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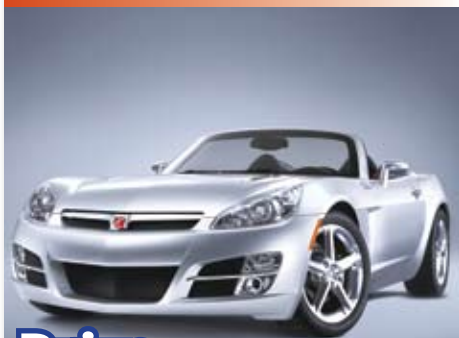
MAY 28, 2008 • VOL 23 NO 37

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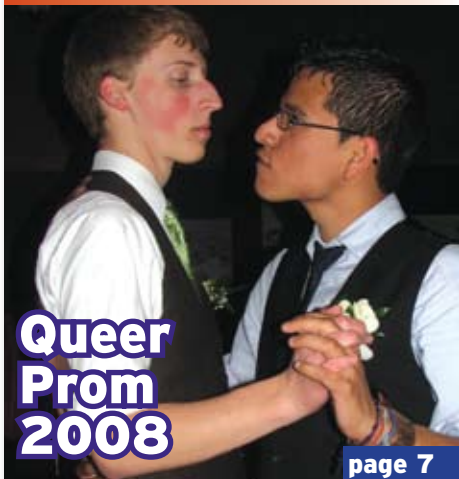
IML Weekend

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Drive, He Said

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Queer Prom 2008

page 7



nightspots
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www.WindyCityQueercast.com



SUMMER THEATER PREVIEW

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Making History WTTW airs gay documentary

Out actress Jane Lynch talks about hosting a historic local LGBT television program

BY ANDREW DAVIS

As part of Pride Month, local television station WTTW-11 will show the special "Out & Proud" starting June 3 at 7:30 p.m. According to a press release, the program, which hails the start of a multiplatform initiative for WTTW and its sister stations (including the Spanish-language station V-me), "represents a new and long-term commitment to producing and presenting original content of interest to and designed for both

the LGBT community and all of WTTW's viewing audience."

The program—co-produced by Daniel Andries and Alexandra Silets, and co-executive-produced by Jerry Liwanag and VJ McAleer—will also run June 9 at 8 p.m. and June 15 at 6 p.m.

"Out & Proud," produced in partnership with the Chicago History Museum, profiles a number of LGBT individuals with ties to Chicago, and the persons range from the famous to the Everyman. Among the people profiled are social-activist couple Jane Addams and Mary Rozet Smith;

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Actress Jane Lynch (above) hosts "Out & Proud."

Chicago's Stonewall: The Trip Raid in 1968

The following article was written for the Chicago Gay History Project, a Web site launching later this summer. A companion book, *Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Movement*, edited by Tracy Baim, will be published this summer by Surrey Books. This essay is among many by Marie J. Kuda included in the book.

BY MARIE J. KUDA

In the 21st century, "Stonewall" is the accepted buzzword for the beginning of the gay liberation movement in the United States. It conjures up a vision of bar-raiding Greenwich Village cops terrorized inside the Stonewall Inn by a bunch of angry queens outside, tossing rocks, bottles, a Molotov cocktail and shouts reminiscent of Network ("I'm not going to take this anymore!").

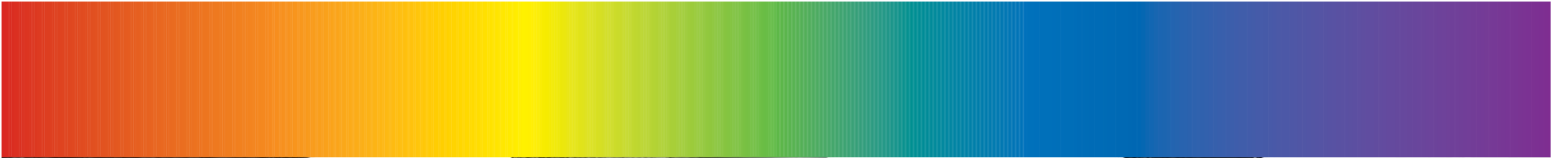
But in Chicago, the events of that June day in 1969 barely made a ripple. The riot was not immediate national news. A few local gay papers existed around the country, but

Turn to page 24

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There was leather as far as the eye could see this past Memorial Day weekend as International Mr. Leather (IML) celebrated its 30th in Chicago. See more photos on page 29 and at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Photo by Israel Wright



Cyndi Lauper (above) is just one of the artists profiled in a "True Colors Tour"-themed edition of Pop Making Sense. See page 28.

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This week's online-only features include:
 -Media Watch
 -Mombian with Dana Rudolph: Dottie's Magic Pockets
 -Theater: Boys and Girls (right); Beholder
 -Theater: Catey Sullivan's special, "On the outs: Beyond Chicago"



Photo by Johnny Knight

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nightspots

SEX AND THE WINDY CITY
 Windy City Queercast host May Matheny explores her inner Samantha/Charlotte/Carrie/Miranda.
 Photo by Kirk Williamson



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Ramifications of the Calif. marriage decision

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

A pollster opined this week that the California Supreme Court's decision on gay marriage will help Republican John McCain and hurt Democrat Barack Obama.

"By overturning a ban on gay marriage that was approved by 61 percent of California voters," wrote Peter Brown of Quinnipiac University Polling Institute May 19, "the judges have helped revive an emotional issue that seems likely to work to Sen. McCain's benefit and to Sen. Barack Obama's detriment."

But California voters approved a ban to recognize same-sex marriages from other states eight years ago. For the last four of those years, the nation has witnessed the reality of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts with no noticeable threat to the survival of civilization. Times change, and so does public opinion.

The California ban on issuing marriage licenses to in-state couples was legislative but 31 years ago. And during the past three years, the California legislature has twice approved legislation to recognize same-sex marriage. Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the legislation twice, but now says he won't support the ballot measure to overturn last week's decision.

And, interestingly, the Republican Party's draft platform on domestic issues, publicized May 14, makes no mention of gay marriage or other controversial issues. Instead, it focuses on such bread and butter matters as lower gas prices, health care insurance, reducing college tuition, and improving literacy. In fact, it reads more like a Democratic Party agenda, and that's a big change from 2004. Then, the domestic platform harangued against "activist judges ... redefining



Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill. Photo by Rex Wockner

the institution of marriage" and proposed limiting the jurisdiction of federal courts over the Defense of Marriage Act that bans federal recognition of same-sex marriage. It also called for amending the federal constitution to explicitly ban gay marriage nationwide, a proposal generally rejected by McCain.

U.S. Rep. Kay Granger of Texas, who is in charge of writing the Republican party platform for 2008, told Congressional Quarterly the party has decided to focus on where families are now, "not where you want them to be."

Where families are now is an interesting place. A Gallup Poll of 1,017 adults nationwide conducted May 8-11—just four days before the release of the California decision—found that 56 percent said same-sex relationships should not be recognized by law but only 48 percent would favor a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. That's an all-time high.

Asked how important a candidate's position on the issue is in deciding for whom to vote, 49 percent said it was "one of many factors," 33 percent said it was "not a major issue," 16 percent said the candidate "must share" their views, and 2 percent were "unsure." That hasn't changed much since Gallup first asked the ques-

tion during the 2004 presidential race.

In California, however, attitudes have steadily improved. According to an independent report released last year by the Field Research Corporation, Californians were more evenly divided. And a look at surveys over the course of 22 years found that, in California, support for same-sex marriage was growing at a faster pace than anywhere else in the country. Thirty percent supported it in 1985, 38 percent in 1997, and 43 percent in 2003-6.

There is no reason emerging to suggest African American voters in California (who make up about nine percent of the vote)—72 percent of whom are registered Democrats—are going to vote for McCain solely because his opposition to gay marriage is marginally stronger than Obama's.

However, if African Americans in California are overwhelmingly against gay marriage, there is a reason to believe they'll affect the outcome of the voting on the anti-gay marriage measure because they are expected to turn out in November with the same full force they turned out in February to vote for Obama.

And it is fair to expect that the marriage decision will inspire a greater conservative turnout to the polls in California than will McCain himself. While they might turn out to vote against gay marriage, they will likely cast their vote for McCain while they're at it.

What will those turn outs be? In the California primary Feb. 5, McCain drew only 1.2 million voters to the polls; Obama drew 2.1 million winning second place in the Democratic primary (where 2.6 million Californians voted for Clinton).

McCain has been more moderate on gay marriage than the Republican Party's most conservative wing would like. While he supported a constitutional amendment ban in Arizona (which failed), he has opposed an amendment to the federal constitution. He has suggested he might support the federal amendment, under some as yet unidentified circumstance.

After the California marriage decision was released May 15, the McCain campaign put out a statement saying that the candidate "supports the right of the people of California to recognize marriage as a unique institution sanctioning the union between a man and a woman, just as he did in his home state of Arizona."

"John McCain doesn't believe judges should be making these decisions," said the statement.

The Obama camp, by comparison, said simply that Obama "respects the decision of the California Supreme Court and continues to believe that states should make their own decisions when it comes to the issue of marriage." And Hillary Clinton's campaign restated her position that she supports civil unions.

Pam Spaulding, a lesbian political commentator, called all three responses a "punt."

"Good lord, this 'leave it to the states' bulls*t is so tired," wrote Spaulding on her blog, Pam's House Blend. "Clinton and Obama are lawyers, for god's sake. They know the precedent of Loving v. Virginia on this...."

They know the precedent of the 2004 presidential campaign, too, or at least what former President Bill Clinton claimed it was. Clinton notoriously blamed the 2003 Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision in Goodridge as "overwhelming factor in the defeat of John Kerry."

"With one decision of one [state] supreme court," said Clinton, speaking to a college audience in Utica, New York, in November 2004, "all of the sudden we have a constitutional amendment designed, I think, to whip people up, to inflame them, make them stop thinking about other issues."

But that was 2004, when gas prices were hitting a "new record high" of \$1.75—not \$4, as they are now. That was before the subprime mortgage crisis triggered a soaring number of foreclosures, and the U.S. economy slid into what many economists have now labeled a recession. And, the U.S. was only in its first year of combat in Iraq, not its fifth.

Same-sex marriage may still carry some weight on voters' minds, but in 2008, it will have a lot of competition to be the "overwhelming factor" that defeats any candidate.

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Local law firm hosts talk on marriage ruling

BY AMY WOOTEN

Following the news of the recent California Supreme Court ruling, the American Constitution Society's Chicago Lawyer Chapter presented a discussion on the importance of the groundbreaking decision.

The May 23 discussion, "The California Supreme Court's Gay Marriage Decision: What Does It Mean and What's Next?," hosted at the law offices of Miller Shakman & Beem, featured guest speaker John Knight, senior staff attorney and director of the AIDS and Civil Liberties/Gay and Lesbian Rights Projects at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Illinois. Although Massachusetts already offers same-sex marriage, Knight said there are several reasons the California ruling is a "landmark" decision for proponents.

For one, gay marriage proponents had been losing their argument in the court system until now. This marks a change in the tide.

"The court finally got what we've been saying for years," Knight said, calling the California Supreme Court's analysis "earth-shattering."

The decision is also groundbreaking because of the influence of the California Supreme Court. California's highest court has been in the forefront of many new decisions recognizing rights that haven't been recognized before, Knight said, adding that the California Supreme

Court is the "most influential high state court" in the nation. This, in turn, could have a tremendous impact throughout the nation.

Knight said that the size of California's economy also makes the decision important.

During the discussion, Knight emphasized the importance of the decision in terms of its demand that gay and lesbian couples receive the same respect, dignity and fundamental rights as their heterosexual counterparts. Knight said that the decision strengthens gay marriage advocates' argument that marriage equality is about those fundamental rights, like protecting one's family, and the desire to obtain the protections and dignity afforded everybody else.

"I never really thought we would be at this particular place," a clearly moved Knight said.

On the national front, those present noted two other pending marriage cases in Connecticut and Iowa, which could further change the landscape.

"We're hopeful in both of those courts," Knight said.

The ACLU believes that in addition to various court cases, there will be more legislative efforts to obtain legal recognition of same-sex relationships, Knight said. These efforts, such as the push for civil unions currently going on in the Illinois House, represent more progress towards obtaining marriage equality throughout the United States.

"We'll keep fighting until, one day, we will have marriage benefits everywhere," Knight said.



Rev. Deborah Lake (above) is surprised by some of the reactions her comments have generated.

Column about Black LGBT youth angers some

BY AMY WOOTEN

A May 19 Chicago Sun-Times column written by Laura Washington tackled the issue of the large numbers of LGBT youth from various parts of the city who have flocked to the Lakeview neighborhood to hang out since the opening of the Center on Halsted. It is not news that LGBT youth enjoyed socializing in Boystown long before the Center was even built. However, since the Center's emergence, several Lakeview residents and businesses have complained about the youth who come to the neighborhood, which has led to emotional forums and heated debates. Many in the LGBT community feel that the complaints are rooted in racist thought and a misunderstanding of queer youth and what they need.

Washington's column featured comments by various members of the community, such as Sankofa Way's Rev. Deborah Lake, Center on Halsted Executive Director Modesto "Tico" Valle and Equality Illinois' director of public policy, Rick Garcia. Some members of the community are furious with how LGBT youth were portrayed in Washington's piece, and are dismayed by the comments made by Lake, Valle and Garcia, causing the Coalition for Justice and Respect and Critical Caucus to hold an urgent meeting regarding the matter May 24.

The Coalition for Justice and Respect's Marc Loveless, in a mass e-mail response to the piece, called the comments made within the article "racist and unsettling." He also called the ar-

ticle's characterization of gay youth in the area "misleading," and felt the article was "disrespectful and untrue."

Tommy Avant Garde, of Chicago's House of Avant Garde (a ball-culture house), was angered by Washington's column as well, but did not participate in the May 24 meeting. "My initial impression was that this is an issue that needs to come to a head," Avant Garde told Windy City Times.

Avant Garde said that emotions are getting high again, not only because of Washington's article, but also because summer is approaching and more youth will be coming to the neighborhood. Avant Garde has participated in numerous forums and discussions about the issue, and feels that nothing can be done without everyone participating, including the youth.

In the article, Washington wrote, "The summer winds are coming to North Halsted. The p.c. crowd is running out of time."

"I will agree with her on that," Avant Garde said. He feels that the LGBT community needs to move beyond discussion and argument and take action. "If I have to step on the toes, I will step on the toes," he said. "I'm tired of it, and I think something needs to be done or I fear there is going to be a real big issue."

In his response, Loveless took offense to Washington's portrayal of the youth that hang around Halsted Street as "towering muscled youths." He felt that Washington was insinuating that the youth pose a threat to the neighborhood.

Loveless was also angered by Lake's comments. In the piece, Lake stated that some of the young adults are coming to Halsted Street for sex work, but nobody seems to want to address this issue. In his response, Loveless felt that Lake thought LGBT youth hustling and engaging in criminal activities was the main problem, and felt the statement was a misleading, stereotypical characterization of Black LGBT youth.

Lake told Windy City Times that she was "surprised" that anybody was offended or angered by her comments. She said that she recognizes that the issue is very complicated, and was simply trying to convey the message that the LGBT community needs to be willing to discuss every aspect of the issue.

She first heard about the sex work issue at a forum before the Center even opened, and then with discussions she's had with youth since. She said she was concerned "knowing that was part of the attraction, but not part of the discussion."

"Not every young person who goes to the North Side is going there for that," she said, "...but that is part of the draw."

Lake said that her point was that the LGBT

community needs to discuss all of the issues. "We can't just pick out the ones that we're comfortable arguing about, which is race," she said.

Loveless called the issues brought up in the article "nonsense" in his response, and was offended by Washington's statement that when issues are brought up regarding LGBT youth in Boystown "the Al Sharptons of the gay community scream racism."

"I think racism plays a part in the discussion of that issue, and we aren't discussing that, either," Avant Garde said.

"I believe you have to have the parties together to make things happen because if you don't, there's always going to be one side saying this and one side saying that," Avant Garde said.

"We need to look beyond comfort levels, even in our disagreements, and talk about things that we haven't really talked about and haven't re-

ally explored, and hold those accountable who we haven't held accountable in the past," Lake added. Lake believes that a lot of the arguments get in the way of having fruitful discussion.

"We're not having the discussions we need to have," she said.

Avant Garde believes that a lot of what is missing from the ongoing discussion is voices of the youth. He has been working on empowering youth to speak up about the issue, and plans to have many youth become more involved once school lets out.

"We're not in a place to say what they need," he said, adding that youth simply don't have alternatives to hang out on the North Side, as well as the South and West sides.

"I also think the African-American community needs to step up," Avant Garde said. "It's as simple as that. We need to step up."



Larry McKeon.

McKeon memorial held in Springfield

BY AMY WOOTEN

State legislators held an official remembrance in Springfield to mourn the passing of a gay pioneer—former State Rep. Larry McKeon.

The Illinois House of Representatives honored McKeon, the first openly gay and HIV-positive Illinois legislator, May 20 for his years of dedicated public service. Many of McKeon's friends and former colleagues spoke of the broad range of work he did on behalf of groups such as the gay and lesbian community, immigrants, the homeless, seniors and workers.

With House Resolution 1323, state legislators honored McKeon's legacy as a compassionate lawmaker and activist. Although McKeon is most remembered as the sponsor of an amendment to the Illinois Human Rights Act banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, which was passed in 2005, those present also noted the many other ways in which McKeon touched the lives of Illinoisans.

McKeon represented the North Side's 13th District, which was the 34th prior to re-districting in 2002. He made state history when he was elected to the House in 1996. He served five consecutive terms until his retirement in 2007, when he was replaced by Rep. Greg Harris, who also happens to be openly gay and HIV-positive.

During the memorial, Harris said that McKeon was proud to stand up for many groups besides the LGBT community over the years, such as the labor, immigrant and senior communities.

Rep. George Scully, D-Crete, agreed: "I hope we all remember the very broad range of issues he cared deeply about."

Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie, D-Chicago, called McKeon's contributions "enormous," adding, "Larry was a man for all seasons."

Harris also spoke of how McKeon's election as the first openly gay and HIV-positive state lawmaker was both an opportunity and burden for him. But even though all eyes were on McKeon at all times, Harris said that McKeon managed to raise the bar very high.

Rep. Sara Feigenholtz, D-Chicago, was moved to tears while she talked about McKeon's legacy as a man who cared deeply about social justice, and a man who, by serving the public, changed many minds.

"For some people he was the first openly gay man they have ever met," Feigenholtz said. "For others, he was the first openly HIV-positive person they have ever met."

... We can never un-ring that bell," she added.

A memorial service for McKeon will be held in Chicago in June. Details will be reported as they become available.



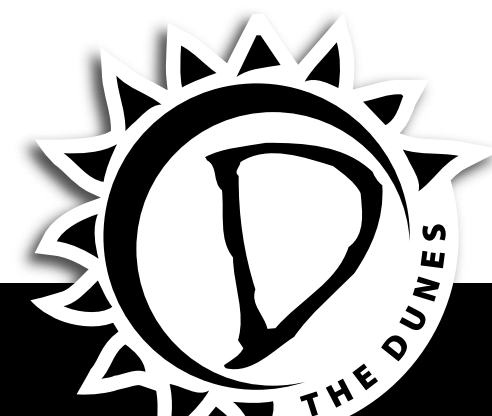
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Queer Prom 2008

The National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th, opened its doors May 23 to host "Queer Prom 2008: Todos Me Miran." The youth oriented fundraising event was organized by RadioArte to benefit Homofrecuencia, a Spanish-language radio show for Latino/a GLBT teens. This year's prom theme, "Todos Me Miran," (translated as "Everyone Looks at Me") was inspired by Mexican singer Gloria Trevi, who has used the song to empower fans who have felt ostracized for being different. For some, this year's prom gave them an opportunity to attend their first same-sex prom. In addition, in an effort to create an all-inclusive safe space, the museum converted male and female bathrooms into gender-neutral ones. To capture being at the prom, attendees purchased a professional portrait as a memento. Two raffle winners each took home a pair of tickets to see Gloria Trevi and Alejandra Guzman, who are set to perform separately at the Congress Theatre in June. Homofrecuencia airs Monday, 7-9 p.m. at 90.5 FM Radio Arte Chicago or on the Internet from anywhere in the world. Photos and text by Emmanuel Garcia

Local commission lauds military ruling

Dana V. Starks, chair and commissioner of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, issued a statement praising The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' May 21 ruling that allows Air Force Maj. Margaret Witt to continue her legal battle against the military.

The military dismissed Witt after a career of almost two decades when personnel discovered that she had a six-year relationship with another woman.

The statement read, in part, "I commend the decision of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals calling into question the constitutionality of the federal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' statute affecting gay and lesbian members of the armed forces. Stereotypical assumptions about the presence of gays and lesbians in our armed services should no longer drive public policy. It is gratifying that

federal courts are now recognizing that gay and lesbian service members can and do contribute their talents in harmony with their heterosexual colleagues. They do not deserve to be treated as inherently disruptive."

LGBT-themed exhibition in Andersonville

Estudiotres gallery, 5205 N. Clark, is presenting "Everyday People," curated by David Getsy and Rob Bondgren, through Fri., June 27. This LGBT-themed exhibition features artists (including local talents Brooke Barnett, Sean Fader and Doug Ischar) who fuse concepts such as sex, gender, lust, love, and survival with the simple and everyday.

The gallery's hours are Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sat.-Sun., 12-4 p.m.



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Movie screening examines violence and LGBTQs

BY YASMIN NAIR

The Center on Halsted's Anti-Violence Project and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs recently hosted a roundtable and regional training sessions. These included a public screening of the documentary, *Dangerous Living: Coming Out in the Developing World*, May 22. It was one of three events at the Center that week that examined violence and the LGBTQ community.

The film centers around the Cairo 52 case of 2001, where a number of men were arrested after a trip on an Egyptian floating houseboat. *Dangerous Living* argues that the case created a global gay consciousness about "a planetary minority." It includes interviews with queer activists in countries as disparate as Pakistan, Malaysia, and the Honduras.

Dulcia Molina is one of those activists; in 2002, she fled Honduras after her work as an out lesbian and an advocate for child prostitutes put her in danger. She was present to lead a discussion afterwards.

In response to a question about the film's erasure of different political and economic situations, Molina said that the film did not provide those contexts. She added that "coming to America is not [necessarily] a solution" because asylum does not address the economic issues of asylees, and most people would prefer to stay in their countries. Molina also addressed gender: lesbians face greater harm than gay men because of their economic and cultural vulnerability.

Sean Casey of the Heartland Alliance said that there are LGBTQ communities and groups in the global south which lack basic resources. He gave an example of the murdered body of an El Salvadoran transgender person found in Guatemala: a local LGBTQ group struggled for funds to fly the body back. Wilson Montaya, of the Long Island GLBT Community Center, spoke about understanding the violence faced "by our brothers and sisters." Sam Aguilera, of the group Get the Word Out, spoke about working with transgender sex workers on the Mexican-American border, who're often beaten by Juarez police, and asked, "How can we support them further?" In response, Molina spoke about "organizing sex workers to defend their labor rights."

Partner violence among forum topics

BY YASMIN NAIR

Violence is usually discussed within the context of heterosexual families and social groups. It's widely assumed that people in same-sex households, communities and relationships are either incapable of causing harm to each other, or that their needs can't be met by mainstream anti-violence groups. As a result, significant issues like intimate partner violence or the particular needs of transgender youth seeking shelter from abusive homes are not addressed. This leaves portions of the LGBTQ community without the conventional resources available to heterosexuals who seek relief from abuse.

These and other points were raised at a May 24 day-long panel and community discussion, "Violence Within and Against Queer Communities," organized by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. The event's panel featured Alicia Vega, co-chair of Amigas Latinas, and Ann Russo and Michelle VanNatta. The latter two women represented Women and Girls Community Action Network (WGCAN) and the Queer Transformative Justice Project.

Vega talked about the findings of Proyecto Latina, a survey initiated by Amigas Latinas to gather data about the experiences and lives of queer Latina women. Until this survey, conducted January to July 2007, there had been no statistical information about the community. Amigas wanted to "speak from a more informed place" about the women it represented. The questions asked about everything from health care to marital status.

Both Russo and VanNatta felt that the anti-violence movement had moved away from community-based solutions, and that the system depended too much on the state which, in turn, asked for immediate solutions like jail time without providing a long-term plan for the cessation of violence.

Russo and VanNatta also stressed the "need to do something in addition to social services." For both, such work is especially important because it provides an alternative for LGBTQ people and answers the question: "What does [the anti-violence movement] mean for queer issues of violence?"

Read the entire article at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY AMY WOOTEN

This week, Sam Adams became the **second openly gay mayor elected to lead one of the largest cities in the U.S.** Adams won 58 percent of the vote to become the new mayor of Portland, Ore. In 2004, Adams became Portland's first openly gay city commissioner. There, he helped create Portland's domestic partner registry. The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund endorsed Adams, as well as Oregon secretary of state candidate Kate Brown, who is openly bisexual.

Birmingham, Ala., Mayor Larry Langford has said that he will not interfere with a scheduled gay pride parade, according to The Birmingham News. Langford initially said that he would not sign a proclamation for the annual event or grant the sponsoring group, Central Alabama Pride, a parade permit. He later said that he would grant a permit, although he is not necessarily condoning the parade.

The court hearing for a **challenge to the Wisconsin's same-sex marriage ban** has been set for May 30. Last fall, a circuit court judge rejected university professor William McConkey's claim that the Wisconsin marriage ban violates the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution. Now, the professor, with the help of Fair Wisconsin, is pursuing the claim that the referendum on the 2006 ballot illegally asked two questions, which violates the state's single subject rule. In 2006, 59 percent of Wisconsin voters approved the ban. If the judge agrees with McConkey, the amendment will be overturned.

A South Carolina high school principal threw in the towel after the formation of a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at his school. Irmo High School principal Eddie Walker resigned, effective at the end of the 2008-09 school year, because the formation of a GSA conflicts with his religious beliefs. Walker also quit because he thought the formation of the club conflicted with the school's abstinence-only education. He believes that the club's presence will lead to students having sex.

Following the news that California's supreme court lifted the state's ban of same-sex marriage, **Human Rights Campaign pledged \$500,000 to help keep California's Supreme Court ruling from being overturned.** Opponents have proposed a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage that would overturn the ruling. The national LGBT organization pledged \$500,000 to Equality for All to help maintain marriage equal-

ity in California.

According to The Southern Voice, U.S. Rep. Paul Broun, R-Georgia, said that he will **reintroduce the Federal Marriage Protection amendment**, which would amend the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriages. Broun was inspired by the recent California Supreme Court ruling. "What the activist judges in California have shown is that the traditional definition of marriage is under assault by a cadre of lawyers and judges who hold the will of the voters in contempt," he stated in a press release.

Talk-show host **Ellen DeGeneres pressed Republican presidential nominee John McCain about his stance on the gay marriage issue** on a recent episode of her show. DeGeneres, who announced that she will marry Portia de Rossi following the California Supreme Court ruling that allows gay marriage, entered into a friendly debate with the senator. DeGeneres pled her case to the presidential nominee. "We are all the same people, all of us," she said. "You're no different than I am. Our love is the same."

Court rules for lesbian officer against military

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled May 21 that Air Force Maj. Margaret Witt can continue her legal battle against the military, which dismissed her for being in a lesbian relationship.

The appeals court decided that the government may only "intrude upon the personal and private lives of homosexuals" to "advance an important governmental interest," such as improving morale, according to CNN.com.

Witt was discharged from the military after a career of almost two decades when personnel discovered that she had a six-year relationship with another woman.

According to a statement released by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington state, Witt said that she is "thrilled by the court's recognition that I can't be discharged without proving that I was harmful to morale."

Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Lambda Legal, released a statement in which he said, "We extend congratulations to Major Margaret Witt and her counsel, the ACLU and James Lobsenz [part of the ACLU legal team], on [the] Ninth Circuit ruling. We are pleased with the decision, which is a step in the right direction towards full equality for LGBT service members in the U.S. armed forces."

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QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW THIS MAN (MAYOR YURI LUZHKOV) has deprived me and my fellow activists of the right to go on the streets with human rights slogans in support of sexual minorities, openly branding us as satanists and weapons of mass destruction. Two years ago, as part of the first Moscow Gay Pride, I tried to lay flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier next to the Kremlin wall as a sign of our fight against fascism. I was allowed to go no further than the closed doors of Alexandrovskiy Garden where fascist extremists of contemporary Russia pulled the flowers out of my hands and crushed them while I was arrested by militia as a criminal. The next day Mayor Luzhkov said that gays wanted to be irreverent about our sacred place and 'they were justly beaten.'" — *Pioneering Russian gay activist Nikolai Alekseev writing in London's Guardian, May 8.*

"OCCASIONALLY I DON'T LIKE THE PROBING AND THE QUESTIONING. But I put up with it because I grew up in a time when there were no role models. To be gay and lesbian was to be a failure. The good gay people killed themselves. And the others were drug addicts and bums. There was no possibility for a life of integrity or respect. So I feel called to be as open as I can be about my life so that young lesbians and gay men will understand that they can have wonderful relationships, be mothers and fathers and make a real distinction for themselves in their careers. I owe it to those who come after me." — *New Hampshire Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson to Britain's Telegraph newspaper, April 29.*

"THERE'S A'S AND THERE'S B'S. THE A'S ARE GUYS LIKE ME, the B's are homosexual faggots with dirt on their fingernails that transmit diseases." — *Canadian federal Tory MP Tom Lukiwski caught on a 17-year-old amateur videotape unearthed April 3 by an opposition political party. Lukiwski said of the recording: "I am sorry. I am ashamed."*

"I'VE NEVER SEEN A WORSE JOB OF LOBBYING DONE BY THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY (than on the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act, ENDA). They seem to think that all they had to do was to get the gay

and lesbian community to say 'OK.' I think they thought that this was a train, and that they were a car on the train. I said to them, 'You've got to work this, you've got to lobby people.' They did a terrible job of lobbying, and so we didn't have the votes." — *Openly gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., to the Oregon gay newspaper Just Out, May 2. A GLB-only version of ENDA has passed the U.S. House of Representatives and is pending in the Senate.*



Scotty ... will you please marry me?

—**Matthew Rhys' (right) character, Kevin Walker, to his on-screen partner, Scotty Wandell, on the ABC-TV series Brothers & Sisters**



GLAAD photo



"I'D BE UPSET (IF MY BOYFRIEND CAME OUT AS GAY) BECAUSE I WANT to be with him. It's so funny because I joke with him that it drives me crazy to be a girl sometimes, so in my next life I'm going to come back as a guy and (he's) going to be my bitch. But if he liked guys, I would be crushed." — *Singer Janet Jackson to E! Online, April 22.*

"MARRY ME. I MEAN IT. I DON'T WANNA WAIT. I don't wanna—I wanna make this official. ... I'm completely, completely in love with you. I even love the things about you that I hate. Because you make me feel like I don't have to be anyone other than who I am. And, to me, that feels like family, and that's what I want us to be. I want us to be a family, because that never ends. ... Scotty, I am asking you, Will you please marry me?" — *Character Kevin Walker to character Scotty Wandell on the hit ABC-TV series Brothers & Sisters, May 4. Scotty said yes.*

"IT'S A MILESTONE, AND I WAS REALLY quite pleased that I got to be a part of it." — *Brothers & Sisters actress Calista Flockhart on the show's May 11 season-finale gay wedding, to USA Today, May 9.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

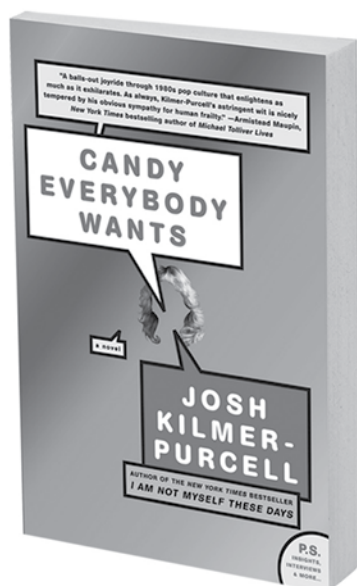
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A lesbian couple's 28th anniversary: A personal account

On May 9, local lesbian couple Judith Markowitz and Susan Franz marked their near-three-decade-long relationship by registering as domestic partners. Below is Markowitz's account of what transpired the night before—and the day of—the registration.

BY JUDITH MARKOWITZ



Judith Markowitz (right) and Susan Franz. Photo courtesy of Markowitz

Nothing's changed—but everything's changed. We walked out of the County Building filled with wonder and joy and holding our certificate. But, before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let's back up.

In March we attended a community concert that had a silent-auction fundraiser. One of the items was a two-night stay at Chicago's famed Ambassador East Hotel and supper in its equally renowned Pump Room Restaurant. "Hmm," we thought, "What a great way to celebrate our 28th anniversary on May 9." So we schemed our way to the highest bid.

Fast forward to late afternoon May 8, when we checked into the Ambassador East's third-floor corner suite and were off to a very good start. This well-appointed *grande dame* has all the charms of her Continental predecessors. We dressed for supper, then strolled to one of our favorite downtown restaurants, Ben Pao. After a leisurely and sumptuous dinner, we ambled to a nearby club, Pops for Champagne, to take in the show by Tammy McCann, a rising jazz vocalist, and her trio.

By midnight we were safely tucked in and dreaming away our last night as unattached singles. The morning that waited would forever change our public standing—as much as Illinois and Cook County laws now permit.

Surely, no brides have ever experienced any more thrilling anticipation before their rituals! We awoke and dressed in our tuxedos and

patent leathers. Spiffed to the fullest extent, we grabbed a taxi and, clutching each other's hand, soon found ourselves at County Building. Although the space for domestic-partner registration is shared by those seeking marriage certificates and other official appointments, this Friday morning it was entirely ours. There, after paperwork and fees were exchanged, we were granted certificate number 1297. At last, after 28 years of voluntary companionship laced with two lives' triumphs, elation, tedium, spontaneity, stress and heartbreak, we were publicly acknowledged to belong together.

Our registrant agreed to capture the "Kodak moment," and a patient bystander outside the building indulged our request for one more photo. And, we took a picture from our dinner at the Pump Room to illustrate how our joy continued into the evening.

Nothing has changed—our committed relationship still lacks the full sanction that marriage conveys. We cannot file joint taxes, we won't have beneficiary provisions to each other's Social Security and, in too many other ways, we continue as "second-class" citizens. Separate but equal is only separate.

Everything has changed—there is now a public record of our devotion to each other. For any and all who care to look, we are identified as "partners in life". After 28 years, it's a beginning!

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A fleeting moment of democracy for California's same-sex couples

I have learned as both a pastor and also as a member belonging to several minority groups—African-American, women and lesbian—that a popular opinion on an issue does not always reflect the right choice. Too often, the right choice and the moral high ground on an issue derive from a small struggling group trying both to be seen and heard among the cacophony of dissenting voices and opposing votes. And it is with this group we see democracy's tenacity working, where those relegated to the fringes of society can begin to sample what those in society take for granted as their inalienable right.

Last week we saw democracy work. In a 4-to-3 decision, California Supreme Court ruled that a "separate and unequal" system of domestic partnership for same-sex couples is not only blatantly discriminatory but it is also unconstitutional.

"In contrast to earlier times, our state now recognizes that an individual's capacity to establish a loving and long-term committed relationship with another person and responsibly to care for and raise children does not depend upon the individual's sexual orientation, and, more generally, that an individual's sexual orientation—like

a person's race or gender—does not constitute a legitimate basis upon which to deny or withhold legal rights," the court wrote.

But the knot is not completely tied for California's same-sex couples.

A conservative backlash in California has already begun with opponents gathering signatures to place on the November ballot, defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

But California won't be alone in its efforts. Florida will vote on a constitutional amendment in November, and Arizona, presidential hopeful John McCain's state, is considering to do the same. Twenty-seven states already have constitutional amendments prohibiting same-sex marriage, defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

But with heterosexual marriage being so sacred, conservatives fail to see how it is constantly desecrated on any given weeknight by being slotted for family entertainment—television shows like "The Bachelor" that cavalierly join people together for high Nielsen ratings.

Also when society narrowly defines marriage as the union between a man and a woman, it is not only policing the sexual behaviors of lesbian and gay people, but society is also policing the sexual behaviors of heterosexuals. Handcuffing marriage to a heterosexual paradigm merely chokes its possibility of ever flourishing and lasting, especially as we are coming to understand the fluidity of not only gender and sexual identities but also of the constant changing configuration of family units.

In the court's need to deal fairly with same-sex couples given the widespread public sentiment against same-sex marriage did it ignore the will of the people?

But the California court's decision can be read two ways.

The court upheld the democratic process by offering same-sex couples marriage and not

"marriage lite" with civil unions. Or the court overstepped its authority, imposing its will on an issue the country, let alone the state of California, is not ready for.

With purportedly more than 1.2 million signatures gathered to place on the November ballot—more than twice the requisite number needed to initiate the process of passing a constitutional amendment to put the question on the 2008 election ballot—is the democratic process thwarted?

To put lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people's equal rights on the ballot for a popular vote is both wrong-hearted and wrong-headed. If I waited for slaveholders to free my ancestors predicated on a ballot vote, we all wouldn't be living in the America we know today.

The proponents of the ballot question are a well-financed and well-organized voting constituency. And as a tyrannical majority, they represent themselves as a formidable might that has power and money, and not as a group of people advocating a moral right. Marriage, for them, is defined solely as between a man and a woman, and any variation of their gender prescription within this institution is vehemently beaten down. They use the ballot not to promote justice but instead to promulgate their bigoted agenda, and democracy works only when their side wins.

Democracy can only begin to work when those relegated to the fringes of society can begin to sample what those in society take for granted as their inalienable right. And sometimes for that to happen, people like our Massachusetts lawmakers and, now, California's have to step in to make the democratic process work for us all.

While LGBTQ families in California have not seen the last in this ballot battle, they are getting, at least for now, a sample of what we LGBTQ families in Massachusetts can take for granted: democracy.



YASMIN
NAIR

Gay marriage and immigration: Laboring over love

The recent California decision on gay marriage fills me with dread—dread at the schlock I know is awaiting me during this Pride month and afterwards; dread about hearing all the triumphant rhetoric about "equality;" and dread that queers are going to speak about marriage as some kind of dream fulfilled. Again.

Because, of course, marriage will solve all our problems. No health care? Get married! Laid off? Get married! Struggling to pay bills and survive another month? Get married! Don't believe in marriage or that marriage should be the only way to gain health care and other benefits? Suck it up and start believing!

We queers have a unique ability to forget about

the after—as in: What happens after "marriage equality"? Will our workplaces be better? Will we be less vulnerable to layoffs? Will our unmarried friends and neighbors have health insurance? Will the lives of our married but uninsured friends and neighbors be any better with the legalization of gay marriage?

These questions preoccupied me as I watched the "gay movement" take up a cause in a cynical bid to further the idea that gay marriage/gay coupledom matters above all: Immigration. In this year's Chicago May Day march, gay groups joined together to form an official queer contingent.

Watching and talking to several of the key organizers of the contingent, I was struck by the great differences between queers who claimed to fight for immigration and queers who are themselves queer immigrants. For queer immigrants, immigration had to do with the rights of the undocumented. Many of them have friends and families who couldn't attend the march without consequences in their workplaces, and who faced deportation after recent raids. This year's march focused on the legalization of the undocumented and workers' rights.

Whether it's gay marriage or queer immigration, we have to understand that queers are more than the sum of all their relationships. We have no right to take on the cause of immigration without understanding the issues faced by

immigrants themselves. And we can't delude ourselves into believing that love will conquer the problems with labor.

To be fair, many non-immigrants, especially younger queers, understood the key issues. But others were fixated on an issue that has nothing to do with the undocumented and even less with workers' rights: binational couples. According to them, gay couples should be able to sponsor their partners for immigration like married heterosexuals. In fact, this does nothing for the undocumented—citizenship via marriage is only available to the documented.

Somehow, the rights of the undocumented have become conflated with the "marriage rights/gay couples matter more than others" movement. Queer organizers insisted that their situation—as queers whose relationships aren't recognized by the state (because, apparently, only marriage can legitimize a relationship)—was equal to that of the undocumented. Never mind the fact that none of them faced the harrowing issues of the undocumented.

Yasmin Nair is a writer for Windy City Times and a member of CLIA (Chicago LGBTQ Immigrants Alliance) as well as a co-organizer of the recent forum, "Immigration at the Margins: Day Laborers, Sex Workers, Domestic Violence, HIV."

Read the entire op-ed piece at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



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Green cars you can drive NOW

BY JOE LAMURAGLIA, GAYWHEELS.COM

With gas prices rising and oil supplies dwindling, automakers are hard at work on "green" cars, most of which promise guilt-free driving in the form of emissions-free vehicles. But what about vehicles that you can buy now that leave less of a mess behind? Here are five cars on the market that will have a lower impact on the environment as well as on your wallet.

—**Smart fortwo:** The name says it all—"for two"—and that's all the smart can hold. The smart is a space-efficient alternative (at 106 inches in length) to driving around with three to four empty seats and gets up to 41 miles per gallon on the highway. Add to that the ability to recycle many of its parts and you have a cute-as-hell way to reduce your impact on the environment.

Among its advantages are a quirky styling unlike any other vehicle; easy maneuverability and parking; low price; and fuel efficiency. The Smart fortwo, a model that has found a loyal following among European city-dwellers, is available in the United States for the first time for 2008 in two different body styles, a coupe and a convertible (Cabriolet).

The two-seat Smart fortwo is available in three different models for 2008: Pure, Passion and Passion Cabriolet. The Cabriolet model differs from the other two models in that it offers an electric soft top that can be adjusted to any position while driving. It includes a glass heated rear window, and the roof bars for the top can be removed and stowed in a special compartment in the tailgate. The base price of the 2008 smart fortwo is \$11,590.

—**Ford Focus:** The 2008 Ford Focus has an optional engine that qualifies it as PZEV (Partial Zero Emissions Vehicle). That means it is cleaner driving down the road than a car from the '70s



was sitting in the driveway with a full tank of gas! Available with the cool Sync audio system and with a 35-MPG rating, the Ford Focus makes going green fun and affordable.

All hatchback and wagon models of the Ford Focus have been dropped for 2008, but a two-door coupe joins the lineup; the remaining sedan has been fully redesigned cosmetically for 2008, with a distinctive new look inside and out. Side air bags are standard.

—**VW Jetta TDI:** The VW Jetta Sedan and SportWagen will be among the first vehicles in the United States featuring VW's fun-to-drive and uber-efficient TDI "Clean Diesel" engine. Rumors indicate that the SportWagen will get up to 55 miles per gallon on the highway. Fun, low emissions, efficient and available later this year.

Re the SportWagen, the trendy lighting and interior design are growing a bit old, but are still leaps and bounds above the fit and finish of many modern interiors. On the flip side, the level of luxury amenities offered by VW nearly reaches Audi status.

—**Lexus RX400h:** Toyota started the hybrid craze with its Prius so it makes sense that their luxury division should benefit from that technology. The Lexus RX400h was the first luxury hybrid vehicle, and the first to equate the hybrid moniker with speed. Mated to a V-6 engine, the batteries in the RX400h can be as delicate as a lamb around town and fast as a leopard when merging onto the highway. Fuel economy isn't breathtaking, but it's doing its part—and how

many \$40,000 trucks can say that?

The 2008 Lexus RX400h offers the comfort and refinement of luxury cars, combined with the spacious, versatile interior of utility vehicles. Several high-tech features are available—like adaptive front lighting—that aren't widely available in its class.

—**Chevrolet Tahoe Hybrid:** Some people really need a large SUV. Just ask any active family with three or more children and their gear. Chevrolet now gives these consumers a more fuel-

efficient option with their 2008 Tahoe Hybrid. It's a full-size SUV that gets 21 miles per gallon in the city and doesn't compromise on towing or payload capacity. If you just have to be different, GMC's Yukon also comes in hybrid form, as does the swanky Cadillac Escalade.

Among its other strengths are its towing and hauling ability; spacious interior; and compliant ride and handling relative to other large SUVs.

A four-wheel-drive, four-door version has a standard retail price of \$52,395.



The Lexus RX400h. Photo courtesy of Toyota

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Saturn Sky. Photo courtesy of Saturn

Budget convertibles

Get into their tops for less than you think.

BY MARTY PADGETT, GAYWHEELS.COM

You might assume that convertibles will chomp a huge chunk from your wallet, but it doesn't have to be that way. There are a handful of snappy, great-looking, and entertaining convertibles that you can buy for less than \$30,000. Even better—most of them will get more than 20 miles per gallon on the highway, making that long-distance cruise even more affordable.

Gaywheels.com has our favorite convertibles

under \$30,000, all from companies with gay-friendly policies for their employees—and with any of these, you'll be able to parade around in style, lid-free:

—**Saturn Sky:** Pontiac had its Solstice roadster first—but we gays have taken more to Saturn's Sky, the better-looking twin. The \$25,525 Sky's lines are a sexier combination of straights and curves, though the two-seat convertible package is the same. Under the teensy hood there's a choice of a 2.4-liter four-cylinder with 173 horsepower, or in the Sky Red Line, a 2.0-liter turbo four with 260 horsepower. A choice of five-speeds, automatic or manual, is up to you, though we recommend the automatic. Even with it, fuel economy can be as high as 28 mpg on the open road. Anti-lock brakes and stability control are standard, as are satellite radio, cruise control, and power windows, locks and mirrors.

—**Volkswagen Eos:** The name is shared with the goddess of the dawn. Okay, so maybe you're hunting more for the god or goddess of the night, but Volkswagen's four-seat Eos is glad to help out in the search for Mr. or Ms. Right (Now). Sneaking in just below \$29,000 base, the Eos' coolest feature is its retractable hardtop; push a button and about 30 seconds later, it's folded neatly away in the trunk next to your gym bag. Engine choices include a 200-horsepower turbo four and a 250-horsepower V-6, and highway fuel economy goes as high as 30 mpg. A manual gearbox is offered on the turbo four, while VW's nifty dual-clutch automatic is the only tranny available on the V-6. Lots of standard gear includes anti-lock brakes and stability control, and Sirius satellite radio is available.

—**Mazda Miata:** Intimate as a table for two in a back corner, and responsive as a Time Life operator, Mazda's Miata is always a great choice for a two-seat roadster with great looks, fantastic handling and an easy-to-use top, something most of us can appreciate. For just \$20,585, you get a classically influenced roadster with a body like a Greek god (okay, like a British roadster from the '60s), a 166-horsepower four-cylinder

and a choice of manual or automatic gearboxes. You also get the ability to park almost anywhere in town, or on the side of the road, and earn the admiration of the cute surfers—and maybe their phone numbers, too. A word of caution: the cockpit's actually a little too small to go by that name. We're just saying.

—**Ford Mustang:** Raise your hand if you've never heard of a Mustang—yep, we thought so. The evergreen 'Tang's been around so long, most people forget that it's one of the best-selling convertibles in the country—and still, one of the most fun to drive topless. The four-seat rag-top starts at just \$25,060, and with the base V-6 engine musters 26 miles per gallon on the highway. There's a Pony package that firms up the base suspension, and all sorts of color and trim options to go all retro on the Mustang. But the best option is Ford's 1000-watt Shaker audio system. Plug in your iPhone, or slip in that AC/DC CD, spin the knobs, and you'll be amazed at who turns their head and smiles in admiration. High school was never this cool for us!

Survey: Insurance companies' domestic-partner benefits may affect sales

One-third of gays and lesbians would change their auto insurance policies if an insurance company offered domestic-partner benefits to its own employees, according to the results of a survey released by Witeck-Combs Communications.

Harris Interactive, a global market research and consulting firm, conducted the national online survey in conjunction with Witeck-

Combs Jan. 15-22. Of the 2,514 respondents, 303 identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

The survey also revealed that gays and lesbians are twice as likely as their heterosexual counterparts to purchase their automotive insurance online. Seventeen percent of gays and lesbians said they purchased their primary automotive insurance online, compared to only 8 percent of heterosexuals. In addition, 42 percent of gays and lesbians are likely to purchase their primary auto insurance through a company agent, as compared to 35 percent for heterosexuals.

However, 49 percent of the LGBT respondents said that they have no life insurance. Only 32 percent of heterosexuals claimed to have none.

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John Sternal. Photo courtesy of Sternal

LeaseTrader.com: A little give and take

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Getting that car of your dreams just became a little easier, thanks to LeaseTrader.com. The Web site allows you to trade your vehicle to someone else so you can obtain something different—or lets you get that luxury car off your own hands by handing over the lease to another person. Windy City Times talked with John Sternal, vice president of marketing communications at LeaseTrader.com, to learn more about the program.

Windy City Times: Could you describe the whole concept behind LeaseTrader.com?

John Sternal: Sure, but let me first explain how and when it started. About 10 years ago, a gentleman by the name of Sergio Stiberan—who is now the founder and CEO of the company—was driving around in a BMW, and he had about 14 months to go on his lease. And for no other purpose than the fact that he was bored with his car, he wanted to get out of his lease and get a different BMW. So, he went back to the dealer who sold him the lease and said, "Listen. You told me when I was done with the car that I could come back and that you would get me out of the [lease so] I could get something else." The dealer said, "OK. You have 14 months left on the lease, so write me a check for \$15,000—the balance on the lease—and I can get you out of that car." Well, Sergio said, "I'm not going to pay you the remaining balance and give you the car; I might as well keep it." And that is what most people face today when people need a way out of their car; there's no way to break out of that contract.

Sergio knew that there were other people who would be more than happy to pick up where he left off on his car, so he set out to create this online marketplace. It's very similar to a match-making site, [except] one person wants out of [his] lease and someone else is more than happy

to pick up where the other person left off and complete the remaining terms of the contract.

WCT: So it's not about switching vehicles?

JS: It's a one-way transaction. You're either getting out of a car or getting into a car, but you're not trading with the other person.

WCT: And I'm assuming this would be more likely to work with a luxury auto than with, say, a Nova?

JS: [Laughs] Well, I'll be honest with you: The majority of our cars are probably in the luxury category, but that's only because the majority of luxury vehicles are leased. But we have plenty of Fords, GM cars and Chevrolets. We have a lot of what you would call average cars because, for example, somebody is moving to New York City because of a job transfer. That person will just take the subway; it might cost that person more to park each month than to pay the lease.

WCT: And you're preaching to the choir because the situation in Chicago is very similar. So, how long does a typical transaction take?

JS: Well, you go online and post your vehicle. We have thousands of people shopping for cars, so once they find you, you talk and negotiate; then, we step back into the picture and handle the transfer of the formal ownership. That transfer takes about two or three weeks.

WCT: You have "hot deals" on your Web site. What makes them different from regular deals?

JS: Everyone leases differently. If you take a BMW 3 series, for example, you'll never find two [identical] deals because everyone negotiates differently, everybody tries to get different terms [and] everybody puts down a different down payment. Some deals are a little bit better than others. Plus, when you're advertising your car on the site, there are different levels that you can choose to market your vehicle. Sometimes you can get better placement if you're willing to be more aggressive with your marketing. So, all of that factors into [becoming a "hot deal"].

WCT: What do you do to cut down on the possibility of someone trying to pull a scam?

JS: It rarely happens because, with the transfer of ownership, [there's all] this paperwork involved and dealing with the car lease company; it can become such a headache. You can try to do this on your own, but it's not worth the time, effort and headache. We've got a whole transfer department that does all of this day in and day out. Plus—and this is the bigger reason why it's better not to do this on your own—if you want to get out of that vehicle, it's one thing to find somebody else to take over your lease, but it's another thing to find someone who's credit-qualified to take over that lease. Anyone who wants to be a buyer on the site has to get a credit check from us. The seller already knows that anyone we put in contact with them has the credentials to take over the lease payments, so [he] won't be wasting time.

WCT: How popular is your site?

JS: In 2006, we handled 20,000 transactions. In 2007, we handled 35,000 transactions and we're projecting 45,000 transactions this year. The more people who become aware of this option and that this site exists, the people there are who want to try it out. I'll be honest with

you: We have a lot of repeat business; once people realize they can have a different car every 12 months, they're in heaven.

WCT: So could I afford to lease a Lamborghini on a managing editor's salary?

JS: [Laughs] It's possible, depending on how desperate that Lamborghini owner is to get rid of that car. But that's where negotiating comes in. You could get the seller to pick up transfer fees or even entice the seller so that your monthly payments are less than what his monthly payments were.

WCT: Is there anyone that this site is not good for?

JS: Absolutely. One of the first things we talk about is if that person is, first and foremost, a candidate for leasing. There are a couple ways to figure that out: If you're going to drive more than 15,000 miles a year or if you're going to want to hold on to your car [for more] than four years, you're probably not a good candidate for leasing. It's probably better to buy or finance a car because the numbers will probably be better for you.

Also, leasing is based on

credit. So if you're not in good standing, you're probably not going to be approved—and you're checked by the lease finance company as well as by LeaseTrader.com.

WCT: Is there anything you wanted to add?

JS: [One trend] we've seen is a 24-percent increase in the number of people who want to downsize their vehicle; that, for us, is very significant—and that is [attributable] to the slowing economy.

See www.lease trader.com for more.



A BMW 550i sedan, one of the many vehicles available at LeaseTrader.com. Photo courtesy of LeaseTrader.com

VEHICLE REVIEW 2008 Jaguar XKR convertible

BY MICHELE FLEURY, GAYWHEELS.COM

Short of actually being on the old Dinah Shore show, with Dinah Shore herself, could there be anything like arriving at Dinah Shore Weekend in a \$92,000 car?

How about a \$92,035 car, to be exact?

Not only did I feel like royalty heading out to Palm Springs, to take part in this year's fashion show and Logo festivities—I looked liked some titled Brit behind the wheel of the Jaguar XKR convertible.

The drive from Los Angeles to Palm Springs is two hours of flat, straight highway—the perfect road to test the XKR's supercharged eight-cylinder, 420-hp engine. The rumble of the Active Exhaust System is just the first hint that you're about to be pressed deep in your seat by the Jag V-8. Like a bar bouncer, it's all about controlled rage—shooting to 60 m.p.h. in 5 seconds flat.

Inside and out, the Jaguar XKR lives up to the promise of that rippling V-8. Fast, strong and nimble describe the XKR's handling, and it weighs almost two tons and sits at 188.6 inches in length—or 18 inches longer than the Honda Element and 3 inches wider.

The looks are ravishing. The exterior is near perfection, all lovely kitty lumps and aggressive lines. The XKR's raked windshield; long, lean hood adorned with vents; and the oval honeycomb grille add to the elegance created by its stunning profile. The look flashes back to the 1961 Jaguar E-Type (for non-car nuts,

you might recognize the E-Type as the Austin Powers Shaguar), but with a distinct cutting-edge twist. The only cars that come close in outright sex appeal are the Maserati Gran Turismo and Aston Martin V8 Vantage. But even the \$110,000 Gran Turismo and \$111,300 Vantage lack the refinement evident in the styling of the XKR.

The interior of the XKR is the finest example of modern-meets-classic. The leather seats are like clarified butter and they adjust in 16 different ways. The cabin has accents of wood and aluminum as well as the modern center panel that houses a one-touch screen for audio, climate control, navigation and vehicle stats. It's a brilliant use of space, leaving the rest of the dash clutter free. The one thing missing was an MP3 jack. Granted, I might be slightly younger than the XKR's target market, but even my parents have ventured into iPod territory. We were forced to rely on old-fashioned CDs to test the 160-watt Alpine stereo. How retro!

For all the XKR's power and might, it is a shockingly quiet ride thanks to the insulated soft top that keeps with its retro aspirations by not caving to the hard top convertible trend. And it's a sure-footed one, too—the XKR handles with more grace than any Jaguar before it.

On Sunday morning, all the tired and hungover women of Dinah Shore trudged toward the hotel valet. Alone in my giddiness, I handed my ticket over with a smile. Before I knew it, the XKR was having her own runway moment as she rolled down the drive towards us. I had little choice but to hop in, put on my wraparounds and enjoy my America's Next Top Model moment.



The 2008 Jaguar XKR convertible. Photo courtesy of Jaguar

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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo courtesy of Marta Carrasco

SHOWER POWER

The Latino Theatre Festival (above) will make quite a splash this summer—and it's part of the summer theater preview that starts below.

HISTORY

Chicago's Stonewall.
Page 25.

Photo by Tracy Baim



MUSIC

'Color'-ful music
Page 28.



EVENTS

Cowhide-and-seek.
Page 29.

Photo by Israel Wright



SUMMER THEATER PREVIEW

Summer breeze: Enjoying theater outdoors

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Why perform theater outdoors?

Many theater administrators loftily cite how they're carrying on ancient Greek and Shakespearean traditions by performing in the open air. But in Chicago, you can also factor in the desire to bring theater out to people who want to enjoy summer weather after many winter months being cooped up inside.

As expected, there is Shakespeare on tap from Oak Brook-based First Folio Shakespeare Festival and the Oak Park Festival Theatre. Unfortunately they're slightly overlapping with dueling productions of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

But a few other companies are trying something different when it comes to combining theater and the outdoors.

GroundUp Theatre also has *Much Ado About Nothing* on its summer bill, which is presented free in multiple Chicago parks. But pay attention to which characters wear the pants, since GroundUp continues its tradition of changing the genders of a few Shakespearean characters.

For GroundUp's *Much Ado* (which has been designed to have a Victorian-industrial look known as "steam punk") the heroine Hero becomes male and her fiancée Claudio becomes Claudia. The villain Don John also has his gender switched, though the scheming underlings will still be male.

"We're a feminist theater company," explained technical director Don Johnson. "We do gender-bending to give women artists better roles and to explore how women and men interact in a different light."

Along with its different approach to Shakespeare, Johnson points out how GroundUp's



Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm. Photo by Frank Farrell

outdoor shows are great for families. Not only is there the cheap price, but the casual park setting allows kids to come and go if their interest wanes.

Theatre-Hikes also likes trumpet its family-friendly Shakespeare, through for different reasons. Since audiences have to hike to different locales during the play throughout Lisle's Morton Arboretum or Chicago's North Park Village Nature Center, it's like a series of mini-recesses for kids to let their energy out.

"Kids are twitchy," says Morton Arboretum special events Marilyn Baysek. "They're quite able to sit through a 15-to-20-minute scene when they know they can walk and dash around in a moment."

The Taming of the Shrew is this year's Theatre-Hikes Shakespeare offering, but far more remarkable is what could be the world's first theater "Bike-Hike."

Theatre-Hikes Artistic Director Frank Farrell found the perfect show to utilize Morton Arboretum's many bike trails with the 1980s off-Broadway romantic comedy *Key Exchange*. The mature-audiences-only play is set in New York's Central Park and deals with a couple whose relationship has moved to the stage where they're ready to

exchange each other's apartment keys. Instead of walking, audience cycle between scenes.

"Morton Arboretum has taken full advantage of the whole biking concept," Farrell said. "They're even throwing a 'Central Park Picnic' party after each show with cocktails and more."

If Theatre-Hikes adds a new component to its tradition of combining nature's beauty, live performance and physical wellness, Walkabout Theatre Company does its part by emphasizing ties between current and historical environmental green trends.

With the world premiere comedy *War Garden*, director and performer Seth Bockley takes his inspiration from history and the growth of urban community gardens. During World War I, there was an incident where a Chicago ladies auxiliary group struggled to convince Civil War veteran (and land squatter) Capt. George Streeter to let them grow a war garden (later called victory gardens during World War II) in his Streeterville neighborhood.

Bockley exaggerates the argument into a full-fledged farcical war with plenty of patriotic American songs (with new lyrics about gardening) and jokes about Streeterville condominiums. What's even more significant is that *War Garden* is to be performed at actual Chicago community gardens.

"I was so surprised at how much the impact that war gardens and victory gardens had," Bockley said. "When you look at the agricultural impact and the current local gardening movement, it's a wake-up call to show that these green ideas are not so new."

Some of Bockley's inspiration also grows from his work with Redmoon Theatre, which is known for its outdoor park spectaculars which have drawn audiences of thousands through the years. Walkabout's *War Garden* has a few zany contraptions and set pieces reminiscent of Redmoon's work, while the democratic outdoor performance aspect also has a connection to Redmoon.

"I'm very interested in taking theater out of its typical contained environment," Bockley said. "All too often theater can seem aloof or inac-

cessible to many people. When we're outdoors, people can run into it and participate."

Conspicuously missing from this summer season is a giant Redmoon Theatre outdoor park spectacular. According to Redmoon Artistic Director Jim Lasko, Redmoon has a few smaller-scale guerilla-type outdoor appearances in the works, but a full-fledged show is in the works for September 2009.

In the meantime, Lasko is all for other companies braving the elements to take theater to the people.

"The more we can do to bring theater back into the center of public life, the less marginalized it will be," Lasko said. "I really believe in outdoor theater since it activates public spaces and it's a vital enterprise in bringing a centrality to our culture."

—**Theatre-Hikes'** 2008 season from June to October includes: *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Dracula* and the special *Bike Hike* performance of *Key Exchange* for mature audiences. Most performances are at The Morton Arboretum, 4100 Illinois Route 53, Lisle, but a few are at North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago. Pricing varies depending upon the show and location. Visit theatre-hikes.org or call 773-293-1358 for more information.

—**GroundUp Theatre's** *Much Ado About Nothing* plays 14 performances at seven Chicago parks June 21-Aug. 10. Free, but donations appreciated. Call 773-764-9916 or visit grounduptheatre.com for more information.

—**The Oak Park Festival Theatre** also performs *Much Ado About Nothing* from June 11 to July 19 and *Dancing at Lughnasa* from July 23 to Aug. 23 at Austin Gardens, at the intersection of Ontario and Forest avenues in Oak Park. \$17-\$22. Call (708) 445-4440 or visit oakparfestival.com.

Read the entire article at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com, where you can also find Catey Sullivan's related story, "On the outs: Beyond Chicago."



The Kid From Brooklyn.

A tumbler's tale: Danny Kaye and 'The Kid From Brooklyn'

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

It has been said of the late Danny Kaye that he proved it was possible for one person to do everything in one lifetime. Well, maybe not everything, but the list of his accomplishments is certainly impressive. Not only was he the consummate clown—singer, dancer, actor, juggler, musician and fencer (that's really him, and not a double, crossing swords with Basil Rathbone in *The Court Jester*)—but he spoke 32 languages, flew his own airplane and conducted symphony orchestras. He logged in over 20 years traveling the world as an ambassador for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF); cooked gourmet Chinese meals at his home for royal dignitaries; and was awarded an honorary degree by the American College of Physicians and Surgeons after studiously observing and even assisting in several medical pro-

cedures. At the height of his career, he was the highest-paid actor in Hollywood. Not bad for a high school dropout from Brooklyn.

The *Kid From Brooklyn*, subtitled, "The Danny Kaye Musical," is Mark Childers and Peter J. Loewy's homage to the eccentric genius of the "tumbler"—Catskills-circuit jargon for a multi-talented entertainer whose job is to generate "tumult"—born David Daniel Kaminsky, and to his wizardly muse and wife, Sylvia Fine. It premiered at Fort Lauderdale's Broward Stage Door Theatre, then went on to play at the El Portal Theatre in Los Angeles, where it holds the record for the longest-running and highest-grossing show ever to play there. On June 7, the production starring Brian Childers and Karin Leone comes to Chicago's Mercury Theatre on its way to New York City.

WCT: Comedy these days tends toward the snarky stand-up variety, leading to many of the great clowns in American Theatre—Red Skelton, Jimmy Durante—being ignored in recent years. Why did you choose Danny Kaye as your subject?

PL: Peter Loewy: Danny Kaye has always been an icon, in my eyes. Watching his TV show every week in my living room is a very special memory for me. His talents were limitless.

WCT: I recall someone once asking him how he managed to pursue so many outside interests, and he replied that he "concentrated very intensely" on whatever interested him at the time. How are you going to pack all that into one evening and still have room for the music?

PL: With a man as diverse as Danny Kaye, it can be a daunting task trying to incorporate all the facets of his life into a single script. While developing the play, however, we found that the issues that most interested people were the universal themes: love, ambition, power struggles.

WCT: Kaye's prodigious humanitarian missions are well-known, but like many gifted performers who are expected to be funny all the time, he was often a less-than-pleasant

person. Was it difficult to reconcile these two sides of his character?

PL: We can only speculate on why his public and private personae were in such strong opposition. There are indications that he may have had manic-depressive tendencies—sometimes he would go to therapy three times a day. Personally, I think that a lot of his dark nature had to do with his losing his mother at a very young age, and that his many overseas tours for UNICEF may have been fueled by his sympathy for the children. In the show, we try to stay true to our research, and to present audiences with an honest portrayal of the man.

WCT: Some of my favorite memories of Danny Kaye are his serious film roles—Me And The Colonel, The Five Pennies, The Madwoman Of Chaillot. Will these be acknowledged in the show?

PL: Well, we include the "Lullaby in Ragtime" from *The Five Pennies*. There is so much material to choose from, but our purpose wasn't simply to chronicle Kaye's achievements. The audiences will leave knowing more about him than they did before, but they were pretty clear in what it was they wanted to learn.

WCT: Sooner or later, the question has to be asked—will the show address the rumors of Kaye's bisexuality?

PL: Yes, it will—but subtly. Those who get it, will get it. And those who dismiss the rumors—which were never confirmed—will probably not catch the references.

WCT: What were your own goals in creating The Kid From Brooklyn? What do you hope your show will do?

PL: Our goal was, first, to introduce new generations to the magic of this charismatic performer and to acquaint long-time fans with their favorite. But Danny Kaye's comedic style paved the way for countless entertainers—among them, Jim Carrey, Robin Williams and Steve Martin—and it is also my hope that he will never be forgotten.

A trip back to 'Avenue Q'

BY JERRY NUNN

Back in 2006, I traveled to New York to see the Tony Award-winning Broadway show *Avenue Q*. It seemed right up my alley with the combination of puppets and gay themes.

Now, in 2008, *Avenue Q* is playing here in Chicago. Andrew Graham, the show's musical director, took a moment from his hectic schedule to sit down with *Windy City Times* and give our readers some knowledge on what a puppeteer has up his sleeve.

Windy City Times: So how exactly did you become involved in this production?

Andrew Graham: Just through knowing people. I have done tours with *Seussical*, *Footloose* and *Grease*.

WCT: In a nutshell, explain the plot of Avenue Q.

AG: It's sort of like "Sesame Street" for adults. With life lessons through songs such as "Everyone's a Little Bit Racist" and "The Internet is for Porn." People are always surprised when they see it. It is not what they expected.

WCT: What kind of crowds do you expect?

AG: We do get a different type of crowd. We get a lot of college-aged audiences. It's a good show for people that don't really like musicals. I am always surprised by people's reactions. They do not water down the show for the tour, so I am proud of that.

Avenue Q can be seen at the Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph, until June 7. For ticket information please contact Broadway in Chicago at 312-902-1400 or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

Read this entire interview online at www.windycitymediagroup.com.

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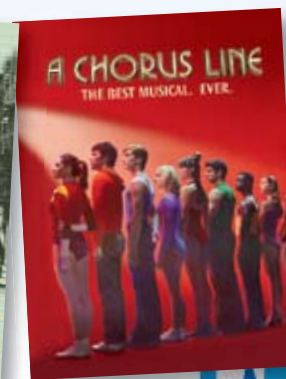
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Summer dance preview

BY ERIC EATHERLY

Summer is slowly but surely creeping into Chicago, but just because the temperatures are climbing up doesn't mean the dance scene is cooling down. Though we're past the "main" spring performance season there are still some wonderful dance events to take in over the next few months, even some that you can get yourself involved in, too. Here is a sample of what's to come:

A great way to see the phenomenal technique and creativity of the **Hubbard Street Dance Chicago** (HSDC) dancers is to see their annual summer choreographic workshop, "Inside/Out." The company will perform works-in-progress created by HSDC main dancers Fri.-Sat., June 6-7, at the Dance Center of Columbia College, 1306 S. Michigan. "Inside/Out" is an opportunity for HSDC dancers to explore not only their choreographic voices but also related skills, such as administration and technical support, and will feature brand-new pieces by Shannon Alvis, Autumn Eckman, Brian Enos, Laura Halm, Jason Horton, Terence Marling, Jamy Meek, Yarden Ronen,



Thomas Nicholas and Victoria Jaiani take part in a Joffrey Ballet rehearsal. Photo by Herbert Migdoll

Kevin Shannon, Benjamin Wardell and Robyn Mineko Williams. 312-850-9744; \$20-\$35.

The charming outdoor Ravinia Festival is always a soothing way to enjoy dance and music, and inexpensive compared to downtown theatre tickets. This year, the Ruth Page Festival of Dance at Ravinia kicks off with the return of

one of Chicago's leading contemporary companies, **CDI/Concert Dance Inc.**, Wed-Thurs. June 11-12. The program will be highlighted by three world premieres by Artistic Director Venetia Stifler. Commissioned by the "One Score, One Chicago" project, Stifler will premiere an as-of-yet untitled work set to the music of Bohemian-Austrian composer Gustav Mahler. Among other pieces, the program premieres "Fugues," a piece for four male dancers set to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, and "German Songs," a dance in four sections that features couples in various phases of romance set to the music of Johann Strauss and Franz Schubert. Bennett-Gordon Hall, 200 Ravinia Park, Highland Park; 847-266-5100; \$10 for reserved seats and no lawn tickets will be available.

A Dream of Arabia makes its United States debut Thur.-Sun., June 12-15, at the Lund Auditorium of Dominican University, 7900 W. Division, River Forest. Described as "a Middle Eastern 'Rivendence,'" A Dream of Arabia is a revival of the true ancient art of Middle Eastern dance and utilizes the universal language of music and dance in a quest to unite humanity through thought and innovation. By introducing Westerners to Middle Eastern culture through this first-of-its-kind production, A Dream of Arabia works to clear up misconceptions and build a bridge across the

expansive cultural divide which so often hinders tolerance between Middle Eastern and Western societies. 708-488-5000; \$29.50-\$95.

The **Anila Sinha Foundation** presents a rare and unique dance-and-drum duet featuring Pandit Birju Maharaj and Ustad Zakir Hussain accompanied by a live orchestra on Fri., June 13 at the Harris Theatre for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph. Maharaj is internationally recognized as the greatest living exponent of the North Indian Classical dance "Kathak." Zakir Hussain is an international phenomenon both in the field of percussion and throughout the musical world. This evening of performance will be a wonderful window into the art of Indian dance and music. 312-344-7777; \$35-\$100.

The **12th Annual Chicago SummerDance** series gets underway June 12-Aug. 24 as the Spirit of Music Garden in Grant Park becomes a unique outdoor urban dance space—the largest of its kind in the United States. More than 60,000 locals and visitors will dance to the sounds of 43 different bands playing everything from swing, salsa and soukous to cajun, balkan and klezmer, all on one huge, recycled-plastic dance floor. SummerDance events occur Thurs.-Sat., 6-9:30 p.m., and Sun., 4-7 p.m., weather permitting. The programs are formatted into themes featuring world-music ensembles on Thursdays; "popular nights" including Latin, swing and steppin' on Fridays and Saturdays; and ballroom/big band on Sundays. All the events are free and open to the public. For more information and for program specifics, call 312-742-4007 or visit www.ChicagoSummerDance.org.

Thodos Dance Chicago presents "New Dances" Fri.-Sun., July 11-13, at the Ruth Page Theatre, 1016 N. Dearborn. "New Dances" is a venue for the company's main dancers to create new work on their peers, exploring dance aesthetics that range from ballet and jazz to modern and avant-garde. This year Zachary Whittenburg will be the special guest choreographer contributing to the show. The program will also feature premieres from "New Dances" veteran choreographers Jessica Miller Tomlinson and Kelsey Yates, as well as work by Jeremy Blair, Sean Dahlberg, Kellie Hodges, Ryan Miller, Dori Santarsiere and Jackie Stewart. 312-266-6255; \$20-\$35.

Last but not least, return to the Ravinia Pavilion for the Ruth Page Festival of Dance at Ravinia to enjoy performances by **The Joffrey Ballet** Sat., Aug. 16. This will be a wonderful way to enjoy the spectacular Joffrey dancers in a more intimate and relaxing setting. 847-266-5100; Lawn \$10, Reserved seats \$15-\$40.

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Randy Duncan. Photo courtesy of Duncan

"That they all eat like birds, and that they're all vegetarians or vegans. The girls might eat more [healthily], but I've seen guys chow down on a burger or two, or have seen dancers smoke cigarettes or drink."

—Randy Duncan, talking about the biggest misconception about dancers

Read the full interview with local legendary choreographer Randy Duncan at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com. He discusses everything from *Save the Last Dance*, which he helped choreograph, to what he feels is a dancer's most important quality.

Critics' picks: The grand summertime edition

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL, CATEY SULLIVAN,
MARY SHEN BARNIDGE AND SCOTT C. MORGAN

The Windy City Times' ace theater critics—Mary Shen Barnidge, Scott Morgan, Catey Sullivan and Theater Editor Jonathan Abarbanel—have combined their wisdom, insights and talents to come up with a list of 19 shows sure to delight discerning theater patrons this summer. They arrived at this list after hours of pleasant professional dialogue, heated argument and beating each other up. Barnidge and Sullivan easily came out on top of Abarbanel and Morgan; they are big women. Enjoy! Also, see the two accompanying articles in this issue about outdoors theater choices.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Bailiwick, through July 6; 773-883-1090. It oughta be called "The Pastor of Notre Dame" as Jeremy Rill as Father Frollo steals the show in rocker Dennis DeYoung's pop-opera adaptation of that *other* Victor Hugo classic.

Til the Fat Lady Sings, Citadel Theatre at Victory Gardens Greenhouse, through June 29; 773-871-3000. The late Scott McPherson is best known for his comic examination of disease and death in Marvin's Room, but this—his first full-length play—also displays his dark humor in a look at grieving gone amok.

Wit, The Gift Theatre, through July 6; 773-283-7071. Inspired by her work in an AIDS oncology hospital, Margaret Edson won the Pulitzer Prize for her drama about a poetry professor's battle with cancer. Wrenching and wickedly funny, Wit is ideally suited to the intensely intimate Gift space.

Bloody Bess, Backstage Theatre at The Store-

front, June 13-July 20; 312-742-8597. A pioneering show of Chicago 1970s Off-Loop Theater, this rip-roaring pirate swashbuckler features sea-battles by award-winning fight designer Geoff Coates, and feisty female pirates, as the title suggests. Haaarh, matey!

Sweeney Todd, Actors Theatre at Loyola University Mullady Theatre, June 13-28; 847-604-2100. If the recent stripped-down tour of Stephen Sondheim's musical masterpiece left you cold, this community production might fill in the gaps intentionally left missing in that Broadway revival.

The Mysterious Elephant and the Terrible Tragedy of the Unlikely Addington Twins (Who Kill Him), The Strange Tree Group at Chopin Theatre, June 19-July 19; 773-598-8240. If Strange Tree is true to form, the quirky title will play out in a visually rich and thoroughly eccentric play with music, Victorian leanings and shadowbox delights.

Superior Donuts, Steppenwolf Theatre, June 19-Aug. 17; 312-335-1650. Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy Letts wrote it, earthy Kate Buddeke is in it. What else you need to know? The author and leading lady of the edgy Bug reunite for a comedy concerning a decaying Uptown donut shop and its aging owner (the always-fascinating Yassen Payenkov.)

Ain't Misbehavin', Goodman Theatre, June 21-July 27; 312-443-3800. With music and lyrics by Fats Waller, this jazz-and-blues-infused revue should be a summertime slam dunk. T-Pain and Lil Wayne may rule the airwaves, but they never penned songs like "Your Feet's Too Big" or "The Joint is Jumpin'" or "Honeysuckle Rose."

Funk it Up About Nothin', Chicago Shakespeare Theater, June 25-Aug. 3; 312-595-5600. Yo dawg. Check it: You can see a usual "Much Ado About Nothing" this summer in the burbs. Or, you can hit up the Navy Pier hip-hop version by the Q Brothers, the mad rap creators of "The Bombitty of Errors."

Hay Fever, Circle Theatre, June 25-Aug. 3; 708-771-0700. Noel Coward's delightful comedy



Top: Lookingglass Alice. Above: Nixon's Nixon.
Top photo by Michael Brosilow; above photo courtesy of Writers' Theatre

about a weekend in the country amidst a household of artists and eccentrics should be just Circle Theatre's cup of tea. They've shown before they know how to do such period comedies well, and make them look simply smashing.

Lookingglass Alice, Lookingglass Theatre, July 2-Aug. 31; 312-337-0665. This acrobatic interpretation of Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland returns for a third time, a signature work by Lookingglass and The Actor's Gymnasium. Don't wait 'til it sells out yet again.

The Full Monty, Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre, July 16-Sept. 21; 847-634-0200. Naked men on stage in suburban theaters? What's next, an African-American president? You know the story: Five regular guys emasculated by unemployment, sexless marriages and chronic depression

decide to strip their way back to self-respect and joie de vivre.

Perfect Mendacity, First Look Series at Steppenwolf, July 24-Aug. 10; 312-335-1650. Author Jason Wells' Men of Tortuga was the hit play of the 2005 First Look Series. This time, Wells' director is the estimable David Cromer, whom we soon may lose to NYC.

The Birthday Party, Signal Ensemble at Chopin Theatre, July 28-Aug. 30; 773-347-1350. This underrated company housed in the inconvenient location is finally beginning to receive the attention it deserves—don't be among the last to see why as they stage one of Nobel Laureate Harold Pinter's most funny and threatening plays.

Latino Theatre Festival, Goodman Theatre, Aug. 8-24; 312-443-3800. This fourth biennial festival offers theater, dance, sketch comedy and puppetry performed by Latino theater troupes and artists from Mexico, Spain and the United States with inspirations as different as Garcia Lorca and Carmen Miranda.

The Boys from Syracuse, Drury Lake Oakbrook, Aug. 7-Sept. 28; 630-530-8300. In 1938, Rodgers & Hart updated Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors. Now director David H. Bell updates Rodgers & Hart. We pray he'll leave their brilliant, jazzy score alone: "Sing for Your Supper," "This Can't Be Love," "Falling in Love with Love" and more.

Iolanthe, Light Opera Works at Cahn Auditorium (Evanston), Aug. 16-24; 847-869-6300. The Mikado and H.M.S. Pinafore may be better-known Gilbert & Sullivan works, but Iolanthe best represents their distinct blend of topsy-turvy situations and British satire. Where else will you see all-powerful fairies take over Parliament?

Nixon's Nixon, Writers' Theatre, Aug. 18-Sept. 26; 847-242-6000. We missed it the first time around, but Writers' Theatre is bringing back both Larry Yando as Nixon and Bill Brown as Henry Kissinger in Russell Lees' savage depiction of what transpired just before Tricky Dick resigned.

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Photo: Carol Rosegg



Avenue Q. Photo by Carol Rosegg

THEATER REVIEW

Avenue Q

Playwright: Jeff Whitty;

Score: Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx

At: Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph

Phone: 312-902-1400; \$25-\$75

Through June 7

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Avenue Q has taken its sweet time finding its way to Chicago. In the five years since Avenue Q debuted in New York, the Windy City has already been wowed by its own blockbuster productions of Broadway's *Wicked*, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee and *Jersey Boys*.

Chicagoans have every right to hold a grudge, especially fanatical *Wicked* worshipers who are still smarting over the Oz witches' loss to Avenue Q's foul-mouthed puppets for the 2004 Best Musical Tony Award.

But for Avenue Q, it's best that you swallow your civic pride and embrace this smart and

sassy show immediately. This tour is only in Chicago for a limited time and your hip friends will be forever shaming you if you miss it.

Avenue Q is both a spoof of and loving homage to *Sesame Street*. Squarely targeted at generations of adults who grew up alongside that beloved PBS-TV kids show, Avenue Q takes *Sesame Street*'s simple life lessons and updates them to the life issues faced by today's 20- and 30-year olds (both in human and puppet form).

So we get to see how the denizens of this outer New York borough learn through songs like "Everyone's a Little Bit Racist," "It Sucks to Be Me" and "The Internet is for Porn." A romance blossoms between recent college grad Princeton and Kate Monster, while Rod and Nicky (close cousins of Bert and Ernie) deal with issues of tolerance and sexuality.

So if heavy drinking and puppet sex shock you, well then, you should have read the show's disclaimer that states: "Avenue Q has not been approved in any manner by the Jim Henson Company or Sesame Workshop, which have no responsibility for its content."

For first-time Avenue Q visitors, this tour will be a blast. The physical production looks like an exact replica of the original, while the cast expertly plays up the humor and poignancy of its characters who are trying to find love and their purpose is in life.

Yet for those of us who were savvy enough to catch the show on Broadway, we'll notice some missing sparks.

Avenue Q plays in a smaller theater in New York, so the comedic intimacy is slightly dissipated in the barn-size theaters that have booked this tour. And though the hard-working cast manipulate the parade of puppets with aplomb, they don't have the spot-on Muppet mannerisms which were mastered by the original cast (who were veteran puppeteers from *Sesame Workshop*).

Though Chicagoans should penalize Avenue Q for its tardiness, the show is so much fun (and even life-affirming) that most people should be willing to overlook that transgression. But we'd be even happier if Avenue Q considered its own Chicago production.

THEATER REVIEW

Juno and the Paycock

Playwright: Sean O'Casey

At: The Artistic Home at

Live Bait, 3914 N. Clark

Phone: 866-811-4111; \$22-\$25

Runs through: June 29

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Juno and the Paycock is a tragedy of circumstances and a comedy of character. It's a great play because Sean O'Casey's vibrant people and language bring home the human truth of both the comic and tragic aspects. His early plays are about Dublin slum-dwellers, laborers, union organizers and Irish freedom fighters. O'Casey (1880-1964) was one of them so his boastful, passionate, romantic and suffering characters have absolute authenticity whether rogues, drunks or heroes. Indeed, O'Casey's earliest Irish audiences resented him for portraying the Irish warts and all. His language is poetic realism: everyday vocabulary heightened by rhythm, pace, alliteration and carefully-selected imagery.

Dating from 1924, *Juno and the Paycock* reflects O'Casey's disillusion with the bloody and divisive Irish independence struggle. As usual, it's O'Casey's women—Juno Boyle, her daughter Mary and their neighbor Mrs. Tancred—who carry the play's emotional cross as they endure the violence, cupidity, transparent deceptions and hyperbole of the men but are nearly powerless

to alter events.

Juno and husband Jack Boyle—the title's "paycock" (peacock)—live in a two-room tenement with their young adult daughter and slightly older son, an IRA member broken in body and spirit by the 1916-1922 war against the British. Jack Boyle, called "Captain" by his sponging sycophantic buddy Joxer Daley, lives off the dole and Juno's low-wage job. Then, with the prospect of a sizeable inheritance they buy furniture and clothes on credit and Mary is courted by a young lawyer. But the inheritance falls through, Mary is left pregnant and IRA irregulars seize the son for betrayal. Three famous phrases echo through the play. The son pleads, "Haven't I given enough for Ireland?" Sentimental useless Capt. Boyle mumbles, "Th' whole world's in a terrible state o' chasis." The women lament, "Mother of God! Take away these hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh!"

The challenge of the play is to make the funny bits really funny, which makes the tragic bits more tragic. Director John Mossman's tragicomic balance is good but not pitch-perfect. Audiences seeing *O'Casey* (vs. Neil Simon, say) must be shown it's OK to laugh. But early on the characters are too prickly, the vocal attack too aggressive to signal comedy in the intimate venue, even by Capt. Boyle (ever-capable veteran Frank Nall) and Joxer (appropriately seedy Mark Ulrich). A lighter touch is needed, more playfulness, more softness, perhaps more time for physical comedy to develop. Nonetheless the heart of this company is staunch, the characters are true and the spirit of the production is unflagging with Kathy Scambiatterra's stalwart Juno as the bedrock.

For its first production in a year, The Artistic Home takes a challenging large-cast work and gives us—as usual—a production well worth the journey.

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SPOTLIGHT

Because They Have No Words



The 2005 Hurricane Katrina catastrophe left hundreds of thousands homeless, and also left thousands of pets without shelter or care. That's what drew Tim Maddock to New Orleans in September 2005, saying goodbye to his partner and dog in L.A. and driving to New Orleans to rescue animals. *Because They Have No Words*, at the Piven Theatre, is Maddock's story with Maddock playing himself. A former Boystown resident, Maddock is a Northwestern University theater graduate who was a gay advocate within NU's fraternity system. His autobiographical tale of rescuing animal victims of Katrina offers both thrilling drama and undeniable inspiration. *Because They Have No Words* runs through June 15; Piven Theatre, 927 Noyes, Evanston, through June 15; 847-866-8049; \$25. Photo by Christopher Ash

THEATER REVIEW

A Taste of HoneyPlaywright: **Shelagh Delaney**At: **Shattered Globe Theatre Company**at the **Greenhouse, 2257 N. Lincoln**Phone: **773-871-7000; \$27-\$35**Runs through: **July 5**

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

We are in a shabby thrice-subdivided furnished apartment on the upper floor of a building flanked by a noisy gasworks, a smelly slaughterhouse, a chilly fog-enshrouded river and—the supreme irony—a church with a cemetery. Our newly arrived tenants are a gin-swilling matron and her sullen teenage daughter, their suitcases bespeaking a chronically transient lifestyle initiated years earlier by Helen's husband deserting both her and her infant child. At present, the abandoned mother is being pursued by a churlish suitor, and Jo is planning to leave school and find a job, little suspecting that she will soon be living on welfare in preparation for having a baby. Oh, did I mention that this is England, and it's 1958?

Eighteen-year-old Shelagh Delaney's play premiered only two years after John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* launched the literary movement toward drama featuring working-class heroes embodied by the "angry young man," or, in this case, woman. Female misanthropy being expressed less through violence than through lassitude, these two generations of single mothers illustrate the cycle of poverty engendered by ignorance, bigotry and despair. In this aspect, the slums of Manchester are little different from those throughout the world: true, oral contraceptives had not yet been invented, but a more self-assertive girl than Jo could have found means to avoid becoming pregnant by a navy medic finishing his National Service. Before someone can improve their lot, however, they must first believe that it *can* be improved—as

Jo's sailor is doing, as well as the art student who appoints himself her caretaker—and in that, says Delaney, lies the obstacle to Helen and Jo's progress.

It would be easy to caricature personalities so (we hope) alien to our experience, the better to assure us of our superiority to these hopeless wretches. But even if Shattered Globe Theatre's audiences were prepared to tolerate company member Linda Reiter playing an irrevocably unsympathetic character, director Jeremy Wechsler has never opted to take the cheap route. Under his instruction, each cast member—Helen Sandler as the ambivalent Jo, Kevin Viol as the nurturing Geoff (who is probably, but not obviously, gay), Bryson Engelen as the affectionate seaman Jimmie, Jeremy Van Meter as the repellent Peter and the aforementioned Reiter as the destructive Mama Helen—conveys the viewpoint of their individual character with unflinching conviction, leaving us to provide our own giggles and grimaces.

THEATER REVIEW

The Hunchback of Notre DamePlaywright: **Dennis DeYoung**At: **Bailiwick Repertory Theater,****1225 W. Belmont**Phone: **773-883-1090; \$25, \$35, \$45**Runs through: **July 6**

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Fueled by piledriving power ballads, Quasimodo has landed at the Bailiwick. Dennis DeYoung's long-gestating musical version of Victor Hugo's epic novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* resonates with the thunderous reverberation of a million money notes. Think of it as Andrew Lloyd Webber with fewer notes and more bombast. What we've got here is a balls-out, ear-piercing jackpot of shamelessly overwrought three-chord



The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Photo courtesy of David Zak

histrionics. Spiritually, this is a show draped in vestments of spandex and pleather and crowned with a shining halo of big hair.

Over a decade in the making, *Hunchback* is shallow but entertaining. The lack of depth is primarily the fault of a sketchy book that reduces Hugo's intricate, infinitely conflicted characters to silhouettes. There's a similar facility to the score: You can tart up simple tunes with the musical equivalent of a thousand grandiloquent Gothic arches and gargoyles—you've still got easy-as-ABC at the heart. *Hunchback's* melodic core is as catchy and facile as a Beyonce hook: inarguably hummable, slick and safe.

DeYoung's partner in *Hunchback* is director David Zak, whose energy, ambition and passion for staging ambitious new works is still palpable more than 20 years after founding the off-Loop institution. Far from resting on his laurels after decades in a brutal business, Zak continues to be a force for innovation. Like last year's Jerry Springer opera, *Hunchback* is the sort of massive undertaking a less daring artistic director would run from. Zak embraces it full-throttle, and his enthusiasm manifests itself in the cast's commitment and energy. Even when the production stumbles, there's no questioning the integrity of everybody on stage; they're all giving 120 percent.

Hunchback is as much if not more about priest Frolo (Jeremy Rill) as it is about the title character (George Andrew Wolff, whose strong voice and guileless affect are well suited to Quasimodo). Rill looks too young for the role (the greasypaint furrows on his brow only highlight his youth) but he's got a sonorous voice that can belt with the fervor of *Notre Dame's* great bells. Writhing in paroxysms of lust for the gypsy girl Esmeralda (Danna Tretta, too Barbie Doll shiny and Crest strips smiley to be believable as a hard-living Roma), Rill chews the scenery with a gnashing ferocity that should be reined in. But even at his most gnashing, there's no arguing with his vocal prowess.

The vocal strength of the cast is almost, (ironically) muffled by over amplification and unvarying dynamics. The soundscape ranges from loud to very loud to end-of-the-world loud. Further hampering the music is the American Idol-ization of the soloists, who never settle for simply delivering a melody when they can fit in all manner of vocal gymnastics. Nobody seems to trust that the music might be adequate without all manner of show-offy machinations.

Tone down the swirling grandiosity and tune up the book. Then, *Hunchback* could truly soar.

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OUT from cover

cartoonist/activist Danny Sotomayor; Baton Show Lounge owner and gay-rights advocate Jim Flint; and African-American pianist Tony Jackson, who was openly gay during the Ragtime era (the 1920s).

Adding to the local flavor of "Out & Proud" is host Jane Lynch, the Dolton-born out actress who has been in a slew of TV and movie projects but is probably best known as the lesbian dog trainer in the film *Best in Show*. Lynch talked with *Windy City Times* about "Out & Proud," same-sex marriage and her own sexuality.

Windy City Times: I was wondering if you could tell me how you came to be part of this project.

Jane Lynch: Well, they asked me. I'm not sure why they asked me, but I assume it's because I am from Chicago and I am out—and I was really thrilled to do it.

WCT: What was the most surprising thing you discovered during production?

JL: I didn't know anything about Danny Sotomayor, who was one of the founders of [the AIDS activist group] ACT UP. He was just an amazing guy—so creative and so inventive. He was also so persistent; he was like a pit bull, and he didn't let anything go—and thank God for that persistence. And it was so sad that he died of AIDS. Also, I didn't know that he was Scott McPherson's lover; Scott was a wonderful playwright who [wrote] "Marvin's Room."

WCT: And "Out & Proud" covers other people, such as Jim Flint and Jane Addams.

JL: Oh, yes. It was really enlightening. There's a whole story there that I had no idea was going on, and I was alive during much of it.

WCT: What are the similarities and differences between the LGBT scenes here and [in Los Angeles]?

JL: I don't know. I really don't know the LGBT community in Chicago, but I will find out when I speak at an HRC [Human Rights Campaign] event July 19 out [in Chicago at the "2008 Chicago Summer Chic" gala fundraiser]. I wasn't part of the gay community when I was young. If I was part of any community, it was the theater community.

[As for Los Angeles,] I'm not really in a scene; I just go about my life. [Laughs] I speak at events, and I really like to reach people who don't have gay organizations in their towns, or they're [shunned]. I want to let them know that they're OK, and that there are people who will love them and accept them. I do love the acceptance of gay unions; it's almost taken off like wildfire. We now have gay marriage in California, and I'm starting to take heart. The edges of the country are starting to lead the march, and it's important to me that kids know that we're here; that we accept them for who they are; and that the world is changing.

WCT: Do you see a day when same-sex marriage will be approved nationwide?

JL: Yeah—and it'll be in our lifetime. I guarantee you.

You know what? The opposition can't get it up anymore. [Laughs] They just can't; they've



Writer Dwight Okita is one of the subjects of "Out & Proud."

exhausted their resources and they'll move on to bigger fish. It was pretty much a non-issue, anyway.

WCT: Some people feel that the marriage ruling in California will cause all the archconservatives to come out against it.

JL: No, they're not. Just watch. They don't have it. I will eat my words if I'm wrong, but there's such a non-reaction to that [decision]. For a moment, there was kind of a birth—and then, nothing. And polls suggest that a lot of people just don't care; there are bigger fish.

WCT: Did you have your own gay icons or idols before you took part in this production?

JL: No; I never looked at anyone as if they were gay or not. I've looked up to people who happened to be gay. But when I grew up, there weren't a lot of out people, and it's more common for people to be out now. I didn't know anyone who was gay when I was growing up.

WCT: I told someone that, now, there are so many gay-straight alliances and similar groups for high school students. When I came up, all we had was the drama club.

JL: [Laughs] Exactly—and the choir.

WCT: But the networks people have now are amazing.

JL: Yes, and gay-straight alliances are such a wonderful thing; they're great for those kids who feel all alone.

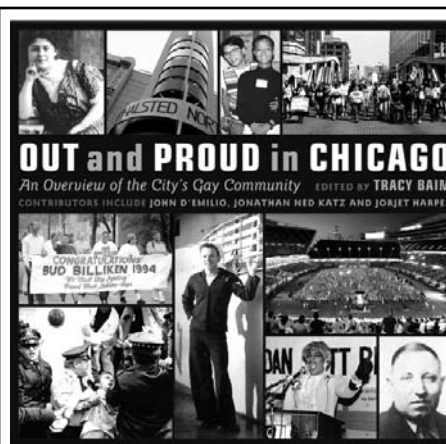
WCT: Was it easy for you to come out?

JL: Well, it's always a journey, and there are ups and downs. When I was a kid, I had fears because I didn't know anybody who was like me. I thought that I was different and that I would be ostracized if [my sexuality] was revealed. But as I became an adult, I slowly began coming to terms with it. My family was great, but I was 30 when I came out; it wasn't like I was 18. [Laughs] There was a distance between my family and myself because they couldn't know me at my core—I wouldn't let them know me at my core; now, we're much closer.

WCT: Was there anything you wanted to add about the production?

JL: I think it's a really great story, and I had never heard it told. It's interesting, and there are so many brave people who put up and wouldn't stand down. It was just very inspiring and awesome, so I was really glad to know this story.

See www.wttw.com for more information about "Out & Proud."



Covering history

Three exciting projects are coming together to help cover the wide diversity of Chicago's gay history. Chicago's community has often been overlooked by the national movement, despite many important people and events that played a critical role in moving the gay-rights agenda forward. Nearly 40 years after the Stonewall Riots in New York, this city's contributions are now starting to be documented more fully. In the summer of 2007, I started the process of interviewing hundreds of current and former Chicagoans about their role in the movement. This was done on videotape, as well as through e-mail surveys. My main goal was a Web site, which will have a "soft" launch in June, and an official launch this September: www.ChicagoGayHistory.org will feature those video interviews, plus thousands of photos, articles, and archive material.

As I began that process, WTTW-Channel 11 also began work on a film documenting the gay community. It made sense to work together, and I provided them with hundreds of photos and images, part of them donated by Marie J. Kuda for the Web site project I was working on, called the Chicago Gay History Project. WTTW also reviewed some of the video interviews, to

decide what people to focus on for their project. When WTTW became interested in a companion book to use during the pledge-drive airing of their film, they told Agate Publishing that I would be the ideal person to coordinate such a book in the six weeks it had to be completed.

So, a team of more than 20 others set about writing an overview of the Chicago gay community, from the 1800s to today. Writers include Kuda, John D'Emilio, Jonathan Ned Katz, Ron Dorfman, Owen Keehnen and so many more. Senior editors were William B. Kelley and Jorjet Harper. Culling hundreds of photos from my own photo archives as well as the archives of *Windy City Times* and other papers and institutions, we were able to complete that book, which will be available later this summer from Surrey Books, an Agate imprint: *Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community*, hardcover, 4-color, 224 pages, \$30. There will be book signings this fall, including at Women & Children First in September, and a launch of the book and Web site at Center on Halsted later that month.

The Web site is just starting to be pulled together. Starting in June, you can review it, but know that in September it will officially launch. If you have made a contribution to Chicago's gay history, whether through activism or culture, sports or academia, etc., please e-mail editor@windycitymediagroup.com, and I will send you an e-mail survey to be completed for potential inclusion in the project. This project has thus far cost more than \$100,000, primarily because of the more than 250 video interviews. Thanks in part to a donation by Michael Leppen, it will have its launch this year. But to sustain it, I hope to host fundraisers this fall, and to also partner with an institution to sustain the project well beyond any of our lifetimes.

—Tracy Baim



"Out & Proud" host Jane Lynch (center) with the program's co-producers, Alexandra Silets and Daniel Andries.

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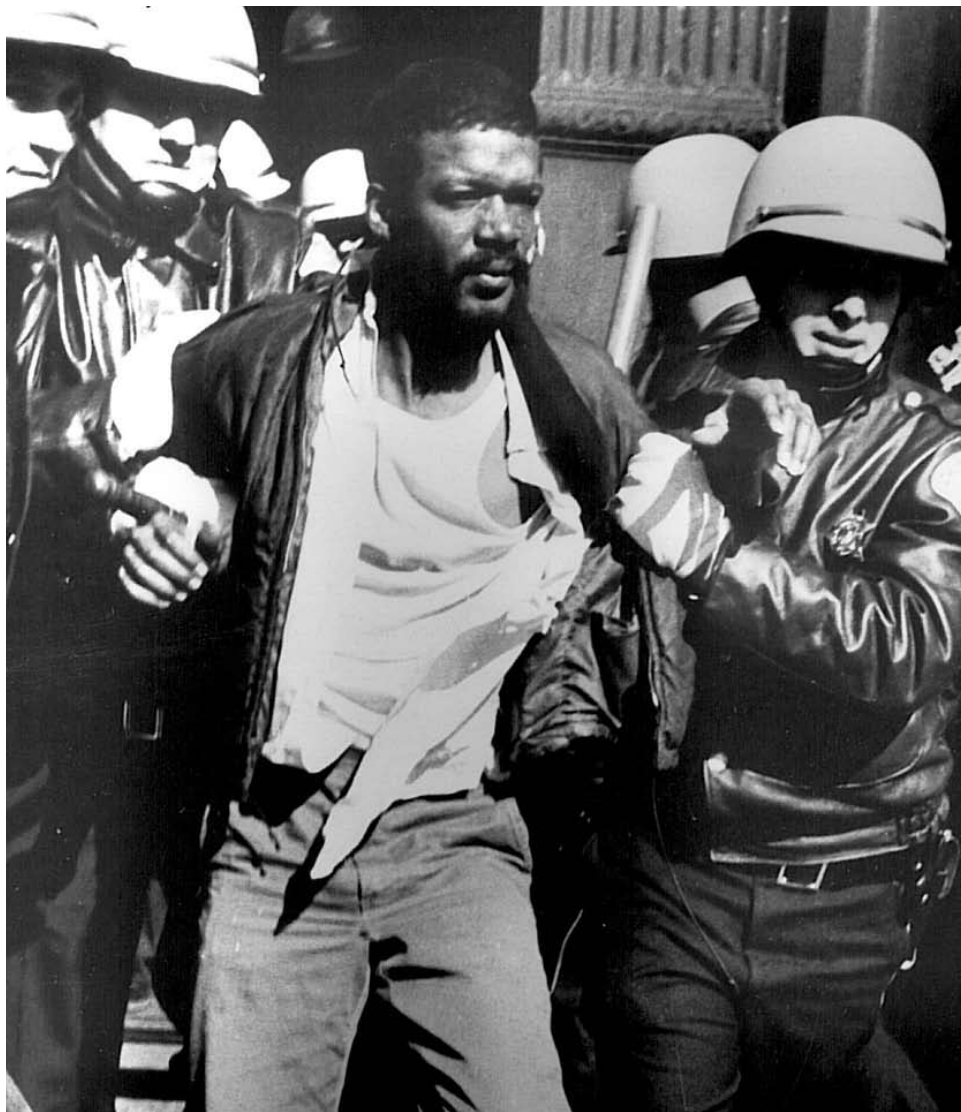
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RAID from cover

there wasn't any real national gay press. When word from New York finally reached here, it was recorded in July's *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* with the same emphasis as was given to the item on vigilante residents of the borough of Queens who, in a campaign against homosexuals reportedly frequenting a neighborhood park, had cut down dozens of its trees. According to the writer, William B. Kelley, "The *New York Times* ran at least three days of stories, one editorial and one letter on the subject. They were against cutting the trees."

Chicago gays chose to challenge the status quo in the courts instead of the streets. In a city coming out of 1968 with a nationwide reputation for police brutality, discretion was indeed the better part of valor. The Trip case, challenging bar closings, went to the Illinois Supreme Court; the case of *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* editor David Stienecker involved defending him against charges brought by an officer who arrested gays in tearooms (public washrooms).



A police arrest during the riots outside the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Photo courtesy of the Chicago History Museum

While slower and more low-key than Stonewall, these two cases led Chicago gays to become proactive instead of reactive in their fight against oppression and discrimination.

The Trip case

Chicago's equivalent to Stonewall began 40 years ago with a police bust at The Trip, a gay-owned restaurant-bar complex at 27 E. Ohio St. The Trip had a main-floor restaurant, a second-floor cabaret and a third-floor playroom with pool table and pinball games. At midday, because of its location just west of North Michigan Avenue, the restaurant catered to luncheon crowds of shoppers, often featuring women's fashion shows. The area was undergoing an upswing; a few gritty hotels with questionable clientele remained, but new upscale businesses were mediating the fringes of adjacent Rush Street nightlife. On the borderline, The Trip became quite gay after the dinner hour, and on Sundays it operated as a private club.

One Sunday in January 1968, police raided The

Trip, arresting 13 patrons on charges of public indecency and soliciting for prostitution. A plainclothes officer had gained entry by using a membership card obtained illegally during an unrelated arrest and made the charges after observing members dancing together as same-sex couples.

When the case came to court in March, attorney Ralla Klepak defended, and charges against patrons and management were dismissed. The *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter*, reporting on the incident, saw it as an illustration of further harassment by police, noting that dancing was not illegal per se and that the ACLU would welcome an opportunity for a test case. (In 1970 The Trip would become one of the first venues to have same-sex dancing, even before Chicago Gay Liberation picketed bars for that right.)

A second raid in May 1968 by two plainclothesmen resulted in the arrests of one patron and one employee; but, more significantly, the local liquor authorities issued an emergency closing order pending appeal on the revocation of The Trip's liquor license. This was common practice in Chicago and a kiss of death for gay bars. If

The North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO), a coordinating group made up of delegates from 26 organizations, met there for its third annual nationwide conference, just days before the Democratic National Convention riots. *Mattachine Midwest* also held its monthly public meetings there while the business was closed.

Mattachine Midwest was an independent corporation created in 1965 after years of failure to sustain local chapters of the West Coast-headquartered organizations *Mattachine Society* and *Daughters of Bilitis*. The impetus for the new organization was a particularly brutal raid on the Fun Lounge, a rather sleazy suburban bar that packed in a queer clientele on weekends. The *Chicago Tribune* led off the report in its April 26, 1964, edition with a headline indicating eight teachers had been seized in a "vice raid" that also netted 95 other men and six women. The article listed names, addresses and occupations of those arrested (a common practice of the time) along with asides that "many of the men carried powder puffs and lipsticks" and that a quantity of "freshly shipped" marijuana had been seized. Subsequently there were reports of job losses and a rumored suicide.

Though The Trip had been allowed to reopen, the police still visited; in 1971 a patron was arrested on the old-standby charge of public indecency, but the charge was dismissed. The owners became overly protective of their business, allegedly refusing to call police when a *Mattachine* officer was robbed at gunpoint while at a meeting with an out-of-state activist on the third floor. In a 1972 on-site interview with the owners, *Chicago Today* columnist Barbara Ettorre noted the bar was full, with men from all walks of life, all ages, every manner of dress. The bar's management told her that weekends were "crowded wall-to-wall" and that they had a uniformed Andy Frain company usher to check IDs. They were going to make certain none of their patrons would be subject to arrest.

Chicago in 1968

In 1968, Chicago was going through critical times, well beyond the constant harassment of the gay community. In addition to reports on bar raids and park arrests, *Mattachine Midwest's* referral service received many calls from draft resisters; the anti-Vietnam War movement was well under way. Gays could not serve if identified when drafted: few wanted to go, but no one wanted to be branded with a stigma that would affect their economic and social lives.

After Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination in April 1968, Chicago's West Side erupted in four days of anguished riots and looting. The police and National Guard were called out; the notorious "shoot to kill" order was given. Then Bobby Kennedy, seen as the Democrats' likely candidate for president, was murdered. The Democratic Party's nominating convention was to be held in Chicago that August. Anti-war activists, a variety of New Left groups, old-line hippies, Yuppies, and others were calling for people to come to Chicago and stage demonstrations at the convention site. Abe Peck, now self-described as "hippie-rad editor turned journalism professor," tried to dissuade misguided flower children from coming to the city, warning them in his counter-culture newspaper *The Seed* about the potential for violence here.

In addition, many civil rights groups (Black, women's, gay) had been infiltrated by the FBI's COINTELPRO, a counterintelligence program whose goal was to disrupt, disorganize and cause internal dissension in an effort to neutralize a group's activities. The program originated in the Cold War anti-communist 1950s and perfected its "dirty tricks" down through the Nixon administration. Its informants planted derogatory stories (they had been responsible for labeling former Illinois Gov. Adlai Stevenson "gay" during his bid for a presidential nomination); they used anonymous letters and surveillance, embedded "moles," opened mail, blackmailed, and by other devious means invaded the rights of U.S. citizens.

Chicago police also had their covert group, the Red Squad. This group in various incarna-

tions had its origin all the way back in the days following the Haymarket labor riot of 1886 in which seven policemen were killed and dozens injured. The objects of the squad's covert activities switched over the years from anarchists, to communists, to any left-leaning organizations of the civil rights era.

In the early 1970s when attorney Rick Gutman of the Alliance to End Repression (of which *Mattachine Midwest* was a member) was about to challenge the Red Squad in court on constitutional grounds, the squad reportedly destroyed thousands of files. Activist John Chester, who in 1972 was the first open gay on the Alliance's Steering Committee, reports that he "replaced a woman who was a Red Squad spy." Historians have speculated many of the threats that Mayor Richard J. Daley said (after the convention protests) had prompted him to order the police and National Guard to clamp down on demonstrators were "planted" by one of the embedded groups (COINTELPRO or the Red Squad) and then reported by the other as fact.

Red Squad records are sealed at the Chicago History Museum (until 2012), but when finally disbanded, the squad was reported to have accumulated files on more than 250,000 individuals and 14,000 organizations. As part of the settlement of the suit against the Red Squad, it was learned that the squad had also obtained information at the first gay political convention, called in Chicago in February 1972 to develop demands for a gay plank to be presented at the major party conventions.

The 1968 NACHO convention at The Trip was held Aug. 11 through 18. Activists from around the country converged and passed a "Homo sexual Bill of Rights." One item demanded a national policy that had been law in Illinois since 1961, that sexual acts by consenting adults in private would not be held to be criminal. A motion by pioneering activist Franklin E. Kameny made "Gay Is Good" the slogan of the movement.

Meanwhile, the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (the MOBE) and other protest groups were arriving daily. On Wednesday, Aug. 21, the MOBE failed in its attempt to get an injunction against the city in U.S. District Court to preclude the refusal of permits for a variety of activities, and the ban against sleeping in the parks.

Late Thursday, Aug. 22, on Wells Street in the Old Town area just west of Lincoln Park, two young runaways were being pursued by police. One, Jerome Johnson, a 17-year-old Native American from South Dakota, allegedly produced a handgun and was shot and killed by Youth Officer John Manley of the Damen Avenue District. An April 1970 article by Ron Dorfman in the *Chicago Journalism Review* reported it as "the only fatality remotely connected with the Democratic National Convention of 1968 ... touching off the first angry rally in the park the week before the convention." Word spread quickly and a memorial march was held.

After the rally on Sunday, Aug. 25, as poet Allen Ginsberg and a group of gays were "omming" peacefully in Lincoln Park past the 11 p.m. curfew, police weighed in with batons swinging. The *Chicago Tribune Magazine* later called this the "beginning" of the convention riots, the first large-scale police-public confrontation.

The David Stienecker case

David Stienecker had come to Chicago originally from the small town of Climax, Mich. In the mid-1960s he met Bill Kelley and Ira Jones, who were active in *Mattachine Midwest*; they prevailed upon him to join the organization. In 1966 Stienecker heard New York activist Craig Rodwell speak at an MM public meeting. Rodwell was a native Chicagoan who would return to New York and later open Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, the country's first gay bookstore. Stienecker said he was "blown away by his frankness and activism" and they had a brief affair; Stienecker followed Rodwell to New York.

On Wednesday, Aug. 28, 1968, Stienecker, still in New York, watched the fateful televised report of the police beating demonstrators across from the Conrad Hilton Hotel, convention headquar-

ters. He returned to Chicago in December to find Mattachine Midwest embroiled in a variety of actions to ward off increasing police harassment. President Jim Bradford and attorney Renee Hanover were meeting with police commanders in attempts to mitigate the violence. Stienecker became editor of the MM Newsletter and joined in reporting and pursuing the issues.

Throughout 1969, activism also continued around the trial of those charged during convention week: the "Chicago Seven," as they became known after Black Panther Bobby Seale was bound, gagged, and subsequently removed from court for protesting the legitimacy of the trial. When U.S. Attorney Thomas A. Foran characterized the convention riots as "a freaking fag revolution," Chicago gay activists printed up buttons with the phrase. MM and its officers individually wrote protest letters to the mainstream press.

The number of entrapment arrests escalated in the parks and tearooms. "You have to remember that at this time in Chicago the only way you heard about things was by word of mouth," Stienecker told John Poling in 2002 during an interview for Poling's thesis on Mattachine Midwest. The organization's answering service and newsletter were the only game in town. Members and the gay grapevine reported on the increased police activities.

Stienecker thought that one zealous officer with a reputation for physical violence merited particular attention and that the community should be warned against him: "It wasn't a matter of hearing about one incident, but rather hearing almost weekly about another Officer Manley entrapment that finally made us realize this was serious and something had to be done. People's lives were at stake, not necessarily physically, but every other way. ... I think there was something seriously wrong with Manley, but I'm not sure what it was. I wanted to get under his skin and we all wanted these incidents to stop."

Draft resistance and the anti-war movement had also been increasing in intensity. A popular film comedy, *The Gay Deceivers*, centered on two straight guys passing as gay to avoid the draft. It didn't sit too well with gays for whom this was a critical issue.

But when Stienecker wrote about Manley in the September 1969 MM Newsletter (see image, page 79), he titled his article "A Gay Deceiver, or Is He?" Describing Manley and his arrest techniques, Stienecker suggested that he enjoyed his work too much, and posited that it would be a great way for a closeted cop to get his rocks off and still come out smelling like a rose. The article mistakenly used "Charles" instead of "John" as the officer's name. In the October 1969 issue Stienecker ran a correction, with a brief follow-up and a photograph of Sgt. John Manley.

In early 1970 a newly formed gay group at the University of Chicago learned that Sgt. Manley was scheduled to speak Feb. 25 on "Youthful Offenders" to the Women's Bar Association of Illinois. In the Feb. 6 issue of the Chicago Maroon and a concurrent Gay Liberation Newsletter, Step May, Nancy Garwood, and Bill Dry signed an article calling for a picket and leafleting of



David Stienecker in 2008. Photo by Tracy Baim

the WBAI protesting Manley's appearance. May and Garwood were later "outed" to their parents in anonymous letters with a veiled warning about messing with a Chicago police officer. (Dry was not a UC student and would go on to be a founder of Gay Liberation at Northwestern University.) On the day of the demonstration when they saw Manley in person at the WBAI picket, one UC student, Alice Leiner, recognized him as having attended a planning meeting and passing himself off as an out-of-town gay activist named Mandrenas.

On the morning of Feb. 7, 1970, Manley himself showed up at David Stienecker's third-floor apartment with a warrant for his arrest on the charge of "criminal defamation" (Chapter 38, Section 27-1, Illinois Revised Statutes, since repealed). Stienecker told Poling: "I wasn't sure if I was going to go to jail or be taken for a ride and beaten up. (That was not uncommon in those days.) So, yes, I was scared."

Perhaps validating his earlier assessment of Manley, Stienecker also said the cop "insisted on watching me dress in the bathroom." (In a later Chicago Journalism Review article, "Mattachine editor arrested," Ron Dorfman noted that the warrant for Stienecker's arrest had been issued in October 1969, shortly after the second Manley article had appeared.) Stienecker told Poling that although Manley suggested he just plead guilty and the judge would give him "a slap on the wrist," he insisted on calling an attorney: "I mention this because it shows the attitude of the cops at the time. They never believed a gay person would fight a charge."

The March 1970 MM Newsletter headlined Stienecker's arrest, railed against Manley's contempt for freedom of the press, and noted this was "the first case ... in which an official of a homophile organization has been arrested for writing an article." MM President Bradford wrote that he regarded Stienecker's arrest as a sign of Mattachine Midwest's effectiveness in the fight against police abuse. Both the MM and UC-CGL

newsletters called for any information on Manley, urging anyone willing to testify to come forward. Attorney Renee Hanover represented Stienecker, and the case was eventually dropped because the prosecution hadn't made a case and Manley failed to make three court dates.

As their trial dragged through federal court, one of the Chicago Seven and other activist leaders, including Stienecker, were asked to speak at a rally at the Logan Monument in Grant Park. In its coverage of the event, the Chicago Tribune devoted a couple of paragraphs to Stienecker. His employer, World Book Encyclopedia, had seen the item, and a couple of months later he was fired (an investigation indicated, because he was gay). Stienecker wanted to sue "but the ACLU didn't think we had a good case because I quickly got a better job. I would also have to involve gay people [from World Book] who were very closeted, and it would have ruined their lives."

Conclusion

It would be naive to conclude that these two cases (The Trip's and Stienecker's) on their own changed the treatment of gays in Chicago overnight. But they certainly gave notice for the first

time, to the city and the police, that it wasn't going to be the same old, same old anymore.

More importantly, disparate gays alone, and in groups, understood that they too could stand up and fight for their rights. By mid-year there were gay groups on all the major college campuses in the area. New organizations (CGA, IGLA, IGRTF) began polling and political action. Lesbian and gay newsletters popped up everywhere. Former members of MM dispersed throughout the new organizations. Instead of just the Mattachine referral hotline there were now directories, newspapers, clinics, a lesbian center with a bookstore and library, social service organizations from Rogers Park to Hyde Park Beckman House and Gay Horizons, and a gay community center on West Elm Street.

In 1971 the president of the Chicago Gay Alliance presented the Judiciary Committee of the City Council with its first demand that amendments be added to existing housing and employment laws to include "sexual orientation" in the list of prohibited forms of discrimination. In just a few years, with the old guard as midwives, a citywide community had been born.

With research contributions by William B. Kelley.

SIDEBAR

Cops, bars and bagmen

A 1972 article in the Chicago Sun-Times noted federal indictments of police Capt. Clarence E. Braasch, former commander of the East Chicago Avenue District, and 23 policemen who had served under him as vice investigators, for taking kickbacks from bar owners. A second article reported the names of bars that the indictment alleged were shakedown victims of the cops between 1966 and 1970. A number of gay bars were included in the list, among them the Gold Coast, the Baton Lounge, the Haig, the Inner Circle on Wells, the King's Ransom, New Jamie's, the Normandy, and Togetherness.

The old mayor, Richard J. Daley, had bowed to pressure from reformers in 1960 when he had hired a new superintendent of police, O.W. Wilson, who was supposed to clean house in the department. James B. Conlisk Jr. served as superintendent after Wilson retired in 1967 and was in office during the West Side riots and Democratic National Convention police riots of 1968. Corruption was the norm in the city; no one believed that, if they really wanted to, the brass couldn't find evidence of what most bar patrons knew.

When bars were busted (in the days when attorneys were not allowed to advertise) it was common for district cops (who got a percentage) to hand out business cards for attorneys who knew how to get arrestees off for a fee.

But that was only half the battle. The other side of doing business in Chicago in those days was dealing with the wiseguys. If you were "in the know" you could tell which bars were "connected" to the mob (translate: didn't want trouble, like having the bar busted up) by what

brand of beer was on tap, what company had the towel and toilet-paper concession, whose jukebox was installed.

Others had their hands out, too; there were the ward heelers, legmen for the ward bosses and aldermen. Ignore them, and inspectors from departments you never heard of would find violations and close a bar. Chicago has always had a helluva record for corruption, and it's only in recent memory that so many politicians and court officers have found their way to jail.

"The situation would not have become the profitable venture that [it] apparently was had bars and other establishments refused to go along with the pay-off system in the first place. This break-through now should liberate everyone-bars, bar employees and individual gays-to assert their right to pursue their happiness unmolested by authorities. Anyone who is bothered unlawfully, either by false arrest or extortion attempt should say 'never again,'" stated Chicago gay activist Jim Bradford in the Mattachine Midwest Newsletter for January 1973.

Gays were outside the mainstream. It wasn't until the spring of 1972 when kids from Gay Liberation and Mattachine old-timers demanded dancing in the bars (it wasn't illegal), drinks that weren't watered, safety, and even brighter lights-that things began to change.

They called for bar boycotts and held a dance at the old Coliseum. The establishment tried to block that, too: permit problems, insurance hassles. But attorney Renee Hanover stepped in, insurance was obtained from a Black-owned company, and 2,000 gays (and what may have seemed like almost as many cops) came to the party. Challenging the economic base of the system opened the door to change all down the line.

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BY DAVID BYRNE AND TONY PEREGRIN

After its successful maiden voyage last year, **The True Colors Tour** is ready to set sail once again. Covering 25 cities between May 31 and July 5, there will be varying line-ups during its return. The True Colors Tour stops at The Chicago Theatre Tues., June 10. Expect full sets from the concert series' founder, Cyndi Lauper, as well as The Cliks, The B-52s, Tegan and Sara and Chicago's own The White Tie Affair. The evening will be five hours of continuous entertainment with comedy from Rosie O'Connell, and Carson Kressley hosting. Proceeds from the tour will benefit The True Colors Fund of Stonewall Community Foundation.

Lauper continues to be a dedicated, vocal ally to the LGBT community "time after time." Her latest set, *Bring Ya to the Brink*, is an overdue return to original material. Here, Lauper does not come across as out of place, since she co-writes and co-produces every track, teaming with renowned dance producers, including Rich Morel, Dragonette, Basement Jaxx and Kleerup. True to form, *Bring Ya to the Brink* delivers catchy upbeat music, but has pressing lyrics lurking beneath the sugar coating. The lead single, "Same Ol' Story," is a perfect sequel to her duet with Erasure, "Early Bird." Lauper's comeback vehicle is the kind of an album ideal for the marriage between car stereos and summertime. If you are looking for a Lauper gem, hunt down her electronic collaboration with Tricky, "5 Days," from his 2001 opus, *Blowback*.

The Indigo Girls will be making cameos throughout this year's True Colors Tour, although the duo is skipping The Windy City. On Aug. 5, **Amy Ray** will be releasing *Didn't It Feel Kinder* on Daemon Records. Ray's strongest solo outing yet is moody, dark, subtly political and rich in storytelling—just what one would expect from her. Those trademark Indigo Girls folk-pop harmonies are replaced by a crunchier sound with the guitar sometimes plugged into the amplifier.



Cyndi Lauper.

During last year's True Colors Tour, **The Dresden Dolls** quickly became the darlings of the trek. Unfortunately, the group consisting of vocalist and keyboardist Amanda Palmer and drummer Brian Viglione will not be rejoining Lauper and crew this time around. The Brechtian Punk Cabaret performers have a set of oddities, B-sides and newly recorded songs aptly titled *No, Virginia...*, serving as a bridge between 2006's *Yes, Virginia...* and Palmer's forthcoming solo debut. *No, Virginia...* is out now via Roadrunner Records.

The Ting Tings has been making quite the buzz with a sound reminiscent of Blondie's hungry years, and the British duo also incorporates Berlin and Transvision Vamp into the mix. Advertising executives beat radio programmers to the punch, as The Ting Tings is the latest act to be licensed to an Apple spot with "Shut Up and Let Me Go." The pair's debut already entered in the top spot on the UK charts and is currently available via iTunes, while a physical release is slated for June 3. Don't be turned off by the scattling on "Great DJ;" moreover, the duo's irresistible cut "That's Not My Name" is part "My Sharona" and The Sounds' "Song with a Mission." The Ting Tings rank up there with The White Stripes, The Dresden Dolls and Giant Drag as one of the great contemporary co-ed musical pairs.

I have been quick to discount American Idol, since it seems to be a factory milking naive hopefuls with the temptation of a complex contract and instant popularity. Most of the contestants have proven to be flashes in the pan, but last year's winner, **Jordin Sparks**, wins me over with her hit "No Air." Here, Sparks follows the advice from the show's judges and acts her age, instead of being partial to the mature-beyond-her-years-sound she favors. On this duet, Chris Brown makes his idol Michael Jackson proud. Sparks ignites, showing off her chops with outstanding vocal gymnastics and Brown keeps up, following her lead. There is no doubt that "No Air" is a pop guilty pleasure.

Scarlett Johansson's venture into the world of music, *Anywhere I Lay My Head*, is a beautiful assortment of Tom Waits covers and the especially penned track *A Song for Jo*. Using her celluloid skills, the actress's voice takes on different personalities, as if each song is new a character to portray. Granted, Johansson will not be belting out The National Anthem anytime soon, she knows her limits. Interestingly, David Bowie cameos on "Falling Down" and "Fannin Street." Produced by TV for the Radio's David Andrew Sitek, the production is gorgeous and lush, reminiscent of some of Sinead O'Connor's

recordings circa the Universal Mother or Gospel Oak sessions. The end result is a cozy, dreamy set of interpretations of tunes from one of the most celebrated living songwriters.

One of Chicago's best kept secrets, **Naomi Ashley**, will be performing at The Heartland Café, 7000 N. Glenwood, May 31 and at Schuba's, 3159 N. Southport, June 1. The Midwest



DJ Scotty Thomson. Photo courtesy of Thomson

DJ Scotty Thomson: Native New Yorker hits Chicago

BY ROSS FORMAN

When Scotty Thomson strolls in to spin at the nightclub known as Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, May 31, he will be *sans* Speedo.

"That's the old Scott, when I wasn't a full-time DJ, and it really was something that my publicist liked to latch on to," Thomson said, laughing.

Yep, the muscled 33-year-old previously would offer his eclectic music wearing, well, nothing but a Speedo—oh, and maybe flip-flops.

But that's not the case anymore. He's now clothed, usually, with an occasional shirtless evening.

"I like to show up with a smile on my face and I'm excited to play music for people, and I think that kind of comes through in my sets,"

breeds a certain pedigree of Americana singer-songwriters and Ashley proves worthy to be in this class on her latest *Another Year or So*. Her material, like "Dangerous" and "That Kind of Girl," seamlessly balances on the twang of bluegrass, the storytelling of folk and troubles associated with country music.

said Thomson, a New York native. "I always had a huge CD book in college and people always told me to bring my CDs to parties because I always had a lot of fun music; I was always buying upbeat stuff that people like to hear when they're drinking or having house parties. I didn't even think of it as DJ'ing then, but I guess I was a DJ in the making."

Thomson, who lives in New York, is now a full-time DJ who has had gigs at Avalon, XL, SBNY, HK Lounge and elsewhere in his home state. He also has been hired to DJ in night-spots in Chicago, Los Angeles and other cities.

"Right now, my music takes up most of my time," Thomson said. "If I'm not traveling and spinning places, I'm working on music, listening to music, researching music—that kind of stuff."

Thomson, who is gay and "recently single," said his spinning combines recognizable music with a mix of classics and a lot of European imports, stuff that other DJs don't traditionally play. And it's music and beats that "get people very excited, such that they want to know what it is."

Fun is key to Thomson's musical world.

Thomson attended Friends Academy in New York, then St. Mary's University.

"People are always shocked when they see my [collegiate] All-American sailing certificate on the wall [at home], and right next to it is my DJ booth. They think [the combination is] so weird," Thomson said, laughing.

In reality, it must be Thomson's Gemini personality shining through.

And in the DJ booth, his skills truly shine through.

See www.hydratechicago.com.

BOOK REVIEW

The Saint of Kathmandu: And Other Tales of the Sacred in Distant Lands

Written By Sarah LeVine
\$25.95; Beacon Press; 242
REVIEW BY YASMIN NAIR

Sarah LeVine's *The Saint of Kathmandu* is a memoir about her 30-odd years in communities devoted to spiritual quests. It implicitly argues that what brings people together into massive football stadiums to pray as one or as solitary worshippers in darkened Cathedrals isn't religion—a set of prescribed doctrines—as much as faith: the need to believe in a power that can alleviate the conditions of living.

The book is divided into five chapters, ranging from the early '70s to sometime near the present. The locations vary from Africa and Hong Kong to Nepal and the United States. In Nigeria, LeVine, an anthropologist, spends time with Al-hajia Rabi, who is both a learned Muslim woman schooled in the Koran and the chief medical offi-

cer in the Muslim town of Kaura. In Kathmandu, she's taken under the wing of Guruma (the name is a title, meaning both teacher and mother), a vital woman and female Buddhist monk devoted to the cause of women's equality in her order.

In the most poignant chapter, set in Hong Kong, LeVine befriends her Filipina maid Isabel. Maids are the Philippines' biggest export—they go to the farthest corners of the world to cook and baby-sit for strangers, and many spend years apart from their own children. Isabel, it turns out, married a man who disappeared while she was pregnant with their child.

The Saint of Kathmandu is a compelling book, and it's compassionate without condescension. LeVine writes about strong women, and that goes a long way to shift the paradigms through which we understand faith in the global south.

Yet, the book tends to portray matters of faith as timeless and unchanging. LeVine is often mysterious about dates (the Hong Kong chapter is one exception, but then it's difficult to dehistoricise Hong Kong). The chapters on Africa and Mexico, in contrast, require a good deal of math to discern when events might have occurred.

Sarah LeVine will be at Women and Children First, 5233 N. Clark, May 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Read the entire review at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Knight online after *Sex and the City* opening

Gay writer-director Michael Patrick King and the studio bringing you *Sex and the City*, one of the summer's most highly anticipated films by the GLBT community, are keeping a tight lid on the last 20 minutes of the film—so tight that, even though the film has already premiered in London and spoilers galore are available on the Internet, the movie is not being screened for critics here in time to meet our deadline. But we want to let you know as early as possible our thoughts on the film. Therefore, this week's edition of *Knight at the Movie* will only be available online. Check www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com Friday for my review of the film. —Richard Knight, Jr.

WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, May 28

Crew Dragzilla, annual staff drag show, benefit for Center On Halsted, 4804 N. Broadway, 773-784-CREW, WorldsGreatestBar.com

Women and Children First Bookstore Sabrina Chapadijiev, editor, and local contributors: Live Through This: On Creativity and Self-Destruction. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com / 773-769-9299

Thursday, May 29

Be-All Convention, The Annual Be-All Convention. Hyatt Regency Woodfield, e-mail Dayle.Roberts@sbcglobal.net or call 847-358-3994

Borders Books and Music. Author of "Candy Everybody Wants," Josh Kilmer-Purcell. 7:30 p.m., 2817 N. Clark St.

Center on Halsted Gay and Gospel: A Pre-Gospelfest Celebration featuring E. Patrick Johnson and performances by achurch4me?/MCC and Pillar of Love Fellowship Church members. 6-9 p.m., \$10, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Transitions Bookplace James Van Praagh promotes his book "Ghosts Among Us." 7 p.m., 1000 W. North Ave., www.transitionsbookplace.com

Windy City Gay Idol 2008 Wild Card event of 6th annual talent search contest. 8 p.m. signup/9 p.m. start, Spin, 800 W. Belmont, www.windycitymediagroup.com for rules/regulations, www.myspace.com/2007windycitygayidol

Women and Children First Bookstore Sarah Levine: The Saint of Kathmandu: And Other Tales of the Sacred in Distant Lands. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com / 773-769-9299

Friday, May 30

Affinity Community Services SinglesMingle. 7 p.m., 21+, 5650 S. Woodlawn, 773-324-0377

Cake Chicago "May in the Country," with live music by Kate Myers, Ashley Thornton, Ripley Caine, Katie Quick and more. Come dressed in your favorite country outfit. 9 p.m., Red Line Tap, \$5 cover, 7006 N. Glenwood

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless 17th Annual Hopefest with jazz singer Madeleine Peyroux, Otis Clay, live and silent auctions. 8 p.m., \$35, \$100 VIP, Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave., 312-435-4548, www.chicagohomeless.org

Clubhouse & Smooth Productions Urbano Hip Hop for All! Featuring sexy Urbano dancers. DJ Anton and special guest. 10 p.m.-4 a.m., Circuit, 3641 N. Halsted St., \$10 at door, urbanochicago@aol.com

Mary's Attic Ben Lerman's Ukelear Meltdown. This NYC musician and comedian will be joined by Cameron Esposito and Scott Free. And May 31 (with Carrie Callahan and Dan Polydoris. 7:30 p.m., \$7, 5400 N. Clark St., www.benlerman.net

MORE for Gay Men Being Out with Purpose, an experiential workshop on life purpose for gay men who desire more passion, meaning and connection in their lives. Through May 31. 6-10 p.m. and Saturday 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., early registration \$149, door \$129, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., register at 312-645-8300

T's Sean Wiggins live with Chandler on drums. 8-10 p.m., \$5 cover, 5025 N. Clark, www.seanwiggins.com

Women and Children First Bookstore Tim Joyce, Carl Kozlowski: Seize the Day Job: The Humor Book Al-Qaeda Kept You From Reading. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com / 773-769-9299

Saturday, May 31

Burkhart's Underground Rage to Page workshop with "Live Through This: On Creativity and Self-Destruction" editor, Sabrina Chapadijiev. 2-4 p.m., 1228 N. Noble St., read coach house

Fairygodmother Foundation 6th Annual Stars & Wishes Gala. The Casino, \$275 benefactor tickets, \$250 patron tickets, info at www.fairygodmother.org

Immanuel UCC Biblical Defense Workshop for Youths to empower LGBT youths and analyze "slammer passages." 4-6 p.m., 1500 Old Church Rd. in Streamwood

Live Oak Connected: A Free Saturday

Series for Lesbians. This month: Family: Identifying, Participating and Creating. 10 a.m.-1 p.m., 1300 W. Belmont, space limited, 773-880-1310 ext. 87, www.liveoakchicago.com

MidTangent Productions Queer Bash, a fundraiser with drinking, dancing and entertainment. Food, prizes and live performances to benefit the remounting of A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Queer Tale. 9 p.m.-1 a.m., @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark, \$15 suggested donation

Stonewall Association of Illinois Come Out and Dance Fundraiser. 7 p.m.-midnight, The Fat Bean Bistro and Coffee Bar, 4003 S. Plainfield/Naperville Rd. in Naperville, \$20

Windy City Gay Idol 2008 Semi-finals event of 6th annual talent search contest. 3 p.m. signup/5 p.m. start, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., www.windycitymediagroup.com for rules/regulations, www.myspace.com/2007windycitygayidol

Sunday, June 1

Burkhart's Underground Reading by "Live Through This: On Creativity and Self-Destruction" editor Sabrina Chapadijiev, contributor Stephanie Howell, and performances by Chapadijiev and Mark Bose. 10-11:30 p.m., 1228 N. Noble St., read coach house

Chicago Human Rights Campaign A Ladies Spectacular, an afternoon of WNBA basketball with the Chicago Sky. Tickets include pre-game warm-up and autograph session with WNBA Sky Players. 2:30-6 p.m., \$35 per person, UIC Pavilion, tickets at www.hrc.org/chicagosky

Immanuel UCC Biblical Defense Workshop for Adults. Workshop analyzes "slammer passages." 1-5 p.m., 1500 Old Church Rd. in Streamwood

WACT Monthly meeting. Email cherylchicago@earthlink.net for info

Tuesday, June 3

achurch4me? MCC Reflection/Meditation/Music/Prayer. People from all faiths and spiritualities welcome. 7:15 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.achurch4me.org, info@

achurch4me.org, 773-661-0936

Living Well Ministries Choose Life coming out study/support group. Tuesdays through June 24. 7-9 p.m., 6554 N. Rockwell St., registration \$60/\$50, pre-registration required, e-mail jacki@livingwellministries.net or call 773-655-4357

Star Gaze Anne Leighton and Sarah Hoagland's 25th anniversary party. Performance by POW-WOW Ensemble, DJ Sharon. 7-11 p.m., donations to POW-WOW encouraged, 5419 N. Clark St.

WTTW-11 Television program: "Out & Proud in Chicago," a documentary on Chicago's LGBT community. 7:30 p.m., plans to re-air several times in June, see www.wttw.com for a schedule

Thursday, June 5

American Veterans for Equal Rights Monthly meeting. 7 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.aver.us

Chicago Foundation for Women 2008 Impact Awards, honoring Byllye Avery, Jo Moore and Amber Smock. 5:30 p.m., \$40, The Standard Club, 320 S. Plymouth Ct., www.cfw.org

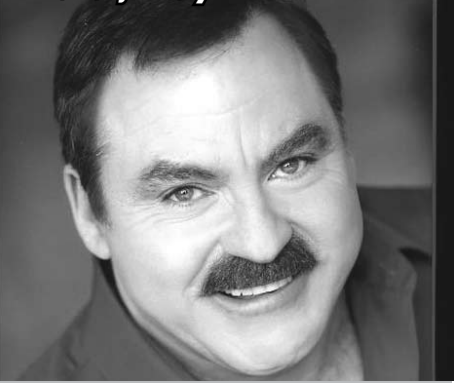
New Town Writers Meeting. 7:30 p.m., Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville Ave., www.myspace.com/newtownwriters

Friday, June 6

Center on Halsted Pritikin's Time Capsule, A Glimpse of San Francisco in the '70s, an exhibit that features photographs from Jerry Pritikin. Runs through July 13. Opening reception 6:30-8:30 p.m., 3656 N. Halsted St., second floor, \$5 donation requested

Chix Mix Productions Drag king and burlesque show by the Chicago Boi Toiz & Gurl Toiz. Doors open 9 p.m., \$7 at door, \$5 if you email first and last name to versageproductions@yahoo.com, Circuit Nightclub, 3641 N. Halsted St., www.chixmixproductions.com, chixmixproductions@yahoo.com

Thurs., May 29



MEDIUM, RARE

Spiritual medium James Van Praagh will be at Transitions Bookplace, 1000 W. North.

Photo by KevynMajorHoward.com

Thurs., May 29; Sat., May 31



SINGSONG

It gets down to the nitty-gritty as **Windy City Gay Idol 2008** holds its wild-card and semifinal rounds at Spin, 800 W. Belmont, and Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, respectively.

Photo by Kirk Williamson



Leather or knot

The local annual event known as International Mr. Leather (IML) celebrated its 30th anniversary May 21-26, with the Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker, serving as the host hotel. Among the competitions' winners were Gary Iriza, Mr. Palm Springs Leather 2008 (sponsored by Palm Springs Leather Order of the Desert, The Barracks bar, Gear, Palm Springs, Calif.), who was crowned Mr. IML 2008; and Bootdog, the 2008 International Bootblack winner from Alameda County Leather Corps, Castro Valley, Calif. (Iriza is second from the right in Israel Wright's picture above.) And, of course, there were plenty of various gatherings—including theme parties and the leather market—to keep attendees busy. Photos by Wright and Ross Forman; see many more at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.





Left: Members of the Chicago Razors after competing in an event. Right: A Razor wins a medal at the Gay Games. Photos courtesy of the organization

SPORTS

The Razors' edge

BY ROSS FORMAN

A group of triathlon competitors arrived in Chicago for the 2006 Gay Games, but their bicycles didn't. And that's not an easy thing to replace, since some bikes cost \$2,000 or more.

The Chicago Razors stepped forward and worked with a bike shop in Evanston. Each competitor was able to get a last-minute, high-quality rental. Strife quickly turned to satisfaction as all were able to compete.

"To be able to do the Chicago triathlon [course] was easily the highlight, the best Gay Games triathlon," said Bill Toepper, 49, who serves as the president of the Razors, Chicago's all-inclusive gay triathlon team, as they bill themselves.

Toepper has competed in four Gay Games, and already is planning for Cologne in 2010. It was the Vancouver Games in 1990 that, in essence, launched Chicago's gay triathlon club.

"We enjoyed the Vancouver experience so much that, over the next couple of years, we continued to hang out together, do some races together," Toepper said. "We kept a database of Vancouver gay athletes and had them coming to Chicago for what was then [known as] the Mrs. T's Triathlon. So, for about four years, we had about 50 to 100 gay tri-athletes for the event, and it was a lot of fun. But then [that event] kind of fizzled because, in the end, it just became more difficult to get into that race."

When the Chicago Games approached in 2006, Toepper said it was a "logical time" to restart the fire. "We were able to reach gay athletes locally, had a bar night at Sidetrack, talked about what we wanted to do, came up with a few simple plans, including training together and have a social component too. We really wanted to be good hosts for the Games. And I think we were able to pull it off," he said.

The Chicago Razors now have about 120 members, mostly men; about 50 are active members. They have weekly runs, bicycle rides and, when Lake Michigan warms up, weekly swims in the lake.

"We do our best to try to bring new members in through clinics and one-on-one teaching. We're always trying to get people exposed to the sport," said Toepper, who lives in Chicago's Old Town neighborhood, is gay and has a partner (Craig Preston).

The Razors compete in about eight races annually, usually involving overnight trips to Midwest cities, with about 10 or 15 guys. They also have a monthly social event.

There are a few women on the Razors, Toepper said. Most of the men range from 30 to 40.

"I'd say the level of competitiveness is not too high," he said. "Many joined around the Gay Games [in 2006], so, after a few years, most of the guys are getting faster and more competitive, though."

A few of the Razors are even fast enough to

win their age groups. Mostly, though, it's a team of, "competitive weekend athletes," Toepper said.

"Triathlon is a sport for guys, or girls, with resources because some use a \$2,000 bicycle," he said. "The bike kind of prohibits some people [from participating], unfortunately. However, you can do it on a \$200 bike, I swear."

Membership in the Razors is free, although competitors must provide their own swimming goggles, wet suit, shoes, helmet, etc.

"Sure, [swimming, running and bicycling] are individual sports, but with all of the training, they really are great team sports, so to speak. We develop great camaraderie within the group," Toepper said.

The Razors will compete in several Midwest events, highlighted by the Accenture Chicago Triathlon Aug. 24. Members also will compete in the annual Pride to Run race before Chicago's Gay Pride Parade.

"If you can swim, bike and run, you can do it," Toepper said. "The most difficult thing is if you are a sub-par swimmer; then it can be difficult to swim in open water with all of the splashing and kicking and chaos that is going on [in the water]. That's probably the most difficult thing for newcomers, though the guys seem to overcome that pretty easily. The next most difficult thing is the culture of riding the bike, especially riding in miserable [weather] conditions.

"I guess we're a group of obsessive, compulsive, organized people who just enjoying hanging out with one another, be it training, relaxing at someone's home or traveling to a race.

"Triathlon is sort of a lifestyle, at least for a lot of us it is. It's a great hobby."

For more information on the team, go to www.chicagorazors.com.

AIDS marathon benefit at Bar Louie

The inaugural fundraiser sponsored by the National AIDS Marathon Training Program is scheduled for Fri., June 6, at Bar Louie, 47 W. Polk, at 7:30 p.m..

The silent auction includes autographed sports memorabilia; a sightseeing plane ride over Chicago; massages; combo dinner-date packages with some of the AIDS Marathon coaches and others; and more. Three of the most popular auction items likely will be special, private meet-and-greet opportunities with famed athletes Bo Jackson, Ryne Sandberg and Bart Starr during their joint appearance in Chicago in late July at the 29th annual National Sports Collectors Convention, which will be held in Rosemont.

The money raised will benefit the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. For \$30, attendees will get an open bar, great entertainment, the opportunity to bid on amazing items and the satisfaction of knowing you are making a difference in the fight against AIDS.

—Ross Forman

Gay lacrosse coach hops on over to Germany

BY ROSS FORMAN

Kyle Hawkins is back coaching lacrosse, but is truly worlds away from his last gig as the head coach at the University of Missouri. And the fact he's gay isn't just a non-issue with his new team, but also the way they discovered him.

Hawkins is now the director of men's lacrosse and head coach for the HTHC Hamburg Lacrosse Warriors of the German Lacrosse Association. He accepted the position in early January, and started late that month.

"Europe is obviously a better place for a gay person to be than Missouri," said Hawkins, who compiled a 127-58 record in nine years at Miz-zou, including a Great Rivers Lacrosse Conference championship in 2004 and Coach of the Year honors.

The university fired Hawkins in 2007.

"The more I found out about lacrosse in Europe, the less I'm surprised [I was hired]," Hawkins said. "Lacrosse is growing quickly in Europe, much the way the sport grew 10 and 15 years ago in the U.S. So, with my credentials, I think I'm a real asset to Europeans.

"The more I look at it, I know I'm in the right place; I couldn't be in a place that would make me a whole lot happier. The social atmosphere is unbelievably more accepting; the pay is very good. I'm now at the forefront of the growth of lacrosse in Europe."

Hawkins was recruited last June by the English Lacrosse Association, "and they heard about me because of what happened at Missouri," he said. However, funding for Hawkins' job never materialized.

Last December, the Hamburg team contacted Hawkins for its job while he was still living in Columbia, Mo. They flew Hawkins to Germany for a job interview Dec. 26.

Hawkins said he was "pleasantly surprised" with both job offers, even though the English gig never materialized.

"This team is very good; I'm very pleasantly surprised," he said.

Hawkins compared the Warriors' level to play to that of a college club team. It probably is one of the 20 best teams in Europe, he said.

"As far as the level of competition goes, I would say on par with the better [college] club [teams], the better Division III teams and the lower Division I teams," Hawkins said.

"[During] my first conversation with the English, they admitted that they discovered me because I was gay. When the Germans offered me the job, I wasn't sure if they knew [I was gay]." Ultimately, the Germans also told him that they



Kyle Hawkins.

knew he was gay—because they did Internet research about him, and his sexual orientation is prominently featured online.

"They told me they didn't care" that I am gay, Hawkins said. "Now, everyone [associated with the team] knows and not one person in the organization seems to even treat it like it's odd, much less have any negative reaction. That's nice."

Hawkins is in charge of all teams under the HTHC Hamburg Lacrosse banner, from the youth to the adult levels. Players on his top-level Warriors team range in age from 22 to 35.

"Everyone knows I'm gay at all levels [of the organization], and no one cares," he said.

Is that surprising?

"It's uncomfortably nice, if that makes sense," he said. "It's so nice to not have anyone care [about my sexuality] that it's almost surreal."

Hawkins said he is aware of some LGBT players within the organization, but none on his team—"at least none that I'm aware of."

"My sexuality is such a non-issue here. It's just such a different culture here [from Missouri]."

Hawkins was the commissioner of the Great Rivers Lacrosse Conference during the years 2001-2005. Under his coaching, more than 80 athletes were named All-Conference players and more than 25 were named All-Americans.

"I would have to say, the [Missouri] team just got uncomfortable with the whole situation," said Hawkins, speaking slowly and choosing his words carefully since he is currently involved with a lawsuit against the university for his firing.

"I do believe there was homophobia at play. I think that homophobia was the root cause," of my firing.

Hawkins is now single.

"It's remarkable how much of a factor my sexual orientation was at Missouri and how little it is here. It has not been a factor here at all."

Smash & Tickle June 7

Smash & Tickle '08, the second annual 2nd City badminton tournament, will take place Sat., June 7, at the Broadway Armory, 5917 N. Broadway.

There will be singles and doubles events. A drop-flight format will be employed, with a minimum of three matches to be played. There will be four divisions, covering all skill levels.

The fee will be \$30 for one event and \$45 for both. E-mail secondcitybad@yahoo.com to receive registration information.

Gay man to be part of Tenn. hall of fame

Jackie Walker, an All-American college football star in the early 1970s who was open about his sexual orientation, is among 10 individuals slated to be inducted into the the Greater Knoxville (Tenn.) Sports Hall of Fame July 17.

Walker, who died of AIDS in 2002, was a defensive star at the University of Tennessee-

Knoxville during the years 1969-71. He made both All-SEC (Southeastern Conference) and All-America in 1970 and 1971, according to The Knoxville News-Sentinel. While at the school, Walker majored in drama and speech.

Gay powerlifter adds to honors

Chris Morgan, the current reigning Gay Games powerlifting champion, has qualified for both this year's European and world championship finals.

He was lifting in the British Championships, held in Tamworth, England, lifting a total of 557.5 kilos (1,229.07 lbs.) to place second in the 82.5 kilo (181.8 lb.) class. Morgan has already appeared for England on four occasions, taking World Championship silver (2004), gold (2005) and bronze (2006), along with a silver at the European contest (2005).

The European Championships will be held in Ireland in June, and the World Championships are to be held in Evansville, Ind., in November.

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