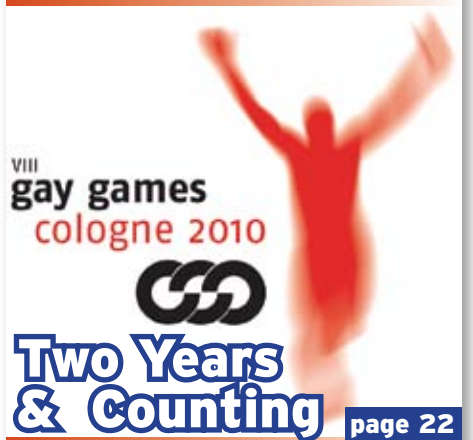
WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI AND TRANS COMMUNITY SINCE 1985 APRIL 23, 2008 • VOL 23 NO 32

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LGBTs part of May 1 immigration march

BY YASMIN NAIR

The 2006 Sensenbrenner Bill (HR 4437)—also known as The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005—prompted widespread protests nationwide. In Chicago, the March 10 Movement mobilized a rally of 200,000 immigrants in downtown Chicago. Subsequently, national immigrant-rights groups began staging immigrant rights rallies on May Day (May 1) to emphasize the connection between labor and immigrants.

This year, the May Day immigrant-rights march organizers in Chicago have, in a change from previous years, included an anti-war message along with a call for legalization of all undocumented people.

That's not the only change. For the first time since 2006, local Chicago queer groups have issued an open invitation for queers and queer immigrants to join in solidarity with May Day organizers. Several LGBTQ groups, including Amigas Latinas, ALMA (Association of Latino Men for Action), Orgullo en Accion and Gay Liberation Network (GLN) are participating.



Aurora Pineda (above) will take part in the May 1 immigration march. Photo by Andrew Davis

So, queer immigrants will organize under a big tent—or at least a big rainbow flag. But what does a queer presence mean in an immigration reform movement that's focused on labor? Do U.S.-born queers and immigrant queers face the same issues around immigration?

This isn't the first time that immigrant queers have marched in the rallies, and many have been working in the immigrant reform movement before working for queer issues. Tania Unzueta, director of RadioArte's youth program and producer of the radio show Homofrequencia, remembers that the March 10 Movement's first rally in 2006 made her realize that she would be coming out twice—as queer to the immigrant-rights movement and as an immigrant to those who did not know about her background. She remembers nu-

Turn to page 6

For the latest on the Democratic Penn. primary, see www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

Teacher same-sex bill fails

BY AMY WOOTEN

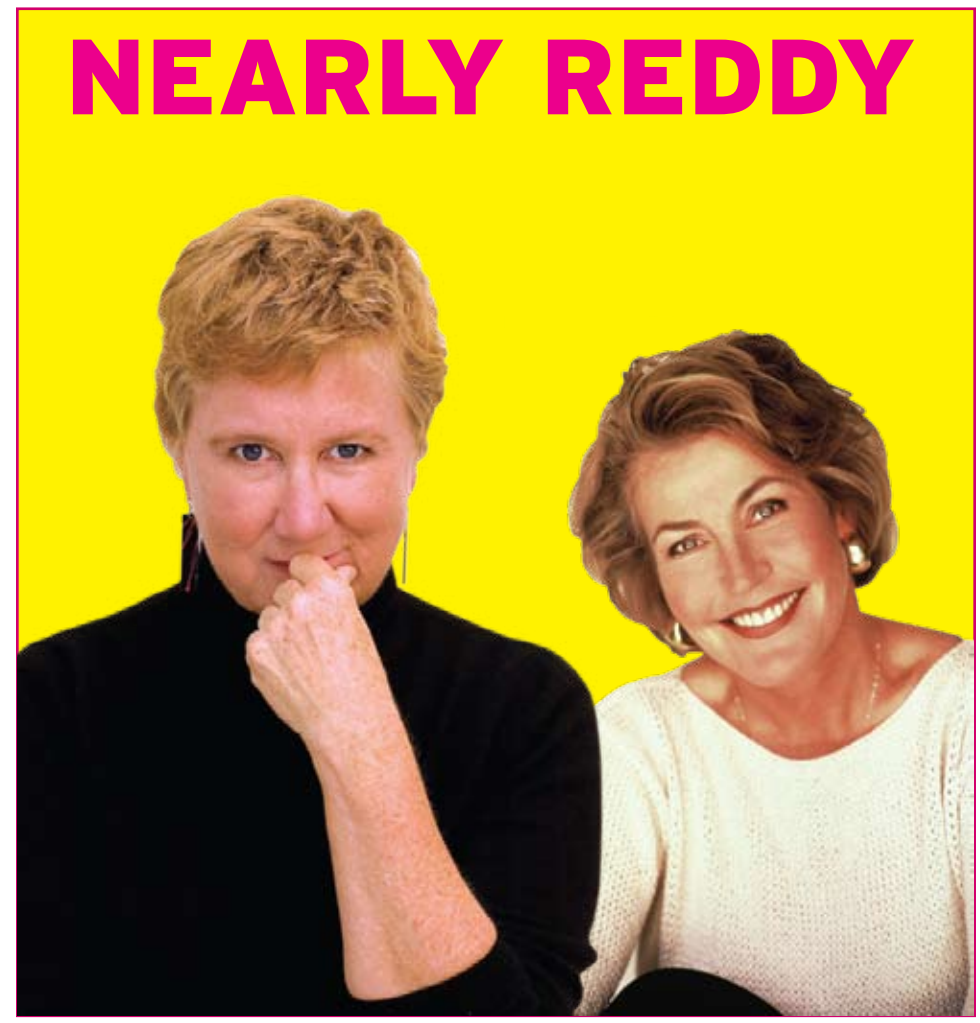
A measure that aimed to extend survivor benefits to the same-sex partners of Chicago Public School teachers fell short by a 43-67 vote after a long debate.

HB 4731 was sponsored by openly gay state Rep. Greg Harris, D-Chicago, who vowed to keep fighting for its passage despite the setback. The measure would have extended survivor benefits, at no cost to taxpayers, to the same-sex partners of Chicago Public School teachers who have passed away.

"I think people were just not ready for it," said Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) lobbyist Traci Cobb-Evans. Cobb-Evans added that although CTU was very clear about why such a bill was needed, she thought many legislators still believed its passage would "open up a can of worms."

CTU is an organization of educators seeking to advance teacher's rights, improve learning

Turn to page 6



Holly Near (left) and Helen Reddy, who were prominent members of the '70s music scene, will be in Chicago this week at separate events. Read interviews with them on pages 11 and 12, respectively.



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LGBT activists plan to be a very visible part of the May 1 immigration march. See pages 1,6.

Photo from 2007 march by Emmanuel Garcia



Windy City Times' new monthly automobile section (which features vehicles such as the 2008 Saab 9-3, above) debuts this week. See page 13.

Photo courtesy of Saab

www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

This week's online-only features include:

—Media Watch

—Dana Rudolph's Mombian column

—Theater: Candles in the Sun

—Pop Making Sense, which features, among others, George Michael (right)

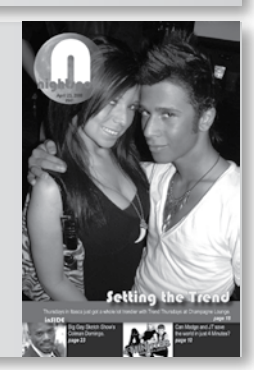


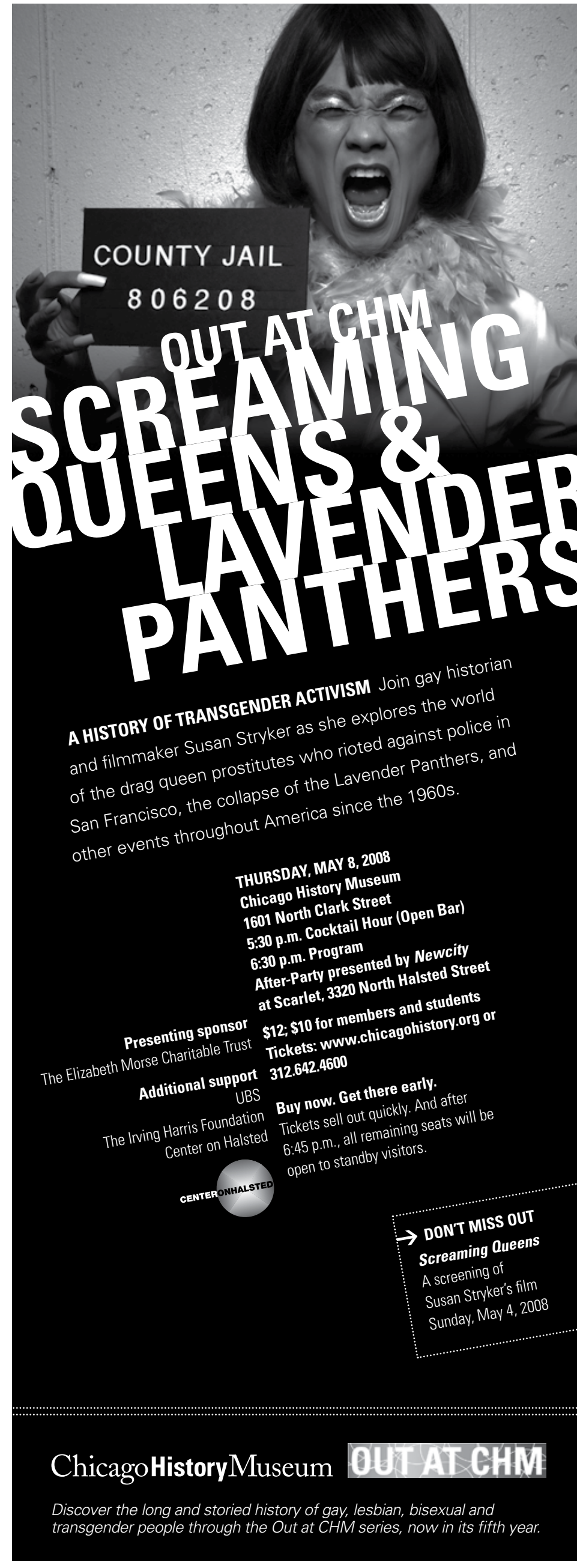
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nightspots

SETTING THE TREND
Thursdays in Itasca just got a whole lot trendier with Trend Thursdays at Champagne Lounge.
Photo by Kirk Williamson







Marianne Duddy-Burke. Photo provided by Duddy-Burke

Dignity confronts the pope

BY BOB ROEHR

Gay and lesbian Catholics were among those who flocked to events during Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the United States, which concluded April 20, but there were few smiles upon their faces. They came to protest the career of a man noted for his anti-gay positions in his service to the church.

"We are holding up the Pope's words and actions to confront him with the horrific nature of the dehumanizing and demeaning language he has used against gay people for so long. We want to contrast that with the tremendous gains that GLBT Catholics have made in the Church in recent decades," said Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of Dignity USA.

"It is fair to say that this pope has used more shameful rhetoric abut the gay and lesbian community than any religious leader of the modern era." Duddy-Burke added that his continued opposition to the use of condoms to reduce the spread of HIV "has left him with the blood of millions on his hands."

"He needs to own up to the damage that his policies have caused. And see all of the ways that dogma triumphing over compassion is the antithesis of the gospel he is supposed to represent," she said.

"We present ourselves to Pope Benedict to remind him that God does not make mistakes and welcomes all of us into the Church. We expect as the Vicar of Christ, so should he," said the Washington chapter of Dignity in a statement released just days before the pope's plane touched down.

It noted that the chapter was founded in 1972 in the cafeteria of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the campus of Catholic University, where the Pope met with his bishops Wed., April 16.

The pope, in an earlier role when he was still Cardinal Ratzinger, was called "Rottweiler" by some for his tenacious defense of conservative church dogma. Those included fervent opposition to abortion, the inclusion of women in the priesthood, homosexuality and same-sex marriage.

One of those actions included banning Dignity from meeting on Church property. The now deceased Rev. Timothy S. Healy, president of Georgetown University, would later say that evicting Dignity from the campus chapel was the thing he was most ashamed of in his career.

Dignity USA released an open letter On the Pastoral Care of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender People April 16. The four-page, 10-point letter called for full inclusion of GLBT Catholics in the life of the Church; a revision of the theology of sexuality to acknowledge the expression of divine love "in the absence of possible procreation;" and the acceptance of both civil marriage of same-sex couples and the blessing of their relationships within the Church.

Duddy-Burke said it is "an attempt to contrast what the Church offers at this point with what gay and lesbian Catholics, their families, and gay-friendly parishes are already offering for people."

"At the grassroots level, we don't face the same kind of day-to-day difficulties in our lives that we faced twenty years ago, or even ten years ago," she said.

She pointed to a number of parishes that consider themselves gay-friendly, and "even those that do not officially do outreach to the community have gay and lesbian members who are perfectly happy and content there."

Duddy-Burke said there are gay-straight alliances on more than forty campuses of Catholic colleges and universities across the nation.

"All of those Catholics shouldn't feel like they are oddities because they love their gay kids or siblings, we want to let them know that they are actually in the mainstream. It is the Pope who is out of touch."

Two medical marijuana bills introduced in House

BY BOB ROEHR

Two bills introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives April 17 would put a serious dent into federal prosecution of medical use of marijuana and offer protection to patients who use it.

Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., is a leader on both measures. The Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act (HR 5842) would reschedule marijuana from a Schedule I to a Schedule II drug under the Controlled Substances Act. The change would allow physicians to recommend use of marijuana under conditions set by state law.

An Act to Remove Federal Penalties for the Personal Use of Marijuana by Responsible Adults (HR 5843) would eliminate federal penalties for the possession of small amounts (up to 100 grams) or not-for-profit transfer of small amounts (up to one ounce, 28.3 grams) of marijuana. It would create a civil penalty of $100 for the public use of marijuana.

It would not legalize growing or distribution of commercial quantities of marijuana, nor would it affect any state laws.

"When doctors recommend the use of marijuana for their patients and states are willing to permit it, I think it's wrong for the federal government to subject either the doctors or the patients to criminal prosecution," Frank said in introducing the measures.

"Literally, to make a 'federal case' out of it is wholly disproportionate to the activity involved. We do not have federal criminal prohibitions against drinking alcoholic beverages, and there are generally no criminal penalties for the use of tobacco at the state and federal levels for adults. There is no rational argument for treating marijuana so differently from these other substances."

Continuing on that, Frank said, "I think it is poor law enforcement to keep on the books legislation that establishes as a crime something which in fact society does not seriously wish to prosecute. In my view, having federal law enforcement agents engaged in the prosecution of people who are personally using marijuana is a waste of scarce resources better used for serious crimes."



Rep. Barney Frank. Photo by Rex Wockner

Keith Stroup, legal counsel for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), said no decriminalization bill has been introduce in 37 years. "If passed by Congress, this legislation would legalize the possession, use, and non-profit transfer of marijuana by adults for the first time since 1937."

The bill incorporates the basic recommendations of the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse, which was issued during the Nixon administration, in 1972.

"Congressman Frank's bill represents a major step toward sanity in federal marijuana policy," said the Marijuana Policy Project's Aaron Houston. "The decades-long federal war on marijuana protects no one and in fact has ruined countless lives. Most Americans do not believe that simple possession of a small amount of marijuana should be a criminal matter, and it's time Congress listened to the voters."

The lead sponsor of the medical marijuana bill is Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas. The bipartisan group of initial cosponsors includes Sam Farr, D-Calif., Frank, Maurice Hinchey, D-N.Y., and Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., They had supported similar legislation in earlier sessions of Congress but no hearings were ever held on those bills.

Caren Woodson, speaking for Americans for Safe Access, said, "By disregarding marijuana's medical efficacy, and undermining efforts to implement state laws, the federal government is willfully placing hundreds of thousands of sick Americans in harms way." The nationwide group advocates for medical marijuana.

A study published online in the Journal of Pain April 17 offered further evidence of the utility of marijuana in reducing pain. In this study, conducted at the University of California-Davis, patients experiencing neuropathic pain from diabetes, spinal injury and multiple sclerosis smoked marijuana cigarettes containing controlled amounts of the active ingredient THC.

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Windy City Times is seeking to recognize 30 more outstanding LGBT individuals (and their allies) who are under 30 years of age.

SEEKING NOMINATIONS!!!

DEADLINE: FRI., APRIL 25

Nominees should be under 30 years of age and should have made some substantial contributions to the LGBT community, whether in the fields of entertainment, politics, health and/or other areas.

The nomination should be 100 words or less and should state what achievements or contributions the nominee has made. Nominators should include their own names and contact information as well as the contact information of the nominee.

Please email nominations to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com or fax to Andrew Davis' attention to 773-871-7609.

Following the policy instituted in 2005 that individuals can only win once, those have won the award since that year are ineligible for this year's awards. Honorees will be notified in May and recognized in June. The 2008 Awards are co-sponsored by Windy City Times, Center on Halsted, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago House, and Howard Brown Health Center.

THE WINDY CITY TIMES NINTH ANNUAL 30 UNDER THIRTY AWARDS

Kevin Clewer: The Search Continues

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Openly gay Chicagoan Kevin Clewer was found murdered in his home on the 3400 block of North Elaine on March 24, 2004, having died from multiple stab wounds. (He would have celebrated his 36th birthday on April 7, 2008.)

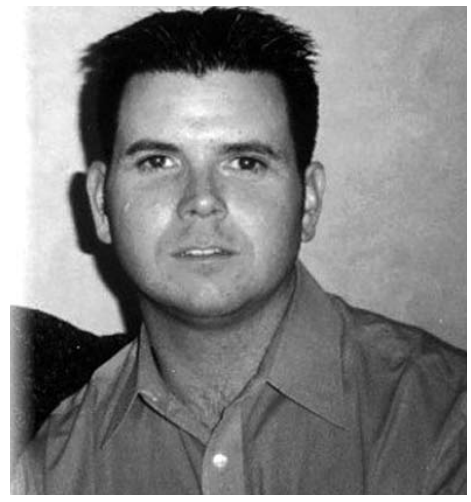
Clewer's killer has not been apprehended. However, Ron Clewer, Kevin's brother, still harbors hope that Kevin's case will have proper closure and that the murderer will be caught. Ron recently talked with Windy City Times about the case and his family.

Windy City Times: What's the latest regarding leads in your brother's case?

Ron Clewer: I haven't spoken to the detective recently, but back in November Kevin's case had been changed from the detective who had been handling it to a cold-case squad. They were going to start at the beginning and review all the stuff. The detectives have said that not much has happened in the past year [although] they had followed up on a couple of leads, [including] one somewhere east of Chicago, which turned out to be a dead end.

WCT: Are they still looking for someone who fits the description of "Fernando" [the person of interest wanted for questioning, featured on www.4chicagokev.com]?

RC: Well, supposedly all indications are that Kevin met this gentleman in a bar that night—but the one thing that I was surprised to hear is that they're not necessarily saying that "Fernando" killed Kevin but that he was one of the last people to see him alive, so they'd like to talk to him. [The detectives] don't know if "Fernando" isn't rising to the surface, if you will, because he did so something or if he's scared he's going to be blamed for something he didn't do, so they're still looking to the community to help uncover where he is.



Kevin Clewer. Photo courtesy of Ron Clewer

WCT: Is there something the family does on Kevin's birthday, like a memorial?

RC: We were doing public memorials prior to the passing of my parents. [Clewer's parents, Pamela Lynn Clewer Hansen Cunningham and James Clewer, died within weeks of each other in 2005.] It took a while to get beyond the numbness of it all.

As a family, we had been pushing to find answers to Kevin's case. When my mother passed, I was talking with the media and it was kind of hard. When my father passed away, it was too much; I had to step back for a little bit and say, "I just can't do this right now."

I think that kind of pushed folks away [and] it's been really hard to express interest in it. I realize that it's not out there any more and that there are a lot of other things out there, but I put up a wall to protect myself and pushed the media away, which was not my intent at all; I just couldn't do it.

WCT: How have you been able to deal with everything?

RC: I don't know. With my mom, it all happened so damn fast, to be honest with you. With Kevin's passing, I was very focused on finding answers—but my parents were aging and making themselves ill over it. When my mom got sick, it was like this light bulb went off; she didn't even know she was sick. She had lung cancer and cancer throughout all her internal organs. She thought she was tired and that she had some kind of cold.

She went into the hospital on a Sunday and passed away that Wednesday after she was put into a medically induced coma on that Monday. … I went by the hospital that Wednesday night. I started to doze off and the monitor went off; they said it was nothing, but I had this bizarre feeling. So I stood up and said to her, "When they bring you out of this, if it's really serious, it's going to be painful for you. I don't want you to fight it because I know you really feel you need to be with Kevin. I want you to do what's best for you." Two minutes later, her monitor went off. They told me that she was going into cardiac arrest, and the doctor [who they got on the phone] told me that my mom had lung cancer and brain cancer, so I had to make a decision [whether to revive her]. I said, "I don't want her to suffer for me," and she passed away 30 seconds later.

Then, [a few weeks later] my dad passed away. I got a call from my dad's job. Even though I was told that everything would be OK because they told me that he had [merely] passed out, I knew [the truth]. It all just kind of happened, and I don't know how I found the strength.

Anyone with information should contact Detective Steve Schorsch at 312-746-9690 or Cook County Crimestoppers at 800-535-7867 (for those who wish to remain anonymous), or visit www.4ChicagoKev.com.

Series to tackle Black LGBT youth issues

Due to a growing concern regarding issues in the African-American LGBT community, The House of Avant-Garde/School of Opulence will hold an upcoming town hall meeting.

The town hall, hosted by Father Tommy Avant-Garde and Miss Tyanna Milan, will address issues in the young African American LGBT community such as homelessness, healthcare, education and more. The upcoming meeting is part of a series of town hall discussions called "By Popular Demand."

The event will take place April 29, 6-10 p.m., at 637 S. Dearborn. Call 773-522-4344 for more information.

Dr. Laura nominated again

For at least the third year, controversial personality Dr. Laura Schlessinger has been nominated for induction to the National Radio Hall of Fame (NRHOF), housed at Chicago's Museum of Broadcast Communications (MBC).

Schlessinger is nominated in the National-Active category. Other nominees in that category include Howard Stern and Bob Costas.

Another controversial nominee is "Focus on the Family," founded by Dr. James Dobson in the mid-1970s. The Focus on the Family organization has boycotted companies that it feels supports gay rights, including Proctor & Gamble.

The national online balloting—which is free, but requires registration—will begin May 1 and ends at midnight July 15. See www.radiohof.org.



MARCH from cover

merous rainbow flags dotting the rallies.

For Aurora Pineda and fellow members of Amigas Latinas, immigration became an issue when they came into contact with immigrant Latinas who were not out. They feared coming out or getting divorced, not because of domestic-violence issues, but because they'd find themselves without legal status: Married queer immigrants face different consequences than citizens because they lose their immigration status as the spouses of citizens/permanent residents.

That raises the issue of binational couples. The mainstream gay-rights community emphasizes the issues of those who are either separated from non-citizen/non-permanent resident partners or feel compelled to leave the country to be with partners; the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA) is supposed to remedy that by granting the same rights of sponsorship of partners to same-sex couples that opposite-sex couples have. GLN's Andy Thayer, for one, spoke at length about the issue and refers to the "legalization of binational couples."

However, the UAFA only benefit those already with legal status. Even straight married couples can no longer use marriage as an immigration solution. In 1996, the Clinton administration passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. The penalty for undocumented people, even those married to citizens, can be severe: They can be required to return to their home country for as long as 10 years, and can only return to the U.S. after successfully petitioning to return from within said country —through a complex and often onerous process.

For Pineda, family reunification is a major issue for queer immigrants. She and her partner Karen Rothstein-Pineda have an infant, are active in creating a Spanish PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), and she speaks frequently about the need to recognize the legitimacy of queer families. Pineda doesn't believe that only queers within traditional families should count and is critical of moralistic overtones in LGBTQ organizing: "The reality is that once you pull those doors of your house [shut] behind you, you might be doing the same thing the person [you criticized] is doing. Who cares?"

The reality of the different social structures occupied by queer or non-queer immigrant youth resonates for Unzueta, who works with 40 immigrant youth, of whom about 15 are queer. She recalls one youth worried about her undocumented mother, who was also being harassed at



LGBT individuals were among the participants at last year's march. Photo courtesy of GLN

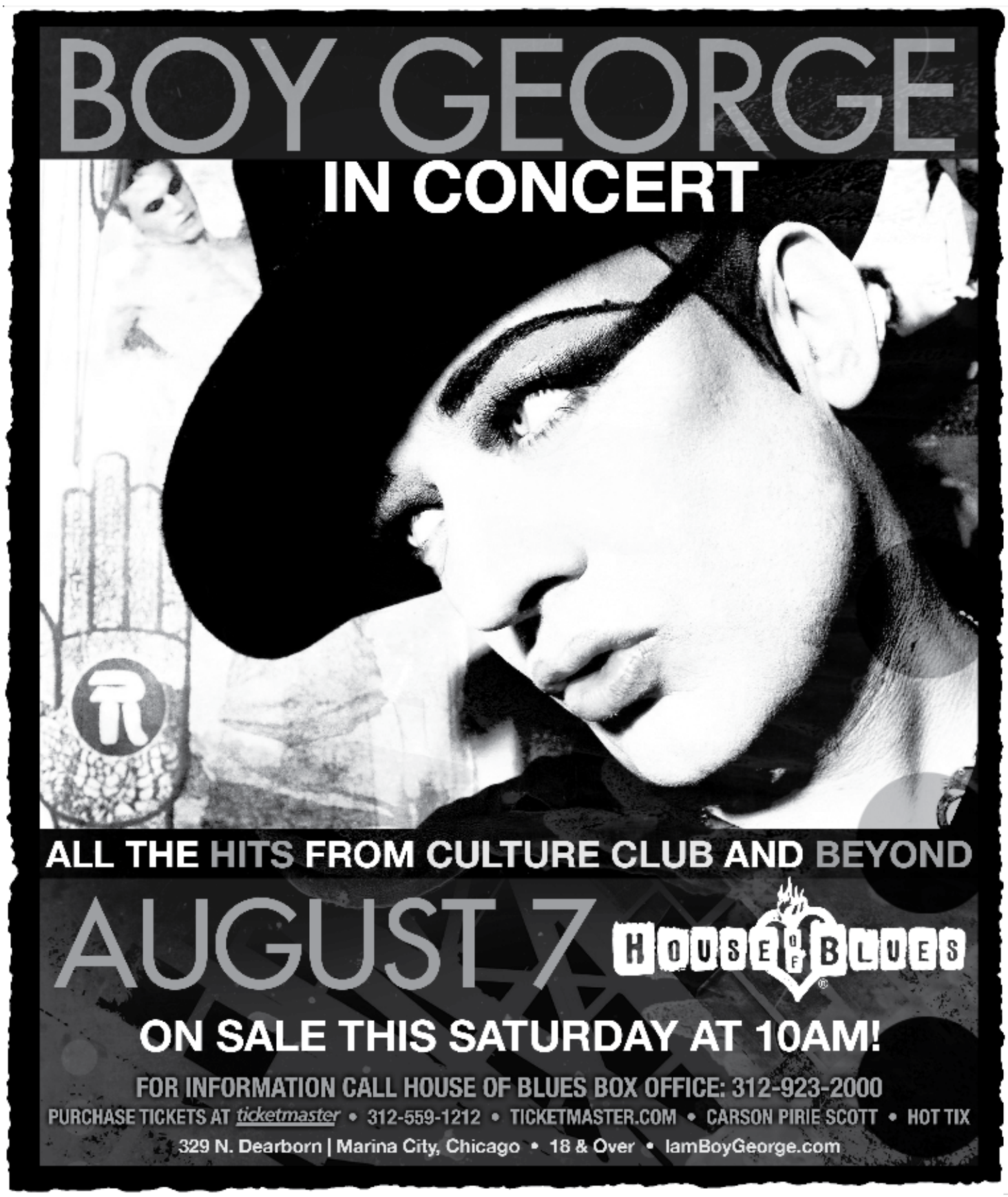
work. Like many queer youth, queer immigrant youth can become homeless upon coming out. For Unzueta, access to education is, therefore, a high priority. The recent DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act troubles many immigration activists, because it promises access to college and legalization for undocumented youth—on the condition that they serve two years in the military. Many see this as taking advantage of already disenfranchised youth. Unzueta points out that it's especially problematic for immigrant youth who may be anti-war and for queers who must face "a homophobic institution" like the army.

There are other issues that queers are concerned about. For many years now, several groups nationwide, including advocacy groups like National Immigrant Justice Center, New York's Queers for Economic Justice and the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago, as well as local activist groups like CLIA (Chicago LGBTQ Immigrant Alliance), have called for an end to the ban on HIV-positive travelers and immigrants. In addition, there's a push for allowing more queer immigrants to ask for asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation. (Then-Attorney General Janet Reno legalized the measure in 1994.)

So, there will be as many approaches to queer immigration as rainbow flags on May Day. For queers and non-queer immigrants alike, participation itself can be stressful, especially if they have prior criminal records for even minor infractions. But queer organizers are optimistic about creating a safe space as well as solidarity with the larger immigrant-rights movement. Asked about what non-immigrant queer groups ought to be mindful of at a march that's about legalization of the undocumented and organized by an immigrant rights coalition, Unzueta is cautiously optimistic: "I hope that it is with a feeling of solidarity rather than with a feeling of righteousness. Yes, it's important to fight for inclusion of LGBTQ people within immigrant rights, but the march calls for very specific things: legalization, worker's rights, education. This would be a space to create community."

On May 1, look for the Rainbow Flags in the Union Park at 11 a.m in order to join the contingent, or call GLN at 773-209-1187 to find it.

On April 30, CLIA will hold a forum: Immigration at the Margins: Domestic Violence, Sex Work, HIV, and Trafficking at the Center on Halsted, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. See www.centeronhalsted.org.



TEACHERS from cover

conditions and promote quality public education.

Among issues brought up during the debate were concerns over the bill being "discriminatory" against unmarried straight couples and that the level of commitment in same-sex partnerships was vague and undefined.

In a statement made following the failure of the bill, Harris said that he hoped the passage of a civil unions law in Illinois would help solve these concerns that were brought up during the extensive debate.

"Otherwise, these arguments seem to be a smokescreen for continuing to deny fair and equal treatment for all Illinois families," Harris said in the statement.

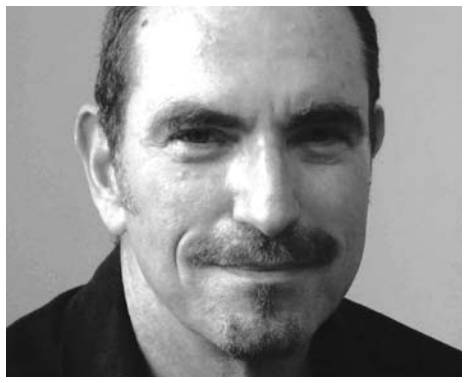
Chicago-area state representatives largely supported the bill.

"I think it's going to take years for people to realize it simply helps those few teachers who are being treated unfairly," Cobb-Evans said. Cobb-Evans said that the bill would have impacted only about seven households if it became law, CTU estimates. Only a handful of Chicago teachers have qualified domestic partners.

Although the bill's failure is a disappointment to CTU, Cobb-Evans said the organization is pleased that the bill at least made it out of committee and onto the floor for a third reading and standard debate, as opposed to last year.

"We'll just start anew next year," Cobb-Evans said.

She added that CTU plans to work toward getting more CTU members involved and having one-on-one conversations with lawmakers to see what is holding them back on supporting the bill.



Dr. David Halperin (above) was one of the sex forum's speakers.

Forum attendees talk about sex

BY AMY WOOTEN

Sex and gay men's health were the focal points of a recent rousing discussion at the Center on Halsted.

Project CRYSP and Lifelube.org co-sponsored its first community forum about gay men's health. "'Good' Sex? 'Bad' Sex? Just What Do Gay Men Want, Anyway?" was hosted by Fausto Fernos and Marc Felion (Feast of Fools podcast), and featured panel experts Dr. David Halperin (author of What Do Gay Men Want?), DePaul University's Dr. Gary Harper and Northwestern University's Dr. Michele Morales. Although many topics were touched on—from crystal meth to the idea that younger gay men think HIV is a manageable disease—the conversation frequently returned to the stereotyping of the community and communication.

The conversation started by exposing the negative light often cast on gay men by research and science.

Researchers face a "double bind," said Morales. Although it is important to acknowledge the real problems that face a community, such as substance abuse, sometimes focusing on these issues "constructs the idea we are not well as a community," she said. Morales said its no coincidence that homosexuality and alcoholism emerged as identities around the same time roughly 100 years ago.

Morales pointed out that research tends to focus on the few variables that differ between gay and straight men, and exaggerates findings.

"We are invested in finding problems in our community to show that homophobia and discrimination exists," Morales said. "We have, in fact, backed ourselves into a corner."

"As a society, we tend to demonize what gay men do," Harper said.

Morales stated that it's hard to find medical journals highlighting ways in which gay men are healthier than straight men. In scientific literature, "there's no room for us to be well," she said.

According to the speakers, the gay community also plays a role in this. Harper, who agreed with Morales, discussed how gay men separate themselves from straight men, while youth are redefining what it means to be gay.

"Sometimes we put ourselves in our own boxes," Harper said, adding that gay men also help perpetuate stereotypes and restrictions, for example, of "tops" and "bottoms."

Adding to the problem, Halperin discussed, are the inaccurate psychological concepts used to describe gay men. Researchers are trying to figure out the inner lives of gay men and why they engage in risky sex by researching "what makes us behave so badly," Halperin said.

He added that clichés that gay men are acting irrationally or can't control their behavior are being used to describe gay men, and these clichés are damaging.

In fact, Halperin said, gay men have been putting their heads together and taking steps to prevent infection for years. They are also trying to move beyond the old condom rule and trying to explore other means of prevention.

During a question-and-answer session, there was some lively debate on Halperin's claims that it's okay to try other prevention methods, such as serosorting (people of the same HIV status engaging in sexual activities with one another), which was backed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

Project CRYSP will hold a second community forum June 12 at Center on Halsted. The topic has not yet been decided.

Read the entire article at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

NU hosts queer media symposium

BY YASMIN NAIR

Is queer visibility always desirable? What are the politics and conditions of visibility? Who gets to produce the representations and who gets to consume them?

Two queer scholars engaged such questions as part of an April 18 queer media symposium at Northwestern University, 1800 Sherman, Evanston, organized by graduate students Margo Miller and Hollis Griffith, and sponsored by the Center for Screen Cultures and the Department of Radio, TV and Film.

Kara Keeling, assistant professor at the University of Southern California, presented "Queer Times/Black Futures," about queer histories and futures in cinema. She compared Isaac Julien's 1988 film Looking for Langston, about Langston Hughes, to the 2005 documentary The Aggressives, directed by Daniel Peddle. The latter follows six young masculine-identified women in New York. These include Marquise, who joins the Army but disappears just before the Iraq invasion.

According to Keeling, Langston simultaneously "renders the Harlem Renaissance legible" and locates Black gay desire in a project of recovering queer moments that have been "hidden from history." The Aggressives, however, organizes time idiosyncratically and, except for the war, it is usually difficult to establish when things happen. Marquise's disappearance might prompt audiences to ask "Where is she?" However, Keeling asked about the ethical implications of looking for someone marked by a "refusal to remain bound by the visual economy" of the film and of the surveillance of the army: "the benefits of visibility are unevenly distributed." Keeling suggested that rather than ask where Marquise had gone, we ought to ask, "*When* is she?" By this, Keeling was referring to the need to consider how young, trans-identified and disenfranchised African Americans try to resist the surveillance of institutions like the army, seen as their only escape, by leaving the literal and cinematic timeline of the film. In that sense, for some, "a queer Black future looks like no future at all."

Kelly Kessler, an assistant professor at Rutgers University, presented "Gabbin', Glammin', and Growin': The Evolution of The L-Word's Online Community." Kessler is both a fan and theorist of the show, and a member of Second Life, an interactive site that allows participants to live in a computer-generated virtual simulation of The L-Word. Much of her talk was based on a live interactive demonstration of her participation in the fan group. According to Kessler, Second Life, created by the show's producers only gives the illusion of democracy and diversity. According to Kessler, avatars (online personae) require people to subscribe to gender roles. In addition, participation requires considerable technological dexterity and is defined by access to funds—adding accessories, even basics like hairstyles and clothing, requires participants to pay extra. Women are reduced to feminizing stereotypes like full makeup and long hair; the default persona is young and highly sexualized. All this means that Second Life only "reinforces the cultural, economic, and ideological hierarchies of the show."

YWEP youth speak out

BY YASMIN NAIR

"If you're tired of not being heard, or being overlooked, this is the place for you." With these words, a member of Chicago's YWEP (Young Women's Empowerment Project), and the emcee and host for the evening, opened the evening's speak-out. The event, which took place at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Latino Cultural Center, 750 S. Halsted, was part of the first National Week of Action for Reproductive Justice, launched by the Third Wave Foundation, a feminist organization that focuses on young women and transgender youth. YWEP works with female-identified street-based youth 12-23 involved with the sex trade, whether by choice or for survival.

Approximately 50 youth and a few adults attended the entirely youth-led and -created program, which began with a presentation about the issues facing participants. A YWEP member spoke about the "poor and shitty health care" that street-based youth endure, compounded by medical professionals who either provide little access to contraception or coerce them into having unwanted abortions. In addition, these youth are particularly affected by the combination of parental notification laws and increased criminalization of young people in the sex trade, which doubles their chances of homelessness.

According to Cindy Ibarra, communications coordinator for YWEP, the aim of events like the speak-out was to foster leadership skills in street-based youth who are multiply disenfranchised for their actions; their gender and sexual identities; and their class background. They are also disenfranchised by mainstream organizing around reproductive rights because of structural issues, such as activist meetings are held at times when youth are unable to attend.

Performances included short skits by the Empowered Fe-Fes, a group focused on the needs of young girls with disabilities Others read pieces that ranged from the personal—one youth read a poem to a boyfriend—to spoken word performances about child sexual abuse and being kicked out of homes. Also on hand were youth representatives from groups like Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, who urged the audience to lobby against abstinence-only programs; and youth who had experienced abuse in incarceration and/or the mental health system.

See www.youarepriceless.org for more.



NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY AMY WOOTEN

According to Queerty.com, **an Ohio businessman just gave Kent State University the school's largest LGBT donation.** Harry Jackson gave the university $2 million to be used to improve gay rights activism among its students through scholarships, speakers and more.

Florida gay marriage foes launched a 10-city campaign in support of a constitutional amendment that would ban same-sex marriage in the state, according to the Sun-Sentinal. Amendment 2, which would define marriage as between a man and a woman, will appear on the November ballot. Conservatives are traveling the Sunshine State, primarily visiting Baptist churches in the hopes of garnering additional support. So far, 27 other states in the U.S. have passed anti-gay marriage amendments.

Over 50,000 schools across the U.S. will participate in **the 12th annual National Day of Silence,** which will take place April 25. The annual day is meant to highlight the need to change school policies to protect LGBT youth. This year, the GLSEN-supported event will honor the death of junior high school student Lawrence King, who was murdered by a fellow classmate because of his sexual orientation and gender expression.

Same-sex marriage in Iowa would increase the state budget by over $5 million each year, according a recent study. The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law released research that estimates that permitting same-sex marriage in the Midwestern state would have a positive impact on the state budget—roughly $5.3 million each year due to increases in state income and sales tax, as well as cost savings. Read about the study at www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute.

Chelsea Clinton took part in a gay bar crawl in Philadelphia in advance of the April 22 primary in Pennsylvania, MSNBC.com reported. As she went around the Center City neighborhood—and was led by Gov. Ed Rendell—admirers besieged her. Others with Clinton as she visited nightspots such as Woody's, Bump and Sisters included actors Rob Reiner and Robert Gant.

CNN personality Richard Quest was arrested in New York's City Central Park April 18 and charged with loitering and criminal possession of a controlled substance after police found him with meth; a rope around his neck that was tied to his genitals; and a sex toy in his boot, according to The New York Post. Quest's unidentified male companion allegedly received a summons for not carrying any identification.

The Vermont Commission on Family Recognition and Protection issued its most recent report, **but did not make any recommendations to change state law to allow for same-sex marriages**, according to 365Gay.com. The report summarizes hearings where LGBT individuals complained about discrimination.

Korb tells Congress to repeal DADT

BY BOB ROEHR

Former Reagan administration Assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence J. Korb called for repeal of the ban on gays serving opening in the U.S. military known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). The remarks came in prepared in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee April 16.

The government should "get rid of outmoded social restrictions," including DADT, that are "counterproductive to military readiness," Korb said. "The Army and Marine Corps cannot afford to place unnecessary obstacles in the way of qualified men and women who want to serve."

He noted that "over the past 10 years more than 10,000 personnel have been discharged as a result of this policy, including 800 with skills deemed 'mission critical,' such as pilots, combat engineers, and linguists. These are the very job functions for which the military has experienced personnel shortfalls."

The comments were not new for Korb, who has strongly supported repeal for a number of years. However, it was unusual for a person of his stature to raise the issue of DADT during a hearing on broader military matters.

Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-Calif., is the lead sponsor of the Military Readiness Enhancement Act (HR 1246), which would repeal DADT. It has 142 co-sponsors. Supporters hope to hold a hearing on the bill later this year. There were similar expectations last year but no hearing.

Aubrey Sarvis, executive director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), said, "Mr. Korb's remarks are a reminder that many leaders within the defense community support repeal" of the ban. It "forces our military to dismiss talented troops at a time when we are struggling to recruit and retain service members."

WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

Eurovision attendees fear anti-gay attacks

Far-right groups in Serbia reportedly have threatened to harm the throngs of gay people who typically travel to attend the campy Eurovision Song Contest.

The 53rd extravaganza will be in Belgrade this year because Serbian singer Marija Serifovic won last year's contest, which was held in Helsinki. Forty-three countries have entered the contest, which culminates May 24.

The European Pride Organisers Association has been pressuring the European Broadcasting Union to guarantee the safety of gay attendees, but is dissatisfied with the response it has received.

In a letter to EPOA Human Rights Coordinator Kurt Krickler, the EBU's executive supervisor for the contest, Svante Stockselius, said: "The EBU does not separate our fans into groups based on their religion, colour, sexual preferences or others. We have a guarantee for the safety of delegations, press and fans issued by the president of Serbia. This guarantee includes all."

Krickler wrote back: "We are not really convinced and reassured by the guarantees of the Serbian authorities, including the Serbian president, given to the EBU. ... EPOA wants to stress that we will certainly also hold the EBU accountable and responsible if homophobic incidents of violence occur during and immediately after the ESC as we have explicitly warned you well in advance of the specific situation and the exceptional homophobic attitudes in Belgrade and Serbia. The EBU could hardly pretend they were not alerted and aware of the danger and likelihood of homophobic attacks during the ESC."

In an earlier letter to Stockselius, Krickler cited a "poor record of human rights in Serbia in general and regarding the human rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender (LGBT) people in particular."

"In June 2001, the first gay pride march in Belgrade was brutally attacked by a huge violent crowd of nationalist extremists and hooligans; dozens of people were left massively hurt and injured in the streets while the police failed to provide adequate protection," Krickler said, providing a YouTube link to bolster his assertion.

Egypt jails more men for debauchery

Egypt sent five more men to prison April 9 for "habitual practice of debauchery."

The men, arrested in an ongoing crackdown mostly on HIV-positive people, will spend three years in jail followed by an additional three years when they will have to stay at the police station nightly from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

The men were abused, tortured, made to confess and force-tested for HIV after their arrests, according to human-rights groups.

Their lawyer has lodged an appeal with Egypt's highest court, the Court of Cassation.

In January, four other men were imprisoned for a year on the same charges.

Aussie TV anchor comes out

Veteran Melbourne, Australia, TV anchorman Peter Hitchener, 62, came out April 6 in an interview with the Sunday Herald Sun.

"Given that we are on private issues of private life, I am choosing to share with you today that part of my life that I have not spoken about before: that I am gay," Hitchener said.

"That is part of who I am and with that disclosure, or acknowledgment, I just also need to say I am still the person I was yesterday. I am still the same person and I remain committed to my job and my family and my service and so on.

"I have never been asked about it before," Hitchener said. "There is never a right time, or an easy time, to talk about these personal issues, but this is the right time to say it and to move on."

Hitchener's boss, National Nine News news director Michael Venus, said the network fully supports Hitchener's move.

"I am acutely aware of how difficult a decision this has been for Peter," Venus said. "Indeed I know he has agonized over it for a very long time. But it is a decision which has our full support and in no way diminishes his standing as one of Australia's pre-eminent broadcasters."

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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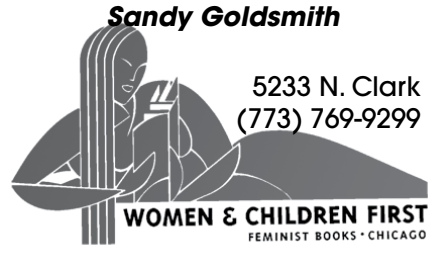
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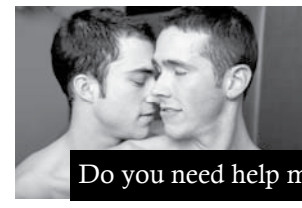
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Samuel Allerton and his son, Robert, in the 1870s. Image courtesy of the Chicago History Museum.

As part of the ongoing Chicago Gay History Project, Windy City Times will present a series on Chicago gay history events and people over the coming months. This essay focuses on philanthropist Robert Allerton.

Adopting new ways: Robert Allerton

BY MARIE J. KUDA

Robert Allerton (1873–1964) was the only son of Samuel Allerton (1828–1914), who had cornered the Chicago hog market and made a corollary fortune (Union Stockyards, First National Bank). Samuel had 40,000 acres of farm and ranch land in rural Illinois and a home on Prairie Avenue among the other civic leaders. After his wife died, Samuel married her younger sister, and Robert was raised by a stepmother barely 15 years older than he, whom he adored.

To escape the city in summer, Samuel built the "Folly" on 26 acres at the narrows of Lake Geneva in Wisconsin. Robert watched as young architect Henry Lord Gay built the imposing redwood structure. His stepmother Agnes (1858–1924) loved the Folly and, with young Robert in tow, created extensive gardens there.

Robert skipped college to go abroad with a friend and study art. At 24, he destroyed all his work and returned to the United States. Samuel gave him a few thousand acres in Piatt County; Robert had architect John Joseph Borie build a 32-bedroom Georgian mansion. He created perennial gardens, placed sculpture throughout, and set aside a 40-acre stand of virgin timber before settling into the life of a gentleman "farmer." He continued traveling extensively to purchase furniture and art for the new house.

Robert was the first of many generous donors to enrich the collections of the nascent Art Institute of Chicago (his gifts of major 19th- and 20th-century art included Rodin's six-foot bronze sculpture, Adam). He lent sculpture and paintings from his personal collection for exhibition at both the 1893 and 1933 World's Fairs. A 1970 Art Institute guidebook states that "the original Michigan Avenue edifice was named to honor Allerton for his long service as a trustee, officer and benefactor of the museum."

In 1922 he met young John Wyatt Gregg (1899–1985) at an event at the University of Illinois in Urbana, and they decided to make a life together. They traveled extensively from Thanksgiving through the winter each year, returning to Chicago and the "farm" in the spring. As a concession to their age difference, they presented themselves as "father and son." When his stepmother Agnes died, Robert destroyed the Folly in Wisconsin and built the Allerton Hotel on North Michigan Avenue in Chicago (its penthouse club, the Tip Top Tap, had a reputation as a gay-friendly meeting place until it closed in the mid-1960s).

In the 1930s on a stopover in Hawaii, Robert fell in love with the Lawai-Kai river valley on Kauai. He bought a 54-acre plot and constructed a house and gardens. Returning to Illinois briefly after World War II, he and John Gregg closed the "farm," donating almost 5,000 acres to the university. Part of the Robert Allerton Park is now designated a National Natural Landmark.

Meanwhile, the aging Robert explored the possibility of adopting Gregg. Under the law at the time, Illinois had no provision for adopting an adult. Apocryphal history credits Allerton with using his connections to initiate a revamp of statutory Illinois adoption law. A comprehensive reworking of the law (now known as 750 ILCS 50/0.01 to 50/24) passed in 1959 and, in part, permitted legal adoption of an adult provided the adult had lived in the petitioner's home for two consecutive years. John Gregg Allerton's oral history states that Robert Allerton was the first to adopt under the new law, in front of Judge Dighton of Monticello, Piatt County.

After Robert's death, the Kauai gardens and home and $1 million were given to Hawaii. The property is now part of the National Tropical Botanical Gardens.

With research contributions by William B. Kelley

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QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN PROFESSIONALLY ... that is the fear, but I guess I can't really be concerned about what will happen, because it's my truth. There is this desire in L.A. to wonder who you are and what's been blaring for me for the last three years is how can I be most authentic to myself—so this is the first time I am speaking about it [being gay] in this way." — *Actor Luke MacFarlane, who plays Scotty Wandell, character Kevin Walker's boyfriend on ABC-TV's Brothers & Sisters, to Toronto's Globe and Mail, April 15. The newspaper said the couple will marry in the May 11 season finale.*

"THE GAY PRESS MAY FEEL LIKE I'M NOT GIVING THEM enough love. But basically, all press feels that way at all times. Obviously, when you've got limited amount of time, you've got so many outlets. We tend not to do a whole bunch of specialized press. ... But I haven't been silent on gay issues. What's happened is, I speak oftentimes to gay issues to a public general audience." — *Barack Obama to Advocate.com, April 10.*

"[M]Y BIGGEST CRITICISM OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY HAS ALWAYS BEEN that we have lost a lot of members of the Republican Party here in California [including] gays and lesbians. [W]e need to go and be a party that is more inclusive. ... That's the power we have to get inside the party and to create the changes, rather than just complaining about it. ... The gay and lesbian movement, and the members, can have a tremendous impact." — *California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger speaking at the Log Cabin Republicans National Convention April 11 in San Diego.*

"I WOULD MUCH PREFER TO EXPORT HOMOSEXUALS FROM the United States than to import them into the United States because we believe that homosexuality is destructive to society." — *Peter Sprigg, vice president for policy at the Family Research Council, speaking against a pending bill that grants immigration rights to gay Americans' foreign partners, to Medill News Service, March 19.*

We need to go and be a party that is more inclusive.
—Republican Calif. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.



Photo by Rex Wockner

"I THINK YOU CAN JUDGE THE LEVEL OF SUCCESS FOR any group of people by the reaction against it. And given the reaction of the so-called Christian Right—I would put that in quotes because I don't believe they're Christians at all—I would have to say that [gay] people have been wildly successful." — *Rubyfruit Jungle author Rita Mae Brown to Time magazine, March 18.*

"I WOULD SAY THAT CUBA HAS HOMOPHOBIA LITE, NOT AGGRESSIVE. We don't have cases of persons murdered or beaten because they're gay, as happens in Europe or the USA. It's true there was a more difficult period in the 1960s and '70s, but then there was a rejection of homosexuality all over the world. [Now] we have come to recognize also the diversity of sexual orientations." — *Mariela Castro Espín, director of Cuba's National Center for Sex Education and daughter of President Raúl Castro, to the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera, March 27.*

"I LIVE IN THE CASTRO, IN SAN FRANCISCO, AND EVERYONE KNOWS what that means. The streets are teeming with homosexuals. It's just like in those horror-movie fundamentalist videos: Everyone's in leather with their bits and butts on display; murderous Baby Jane drag queens run amok day and night; gay sex is happening in the streets at all hours. There's a huge lube slide at the corner of 18th and Castro by the Bank of America, where of course, virgin straight men are sacrificed should they wander haplessly into our own little Sodom-by-the-Bay." — *Violet Blue writing at SFGate.com, April 2.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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VIEWPOINT



YASMIN NAIR

Rape: The T-shirt

Jennifer Baumgardner, otherwise known as the woman who came up with the "I had an abortion" T-shirt, recently unveiled her latest creation. This time, her T-shirt's image is of an open safe, with the words "I was raped" delicately scrawled across a note. (April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month.) The message is obvious: Rape is a secret for too many people and they need to open up about it. According to Baumgardner, the shirt allows victims " to own that experience and divest themselves of some of the shame and secrecy of it—and realize that they're not the ones that should be ashamed."

We could argue about whether or not rape is still a deeply shameful experience. That's not an unimportant question, but focusing on whether or not our cultural and legal attitudes towards rape have changed only blinds us to the fact that the T-shirt renders rape in terms of affect and understanding. It does nothing more than ask for pity for the wearer who has carried the burden of a secret.

By focusing on rape as an intensely privatized experience, we miss the fact that rape is a tool of political and economic coercion, mostly suffered by bodies with neither the resources nor the inclination to wear their experiences on T-shirts. In a time of war, rape is the first weapon of dominance visited upon the conquered. But this use of rape is hardly restricted to war zones.

Take, for instance, the issue of prisoner rape. According to the Bureau of Justice, as noted by the group Stop Prisoner Rape (SPR), "more than 6, 500 inmates in adult prisons filed reports of sexual violence in 2006 alone." A significant portion of these are youth and/or LGBTQ youth.

There is, of course, a danger that drawing such distinctions creates hierarchies of opprerssion. Even if the people raped in prison are criminals who had themselves raped others, we shouldn't classify them as deserving victims of rape. And yet, we've grown indifferent to and naturalized the fact that prison rape has become a *de facto* method of maintaining control over inmates who will probably spend their entire lives in prison because of draconian sentencing laws that inflict longer sentences for even minor crimes. They will always live within the informal and brutal sexual economy of prison time.

In short, rape has become the unacknowledged weapon of choice within mechanisms of war and systems of incarceration. The text and imagery of the rape T-shirt separates the act from the political and economic realities in which it occurs.

And what are we to do with those among us who wear these T-shirts to announce their experiences? If someone has to wear a T-shirt to "own" an experience, that's a sign he or she lacks access to professionalized care. Let's not kid ourselves that all we need to do hold hands with each other in order to help victims of rape. People respond differently to different forms of sexual assault and need different kinds of help. Are we to collectively take rape-counseling classes to help the wearers cope?

The T-shirt proves that the personal is not political. Instead, the personal now stands in for the political. People who are raped don't need another T-shirt. They need medical care—free and easily accessible—that helps them to deal with the physical harm they've endured. They need a system of justice that doesn't criminalize them, and lawyers to help them through the system.

Instead, the T-shirt puts the onus upon the wearer to create a system of "ownership" and recovery. It also creates an emotional climate around rape, the sort that furthers the notion that we not only know how to help the victims, but how to punish the criminals. It's no surprise that there's also a T-shirt that declares, "Dead men don't rape." We have privatized victimhood and are now privatizing criminalization.

Ultimately, the T-shirt creates a shamanistic aura around the raped, assuming that they have privileged access to experience. It operates on the assumption that nothing that the non-raped might say to grapple with the complexities of rape can equal the wearer's rape.

Let me put it this way: If I told you that I was raped, would you read this column differently? Would you be more or less willing to validate my critique and analysis? Why?

E-mail Yasmin Nair at welshzen@yahoo.com. She also blogs at www.bilerico.com.

LETTERS

Lobbying for civil unions

On Wed., April 9, Equality Illinois and hundreds of volunteers went to the Capitol Building in Springfield to lobby legislators to pass the Civil Union Act introduced by State Rep. Greg Harris. I want to extend my support and appreciation for this mission. Let's hope the legislature listens and takes the message to heart.

When it comes down to it, this isn't an issue of politics. It's an issue of basic human rights and fairness. Across our state, committed gay and lesbian couples currently cannot make healthcare decisions for their partners, visit their partners in hospitals, or make arrangements for a funeral after a partner passes away. This is unacceptable.

Here in Illinois, we've made human rights and equal access under the law a priority. Throughout his administration, Gov. Blagojevich has championed the needs of the gay and lesbian community by adding the protection of sexual orientation and gender identity to hate crime and discrimination laws in our state and by extending domestic-partner benefits to all State of Illinois employees. In 2005, the governor and legislators amended the Human Rights Act and Illinois became the 15th state in the nation to extend equal protection for its gay and lesbian citizens. Now it's time we go further.

This year, Illinois has an opportunity to make history. We can be the first state in the heartland that extends fairness and equality to all of its citizens. I believe that as a state we are on the cusp of completing this mission. We need our General Assembly to take decisive action. Let your representatives know how you feel. Let them follow the lead of the Land of Lincoln—the land of equality under the law.

Rocco Claps
Director, Illinois Department of Human Rights
Chicago

Righting a Rahm

Are you as frustrated with Congressman Rahm Emanuel as I am?

He endorsed Sen. Hillary Clinton (on Bill Maher's TV show) before Barack Obama's campaign caught fire. Now, apparently, he's backtracked and is officially "undeclared" as a superdelegate—surprising for a leading Democrat from Obama's home state (not to mention, from a district so heavilly in favor of Obama), but certainly not surprising for someone who owes much of his political career to Bill Clinton.

Emanuel is, after all, an architect (or, at least, one of the more proficient engineers) of Clinton-style gutter politics, so I imagine he's calculating his silence is a political wound that will heal rather than harden between now and November.

But, of course, his vote in this matter is not about him—it's about us, or, at least, the Democrats he presumably represents. I can't help but feel his silence in not endorsing Obama is essentially stifling my full voice in my party's nominating process.

I also feel Emanuel is just increasingly out of touch with our worries and wants throughout the district. Perhaps it's time for a change in more ways than one?

I've e-mailed Emanuel on all of this. Not sure if it will do any good—certainly not before Tuesday's primary (Obama hasn't quite yet inspired that much hopefulness in me!)—but if you wish to do the same, Emanuel's Web site is www.house.gov/emanuel/index.shtml.

Michael Burke
Chicago



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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Richard Knight, Jr., reviews the movie Baby Mama, which features Tina Fey (above). See page 20.

THEATER

'Secret Agent' man. page 16



Photo by Joshua Anderson

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Reddy or not. page 12



SPORTS

The scent of Cologne. page 22



Holly Near feels change in Chicago

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

Musician and social activist Holly Near has spent her life creating a dialogue around the need for change. Near has always allowed her music to represent her soul, and in doing so has remained true to her purpose in speaking out against injustice. She sees an opportunity on the horizon, and is eager to perform in the Change Is in the Air concert on Sun., April 27, at the Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ, which she hopes will draw people into the circle of social awareness and create a worthy discussion that will help lead to action beyond the doors of the venue. Windy City Times spoke with Near through e-mail recently to find out more about the concert and social activism.

Windy City Times: Hi, Holly. Are you excited for your Chicago visit this month?

Holly Near: Pleased.

WCT: Besides the concert, do you have any big plans for how you will spend your time in the city?

HN: I have been to Chicago off and on since 1972. Each time I see something new or something again with a new eye. In the early '70s, I remember going to The Chicago Stock Exchange and thought, "Oh, my. This can't possibly be how it works!" … One more memory: I was there visiting a friend during an election. When we left the house to go out to breakfast there was a note on the door saying, "Remember to vote." When we came back from breakfast there was another note that said, "You still haven't voted!" I am laughing remembering.

WCT: The title of the concert is Change Is in the Air! Obviously, we are in the midst of a major election. Was that the basis for the title, or are there other changes you are thinking about as well? What does that title mean to you right now?

HN: I believe we as human beings are being offered an opportunity for transformation as a global community. So, yes, change is in the air. People are discontented and hurting. Hunger, joblessness, violence, prisons, global warming. We have the possibility of a deeply rooted awakening to the authentic. What humanity will choose to do with it is yet to be seen. It's a very exciting time for our species.

WCT: Speaking of the election, I read where you said that we are in a "window of opportunity" with this upcoming election. Do you think that the candidates are capable of moving through that window, and of really achieving significant change? What do you think about the election at this point?

HN: The candidates have already moved through the window of opportunity. That is different than whether they can achieve significant change. That comes later. This particular campaign has people talking. It has encouraged critical thinkers to put forth major works on race and gender. It has opened the door of conversation in ordinary places between ordinary people. This is good. What the candidates have not had the freedom to do is really discuss the issues. The system prevents it. My main criticism of the election process is the system itself. … We need to change the system so that we all vote for our ideal candidate and then we vote again (all on the same day) in a runoff between the two top candidates.

That said, we won't really know what either candidate can or will do until they are in office. It is completely defined by whom they chose as advisors, how courageous the congress [is], how involved the people [are]. So for me, any time I work for social change in an election year, I use it as an opportunity to strengthen a social change movement because after the election, the candidate has inherited the corporations, the debt, the wars, the misinformation (some of which they helped to create). The world will benefit most profoundly by a healthy social change movement.



Holly Near.

I am not a star-struck believer in the Democratic Party. But I do like to choose with whom I will struggle, so I believe we absolutely must defeat John McCain.

WCT: How do you persevere and continue to make politically and socially conscious music without becoming overwhelmed by the negative?

HN: The world has been spinning for a long time. I'm only here for a small period of time. It is not my job to fix everything. As I see it, my self-appointed job is to love this planet and contribute to its well-being while I am here, to take the torch from those who went before me and then pass the torch to the next one. I try to keep focused on the awe and wonder of being alive and at the same time not ignore the horrors in which my species participates. I show up. I try to be counted. I try to remember that my visibility might be an inspiration to someone else. I use music and art to help me think clearly. That is why music is so important in the transformation of human kind. A marching band can inspire misdirected courage in young people and lead them to sign up for war. On the other hand, a marching band in a gay pride event can cry out, "Come on! Let's have the courage to love each other!" Powerful this music is. I do not take it lightly.

WCT: You've said that the Internet is not enough for activism and change, that people need more than a virtual world, I guess. I am wondering to what extent you see the Internet as a helpful tool and at what point it sort of allows people to talk the talk but not really walk the walk?

HN: The Internet offers global information access. What we will do with it is yet to be seen. Will it be used to build community or to isolate? Call me old-fashioned, but at some point I believe we have to walk outside and be with each other.

WCT: At the same time, the Internet has been a wonderful way for politically and socially conscious bands to gain attention and reach a wider audience. Do you see a revolution on the horizon for the music industry through the Internet?

HN: The jury is out on this for me. Lots of people now have access to making CDs and putting the music on the Internet but now it is very hard for young artists to find an audience. For the most part, I think that still requires live performance.

Turn to page 20

Helen Reddy: Mind over matter

BY ANDREW DAVIS

The legendary Helen Reddy first made an indelible impression more than three decades ago with a string of pop hits, including "Delta Dawn" and the anthemic "I Am Woman." However, she has moved on to another phase: After permanently retiring from performing in 2002, she has become a clinical hypnotherapist and motivational speaker. Before coming to Transitions Bookstore, 1000 W. North, on Thurs., April 24, to promote her memoir, Helen Reddy: The Woman I Am, she spoke with Windy City Times about feminism, politics, ghosts and Elvis Presley.

Windy City Times: First of all, did you realize that you have such a large following in the LGBT community?

Helen Reddy: Well, quite honestly, Andrew, I don't think of gay people as being a separate species. I have many friends, fans and supporters, and they run the gamut.

WCT: Obviously, "I Am Woman" became a huge feminist anthem. How have you seen feminism change from the '70s until now?

HR: [*Laughs*] You might be better off asking me that question [later]; I'll be the keynote speaker at a NOW [National Organization for Women] conference later on. I've sort of been living outside the United States for the past seven or eight years—I've been a little out of touch over the past several years, but I certainly am not pleased with what I see when I look around. We made so much progress in the '70s, and so much has gotten shot to "heck," as they would say in USA Today. [*Ed. note: A recent article on Reddy in that newspaper apparently substituted "heck" for "hell."*] By the way, when did they start censoring the word "hell" in newspapers?



Helen Reddy.

WCT: Well, we don't. We don't censor any [words].

HR: Well, that's good. I'm glad to hear that. Censoring that just seems ridiculous.

WCT: You actually lived in Chicago for a while. What was that like?

HR: I lived there in 1967-1968. Unfortunately for me, I wasn't there during the summer [*laughs*], so I can only say, "Cold." Coming from Australia, I had never experienced cold like that, and I never saw snow until I went to New York when I was 25.

I was one of the first people who lived in Lake Point Tower [a condo building located at 505 N. Lake Shore]; when we moved in, they were still constructing the top stories. The doorman used to call me "Stranger" because I left the building once a week because I could not deal with the cold. [*Laughs*] I did an outdoor concert in Chicago one summer, and it's lovely in the summer.

I consider my time there very important because I was in show business. I had seen stage hypnotists but had never taken them very seriously because I thought it was all magic and tricks.

It was not until my teens and I read [Morey Bernstein's] The Search for Bridey Murphy, which talked about an amateur hypnotist regressing to a previous life, [that I became intrigued]. There was so much that really rang true with me—you know that tingle you get in the back of your neck when something is true? And I never thought of hypnotism in that context. Also, the book introduced me to the concept of reincarnation, and that suddenly made sense of so many things that religion could not explain to my satisfaction.

WCT: Something I saw in the book related to past-life regressions is that you believe that Elvis Presley was King Tut.

HR: Yes, that was something that came through.

WCT: You list a series of coincidences between the two.

HR: They seem to confirm the feeling that I had [and] that other people were tuning into. And I do believe that people of a certain spiritual path have a succession of famous lives, and the object of the lesson there is to become immune to adulation. You can't be a true spiritual teacher if your ego is swayed by the crowd.

WCT: Switching gears, many of your fans [must be] heartbroken to know that you retired from performing in 2002.

HR: That was my last performance. I made the decision, but I still had engagements that were still on the books, and so I fulfilled [those] obligations. My last performance was with the Edmonton Symphony in 2002.

WCT: So there's no chance of you "un-retiring?"

HR: Not a chance in heck. No, no; I've finally gotten rid of the "'70s pop star" label forever.

WCT: Was there anything you didn't include in your memoir that you wish you had?

HR: Oh, well, there always are. [*Laughs*] But I'm thinking about the next book now; I've had some very interesting experiences since I wrote the book, particularly as far as hypnotherapy is concerned. In the last several months, I had two clients within the space of eight days, both of whom thought they saw Jesus; usually, [people] think they see deceased relatives, but it's extraordinary for a religious figure to come through twice in an eight-day period—but we are living in rather extraordinary times.

WCT: I would definitely agree. Something else I noticed in the book is that you've gone through so many traumatic situations (in addition to the high points): being diagnosed with Addison's disease, losing your parents and [recently] losing your daughter-in-law [as stated in the memoir's epilogue]. How did you get through those [developments]?

HR: We're never given more than we can handle. By the way, it's been three years since my daughter-in-law passed away; my son and business manager, Jordan, has remarried since and is very happy. It's wonderful; he's become a feminist—he's this sensitive, caring man.

WCT: What would you like readers to take away from your book?

HR: Curiosity—that they want to read and learn more. Hopefully, I will have opened a few windows, that there are things that they want to explore. I would like to think that it changes their lives in some way.

WCT: Is there anything you wanted to add?

HR: I feel that this is a good time in my life; I'm probably happier than I've ever been. I love where I'm living [Sydney, Australia]. In some ways, it reminds me of what America used to be like. My children and grandchild are healthy; life is very good. I just wish the United States had not been cast into such a deep hole.

WCT: [Some say] that the past eight years have been [rough].

HR: Yes, but what's worse is that no one's been allowed to say so.

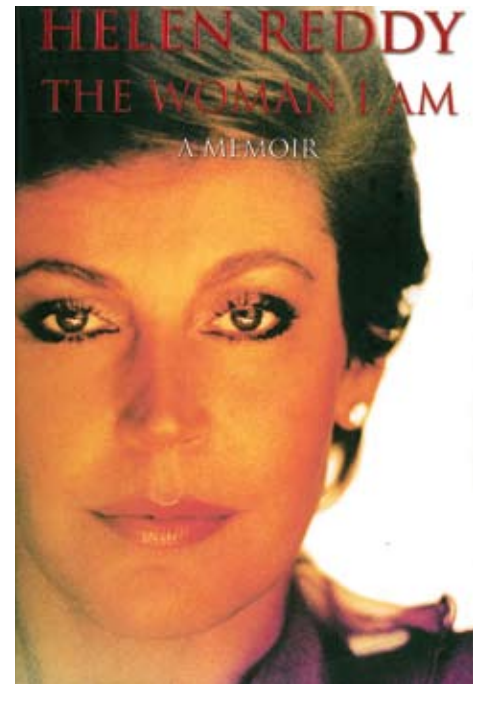
WCT: Well, voters will have their say this November, and many are hoping for some sort of change.

HR: Well, there has to be some kind of change. I worry that, at the last minute, certain people want to invade Iran and the election will have to be cancelled. Power is never relinquished willingly. [Zimbabwe President] Robert Mugabe may not be the only one who wants to cling to power.

WCT: Well, on that possibly apocalyptic note... [*Both laugh.*] It's been a pleasure.

HR: All the best.

Helen Reddy will be at Transitions Bookstore Thurs., April 24, at 7 p.m. to promote her memoir, The Woman I Am. Tickets are $30 for members and $35 for non-members; call 312-951-7323.



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Top 10 researched vehicles for the 1st part of 2008

Rabbit hops over Yaris to top spot, Volvo C30 and Mazda3 make their debut

COURTESY OF GAYWHEELS.COM

Nashville, TN—Gaywheels.com, a source of information specifically targeted to and about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) car-shoppers, has announced its list of the Top 10 Most-Researched Vehicles during the first quarter of 2008. The Volkswagen Rabbit took over the top spot from the Toyota Yaris after a 12-month run. The Volvo C30 and the Mazda Mazda3 made their debuts in the 9th and 10th spots, respectively.

"It seems price and fuel economy concerns are important to the Gaywheels.com consumer," said Gaywheels.com founder Joe LaMuraglia. "Sixty percent of the vehicles on the most-researched list are hatchbacks and four of those six have a MSRP starting at under $16K."

The most-researched vehicles were as follows:



The 2008 Saab 9-3. Photo courtesy of Saab

1. Volkswagen Rabbit: Model strengths include a convenient hatchback design; standard safety equipment; and low price (range: $15,000-$18,000)

2. Volkswagen Eos: The four-cylinder 2008 VW Eos ranks as one of the best bargains among all convertibles, offering a very upscale interior for about the same price as its cruise-oriented competitors. The V6 Eos boasts a host of luxury features that matches premium brand competitors while costing substantially less.

3. Toyota Yaris: A sporty liftback S model, featuring front and rear color-keyed spoilers, sport seat fabric, amber gauge illumination, and other extras, joins the Toyota Yaris lineup for 2008.

4. Mazda MX-5 Miata: The 2008 Mazda MX-5 Miata, or just Miata, as it's more commonly known, comes with a 166-horsepower, 2.0L four-cylinder engine, matched with a standard five-speed manual transmission and rear-wheel drive. It continues to have a loyal, cult-like following for its sports-car simplicity and reputation for reliability and longevity.



VW Eos. Photo courtesy of VW

5. Audi A3: In addition to an eager engine and one of the best interiors in its class, this five-door hatchback is a marvelous choice for those who want a car that combines the nimbleness of a sports car with the cargo capabilities of a mini-wagon.

6. Volkswagen Jetta: The 2008 Volkswagen Jetta comes well-equipped and value-priced for those who want a small but roomy sedan or wagon.

7. Saab 9-3: The Saab 9-3 has long been a sportier looking, sportier driving alternative to other European luxury sedans, and the convertible model remains one of the most practical choices among drop-tops for day-to-day utility. The 2008 9-3 already stands out for its tight, crisp handling; the expected availability of all-wheel drive should make the 9-3 more appealing in its class for those in snowy climes.

8. Dodge Caliber: Now in its second year of production, Dodge's 2008 Caliber retains its low price and high mpg reputation, but also adds the oomph of the company's performance division with a new $22,435 SRT4 model.

9. Volvo C30: The 2008 Volvo C30 is an all-new sporty two-door hatchback model. It's closely related mechanically to the S40 sedan and V50 wagon, but is much smaller, and therefore it promises to be considerably perkier to drive.

10. Mazda Mazda3: The 2008 Mazda3 is one of the most nimble, best-handling small cars on the market, and the five-door models especially stand out among competing models for their sporty silhouette and hatchback convenience.

Although information, specifications and pricing on all new car and truck models are available on Gaywheels.com, each vehicle on the Most-Researched list is offered by a gay-friendly brand. Gaywheels.com classifies vehicle manufacturers as gay-friendly or not based on their corporate policies for offering domestic-partner benefits to their employees in the U.S.

The Top 10 Most Researched list is based on Web site statistics gathered Jan. 1-March 31 from Gaywheels.com's New Car section. Gaywheels.com publishes its Most-Researched list quarterly.





Hummer H3T. Photo courtesy of General Motors

Gaywheels' picks: Chicago auto show's top five

BY JOE LAMURAGLIA, GAYWHEELS.COM

Chicago's auto show (which took place earlier this year) may play a distant second to Detroit when it comes to new cars and trucks. But in the Windy City this year, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler brought new family haulers—and one ass-hauler—while Volkswagen finally rejoined the minivan market after years of absence. The highlights from this year's Chicago show, in no particular order:

Chevrolet Traverse

Chevrolet is the last of GM's mass-market car brands to get a big crossover vehicle. But with the Traverse, Chevy might have one of the best-looking of GM's foursome, which includes the Saturn Outlook, Buick Enclave and GMC Acadia. The Traverse shares some styling cues with the new Chevy Malibu, inside and out, with a smart front end and smallish taillamps giving it a distinct style. Under the hood there's a 3.6-liter V-6 with 281 horsepower and 253 pound-feet of torque. A six-speed automatic is the sole transmission. Standard safety features include six airbags; anti-lock brakes; traction and stability control. All-wheel drive will be an option, as will 20-inch rims and Bluetooth.

Ford Transit Connect

It's taken a long time for any car company to take on Dodge's commercial Sprinter van, but Ford is doing it now with the Turkish-build Transit Connect. Think of it as a Honda Element with even more utility; the Transit stands 6' 8", and its customizable cargo area means it's a perfect work/play vehicle for dog walkers to caterers to locksmiths. Available with a four-cylinder engine and a manual transmission, the Transit promises to be a fuel-efficient trailblazer that can also double as a mobile billboard. Ford says for now it will import the vehicle from Europe, but it might eventually build the Transit Connect in the United States, if enough entrepreneurs step forward for its practical package.

Dodge Challenger

Musclecars might seem odd in the days of the Toyota Prius, but Dodge's HEMI-powered, tire-shredding Challenger SRT8 couldn't care less about what the Prius thinks. Not with a 425-hp V-8 under the hood, big 20-inch tires in its wheel wells, and a 0-60 time of 4.9 seconds. Top speed for the reborn musclecar is 170 miles per hour, Dodge says, and the Challenger grips the road on massive Goodyear tires. A five-speed automatic is the only reminder that this is 2008, not 1970. The Challenger SRT8 is the high-powered version on display now; Chrysler will eventually offer a V-6 version of the big two-door coupe as well, and a convertible has been rumored but not confirmed.

Volkswagen Routan

Volkswagen's been missing a real minivan since the Microbus left in a hazy green cloud in the early 1970s. But everything about the new Routan minivan is modern, because under its lightly reskinned exterior, it's a rebadged Chrysler minivan sold under a new agreement between the two companies. The Routan gets a unique interior too, with seating for seven and an available power third-row bench. Chrysler's 3.8-liter, 197-horsepower V-6 is the standard engine in the Routan. A six-speed automatic transmission is the sole gearbox offered. Volkswagen also will offer Chrysler's 4.0-liter V-6, with 251 horsepower and 259 pound-feet, as an option. Standard safety gear will include revised suspension tuning, stability and traction control, and curtain airbags. Other features included in all Routans are a conversation mirror; a rear-seat DVD entertainment system; dual power sliding doors; a touchscreen navigation system with a 20GB music hard drive; a power liftgate; and 13 cupholders.

Hummer H3T

HUMMER's future seems to be getting smaller: first the GM brand dropped the military-derived H1, then it introduced the compact H3 off-roader. Now the H3 loses its cargo cover in favor of a real cargo bed as it becomes the H3T, T for truck. The almost five-foot bed gets an accessory mounting system and a removeable tailgate, giving it flexibility if not a huge amount of cargo carrying room. Powertrains include the standard 3.7-liter in-line five-cylinder that produces 242 horsepower with either a five-speed manual or an old-school four-speed automatic. The Alpha-level 5.3-liter V-8 with 300 horsepower is optional.



2008 BMW X6. Photo courtesy of BMW

VEHICLE REVIEW

2008 BMW X6

X6isting to please

BY JOE LAMURAGLIA, GAYWHEELS.COM

In the world of automotive product planning, car companies around the globe are always looking for that unmet need. That's how the minivan was created: for years, families with more than 2 children had few choices when shopping for a vehicle. Then in 1983, someone at Chrysler figured out that there was a need for 7-passenger van that was easy to drive, got good fuel mileage and could carry people and cargo with ease. Boom! The minivan was born.

Sometimes the "unmet needs" are emotional ones. We Americans clearly love SUVs, but we want them to act and look like sexy beasts, too. And that's what gave birth to the BMW X6—one of the few vehicles ever to attempt a hookup between a sport-utility vehicle and a sleek coupe.

What's in a name?

If you're like me, a coupe is a two-door, two- or four-seat vehicle with sporty styling that essentially defines the driver as young, fun-loving and having limited people-carrying requirements. With the advent of the Mercedes-Benz CLS, the "coupe" descriptor has been slowly expanding to include larger vehicles with 4 doors that maintain the sleek, sporty styling of a traditional coupe.

That rationale must have caught on in Germany, because VW joined the party with the Passat CC. BMW has entered fashionably late with the X6– all with four doors and seating for four.

In my opinion, the X6 has stretched the definition the most. The X6 is clearly an SUV, down to the front end of an X5. From the B-pillar back, it evokes a traditional coupe, but it's still an SUV at heart. And yet, the sexed-up roofline takes away some of what makes it an SUV, and gives it a truly unique shape. SUV or coupe? Does it really matter, so long as it's attractive?

Functional funkiness

The X6 looks like an SUV but acts more like a coupe—and that's not always a good thing. SUVs are supposed to be functional. While the sleek styling and rear-sport seating limit the X6 to a four-seater, it does have surprising cargo capacity and with the two rear seats folded down, a trip to Costco or the swap meet won't be cause for any embarrassment. This baby can swallow cargo like a porn star swallows his ... yeah, pride ... that's what I was going for.

The styling does cause compromises, though, most notably in the rear seats. They're a snug fit for anyone over 5'11" and it only fits two additional humans, not three. This fact was the subject of debate over dinner at the event. Some journalists were stuck on the fact that the rear seats weren't as roomy as the X5. My argument is: If you need rear-seat room, you don't buy an X6, you get an X5. Bottom line: This vehicle isn't designed for someone who needs to carry people often. It's more of a personal vehicle with additional seating for those occasional times you have friends or family around.

Driving

If you read my BMW X6 preview, you know that I didn't get as much time behind the wheel as I would have liked. Damaged fuel tanks and roadside guard duty does eat up a lot of the day. I did manage to pilot an X6 from Greenville, S.C. to Atlanta, Ga., and that trip, combined with the morning of the test day, gave me approximately 3.5 hours of seat time.

The X6 is available with two engines, a 3.0 liter inline 6-cylinder in the xDrive35i and a 4.4 liter twin-turbo V8 in the xDrive50i. We were in the xDrive50i up to the point of impact and then switched out to a xDrive35i for the remainder of the day and for the drive to Hotlanta. I preferred the V6 for a few reasons, most notably because it was easier to drive fast and felt lighter than the Xdrive50 V8. "Lighter" is a bit of an oxymoron when speaking of the X6 because in both trims, it is a large, heavy vehicle that via the magic of technology, drives like a much smaller car.

On the road, the X6 Xdrive35i drove well, had plenty of power to pass and get past legal speeds with ease. The driving feel is familiar to anyone that has spent time in an X5 and the instruments and controls, with all their idiosyncrasies, are from the X5 as well. Rear visibility is compromised by the design, but once you get used to using the extra-large side mirrors, it is easy to pilot down the road. the car's computer indicated that the vehicle averaged 19 MPG on my jaunt to Atlanta.

Verdict

With the advent of increased productivity and the power of computing, it is becoming feasible for manufacturers to create niche products for smaller and smaller target markets. The 2008 BMW X6 was created to satisfy the "unmet needs" of a very specific target market and does its job very well. It wasn't designed to be all things to all people; it X6ists to please those who want a personal vehicle that happens to be an SUV.

X6 xDrive35i starts at $53,275; X6 xDrive50i starts at $63,775.



Aftermarket audio systems

BY JOE TRALONGO, GAYWHEELS.COM

The world of after-market car audio is teaming with choices that rival and, in some cases, surpass the best sound systems offered by the automotive manufacturers. Looking for more music options but not interested in paying a monthly subscription? Check out the emerging world of HD Radio. HD expands the number of stations a single radio network has by piggybacking four or five different new stations onto a single signal. Think of it as hair extensions for radio.

With an HD receiver, you can tune in and capture unique formats, such as Clear Channel's Pride Channel, a station dedicated to the GLBT communities in Miami, West Palm Beach, Dallas-Ft. Worth, San Francisco, Hartford and Chicago. HD stations broadcast country, comedy, house, DJ, and the list goes on. HD receivers start around $150 and if you don't wish to replace your factory stereo, you can buy and HD tuner like the JVC KT-HDP1 that mounts on the dash or console and transmits through one of your existing stereo's FM channels.

The same aftermarket options exist for satellite radio, which gives a much broader entertainment choice and no pesky FCC regulations to limited what can and can't be said on air. SIRIUS and XM have announced plans to merge, so it really doesn't matter which one you choose, you'll soon have access to the best programming from both. Currently, SIRIUS has a channel dedicated to the GLBT community (SIRIUS OUT Q), XM does not.

And no worries if you want SIRIUS but own a GM car with factory-installed XM satellite ready head unit. There are converter kits available on the SIRIUS site, as well as most audio shops, that permit you to make the switch. The SIR-GM1 kit fits most GM cars with satellite ready radio between 2003 and 2007. 2008 models like the new CTS are not covered, but chances are good there's a converter in the works for these cars as well. Not all GM cars are included, so be sure to check the SIRIUS site or call before you purchase a converter.

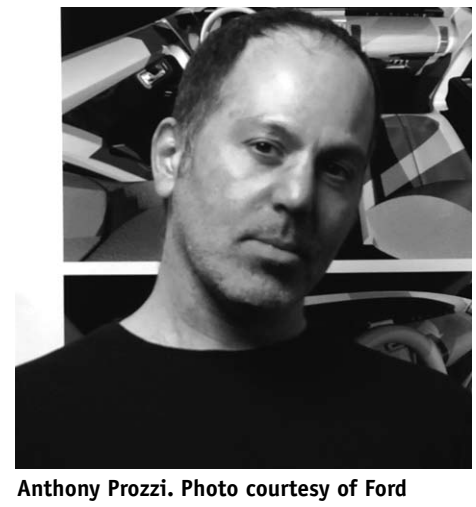
If money is no object, even a 1972 Ford Pinto can be decked out like the latest BMW or Audi luxury sedan. Pioneer's AVIC-Z2X retails for around $2,200 and includes a voice-activated DVD navigation system, Bluetooth wireless phone connectivity, an iPod adapter and a rearview camera that displays its image on the unit's seven-inch color screen. Alpine's IVA-W205 (pictured), which retails for around $1,500, includes a removable GPS docking unit that can be used outside the vehicle. Most aftermarket GPS units include helpful points of interest that can quickly locate ATMs, gas stations, restaurants, phone numbers and more.

All of these systems can be found at your local big box stores such as Best Buy, which also have fairly competent installation shops. If, however, you're the do-it-yourself-type, online stores such as Crutchfield.com can provide you with all the tools necessary, including phone support should you discover you've bitten off more than you can chew.

HEADLIGHTS

Anthony Prozzi

BY JOE LAMURAGLIA, GAYWHEELS.COM



Anthony Prozzi. Photo courtesy of Ford

Name: Anthony Prozzi
Place of birth: Brooklyn , N.Y .
Age: 44
Year, make and model of your first car/truck: 1976 Pontiac Firebird
Occupation: Senior designer
Employer: Ford Motor Company
What did you think you wanted to be when you grew up? I was a bookworm growing up, straight-A student and always an overachiever, as a product of Italian immigrant parents. They wanted to see me be a doctor, and I went as far as pre-med at NYU—but I'm happy fate intervened and became a designer.
How long have you worked in the auto industry? Twelve years that seem to have gone by in a blink
What do you drive now? A shiny black Ford Edge
Are you out at work? Those who are hip enough to be in the know are aware of my preferences; I'm so busy it's a non-issue.
Was being gay ever an issue at any of your jobs? I'm very lucky that it never was. I always believe your work speaks for itself and private matters are just that—private.
If you had one piece of advice to give to a gay person wanting to work in the auto industry, what would it be? Be yourself. Work hard and let your work be the criteria by which you succeed—and, of course, have fun along the way.
OK, here is the fun part: If you had $25,000 and had to buy a new car, what would it be and why? The new Ford Verve—in black, of course.
Same question but bigger budget—$50,000: Tough one. I'd buy the car I designed the interior of: the Ford Flex, but seriously trick it out—black on black with some shine. [It would be] very Dior Homme.
If money was no object and you had to drive it every day: I like a lot of space—so same answer as above, but with a fuel cell.
What is your favorite car of all time and why? Killer. There are way too many—my grandfather had an Alfa Giulietta, so its high on the list—along with any other Italian cars from the '60s.
If your car/truck could talk, what would it say about you? Hey, you're getting checked out by that fox at the light.
Finally, why do you want to be featured on Gaywheels.com? I live my life with my heart on my sleeve—I'm a great role model—I speak my mind and my work is always top-notch.

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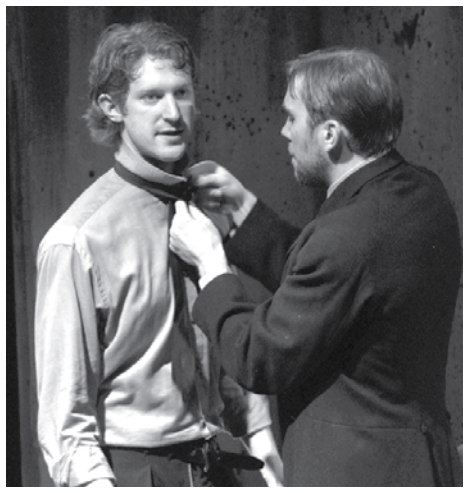


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The Secret Agent. Photo by Joshua Anderson

THEATER REVIEW

The Secret Agent

Playwright: adapted by Alexander Gelman from the novel by Joseph Conrad
At: Organic Theater Company at La Costa Theatre, 3931 N. Elston
Phone: 800-595-4849; $29
Runs through: May 11

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Dirty Spook Tricks didn't begin with the CIA, any more than espionage fiction with Graham Greene or John LeCarré. As long ago as 1907, Joseph Conrad—author of Lord Jim and Heart Of Darkness—explored Spy Games in his cautionary tale of the collateral damage engendered by a dubious charade conceived as a purely tactical gesture.

Our unlikely hero is one Mr. Verloc, ostensibly a happily-married London shopkeeper, but in reality, an informant for the local police AND an agent provocateur for the government of an unnamed European country. This unglamorous operative hasn't been very provoqué lately, however, and his boss at the embassy suggests that his career would improve if he staged a small disaster—say, a bombing at the Greenwich Observatory—an assignment presenting its engineer with an opportunity to have his brother-in-law arrested for the crime. But when an accident sets off the explosion prematurely, killing the innocent lad, a search is mounted for the accessory perps, with tragic results for Verloc and his distraught wife.

The goals of the current group of artists doing business under the name of the venerable Organic Theater Company appear considerably different from those of its rebellious mid-'70s founders. Under the leadership of producing artistic director Alexander Gelman, this production—running in repertory with five other plays, including four remounts from its 2007 season—emerges as noteworthy for its attention to academic values as for its disregard of commercial considerations: Gelman's adaptation displays a rare and commendable reverence for Conrad's text, transferred nearly-verbatim from the original—*except* for a few disruptive moments when M. Anthony Reimer's otherwise impeccable score of incidental music suddenly shifts to Jazz Age classics (*e.g.*, Al Jolson's rendition of "Toot-Toot-Tootsie") as the actors break into jubilant dancing for no apparent reason beyond relief from the exclusively verbal discourse.

To their credit, the well-trained young players navigate their Story Theatre-style dialogue with unhurried skill—in particular, Richard L. Gross as Chief Inspector Heat and Joel Stanley Huff as the ambivalent Verloc—to bring the performance time to an efficient two and a half hours. The sad irony is that audiences most likely to appreciate these page-to-stage efforts will find their access encumbered by the steep staircase leading to the industrial loft space comprising the latest entry in the burgeoning Elston Avenue art district.



What Every Woman Knows. Photo by Peter Coombs

THEATER REVIEW

What Every Woman Knows

Playwright: J.M. Barrie
At: ShawChicago at Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph
Phone: 312-742-8497; $15
Through May 3

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Little-known comic drama What Every Woman Knows would probably be produced more often if it wasn't for one thing: the thick Scottish accents.

One of the hardest dialects for actors to replicate is also one that American ears aren't typically accustomed to hearing. After a ShawChicago performance, one elderly woman said, "I think I missed about 30 percent of what they said."

'Tis a pity, since this 1908 play by Scotsman J.M. Barrie is cute historical curiosity. The creator of Peter Pan not only had a soft spot for kids, but he clearly supported women's suffrage in What Every Woman Knows.

The play's set-up is silly. A 27-year-old "spinster" named Maggie Wiley (Barbara Zahora) gets unconventionally betrothed by her *nouveau riche* Scottish family. Her fiance is an educationally aspirant train ticket-taker named John Shand (Christian Gray) who gets cornered into the marriage deal when he is caught burgling the family to borrow books from their enormous bookcase (which they own just for show).

From there, Barrie builds up John into a practical financial and political dynamo who gets into Parliament. Although Maggie knows their marriage isn't based on love, she does everything she can behind the scenes to support John's career, both politically with bigwigs like Charles Venables (Tony Dobrowolski) and in society among the likes of the crafty visiting French Comtesse de la Briere (Kate Young).

So when John falls in love with Lady Sybil Tenterden (Lili-Anne Brown), Maggie hatches a scheme to show how valuable she truly is to him.

The play is slavish to the cliché "Behind every great man, there is a great woman." But since Barrie includes the women's vote debate, the play is politically a piece of feminist theater, however dated.

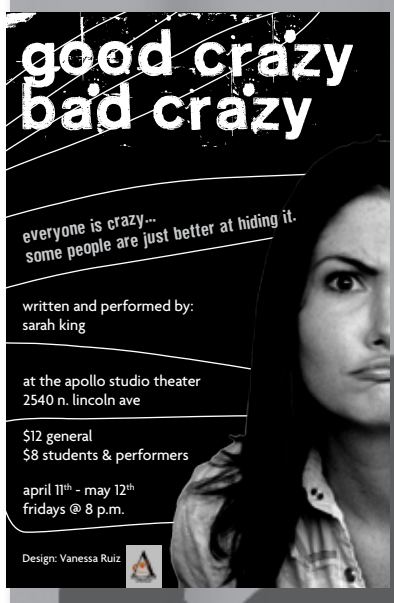
ShawChicago's concert staging with scripts in hands and music stands is a low-frills affair (Joseph Bowen fills in details by reading wordy stage directions). But ShawChicago more than makes up for the austere with Robert Scogin's solid direction and strong performances from its all-Equity cast.

Though Maggie is the true heroine of the play, the character's sensible nature makes Zahora rightfully hold back in showing heart-wrenching emotion. Surprisingly, Gray offers up the emotional waterworks, especially when John realizes what is to be lost at his indiscretion.

In the supporting cast, Young is particularly delectable as the knowing French grand dame. Brown could work on her haughty accent, but she otherwise acts a fine "other woman."

And as for those difficult Scottish accents, Michael McAlister, Nathan Hosner, Joe Lehman and Zahora each succeed so well as the Wiley family that you really have to listen to catch everything they say. In the case of What Every Woman Knows, paying attention offers pleasant rewards.

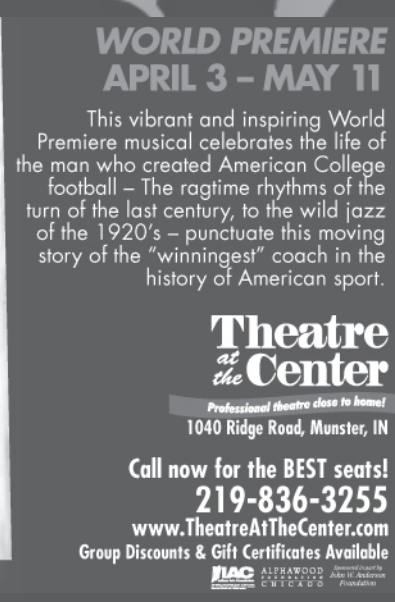
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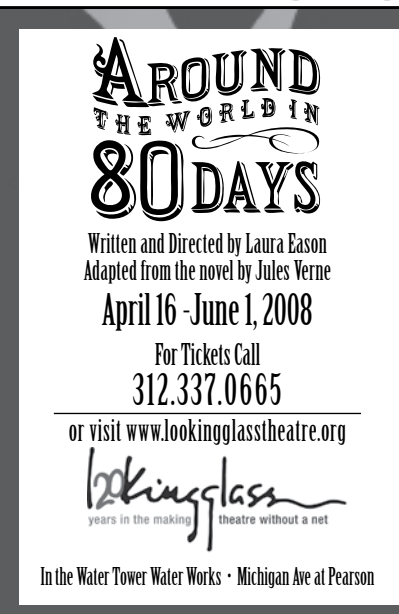


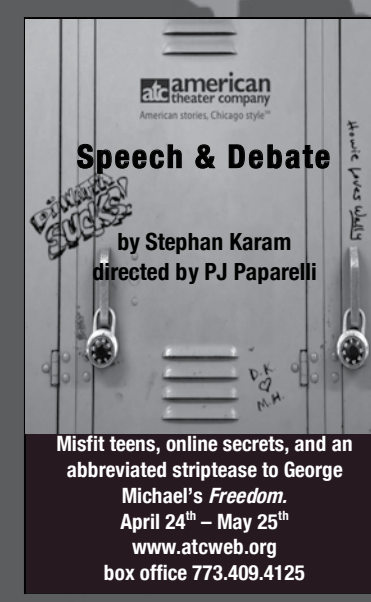












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Intrigue with Faye. Photo by Johnny Knight

THEATER REVIEW

Intrigue with Faye

Playwright: Kate Robin
At: Infusion Theatre Co. at the Royal George Theatre Gallery Space, 1641 N. Halsted
Phone: 312-988-9000; $$20, $25; $10 Mother's Day
Runs through: June 1

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Therapy as theater. That's the foundation of Kate Robin's overlong but largely compelling Intrigue With Faye. As live video merges with Robin's scripted barb of a romantic comedy, audiences become privy to every subconscious motivation and Freudian slip shaping the troubled relationship of Lissa (Leah Nuetzel) and Kean (Steve O'Connell).

You need a sturdy tolerance for navel-gazing, narcissism and psychobabble to get through the ballad of Lissa and Kean. Intrigue would be fresher and sharper at 90 minutes or less—at two hours, it pushes the audience's capacity for tortured confessions and painful self-revelations to its limit.

Yet, as directed by Mitch Golob, Intrigue is, well, mostly intriguing. The video/live-theater combination is risky business, something anyone who saw the clunky, poorly incorporated attempt at fusing the two in GreyZelda's recent A View from the Bridge or Oracle Theatre's Scotland Road quickly realized. But Golob, working with video designer Lucas Merino, pulls off a seamless combination of the two as the Lissa and Kean film their every move in an attempt to strengthen their foundering relationship.

Lissa is cut from the cloth of cliché: She's a therapist with—guess what? —her own profoundly unresolved issues. But in Nuetzel's sharp, authentic performance, Lissa is the rare cliché who also seems real. O'Connell's Kean is equally good, traversing the emotional spectrum from painfully vulnerable man-child to ardent lover to insensitive douche.

As Intrigue begins, we see the two—projected on a bank of video screens above the stage—sucking mad face in the hallway to their apartment. The screens go dark when they enter in the flesh, still making out with a vengeance until Kean off-handedly picks up a pile of unopened mail and Lissa suddenly cramps up with a crippling stomach ache. Clearly, there are problems underneath this couple's het up surface.

Sure enough, deal-breakers start cropping up as Kean haltingly admits to sleeping around. Arguably, even worse—he's been watching Lissa's videotapes of her sessions with troubled clients, tapes intended only to be seen by her supervisors for the purpose of evaluating her work.

Robin delivers a long set-up involving these tapes, but within the over-lengthy exposition comes a high point of hilarity when Kevin Stark shows up on screen as one of Lissa's unhappily married patients. She earnestly delivers a bunch of textbook blather about latent hostility, mothers and other such staples of therapy. (ending with the eye-roller, "How does that make you feel?") Stark shrugs and responds, "No, see, my wife is just a bitch." It's a marvelous, sometimes-a-cigar-is-just-a-cigar moment.

To her credit, Robin doesn't tie things up with tidy sitcom bow at the end—Can this relationship be saved? There's rarely a definitive answer to that question. Smartly, Robin doesn't offer one.

SPOTLIGHT

Sweeney Todd



First it was a Broadway musical; then a dark and moody movie; and now, it's a Broadway musical again. This highly touted version of Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler's **Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street** swept London and New York with its imaginative, scaled-down interpretation in which most of the singers also double as the onstage orchestra. Don't worry: Sweeney remains hell-bent on revenge and intent on supplying Mrs. Lovett with all she needs to make delicious meat pies. For those who know Sweeney Todd only through the recent movie—if that's possible—be assured that it improves with real singers and a sense of comedy. At the Cadillac Palace through May 4; 312-902-1400 (Ticketmaster); $22.50-$72.50. Photo by DavidAllenStudio.com

CRITICS' PICS

Carter's Way, Steppenwolf Theatre, through April 27. Emotions rule in Eric Simonson's period drama, but playgoers demanding logic in their story will detect not a single false note in the hand-synced jazz solos or the vividly-drawn characters. MSB

Knute Rockne, All-American, Theatre at the Center, through May 1.Who'd a thunk a musical about Notre Dame's iconic football coach would captivate so? Couldn't care less about pigskin? Michael Mahler's jazz/ragtime infused score will draw you in anyway. CS

Lust, Lies and Marriage, Piccolo Theatre (Evanston), through May 10. Get a taste of Renaissance sitcom with this very traditional rendition of a classical commedia dell'arte play about silly lovers, foolish fathers and servants both clever and simple. JA

Nine, Porchlight Music Theatre at Theatre Building Chicago, through May 18. This sterling condensation of Maury Yeston and Arthur Kopit's 1982 musical adaptation of Fellini's artsy film 8 ½ is teeming with great performances. *Ciao, bella*! SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

THEATER REVIEW

The Skriker

Playwright: Caryl Churchill
At: GreyZelda Theatre Group at Angel Island, 731 W. Sheridan
Phone: 773-427-1935; $20
Runs through: May 10

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

You can hear their eerie cries as you climb the stairs at Angel Island's loft space, and if you linger in the lobby before taking your seats, you might see winged fairies fluttering at the windows. Inside the auditorium, you will find yourself confronted by a swarm of grotesque tricksters from Celtic/Saxon myth—ogres, brownies, kelpies, bogles, ghosts, ghoulies, long-legged beasties and other creatures you wouldn't want to meet in the dark. But that's before we're introduced to the queen of them all, the Skriker, who speaks in a curious echolalic-associative idiom (calling someone a "toxic-waste-paper-basket case", for example) and who greets us by exhibiting the leftovers from her most recent meal of stolen infant.

For most theater companies, a setting such as that invoked by English playwright Caryl Churchill's celebration of her national folklore would constitute an invitation to dazzle us with high-tech fantasy at the expense of the story. Not so this GreyZelda Theatre Group production, whose director, Rebecca Zellar, keeps the scale comfortably life-sized. Oh, Jeff Semmerling's masks, Tomas Medina's prestidigital instruction and Joseph Ravens' movement design for the athletic ensemble supply the requisite menace associated with apparitions stalking their human prey. But always at the center of the action are the two unwary mortals seduced by the shape-shifting Skriker, who assumes the guise of a street-beggar, orphan child or leather-jacketed butch as easily as she bewitches people into spitting money—or frogs.

Immersion in this dramatic universe for almost two intermissionless hours could overwhelm an audience's suspension of disbelief, but for the copious assistance offered, not only by the ingenious spectacle employing an array of narrative arcs (note the progress of the red-slippered dancer, or the humble janitor-boy, over the evening's duration), but the tightly focused performances of Kelly Yacono and Kathryn Daniels as ambivalent young mothers targeted by kidnappers from a *literal* Underworld. The *tour de force* in this ambitious project, however, is Lisa Wilson's portrayal of the top-ranked Weird Sister herself. In a role that could have come off like a Karen Finley-wannabe afflicted with the pip, Wilson remains the most charming and congenial of hostesses as she guides us on our tour of twilight realms too often ignored since the proliferation of intimate brightly lit playhouses put an end to shivery Things That Go Bump In The Night.

ONLINE THIS WEEK:

—Candles in the Sun

THEATER REVIEW

In a Dark Dark House

Playwright: Neil LaBute
At: Profiles Theatre, 4147 N. Broadway
Phone: 773-549-1815; $25, $30; $5 discount students and seniors
Runs through: May 11

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Go ahead, call him gimmicky and formulaic. As he catalogues the sins of middle-class man's burden in his prodigious, profligate output, playwright Neil LaBute is quite often just that. Yet every now and then within his obsessively watchable parables of men behaving sociopathically, LaBute produces a white-hot gleam of brilliance that glares like a klieg light on a colony of cockroaches. In a Dark Dark House is one such testimony to the horrifying depths the lurk within the author of Bash and Lepers.

In 90 minutes and with three characters, Profiles Theatre presents Dark House as a skin-crawling story of intense emotional and physical violence. With his toxic trio of a cast, director Joe Jahraus finishes off Profiles Theatre's all-LaBute season in creeptacular fashion.

Those familiar with LaBute know that he invariably ends his tales with a twist. Sometimes it's a mighty cork-screwering as shocking as a T-bone steak served during a high Hindu holiday, sometimes it's as contrived (and ultimately useless) as a Rube Goldberg machine.

The endgame pivot of Dark House comes in a final, wordless moment during which the sicker of two brothers finally shows himself as a threat not only to himself, but to others as well—and how. But long before we get to that final reveal (which LaBute junkies will see coming), we get to know siblings Drew (Hans Fleischmann, menacing and pathetic as a non-recovering addict and a disbarred attorney) and Terry (Darrell W. Cox). The two are uneasy and estranged as they try to suss each other out during visiting hours at the upscale rehab facility where Drew is in court-ordered detox. The ex-lawyer has the lingo of recovery down cold and talks earnestly about acting out, repressed childhood traumas and rigorous honesty. But Drew is also itchy and skittery; this visit isn't about any searching and fearless moral inventory—he wants something.

To talk more about what actually happens wouldn't do, but it's worth noting that all three scenes take place in relatively isolated enclaves. After the rehab center, we move to an all-but-deserted miniature-golf course for 20 minutes of mesmerizing dialogue that will leave you skeeved out to the point of wanting a shower and amazed at the depths of credible corruption Cox can dredge up. Equally disturbing—in a vastly different way—is Allison Torem as Jennifer, the jailbait teenager who manages the course. Mindlessly shaking her business end to Kelis' salacious "Milkshake," Jennifer is 16 going on a used-up 40, a child who is aware of the power—but not the danger—inherent to unleashing her sex appeal on the wrong kind of guy.

"Kids, they're all that matters in the end," Drew notes wistfully, drink in hand as he presides over the suburban barbeque that ends the piece. Perhaps. But within House, that importance has monstrous implications.



In a Dark Dark House. Photo by Thad Hallstein

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Windy City Gay Idol: Scarlet Fever















Contestants turned up the heat April 16 when Windy City Gay Idol took place at Scarlet, 3320 N. Halsted. When the dust settled, Sean and Jamie won and moved on to the semifinals. The judges were Jerry Nunn, Kirk Williamson and DJ Carla Starla. Photos by Kirk Williamson

Windy City Gay Idol is sponsored by Bud Light, American Airlines, Broadway In Chicago, Toronto Tourism, Creaoke and Windy City Media Group.





Tina Fey (left) and Amy Poehler in Baby Mama.

Baby Mama, Film Notes

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Saturday Night Live alum Tiny Fey and Amy Poehler, her former Weekend Update co-anchor from the show, co-star in **Baby Mama**—a broad, easygoing comedy about surrogate motherhood that's a modern-day version of Diane Keaton's seminal '80s comedy Baby Boom.

Fey, the current star of TV's 30 Rock, plays Kate Holbrook, a 37-year-old career exec who wants a baby. Everywhere she goes she sees them (leading to the first montage, one that includes a gay couple with their small fry), but Kate can't get past the first date because she desperately reveals to each prospect her desire for a baby; she also considers marriage a "high-risk scenario." Then she's told by a doctor that he "doesn't like her uterus," that her chance of conceiving are about one in a million. Lastly, her cranky, snobbish mother (Holland Taylor) warns her to not adopt a Black baby.

What's a gal to do?

Enter Sigourney Weaver as a high-priced, high-falutin' baby broker of sorts who connects Fey with a batch of potential surrogates. (Cue the second montage.) The most promising candidate turns out to be white-trash Angie (Amy Poehler), whose womb is rarin' to go, and whose white-trash boyfriend, Carl (Dax Shepard), is just as eager to get his hands on the big bucks Fey will pay for the privilege. (Cue the third montage—this one set to the Diana Ross-Lionel Richie chestnut "Endless Love"—for the "implementation" scene.)

But complications abruptly ensue (Don't they always?) when Angie shows up unannounced at Kate's *pied-á terre*, bags in hand after breaking up with Carl. Kate, who is a finicky perfectionist, hadn't counted on the sloppy Angie as a roomie, and a series of Odd Couple-type sequences follow. Naturally, Angie will get Kate to loosen up and go nightclubbin'—and Kate will get Angie to think about something other than karaoke, junk food and sex.

In the midst of all this, Kate is busy trying to please the boss of Round Earth, the health-food company she works for. This overbearing narcissist is an insufferable "zen-like" aging hippie who doesn't wear socks with his business suits, sports a ponytail and is played with comedic relish by Steve Martin. This unnamed character has deemed an untapped neighborhood in Philadelphia as the next perfect location for a Round Earth megastore and sends Kate to investigate and find a building. She discovers a juice bar (called Super Fruity) run by the friendly Rob (Greg Kinnear), who gives her a rundown on the area. But when Round Earth announces its plans, a neighborhood coalition headed by Rob protests—so, naturally, ideological opposites will personally attract and, soon, Kate and Rob will fall for each other *a la* You've Got Mail.

Many more plot twists—most of them expected—come into play before the expected "my water just broke/dash to the hospital" finish. In addition to Poehler, who has no trouble getting laughs as usual, Romany Malco (who plays Oscar, Fey's wise-ass doorman) offers good support. And—with her glasses, real-woman curves, innate wit and intelligence—Fey is a desperately needed addition to the movies: a Diane Keaton for the YouTube generation.

Baby Mama—which was written not by Fey but by its director, Michael McCullers—is awfully familiar. Yet, the movie—forgive me—delivers its laughs without audiences having to go into labor to get them. It's gentler than what has become standard comedic fare, and the comedy is not so graphic or mean-spirited—definitely plusses. It all adds up to a great date movie and, maybe, some real-life future baby mamas.

Film Notes:

—Though it is sad to learn that Roger Ebert, dean of popular American film critics, has yet to recover his voice after a series of surgeries and won't be back on TV with At the Movies with Ebert & Roeper anytime soon, it is good to know that he is returning to writing reviews on a regular basis. And **Ebertfest**, his annual film fest of overlooked movies, is taking place April 23-April 27 in Champaign on the University of Illinois campus, Ebert's alma mater. As usual, Ebert has chosen a stellar slate of terrific movies.

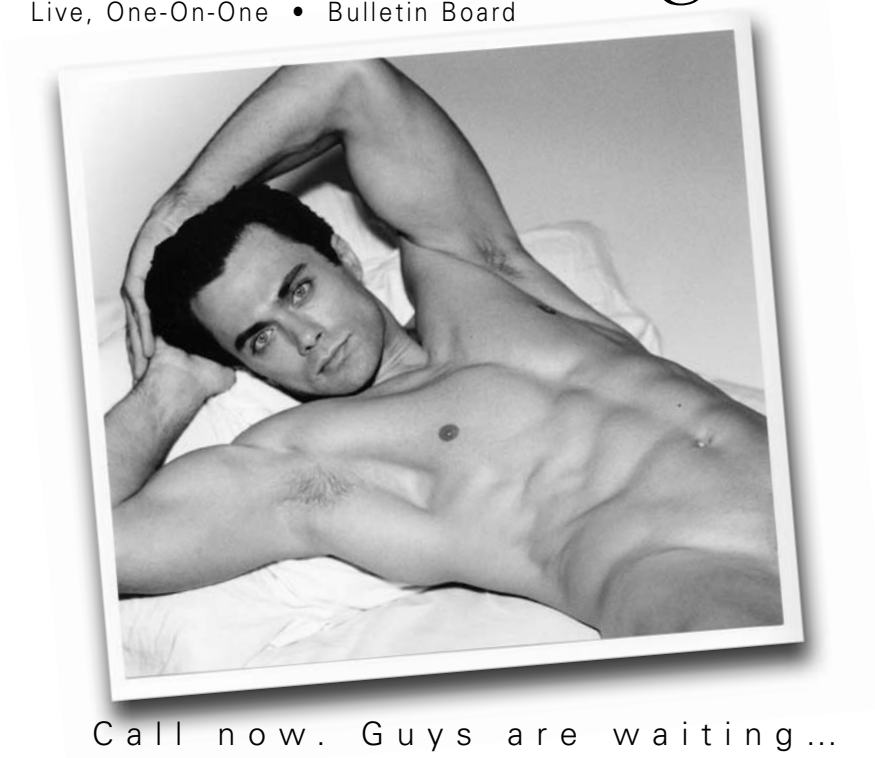
Three that are not to be missed are the Fri., April 25, 10 p.m. screening of director Paul Schrader's Mishima: A Life in Four Parts, his exquisitely rendered 1985 film (complete with Philip Glass score) about the gay Japanese writer. Schrader and Mishima production designer Eiko Ishioka (who won an Oscar for her amazing Dracula costumes) will be in attendance. Second, fellow University of Illinois alum Ang Lee, director of the gay-themed Wedding Banquet and an Oscar winner for Brokeback Mountain, will talk about his offbeat blockbuster The Hulk after a Sat., April 26, screening.

Lastly, director Bill Forsyth and actress Christine Lahti will discuss the underrated Housekeeping, a film set in the 1950s. Lahti plays free spirit Aunt Sylvie, whose unconventional ideas alternately tantalize, frighten and open new worlds to her two nieces. The 1987 film, with its meditative score by Michael Gibbs and decided feminist bent, is one of those small miracles that comes along so rarely in the movies. It screens Sat., April 26, at 7:30 p.m. Many of the screenings are sold out but there are still single screening tickets to be had. www.ebertfest.com

—Here's another reminder that both seasons one and two of the Rosie O'Donnell executive-produced Big Gay Sketch Show arrive (separately) on DVD Tues., April 29. Season two cast member Colman Domingo, noted for his impersonations of Oprah Winfrey and Maya Angelou, was a recent guest on Windy City Queercast. Also, look for an interview with another cast member, Paolo Andino, to run in Windy City Times soon.

Check out my archived reviews at www.windycitytimes.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter Web site, where there is also ordering information on my book of collected film reviews, Knight at the Movies 2004-2006.

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NEAR from page 11

WCT: I know you performed on a recent Olivia cruise. How was that experience?

HN: I went on the 35th-anniversary celebration cruise. It was lovely. I sang with Meg Christian, who I had not seen in probably 30 years. Although cruise ships are environmental disasters, I must say that this lesbian cruise company has done a lot of work confronting homophobia wherever they go. At first there were places that held demonstrations as the ship arrived, not wanting all those lesbians to set foot on the soil. But now, there are signs that say, "Welcome Olivia Ladies!" Is homophobia gone? Of course not. They are welcomed because the locals have come to realize that of all the cruise ships, the lesbians are the nicest, the most laid-back, shop a lot and tip the best. And in the midst of that economic criteria, they start to see that maybe it isn't as bad to be gay as they previously thought. And that, no doubt, is good for the GLBTQ folks who live their full-time.

WCT: What was it like to be surrounded by so many lesbians and all that estrogen?

HN: I am very used to being around a lot of women, a lot of lesbians. It can be fun or annoying, just like being around any humans who gather around identity. But I think for women who work in the mainstream world, it must be mind-boggling to have a vacation where you don't feel danger when you kiss your sweetheart. The world is still very hard on "other". ... I am reminded how fortunate I am to have grown up with an open mind. I take it for granted but, in truth, it is an unusual gift to have been given. How sad it is for those who are full of hate. What happened to them as babies? What happened to Bush and Cheney as children? I don't know, but let's remove them from public office so they don't hurt more people!

WCT: What can fans expect at the concert?

HN: I would encourage people to think of it as a chance to gather, a place to invite a friend who might not know there is such a thing as social change music. Cultural events are a good way to bring people into the circle; it lays a scrumptious table for discussion after the show.

The concert will be held Sun., April 27, at the Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ, 615 W. Wellington. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., with the performance at 7 p.m. Other acts include Emma's Revolution and Voices; see www.waucc.org for more info. Near will also be appearing at Women and Children First on the same day at 2 p.m. for a CD signing; see www.womenandchildrenfirst.com.

WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, April 23

Gay Liberation Network Discussion group on LGBT history. Focus on movement against Anita Bryant. Call 773-209-1187 or e-mail LGBTliberation@aol.com for suggested reading materials

Lambda Legal The Bon Foster Revolution. Celebrating 15 years of Lambda Legal in Chicago. 6 p.m., Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St., www.lambdalegal.org/bonfoster

Women and Children First Roz Kaveney: Superheroes! 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Thursday, April 24

Dining Out for Life Chicagoland restaurants participate in the 15th Annual Dining Out for Life, which raises funds for HIV/AIDS. See www.diningoutforlife/chicago and www.diningoutforlife.com/chicago/participating, www.aidscarechicago.org

Gruppo di Amici and Taste Food & Wine First Annual Jarvis Square Wine Affair. Meet master Sommelier Alpana Singh (Check Please!). 6:30-9 p.m., 1506/1508 W. Jarvis Ave., $30 advance, $35 at door, tickets at 773-508-5565 or 773-761-3663

NewTown Writers Workshop. 7:30 p.m., Gerber/Hart, 1127 W. Granville Ave., newtownwriters@yahoo.com, www.newtownwriters.org

Transitions Bookplace Grammy Award-winning performer Helen Reddy ("I Am Woman") makes an appearance. 1000 W. North Ave., 312-951-7323, www.transitionsbookplace.com

Women and Children First Nancy Polikoff: Beyond (Straight and Gay) Marriage: Valuing All Families under the Law. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Third Annual Poetry slam to raise awareness of sexual assault, She Speaks Volumes. Features d'bi young anitafrika. 6-8 p.m., $20, doors open 5:30 p.m., Alhambra Palace, 1240 W. Randolph, tickets at www.ywcachicago.org or 312-762-2743

Friday, April 25

American Institute of Architects Chicago Modernism Show & Sale, a Tribute to 20th Century Design. Through April 27. 1422 N. Kingsbury, 708-366-2710, www.chicagomodernism.net

Columbia College Chicago Gender Fusions 4. Gaylesbiantransfagdykequeer: Naming Desire and Identity in Media. Film screening and dialogue. 6-8:30 p.m., Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash, 8th floor, free and open to public

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance Day of Silence/Night of Noise. Night of Noise gathering 5:30-9 p.m., outside of Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph St.

Women and Children First Ambassador Madeleine M. Kunin: Pearls, Politics, & Power: How Women Can Win and Lead. TBA, 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Saturday, April 26

Better Existence with HIV Fifth Annual Club BEHIV & Cabaret, "April in Paris," featuring Highland Park Pops Big Band, French cuisine, silent and live auction. 6:30-11 p.m., Woman's Club of Evanston, 1702 Chicago Ave., $150/person, www.behiv.org

Chicago Center for Urban Life & Culture "Soul of the South Side" 38th anniversary fundraiser. Little Black Pearl Workshop, 1060 E. 47th St., $50 advance, $60 day of, 73-363-1312, www.chicagocenter.org

Columbia College Chicago Gender Fusions 4. Forging New Queer Geographies: Busting Up the Binaries! Features comedian Marga Gomez, performance artist Matthew Holils and writer/performer Ryka Aoki de la Cruz. 3:30-5:30 p.m., Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash, 8th floor, free and open to public

Columbia College Chicago Gender Fusions 4 Performance Spectacle: Busting Up the Binaries! Featuring performances by Teatro Luna, avery r. young, Nikki Patin, Marga Gomez, Matthew Hollis, Ryka Aoki de la Cruz and more. 8-11 p.m., Conaway Center, 1104 S. Wabash, $10 general admission, $5 students and senior citizens

GForce Gay hockey team GForce's sneak preview of a short-form documentary. 9 p.m., Scarlet, 3320 N. Halsted St., www.gforcehockey.com

Las Manos Gallery Art in Andersonville opening reception. 7-11 p.m., 5220 N. Clark St., 773-728-8910, www.lasmanosgallery.com

Live Oak Connected: A Free Saturday Series for Lesbians. This month: Urge to Merge: Dating and Relating. 10 a.m.- 1 p.m., 1300 W. Belmont, space limited, 773-880-1310 ext. 87, www.liveoakchicago.com

West Suburban Gay Association Dinner and Games at member's home. 7:30 p.m., see www.wsga.com for more info.

Sunday, April 27

Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation Body and $old performances. Through May 1. 7-9 p.m., Center on Halsted, $10 for adults, free for people 18 and under

Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ Concert: Holly Near, Emma's Revolution and special guest, Voices. $25, doors open 6:30 p.m., show starts 7 p.m., 615 W. Wellington Ave., tickeets at www.waucc.org, 773-935-0642 or at Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark St. or 773-769-9299

Women and Children First Holly Near & Emma's Revolution CD signings. 2-3 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Women and Children First Susan Cherry & Sandy Goldsmith: Poetry Reading. 4:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Monday, April 28

American Veterans for Equal Rights Meet & Greet Ald. Sandi Jackson. 6-8 p.m., Jeffrey Pub, 7041 S. Jeffery, www.aver.us

Tuesday, April 29

@mosphere Join the cast of Les Misérables in a benefit performance honoring Dan Proctor, raffle and silent auction, $15 suggested donation, 7:30 p.m., 5355 N. Clark St., 773-784-1100

Wednesday, April 30

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Town Hall Meeting, includes discussion on Prevalence and Predictors of Suicidality Among Gay Lesbian and Bisexual Youth. 6:30-8:30 p.m., University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry, 801 S. Paulina St., 4th floor lecture hal, free and open to public, RSVP jhurtado@afsp.org or 312-238-9564

Chicago LGBTQ Immigrants Alliance Immigration at the Margins forum. Some topics: Day laborers, queer immigrant youth, HIV ban and its effects. 9 a.m.- 5 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., reservations@caase.org or call 773-867-1082 for tickets

Thursday, May 1

Gay Liberation Network Amigas Latinas, ALMA, Orgullo En Accion and Sangat form an LGBT contingent in the immigrant rights march. Meet 11 a.m. in Union Park, near corner Ashland and Lake, look for rainbow flags, 773-209-1187, www.gayliberation.net

Roosevelt University Actor Wilson Cruz in "My So-Called Life: Coming Out, Family Life and Homelessness," presentation. 7:30 p.m., Congress Lounge, 430 S. Michigan Ave., www.roosevelt.edu

Mon., April 28



ACTION JACKSON

There will be a meet-and-greet featuring **Chicago Ald. Sandi Jackson** at Jeffery Pub, 7049 S. Jeffrey.

Photo by Kat Fitzgerald

Thurs., May 1



CRUZ CONTROL

Wilson Cruz will talk about "My So-Called Life: Coming Out, Family Life and Homelessness" at Roosevelt University, 430 S. Michigan.







The spoken kind...

Achy Obejas (top right), Staceyann Chin (top left) and C.C. Carter were just a few of the performers who participated in "Race Sex & The Spoken Word," an evening of performers and poetry that was part of the "Race Sex & Power" conference that took place at the University of Illinois at Chicago April 11-12. Photos by Mel Ferrand

Entertainment news

BY AMY WOOTEN

"Brothers & Sisters" star Luke McFarlane isn't just a gay man on TV. The actor just came out of the closet in a recent interview with Toronto's Globe and Mail because he wants to be "authentic to myself." McFarlane plays gay character Scotty Wandell in the ABC drama. The 28-year-old said he's been out to his friends and family, and admits that although he is afraid about what will happen to his career, he needs to be true to himself. "I guess I can't really be concerned about what will happen, because it's my truth," he said.

"Sex and the City" star and out lesbian **Cynthia Nixon revealed her battle with breast cancer**, which she chose to keep private, during a Good Morning America interview. Nixon said she kept her diagnosis out of the spotlight to avoid paparazzi. Nixon, who was diagnosed in 2006, is now cancer-free. Nixon said that partner Christine Marinoni was "very scared" and was in a panic after hearing the news.

In an exclusive interview with Village Voice, TV actor Jason Beghe ("Cane," "JAG"), who left the Church of Scientology seven months ago out of disappointment and frustration, said that **the tipping point for him was when members of the church tried to blame Beghe's near-fatal car accident on his friendship with a gay man.** He had given an estimated million dollars during his 12 years in the church. Beghe decided to be vocal about leaving the church because he wants to warn both celebrities and others about Scientology's unethical practices.

Former "Lost" actress **Michelle Rodriguez is sick of the ongoing media rumors that she is a lesbian,** she revealed in a recent interview with Latina Magazine. Rodriguez said, "What the majority of [people] want to know is what I'm doing with my vagina, and I think that that's sick. What do you care who I'm dating?" During the chat, Rodriguez said that much of the speculation has to do with the fact that she's a "tomboy." She said that she refuses to answer continued questions about her sexuality. "I don't answer those questions. I just keep it to myself and it's nobody's business. If I wanna fuck a girl, a boy, a dog — that's my business."

Rocker and talk show host Henry Rollins (formerly of pioneering punk band Black Flag) reiterated his long-time distaste for homophobia in an interview with the Sydney Star Observer. Rollins discussed his disgust at a teacher's open attacks on a gay student while attending military school as a kid—an event that stuck with him and caused him to be vocal about gay rights over the years. When talking about gay marriage, Rollins said, "You know what you are very soon in your life. So when someone says you can't love that person, you can't marry that person I'm like, 'Really, fuck you!' **Boy, if I was gay I would kick your arse!"**

The iTunes Store in Canada recently removed a handful of anti-gay songs from its catalog due to pressure from gay groups. After receiving criticism from LGBT Canadian organizations, several songs by Jamaican artists such as Buju Banton (whose much-protested song "Boom Bye Bye" calls for the murder of gay men) were removed because they violate the country's Human Rights Act and criminal code.



Delegates from the Gay Games VIII in Cologne, Germany, attended the Federation of Gay Games 25th anniversary gala last fall in San Francisco. Photo by Rick Gerharter

Gay Games 2010 Revs Up

BY ROSS FORMAN

Jochen Farber said he experienced nothing but friendship and hospitality in 2006, when he came to Chicago for Gay Games VIII—from Mayor Richard Daley to the cab drivers he encountered.

Farber wants to repay that hospitality—to Chicago and the rest of the world—in 2010 when the next round of Gay Games takes place in Cologne, Germany. Farber is, after all, the head of public relations/marketing.

"I believe we'll have a lot of people from Chicago come over to Cologne in 2010, and hopefully we can give back in some way to the friendliness we experienced from the people of Chicago," he said by phone. "The preparations are working fine."

The Federation of Gay Games (FGG) has already had two site visits, including a visit from Emy Ritt, of Paris, who was elected FGG's new female co-president after Kathleen Webster announced her retirement. Webster had served in the position since 2001. Sion O'Connor continues as the male co-president.

"The philosophy of the Gay Games in Chicago was, in the beginning, [to] start with the small sponsors, such as the bars and clubs, and [with] the [smaller] sponsors [on board], it will make it easier to ask the bigger sponsors," Farber said. "We're doing it slightly different. We're trying to approach some bigger companies in the beginning, and this is companies that we know we have good contacts."

Cologne organizers announced in February that gay-Parship, which is Europe's leading online LGBT matchmaking site, is confirmed as an exclusive partner.

Gay Games VIII is scheduled to take place July 31-Aug. 7, 2010.

Official registration for Gay Games VIII kicks off on July 1 for 33 disciplines, including chess.

Windy City Times: What's been the biggest surprise so far?

Jochen Farber: [It's been] the huge support from the gay community worldwide. We're getting a huge number of e-mails from people all over the world, all offering their help to do promotions for the Games. That is/was a very big surprise for us. We're getting people from Australia, the U.S. and Europe offering their help to us.

WCT: What new sports and/or activities are planned for Cologne?

JF: In the agreement with the FGG, the core sports are not changing; they are the same as in Chicago. The additional sports for Cologne will be chess, billiards, dance sports, team handball, beach volleyball, inline skating, table tennis, climbing, sailing and field hockey.

WCT: Why was chess added as a sport?

JF: Well, in Europe it really is a big sport; people really like it. And for us it's easy to organize.

WCT: What do you anticipate being the top sport—the most popular sport?

JF: I think badminton will have the most participants. I think dancing and figure skating will be the most popular.

WCT: What are your predictions ... the number of overall participants, the number of males, females, Americans?

JF: The same number as attended in Chicago: 12,000 athletes. Our hope is to be 50-50 male-female but, in the end, I don't think that will be realistic; I think there will be more males than females. We believe about 40 percent of the participants will come from North America, 40 percent from Europe and the remaining 20 percent from the rest of the world.

WCT: What did the Cologne organizers learn from the Chicago Games that you definitely plan to implement in 2010?

JF: One of the positives was the exhibitions, and we're going to try to do something similar here. We also very much like the Local Ambassadors program of Chicago; we're trying to incorporate that into the FGG Ambassadors Program. The other thing is, the marketing tools ... we are still in very [close] contact with Chicago team people, such as Tracy Baim and Kevin Boyer. In Chicago, they went to the people to get them signed up; they didn't just mail a bunch of flyers to an event and hope they got distributed. That worked. We think we will do the same, and we're discussing with Chicago [organizing] people about helping on that level in the U.S.

WCT: For those who have never been to Cologne, tell us about the city and its gay community.

JF: There are about 1 million people living in Cologne, of which about 10 percent are openly gay and lesbian. Cologne has the biggest gay community in Germany. To [be gay or lesbian] and walk publicly holding hands is normal; that's been the case for 15 or 20 years already. Cologne is in the heart of Europe, so you can reach every bigger European city in a few hours.

WCT: What will the Cologne legacy be?

JF: People, technology and reach.

WCT: Do you foresee a financial success, or at least breaking even like Chicago did?

JF: For sure, we foresee a financial success. The reason for fronting an event like this is not just about tolerance and participation; we want this to be a [financial] success. Our goal is not to win money; our goal is to break even, as they did in Chicago. The fact the Chicago Games broke even was of huge importance and will have a huge impact for us locally, image-wise. It really helps with our sponsors.

WCT: Has there been any negative publicity and/or protests, much the way Chicago endured slight problems in [Crystal Lake], where the rowing was held?

JF: As previously mentioned, it's totally normal to be gay or lesbian and walk hand-in-hand, or kiss one another in public. So, there is not any group in Cologne that would object to the Games. Gay and lesbian life is integrated [in Cologne] for years now, so I don't even see [that subject] coming up.

WCT: Was there anything in particular that you saw in Chicago that you do not want to incorporate into the Cologne Games?

JF: This is a tough one, because I don't want to criticize after an event. Plus, the job that Chicago did was terrific, especially given the time frame that they had to prepare. However, there is one thing, and I think everyone in Chicago agrees too, that we definitely want to do different—the Opening Ceremony. It was nice, but much too long, too much speaking, too many speeches. Our idea of the Opening Ceremony in 2010 is not to do as many political statements. Any statements, we want to make them with pictures, not words, if you know what I mean.

We want to have a fantastic Opening Ceremony with entertainment, and deliver the FGG message: inclusion, participation and personal best.

See www.games-cologne.com.

Read the entire article at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Force upsets Demolition

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Force did something in its April 19 home opener that it had never done in five previous seasons: defeat the archrival Detroit Demolition.

The Force improved to 2-0 with an 18-7 win at Holmgren Athletic Complex on the campus of North Park University—which was also the first home night game in team history. The Demolition is now 1-1.

"We just buckled down and really played as a team. Everyone came through; everyone was responsible for this win," said Force quarterback Sami Grisafe. "It feels amazing to finally defeat Detroit. When the final horn went off, it was as if a whole bunch of happiness exploded in me. I really can't put it into words."

"I was more excited for that [final touchdown that resulted from a fumble she caused that a fellow teammate picked up] than my touchdown reception," Kimberly Marks, a defensive lineman, said. "I'm not really sure how the ball got loose ... but once I saw the [referee's touchdown] signal, I knew that iced the win.

The Force travels to the Wisconsin Warriors Sat., April 26, and next plays at home Sat., May 17, when those same Warriors come to Chicago.

Independent Women's Football League (IWFL) officials announced after the Force's game that the 2008 national championship weekend will be held at North Park University. The weekend will feature the top teams in all three tiers of IWFL competition.

SPORTS NEWS

Beach v-ball sign-ups May 3

Individual and team registration for CMSA beach volleyball will take place Sat., May 3, 2-6 p.m., at The Fat Cat, 4840 N. Broadway.

Online registration is currently available until Fri., May 9. See chicagomsa.d4sportsreg.com for details.

Gay hockey movie at Scarlet

GForce, a gay hockey team, will show the sneak-preview premiere of a short-form documentary, tentatively titled "Break Out: GForce skates out of the neutral zone," Sat., April 26, at 9 p.m. at Scarlet, 3320 N. Halsted.

The seven-minute film was recorded over several days in January in Aspen, Colo. and, among other things, shows players sharing their stories and preparing for an annual game against an all-star straight hockey team.

The movie premiere will happen during the CAN/AM Chicago Ice Hockey Classic (which GForce is participating in), running April 25-27 at Johnny's Ice House, 1350 W. Madison. See www.gforcehockey.com for more info.

Danica makes racing history

Race-car driver Danica Patrick made history April 20. She became the first woman to win an IndyCar race, edging Helio Castroneves to prevail in the Indy Japan 300—in her 50th career start.

She took the lead from Castroneves on lap 198 of the 200-lap race.

Patrick, 26, came in second in last year's Belle Isle race in Detroit. At the 2005 Indy 500, she almost won the pole and became the first female driver to lead the race; she ended up in fourth place.

2008 Chicago MSA Beach Volleyball Sign Up

Registration for 4-on-4 Beach Volleyball - Saturday, May 3rd, 2:00-6:00 p.m.

@ Fat Cat - 4840 N. Broadway - Drink specials and hors d'oeuvres served

CMSA Beach Volleyball Features:

Friday matches from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Nine-week season starting May 30, 2008
Sand courts at Montrose Avenue Beach
Saturday double-elimination playoffs & BBQ
Women's Divisions: Competitive and Recreation
Men's Divisions: C (indoor C); CC (indoor B-Minor); B (indoor B-Major); BB (indoor BB-Minor); A (BB-Major); AA (indoor A) **Cost:** $325/team – due at registration
Register online: Chicagomsa.com

** Individuals Welcome ** Individuals Welcome ** Individuals Welcome ** Individuals Welcome **
Captains meeting: Thursday, May 15, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Broadway Armory (5917 N Broadway)
For further information on beach volleyball and other Chicago MSA sports: chicagomsa.com

Bowling - CMSA Mixed Standings

Division A	W	L
Cornelia's	70	35
Hamburger Mary's	67	38
GYOF	61	44
Funky Five	62	43
Second to None	60	45
FVB Interiors	52	53
Jury's	50	55
Bowlers-A-GO-GO	44	61
Crew's Ball Busters	44	61
Bowleros	42	63

North End	41	64
REMAX Edge	40	65
5 Pins 10 Balls	39	66
Gutter Fluffers	37	68
Marty's	17	88

Division B	W	L
Bobby Love's	95	10
Great Scots	74	31
Halsted Bar & Grill	73	32
Salon Michael	60	38
Wells Fargo ONYX 5	60	45
Rough Trade	59	46
Windy City Sweets	58	47
Juana Bees	55	50
Wicked	55	50
Castaways	49	56
Looney Tunes	48	57
Scot Shotz	47	58
Extremely Striking	39	66
Lady & Her Tramps	38	67
Done More 5 Less	37	68

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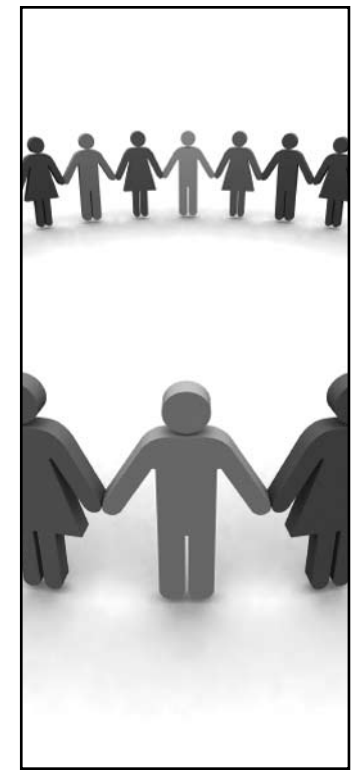
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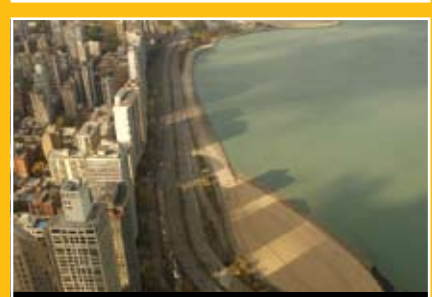
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Evanston Public Library
1703 Orrington Ave
❑ Thurs., May 1 @ 6:30 pm

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