



Condom Campaigns

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Viola Davis

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John O'Hurley

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Queer Champion Runner

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7 arrested at V-Day marriage protest

BY YASMIN NAIR

When Proposition 8 passed in November 2008, it prompted a series of actions across the country and legal challenges in California. On March 5, the California Supreme Court will begin to hear arguments against Prop 8. In order to highlight the importance of the upcoming trial, Gay Liberation Network (GLN) and Join the Impact Chicago organized a Valentine's Day action at the Cook County Marriage License Bureau, 50 W. Washington. This began with a traditional picket outside the building and ended with a sit-in inside that resulted in the arrest of seven marriage activists.

More than 300 people showed up at the protest at 11 a.m. Feb. 14 in downtown Chicago, holding signs and chanting during an initial picket outside 118 S. Michigan. One man, with a sign that said, "Obama, Don't 4Get," said that he was there because "[w]e don't the same protections that other couples have. The unions that that we have are just as valid as heterosexual unions."

Turn to page 6



Marriage-equality activists show unity by raising their fists at the Cook County License Bureau Feb. 14. Photo by Yasmin Nair



RuPaul's amazing 'Race'

RuPaul is no drag in her latest TV effort. Read Ru's interview with Windy City Times on page 17.

Sara Feigenholtz's run for the House

Over the next two weeks, Windy City Times will run interviews with several candidates vying for the Fifth Congressional District. Up first: State Reps. Sara Feigenholtz and John Fritchey. (Fritchey's interview is on page 5.)

BY ANDREW DAVIS

When State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz announced her run for the U.S. Representative seat formerly held by Rahm Emanuel, she was instantly stamped among the frontrunners. In this interview with Windy City Times, the longtime LGBT ally discussed her ties to the Fifth Congressional District, the economy and the controversy surrounding a poll her campaign staff allegedly conducted.

Windy City Times: Do you have any thoughts about what happened to [former Gov.] Rod Blagojevich?

Sara Feigenholtz: I honestly think I said it all in my press release. I think we really need to move on to deal with some serious issues in the state of Illinois. It's been a very difficult time, but even moreso for the people in Illinois, who have suffered from these egos and inertia. We just need to start a new chapter. There's so much at stake here during these tough economic times that we need to move forward.

WCT: Let's say you win this election. How would you expect the atmosphere at the U.S. House to be different than the one in the Illinois House?

Turn to page 5

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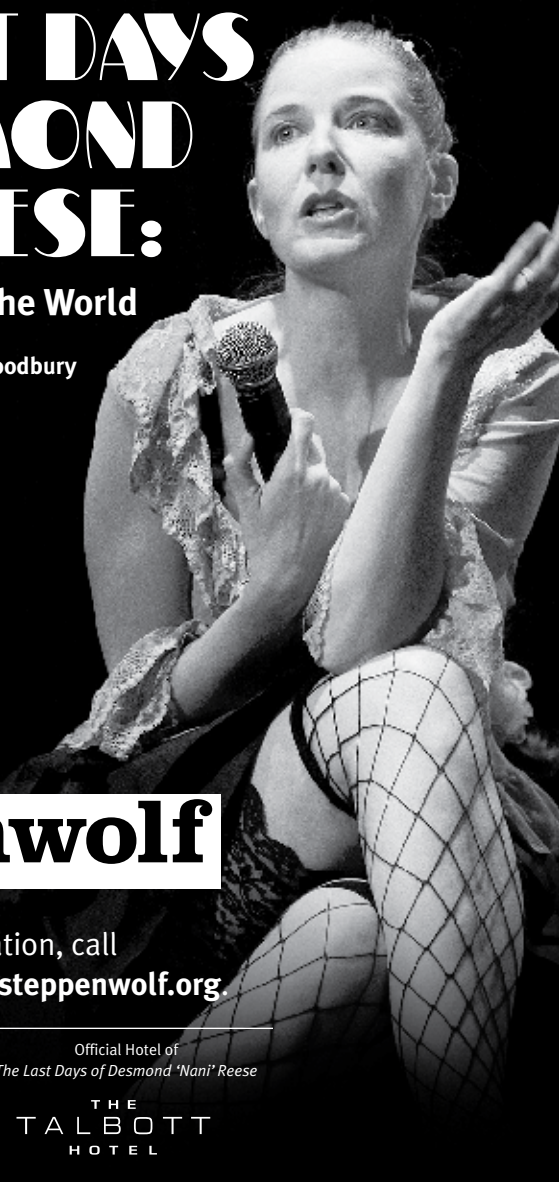
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Waver Franklin (above) has a direct connection to the National AIDS Marathon. Read more on page 22.

Photo by Ross Forman

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About Face's Stupid Kids (above) is one of several theatrical productions being reviewed this week. Read page 12.

Photo courtesy of About Face Youth Theatre

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Features include:
 -Pat Quinn's talk about the economy
 -An interview with singer Rick Astley (right)
 -Mombian with Dr. Dana Rudolph
 -Talking with Lamar Ariel



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Federal immigration bill introduced

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Saying that now there's a president in the White House who is not a "guaranteed veto" for the legislation, U.S. Rep. Jerrold Nadler reintroduced a bill Feb. 12 that seeks to enable gay Americans to sponsor their foreign same-sex partners for legal residency in the United States.

U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy reintroduced the companion bill in the Senate.

Speaking to reporters on a telephone conference call, Nadler said it would be hard to say what the "odds" are for the bill—the Uniting American Families Act—to pass.

Nadler's remarks to reporters were interrupted by a phone call from the White House but, when he came back on the phone, the Congressman said the call was about the stimulus package.

An Obama administration aide indicated the White House has not yet weighed in on the legislation.

But, as a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination last year, then-Sen. Obama told the Human Rights Campaign that he supported the bill. And Nadler indicated that the change in the White House—and "positive signals" from Democratic committee leaders—has prompted him to make a "serious attempt" at passing the legislation.

Under the current Immigration and Naturalization Act, an American citizen can sponsor his or her opposite-sex "spouse" for a green card, representing legal residency.

The Leahy-Nadler bills seek to amend that law to add the words "permanent partner" to those qualified to seek such residency.

"Permanent partner" is defined as an adult

who is in a committed, intimate, financially interdependent relationship with another adult in "which both parties intend a lifelong commitment."

"The promotion of family unity has long been part of federal immigration policy," said Leahy, in a statement released Thursday, "and we should honor that principle by providing all Americans the opportunity to be with their loved ones."

Leahy estimated that about 35,000 binational same-sex couples live in the United States.

"It is all but certain that many of these couples will eventually be forced to make a choice with which no American should be faced," said Leahy, "to choose between the country they love and the person they love."

During the telephone conference call, one couple who lives in Vermont told how the foreign partner cannot get a green card even though the couple obtained a civil-union license in that state. The foreign partner, identified as Janet from the United Kingdom, noted the irony that the cat she brought with her to the United States has legal permission to be here permanently through a "pet visa," but that she, herself, cannot obtain such status.

A woman, identified as Lee from South Africa, said she lives in New York City with her partner and their two sons. She said she lives in constant fear of being deported and separated from her family.

Rachel Tiven, executive director of Immigration Equality, a national organization working to improve immigration law to help LGBT people with foreign partners, wrote president-elect Obama in December. In the letter, Tiven urged Obama to both support the bill and take other actions to help LGBT people in immigration matters.

On introduction, the House bill had 74 sponsors and the Senate bill had 12.

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Gay appointee to faith-based council

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

His name wasn't on the press release announcing the White House's new "Advisory Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships," but one openly gay man has been appointed to the 25-member council. That man is Fred Davie, president of a foundation to help low-income communities.

Davie's staff said he was too busy to be interviewed for this article, and no gay leader had ever heard of him or anything he's ever done for or with the gay civil rights movement. Brian Bond, the White House's openly gay deputy director for public liaison did not return calls or e-mails concerning the council. Neither did another staffer this reporter was directed to.

In an executive order signed February 5, President Obama renamed the original "Faith-Based and Community Initiatives" entity created by President Bush the "Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships."

The faith-based council is of interest. Even under Bush, it has provided funding to such LGBT community entities as the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center. And so far, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is trusting Obama to keep his word about playing fair.

A Washington update from HRC last July told supporters that the Obama campaign had "confirmed that his faith-based initiative will not direct federal dollars to groups that proselytize or advocate for [anti-gay] reparative therapy."

"If elected," read the July 14 Equally Speaking transcript, "Sen. Obama plans to implement a council to provide secular social services to communities in need through faith-based organizations."

In its own "Blueprint for Positive Change," HRC said the new administration "must issue clarifying regulations that ensure that the government does not discriminate on the basis of religion" and "affirmatively clarify that the statutes containing charitable choice provisions in no way preempt federal, state or local laws preventing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity."

But there is at least one development that could make the cautiously optimistic nervous. To head the advisory council, President Obama has selected a Pentecostalist who lobbied hard for evangelist Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at the inauguration.

Joshua Dubois will head the council. He has connections all over the map—born in Maine, raised in Tennessee and Ohio, undergraduate degree from Boston University, master's at Princeton and started law school at Georgetown. He headed the Obama campaign's religious affairs, according to Time magazine, though this reporter could find no one who knew whether he orchestrated the South Carolina gospel tour that featured controversial singer Donnie McClurkin. But Dubois did, reportedly, help engineer candidate Obama's appearance at the Saddleback presidential form, as well as Saddleback preacher Rick Warren's prominent inclusion in the inauguration.

Warren's inclusion as such a high-profile participant drew swift criticism from many quarters of the gay civil rights movement, and beyond. Warren had just helped support the anti-gay Proposition 8 amendment in California and then told a reporter that he "absolutely" equates gay marriage with pedophilia, incest, and polygamy.

But HRC saw reason to remain calm, too.

The executive order reconstituting the faith-based council says, "It is critical that the Federal government strengthen the ability" of faith-based, neighborhood, and "other nonprofit providers" to deliver services "while preserving our fundamental constitutional commitments guaranteeing the equal protection of the laws and the free exercise of religion and forbidding the establishment of religion."

"It's reassuring," said HRC President Joe Solmonese, "that in the recent executive order, President Obama is engaging civil rights experts from the Department of Justice and the White House counsel's office to review the policies implemented by the Bush Administration."

"We expect that President Obama will abide by his commitment and ensure that federal funds are not used to discriminate against the LGBT community," said Solmonese. "We look forward to a continued dialogue on how best to achieve this goal and reverse other Bush anti-LGBT policies."

In other transition news...

Gay counsel: Openly lesbian law professor Alison J. Nathan was appointed recently as one of 14 attorneys to serve as counsel to President Obama in the White House. Nathan, who graduated from Cornell Law School in 2000, was a member of the Obama campaign's LGBT Advisory Committee. Her new title is associate counsel to the President. And Nathan applied for her position through the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund's Presidential Appointments Project.

Inclusion: The Obama administration once again included three members of a gay business organization in a meeting of business leaders to talk about the economy generally. Justin Nelson, co-founder of the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, said he was invited to and attended a meeting with top advisors to the president. The discussion, he said, focused on the president's proposed stimulus package. "Our participation," said Nelson, "is a clear demonstration of the Obama Administration's work to actively engage the LGBT community on all issues of importance to LGBT business owners and their families. After being held at arm's length for most of the previous Administration's two terms, our inclusion is a clear signal that the Obama team knows that there is much more to LGBT people than just being LGBT." Co-founder Chance Mitchell, who also attended the meeting, said, "We let the president and his team know that he had our support in his plan to stimulate the economy."

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National roundup

BY ANDREW DAVIS

One year after eighth-grader Lawrence King was killed in Oxnard, Calif., dozens of community vigils were held across the nation. Among those remembering King was California Assemblymember Tom Ammiano, who said, "Lawrence's brutal murder is a challenge to all of us to stand up for the safety of gay, lesbian and questioning youth in our school system," according to the San Francisco Sentinel. King was allegedly murdered by a classmate because of the former's sexual orientation and gender expression.

In San Diego, Calif., **hundreds of people protested a Bill Clinton appearance at the Manchester Hyatt Hotel** after the former president did not honor a boycott supported by LGBT leaders and labor unions, according to the San Francisco Sentinel. The boycott was started last July in response to hotel owner Doug Manchester's \$125,000 contribution in support of Prop 8.

Wyoming's House of Representatives has voted against a proposed constitutional amendment that would have defined marriage between a man and a woman as the only legal union in the state. HRC President Joe Solmonese said, "We congratulate Rep. Cathy Connolly and the 24 other representatives who voted against the resolution."

In New York, **police have arrested four people who allegedly vandalized the Long Island Gay & Lesbian Youth Center** in Bay Shore late last month, EDGE Boston reported. Detectives arrested Milagro Ruiz, Gilbert R. Geigel, Kerrond Miller-Jones and Charles Diaz Feb. 9.

Read much more national news online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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BILLY MASTERS

Page 20

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John Fritchey

BY YASMIN NAIR

Democrat John Fritchey is currently the 11th District State Representative. He's also among the many candidates seeking to fill Rahm Emanuel's recently vacated seat in Illinois's Fifth Congressional District. Fritchey has a reputation as a progressive and is backed by a number of labor unions. He spoke to Windy City Times about his views on gay marriage, DADT, hate crimes legislation and his stand on labor-related issues. The primary will take place on March 3 and the general election on April 7.

Windy City Times: What are your views on gay marriage?

John Fritchey: Since long before I was in the legislature, and the 12 years I have been a state representative, I have been supportive of equal rights across the board regardless of consideration of sexual orientation, race, gender [and] age.

WCT: But would you support a state or federal law that legalized gay marriage?

JF: I'm more concerned with the rights that come with the institution than with the institution itself. Accordingly, I support the idea that each and every right that's extended to every couple by virtue of the institution of marriage

be extended to same-sex couples as well. I don't care what government or anybody else wants to call it. I think at the end of the day what I want to do is make sure is that we recognize the institution for everybody.

WCT: What about "Don't Ask, Don't Tell?"

JF: It was a terrible idea whose time not only has come but whose time never existed.

WCT: What are your views on hate-crimes legislation?

JF: I have been a co-sponsor of, I believe, every piece of legislation strengthening penalties and extending coverage of hate crimes since I've been in office and I will continue to do so.

WCT: Progressive organizations like the Audre Lorde Project and the American Friends Service Committee are critical of hate-crimes legislation, especially with regard to penalty enhancement. They feel that these laws only increase the rates of incarceration, especially among the poor and minorities.

JF: I'm aware of their position on the issue. In a perfect world, there would be no hate crimes so there would be no legislation punishing hate crimes. But we, of course, don't live in a perfect world and, until such time as we do, I believe we need to take significant action against repugnant behavior.

WCT: What ideas do you have for prevention of hate violence?

JF: I think that the best defense is a good offense, and the best offense will come through education. Obviously, we need to work on educating our adult community but a long-term solution rests on educating children. The beautiful thing about children is they are inherently free of biases, be it based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation. Prejudice is taught and learned. Tolerance should be as well.

WCT: Can you speak more specifically about what that education looks like?

JF: When I talk about education, I don't mean only within a child's school, but also within their homes, their family and their community. These prejudices have been passed down from generation to generation. There's some very direct parallel between hate crimes aimed towards the LGBT community and those that we saw aimed at African Americans and other minorities in the past. What we need is structural social change.

WCT: There has been some controversy regarding Sara Feigenholtz's polling strategies.

JF: I did not get in this race to run against anybody. I got in this race to run for an office. Yet, days after I was in the race, Sara had put out a poll alleging, among other things, that I was running my campaign out of a taxpayer-funded district office. That was wholly untrue, which her campaign either knew or should have known. It set a very unfortunate tone. I think the responsible thing would have been for Sara to acknowledge that they had done it, and that it was a mistake and move on. Yet to this day, she won't do something as fundamental as accept responsibility for a poll that everybody knows was hers. That sets a troubling tone not



State Rep.
John
Fritchey.

just for the campaign but for a lack of transparency in how she operates. It was an avoidable situation.

WCT: The issue of transparency brings me to the question of Illinois having become known as a bastion of corruption. How would you remedy that perception and even the reality?

JF: I have sponsored more ethics reform legislation than any legislator in Illinois; over two dozen pieces of legislation in the last decade. I was the author of legislation that was at the core of the condition of George Ryan. Most recently, I sponsored the law banning pay to play politics in Illinois. I've been a steadfast believer that all government, including state government, belongs to the people and should be treated as such.

WCT: How do you differentiate yourself from Rahm Emanuel?

JF: Rahm has a very contentious style, which works very well for him. Because of my background, I'm inclined to work with individuals and groups across the spectrum. Everybody finds a style that works best for them: That's the style that works best for me.

WCT: You've been endorsed by a number of labor unions. Can you speak about the connection between labor issues and social and cultural issues, especially in the context of this economy?

JF: I have a 97 percent lifetime labor record and I'm proud to have the endorsement of the AFL-CIO. Standing up for working men and women means more than just supporting more jobs in a better economy. It means supporting a healthy and viable workplace for those men and women. So whether it's a living wage, access to health care or a workplace tolerant of workers' natural languages—the issue of standing up for workers' rights is a broad one. Advocating for more jobs is simply one part of that.

WCT: What are your views on the stimulus package?

JF: There's no question that a stimulus package was needed and it will have lasting benefits not only in terms of the physical changes it will bring to our city and state but in the lives of the men and women that will bring those changes about. We are about to invest dramatically in everything from physical infrastructure such as roads and bridges to human infrastructure such as hospitals and schools. This will change life not just for us but for generations to come.

See www.fritcheyforum.com.

SARA from cover

SF: I think they'll be very similar. I think there's a lot of excitement about new beginnings, and I think that Barack Obama—who I worked with for eight years when he was in the General Assembly... Everybody saw the outpouring of millions of Americans celebrating the transition from eight years of what some would consider a very challenging time (to put it mildly) to a new chapter for this country. I think that, frankly, it's about change and that people are excited for the change.

I've always put my community first before politics, and that's what I plan on doing in Washington.

WCT: Is there anything your predecessor [Rahm Emanuel] did that you would like to continue?

SF: I think that Rahm had a really wonderful career as a fighter for his community also. He was very well-liked in a very diverse district, and he worked very hard. I'm sure it was a conflict for him to leave because I'm sure he loved being a congressperson.

I, too, will fight for the people who live in this wonderful congressional district. If I had to be specific about it, I would say that I would like to have the same respect and be as hard-working as he was.

WCT: Obviously, this district covers a wide area, and there is a wide variety of perspectives. How you expect to balance the needs and wants of the more liberal areas with the more conservative ones?

SF: You know, I have to tell you that I've travelled and traversed the Fifth Congressional District, and have spoken with people on both ends of the district. Frankly, the [ends] are very similar, especially when it's crunch time and there's this economy. ... Everyone is suffering from this economy, wondering how they're going to pay for their kids' college and take care of themselves as they watch the economy dwindle. I think that those are the key issues right now.

WCT: OK. Do you know if the eastern and western ends are on the same page regarding LGBT issues?

SF: Well, Andrew, I was born in the center of the 5th Congressional District in Peterson Park, I went to school in Albany Park, I went to junior college in Portage Park and I went to college in North Park. Honestly, I've represented my district [in the state] for 14 years. If you take a look at this district, it's about the economy more than anything.

WCT: I want to ask you about this report that came up on Fox News Chicago. Supposedly, a phone poll was conducted by your campaign that slammed [opponents] John Fritchey and Mike Quigley. Do you have any comment on this?

SF: [At this point, the campaign manager said that he would talk with Windy City Times after the interview about that particular topic. The following week, WCT received an e-mailed response from Feigenholtz: "I won't engage in this kind of political gamesmanship and fingerpointing. Voters are tired of the bickering and they don't care about polls; they care



State Rep.
Sara
Feigenholtz.

about what I'm going to do to help them and their families through these difficult economic times—that's what I'm talking to voters about. I've avoided political bickering in Springfield for the last 14 years, which has allowed me to actually get things done for people."

WCT: How do you feel about a trans-inclusive ENDA [Employment Non-Discrimination Act]?

SF: I believe that the best way to approach ENDA is by casting a wider net. It's a basic civil-rights issue for everyone, and I believe that the more inclusive, the better.

WCT: One of your opponents, Mike Quigley, is pretty well-known in the LGBT community as well, from his work as Cook County commissioner. Why should the LGBT community vote for you over him?

SF: I think that I have been much more than a "yes" vote. I have been a very, very loud, passionate voice for the past 14 years on a myriad of issues that affect the LGBT community. Again, Andrew, a lot of it comes from growing up on the Northwest Side. My mother was an immigrant, and she came from some difficult times in Europe. She put herself through medical school, and she taught me a set of values about civil rights and human rights. This is why we have to be a voice for the voiceless—and I've done it loud and I've done it proud.

I can remember when I first got to the General Assembly, and in 1995 it was the year that our AIDS Drug Assistance Program [ADAP] had practically gone bankrupt. It was the year that Roche Pharmaceutical had produced a drug called a protease inhibitor that had passed FDA approval.

We were in committee, and there was testimony being delivered. I was sitting next to two Republicans while Mark Ishaug, I believe, testified for more money for AIDS programs. And one of the most watershed moments of my life as a rep—that set me as a fighter for the LGBT community—was when a Republican woman leaned over to a colleague of hers and said, "Why are we going to pay for these drugs? These people are going to die, anyway." That was a defining moment in my career; I realized what my challenges were.

I think that I have a record that [makes it] pretty clear that this is my main focus. I believe in representing communities that are voiceless. It's not about me; it's about the people I represent.

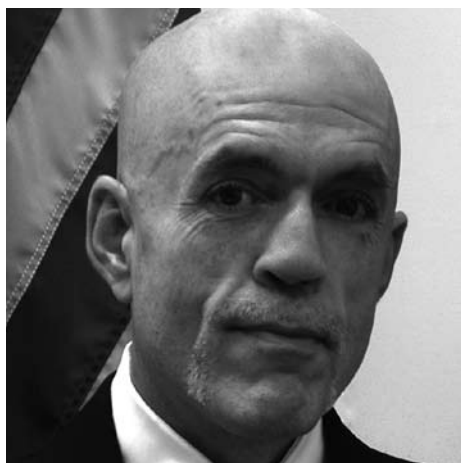
See www.saraforcongress.com.

Next week will be the official election issue, and will include interviews with Mike Quigley and Alderman Patrick O'Connor. And, as usual, the charts with the candidates' questionnaire scores will be in the issue.

Read the entire interview with State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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State Rep. Greg Harris.

Harris heads new state House committee

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Openly gay State Rep. Greg Harris, D-Chicago, convened the seven-member House Committee on Youth and Family Feb. 10, marking the first time the House has dedicated a committee strictly to youth and family issues.

The Youth and Family Committee was created for the 96th General Assembly to work on many matters that affect families throughout the state. Harris told Windy City Times that the committee will initially look at "the totality off all issues affecting families and young people throughout the state of Illinois, which [covers everything from] educational alternatives to extracurricular alternatives to service programs to departments in state governments that serve youth or families, such as the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Juvenile Justice." He added that "it could be an especially interesting assignment this year because when Gov. [Pat] Quinn came to the Democratic caucus [recently] and spoke to us, he said that his number-one priority is to focus on expanding on youth and family programming, and to re-evaluate what we're doing." Harris said that the committee will look at issues concerning every demographic, including LGBT individuals, people who live in rural areas and homeless youth.

Harris also took time to refute a news report that stated that a same-sex marriage bill was to be discussed during the committee's first meeting, although he added that it will be discussed "at some point. My m.o. is that I did introduce a same-sex marriage bill, I'm going to talk to my colleagues and ask for their vote. If there aren't enough votes to pass through the Illinois General Assembly, I will introduce a civil-union bill so that while we work toward full marriage equality—which is my goal—[there will be] an intermediate step to help people who need the basic rights and protections today."

"It has been over 27 years since Illinois had a comprehensive plan on how youth and family services are funded," Harris said. "Twenty-seven years ago, the Internet did not exist, personal computers did not exist and cell phones did not

exist. The world is vastly different. We need to be sure that we're surveying our families in ways that are in the 21st century."

CDPH survey shows good and bad trends

BY SAM WORLEY

A recent Chicago Department of Public Health update provided to the HIV Prevention Planning Group showed mixed results in local HIV infection rates: an overall decline in rates has not been experienced evenly across communities, and in some populations no decline has been felt at all. In line with national trends, Black men who have sex with men, in younger populations particularly, continue to experience rising incidence of infection.

CDPH Assistant Commissioner for STD/ HIV/ AIDS Policy and Prevention Programs Christopher Brown, who co-authored the report, pointed to two important demographics that showed significant decline in infection as of 2006, the last year represented in the update. Injection-drug users, a population at heightened risk of contracting HIV, are down to 9 to 10 percent of all reported cases—where they once comprised between 22 and 25 percent. Brown cited needle exchange programs as having a "significant impact" in preventing the transmission of HIV.

And Brown is optimistic about the continuation of this trend. He said that while CDPH currently receives only city funding for needle exchange programs, the department is working with the Obama administration to secure federal money to augment its work.

There was also a notable decline in rates of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Nanette Benbow, director of CDPH's Office of HIV/AIDS Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Research, and a co-author of the update, says that "really strong interventions" have been the cause of successes with injection drug users and mothers with HIV. In the case of mother-to-child transmissions, says Benbow, processes of appropriate pre- and post-natal care following diagnosis, including highly effective medication regimens, have been successful in preventing transmission.

African-American men who have sex with men (MSM), however, continued to show high rates of infection, including a dramatic rise in the 20 to 29 age range. There was also an increase in rates among Black MSM in the 13 to 19 age range. While not encouraging, neither are the numbers particularly surprising; black people in general—men and women—experience much higher rates of infection nationally. In Illinois, where African-Americans make up roughly 15 percent of the population, they comprise about half of all new HIV infections.

Jim Pickett, director of advocacy for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, pointed to "structural homophobia" as an inhibitor to widespread education about effective prevention practices among men who have sex with men. HIV prevention workers, according to Pickett, have been "hamstrung" by federal regulations that preclude frank discussion of sex and sexual practices.

Pickett said that efforts to test everybody are admirable, but with limited resources, stress should be placed on testing high-risk populations. "In the absence of universal health care," Pickett said, "the idea of testing is to find positives"—and that means targeting testing at higher-risk demographics such as men (particularly black men) who have sex with men, injection drug users, sex workers, and others.

"Resources should be directed at those that need them," said Pickett, rather than those that are "politically palatable."

The next step for the HIV

planning group, says Chris Brown, is a "rigorous process to figure out where we should put our resources." He cited a forthcoming three-year plan, beginning in 2010, to "follow the epidemic," targeting prevention resources at specific Chicago neighborhoods and populations with higher incidence of HIV infection.

Prevention starts, said Brown, with people knowing their status—a process into which CDPH puts "a tremendous amount of resources." In addition to routine counselling and testing, the CDPH accesses resources from a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention project called the Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions (DEBI). The DEBI project, begun in 1999 in response to HIV service providers' requests for proven successful intervention strategies, offers providers—in the works of the DEBI website—"science-based interventions that work."

Intervention strategies are described in an online compendium, published by the CDC, which runs programs through an "efficacy review" before publication. Agencies like the CDPH, said Brown, can implement various DEBI programs as prescribed by the CDC, or they can make "local tweaks."

The CDPH plans to release a new estimate on HIV incidence in early summer.

ARRESTS from cover

Several speakers spoke to the crowd before and after it marched in a picket line up and down the pavement in front of the building. Brent Holman-Gomez greeted protesters: "Welcome to the struggle." He went on to detail the benefits that, according to him, same-sex couples are denied over their heterosexual partners, including estate inheritance rights and social security benefits.

Holman-Gomez emphasized the symbolic value of holding the protest on Valentine's Day. Inside the Marriage Bureau, several straight couples had shown up to get their licenses, and at least one bride to be was dressed up in a formal full-length white gown. Holman-Gomez said that the crowd of LGBT protesters was there to congratulate the straight couples but also to remind them that the right to marry was denied to same-sex couples.

Straight advocates spoke about the need for solidarity between heterosexuals and their LGBT friends who were unable to marry. Missy Lorenzen declared that she would not marry until her gay friends were legally allowed to marry. Gina Pantone said that, "As a straight ally, I'm here because I can no longer stay silent while millions of Americans are denied their chance at happiness, fairness, and stability; while families in California are being torn apart and having the validity of their relationships put up for vote."

In between speeches, protesters marched with chants that included, "Obama, Obama, let Mama marry Mama" and "What do you want? Equality? When do we want it? Now!" Different groups brought their perspectives to the table, although not all of them made their point completely relevant to the issue. On the one hand, Cory, of the International Socialist Organization, spoke of the need for gays and lesbians to recognize "so-called gender-variant identity. This is a part of our movement, as well as a united ENDA [Employment Non-Discrimination Act]." On the other hand, Prajwal Ciryam of the Chicago Single-Payer Action Network spoke at length about his group's support for same-sex marriage. However, his speech addressed mostly generalities about the need for healthcare for all and the need for change: "There is no institution that is too great for compassion, too strong for love, too proud and important for equality and respect."

Andy Thayer of GLN spoke about the economic issues that, he said, faced same-sex couples in a recession. According to him, "Hetero couples can take those [economic] rights for granted but we cannot. Particularly in these hard eco-

WCT seeking 30 Under 30

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

Nominees should be under 30 years of age and should have made some substantial contributions to the LGBT community, whether in the fields of entertainment, politics, health and/or other areas. (The deadline to nominate individuals is Friday, April 24.)

Individuals themselves, organizations, co-workers, etc. can nominate a person by sending an e-mail or fax to WCMG. The nomination should be 100 words or less and should state what achievements or contributions the nominee has made. Nominators should include their own names and contact information as well as the contact information of the nominee. Those nominations can be sent to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com or faxed to Andrew Davis' attention to 773-871-7609.

(Note: Following the policy instituted in 2005 that individuals can only win once, those have won the award since that year are ineligible for this year's awards.)

Honorees will be notified in May and recognized at a ceremony in June.



Protester at the Feb. 14 rally. Photo by Yasmin Nair

conomic times, we need equal rights." Thayer then announced that a group of protesters was already inside the building and participating in a sit-in to demonstrate for equal marriage rights. The crowd followed Thayer inside the building.

Thayer later told Windy City Times that the seven who were arrested had "infiltrated" the building before the action. Dale Fecker and Buddy Bell had gone up to the counter and demanded a marriage license. Since Illinois does not grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples, they were automatically denied. The two, according to Thayer, then said, "We demand equality," and all seven then staged the sit-in.

When the large crowd showed up at the door of the license bureau, all seven were seated on the floor, holding up signs and singing protest songs/hymns that included, "This little light of mine" and "If I had a hammer." Erica Chu, with a sign that said, "Your silence supports the status quo. Speak Up," told Windy City Times that she was "here to support equality." Nick Ferrin, holding a sign that said, "End Discrimination," told the paper that he was there because, "Marriage is used to divide people into groups, into some people who can marry and some who can't and that's wrong." The others arrested were Dan Ware, Daniel Karczewski and Jeff Graubart (who was arrested in the 1970s in a similar marriage protest).

In a subsequent update, GLN's press release said that all seven were arrested at 4 p.m. that day for criminal trespass, a Class C misdemeanor. They were all released at 2:15 a.m. the next morning.

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AFC launches 'Cure' program

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) launched "With Me Comes a Cure," a public awareness campaign designed to combat the spread of HIV infection in the African-American community, on Feb. 7. Although Black people make up 15 percent of the population of Illinois, 51 percent of new HIV diagnoses come from the African-American community. Particularly hard hit are Black men who have sex with men (MSM)—indeed, one of the few populations experiencing an increase in new infections in an overall context of decline.

According to Jim Pickett, AFC's advocacy director, public-health efforts to test for HIV have ignored the needs of specific communities at high risk of infection—communities that include African Americans, MSM of all races, sex workers and injection-drug users.

With "limited resources," Pickett said, efforts are needed to address potentially risky behaviors, such as anal sex, that government agencies are generally unwilling to consider addressing in detail. Citing "structural homophobia" as prohibitive, Pickett added that health agencies "do work that doesn't speak directly to gay men. Resources should be directed to the populations that need them," rather than those that are "politically palatable."

The AFC's "With Me Comes a Cure" campaign is designed as just such a new direction.

"It's not enough to talk about HIV prevention in isolation," said AFC Communications Director Johnathon Briggs, stressing that such talk needs to be explicitly concerned with those groups that have the "greatest need for intervention." Briggs began working on the campaign in August 2008, with help from a grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) HIV Vaccine Research and Education Initiative. Not limited to simply inciting discussion on HIV within African-American communities, the AFC's goal for the campaign is more ambitious—indeed, a redefinition of the concept "cure" itself.

"Any preventative action you take is in essence a cure," Briggs said. "The cure is what you're doing right now to prevent infection." The campaign, he stated, is meant to demonstrate to people that "they have power to actually be a part of the cure."

Centered around the Web site www.withme-comesacure.org, the campaign asks community members to imagine what words or ideas to insert in the title in place of the word "me." With what, then, comes a cure? Some words that have been input into the Web site that have been conceptual become concrete: Dance. Unity. Writ-

ing. Islam. Playing the cello. Science. Community members are encouraged to identify ways that their input can lead to action around HIV infection—how dance, for instance, can communicate a message of prevention.

"Everyone has a talent, a passion, or a resource" that can help prevent HIV, Briggs said.

Based on a concept created *pro bono* by Chicago Creative Partnership, "Cure" was developed through the input of three focus groups—made up of Black women, Black MSM and Black youths from throughout the city—held late last year. All three were vital, said Briggs: While the group of women was intrigued by the ambiguity and potential of the campaign's concept, the youths were most engaged in thinking about cultural activism and HIV.

One plan developed by the youth group, said Briggs, is for a video emphasizing condom use based on the Young Jeezy song "I Put On for My City."

While the NIAID grant funded CTA ads and "Cure" paraphernalia such as T-shirts, compact mirrors and condom cases, the year-long campaign will include a number of public events, including a mural painting in May on the city's West Side—all designed to emphasize prevention, frequent testing and enrollment in clinical trials.

One area of the campaign focuses on connecting affected communities, especially communities of color, with the kinds of healthcare they might not otherwise be exposed to. Epidemiologist Yaa Simpson, whose organization, the Association of Clinical Trials Services, is working with AFC on "Cure," says that her goal is to "bring the science to the people. Curing people is everybody's business. HIV is everybody's business. No scientist or researcher has ever cured anything without people."

The open-ended nature of "Cure," Briggs said, offers a way to think of "HIV as a proxy for other kinds of social inequality": how communities affected disproportionately by HIV are also communities affected by poverty, high incarceration rates, and lack of access to education and social services. The deliberate vagueness of the title—with the words "HIV" or "AIDS" not readily apparent—give participants the opportunity to think creatively about the larger structural problems they face.

Recalling the words of one focus group member last year, Briggs said, "Sometimes you have to take out the word to get out the word."

Einstein's Bros. store shut down

An Andersonville bagel shop was shut down Feb. 13 by Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) inspectors.

Einstein Bros. Bagels, 5318 N. Clark, was ordered closed when CDPH inspectors found mouse droppings in the kitchen, dining room

senior designer for Johnson and Associates, a sales and interior design firm.

White volunteered at the AIDS hospice Bonaventure House and was a member of several gay organizations during the 1980s and '90s.

He was well-read and highly intelligent, a fact he let known in a light-hearted manner. He was also a kind, sharing person with an infectious laugh and a warm heart. He loved life and was vested in the conviction that life was meant to be lived to its fullest—and that he did.

He is survived by his 97-year-old mother, Lula Mae Owens, of Hammond Ind.; his aunt, Eddice White Stevens, of Chicago; cousins, including Mary L. Wiley, Crystal, Rachel, Joseph, Jr., and many others. He is also survived by many friends in the community, including Craig Officer—a former partner and friend of 32 years—Eric Norris, Monroe Floyd, Carol Brice and all those he made laugh and love him over the past several decades. He will be missed everyday. We love you.

—Sent by Craig Officer



Condom nation

As part of National Condom Month—and to kick off National Condom Week (Feb. 14-21)—Howard Brown Health Center, in collaboration with Beyondmedia Education and About Face Theatre, developed "Condom Sense: A Real Life Education," the first comprehensive, LGBTQ-inclusive sex-education curriculum developed for public-school distribution in the United States. These community partners started the curriculum with a public-awareness campaign on Friday, Feb. 13, that included placing giant condoms on the rainbow pylons along Halsted Street in Boystown. The premiere of the educational video "HIV: Hey, It's Viral!" will take place at Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan, on Friday, Feb. 20, at 7 p.m.

In addition, volunteers from the AIDS Foundation of Chicago handed out "Love the One You're With" condom kits to passersby near Harold Washington College, at Lake and Wabash, on Feb. 12 to increase awareness about and support for condom access. Contact Pete Subkoviak at 312-334-0963 or psubkoviak@aidschicago.org for more information. Photos of the pylon (left) and of Subkoviak and Rhea Ghosh by Andrew Davis

and throughout the facility. Company representatives will have to explain themselves at a City of Chicago administrative hearing set for March 26 and pay a fine of \$500.

In 2006, Windy City Times reported that the same establishment was ordered closed Sept. 21 after inspectors discovered mouse feces; bagel dogs held at unsafe temperatures; and a build-up of thick black goo in the shop's ice machine.

Pediatric AIDS Chicago dissolves

Pediatric AIDS Chicago (PAC) has ended its 18-year history as a fundraising entity for pediatric HIV/AIDS services in Chicago, dissolving as a nonprofit organization to concentrate on the direct-service organization Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative (PACPI). This transition is a result of the need for a centralized approach to ending mother-to-child HIV transmission, by combining forces in the fight against pediatric AIDS in Chicago.

PAC began in 1991 from a friendship between Debbi Klein, Lynne Weber, Susie Ortner and Elizabeth Glaser (co-founder of the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation).

For more about PACPI, contact Cecilia Boyd at 312-334-0972 or PACPIdevelopment@gmail.com.

Children's HIV/AIDS org helping Guyana

Chicago's HIV/AIDS agency The Children's Place Association is working with the government of Guyana—a country with one of the highest HIV-infection rates in the Caribbean—to implement programs and services to help children and families affected by HIV/AIDS in this high-need region of the world.

The association held a roundtable in Georgetown, Guyana, to discuss the family-focused model of care that can enable adults to live longer, thereby reducing the number of children orphaned by the epidemic.

Visit www.childrens-place.org for more information.

Center accepting apps for census jobs

Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, is taking applications for jobs with the U.S. Census Bureau, as the federal office is recruiting for temporary part-time census jobs for the 2010 census.

Individuals should come between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. through Friday, Feb. 20, and should bring a U.S. Passport or drivers license and a social security card or birth certificate. See www.census.gov/2010censusjobs.

PASSAGES

Ernest White, Jr.

Ernest White, Jr., died at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, on Saturday, Jan. 24. He was 78.

White was born to the union of Lula Mae Owens and Ernest White, Sr., in Greenville, Miss. The younger White attended #4 Elementary School in Greenville and graduated from Coleman High School in 1949. He was a music (voice) major at Jackson State University, where he graduated in 1954. He attended Harrington Institute of Interior Design and was certified as an interior designer in 1984.

After college White enlisted in the United States Army, where he assigned to the Army Security Agency as a cryptanalyst. He served in Germany and traveled extensively throughout Europe during that time.

Other employment included a position with the Illinois Department of Labor as a deputy claims examiner. He also served as regional director for District 5 in the United States Office of Economic Opportunity. Later, he worked as a

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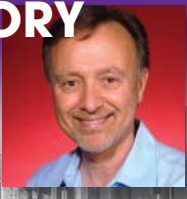
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CHICAGO GAY HISTORY

BY JOHN D'EMILIO



Blues women of the 1920s

One of the widely held beliefs about gay and lesbian history goes like this: the farther back in time, the worse things were. Maybe if we reached all the way back to the Greeks and the Amazons, or if we were transported magically to the island of ancient Lesbos, we'd find something to cheer our souls. But basically, back in the day, before Stonewall, things were pretty grim.

Well, the common wisdom turns out not to be entirely true. There have been times and places where a combination of circumstances allowed queer life to surface, and an oasis of safety opened up. One of those times was the 1920s and 1930s, and one of those places was the South Side of Chicago.

It was in the 1920s that "South Side" came to mean the African-American part of town. Between 1910 and 1930, major migrations out of the rural South made Chicago's Black population soar. From only 44,000 folks in 1910, the numbers swelled to over 230,000 in 1930. Because of open discrimination by white realtors, landlords and homeowners, most African Americans found themselves forced to settle on the South Side. From the railroad tracks just west of State Street to Cottage Grove on the east, and spreading south from 31st Street to Washington Park, a densely packed community quickly grew.

The 1920s were relatively prosperous times in the U.S.—the "Fat Years," as two observers of South Side life called them. It was the Prohibition decade, too. Prohibition added an extra thrill to the city's nightlife. With the sale of alcohol a crime, and the mob jumping in to make big bucks in the liquor trade, anyone with a flask could feel at least a little bit outside the law. So, with money to spend and the new freedom that city life seemed to offer, Southsiders in the 1920s supported a world of clubs and theaters that rivaled those in any urban neighborhood.

Among the top attractions in town were the female performers who sang the blues. A musical form with roots in Southern Black communities,

the blues became bigger than ever in the 1920s. In response to campaigns from newspapers like the Chicago Defender, the music industry finally, in 1920, began to record Black women. Almost instantly, a new set of stars were born. Bessie Smith's first recording, in 1923, sold three quarters of a million copies, an astounding number for those days. When singers like Smith, Ma Rainey, Alberta Hunter or Ethel Waters performed before live audiences in theaters and clubs, the demand for seats exceeded capacity.

The Defender had, as one of its missions, promoting the achievements of what in the 1920s the paper regularly referred to as "the race." Every issue gave generous space to the entertainment world. Reporters in other cities sent in reviews of performers on tour in order to stoke anticipation for their arrival in Chicago. From Detroit in 1926, one writer described an Ethel Waters show as "one of the most spicy and risqué to ever appear in this city ... Night after night people have been turned away." A Ma Rainey performance in Louisville drew this description: "The way Ma draws them in, she should be called the 'mother of packin' 'em in' ... Ma does three numbers that burn 'em up [and] send them out screaming for more."

When these singers were in Chicago, the Defender pulled out all the stops. It lavished them with praise. "All Chicago loves Alberta [Hunter]. She has a personality that makes one go again to hear her," it wrote. "The talented lady captivated all who met her." During a 1925 run at the South Side's Monogram Theater, a headline alerted readers that "Ma Rainey Packs 'Em In ... She proved the magnet which had the 'sold out' placard on display at each show long before curtain time."

Celebrities today often live surrounded by handlers and in a world of such wealth that it keeps them far removed from their fans. Not so for these blues singers in the 1920s. For one thing, the economic gap between a successful entertainer and the working people who sat in the audience was not nearly as large as it is today. But, even more, racial segregation in housing kept these stars in the community where they performed. Hunter lived on East 36th Place, a block or so from State Street, a main thoroughfare through the Black community. Rainey had an apartment at 35th and Wabash. They could be seen out on the streets of the South Side. Fans felt as if they knew these women, as if they were all part of each other's lives.

The performances and the music encouraged this sense of connection. Although the singer might be dressed in lavish gowns and costumes, she still bantered back and forth with the audience in a way that let them know she was one

of them. And then there was the singing itself. The style of the blues was filled with emotion. The performer sang of the hardships of life and the heartache of love in ways that were both raw and vulnerable. In "Broken Soul Blues" (doesn't the title say it all?), Ma Rainey begins with these lines: "My soul is broken, my heart aches too / Days I spend longing, daddy, for you / Nights I spend weeping, weeping for you."

Angela Davis, who has written eloquently about these blues singers, argues forcefully that one of the key features distinguishing female blues singers in this era was the "pervasive sexual imagery" in their music. One of the things that emancipation meant for African Americans, she says, was the freedom to choose one's partners. Sexuality, Davis writes, was "a tangible expression of freedom."

A lot of the songs these women performed and wrote spoke openly about sexual passion. Not surprisingly, many center thematically on men. I-can't-live-without-him and He-done-me-wrong sum up the content of quite a few of these blues compositions. But there are others in which women's sexual desire and women's sexual activity are out there, fully on a par with male sexual adventuring. In "Barrel House Blues," another song recorded by Rainey, the woman is the match of her man: "Papa likes his sherry, mama likes her port / Papa likes to shimmy, mama likes to sport / Papa likes his bourbon, mama likes her gin / Papa likes his outside women, mama likes her outside men."

Of the songs from this era that I know of, a favorite is "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom." It celebrates one of the dance crazes of the 1920s. The verses are full of sexually suggestive double entendres:

All the boys in the neighborhood

They say your black bottom is really good

Come on and show me your black bottom

I want to learn that dance...

Come on and show that dance you call your big black bottom

It puts us in a trance.

Early last morning 'bout the break of day

Grandpa told my grandmama, I heard him say

'Get up and show your good old man your black bottom

I want to learn that dance.'"

"Black Bottom" was just one of many songs that Rainey recorded. Her music company, Paramount, regularly placed large illustrated ads in The Defender. The ad for "Black Bottom" shows Ma Rainey, with a clarinet and trombone player on either side of her, dancing exuberantly. She wears a low-cut sleeveless dress that, with one hand, she has lifted way above her knee. The other hand is posed provocatively on her hip, and the look in her eye says "let's have some fun together."

Ads like these (and there were many of them) promoted not only the record, but the singer and her performances too. For the large Southside readership of The Defender, it was a short distance from the sketch of Rainey dancing wildly to seeing her live, in the flesh, at the Monogram or Dreamland. Through records, print, and performances, singers like Rainey became appealing figures of fantasy, stimulating in different ways the desires of men and women alike.

With this as a context, what then do we make of an eye-catching ad in the Sept. 22, 1928 issue of The Defender? It shows Rainey on a street corner at night, dressed in decidedly masculine attire, chatting up two fashionably dressed femmes, while a police officer eyes them suspiciously.

To be continued...

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ALMA announces scholarships

The Association of Latino Men for Action (ALMA) is pleased to announce that it will award two \$1,000 scholarships in 2009 to qualified Latino gay, bisexual or questioning youth seeking or currently enrolled in higher education.

ALMA Scholarship application packets are available for download from the ALMA Web site,

www.almachicago.org, or by contacting ALMA at 773-661-0926 or info@almachicago.org. Eligible candidates must identify as gay, bisexual or questioning males, and be of Latino/Hispanic origin or heritage. The submission deadline is Friday, March 20.

This year's recipients will receive their scholarship checks at the second Annual SS ALMA Boat Cruise benefit, sponsored by Circuit 2.0 Nightclub, on Friday, July 10.

AIDSCare hosting 'Fat Saturday Ball'

HIV/AIDS service organization AIDSCare is hosting its "Fat Saturday Ball: Nocturne" Saturday, Feb. 21, 6-11 p.m., at the historic Stan Mansion, 2408 N. Kedzie.

Guests will enjoy risqué entertainment (such as Belmont Burlesque Review and male performer Hot Toddy), music, auctions, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres.

Tickets start at \$150. See www.aidscarechicago.org.

YPC holding garage sale Feb. 18-19

Youth Pride Center (YPC) is saying goodbye to its longtime South Loop location with a unique "garage sale" style fundraiser. Since YPC has already moved to Hyde Park, it has many things left over in the old space.

The sale is Feb. 18-19, 6-8 p.m., at 637 S. Dearborn. Proceeds will benefit Youth Pride Services' south suburban satellite location and its dance team. Contact Tony Taylor at 773-699-8654.

BEHIV leather event Feb. 28

For the second year, Better Existence with HIV (BEHIV), will partner with Chicago area members of CLAW (Cleveland Leather Awareness Weekend) Nation for a fundraiser to support BEHIV's programs.

This year's event will be Saturday, Feb. 28, 10 p.m.-12 a.m., in the Club Room of Touché, 6412 N. Clark. Admission is \$25 per person or \$40 per couple.

Visit <http://clawinfo.org/clawnation.html> for more info.

Candidates' forum at school Feb. 22

Lake View Citizens' Council (LVCC) is hosting a candidates' forum for the 5th Congressional seat vacated by Rahm Emanuel Sunday, Feb. 22, at Inter-American School, 851 W. Waveland, 5-7 p.m. The moderator will be Ben Bradley of Ch. 7 WLS.

Participating candidates will include John Fritchey, Mike Quigley, Sara Feigenholtz, Pat O'Connor, Jan Donatelli, Frank Annunzio, Paul Bryar, Tom Hanson, Jon Stewart, Deb Gordils, Rosanna Pulido, Mark Fredrickson, Matthew Reichel, Tom Geoghegan, Daniel Kay and Simon Riberio.

See www.lakeviewcitizens.org.

Tickled Pink charity party set for Feb. 20

Tickled Pink—the party that brings together the city's hip, young or young at heart for a celebration—will take place Feb. 20, 7-11 p.m., at Underground, 56 W. Illinois.

Tickets are \$95 in advance and \$120 at the door, and proceeds will benefit the Breast Cancer Network of Strength (formerly the Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization). Call John Keogh at 312-294-8557 or see www.tickledpinkchicago.com.

Saturday, Feb. 21
7:30 p.m.
Sappho's Salon: A Provocative Night of Lesbian Diversion
Featuring Michelle Renae, Jenn P., and special guest host Kat Fitzgerald

Thursday, Feb. 26
7:30 p.m.
Bound to Struggle: Where Kink and Radical Politics Meet;
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WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

African GLBT activists meet to plot strategy

African GLBT activists and gay rights lawyers met in Cape Town, South Africa, for four days in early February to discuss legal strategies in the push for gay rights on the continent.

The meeting was organized by the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, Global Rights, Interights, and the Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists.

It marked "the first-ever dialogue between lawyers who have worked on litigation related to LGBT rights and African LGBT leaders," IGLHRC said.

Forty-five activists attended from Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

"Lawyers, activist leaders and donors attending the meeting acknowledged the importance of impact litigation for repealing sodomy laws and challenging other discriminatory statutes and policies," IGLHRC said. "Such litigation, however, needs to be situated within the context of local, national and regional LGBT organizing."

The participants discussed the need for security for lawyers defending GLBT clients and causes. Many of the lawyers at the meeting said they have faced attacks on their reputations, attempts at disbarment and physical violence.

The group called for creation of a GLBT African legal fund and a training and support network for African lawyers working on sexual rights cases.

Moscow Pride sues President Medvedev

With several lawsuits pending before the European Court of Human Rights against Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov for his repeated bans of gay pride events, Moscow Pride organizers now have filed a similar suit against Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

The new case stems from a May 2008 ban of a planned gay pride parade at Aleksandrovsy Garden next to the Kremlin, an area under federal control.

Federal officials failed to respond to the request to hold the parade and instead forwarded it to city officials, who automatically ban requests to hold gay events in public places.

Mayor Luzhkov has called gay pride parades "satanic" and "weapons of mass destruction."

"It's a pity that the president, even though he proclaimed that he would fight for human rights, did not interfere and put an end to the unlawful actions of Moscow officials," said pride organizer Nikolai Alekseev.

When Moscow gays have ignored the bans and staged unofficial pride events, they have been violently attacked by anti-gay protesters and police officers.

Group launches Internat'l Business Equality Index

The International Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce is urging major international corporations to participate in the first International Business Equality Index survey to measure how they are performing on "LGBTI" issues.

"The index is a unique tool allowing corporations to draw external comparisons, which illustrate how their competitors are doing, as well as internal comparisons that provide a better

understanding of their own performance," the group said. "In this challenging time of economic uncertainty, participation in an index of such broad scope provides the exact edge that corporations might need to be ahead of the curve."

The deadline for completion of the survey is April 30. Results will be announced in late July at the World Outgames' International Conference on LGBT Human Rights in Copenhagen.

"This index sends a signal to international businesses that they have a responsibility to promote diversity and inclusion, and to ensure that LGBT employees have equal access to the same benefits and rights as all other employees," said Linda Freimane, co-chairperson of the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe). "It addresses the need for the inclusion of the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity during diversity training, and also the tackling of LGBT harassment in workplaces."

ILGA-Europe Co-chairperson Martin K.I. Christensen said the index will "serve as an educational tool as well as a yardstick."

"The intention is ... to reward the international corporations that have consistently adopted a positive outlook towards LGBT people's inclusion and equality, and at the same time use this opportunity to assist companies that may this time score a little lower to perform better in the future," he said.

Bolivia bans anti-gay bias in constitution

Bolivia's new constitution, approved by 61 percent of voters last month, bans discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The constitution took effect Feb. 7.

According to New York-based Latino activist Andrés Duque, Article 14.II, titled "Fundamental Rights and Guarantees," reads, "The State prohibits and punishes all forms of discrimination founded on the basis of sex, skin color, gender, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, origin, culture, nationality, citizenship, language, religious beliefs, ideology, political or philosophical affiliation."

Duque said the document also defines marriage as between a man and a woman and allows Evo Morales, the first Bolivian president of indigenous background, to run for a second term and "to further establish a socialist vision for the country."

It was unclear at press time whether the new protections apply within the new parallel tribal justice system established by the constitution.

Some 60 percent of Bolivians may fall under the jurisdiction of the tribal system.

Residents of Queensland support same-sex marriage

Sixty percent of residents of the Australian state of Queensland support same-sex civil unions that grant all the rights of marriage, and 54 percent support simply opening marriage itself to same-sex couples, a Galaxy poll has found.

"Queensland now lags behind the rest of Australia and we call on all parties contesting the Queensland election in 2009 to make a clear commitment to remove the remaining discriminatory state laws," said Louise DuChesne of Action Reform Change Queensland.

The state's largest city is Brisbane.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"ONE CHANGE I WILL NEVER GET USED TO IS THAT EVERYONE KEEPS CALLING ME 'CONGRESSMAN.' It's ridiculous to hear someone shout 'congressman' and watch each of the 435 members of Congress within earshot turn their heads. Seriously, for my sanity, just call me Jared." — *Openly gay U.S. Rep. Jared Polis, D-Colo., writing on cnn.com, Jan. 30.*

"NEWBIES ARE OFTEN LUMPED TOGETHER AND COLLECTIVELY, even mockingly, referred to as 'The Freshmen.' Some of the upperclassmen are a bit snooty and don't talk to us lowly fish, but others are friendly and eager to help." — *Openly gay U.S. Rep. Jared Polis, D-Colo., writing on cnn.com, Jan. 30.*

"I AM SO SORRY FOR THE SILENCE THAT I HAD THAT RESULTED in duplicity. Because I was never deceptive and never told a lie about other areas of my life. I was perfectly transparent and open. And it was just this one area that I stayed quiet about, and that ended up in a great deal of hurt. And of course I apologize to the homosexual community for the awful impression I gave, and I'm so sorry for the silence. I actually just thought I could handle it myself and my prayer was that I would handle it without embarrassing my wife and kids and without disappointing the church." — *Disgraced mega-pastor Ted Haggard to the Los Angeles Times, Jan. 27.*

"MAYBE THE REASON OPRAH WAS SO NICE TO TED was because she probably relates to him in a lot of ways. She's not married with children, you know? Maybe she relates to some of the things he's saying. You know what I mean?" — *Alexandra Pelosi (daughter of U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi), who made a documentary about disgraced mega-church preacher Ted Haggard that is currently airing on HBO, to New York magazine, Jan. 29.*

"HAGGARD ON OPRAH: I DIDN'T CATCH THE WHOLE THING. But if Mrs. Haggard had been leaning any further away from Ted Haggard during the interview she would've tumbled off Oprah's couch. The body language was ... more revealing than anything." — *Gay writer Dan Savage on his blog, Jan. 29.*

"LAST WEEK, I LABELED MEMBERS OF THE MORMON CHURCH WHO supported California's Proposition 8 as 'un-American.' I believe Proposition 8 is counter to the promise of our Constitution; it is codified discrimination. But everyone has a right to vote their conscience; nothing could be more American. To say members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day

Saints who contributed to Proposition 8 are 'un-American' creates more division when the time calls for respectful disagreement. No one should use 'un-American' lightly or in haste. I did. I should not have." — *Actor Tom Hanks in a Jan. 23 statement.*

"IMAGINE IF I TOLD YOU THAT I ONLY HATED 'THE CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE,' and not, you know, actual Christians. Hey, nothing personal! I know and like tons of individual Christians, and I've broken bread with Christians, and I've had Christians over to my house. But I nevertheless think that Christianity—just the practice, not the people—is immoral and that no one needs to be Christian—it's a lifestyle choice, and Christians can change! Indeed, I was a Christian once. And while I have great affection for Christians I also believe that no one who is Christian is fit to parent, that Christians should not be allowed to marry or adopt, and that Christians aren't going to heaven because my God condemns their immoral lifestyle. Oh, and I also believe that Christians being allowed to marry infringes upon my right to, um, live in a world where Christians do not enjoy that right. Would you consider me an anti-Christian bigot then? I expect you would ... and you'd be right." — *Gay writer Dan Savage on his blog, Jan. 19.*



"Seriously, for my sanity, just call me Jared."

—Openly gay U.S. Rep. Jared Polis



"I'D LIKE TO SEE OBAMA NAKED. I think great leaders, charismatic leaders and men who are so confident and who have achieved so much, usually have big penises." — *Bisexual actor Alan Cumming to New York magazine, Jan. 29.*

"(I'M) CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC (ABOUT OBAMA). I think as gays, and Democrats, we're used to being disappointed by politicians. Hopefully that's going to change." — *Popular gay blogger John Aravosis (Americablog.com) to this column, Jan. 15.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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 —David Marshall, Research Director, Community Marketing, Inc.



**TERRY
 COSGROVE**

Good for the goose, good for the gander

It was one of those newspaper headlines you read and say to yourself, "Who are they kidding?" I'm referring to the recent International Herald Tribune article entitled "Gay-marriage opponents want to be anonymous." The article discusses how the Mormons, Knights of Columbus and other right-wingers want to protect their "right to privacy" so they are suing the state of California to keep their financial contributions to the recent anti-equal marriage Proposition 8 out of the public view. Secret Santa is one thing, but a secret political contribution is quite another.

Because this latest stroke of hypocrisy on the far right is so stunning, I'll leave the debate surrounding the lawsuit to greater minds. Their legal action contends that the bigots who contributed to the pro-Prop 8 campaign have suffered "...threats of physical violence, vandalism of personal property, harassing phone calls, harassing emails, blacklisting and boycotts."

Why does all of this sound so familiar? Perhaps because for more than 30 years, the anti-abortion activists on the right—many associated with the Catholic Knights of Columbus and Mormons (both conveniently oppose measures to prevent abortion and HIV)—have been invading the right to privacy of millions of American women seeking medical care with physical violence, vandalism of personal proper-

ty, harassing phone calls, e-mails, blacklisting, boycotts, etc. In other words, the law should protect anti-abortion and anti-gay activists from threats, boycotts and violence but these same people should be allowed to participate freely in threats, boycotts and violence against women seeking birth control and abortion. You can't even make this stuff up.

For those who haven't read the right-wing playbooks on denying American women their "right to privacy" in medical care, here's some highlights to consider while the anti-abortion/anti-LGBT activists are arguing for same in the California courts. For decades, they have:

—Verbally harassed and physically assaulted women entering medical facilities for a range of reproductive health care;

—Attempted to obtain and make public the private medical records of women who have sought abortions;

—Obtained personal information from auto license plates at medical facilities and used that information to inform employers and family members that a woman has sought an abortion;

—Video-recorded women entering medical facilities where abortions are performed and passed that video info to others;

—Launched national boycotts against corporations, foundations and others which make financial contributions to Planned Parenthood and other providers of women's health care;

—Harassed, threatened, kidnapped and otherwise injured—and, in some cases, murdered—doctors and other medical workers who provide abortion services;

—Launched boycotts and pickets of homes and schools of family members of contractors, architects, masons, plumbers, and others who build medical facilities where family planning and abortion is an option;

—Encouraged pharmacists to impose their

personal beliefs on patients by refusing to fill prescriptions written by doctors for birth control and emergency contraception; and,

—Hosted Web sites posting the photos/video of doctors, healthcare workers and women with the intent of intimidation and encouragement of violence against those providing or seeking reproductive health care.

It would be quite insightful if a judge on the case or attorneys opposing the pro-Proposition 8 legal maneuver would ask the anti-abortion/anti-LGBT Mormon, Catholic and evangelical folks some questions I would like answered which would include the following.

How is a boycott of corporations and individuals who give money to Planned Parenthood any different than a boycott of corporations and individuals who give money to the pro-Prop 8 campaign?

How is sending an e-mail to someone who publicly gave money to the pro-Prop 8 campaign different than sending an e-mail to the boss of a woman telling that boss that the woman recently visited a medical facility where abortions are performed?

How is picketing a doctor's home and her/his children's school with a sign saying "murderer" accompanied by the doctor's photo any different than picketing a pro-Prop 8 person with a sign that says "bigot" on it?

Finally, if it's good for the goose, isn't it good for the gander?

Terry Cosgrove is the President & CEO of Personal PAC, a bipartisan political action committee dedicated to electing pro-choice candidates to state and local office across Illinois.

This article also appears on HuffingtonPost.com.

LETTER

Foreign affair

*The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
 Secretary of State
 U.S. Department of State
 2201 C Street NW
 Washington, D.C. 20520*

Dear Madam Secretary:

Congratulations on your confirmation as our new Secretary of State. We welcome your leadership in promoting America's security and standing in the world and look forward to working in partnership with you. As you begin your work, we hope that you will also focus on equalizing the internal State Department rules and regulations for LGBT foreign and civil-service employees.

Recently, you received a letter from the group Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA), signed by over 2,200 government employees, expressing their concerns on this issue. As in the case of former Ambassador to Romania Michael Guest, the inequitable treatment of LGBT foreign and civil-service officers (FSOs) and their partners should not be the reason why highly qualified employees leave the State Department at a time when their service is needed more than ever. Many of these inequities, however, could be remedied through your leadership as Secretary, without legislative changes.

We are particularly concerned that the Department has not taken enough steps to assure the safety and security of non-EFM partners of FSOs. According to the State Department's own literature, 85 percent of FSOs are likely to be a victim of crime at some point during their overseas career. While same-sex partners are now allowed to take security classes through the Foreign Service Institute, their access is only on a space-available basis. Moreover, they are still denied access

to embassy health services, even in countries where grave health crises exist. Further, if an evacuation is ordered, same-sex partners are financially responsible for their own evacuation—creating a frightening choice between safety and resources.

The lack of equitable treatment could force dedicated, intelligent and needed FSOs and officials to make an unfortunate choice between serving their country and protecting their families. As you noted during the question and answer session of your Senate Foreign Relations confirmation hearing, many other nations now extend training, protection and benefits to the partners of LGBT employees. Further, the State Department's past inattention to these disparities places it below parity with the best employment practices used in the private sector, where the majority of Fortune 500 companies extend employee benefit programs to cover the domestic partners. Without remedying these inequities, the State Department may fail to attract and retain qualified personnel.

Madam Secretary, we urge you to take the initiative in addressing these basic concerns, all of which can be handled through internal regulatory changes and would not require Congressional action. Your leadership in these policy areas would make a difference in the safety and morale of those who support American policy goals overseas:

—Inclusion in travel orders for same-sex domestic partners of FSOs;

—Access to training, including all language classes, area studies, and embassy effectiveness classes for same-sex domestic partners of FSOs;

—Emergency evacuation and medevac from post when necessary for same-sex domestic partners of FSOs;

—Access to post health units for same-sex domestic partners of FSOs;

—Visa support for same-sex domestic partners

accompanying FSOs to overseas postings, and for same-sex foreign-born domestic partners accompanying FSOs to postings in Washington or elsewhere in the U.S.; and

—Preferential status for employment at post comparable to that enjoyed by EFMs for same-sex domestic partners of FSOs

Many of these changes might be efficiently addressed through the inclusion of same-sex domestic partners under the definition of an EFM in the Foreign Service Standardized Regulation 040(m). None of the changes above are contrary to the letter or spirit of the Defense of Marriage Act.

In addition to these issues, we ask you to consider leading the State Department in recognizing partners of diplomats from other countries while they serve in the United States.

Also, we similarly hope you will provide guidance to U.S. Missions to the United Nations to enable American employees at the UN to designate their same-sex partners as domestic partners. While they are not FSOs, these individuals lead dedicated lives of service, and deserve the opportunity to provide for their families.

During your confirmation hearing, you pledged to examine current policies relating to lesbian and gay employees at the State Department. As you work to advance America's national security and exemplify this great country's values around the world, we hope you will follow through on this pledge and also work to fully support your diverse workforce.

Sincerely,
 Tammy Baldwin, Member of Congress
 Russ Feingold, U.S. Senator
 Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Member of Congress
 Ron Wyden, U.S. Senator

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



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THE BOTTOM LINE

THEATER

'Kid' marks.
page 12

Photo courtesy of About Face Youth Theatre



MOVIES

When in 'Doubt.'
page 15

Photo by Andrew Schwartz



SPORTS

Blair ground.
page 22



NUNN ON ONE: THEATER

John O' Hurley
dances on

BY JERRY NUNN

John O'Hurley will be giving audiences the razzle-dazzle with Broadway in Chicago's production of Chicago as Billy Flynn this February. This slick-talking actor—and former Dancing with the Stars winner—sat down face to face with Windy City Times.

Windy City Times: Welcome to Chicago! Have you spent much time in the city?

JOH: Yes, I have. But I have not really done any theater here before—which is my regret because it is one of the great theater communities in America. So many things have their genesis here and have moved to other places to become great theatrical pieces based on their origins in Chicago.

WCT: After reading your background, I was blown away by what a large amount of work you have done. How do you find time to do it all?

JOH: I compartmentalize very well. I block things into periods of time where I can get it out and then put the blinders on. I am also the kind of person that works well under pressure so I like deadlines. I like the fact that I have to get a book finished by a certain date.

I also have, in terms of my business interests, a staff that helps me. I delegate pretty well.

WCT: I was going to say that many people may not know that you are a big businessman along with playing one on TV. How did playing J. Peterman on Seinfeld change your life?

JOH: It exposed me to a size of audience that I will probably never see again, in terms of the numbers that Seinfeld used to get. Those are Super Bowl numbers now.

Peterman was a lunatic character based on great writing. I took a leap into the comedic abyss. He was arrogant and pompous but still a



John O'Hurley in Chicago.

21st-century Mr. Magoo. [Both laugh.]

WCT: You all won the Screen Actors Guild Award for Best Ensemble, so you must have been doing something right. Do you have any advice for the new celebrity dancers since you won the first season of Dancing with the Stars?

JOH: I hope they do their preparation. It's all about developing good legs and a good core. We had the privilege of all being neophytes and to start from the same point. Everyone knows what it is now and what it does for their career. They are all heavily marketing themselves. The show doesn't have the simplicity that the first year did. It's still a great show but overproduced.

WCT: You do a tap-dancing routine in Chicago. Do you have a big dance background?

JOH: No. When I started dancing on Dancing with the Stars my trainer there, Charlotte Jorgenson, had to basically tie on my dance shoes.

I remember back in the '80s when I auditioned for a show called Day in Hollywood/ A Night in the Ukraine; the casting director said, "I thought you could tap." And I said, "I didn't know I couldn't."

WCT: You have done a variety of voiceover work, including Family Guy. My friend from college writes for that show!

JOH: Yes. I am also King Neptune on Sponge-Bob SquarePants, along with King Nova on Buzz Lightyear. I have about 15 cartoons that I do. I can show up in a pair of pajamas and still do my recordings.

WCT: You host Family Feud. What does the "survey say" about working on that show?

JOH: It's been great. Our ratings have jumped 40 percent since I took on the show four years ago. That's a tribute to the commitment that Paul Fremantle did to make the show more vibrant, more interesting and more of an event. I love it. I can't imagine not doing the show. I can do it in 14 weekends so, for me, it's the best part-time job in the world.

WCT: Why do you think people love the musical Chicago?

JOH: For me, it's one of the greatest musicals ever created for the Broadway stage. It's listed as one of the top five shows ever done. It includes some of the best choreography [and] best music, and the story is like an adult comic book.

The musical is so good that you can have a lousy cast and it's still good. That's the test of a good musical.

WCT: And tell me about your cast.

JOH: Well, fortunately for the Chicago cast, it's been handpicked. I am finally getting one my entertainment dreams fulfilled, which is to do this show with Charlotte D'Amboise. She is a star in every definition of the word. She is a great actress, great singer, phenomenal dancer and has one of the best senses of comedic timing that I have seen in a Broadway play.

Chicago is going to be treated to the best cast ever put together for this show.

WCT: You have your own Web site, www.johnohurley.com, where people can learn more about you, such as your music career.

JOH: Yes, I have my new album, Secrets from the Lake, which came out this [recently] and was already number two as far as pre-sales. The first album, Peace of Our Minds, hit 13 on Billboard when it debuted, so they have both done very well. I do it because I love composing on

the piano and cello. It creates a sound that no one else is doing right now.

WCT: Well, we all look forward to hearing that one-of-a-kind sound in Chicago.

Chicago will run at the Oriental Theater, 24 W. Randolph, Feb. 25-March 8. Call 312-902-1400 or visit www.BroadwayInChicago.com for tickets.

CRITICS' PICS

The Cherry Orchard, Strawdog Theatre, through March 28. Chekhov's story of looming homelessness and imminent foreclosure is as timely as tomorrow's headlines. Count on Kimberly Senior—who returns to Chekhov and Strawdog after helming an evocative Three Sisters last year—to deliver with urgency and artistry. CS

Desire Under the Elms, Goodman Theatre, through March 1. Eugene O'Neill's harsh tale of passion and inheritance is compacted to primal mythology in director Robert Falls' visually stunning adaptation that taps the surreal. Love it or hate it, you'll remember it. JA

Into the Woods, Quest Theatre Ensemble, through March 28. Stephen Sondheim's savvy score and James Lapine's humorous book are reasons alone to catch this Tony Award-winning take on fractured fairy tales. But the creative folks of Quest should no doubt add extra design layers to make this a visually compelling show, too. SCM

Not Enough Air, Timeline Theatre, through March 22. Sophie Treadwell was a voice of compassion amid the cutthroat journalism of the Roaring '20s. This biodrama starring Janet Ulrich Brooks (whose image should be engraved on a medal) reveals the woman behind the protest. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

THEATER REVIEW

Stupid Kids

Playwright: John C. Russell

At: About Face, Center on Halsted,
3656 N. Halsted

Phone: 866-811-4111; \$20

Runs through: March 8

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

All of us who were intelligent—not to mention “different”—in high school crushed on kids who weren’t as smart as we were and who were socially unavailable to us (the in/out crowd). But, oh, were they beautiful and charismatic. *Stupid Kids* looks at two of “us”—the queer punkish poets Kimberly and Neechee—and their in-group friends Judy and Jim who only have eyes for each other. Fueled by drugs and drink as much as by angst and rebellion, all four kids are trouble.

Things haven’t changed much in high school when it comes to hormone-driven emotions. Proving the point, yet also bringing *Stupid Kids* up to date, About Face utilizes four members of its Youth Theater to “shadow” the actors playing Jim, Kim, Judy and Neechee. Via brilliantly integrated video, projected text-messaging and spoken words, the shadow cast delivers an additional running commentary of how present-day high schoolers view the era and ethos of the 1980s. For instance, lesbian Kimberly and gay Neechee are in the closet at first, even to each other. “Why doesn’t he [Neechee] just come out already?” the Shadows say at one point, but later admit it’s not so easy, not even today in the big city. As if in reply—but not really—Neechee says, “I look out because in is too tiny. Inside my lone-loner-lonely self, I can love you.”

As Neechee’s rather poetic language suggests, *Stupid Kids* is not a typical teenage-angst realistic drama. It’s not *Rebel Without A Cause* although numerous direct parallels are there (Sal Mineo/James Dean = Neechee/Jim). In-



Stupid Kids. Photo courtesy of About Face Youth Theater

stead, *Stupid Kids* is a highest-energy, heavily stylized, often satirical, incredibly physical high school graphic novel told in bold, richly-imagistic and rhythmic language and considerable choreographed movement. It has the potential to be ludicrous or a dazzling showpiece. Gratefully, it’s a dazzler as co-directed by new About Face artistic director Bonnie Metzgar and Megan Carney, choreographed by M. K. Victorson, and aptly rendered in an environmental setting by a large, praise-worthy design team.

The lithe and intense company includes Patrick Andrews (Neechee), Tony Clarno (Jim), Erin Neal (Kimberly) and Whitney Clair White (Judy). They are shadowed by Sura Antolin, Joey M. Boran, Scott Jaburek and DiDa (sic) Ritz. All work in an

ideal ensemble fashion and display good comic chops when needed. Andrews and Clarno also are noteworthy for their athleticism and dance training, which is apparent in the choreographed sequences.

My only quibble is that the stylization of *Stupid Kids* (the script calls for it) and its frenetic drive wear thin at moments, especially when coupled with relatively little character development. There are emotional repetitions when you want them to get on with things. Even so, *Stupid Kids* bursts with talent and enormous creativity.

THEATER REVIEW

The Hairy Ape

Playwright: Eugene O’Neill

At: The Hypocrites at Goodman
Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn

Phone: 312-443-3800; \$12-\$20

Runs through: Feb. 21

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Estimations differ on the precise moment that we knew it was time for Mary Zimmerman to leave her artistic home in Chicago to seek a wider following. An early clue, however, was our awareness of motifs no longer startling to playgoers accustomed to yearly new projects from this imaginative director—“generic Zimmerman,” if you will—but that would electrify audiences viewing these techniques for the first time throughout our country. Sean Graney may have reached that same turning point, if his interpretation of Eugene O’Neill’s *The Hairy Ape* is any indication.

The scenic design, incorporating the Owen auditorium’s triple-tiered architecture to suggest the various levels of a cruise ship (and in doing so, making for obstructed sight-lines during the scenes played near the floor) reflects one metaphor inherent in this 1921 drama: Yank, a stoker comfortable in his allotted status, loses his cosmological bearings after his universe is invaded by an ambiguous angel descended from the topside deck—a disruption rendering him a creature caught between stages of social evolution. But the themes that Graney claims as his focus in a playbill note are “the dehumanizing effects of industrialization,” socialism’s “failure to accommodate the emotional needs of the individual” and “philosophical anarchism”—concepts mandating such visceral spectacle as orchestrated percussion executed with coal shovels, and the International Workers Of The World membership depicted as prissy do-gooders holding a Bake Sale. And while the cellful of slithery prison inmates who engulf our hero in a literal snake pit are visually provocative, as is

the casting of a 10-year-old child as Yank’s final persecutor, garbing a cluster of robotic socialites in Warholesque disco drag is merely cute (1970s fashions—tee-hee-hee).

In the central role of Yank, Chris Sullivan conveys proletarian dignity from his initial manifesto, delivered in an industrial inferno, to his final act of despair (endowed by Graney with more humanity than O’Neill permitted his protagonist). He is supported by stalwart, if underdeveloped, characterizations from a sturdy ensemble of company regulars. But a curious manifestation already observed at the Goodman’s “global exploration” is the propensity of the American productions to utilize their texts as mere scenarios, relying instead on the visual and aural elements suggested thereby. If this international event leads to further cultural exchanges, then this *Hairy Ape* is tailor-made for performance before audiences in non-English-speaking countries.

THEATER REVIEW

I Gotcha: The Story of Joe Tex and the Soul Clan

Playwright: David Barr III and Joe Plummer

At: Black Ensemble at the Uptown
Hull House Center, 4520 N. Beacon

Phone: 773-769-4451; \$45

Runs through: March 22

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Despite his inclusion in the roster of the Atlantic Records “Soul Clan”—a fraternity boasting crooner Ben E. King, shouter Solomon Burke and slinker Wilson Pickett—the reputation of Joe Tex, born Joseph Arrington, Jr., remains curiously restricted. Even at the peak of his career, you were likely to hear his music only in the Southern states, in predominantly Black con-claves. This might have been a factor prompting him to settle in that region, following his conversion to the Nation of Islam in 1966 and retirement from performing. Whatever his reasons, his self-imposed seclusion facilitates the premise of David Barr III and Joe Plummer’s play, set in 1981 on the occasion of Tex’s 48th birthday party, to which his former colleagues have come in hopes of persuading him to join them on a reunion tour.

Devotees of Black Ensemble’s musical biodramas don’t ask for much in the way of plot beyond the minimum necessary to place the headliner’s artistic legacy into context. Barr and Plummer, however, are not content merely to serve as emcees to a string of warbles and hoofs. Their text may fall short of August Wilson’s profundity, but nevertheless builds its spoken-word dynamic on a consistent and recognizable foundation, where the distinction between external progress and inner turmoil is always clearly delineated, the hero’s struggle to reconcile his religious convictions and troubled past with his expedient desires is explored with candid compassion, and the anticipated resolution is hindered by just enough doubt to earn our emotional investment in its outcome.

None of this, however, impedes the music that is the evening’s main attraction—a program delivering plenty of communal hand-clapping, toe-tapping, shoulder-twitching, sing-along (and at one point, *dance-along*) exuberance. BET regular Lyle Miller wins our sympathies as the shyly ambivalent Tex, but is almost eclipsed by the floods of effusive warmth forthcoming from the trio of Daryl D. Brooks, Trinity P. Murdock and Magellan Watts, who replicate the vocals and—with amazing accuracy—the physical appearance of their respective personae, the aforementioned Burke, Pickett and King. Jimmy Tillman’s orchestra is in top form, likewise, its sturdy brass section featuring the show-stopping Hank Ford on saxophone. The results are a joyful noise sufficient to bring this hard-working company’s plans for a new theater facility a step closer to fulfillment.

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THEATER REVIEW

Dying City

Playwright: Christopher Shinn

At: Next Theatre, 927 Noyes, Evanston

Phone: 847-475-1875; \$23-\$38

Runs through March 8

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The personal is political and *vice versa* in Christopher Shinn's 2006 drama *Dying City*, now receiving a compelling Chicago-area premiere at Next Theatre. Shinn's characters are not only people grappling with their own grief, but are also emblematic of the disappointment that many Americans have felt toward their own government in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Ostensibly, *Dying City* is a domestic drama that focuses on Kelly, a New York psychologist whose husband, Craig, was killed in the current war in Iraq. One year after her husband's disputed death, an unexpected visitor shows up at Kelly apartment late one night: Craig's identical twin brother, Peter.

Though Peter is a self-absorbed gay Hollywood and Broadway actor, his physical resemblance to Craig (and his not-so-subtle manipulative ways) only spurs Kelly to uncomfortably relive the final conflict-filled night spent with her husband.

Shinn employs an interesting casting device by making the same actor play both Craig and Peter, while the actor playing Kelly has to constantly switch gears from guarded widow to a wife facing a marriage breakdown.

Though Shinn's revelation of what caused Kelly and Craig's breakup feels rushed and uncharacteristic, it does tie neatly into the sense of betrayal that many Americans have felt from the Bush administration (especially the lies told to start the war in Iraq and the very un-American tactics employed like torture and rendition to get a leg up on "the war on terror").

The folks at Next Theatre are more than up to the challenges Shinn lays out in *Dying City*. Former Next artistic director Jason Loewith does a great job handling the 90-minute production, spurring his two-person cast to rise to the heightened emotions and complexities of Shinn's conflicted and characters.

Coburn Goss undoubtedly has the more challenging assignment playing the twins Craig and Peter, since he is constantly rushing offstage to change costumes and switch personas from a fey and gossipy actor to a butch military man. Goss succeeds equally in both parts, bringing an authenticity that doesn't pull punches to the less-than-noble personas of Craig and Peter.

Nicole Wiesner appropriately holds in as Kelly at first, cautiously protecting her emotions with both her insensitive brother-in-law and her husband who inexplicably refused a deferment to fight overseas. But Wiesner effectively lashes out when Kelly is emotionally pushed, honestly



Dying City. Photo by Michael Brosilow

showing her mixed feelings of loss and anger.

Though Next's efforts pay off handsomely with *Dying City*, the play itself can still be a bitter pill to swallow. But if you want to see great acting and a metaphorically pertinent drama, you can't do much better than Next Theatre's *Dying City*.

Dick O' Day's Bingo

"Dick O' Day's Presidents' Day Bingo" will take place Thursday, Feb. 19, at Annoyance Theater, 4830 N. Broadway, at 8 p.m. Theater vet Ryan McPheters will be the special guest.

A fee of \$10 will include the first card. See www.dickoday.com.

Psychological thriller at Court Theatre

Court Theatre continues its 54th season with Frederick Knott's classic thriller, *Wait Until Dark*. The production, will run March 5-April 5 at Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis.

Tickets are \$32-\$54. Call 773-753-4472 or visit www.CourtTheatre.org.

SPOTLIGHT



The Derbyshire sisters are back to wreak their macabre humor and malice in Strange Tree Group's revival of Emily Schwartz's *The Dastardly Ficus and Other Comedic Tales of Woe and Misery*. See these suspicious spinsters deal with tales of severed heads, lemon pound cake, cat funerals and other eccentric incidents that would bring joy to the hearts of late cartoonists Edward Gorey and Charles Addams. *The Dastardly Ficus...* plays 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 3 p.m. Sundays until April at the Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division. Tickets are \$20-\$40; call 773-598-8240 or visit www.chopintheatre.com. Photo of Carol Enoch and Nancy Freidrich in *The Dastardly Ficus...* courtesy of Matthew Chaboud



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THEATER REVIEW

Modigliani

Playwright: Dennis McIntyre
 At: The Artistic Home, 3914 N. Clark
 Phone: 866-811-4111; \$23-\$25
 Runs through: March 22

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Primal fear and reckless, defiant exuberance. That's the multi-hued mood of the breathless, opening moments of the Artistic Home's Modigliani, as the title artist bounds through a plate-glass window with a ferocity that radiates both feral desperation and wild exhilaration. Playing the early 20th-century painter of curvy, almond-eyed women, actor John Mossman only shatters imaginary glass—but the sheer kinetic force and audacious elation of his propulsive leap is so potent that suspension of disbelief easily hangs

miles high, making the illusion of a thousand shards of glittering crystal an absolute reality.

So it goes in this feverishly physical hothouse of a production. Directed by Kathy Scambiaterra, Modigliani captures the lavishly free-wheeling wonder of both the artist and his era. It also captures the brutal, soul-sucking despair of trying to make a living through your art in a market where nobody wants you. Today, Modigliani's paintings can command upward of \$30 million. During his brief lifetime, they sold for less than 100 francs.

By focusing his piece on a 72-hour period in 1916, playwright Dennis McIntyre provides a vivid snapshot of Parisian cafe society foaming with creativity and passion. We get a sense of the dazzling era when Modigliani, Picasso and a starry roster of artistic contemporaries lived cheek by jowl, forming a human Petri dish of free thinkers and painters, philosophers and feminists. Absinthe, ether and hash along with whiskey and wine fueled debate and creation—



Modigliani.

"We'll probably get sick," says Modigliani's friend Momo at the outset of a bender, "but we won't remember."

Yet alongside that gleeful debauchery and feverish artistic output, darker forces loomed. McIntyre writes without rose-colored glasses,

and the ensemble ably depicts the cruelty and pain as well as the pleasures of life on the Left Bank. Anti-Semitism, World War I and constant, gnawing poverty shadowed Modigliani and his friends with ugly insistence—constant reminders that even the most outrageously good times never exist in a vacuum.

Unlike Picasso, Modigliani was forever teetering on a knife-edge of poverty and all the humiliation that state entails. Scambiaterra's direction mines both humor and tragedy from a life where sublime inspiration and groveling hunger existed side by side.

Mossman leads a strong ensemble with charisma to burn, but he's matched by Maria Stephens, who plays Modigliani's lover and the model for his most famous nudes. Modigliani's equal in terms of both passion and brains, Stephens' Beatrice is all graceful ferocity in the demanding role, a woman whose strong mind is balanced by white-hot sensuality.

Complementing the fervor of the cast is Chelsea Meyers wondrous scenic design. Huge sketches of Modigliani's women cover the walls of the space, literally enveloping the audience and the cast in evocative art.

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Thodos gala is hot and cool

The Great White Hall of the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark, provided a most suitable ambiance to compliment Thodos Dance Chicago's wonderful "Fire & Ice benefit, held Jan. 31. Thodos' members, led and inspired by the imagination and phenomenal skill of artistic director and event hostess Melissa Thodos, have performed in dozens of venues throughout the United States and overseas.

Thodos Dance Chicago participates in Dance For Life and Chicago Takes Off, and donates tickets to HIV/AIDS agencies such as AIDS Foundation of Chicago and Test Positive Aware Network as part of the company's Partners in Performance program.

After I photographed the beautiful guests and dancers, at the end of the glittering evening co-hosted by the charming and charismatic NBC-5 news reporter Kim Vatis, they even got me to dance the cha-cha-cha for charity—although I would have danced anyway. Photos and text by Steve Starr

No 'Doubt' about Davis

BY EMMANUEL GARCIA

In the movie *Doubt*, written and directed by John Patrick Shanley (who won a Pulitzer Prize for the original play), Viola Davis plays Mrs. Miller, a mother whose son is in the middle of an internal parochial scandal. The film is set in 1964, where Donald is the first Black student at St. Nicholas in the Bronx. Davis's character appears for only one extended scene, but it is this climactic moment that unravels between Mrs. Miller and Sister Aloysius Beauvier (Meryl Streep) that has won her every major nomination this award season, including an Academy Award nod for best supporting actress.

Windy City Times met Davis at the Four Seasons Hotel. Her answers were candid and unrehearsed, which gave the impression that she was either a genuine person or a really good actress.

Windy City Times: Where were you when you found out you were nominated for an Academy Award?

Viola Davis: I was at the Four Seasons Hotel [in Los Angeles] with my husband, my publicist, a bottle of champagne and orange juice. It was a joyous moment. I watched the nominations; I screamed in my husband's ear. I jumped on him. I've been jumping on him a lot lately and screaming in the hallways of the Four Seasons Hotel.

WCT: Did you expect the film would translate as well as it has to critics, like it did on stage?

Viola Davis: I never thought about it. I do think about being good. That's always my goal—to not fail, to succeed. I mean, how could you? You don't have control over that; it has nothing to do with your work. I came into the project wanting to hold my own against the 500-pound gorilla, [the] Mike Tyson of acting: Meryl Streep.



Viola Davis. Photo by Andrew Schwartz/Miramax Film Corp

I have one huge scene in the movie with Meryl Streep and I'm the unknown. I went through a lot to get the role and the day that I got it, the next day I had to go to rehearsal with Meryl Streep.

WCT: How did you prepare for this role? Mrs. Miller's decisions as a mother are complex.

Viola Davis: Well, you rely on your imagination as an actor or as a human being. Life becomes your inspiration and you take things from your life [like] my own mother and growing up in Central Falls, R.I. In 1965, when we moved there in a predominantly Catholic community, we were the only Black family. I saw my mom be the advocate for us, fighting doctors, fighting teachers who probably didn't embrace our intelligence. Parents who saw us just as unruly, thuggish Black kids and not the rambunctious, energetic kids we were. I have seen her have to fight, and all of that is seared in my memory. I put that in the library of my character and I channeled that. Rely on your craft as an actor because that's all you have. ... Not every character is going to have your experience.

WCT: The film allows for many implications about sexuality and misconduct. Gay men have been demonized by society as child

molesters. The difference between child molesters and gay men seems to have blurred within the church and in society. What are your thoughts on this issue?

Viola Davis: First of all, in my life I know that is not the case. I have to say that when I first came to the big city I heard all kinds of ideas that were so strange to me. My experience with pedophiles in my past ... they haven't been gay, and it's just like all people who are miserable weren't married; some were just living with each other. I reject that as a person. Homosexuals are demonized; I saw a lot of demonic people in my life of all colors across the spectrum. ... My character is absolutely in the mindset of... I can't reveal that to you because it's a spoiler, but I think my character is of that mindset, also. I don't think she has demonized this man [Father Flynn] also. I think she sees him as probably gay, but that's just who he is.

WCT: Hollywood can influence progressive ideas, yet so few Black actors are given complex roles. Do you think Hollywood is progressive?

Viola Davis: Nothing is progressive; we are not progressive as people. We are always 50 years behind the time. But it's the same thing with life experience; it always takes you a while to process anything. You never process it as it's happening; it takes you a while. It's the same thing with art—it is behind the times. Very rarely do you see a Black woman on screen with a white man making love. Very rarely do you see even vice versa and yet you walk out in life and you see interracial couples all the time.

WCT: Did a lot of Black actresses come out to audition for this role?

Viola Davis: Every Black actress did come out of the woodwork—fantastic actresses—because they are hungry for something good.

To read the entire interview with Viola Davis, please visit www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Center's Oscar party Feb. 22

Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, will host its new and expanded "On the Red Carpet Oscar Party" Sunday, Feb. 22. The red-carpet reception begins at 6 p.m. and the Oscar telecast will be broadcast on two enormous screens starting at 7 p.m.

Guests will enter the center and be treated like celebrities as they walk down the "living red carpet," filled with paparazzi, to join the excitement. "Fabulous" attire is strongly urged.

Tickets start at \$75 each. Call Donna Williams at 773-472-6469 X176.

'Hear Me Roar' to feature women artists

The Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, continues to focus on LGBT artists by presenting "Hear Me Roar: Three Perspectives," which showcases the works of female painters Carol James, Jordan Kost and Jill Sutton.

The exhibit will open Friday, Feb. 20; stays open through March, Women's History Month; and closes Sunday, April 5.

The opening reception will be held on Feb. 20 on the center's second floor, 6:30-9:30 p.m.; a \$5 donation is requested. RSVP to Tom Ballentine at tballentine@centeronhalsted.com or call 773-472-6469, ext. 245.

BETTY's March 8 appearance cancelled

BETTY's scheduled appearance for March 8 at the Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N. Lincoln, has been cancelled.

Please contact the box office at 773-728-6000 for ticket refund information.

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES



Confessions of a Shopaholic.

Confessions of a Shopaholic; Eleven Minutes

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

It's fashion week at the movies with the designer clothing extravaganza **Confessions of a Shopaholic** already in theaters; **Eleven Minutes**, the documentary that follows season-one Project Runway winner Jay McCarroll as he prepares his first collection, playing on Here! TV exclusively this Friday; and an auction of one of Sean Penn's Milk costumes now underway. All this, of course, will be topped off by a host of celebrities walking the red carpet at this Sunday's Oscar awards, a.k.a. the film world's biggest fashion parade a.k.a. the gay man's national holiday. (Locally, there are many parties to choose from, including the Gene Siskel Film Center hosting Chicago's only Academy-sanctioned bash. See www.siskel-filmcenter.com for further information). In the midst of a big fat recession, the fashion industry must be on cloud nine with this kind of media attention.

Let's try on *Confessions of a Shopaholic* for size. The movie's set in Manhattan and follows the exploits of a fashion-mad young lady journalist who dreams of working at the world's top fashion magazine. Sounds sorta like an episode of TV's *Ugly Betty* meets *The Devil Wears Prada* meets *Sex & the City*, right? Not surprisingly, *Confessions* has plot strands from those three sources, shares the same costume designer (the magenta-haired Patricia Field, who has a nice cottage industry going for herself) and was also based on a chick-lit best-seller.

But in place of feisty Sarah Jessica Parker/Anne Hathaway/America Ferrera or even Reese Witherspoon in the two *Legally Blonde* pictures, *Confessions* gives us a dumb leading lady—one Rebecca Bloomwood. Her personal credo is "a man will never treat you as well as a store," and she's charged enough clothes to bury herself in an avalanche of bills. She's not a hoarder of cartons of toilet paper or someone who must have the latest household gadget, like the rolling Amish fireplace or the Clapper—she's only a shopaholic when it comes to clothes and fashion

accessories. (She loves fashion the way I love movies.)

Rebecca's played by Isla Fisher (who is easily confused with Amy Adams), a talented comedic actress who could have used fresher material—*much* fresher. Is there a gay character making snarky comments and swooning over something with a designer label? Check. Is there a dreamboat patiently standing by? Check (diminutive Hugh Dancy). Is there a host of eccentric supporting characters played by top-drawer actors? Check (Joan Cusack, John Goodman, Julie Hagerty, John Lithgow, Kristin Scott Thomas, Lynn Redgrave, etc.). Will our heroine be forced to examine her values and, perhaps, choose between fashion and love or maybe, just maybe get to keep both? Check.

Confessions suffers from these and other familiar conceits and because it comes so closely on the heels of these other fashion-centric movies it seems but a pale imitation (at best) of those that have stalked the catwalk ahead of it. Director P.J. Hogan, who hasn't had much luck at the box office since 1997 *My Best Friend's Wedding* (though his 2002 film *Unconventional Love*, with Kathy Bates and Rupert Everett, is worth a look) does his best with the tissue-thin material and finds some originality here and there (the store window mannequins beckoning to the leading lady, for example) but the movie's "fashion is all" mantra has worn as thin as a sheer negligee. One can see right through this nonsense and the body underneath, while not quite anorexic, certainly could use some sustenance. *Confessions of a Shopaholic* is about as fresh as that shopworn metaphor.

Eleven Minutes, which follows the creation of gay designer Jay McCarroll's debut collection

for New York's fashion week in the summer of 2007 isn't all that fresh, either. In many ways the film, which follows McCarroll—forever identified as the first season winner of the Project Runway reality show—is simply a poor man's version of *Unzipped*, the 1995 documentary that focused on Isaac Mizrahi as he got his all-important collection ready. Both designers (and films) focus on their subjects as they go about the business of creating a saleable collection on a deadline. But though both have a tendency to kvetch (Mizrahi, big-time), McCarroll doesn't have a tenth of the resources that Mizrahi did, which makes *Eleven Minutes* (which refers to the length of the runway presentation that comes after a year of preparation) much more compelling and entertaining.

Forced to rely on his talents and the kindness of friends and strangers who share his vision (some, hoping to cash in along with him), McCarroll's personality comes front and center. Droll and funny, sometimes bitchy, he's not as testy; he's more down to earth and doesn't display the diva-like behavior his advance press would have one believe. McCarroll is joined in his quest by a batch of creative kindred spirits—a jewelry designer, a tough but valued publicist and a shoemaker who gives new meaning (and anxiety) to the word "deadline." There's a real, "hey kids, let's put on a show" air to the film (co-directed by Michael Selditch and Robert Tate) that is quite winning.

Eleven Minutes offers a great primer on the large pitfalls and transitory triumphs of New York's fashion business and has a great subject in the tenacious and very talented McCarroll. The movie premiered in Chicago last fall at the Reeling Film Fest (with McCarroll in attendance) and has been playing theatrical dates around the country, though Chicago hasn't been scheduled yet. But the film can be seen exclusively on Here! TV Friday, Feb. 20, and will no doubt end up on DVD at some latter date.

—More fashion: A shirt, suit and tie designed by Danny Glicker and worn by Sean Penn in the title role in *Milk*, Gus Van Sant's tremendous biopic of slain gay civil-rights activist Harvey Milk, is being auctioned off for a host of charities including the Hetrick-Martin Institute, home of the Harvey Milk High School in New York City. The auction is underway at www.clothesoffourback.org (bidding is at \$4,500 as I write this) and concludes Feb. 28.

Check out my archived reviews at www.windycitytimes.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter Web site.

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Cruz control

Scarlett Johansson recently celebrated co-star Penelope Cruz's Oscar nomination for *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* at a star-studded bash hosted by Harvey Weinstein and Salma Hayek at Hayek's Los Angeles, Calif., home. Photo by Eric Charbonneau/Le Studio

NUNN ON ONE

RuPaul: Face to 'Race'

BY JERRY NUNN

RuPaul Andre Charles has teamed up with the Logo network to find the next generation of drag queen. With eight, one-hour episodes "RuPaul's Drag Race" is a mash up of reality shows that still has its own identity.

Contestants must fight for the title by designing costumes, choreographing routines and painting on makeup.

RuPaul worked it with Windy City Times in a behind-the-queens interview.

Windy City Times: Hi, RuPaul. I just watched your new Drag Race show yesterday and loved it!

RuPaul: Which episode did you see?

WCT: The second one with Michelle Williams from Destiny's Child guest-judging.

R: Oh, yeah yeah. How fun.

WCT: As one of the producers, did you come up with the concept?

R: The concept has been floating around for a while. In fact, my friends here at World of Wonder tried to get me to do the show for many years. I wasn't really ready to enter the reality show arena not back then but when I changed my mind I came straight to World of Wonder and took it on the road. It pretty much got bought in the room at Logo.

WCT: Was the idea to use other reality show formats and improve on them?

R: Well, drag has always been a sampling of everything in pop culture. That's what drag is all about. We obviously have carte blanche to take a bit of this and bit of that. If you look at my stage persona there's one part Dolly Parton, two parts Cher, three parts Diane Ross, so on and so forth. That's why it has a little bit of everything. It becomes its own unique monster based on all of these elements.

WCT: I definitely saw that. Are you channeling Tim Gunn when you are assisting contestants dressed as a man?

R: The audience might see that but for me I am being my natural inquisitive self. It's important for me to do part of the show out of drag. I can accentuate my authenticity in this field because if I were in drag the whole time my authority wouldn't resonate as much.

WCT: You have more Project Runway influences by judging with Santino Rice. How is it working with him?

R: He's great. You know I met him a year before we started filming because I totally recognized his energy and his sense of humor. He has an opinion and he also has a knowledge of pop culture and of fashion. He was a perfect choice and definitely not wishy-washy. He knows what he likes. That's what we needed for a judge.

WCT: Then you have guest judges like Bob Mackie. You are a huge fan of his, correct?

R: Oh, my God. When I first got a budget to do anything in show business, he was the first call that I made. He designed my costumes for my Las Vegas show and many others since then. He's the one to watch. Listen, we chose our judges on their star making expertise. We chose people that know what it takes and how to make a bigger better star. These girls are already stars. They are stars around the United States. They are show girls that work in clubs for a living. To take things to the next level we wanted our judges to be experts in the field of star making.

WCT: Now that I think about it, I really liked how you were respectful of the contestants and were not out to tear them down at the end of the show. You treat them like they are stars already.

R: I respect for anyone that, in a male dominated culture, can walk out of the house in lipstick and pair of high heels and say, "I'm fabulous." It's no easy feat in this world. Doing drag is akin to an act of treason in a male dominated



RuPaul.

culture. You have to be a strong force to be a hero.

WCT: When you came out big in 1993, it meant so much to me and so many people back then because you were so out and proud. It helped me to come out of the closet and not be ashamed of who I was finally. Now, you influence a whole new generation of people.

R: Aw, that's lovely of you to say, Jerry. Thank you very much. That's very nice.

WCT: You really are a "champion," which is the name of the new CD.

R: That's very kind. That was the inspiration not only with the show, but with the album. For the past ten years everyone in our country has been afraid to speak up and be themselves for fear of being "Dixie-Chicked." It's important to not play small. It's important to make sure your voice is heard and without fear. It's a new day and that's what "Champion" is all about.

This television show is all about showing who you are. And I am not talking about showing who you are as a drag queen but drag has always been about helping our culture understand and not taking ourselves so seriously. You are not your religion or gender or the color of your skin. You are much more than that. If you marginalize yourself then you are missing the point. That's what all of this is about and that's why this is a great time for a show like this.

WCT: Chi-town is represented with one contestant, Jade. What do you think of her?

R: So gorgeous and so gracious. That is really what got her in this competition because she definitely has potential to take it all the way. That's why she's here.

She's so beautiful and just a lovely soul and so talented.

WCT: Do you think there be a Drag Race 2?

R: I hope so. I would love to do it. We had such a great time and again the people that put the show my friends here at World of Wonder are so much fun to work with. I wouldn't have it any other way.

WCT: The new single is called "Cover Girl." And people can find out future news about you on www.rupaul.com, right?

R: Yeah, and it's available on iTunes as well as all the electronic downloading services. It's an integral part of the television show. Every time that I take the runway, every time the girls take the runway, that song is being played.

WCT: Well, congrats on the new show! All my friends were texting me last night to tell you that they love it.

R: That's excellent. Well, I really appreciate it.

RuPaul's Drag Race is presented by Absolut Vodka and runs every Monday through March 23 on Logo. Past episodes are online at www.rupaulsdragrace.com.

Entertainment news

Dave Grohl, the lead singer of the Foo Fighters, has been promoting a particular Web site to show his support of same-sex marriage, according to E! Online. Grohl is also one of the first in Hollywood to start wearing a white ribbon as a show of same-sex solidarity. "Anybody know about WhiteKnot.org?" Grohl asked at a recent benefit. "You know what that's about? I believe in love and I believe in equality and I believe in marriage equality."

A 1979 full-frontal nude photograph of pop superstar Madonna has sold for \$37,500, according to Reuters. Photographer Lee Friedlander shot the image—which had a pre-sale estimate of \$15,000—when the singer was 20 years old. The Press Association reported that the buyer was Italian businessman Fabrizio Masoni, who owns a leather-products company.

The late Anna Nicole Smith will be the subject of an opera, the Chicago Tribune reported. Richard Thomas, who co-created "Jerry Springer, The Opera," is working on the book and lyrics for the production, which is slated to premiere in London in 2011.

Hilary Duff and the legendary actress Faye Dunaway are engaged in a feud, according to JustJared.com. When Dunaway heard that Duff is assuming her role in The Story of Bonnie and Clyde, the older actress asked, "Couldn't they at least cast a real actress?" Duff responded, "I think it was a little unnecessary but I might be mad if I looked like that now, too."

ESPN is removing a promotional ad on the cable channel that showed basketball superstar Shaquille O'Neal rejecting a "fist kiss" (which was actually a fist bump) from sports commentator Mike Breen, according to the Advocate. At one point, O'Neal moves away from Breen on the couch, saying, "No fist kiss, no fess love, no fist hump. None of that. You're

a weirdo, man. Stay over there. Fist kiss. Disgusting." In 2005, O'Neal pursued alleged gay-bashers in Miami, Fla.

Openly gay actor Cheyenne Jackson will guest-star in an episode of TV's Ugly Betty as a gay father, Advocate.com reported. Jackson—who appeared on another ABC show, Life on Mars, Feb. 11—is known for his roles in the movie United 93 and on Broadway in Xanadu.

A Sex in the City sequel is now a done deal after the four lead actresses—Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Cynthia Nixon and Kristin Davis—have all signed on, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. The 2008 film grossed more than \$400 million globally. Writer/director Michael Patrick King is reportedly aiming for a summer 2010 release.

Madonna and Demi Moore will again co-host a party at Maverick Records CEO Guy Oseary's L.A.-area home after this year's Academy Awards ceremony on Feb. 22, according to E! Online. Meanwhile, John's 17th annual Oscar benefit for his AIDS foundation will feature a performance by R&B singer Raphael Saadiq. Also, Vanity Fair will have its soiree after skipping last year because of the writer's strike.

On the heels of her stirring performances at the Grammy Awards and the Super Bowl, **singer Jennifer Hudson will kick off her tour April 2** in Philadelphia with R&B crooner Robin Thicke, People.com reported. The singers will then hit several other cities—including Las Vegas, Chicago, Dallas and Los Angeles—before wrapping up in Houston, Texas, May 8.

Actress Eliza Dushku—probably best known for her role as Faith on TV's Buffy the Vampire Slayer—**has signed on to produce a biopic about controversial gay artist Robert Mapplethorpe**, according to Black Book Magazine. In doing so, she has cast brother Nate Dushku, a onetime yoga instructor, in the lead. Mapplethorpe died of AIDS in 1989 at age 42.

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WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, Feb. 18

Joffrey Ballet Winter Program, \$25. - \$145. 7:30 p.m., Auditorium Theatre 312-902-1500 or in person at the Auditorium box office 50 E. Congress Parkway www.joffrey.com

Lemon Tea. Screenplay rackles "colorism" in Hollywood films. Staged reading at Columbia College Chicago, \$5 - 7 p.m., Hokin Auditorium, 623 S. Wabash, 1st Floor, Reservation 312-264-0123

Live at Maxim's, conversation program with Dennis DeYoung, formerly of Styx. Reception 6 p.m., program 6:30 p.m., Maxim's: The Nancy Goldberg International Center, 24 E. Goethe; 312-742-8497 www.dcatheater.org

Roger Ebert signing "Roger Ebert's Movie Yearbook 2009", 7 p.m., Borders, 830 N. Michigan Ave, 312-573-0564

Stop/Kiss Night Out!, Food and drink to benefit and raise awareness for a play about a friendship between two girls becoming a romance, with devastating consequences. Portion benefits Center on Halsted. 7 p.m., T's Bar. 5025 N. Clark St. www.thegifttheatre.org

4 Women Only show dedicated to new women artists. 9 p.m. Uncommon Ground, 1401 W. Devon Ave. 773-465-9801 www.uncommonground.com

Windy City Gay Naturists Mardi Gras Drag Club: Come dressed as your favorite drag queen. Bring towel. \$12 cash bar or \$20 w/ 2 drink tickets. Touche, 6412 N. Clark St, RSVP wcn60660@aol.com or 312-494-2654

Thursday, Feb. 19

Ebony/JET Magazine Retrospective Covers Exhibit, noon, Macy's on State Street, www.macys.com/events

Kalapriya, Center for Indian Performing Arts presents Priya Love, dance celebrating Valentine's Day. A Chicago Moving Company project, supported by Illinois Arts Council grants, \$15/\$12 seniors. students. Feb. 19-20, 26-27, 7:30 p.m. Hamlin Park Fieldhouse, 3035 N. Hoyne, 773 363-9303 or info@kalapriya.org, www.kalapriya.org

Uncommon Sounds Performance Series Featuring S15, Sonic Inertia Quintet, 9 p.m. Uncommon Ground, 1401 W. Devon; 773-465-9801 www.uncommon-ground.com

Women & Children First Books Jaclyn Friedman and local contributors to Yes Means Yes: Visions of Female Sexual Power and a World Without Rape. Rape culture through lenses of class, race, gender, sexuality. 7:30 p.m. Free. 5233 N. Clark St. 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Friday, Feb. 20

EEEEEEK! Or, Did I Just Trip Over a Serial Killer? Blind Women in the Movies, By the Access Living Arts & Culture Project. Free. Pizza. 6 - 8 p.m. Access Living, 115 W. Chicago Ave, RSVP 312-640-2121.

Hear Me Roar Three Perspectives. Three women art show, \$5 donation in support of the Center's Cultural Program, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m., Center on Halsted, 2nd floor Gallery, RSVP Tom Ballentine, Director of Community and Cultural Affairs at tballentine@centeronhalsted.com or call 773-472-6469 X 245, www.centeronhalsted.org.

HIV: Hey, It's Viral! Premiere, Beyond-media Education, About Face Theater, Broadway Youth Center, movie/TV night, 7 - 9 p.m., Howard Brown, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd, 773-388-1600

Tickled Pink Charity party benefits the Breast Cancer Network of Strength, formerly Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization \$95 advance, \$120 at door. 7 p.m.- 11 p.m., The LOCATION CHANGE: Underground, 56 W. Illinois St. Purchase online at www.tickled-pinkchicago.com

Uncommon Ground Veronica May, out lesbian rocker, The Sandpaper Song. Presented by Labrys Chicago at Uncommon Ground. 1401 W. Devon 773-465-9801 http://labryschicago.com

Women & Children First Books Janet Burroway author Bridge of Sand, plus The Buzzards, Raw Silk, Writing Fiction, the most widely used creative writing textbook. Free. 7:30 p.m. 5233 N. Clark St. 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Saturday, Feb. 21

All Things Chocolate, benefiting Open Door Clinic 7 p.m., Westin Chicago Northwest, 400 Park Blvd. Itasca. 847-695-1093, ext. 19

Cake Chicago, now on Saturdays, presents Flannel February with Live Music by Mara Levi @ 9 p.m., Ripley Caine @ 10 p.m., Samantha Cathcart Band @ 11 p.m.. Wear flannel. \$5. - 9 p.m. Red Line Tap, 7006 N. Glenwood Behind the Heartland Cafe 773-274-5463

Citizen's Relief/Ralph Citizen's Relief/Ralph. Mythic story of love, loneliness, liberation, told by a gay schizophrenic living on the edge. Thru Feb 21. 7 p.m. At Acme Art Works, 2215 West North; www.rhinofest.com

AIDSCare's Fat Saturday Ball annual fundraiser 6 - 11 p.m. \$250/\$350 Stan Mansion 2408 N. Kedzie; www.aidschicago.org/fatsaturdayball.html

Eye of the Storm, the story of Bayard Rustin, a gay, Communist, African-American man in the Civil Rights Movement. 7:30 p.m. William Hatch Auditorium, 1000 N. Ridgeland Ave., Oak Park 708-802-1723 or www.opendoorrep.org

Gwen Ifill, discussion, signing for The Breakthrough: Politics and Race in the Age of Obama, 7 p.m., Borders, 1144 Lake St, Oak Park, 708 386-6927

Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf Mardi Gras party, \$10. 6 - 11 p.m. (hosted bar 6 - 7:30 p.m.) Spin 800 W. Belmont Ave, www.wcrad.org/

Sappho's Salon, for lesbians and friends, poet Michelle Renae; poet Jenn P.; and guest host Kat Fitzgerald. Co-sponsored by Early to Bed. \$7/\$10 includes food, wine 7:30 p.m. Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark; 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

LGBT Meetup Group for the South West Suburbs, \$2, 3 p.m. Details, including location, at www.meetup.com/LGBT-Meetup-Group-for-the-South-West-Suburbs

Vagina Monologues to Chicago Women's Health Center 1 p.m Theatre Building Chicago, 1225 W. Belmont, 773-939-7367 www.brownpapertickets.com/event/54045. (Also on Sunday, Feb. 22)

Sunday, Feb. 22

On the Red Carpet, Center on Halsted's Oscar Party 2009. Reception 6 p.m. Oscar telecast 7 p.m. Center on Halsted 3656 N. Halsted. RSVP by purchasing by Feb.12., \$75-\$1,500; www.centeronhalsted.org/oscars09_form.html

Windy City Gay Naturists Oscars party, privately hosted. \$10/\$15 RSVP wcn60660@aol.com, 312-494-2654

Monday, Feb. 23

On the Brink new musical in progress one night only. Theatre Building Chicago 1225 W Belmont Ave as part of its Monday Night Musicals Program. 773-327-5252 www.theatrebuildingchicago.org

Tuesday, Feb. 24

Chicago Prime Timers dining out. www.primetimersww.org/

Some Like it Haute: Couture Uncovered. Find out what exactly is haute couture and how has it influenced fashion in the city. \$10/\$8, 7 p.m. Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark- www.chicagohistory.org

The Flaming Dames Bourbon Street Burlesque special performance for Fat Tuesday 10 p.m. New Millennium Theatre Company, 773-259-5356

Wednesday, Feb. 25

Gay reading group. Book: The Line of Beauty. 7:30 p.m. SAGE (Seniors Acting in a Gay Environment) Room, Center On Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

Thursday, Feb. 26

CANCELLED: Charity Water Fundraiser at The Underground. www.charitywaterchicagofundraiser.eventbrite.com

Maplethorpe, Block senior curator Debora Wood leads a gallery talk, 6 p.m. Block Museum of Art, Northwestern Univ. 40 Arts Circle Dr. Evanston, 847-491-4000; www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu

Youth Pride Center's Living Legends Black History Gala \$5. 6 p.m. 5480 S. Kenwood; 773-573-8745.

Saturday, Feb. 21



THE CAINE EVENT

Ripley Caine is part of the line-up at Cake Chicago at the Red Line Tap, 7006 N. Glenwood.

Sunday, Feb. 22



TROPHY CASE

The Oscar party **On the Red Carpet** will take place at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

Photo from the 2008 gala by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)

See our online calendar: www.windycitymediagroup.com/calendar



Having a ball

International burlesque starlet Angela Eve brought the spirit (and much more) with her Elysian Ball, held Feb. 12 at XChange West, 344 N. Ogden. She and designer Christophe Gauspohl hosted an event that featured extravagant theatrics and dance performances fusing burlesque, modern dance, ballet, aerials, physical theater and more. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)

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FABULOUS HARBOR COUNTRY COTTAGE: Near Downtown New Buffalo. Hand crafted Arts and Crafts cottage. 2 Bdrm w/ Studio. Private retreat. **Please contact for details and photos. 602-295-8331 travel@mac.com for photos** (9/03/08-8)

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BigChicks.com</p> <p>4 Crew
4804 N. Broadway Ave.
WorldsGreatestBar.com</p> <p>5 Eagle
5001 N. Clark St.
ChicagoEagle.com</p> <p>6 El Gato Negro
1461 Irving Park Rd.
ElGatoNegroBar.com</p> <p>7 The Glenwood
6962 N. Glenwood St.
TheGlenwoodbar.com</p> <p>8 Hamburger Mary's/Mary's Attic
5400 N. Clark St.
HamburgerMarysChicago.com</p> <p>9 Jackhammer
6406 N. Clark St.
Jackhammer-Chicago.com</p> <p>10 Joie De Vine
1744 W. Balmoral Ave.</p> <p>11 Man's Country
5017 N. Clark St. (bath)
MansCountryChicago.com</p> <p>12 Scot's
1829 W. Montrose Ave.
ChicagoScotsBar.com</p> <p>13 SoFo
4923 N. Clark St.
SofoBar.com</p> <p>14 Spyners
4623 N. Western Ave.
Spyners.com</p> <p>15 Star Gaze
5419 N. Clark St.
StarGazeChicago.com</p> <p>16 T's
5025 N. Clark St.
TsBarChicago.com</p> | <p>17 Touche
6412 N. Clark St.
ToucheChicago.com</p> <p>18 Wild Pug
4810 N. Broadway Ave.
WorldsGreatestBar.com</p> <p>BOYSTOWN</p> <p>19 3160
3160 N. Clark St.
Chicago3160.com</p> <p>20 Berlin
954 W. Belmont Ave.
BerlinChicago.com</p> <p>21 Bobby Love's
3729 N. Halsted St.
BobbyLoves.com</p> <p>22 Bucks Saloon
3439 N. Halsted St.
BucksSaloonChicago.com</p> <p>23 Cell Block
3702 N. Halsted St.
www.CellBlock-Chicago.com</p> <p>24 Charlie's
3726 N. Broadway Ave.
CharliesChicago.com</p> <p>25 Circuit
3641 N. Halsted St.
CircuitClub.com</p> <p>26 The Closet
3325 N Broadway Ave.</p> <p>27 Cocktail
3359 N. Halsted St.
CocktailBarChicago.com</p> <p>28 FireFly
3335 N. Halsted St.
FireflyOnHalsted.com</p> <p>29 Halsted's Bar & Grill
3441 N. Halsted St.
HalstedsChicago.com</p> <p>30 Hydrate
3458 N. Halsted St.
HydrateChicago.com</p> <p>31 Kit Kat
3700 N. Halsted St.
KitKatChicago.com</p> | <p>32 Little Jim's
3501 N. Halsted St.
LittleJimsChicago.com</p> <p>33 Lucky Horseshoe
3169 N. Halsted St.</p> <p>34 Manhandler
1948 N. Halsted St.</p> <p>35 minibar/winebar
3341 N. Halsted St.
minibarchicago.com</p> <p>36 North End
3733 N. Halsted St.
NorthEndChicago.com</p> <p>37 Pie Hole
737 W. Roscoe St.
PieHolePizzaJoint.com</p> <p>38 Roscoe's
3356 N. Halsted St.
Roscoes.com</p> <p>39 Scarlet
3320 N. Halsted St.
ScarletChicago.com</p> <p>40 Sidetrack
3349 N. Halsted St.
SidetrackChicago.com</p> <p>41 Spin
800 W. Belmont Ave.
Spin-Nightclub.com</p> <p>42 Steamworks
3246 N. Halsted St. (bath)
SteamworksOnline.com</p> <p>DOWNTOWN</p> <p>43 The Baton
436 N. Clark St.
TheBatonShowLounge.com</p> <p>44 Second Story Bar
157 E. Ohio St.</p> <p>NEAR NORTH</p> <p>45 Club 2506
2506 N. Clybourn Ave.</p> <p>46 Crobar
1543 N. Kingsbury St.</p> <p>47 The Prop House
1675 N. Elston Ave.</p> | <p>THE SOUTHSIDE</p> <p>48 Club Escape
1530 E. 75th St.
ClubEscapeChicago.com</p> <p>49 Escapades
6301 S. Harlem Ave.</p> <p>50 InnExile
5758 W. 65th St.
InnExileChicago.com</p> <p>51 Jeffrey Pub
7041 S. Jeffery Blvd.</p> <p>THE BURBS</p> <p>52 Club Krave
13126 S. Western Ave.
Blue Island, IL
ClubKrave.com</p> <p>53 Hideaway
7301 W. Roosevelt Rd.
Forest Park, IL</p> <p>54 Hunters
1932 E. Higgins Rd.
Elk Grove Village, IL
HuntersNightclubs.com</p> <p>55 John's Place
335 154th Pl.
Calumet City, IL</p> <p>56 Maneuvers
118 E. Jefferson St.
Joliet, IL
JolietManeuvers.com</p> <p>57 Rumors
2433 Desplaines Ave.
North Riverside, IL
RumorsPubOnline.com</p> <p>INDIANA</p> <p>59 Dick's R U Craze?
1221 E.150th St.
Hammond, IN
DicksRUCraze.com</p> <p>60 Encompass
2415 Rush St.
Lake Station, IN
EncompassNightclub.com</p> |
|---|--|--|--|

BILLY MASTERS

This has been a week full of news, so we're launching right into the Grammys—or, rather, Clive Davis' pre-Grammys festivities. The granddaddy of the music industry typically showcases his current protégé alongside more established stars. This year, both categories collided in Whitney Houston. Poised for a comeback, Houston had a lot banking on this show. She looked fabulous in a skintight leopard-print dress, a good wig, and nary a bead of sweat on her face. Then she sang. Not with abandon, mind you. She somewhat tentatively got through "I Will Always Love You," "I Believe In You and Me" and "It's Not Right, But It's Okay" in versions that did nothing to tax her constricted vocal abilities. But she proved that she could get through it—and admirably. And we can prove what we just said—by showing you a video of her set on BillyMasters.com.



Whitney's not alright... but she's okay.

As to the Grammys, am I the only one who looks at the Jonas Brothers and thinks the Rockland Brothers in about a decade?

A boy-bander has gotten his shit together and is looking pretty damn good. Nick Carter of the Backstreet Boys and the tragedy that was "House of Carter" was a drunken, fat mess. At his peak, he was 224 pounds and was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy—brought on by years of binge drinking, heavy drug use and a sedentary lifestyle. Doctors told him he needed a drastic change. Despite some setbacks (including some birthday shots at the Key Club), Nick is now a really hot, sober, ripped guy, weighing in at 167. Check out the brand new shirtless photo on BillyMasters.com.

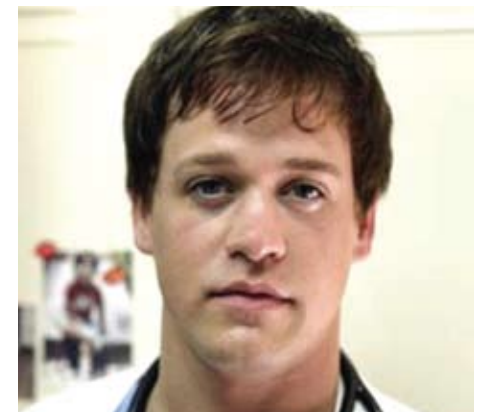
I also don't believe a thing about Madonna and this Jesus Luz character. I put him in the Tony Ward category—albeit with an accent (not that Tony was noted for his elocution). It reminds me of how she acted just after getting famous: she'd drive around NYC looking for hot, scrawny, homeless-looking Latin boys; invite them into the limo; fuck them; give them some cash; and ditch them. Now, being pre-menopausal (at the very least), I suspect the scenario is somewhat different: invite them over; get Steven Klein to take some pics; give them some cash; and ditch them—all the better for us, since "W" ran the pics, which I'm sure will turn up on BillyMasters.com. I warn you in advance—the snaps look like outtakes of the "Justify My Love" video. Not exactly cutting-edge.

Did you know that Madonna was born exactly one day before Belinda Carlisle? So, while that makes Madonna the elder statesman, it makes Belinda a perpetual pop princess. And she'll be bringing her babe-ness to ABC as she competes on the latest installment of "Dancing with the Stars". Obviously you know who I'll be rooting

for, right? Not so fast...my beloved Nancy O'Dell from "Access Hollywood" (and the best legs in showbiz journalism) is also in the race. I'm curious to see how many weeks it will take before Lil' Kim exposes a breast—or shanks someone! Denise Richards should be fun because she'll eventually dissolve into a psychotic mess and snap on live TV. But for the bulk of my fans, the main attraction will be Gilles Marini—the actor who played the stud living next door to Kim Cattrall in the Sex and the City movie who had a penchant for showering al fresco (and, yes, you can see every inch of his dick on BillyMasters.com).

Once again, we hear that Nicollette Sheridan is exiting Desperate Housewives. This is not her first departure from the show. Last year, she was driven out of town, but was brought back with the five-year jump in chronology. This time around, we hear she's not quite as lucky, with the exit being permanent.

Elsewhere on ABC, Grey's Anatomy is rumored to be losing Katherine Heigl and TR Knight. Let me take this opportunity to yawn. Do these people have career opportunities that I am unaware of? My darling Lynn Samuels, the doyenne of Sirius Left, advised Heigl, "Remember Shelley Long and that thriving film career she left 'Cheers' for." And TR ... well, he always has his babysitting to fall back on ... literally.

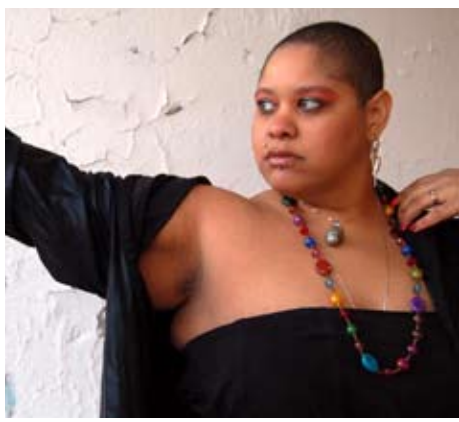


Will TR Knight be the next Supernanny?

This week's "Ask Billy" question comes from Joby in Dallas: "I saw 'Slumdog Millionaire' and thought the young actor Dev Patel was cute. I discovered he was on a racy show in England called 'Skins'. Since he was only 17 at the time, is there any chance you might have some pics of him showing his foreskin?"

See? I can give you a scoop, or a funny joke, but this is what you people want from me. Skin, more skin and foreskin! And you ain't alone, Joby. Sharon Stone is also quite taken with Dev and chased him around the BAFTAs all night (and even pinched him)! Well, she is the original cougar—just don't take her to a zoo! "Skins" was a nighttime soap in the UK which also featured the talents of the stunningly gorgeous Mitch Hower, who is currently on the UK series "Britannia High" (which is kinda like "High School Musical" meets "Knots Landing"). I do have all of the "Skins" episodes, and the most "skin" we see from Dev is in episode 9, when he is caught looking out the window completely naked. The nudity is full back, side, but sadly, covering the fore department. I'll post the pics and footage on BillyMasters.com.

When Carter has a six-pack he can't drink, it's definitely time to end yet another column. No time to do anything more than remind you to check out an extended version of this column (with nasty pics) on www.BillyMasters.com. If you have a query for me, drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Sharon Stone films the Mary Kay LeTourneau story! Until next time, remember, one man's gossip is another man's bible.



Nikki Patin.

Nikki Patin's body language

BY YASMIN NAIR

Nikki Patin is a Chicago-born performance artist and activist, who has appeared on HBO's Def Jam. Her work combines burlesque, spoken word and music to address the themes of body image, race and class. Patin will be touring New Zealand and Australia from the end of February through April, and is hosting a series of fundraisers in town to pay for the upcoming trip. She will be signing copies of her book "The Phat Grrl Diaries" at these events. Windy City Times spoke to Patin.

Windy City Times: Could you talk about your work and its combination of elements like burlesque and spoken word?

Nikki Patin: Body image has been the major focus of my work. I'm a bigger girl, and to do burlesque in a bigger body is really political for a lot of people. My show is about a broader range of body image, not just in terms of size but in terms of skin color, class, religion, ancestry, ethnicity, nationality. It's about how body image can impact action and how action can impact image. You don't have to exist within a narrow range of expectations. I'm a big girl and I'm a big fan of Prince, pop culture and erotic literature so it's a combination of my love for the poppy, dance-y side of life, but also my acknowledgment of reality and how I see the world.

WCT: What do you mean by the political aspect of the work?

NP: I reveal a lot of flesh, for someone with a body type that most people would cover up. For me, as a bigger girl, one of my biggest fears was being naked in front of people. To conquer that

is really powerful, for me personally. For other people who see that, it's something brave and bold. That wasn't a reaction I anticipated. It's been overwhelmingly positive. I think they like the honesty of it.

WCT: There's been a lot of cultural discourse around the concept of phat/fat bodies, over the last decade or so. That has emerged both from performance artists like Nomy Lamm but also in the more conventionally "popular" culture works of people like Monique. Has the moment when fat/phat bodies were a subject of cultural production and discourse largely disappeared or become something else?

NP: Maybe it has. For me, I think of balance. I just don't see many bigger women out there. Typically, I'm the biggest person in the room in whatever show I perform in. What's problematic is that we're perceiving fatness as a specific genre of performance. In actuality, if the oppression around it didn't exist, it would just be woven in. Just like anything else. We have a balance of men and women, blacks and whites, Christian and Muslim performers—they're woven into the texture of performance because we're looking at the story of humanity. I don't think issues around fatness/phatness and body are past their time because I don't see many fat people who feel like they have agency or access to the stage. For me, performatively, that means there's something missing.

WCT: In terms of your New Zealand/Australia tour, do you think that the concept of body image and related issues will translate in the same way? Those would seem to operate in a culturally specific way in the United States.

NP: I've been thinking about that this past month, especially because there are a lot of cultural references to being Black, and to being queer and a lot of Chicago references. I've settled on not really having any expectations about it, and thinking about it just in terms of presenting my story. It just so happens that these issues have framed my existence. I speak to that. I'm really blessed to have sixty minute shows on the tour. That's a nice amount of time to get to know an audience and for them to know me. I'm pretty excited about it.

WCT: What are you most excited about, in terms of this tour?

NP: I'm looking forward to growing more comfortable on stage and growing up as a person. And the experience of traveling alone, and seeing what life is really like in another part of the world.

response—that she doesn't feel like a boy—only brings on an angry admonition to never mention dresses again. From there on, we see Bailey falling in love with different dresses, only to be met with the disgust of her family. Finally, she meets Laurel, a girl who helps her make one of the dream dresses. This book is meant to be read aloud to young children, so it's best not to wonder, as an adult might, what happens to Bailey when she returns to her home. This short and lovely book gives young gender-non-conforming children a fantasy world where their dreams do come true.

If You Dream of Mermaids, by A.A. Philips, is for young adolescents. Todd is a 13-year-old boy who loves playing with dolls and dressing up in skirts. But he remembers all too well the fuss that erupted when he was caught in his mother's clothes as a child. His father, determined to make a boy out of the son he worries will not grow up to be manly enough, wants to sign him up for camp, and Todd hates sports. As a compromise, Todd is sent to nature camp, where he meets Brad, Sylvie and Olivia. Sylvie begins to ferret out Todd's secret, and Olivia is an odd and awkward girl who, like Todd, doesn't quite fit.

Philips writes a gently probing account of a boy who happens to want to do the things that, supposedly, only girls do. She combines all the classic elements of young adolescent lit-

K-Y and Kristine W collaborate—musically

The makers of K-Y® Brand and superstar recording artist Kristine W have teamed up on a remix of her latest single, "Love Is The Look."

Produced by legendary DJ/producer Ralphie Rosario, the K-Y® INTRIGUE™ remix strong vocals, happy lyrics and uptempo beats. Through the end of March, "Love Is The Look (Ralphie Rosario K-Y® INTRIGUE™ Mix)" will be available for free, exclusively on www.Masterbeat.com.

Kristine W, a gay icon, holds the world's record for most consecutive #1 Billboard club hits, breaking the records previously held by Madonna and Janet Jackson.



Kristine W.



Sean Penn.

Milk on DVD March 10

Milk—the Oscar-nominated film based on the life of the late gay San Francisco politician Harvey Milk—will be released on DVD and Blu-Ray March 10.

Oscar winner Sean Penn (Mystic River) and an all-star cast including Josh Brolin, Emile Hirsch, Diego Luna and James Franco star in the movie. Among the special features are deleted scenes; "Remembering Harvey," a clip that features reflections from Milk's friends, such as Frank Robinson and Cleve Jones; and "Hollywood Comes to San Francisco," in which the cast and crew discuss developing and filming the movie.

Milk will cost \$29.98 for a DVD and \$39.98 for the Blu-Ray version.

Billy Joel, Sir Elton John at Wrigley

Billy Joel and gay icon Sir Elton John, the most successful and longest-running concert pairing in pop history, will reunite for their Face 2 Face tour Tuesday, July 21, at Wrigley Field, the home of the Chicago Cubs.

The singers open each concert on the tour with a series of duets, playing twin pianos and trading vocals. Each artist then performs a set with his own band. A grand finale brings the two superstars and their supporting musicians back together for a closing encore.

Tickets are \$55-\$175, excluding applicable fees and service charges, and will go on sale Saturday, Feb. 14. Visit www.tickets.com or call 800-THE-CUBS. Tickets will *not* be sold at the Wrigley Field box office. There is a six-ticket limit per customer.



Sir Elton John.

BOOK REVIEWS

10,000 Dresses

Written by Marcus Ewert,
Illustrated by Rex Ray
\$14.95; Seven Stories
Press; 32 pages

If You Believe in Mermaids, Don't Tell

Written by A. A. Philips
\$12.95; Dog Ear Publishing;
150 pages

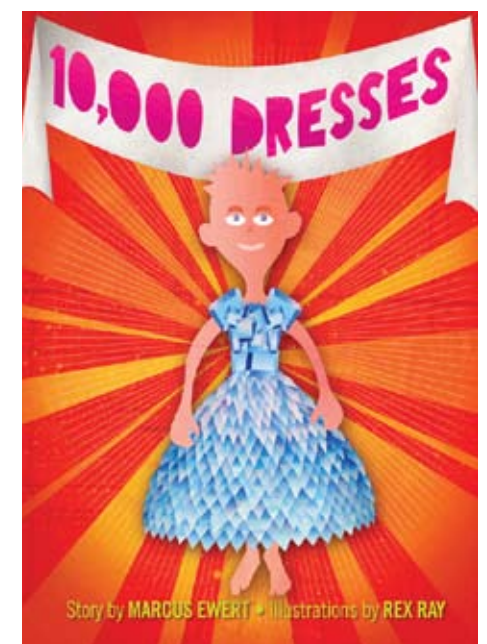
REVIEW BY YASMIN NAIR

There are now several books aimed at gay children or children of gay parents. But there is a relative dearth of books about transgender or gender-non-conforming children.

Two delightful new books seek to fill in the gap. 10,000 Dresses, aimed at young children, tells the story of Bailey, who dreams every night of 10,000 dresses. Her favorite is one made of crystals. One day, she asks her mother to buy her a dress like the one in her dreams. The mother's response provides the first clue about Bailey's troubles: "Bailey, what are you talking about? You're a boy! Boys don't wear dresses!" Bailey's

erature—camp, bullies, a momentary scare and awkward kids stumbling into each other as they try to find their place in the world—with an accurate and non-pathological rendition of Todd's inner life. We see Todd's daily struggle to fulfill gender stereotypes. That includes monitoring his own body: "I'm careful how I move. I hold my shoulders stiff, so they won't swing. ... But sometimes I forget." This is juxtaposed with his internal narratives about finding freedom, some of which involve fantasies drawn from fairy tales but also from the natural world he's made to explore as part of camp.

Will Todd or Bailey grow up to engage in gender-reassignment surgery? Or are they children whose gender performance will not match what society, for now, demands from them? Both books make it clear that the question is not about what choices the protagonists will make but that their ways of being in the world are just fine. "Just fine" may not seem like much but, as both authors indicate, it's probably the most and the best we can give them. What Todd and Bailey want is, on occasion, to be encouraged in their dress-seeking adventures but mostly to be left alone in their gender-non-conforming reveries. In a perfect world, that would be just fine with the rest of us.





Pam Blair.

SPORTS

Blair essence: Queer woman is champion runner

BY ROSS FORMAN

Pam Blair is a dog walker by trade, but running is where she earned acclaim in 2008.

The 28-year-old Andersonville resident is the owner of Pam's Pet Care, Inc. (www.pampetcare.com), which offers pet-sitting and midday dog walking on the North Side of Chicago.

And she was named the 2008 Female Runner of the Year by the Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA).

"I placed first on the CARA women's circuit for the year and was told I was also one of the most improved runners on the circuit since the previous year," said Blair, who earned more points than any other woman over the course of the year at CARA's circuit races.

"There wasn't as much competition on the CARA women's circuit last year as there has been in previous years," Blair added. "I know where I stand in the local racing scene, and at this point in time, it's not at the top. So for me, the award represents my hard work and improvement over the past year, and means a whole lot to me from that perspective."

And it's all the more impressive considering she first started running in February 2007; her first race was in April of that year.

Blair competed in 22 races in 2008, of which 12 were CARA circuit races. She was the first female finisher at the Proud to Run 10K, the North Shore Half Marathon and the She's Got Sole 8K; ended up third at the Soldier Field 10-Mile; and wound up seventh at the Chicago Distance Classic Half Marathon.

Blair, who graduated from Keene State College in 2003, ran her first marathon in 2008 in Chicago, finishing in 3:07.16 (just over a seven minute-per-mile pace).

She is now training for the Boston Marathon, which takes place April 20.

She also is planning to compete this year in such CARA events as Proud to Run, March Mad-

ness, Shamrock Shuffle, Quarryman Challenge, Soldier Field 10-Mile, Rock 'n' Roll Chicago Half Marathon, and possibly the Chicago Marathon, plus other 5K and 10K races.

"I'm excited to be able to represent the LGBT community through running, which seems to be a predominantly straight-dominated sport; at least in Chicago," she said. "I'm not sure if I'm the first openly queer woman to be named CARA Female Runner of the Year, but it would be interesting to find out. It means even more to me that I am representing vegan athletes."

Blair runs almost daily, tracking 70 to 80 miles per week. She also does three strength-training sessions per week.

"In the next two years I would like to run a marathon in under three hours, a 5K [race] in under 18 minutes, and a 10K in under 38 minutes," Blair said. "As far as long-term goals, currently, the only one I am set on is to keep enjoying running as long as possible."

And when not running, she's back on the walking front. For dogs, of course. And also addressing animal rights.

"I spend a lot of my free time educating people about animal abuse and animal rights," she said. "I do not consume or use any products that came from a once-living being, including meat, dairy, eggs, leather, wool, fur, etc."

Blair's other passions are cooking, cycling, hiking, reading and camping.

Franklin receives un-Waver-ing support from others

BY ROSS FORMAN

Waver Franklin can only shake her head in disbelief. Just the thought of running a 26.2-mile marathon is beyond comprehension.

But, boy, is she glad hundreds of Chicagoans annually run one as part of the National AIDS Marathon Training Program, which trains everyday Americans to complete the ultimate running experience, which might take six hours or even more to complete.

Franklin, 53, lives in Uptown and is one of the direct beneficiaries of the AIDS Marathon runners. And also those who participate in—and fund-raise for—the annual AIDS Walk and AIDS Ride. She has AIDS and been HIV-positive for 27 years, since being infected during a blood transfusion.

Franklin receives about \$5,500 annually from AFC-supported organizations, such as Chicago House, to aide with her rent payment and groceries, among other living expenses.

"I'm blessed and highly favored," said Franklin, a South Side native. "It's because of the efforts of those who, for instance, run marathons for the [National] AIDS Marathon [Training Program] that I'm working and ... a lot more. I got well enough mentally, emotionally and physically to go out and get a job."

"Every single one of [the AIDS Marathon runners] is helping me. And to help another person,

that gives me hope for the world; that says that there are people out there who feel like me; they care about others. If you can help another person, it will enrich your life to the point of wanting to do more [for others]."

Franklin is a medication specialist at the University of Illinois-Chicago. She works with HIV-infected patients, counseling on medication and adherence, a post she's held since April 2007. Franklin's work is with patients around the city and in the suburbs too, from Evanston to Oak Lawn. She counsels HIV-positive patients from 19 to 61; some have full-blown AIDS.

"It's a very rewarding job," she said. "I'm thrilled to be able to do what comes naturally to me, and get paid for it. I'm a good talker and a better listener. The people who I come in contact with start out guarded, shy and a little reserved about their personal [situation], but before it's over, we are great friends."

"The reward I get [from the counseling] is, I know that I made an impact on that person's life; I know I did; it shows. I see them blossom into someone more capable of taking care of themselves and they are more educated."

"Nothing has given me as much joy as this job does."

Especially consider all of the sorrow she has endured from AIDS. That's directly to her and through the hardships—and deaths—of literally hundreds of others she's known.

Such as Vera, a friend who died in the late 1990s.

"I felt so overwhelmed, lost and helpless [as Vera was dying] that I had to do something; I had to take action. But I didn't know what to do," Franklin said. "Before she got sick, Vera said, 'Waver, if I get sick where I cannot talk anymore, I'm gonna go up to the tattoo factory and I'm gonna get a tattoo that will say Until We Meet Again, and you'll see it on my ankle.'"

Then one day in the hospital, while Franklin was putting lotion on Vera's feet, she spotted Vera's tattoo.

Franklin left the hospital and went directly to a tattoo shop; she got the same tattoo—the same slogan and the red AIDS symbol—on her right shoulder.

Vera died the next day.

"I've seen the face of AIDS become something that both makes me angry and makes me happy. I'm glad that people recognize the severity and the importance of AIDS better than they used to," Franklin said. "I don't think teenagers today care as much about getting [AIDS] because it's treatable. My niece, for instance, had unprotected sex at 15 and [the man] was HIV-Positive. She said, 'I want to be just like you, Auntie.'"

Her niece is now 27, and she, too, is battling the disease on a daily basis.



Waver Franklin.

"All of these places that are funded by AFC ... they are literally helping hundreds of thousands of people with literally everything in their life," Franklin said. "Chicago House, for instance, they give me nothing but love. The staff there is the most loving, kind, gentle people I've ever met. That place is all about love and kindness, understanding, forgiveness."

Franklin is straight; she has been married three times—to the same man. She also works as an outreach worker for the Chicago Women's AIDS Project.

"AFC helps to provide my housing, and that's no little bitty thing to me. It also provides case management for personal, professional, AIDS-related, or whatever issues I have. And so much more," Franklin said. "This disease knows no gender, no race, no financial bracket; it knows no boundaries. The homosexual community and the AIDS community go hand in hand because, a long time ago, it really was a gay disease. Not anymore."

Franklin has three grown daughters, ages 31 to 37, and 12 grandchildren. All are negative and all know she's positive. Plus, "they all know how to talk about AIDS; they all know what AIDS is. All of my grandchildren are educated and, hopefully, practice safe sex," she said.

Franklin said she now is celibate—by her choosing. "I have not found a suitable partner, one who is HIV Positive," she said. "I am never going to have the feeling that I gave someone this disease; I will never do that to myself."

For those interesting in joining the National AIDS Marathon Training Program, which begins training in late April, go to www.aidsmarathon.com.



Kelly McGillis.

Actress hosts women's flag-football championship

Actress Kelly McGillis—who has starred in films such as Top Gun, Witness and The Accused—and teams of women and girls from around the United States, Canada, Mexico and

Europe marked the 18th Kelly McGillis Classic International Women & Girls' Flag Football Championship Feb. 1-9 in Key West, Fla., according to Fla-keys.com.

McGillis praised the tournament, saying, "You learn to be part of a team, work together as a group—there's no one more important than anybody else," she said. "Those are all great life skills to have, and I don't think we live in a culture that nourishes those things, especially for women."

McGillis practiced with teams as well as appeared at tournament social events.

Roller derby set to skate Feb. 20

The Windy City Rollers women's roller-derby league will hold its second bout of the season Friday, Feb. 20, at the UIC Pavilion, 525 S. Racine, at 7 p.m. as the Manic Attackers combat The Fury powerhouse and the 2008 league champs, Hell's Belles, wage war on the 2007 league champs, Double Crossers.

Tickets are \$20. See www.WindyCityRollers.com.

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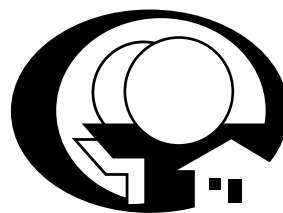


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