the Silent Auction Cocktail Party and ends at Midnight with the post-dinner dance. 6:00pm Chicago Hilton and Towers 720 S Michigan Ave Tickets: <http://www.eqil.org/Gala2/gala2.html>

**Congregation Or Chadash Congregational Dinner** Havdala followed by dinner, followed by games and entertainment with trivia contests, other activities. Dinner by the Pita Inn at a cost of \$15 per person. 6:30pm Congregation Or Chadash at Emanuel Congregation 5959 N Sheridan Rd <http://www.orchadash.org>

## Sunday, Feb. 9

**Chicago Prime Timers** Second Sunday of each month open social. Prime Timers are older gay or bisexual men (and younger men who admire mature men). Our members are men who choose to have their social lives enriched by the diverse activities in which our members engage. Those wishing to enjoy alcoholic beverages are asked to bring their own bottle. Set-ups are \$1. Social hour is followed by a dinner and a program at 7pm. \$20 for members or non-members. Non-members and guests are always most welcome. 6:00pm Ann Sather - Belmont 909 W Belmont Ave <http://www.chicagoprimitimers.org>

**Chicago Her HRC Presents: Va ~ Va ~ Vaudeville!** Human Rights Campaign's 3rd annual Vaudeville extravaganza with titillating comedy, burlesque beauties, and fabulous entertainment by Chicago's best. Tickets include an annual HRC membership. Must be 18+ to attend, 21+ to drink. VIP 6 p.m. General 6:30 p.m. Performances 7 p.m. \$20. VIP \$35 includes early entry, premium floor seating, free 50/50 raffle ticket. 6:00pm - 10:00pm Mayne Stage 1328 W Morse Ave Tickets: <http://action.hrc.org/site/Calendar?view=Detail&id=116501&autologin=true>

# Same-sex weddings, robots mark Grammys

The 56th Grammy Awards, held Jan. 26, will be remembered for two mute Frenchmen and a mass wedding ceremony involving same- and opposite-sex couples.

The French dance-music duo Daft Punk's Random Access Memories took honors as Album of the Year, while the album's hit single "Get Lucky" was Record of the Year. The act also earned the Best Pop Duo/Group Performance award with Pharrell Williams and Nile Rodgers. Williams (as well as album co-producer Paul Williams) spoke on behalf of Daft Punk, who wore helmets and essentially are mute robots in public.

However, for many (including members of the LGBTQ community), the highlight of the Grammys was Macklemore and Ryan Lewis (along with Mary Lambert) performing its equality anthem "Same Love"—which was followed by Queen Latifah officiating a group wedding



From left: Macklemore, Mary Lambert, Madonna, Ryan Lewis and Queen Latifah at this year's Grammy Awards ceremony.

event with 33 couples of various sexual orientations. Madonna then sang a slowed-down version of her 1980s hit "Open Your Heart."

Macklemore and Ryan Lewis won three rap categories and was honored as Best New Artist. Seventeen-year-old New Zealander Lorde won

for Best Pop Solo Performance for her global hit "Royals," and Song of the Year went to "Royals" songwriters Joel Little and Ella Yellich O'Connor—Lorde's real name.

Kacey Musgraves won for Best Country Album for Same Trailer, Different Park, upsetting Taylor Swift, who was favored for Red. During the show, Musgraves performed "Follow Your Arrow," which contains the lyrics "Make lots of noise/Kiss lots of boys/Or kiss lots of girls/If that's something you're into."

The performances paid tribute to music's past as well as its future, and featured several unique collaborations. Among other highlights, Robin Thicke performed with Chicago; Daft Punk with Pharrell Williams, Rodgers, and Stevie Wonder; Kendrick Lamar with Imagine Dragons; Carole King and Sara Barielles; and Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr—a reunion of the surviving members of the Beatles.

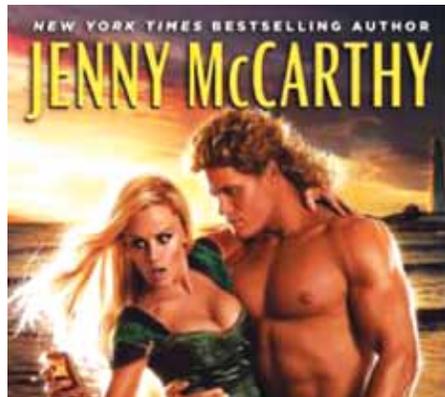
Among other winners, Kathy Griffin prevailed in the Best Comedy Album category for Calm Down Gurl, and Kinky Boots won for Best Musical Theater Album over Matilda: The Musical and Motown The Musical, according to Grammy.com.

See the full list of winners at [www.Grammy.com](http://www.Grammy.com).

# BILLY MASTERS

"My son is being raised by two gay men. A lot of people don't know that. Evan is at home in Chicago, and I've had two gay men raising him. And they are the most wonderful men and I couldn't be more proud for him to see that."—Jenny McCarthy tells the world about what great surrogate parents her gay friends are to her son in Chicago when she's filming *The View* in NYC.

It may be early in 2014, but I'd like to remind you of a prediction I made in my year-end column for 2013. This was directed at readers who feel like same-sex marriage isn't moving fast enough. (Those of us over 35 are able to recognize how swiftly things are changing.) Back then, I predicted that gay marriage would be a federal law within five years. Shortly after that prediction, two more states crept to the brink of legalizing it, and another is about to join them. Equality Florida announced that SIX same-sex couples are filing a lawsuit against the state, claiming that being unable to legally marry violates the Constitution "by denying them the legal protections and equal dignity that having the freedom to marry provides."



Jenny McCarthy (pictured on the cover of her book *Love, Lust & Faking It*) has a gay couple helping her with her kids.

You wanna get my attention? Write a story about a hot boy being condemned for having sex online, throw in an inaccurate headline, and I'm hooked. I don't know who published this piece, but the headline said, "Students rally around 18-year-old Florida high schooler failed for doing gay porn." This article further explained that once knowledge of the boy's porn activities reached the school administrators, he was suspended, "causing him to fail his high school diploma." Is it possible to fail one's diploma? You may fail a class, thus not receiving a diploma. But, of course, I'm splitting hairs. Let's get to the meat (so to speak) of the story.

Since the lad has identified himself, I feel completely comfortable sharing his deets with you. Robert Marucci is a senior at Cocoa High School. He claims to have started doing porn to help support his family. He started making videos in September online under the name "Noel II"—he wasn't even the First Noel! Some students found out and, as you'd expect, they told two friends, and they told two friends, and so on, and so on (this is from a commercial that was big in the Captain & Tennille days).

Allegedly, some students were teasing and bullying him and when the school administration got wind of the situation, he was expelled for "unspecified conduct violations." If there was bullying, it paled in comparison to the outcry upon his expulsion. A large percentage of students staged a protest—both at the school and on their Facebook profiles. The school explained that they had to investigate the situation and were now happy—virtually giddy—to welcome Robert back to school.

It might sound like all's well that ends well, but that's never enough for moi. I had to do my own full investigation. Of the five videos

of Robert/Noel II, I've noticed a trend. First, they are all condom-free. And he shows amazing versatility—he'll get fucked lying on his back, lying on his stomach, sitting on the dick and, on at least one occasion, by more than one man. While I commend his mom for standing by him and telling reporters, "I'm proud of my son," has she seen the videos? Is she really proud of him? OK, he looks good (far better out of clothes than in), but is no one teaching safe sex anymore? Is it really not a big deal? Troublesome.

Less troublesome (but still upsetting) is the situation over at Lifetime. Allegedly, the network providing television for women (and gay men) will not be asking the Charmed One to return as host of *Project Runway: All-Stars*. While Alyssa Milano's uncomfortable and stilted delivery was widely acknowledged, there are rumblings that she was even more difficult behind the scenes—which is surprising because I've always found her to be an absolute delight. I'll have to get an unbiased opinion and ring up Shannon Doherty.

That loud yawn you heard Jan. 19 were oodles of gay men (and some others) watching the premiere of *Looking* on HBO. Truly, there was nothing really bad about the show. It just was so boring—I couldn't believe it was only 30 minutes. By comparison, Lincoln FLEW by! And, I'm sorry, but never has being gay looked so dull. Even the cast of *Oz* looked like they were having more fun. I'm told that subsequent shows will get better, and certainly there is a precedent for a weak pilot kicking off a great show. But if this is the one episode they spent the most time writing and filming, then I'm gonna need to re-up my Adderal prescription to get through it.

Our "Ask Billy" question this week comes from Victor in Mississippi: "Have you been watching this season of 'Splash!' from the UK? Who is Dan Osborne? He's GORGEOUS! They say he's a reality star, but I've never heard of him. He looked like he was really packed into that leopard Speedo—even Tom Daley was staring at it!"

Ah, yes, *Splash!*—the UK show that spawned a dreadful domestic edition. Of course, we didn't have the lovely Tom Daley coaching the "stars." And therein lies the other difference—the Brits get a gorgeous reality star, we got Louie Anderson. Dan Osborne is on *The Only Way Is Essex*, a UK show termed as "an award-winning scripted reality show"—which means it's like most reality shows here that don't admit to being scripted. (It's often compared to *Jersey Shore* and *The Hills*.) Dan is a 6'5", 22-year-old model (lots of indie campaigns) and friends with most of the people on his reality show. I guess he's like *The Situation*, but with a three-digit IQ! And, yes, he's quite gorgeous. Straight, has a kid with his ex-girlfriend, loves gay people. When asked about the leopard Speedo, he said, "I didn't choose them trunks, no. At first I was like, 'No way, that's not happening. And in the end, I ended up wearing them. After 'Splash!', I'm keeping them. I'm going to wear them on my next holiday—I'm taking them to Dubai with me." Right there you see yet another difference—would Sitch know where Dubai is? If you think Dan looked hot in his Speedo, you should see him out of them—as we'll show you on *BillyMasters.com*.

When boys are making a splash in and out of their Speedos, it's definitely time to end yet another column. For all your gossip needs, check out [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com)—the site that knows where to find the boys and the booze. If you have a question, dash it off to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before Gunn shows Milano who's the boss. So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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## Britten Film Festival at Columbia College Feb. 6

The Benjamin Britten Film Festival, presented by The Chicago Chamber Musicians (CCM), continues its 2013/2014 centennial birthday celebration for the composer on Thursday, Feb. 6, with a free showing of *Moonrise Kingdom* at 7 p.m. at the Columbia College Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., on the eighth floor.

Often considered the most prominent British composer of the 20th century, Britten (1913-1976), who was gay, is widely known for his operas and orchestral works.

Other events will include "Let's Make An Opera" (Feb. 8 at the Music Institute of Chicago, 1702 Sherman Ave., Evanston, at 4 p.m.), "Benjamin Britten: A Time There Was..." (Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Music Institute), and *The Hidden Heart: A Life of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears* (Feb. 22 at 1 p.m. at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.; April 17 at Columbia College Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash Ave.).

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

## 'Gay Agenda' at Creating Change confab Jan. 30

The new Chicago LGBT web series *The Gay Agenda* will be making an appearance at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's 26th National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change in Houston, Texas at a live taping Thursday, Jan. 30, at 10 p.m.

The hosts of *The Gay Agenda* (Mary Morten, Jim Bennett, Tony Alvarado-Rivera and Shannon Downey) take on contemporary

events—pop culture, politics, and matters of the heart—in a lively discussion from four distinctive points of view.

The *Gay Agenda* recently released its second episode, where the hosts discuss nature vs. nurture as well as GLAAD, and interview comedian and actress Fawzia Mirza (Kam Kardashian). The episode is available for viewing on the show's YouTube channel, *The Gay Agenda Live!*, at <http://bit.ly/1chTGdP>.

## Orchid show in Glencoe Feb. 15-March 16

The Orchid Show will take place at the Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Rd., Glencoe, from Saturday, Feb. 15, through Sunday, March 16.

Among other things, there will be classes, hula dances (Feb. 15-16), a weekend marketplace and a rare-book exhibition.

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

## 'Dallas Buyers Club' on DVD, Blu-Ray Feb. 4

The film *Dallas Buyers Club*—which features Golden Globe winners Matthew McConaughey and Jared Leto—will be out on Blu-ray™ Combo Pack including Blu-ray™, DVD, DIGITAL HD with UltraViolet™ and On Demand Feb. 4 from Universal Studios Home Entertainment.

In the movie (based on a real-life situation), Texas cowboy Ron Woodroof (McConaughey) sees his life overturned when he's diagnosed as HIV-positive and given 30 days to live.

# Greg Kinnear:

## Playing a tool on 'Rake'

BY JERRY NUNN

Greg Kinnear joked his way onto television way back in 1991 as the first host of Talk Soup on E! He began a movie career three years later on Blankman, then followed that with a remake of Sabrina but it was his role as gay painter Simon Bishop that got him Oscar-nominated for Best Supporting Actor in James L. Brooks' *As Good As It Gets*.

Things took off for Kinnear after that, with *You've Got Mail*, *Nurse Betty* and *Someone Like You*. He depicted Hogan's Heroes' Bob Crame in *Auto Focus* and attached himself to Matt Damon in *Stuck On You*, playing a conjoined twin. He co-starred in *Little Miss Sunshine* and popped up in the hit *Baby Mama* before playing John F. Kennedy in *The Kennedys*.

He returns to TV on Fox's *Rake*, playing a bumbling criminal defense lawyer named Keegan Deane. The series is based on the Australian series of the same name and follows the lawyer as he battles everyone around him such as his ex-wife, judges and even the IRS.

Windy City Times participated in a conference call with the actor on the phone before the series premiered.

**Q: Hi, Greg. First off, how do you relate to this character on *Rake*?**

Greg Kinnear: We're both horrible gamblers. The most obvious connection is that I have no skills in that department and he seems to be tortured by his own lack of ability as well.

**Q: Do you have similarities with Keegan?**

GK: I don't know about similarities. The truth is I don't know that there's a lot. I think it's what really attracted me to the character when I saw the Australian show. The kind of the zone they were playing in, not only the ensemble nature of the show, but just this, Keegan himself with the inability to not get out of his own way and his kind of needs, wants, and addictions all sort of snowballing around him constantly. It's just that notion of two steps forward, three steps back seemed like a fun zone to play in, not that I don't have my own little bag of self-destructive traits. We all do. But he has them in such a flawless rate, such an ease of his ability to miscalculate and to set off little personal landmines around his life so regularly that it really seemed like a fun area to play around in.

I hadn't played an attorney before so one that was dealing with that kind of world seemed like a great plan.

**Q: Did you have to study up on attorneys, then?**

GK: Well, specifically [regarding] defense characters, there's quite a pantheon of very, very colorful types in this world, both men and women. There's an inherently despicable rap that I think defense attorneys get as the

defenders of people—particularly, people that we all recognize as guilty or think are guilty. Yet they're an essential part of the balance of justice.

We'll be doing a lot with this role to champion people's perceptions of defense attorneys.

**Q: That would not be a fun job.**

GK: There is a gambling element to being somebody who is going to take on the job of constantly trying to represent and prop up people who might be somewhat shady. That notion is probably part of how they got the rap, but I think it's to try and find the balance of being colorful, being at times despicable, but also being somebody who does believe in something.

We're on episode 10 now and there have been cases where there are people who for sure the audience is going to want to not be found innocent and at times they are and at times they're not.

**Q: Sounds like a fun show to work on.**

GK: I think the real cool thing about the show is most of the people I represent are guilty and the truth is that's the way it is in the system. If you're innocent or there isn't enough seriously compelling evidence to put you up against the state, chances are it's never going to go to trial and, of course, trial is where all the fun stuff happens.

We do some cases that go to trial. But we also do cases that all are negotiated in back rooms and sort of quietly handled between people negotiating. And that's another kind of cool aspect of the show. But there are colorful characters in this world. I've seen many of them and they're a treat to watch.

I haven't seen anybody quite like this guy but I'm looking.

**Q: Has your view of the court systems changed after doing the show?**

GK: We have lawyers working on the show and just through conversations and stories that we work on, the truth is that you learn that there is not a straight through line on any of these cases, that they're all varied. Many of them never go to trial or the ones that do have a whole different expectation than the ones that don't in terms of the outcome and how they're negotiated.

So much of the process seems inconsistent to me. I don't think it's a bad thing. Maybe it's a reason that the legal world has, over the years, had so many films and television shows about it. There's just a great sort of imbalance to the process, an imbalance to the outcome and justice is not always served fairly for sure. That's been made very clear talking to a lot of the guys we have access to. We try and represent that fairly in the show, I think.

**Q: How much does this version of *Rake* borrow from the Australian version?**



Greg Kinnear. Photo from Fox

GK: Yeah, that's a good question. Well, listen: In terms of its format, one of the most significant changes that we've had to embrace is being on a network where, I think, we have 44 minutes and the Australian show was like 59 minutes; that time change has been a real difficult sort of readjustment that has been something we're conscious of. Believe me, I wanted to do a nice tip of the hat to the Australian show because I really admired it, but the hope is for all of us to try to find our own DNA and kind of develop our own vibe here.

**Q: So the [U.S. version of] *Rake* is its own kind of show.**

GK: I would say a lot of it is its own thing and has kind of organically found its own place. So, I don't know what the percentage would be to give you for that, but maybe 40 percent comes from the Australian show, but I think the rest of it feels very different. I feel like the balance is good.

**Q: How is it working with Sam Raimi, from *Spider-Man* and the *Evil Dead* movies?**

GK: I worked with Sam a few years ago in a movie and I was very nervous. We were doing the show and we didn't have a director for the pilot. I was so terrified. I'm friends with Sam, but I really didn't know if that was crossing a line and my wife was the one who said, "Just ask him, all he can do is say no." I asked him, he read the script and he loved it. In fact, he has gone on and done another show for us and helped us with some other pieces along the way. He has really become an ally to *Rake* and I'm grateful to that because, obviously, he's my friend, but he's also a great artist. I think

the show has some cool colors in it like Sam, and its early incarnation, attracted some really smart people, so I'm grateful for that.

**Q: With all the projects you are offered, how do you pick which one to do?**

GK: I'm a guy who likes to work a lot. We may have to have some debate about that. I guess I've done a lot of movies, but a lot of them aren't leads, the roles that have demanded enormous amounts of time. I guess an illusion might be that that's always the case. It's been a balance of work, for sure that I've enjoyed.

**Q: Is it frustrating or annoying when people say, "It's just Greg Kinnear being Greg Kinnear?"**

GK: Well, I can't really drill down too deep on other people's perceptions of myself. I felt like in terms of my interest on this particular role that it would be fun to play, that it would be something that could evolve and something that might be a nice starting point in an onward journey and where it will go.

I don't know what a Greg Kinnear role looks like or is. I guess if I do the role then it is that. There's at least in the starting place of who this guy is and my hope for what he can be. I was attracted to it and wanted to do it because of what I saw on the page and less about how I could define or redefine people's perception of me. That was just not the mandate here.

**Q: Well, come visit us in Chicago sometime.**

GK: Oh, I will indeed.

**Rake holds court every Thursday on Fox.**

## Lycasek buys Chicago condo for \$850K

Gold medal-winning figure skater Evan Lysacek has paid \$850,000 for a two-bedroom, 1,600-square-foot condo unit on the 45th floor of a high-rise building just off North Michigan Avenue, according to The Chicago Tribune.

Lysacek, 28, won the Gold medal in the 2010 Olympics and also won the 2009 World Figure Skating Championships. Because of an injury, he is skipping the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

## Lakeside Pride has recording of equality show

Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles announced its first digital album release, *Stand Up! A Musical Celebration of Equality*, featuring the Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band with conductors Kyle Rhoades and Jason Duran.

This special commemorative download was recorded live during a one-night-only concert Nov. 9, 2013, in the auditorium of Nettelhorst School in Lakeview.

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

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

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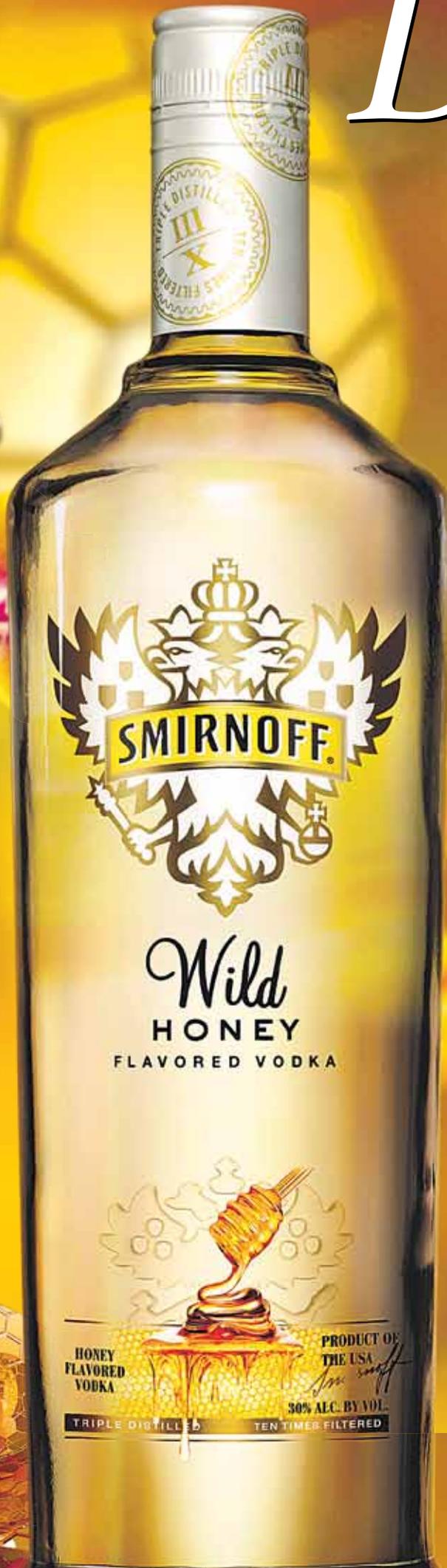


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