

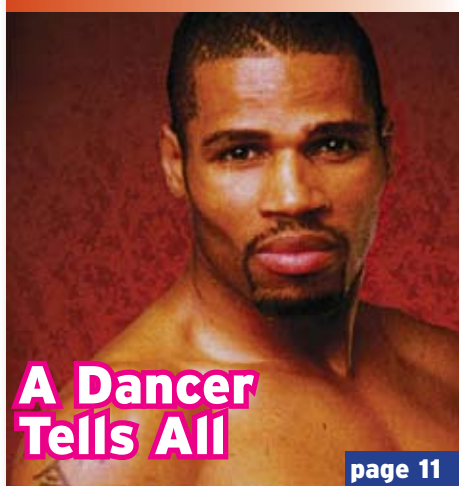
Clinton Talks with Gay Paper

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A Dancer Tells All

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Dancing for the stars: Mark Turbyfill

As part of the ongoing Chicago Gay History Project, Windy City Times will present a series on Chicago gay history events and people over the coming months. This essay is about a Chicago cultural pioneer.

BY MARIE J. KUDA

Mark Turbyfill (1896–1991)—poet, dancer, artist—was truly a Renaissance man. Adjudged by many as “unsung and unappreciated,” he is past due for rediscovery. Born in Indian Territory in what is today’s Oklahoma, he moved to Chicago with his family as a teenager. His father was an architect who traced his family back to a liegeman of William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings. Turbyfill was handsome, with the grace of a dancer, and always welcome in “polite society” as an “extra” man, the stereotypical lifelong bachelor.

While a student at Lake View High School, Turbyfill approached Margaret Anderson of *The Little Review* with one of his poems. She would eventually publish some of his poetry in her magazine, and she and her partner, Jane Heap, would become his lifelong friends. Later, for the first and only time, Harriet Monroe would devote an entire issue of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* to



Authors of *Evaporation*, Mark Turbyfill (left) and Samuel Putnam. Photo by Jun Fujita in 1923. Image courtesy M. Kuda Archives, Oak Park, Ill.

one poem, Turbyfill’s magnum opus (five years in the making), “A Marriage with Space” (May 1926). His poems appeared in nearly a dozen issues.

It was at *Poetry* that he met Chicago novelist Henry Blake Fuller, who described himself as “an

old satyr” and would be Turbyfill’s mentor and friend until Fuller’s death in 1929. Pascal Covici published *A Marriage with Space, and Other Poems*, in Chicago in 1927. A new edition was published here in 1974.

Turbyfill’s first book of poetry, *The Living Frieze* (1921), was published in Evanston in a limited edition by Monroe Wheeler (later of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and lover, in a long-standing *ménage à trois*, of writer Glenway Wescott and photographer George Platt Lynes). Wheeler and Wescott had met as students in Chicago in 1919 and would remain Turbyfill’s lifelong friends.

Turbyfill was co-author of *Evaporation: A Symposium* (1923) with his good friend, journalist and author Samuel Putnam. In 1924, while Putnam was working as a reporter for the *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, he managed to get Turbyfill (posing as a cub reporter) into the Loeb and Leopold trial; they were seated directly behind defense attorney Clarence Darrow and the two boys. Putnam heeded the advice of Henry Blake Fuller and moved to Paris, where he edited *The New Review* and *This Quarter* (Turbyfill contributed to both) and wrote *Paris Was Our Mistress*:

Turn to page 7

OPINION

Thomas Beatie’s pregnancy: What does it change?

BY YASMIN NAIR

Thomas Beatie, a transgender man who has retained his female reproductive organs and is six months pregnant, recently appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

Let me be clear at the outset: I support Beatie’s decision. I also think it’s remarkably brave of him to be public about his decision. It takes a lot to be out as a transgender person, even in famously liberal Oregon, but to be a pregnant man in public goes beyond the pale. Sure, I could have done without all the gendered rhetoric, as when his wife said, “He’s going to be the father; I’m going to be the mother. It doesn’t change how I feel about him as the husband.” This will be a family with a father who gives birth to his child. But this will not, apparently, be a feminist family.

Everything has changed with Beatie’s pregnancy in terms of our ideas about what gendered bodies can do. However, nothing has changed in terms of the context in which reproduction and child-rearing are carried out today.

Turn to page 4



Openly gay Chicagoan Ronnie Kroell competed on Bravo’s *Make Me a Supermodel*—and made it all the way to the April 3 final, where he lost to Holly Kiser. *Windy City Times* interviewed Kroell about the show and his life. Photo courtesy of Bravo

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Advocates traveled *en masse* to Springfield last week for HIV/AIDS Lobby Days. See page 6.

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Windy City Times talks with lesbian bassist Jenn Alva (left) of the Latina rock group Girl in a Coma. See page 16.

Photo by Sarah Quiara

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This week's online-only features include:
—Media Watch
—Jay Hernandez (right) in Starrlight
—Theater: Blithe Spirit and Hardboiled
—An interview with Jesus Ramirez-Valles, director of the movie *Tal Como Somos* (Just As We Are)

Photo by Steve Starr



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TIE ONE ON

This is what they do with ties at Touché's Leather Eye For the Preppy Guy contest.

Photo by Male Image Photography



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Presidential candidate Sen. Hillary Clinton.
Photo by Rex Wockner

Clinton talks LGBT issues

BY MARK SEGAL AND SARAH BLAZUCKI,
PHILADELPHIA GAY NEWS

The Democratic race for president has been heating up for months. And where once eight contenders graced the national stage, only two have made it to Pennsylvania's primary: Sens. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. In these months, an alliance of LGBT papers sought to speak with the top three contenders—Clinton, Obama and former Sen. John Edwards—to no avail. Now, with the delegate spread hovering around 150, smaller constituencies, including the LGBT community and their superdelegates, are playing a larger role.

PGN invited both Clinton and Obama, as well as presumptive Republican candidate John McCain, to speak with us. Only Clinton granted an interview.

Philadelphia Gay News: I assume that you and President Clinton have gay friends. Can you give me your impression of one of those couples that you socialize with, without giving any names?

Hillary Clinton: Oh my gosh. There are so many of them. I know that Mark [Walsh, Clinton's national director of LGBT outreach] is on the phone. Let me say this, we don't get to socialize a lot. But when we do, it's usually at a big event where we get to see people and spend time with them. This is something I want to do more of as soon as I finish this presidential campaign. It's sort of hard to pick out people. We go to some events in Washington and New York. I've

got friends, literally, around the country that I'm close to. It's part of my life.

PGN: How would you respond to those friends if they asked you why they can't get married?

HC: What I say is that marriage is in the province of the state, which has actually turned out to be lucky for us, because we didn't have to get beaten on the Federal Marriage Amendment because we could make, among other arguments, that it was such a stretch for the federal government and it was wrong to enshrine discrimination in the Constitution. And that states are really beginning seriously to deal with the whole range of options, including marriage, both under their own state constitutions and under the legislative approach. I anticipate that there will be a very concerted amount of effort in the next couple of years that will move this important issue forward and different states will take different approaches as they did with marriage over many years and you will see an evolution over time.

PGN: What will you do to improve the immigration policy for same-sex couples?

HC: I think that that's one of the biggest problems that we've got to contend with. Even states that have civil unions, domestic partnerships or even marriage laws are running into roadblocks with the federal government when it comes to federal benefits and privileges. Of course, immigration is a federal responsibility and I am going to do everything I can to eliminate any disparities in any benefits or rights under our law at the federal level so that all people will have available to them every right as an American citizen that they should, and that would include immigration law.

PGN: What changes would you make toward governments that execute gay people, such as Iran, Egypt and Iraq and numerous other countries in the Middle East and Africa? Will you offer political asylum?

HC: I would be very strongly outspoken about this and it would be part of American foreign policy. There are a number of gross human-rights abuses that countries engage in with whom we have relations and we have to be really vigilant and outspoken in our total repudiation of those kinds of actions and do everything we can, including using our leverage on matters such as aid, to change the behavior so we can try to prevent such atrocities from happening.

PGN: In 1948, President Truman issued an executive order banning discrimination based on race. Would you issue an executive order or a signing order with a military appropriations bill to temporarily—until Congress had a chance to deal with it—end "Don't Ask, Don't Tell?"

HC: If I were legally able to do it. I don't know what the legal framework would be because you remember that, in the face of what Bill [Clinton] was trying to do in '93, the act, by veto, proved majorities made prohibitions on doing that. So whether the president has authority to do it by executive order or not, I'm not sure. But I have been committed for more than nine years to eliminating "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

PGN: Could you do so via a signing order connected to a military appropriations bill?

HC: No. I don't think so. I will have that examined, but I don't think so. What a signing order can do, a signing statement, what Bush has done, is to say you're not going to enforce certain aspects of a law that's been passed. This is different. There's a law already on the books, which says the president cannot waive "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." But nobody has ever asked it of me quite like that. I don't think the president would have the authority. I think we'd have to get it changed by legislation, but I will look into that.

PGN: You co-sponsored the Domestic-Partnership Benefits and Obligation Act for federal employees. Would you support federal domestic-partner legislation to give rights to all LGBT citizens, not just federal employees?

HC: Of course. But I think the reason why I have zeroed in on the Obligations Act is because that's what's in the province of the federal government and I think we might be able to get that passed. But I would certainly sign anything that was broader too.

PGN: In states like New Jersey and Massachusetts and others that have passed domestic-partner bills or civil-union bills, one of the major roadblocks they find is the federal tax codes or joint filings for IRS returns. What could we do about that?

HC: That's one of the laws we have to change. I will have a comprehensive review, and I think a lot of that work has already been done, to look at everything that is discriminatory in the tax code or in any other aspect of federal law. And we will try to eliminate all of that discrimination. I think we will have a good argument, ironically, because I think we can say, look, the states are making determinations about extending rights to same-sex couples in various forms and the federal government should recognize that and should extend the same access to federal benefits across the board. I will very much work to achieve that.

PGN: How would you improve services for LGBT youth and seniors?

HC: I would be guided by advice by the LGBT community about the additional kind of services that would be needed on top of the general services that were available. For example, I've done a lot of work in supporting the LGBT community here in New York to deal with the

special problems that adolescents face: the high suicide rates, the sense of alienation and the experiences with bullies. I think there's a lot of very specific and difficult challenges that LGBT young people face. Obviously, I want to protect our young people and I want to give them access to the services that they need. I believe the idea of guidance at schools is important so that schools are well aware of how much more intense the mistreatment of LGBT kids happens to be. I think we need to do everything we can to try to protect our kids and give them a chance to have a productive and safe childhood and adolescence, and I would certainly zero in on that.

PGN: As first lady and as senator, you've lent your presence and support to various gay organizations by being present at gay Pride celebrations and so forth. When elected president, would you continue to do such?

HC: To the extent that security would permit. That's one of the challenges of being president. I don't think the Secret Service let Bill walk in a parade when he became president. I had a lot more flexibility as first lady. I have more flexibility as a senator. I'll see how much they try to trim my sails as president.

PGN: If you win the nomination, will you speak with PGN as the Democratic nominee for president?

HC: Absolutely, and I'll speak to you as president.

© 2008 Philadelphia Gay News

Note: Segal is a Clinton supporter, having donated \$1,000 to her campaign.

BEATIE from cover

In Beatie's own words on the Oprah show: "Different is normal." In a piece for The Advocate, he wrote, "...our situation ultimately will ask everyone to embrace the gamut of human possibility and to define for themselves what is normal."

He's right. And that's the problem.

Beatie's words, and the coverage so far, imply that reconfiguring our sense of what is normal, in favor of its former opposite—the supposedly abnormal or deviant—is all that's required to make fundamental changes in society.

Reproduction is part of the language in which we discuss changes in society, whether in terms of the freedom granted by birth control or in terms of the restriction of abortion rights. Lately, we've been obsessed with the seemingly endless expansion of child-bearing capabilities, marveling at grandmothers who give birth to more offspring. The Beaties used purchased sperm, and that sort of intensive and expensive reproduction technology is hailed as miraculous even though it's strictly a matter of science. But the language of miracle-creation also obfuscates the embodied realities that face transgender people and/or people who raise children.

The Beaties clearly enjoy middle-class privilege: They've run a successful business; have accrued enough in savings to go into seclusion for a while; and his recent book deal is probably quite lucrative. But hormone therapies and surgeries remain expensive for most transgender people, who often also have to battle employment and housing discrimination—which, in turn, can lead them to commit survival crimes and end up in incarceration.

Just as importantly, while birthing seems easier for some, rearing children is an entirely different matter. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, "[a]bout 39 percent of the nation's children—nearly 29 million in 2006—live in families with low-incomes, that is, incomes below twice the official poverty level (for 2008, about \$42,000 for a family of four)." Add to that our failing public schools and a lack of health care, and the situation for the children of the underprivileged is even more dire. A 2006 UNICEF report on child well-being in 21 wealthy nations ranked the United States as the second worst (after the United Kingdom) in children's quality of life.

So, yes, Beatie's pregnancy does expand "the gamut of human possibility." But it does so while reinscribing the transgender body within terms of bourgeois respectability. And yes, potentially, from now on, a larger number of people can bear children. But we ought not to lose sight of the fact that fewer people today can afford to raise the children they bear or adopt with everything they need.

Pregnant transman on Oprah

A transgender man who recently made news by announcing that he is pregnant appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show Thurs., April 3.

Thomas Beatie, 34, who is from Bend, Ore., told The Advocate magazine that he is pregnant, carrying a girl for him and his wife. When Beatie made the transition from female to male, he decided to keep his reproductive organs so he could become pregnant.

"I'm a person and I have the right to have my own biological child," Beatie—formerly Tracy Lagondino, a former Miss Teen Hawaii USA finalist—said on the show. Among other things, Beatie said that early on, he never felt female. Beatie's wife, Nancy, said that she injected the sperm into Thomas from a sperm bank.

While some have praised Winfrey for making Beatie feel welcome on her show, others have questioned and even mocked the transman. According to PageOneQ.com, the team on MSNBC's Morning Joe show made several cracks; Mika Brzezinski said, "This is what makes our business terrible. This kind of news—it's so stupid and useless, and yet, I can't get enough of it."

In a press release, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force stated that "...Throughout history people have gone to extraordinary lengths to conceive and bear children. In this factual context, the Thomas Beatie story is neither unique nor exceptional. ... The real story is that a family seeking to have children has been terribly mistreated by the media and, it appears, by the medical profession. All families deserve care and respect, period."

Beatie's child is due around July 3, according to his recently published article in The Advocate.

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LOCAL NEWS

Harris passes youth bills

Openly gay state Rep. Greg Harris, D-Chicago, passed two bills aimed to help the state's youth.

The House recently approved Harris' bill that would create a Commission on Children and Youth. The 30-member commission would aim to improve health care, education and more for Illinois youth.

Another bill authored by Harris, HB 4455, which would increase funding for shelter, transitional housing and employment assistance for homeless youth by \$7 million, was recently passed.

Point Foundation event April 10

The Point Foundation, the nation's largest scholarship-granting organization for LGBT students of merit, will feature several of its Chicago-area scholars at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, Thurs., April 10, 6-8:30 p.m.

Among the speakers will be Jen Wohlner, the openly gay homecoming queen at her high school, and Timothy Bresnahan, whose time with the Human Rights Campaign inspired him to pursue a degree at Chicago-Kent College of Law. In addition to meeting scholars, attendees will be able to learn about the Cornerstone Society, a monthly pledge program.

There will be a hosted bar and hors d'oeuvres. An RSVP is required to attend; call 866-337-6468. See www.pointfoundation.org for more information.

Harold Washington event at library

WBBM-Channel 2 reporter Derrick Blakley will moderate a symposium honoring the legacy of the late Chicago Mayor Harold Washington Sat., April 12, in the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium, lower level, at the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State.

The event is free. For more information, visit www.chicagopubliclibrary.org or call 312-747-4050.



K. James Owen. Photo courtesy of Jeff Shand

PASSAGES

K. James Owen

BY ANDREW DAVIS

James Owen, a 15-year employee of the local gay bar Little Jim's and a partner of the late gay-rights activist Thom Dombkowski, passed away March 31. He was 54.

"He had this wonderful, dry sense of humor," Jeff Shand, Owen's roommate, told Windy City Times. "He was such a sweetheart."

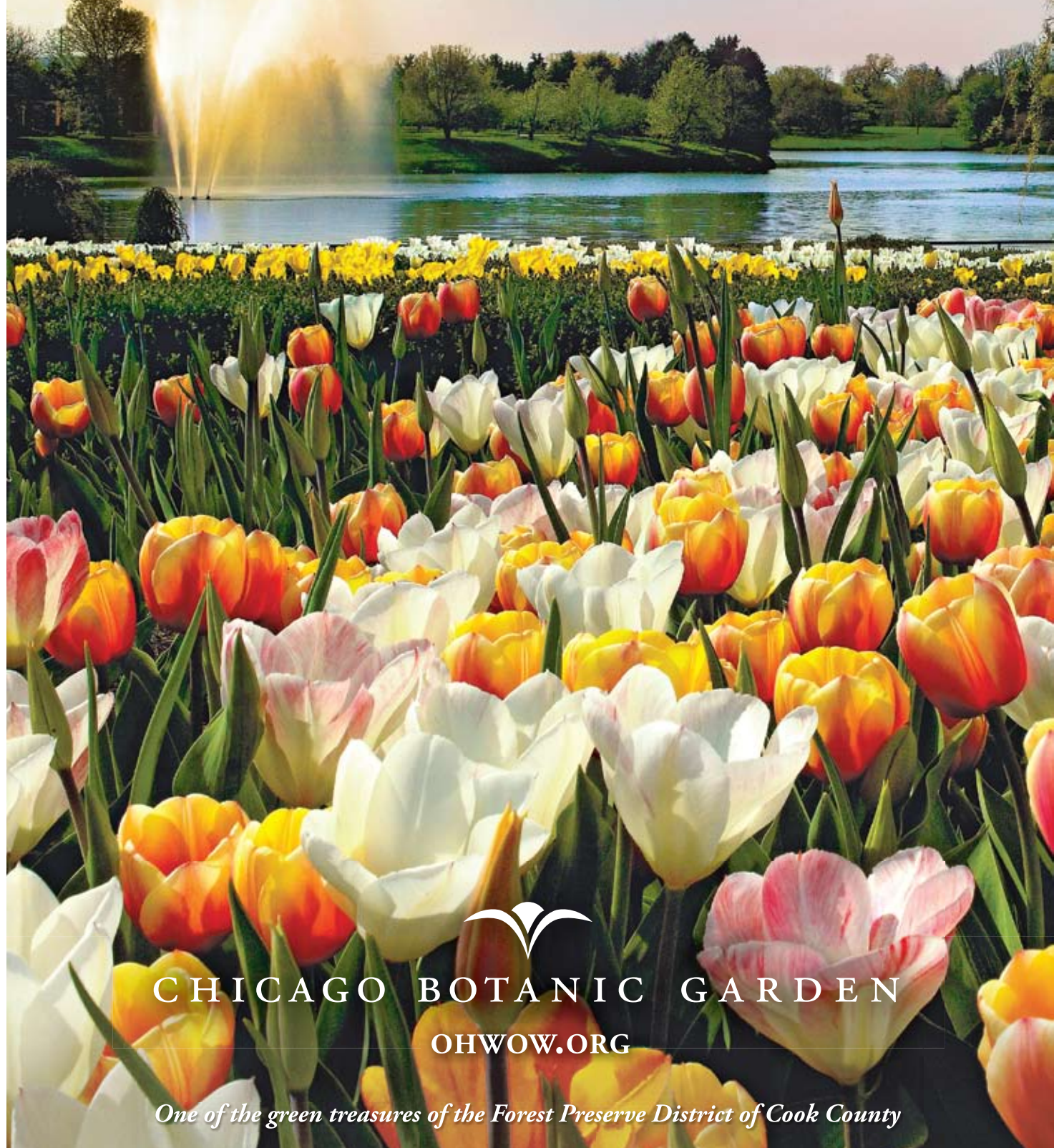
The funeral service was held privately by his family. A celebration of Owen's life will be held Sun., April 13, at Little Jim's, 3501 N. Halsted, at 3 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that a donation be made to the North Side Groceryland (associated with Vital Bridges), 5543 N. Broadway, Chicago, Ill., 60640.

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HIV/AIDS educator John Brady III leads advocates.

HIV/AIDS Lobby Days a 'huge success'

BY AMY WOOTEN

The eighth annual HIV/AIDS Lobby Days was a "huge success," according to the event's organizers.

Over 120 people rallied in the rotunda of the State Capitol on April 2, calling for sound HIV/AIDS policies. Wearing T-shirts emblazoned with this year's "Mission: Possible" theme, HIV/AIDS advocates spoke to their state legislators about critical pieces of HIV/AIDS legislation. Joining the advocates during the rally were state Sen. David Koehler, D-Peoria, and Reps. Greg Harris, D-Chicago, Sara Feigenholtz, D-Chicago, and Cynthia Soto, D-Chicago.

AIDS Foundation of Chicago's Jim Merrell, who organized the event, told Windy City Times that Lobby Days was extremely successful this year. In addition to the rally, roughly 75 advocates were trained April 1. That evening, AFC also honored HIV/AIDS activists for their hard work during an awards ceremony. Advocate Marla Francisco, a client representative for an HIV consortium, was given the 4th annual Mary Dixon Advocacy Award.

"We had lots of positive legislator engagement," on three issues, Merrell said. Those issues were medical expansion for low-income Illinoisans; a bill that would help reduce drug overdoses by removing barriers to distribute a drug that reverses opiate overdoses; and a request for a \$2 million appropriation for expanded voluntary HIV testing as a part of routine medical care.

Roughly 60 percent of this year's participants were new to the event, added AIDS Foundation of Chicago's Johnathon Briggs, who also participated.

"I did feel as though I engaged in meaningful conversation with legislators, especially Rep.

Greg Harris, who understand the issues and encouraged the advocates to speak up for increased funding for life-saving HIV/AIDS policies in spite of the fiscal pressures facing Illinois," Briggs told Windy City Times. "As my grandmother used to say, 'A closed mouth doesn't get fed.'"

"I do feel it was a success because the presence of the people was there," said activist Juliet Jones, who also spoke at the rally. "Definitely, our voices were heard."

For those who missed the bus Downstate for this year's successful event, AFC encourages individuals to contact their legislators to advocate for good HIV/AIDS policies. See www.aidschicago.org/advocacy/news_3_31_08.php.

Law students host AIDS talk

BY YASMIN NAIR

OUTLaw, a group of queer law students from six Chicago law schools, hosted a panel discussion, "HIV/AIDS in Urban America," April 1 at the Loyola University College of Law, 25 E. Pearson. Panelists were Ruqaiyah Yearby, an Assistant Professor at Loyola School of Law, Justin Hayward, Case Manager at AIDS Legal Council, and David Ernesto Munar, Vice President for Policy and Communications at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC).

Yearby talked about the critical issues facing urban patients with HIV/AIDS, chief among them the difficulty in accessing services. Populations already vulnerable due to factors like poverty and a lack of access to medical information suffer additionally from having to use HMOs that don't maintain strong ties to the communities they're supposed to serve. Yearby also touched upon the issue of funding for HIV/AIDS when she addressed the topic of recent budget cuts in Cook County. She stated that it was necessary to redirect money by, for instance, not defunding needle exchange programs.

Justin Hayward emphasized the difficulties that low-income patients face when they try to access services, as well as the continuing discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS. He spoke about instances where he had to deal with intractable medical staff and bureaucrats while trying to ensure that his clients received the assistance they needed. Medicaid's strict definitions of poverty and disability are onerous and counter-productive: "Trying to just get in the door is astonishingly difficult." He pointed out that the process severely strained patients who are already too sick to begin with. Discrimination in the workplace or by medical providers is also an issue for many. While it's illegal to fire people for having HIV/AIDS when their condition does not make them a direct threat, employers can make it difficult for people to continue in a workplace.

David Munar's comments focused on AFC's current campaigns for funding for HIV/AIDS. Munar also spoke about the Catch-22 situation that most Medicaid patients find themselves in:

they're usually on assistance when they're too sick to fend for themselves. Funding treatment options earlier in the course of the disease would have kept them from dire situations. Munar emphasized the importance of early treatment and advocated for AFC-supported campaigns, like the one for Senate Bill 2155, that seeks to increase prescriptions of naloxone, a prescription drug that reverses the effects of drug overdoses.

OUTLaw consists of students from DePaul University College of Law, Northwestern University School of Law, Loyola University Chicago School of Law, The Law School at The University of Chicago, The John Marshall Law School and Chicago-Kent College of Law.

LGBT halfway house hopes to open in fall

BY AMY WOOTEN

Chicago's first LGBT-specific halfway house is seeking help in order to reach its goal to open its doors by this autumn.

People have been working hard to open the city's first LGBT-specific, sober halfway house for the past three years, said Living with Pride board president Claudia Mosier. Its organizers simply want a friendly and safe space for LGBT people to be able to focus on staying clean and sober, and nothing else.

Although there is a large LGBT recovery community in Chicago, those at Living with Pride think the community can greatly benefit from an LGBT-specific halfway house.

"You can get sober and clean in general halfway houses, but we want a place where GLBT people can go to if they just want to be around primarily GLBT folks, where there is less likelihood that they'll have to deal with any prejudices anybody else in the halfway house might have about people being GLBT," Mosier said.

Having a friendly space is especially vital for transgender individuals seeking recovery, who may have encountered problems at general halfway houses in the past.

"Sometimes people freak out," Mosier said. "You might be told you can come here, but you have to dress yourself of your body gender, even if you are going through a transition."

Living with Pride's board of directors consists of those who are in recovery, or people with an interest in the field of LGBT individuals becoming clean and sober.

"Some of them have been in halfway houses in their past recovery, so they know what it's like to be a GLBT person in a more heterosexual-based halfway house," Mosier said.

Although the community has far more options than it used to, one of the problems LGBT seeking recovery face is how much the community continues to revolve around its bars and clubs. Living with Pride aims to help people deal with that dilemma.

"I think there are particular challenges to learning how to live sober and clean in the LGBT community," Mosier said. "So many of our events are alcohol-based or sponsored by bars, so learning how to be on like a softball team and learning how to negotiate what we do afterwards when everybody is going to the bar—how do we manage that and make decisions about how to stay sober and clean but remain athletically active—can be a challenge."

Currently, the primary goal is to find the perfect home for Living with Pride.

"I could have this halfway house up and running right now if we could do it in a different neighborhood, but we're trying to save money so we can get the halfway house in a neighborhood where GLBT people don't feel like we stand out," Mosier.

They are looking into areas such as Lakeview or Andersonville, so those seeking recovery will feel comfortable and safe.

Although finding a welcoming space in an LGBT-heavy area is at the top of the list, Liv-



Claudia Mosier of Living with Pride. Photo courtesy of Mosier

ing with Pride is also focused on providing much more than a cot for its clients. "We want to have the programs in place," while keeping costs low for clients, Mosier said, adding that regular donations from individuals could help Living with Pride achieve that goal.

Living with Pride will hold a Spring Fling! Clean and sober dance and fundraiser on Saturday, May 3, from 8-11 p.m., at Broadway Methodist Church, 3344 N. Broadway. There is a \$15 donation.

For more information or to donate, see www.livingwithpride.org.

Ill. high court favors deceased poz man's parents

The Illinois Supreme Court recently ruled in favor of a deceased HIV-positive man's parents, affirming the Appellate Court's reversal of an award for his fiancée, who argued his parents should have revealed his status to her.

According to AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC), the woman, identified only as Jane Doe, argued that she would have been able to receive treatment earlier if her fiancée's parents had told her his HIV status after his death. However, in Doe v. Dilling, Illinois' high court agreed with the Appellate Court that the jury award should be reversed, noting that "Doe not only had actual knowledge of facts that made her reliance unjustifiable, but she was also could have easily discovered additional facts if she had not chosen to consciously ignore what was plainly in front of her."

According to the case, Doe routinely went to her fiancée's medical appointments.

ALLC filed a friend of the court brief in the parents' favor, citing the Illinois AIDS Confidentiality Act.

Gay chorus and ensemble in concert April 12

Windy City Gay Chorus and Aria: Windy City Women's Ensemble, under the baton of Music Director Alan Wellman, will present their 2008 spring concert, "An Evening of Choral Masterworks," Sat., April 12, at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the Hoover-Leppen Theatre at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

The shows will feature Fauré's "Requiem," plus other works by Brahms, Handel, Mendelssohn and Copland. Tickets are \$20; visit www.windy-citysings.org or purchase them at the door one hour prior to performance.

Affinity town hall April 17

Affinity Community Services—an organization committed to empowerment for Black lesbian and bisexual women—will hold a town hall meeting Thurs., April 17, 7 p.m., at 5650 S. Woodlawn.

Plans include sharing information regarding the new direction of the organization. Call 773-324-0377 or e-mail affinity95@aol.com.

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Dr. David Halperin. Photo courtesy of Jim Pickett

David Halperin on what gay men want

BY AMY WOOTEN

Gay men have a lot to talk about, according to author David Halperin.

Halperin, author of *What Do Gay men Want?*, will be a guest at Project CRYSP's upcoming community forum on gay men's health, "'Good' Sex? 'Bad' Sex? Just What Do Gay men Want Anyway?" The forum, which will also feature panel experts such as DePaul University's Dr. Gary Harper and Northwestern University's Dr. Michele Morales, will take place Thurs., April 17, 6 p.m., at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

The debate will revolve around gay men's relation to sex and risk, and will touch on issues such as barebacking, the clichés that are still used to attempt to understand gay men and much more.

Windy City Times: Are there a lot of conversations that we aren't having when it comes to gay men's health?

David Halperin: I think there aren't enough of them. Part of it is the need to approach gay men's health in a holistic way that isn't centered just on disease or on various kinds of social problems such as alcohol abuse or domestic violence or HIV prevention—so, the need to look at gay men's health and gay men's sexual health, in particular, in a larger context.

WCT: So, have we been taking the wrong approach?

DH: No, I think it's natural that we should be concerned about these things. But, the other conversation that we need to have that we haven't been having enough of is are we really going to stop using condoms? If we are going to stop using condoms, or if we're going to use them less, and if we are trying to protect ourselves from infection of HIV by other means—by means that don't involve using condoms—what exactly are those means? How can we make sure we pursue them intelligently so that we don't

fail at preventing the spread of HIV?

WCT: Why is the community stopping condom use, after years of pounding it in our heads that this is what you need to do?

DH: A lot of studies indicate that condom use is falling off. Some places, including the San Francisco Department of Public Health, have been promoting alternatives to the use of condoms for HIV prevention.

WCT: What are some of those alternatives?

DH: Things like partner selection, which is often called serosorting. The notion that one could perhaps avoid these condoms if one is having sex with someone who has the same HIV serology status as oneself. It's a technique that works better for HIV-positive men than HIV-negative men, since they are the ones who actually know what their HIV status is. Someone who tells you he is HIV-positive is probably not lying to you. But if we were to put more emphasis on sero sorting and partner selection, and less emphasis on condoms, certainly we need to talk about that and we need to try to make sure HIV risk reduction practices don't inadvertently produce risk increases.

WCT: The fact that someone like me thinks it's fairly new—is that because there has been so much emphasis on condom use?

DH: I think that's right. The CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] has not been promoting sero-sorting. The CDC has been promoting condom use and most HIV/AIDS prevention organizations promote condoms. But there has been relatively little attempt to try to figure out what gay men are actually doing on the ground and to try to adapt health initiatives to what people are actually doing, rather than do it to get gay men to adapt to health initiatives. Another reason you might not know about this is a lot of this has been taking place in HIV-positive communities.

WCT: Is another one of the issues that health officials have not tried to figure out what gay men really want?

DH: Right. There is a huge amount of energy being devoted to figuring out what gay men really want, but it's usually in the key of disease or impaired psychology. So the notion is, "Oh, we really have to figure out what gay men want because we have to explain why they are behaving so badly and so self-destructively—why they are doing these terrible things? What on earth is going on in their little minds? What explains this weird, self-destructive, harmful behavior? Why would a normal person ever act that way?"

WCT: So it's very negative.

DH: It's very negative. It posits that there is some irrational behavior going on, and it tries to imply a medical reason, which is usually some form of impairment to explain this "irrational" behavior. Those explanations can range from the supposedly gay-friendly one like post-traumatic stress disorder or grief mourning, and so forth, all the way to lack of self-control, various psychological deficits.

Read more at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

TURBYFILL from cover

Memoirs of a Lost & Found Generation (1947).

Turbyfill had a second passion: the ballet. He studied under partners Andreas Pavley and Serge Oukrainsky, and he danced in the Chicago Grand Opera Company *corps de ballet* on opening night when Mary Garden sang in Pierre Louÿs' *Aphrodite* at the Auditorium Theatre. He studied in New York with Michel Fokine and later, 1924–26, became premier *danseur* with Chicago Allied Arts (under former Diaghilev star Adolph Bolm), the first full-fledged ballet company in the United States. According to dance critic and historian Ann Barzel (who also studied with Bolm), Turbyfill was often paired with Chicago legend Ruth Page in avant-garde productions such as Chicago composer John Alden Carpenter's *The Birthday of the Infanta*, based on a story by Oscar Wilde.

In 1929, Turbyfill was introduced to the "dashing beautiful" Katherine Dunham, "an ambitious Negro girl, who had never had a lesson in her life in the art, but who wanted to become a ballet dancer." He took her on as a student, opening a small studio of his own for Dunham and other Black students in one of the tiny East 57th Street buildings left over from the 1893 World's Fair (his friend Margaret Anderson and other Chicago literati met in another). He put together an advisory board for a proposed *Ballet Nègre*, commissioned a score and began work on the choreography. Some of the people (such as Robert S. Abbott, later of the *Chicago Defender*) whom he approached evinced little interest in supporting a Black ballet company. Dunham eventually debuted in a production choreographed by Ruth Page, with an all-Black supporting cast, at the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition. She went on to become a legend on stage, in film and as a choreographer, teacher and doyenne of West Indian and Afro-American dance.

Through the influence of his friend Mark Tobey, Turbyfill worked at becoming an artist. His poetry found its way into his abstract expressionist oil paintings. Critics dubbed one series of watercolors using a calligraphic white-writing technique on black backgrounds as "Turbyfilligrees." He had a modest success from his first solo exhibition in 1948 throughout the 1960s.

In his mature years Turbyfill would return to dance, using the spoken word to replace music as an accompaniment for dance. His book *The Words Beneath Us: Balletic Poems* (1951) has a few photographs of the experimental performance interwoven with his poems, ending with commentary by critics Claudia Cassidy and Ann Barzel.

Turbyfill had been living in western Rogers Park and attending Metropolitan Community Church services since the 1970s. He confirmed that he was gay and that he had lovers among his male dance students. The only woman he had had relations with was Georgette Leblanc Maeterlinck (Margaret Anderson's partner after Jane Heap) because, he said, that was as close as he could get to his idol, Maurice Maeterlinck. His Chicago neighborhood became too much of a challenge, and a young gay friend from MCC, Ken Frank, helped him pack and move.

In the late 1960s, Turbyfill placed 242 letters from 126 correspondents (1906–66) with the Gotham Book Mart in New York. Southern Illinois University purchased that correspondence, and it now rests in the Special Collections Research Center at Carbondale. Most of his other papers, including books inscribed by authors and a few copies of his unpublished autobiographical memoir, *Whistling in the Windy City*, went to the Newberry Library in 1988. The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago is repository for approximately 100 of his paintings and watercolors, most recently exhibited in 2006.

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Openly lesbian U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis. Photo by Rex Wockner

NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY AMY WOOTEN

According to the Associated Press, a large crowd recently rallied at the state Capitol in support of an anti-gay Oklahoma state lawmaker. **Over 1,000 people cheered on Oklahoma state Rep. Sally Kern**, R-Oklahoma City, who has been under fire in recent weeks after anti-gay comments she made during a speech were posted on YouTube. In the video, Kern compared homosexuality to terrorism. The lawmaker refuses to apologize. At the recent rally, Kern told the crowd, "What has happened to me has served to advance the gospel." She called her supporters those "who want to stand up for the truth of God's word."

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., is leading the ENDA fight in the Senate. Kennedy, a long-time supporter of LGBT rights, is pushing for a federal ban on job discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, the ban does not include protections for the transgender community. Last year, the House approved a bill by Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., which also excludes the trans community. National organizations such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force are opposed to any legislation that excludes protections for trans people. Kennedy told the Associated Press that "The best opportunity for progress is ... to follow along on the action of the House of Representatives, and then look down the road to a new day after we have a good Democratic Congress and a Democratic President."

Politico revealed that the nation's only openly lesbian U.S. representative, Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., was allowed to take her partner on a congressional delegation trip via military plane only

after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi stepped up and intervened. Politico reported that **the Defense Department at first denied Baldwin's request that her partner be put on a military flight to Europe.** Pelosi was able to successfully convince Defense Secretary Robert Gates to approve the request, adding that even former Republican Speaker Rep. Dennis Hastert allowed Baldwin to take her partner on trips.

New York City's openly lesbian City Council Speaker is under federal investigation, reported 365gay.com. Christine Quinn, one of the city's top politicians, is reportedly under federal investigation for allegedly hiding millions of dollars in city money in a secret slush fund. The New York Post reports that Quinn allegedly hid \$4.7 million by "giving" the money to fake groups and organizations such as "Coalition for a Strong Special Education" and others. The money reportedly went to pay off political allies in return for favors.

The Justice Department's inspector general, charged with looking into the firings of several U.S. attorneys under former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, is looking into **whether or not an attorney was let go after rumors that she is a lesbian surfaced,** reported NPR. In interviews with Justice Department staff, NPR found that many individuals thought attorney Leslie Hagen did not have her contract renewed due to the rumors. Hagen worked as a liaison between the Justice Department and the U.S. attorneys' committee on Native American Issues. Hagen, even months after being told her was being let go, received a superb job evaluation.

The LGBT Catholic organization **Dignity USA will hold a series of public events in New York City and Washington, D.C., during Pope Benedict XVI's pastoral visit** to the United States April 15-20, according to an organizational press release. Planned events include a forum entitled "A Few Moments with the Pope: Lesbian/Gay Catholics Speak about their Church" and a papal motorcade demonstration. See www.DignityUSA.org.

Late night talk show host **Jay Leno apologized for an anti-gay comment** he made during a recent interview with actor Ryan Phillippe. Leno said he was sorry for asking Phillippe, who played a gay teen on the ABC soap opera One Life to Live, to give him his "gayest look." During the interview, Phillippe refused to play along, saying, "Wow, that is so something I don't want to do." Leno, in a statement to People magazine, said, "In talking with Ryan's first role, I realize that what I said came out wrong. I certainly didn't mean any malice. I agree it was a dumb thing to say, and I apologize."

House passes PEPFAR reauthorization

BY BOB ROEHR

The U.S. House of Representatives passed reauthorization of America's global fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria by a vote of 308-116 on April 2. The program is most commonly referred to by the acronym PEPFAR. Opposition came entirely from Republicans and was largely on the grounds of cost in a time of budget deficits.

The measure allows for spending up to \$50 billion over the next five years. That is a significant increase over the \$15 billion authorized for the last five years and the \$30 billion that President George W. Bush had proposed. Nonetheless, the White House signaled its support for the bill, even while point out remaining areas of contention.

Four amendments were allowed from the floor during debate, and were passed. They allowed funds to be used to provide safe drinking water; tightened accountability requirements; encouraged collaboration with historically black colleges and universities; and further expanded coverage to allow for work in smaller nations in Africa, joining an earlier expansion that embraced islands in the Caribbean.

Among the changes won by AIDS advocates is a modification of provisions dealing with abstinence only education. A fixed minimum per-

centage of spending on abstinence programs no longer is required, but abstinence must remain a significant part of an overall prevention strategy that is tailored to the needs of individual countries.

The current program prohibits granting of funds to agencies that provide abortion services or that counsel on the procedure even if they do not directly provide them. The new law eases that and allows those organizations to receive prevention funding.

"For our country to be healthy, for the eradication of these diseases to take place, we must have a global approach to them. Disease knows no borders and boundaries," said Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi during the floor debate. "The legislation before us today will move us from the emergency phase to the sustainability phase in fighting AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has passed a similar measure, though its future on the floor of the Senate is a bit cloudy, due to the rules of that chamber.

Conservative Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., has circulated a letter to his colleagues suggesting that he might block consideration of the bill.

Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., co-signed the letter. He called the tripling of spending from current levels the "height of irresponsibility in the middle of a war and surging debts."

Read the entire article at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

'V To The Tenth' set for April 12

"V To The Tenth," an event that marks the 10th anniversary of Eve Ensler's organization V-Day, will take place Sat., April 12, at The New Orleans Arena at 7:30 p.m.

The purposes of the event are to celebrate V-Day's 10 years of fighting to end violence against women and girls, and to honor the women of New Orleans and the Gulf South. Among the many celebrities expected to take part are Glenn Close, Oprah Winfrey, Jennifer Hudson, Eve, Rosario Dawson, Common, Marisa Tomei, Faith Hill, Julia Stiles and Sally Field.

Founded by Ensler in 1998 at the first benefit of her award-winning play The Vagina Monologues, V-Day has raised over \$50 million for local anti-violence groups with benefits taking place in over 120 countries to date.



Eve Ensler.

In addition, there will be an ongoing event called Superlove Fri.-Sat., April 11-12, at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans. Superlove—which will have everything from slam poets to a yoga lounge—will also feature celebrities, including Ilene Chaiken, creator of The L Word.

See www.vday.org for tickets and more information.

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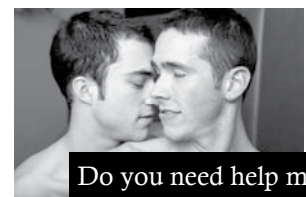


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Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa. Photo courtesy of Presidencia de la República del Ecuador

WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

Ecuadorean president supports same-sex partnerships

Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa said March 29 that the government "will seek to grant certain guarantees to stable homosexual unions but without ever arriving at the point of marriage."

"Let's be clear that the profoundly humanistic position of this government is to respect the intrinsic dignity of everyone, of every human being, independently of their creed, race, sexual preference," Correa said. "We will give certain guarantees to stable gay couples but matrimony will continue being reserved for a man, a woman and the family."

Correa also said: "Every person has dignity,

that's to say, one must respect a person independently of their sexual preference. Be careful not to deny employment to someone because of their sexual preference. That is discrimination, that is unconstitutional."

Activists denounce prosecution of Ukrainian gay paper

The heads of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and the European branch of the International Lesbian and Gay Association wrote Ukrainian President Victor Yushchenko and other officials March 20 demanding that the public prosecutor in Kiev drop criminal charges against the newspaper published by the gay community center Nash Mir.

The center is charged with distribution of pornography in violation of Article 301 of the Criminal Code.

"The government should ensure that notions such as public morality are not employed to restrict in a discriminatory manner, any exercise of freedom of opinion and expression that affirms diverse sexual orientations or gender identities," said IGLHRC's Paula Ettelbrick and ILGA's Patricia Prendiville.

They said the case also violates the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, to which Ukraine is a signatory.

Men arrested for homosexual conduct in Iran

The arrest of more than 30 men attending a house party in Esfahán, Iran, signals renewed efforts by Iranian authorities to enforce morality codes, Human Rights Watch said March 28.

Sources said the raid took place Feb. 28-29 and that the men have been jailed since with-

out access to lawyers and without being charged with a crime.

Police reportedly referred the men to a medical examiner to look for "evidence" they had engaged in gay sex.

Iranian law provides punishments up to death for penetrative sex between men. The last documented death sentences for consensual homosexual conduct were handed down in March 2005. It is not known whether they were carried out.

Iran is known to have executed several teens and men accused of engaging in sodomy, but in the cases that have been publicized in recent years the individuals were accused of other crimes as well, such as rape.

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission has said it suspects that other charges are tacked onto sodomy cases to prevent the public outrage that would accompany executions carried out solely for the crime of consensual adult gay sex. The group also has said it believes executions solely for gay sex are taking place out of the public eye.

But Human Rights Watch has said it cannot fully document any executions in Iran in recent years carried out solely for the crime of consensual adult gay sex, and that there is no evidence that charges of consensual homosexual conduct are converted to charges of rape in the judicial system.

Copenhagen OKs gay foster parents

In a first for Denmark, the city of Copenhagen has approved two gay couples as acceptable foster parents, the Copenhagen Post reported March 31.

The couples were placed on a list to offer homes to children removed from their own homes by government officials.

"We can't guarantee that the two couples will be used as often as other couples," said Klaus Wilmann of the city's Center for Foster Care. "But

we feel that a family consisting of two men or two women can have the same beneficial qualities as any other."

Famously liberal Denmark, which in 1989 became the first country to pass a same-sex registered-partnership law, has nonetheless remained squeamish on issues involving gays and children.

A spokesman for the official Danish Council of Ethics denounced Copenhagen's move as "supporting something abnormal."

"Boys and girls benefit by being raised by a man and a woman," Morten Kvist said.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley, Andrés Duque

LOCAL NEWS Bash Back! march in Chicago

Approximately 100 LGTBTA individuals marched through Lincoln Park and Lakeview Sat., April 5 in a demonstration that coincided with the the Bash Back! Radical Trans and Queer Convergence, according to a press release.

Bash Back! is a radical trans/queer/anarcha-feminist group that started in Chicago. The group's main goal is to fight for liberation while rejecting all forms of state power. It rejects all oppression and believes in a diversity of tactics to achieve equality.

The march targeted several sites that the group believes represents oppression, with the first such place being the Republican headquarters on Halsted and Diversey. Dozens of people danced on the sidewalk and street screaming, "We're here, we're queer, Republicans don't fuck with us."

Other targets included the police station at Addison and Halsted as well as the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. According to the release, the Center has "denied access to young Trans and Queer people who do not belong to the rich, white, Gay community."

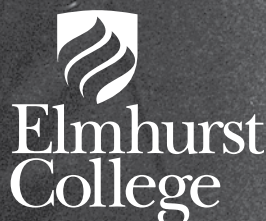
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HOMOPHOBIA AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: Lessons from the Life of Bayard Rustin

Bayard Rustin (1912-1987) was one of the most remarkable social activists of the 20th century. A champion of racial justice, he advised Martin Luther King Jr. and helped organize the momentous 1963 March on Washington. A gay man, he was stigmatized as a "sexual criminal," a smear that limited his ability to lead the movements to which he contributed passion and ideas.

John D'Emilio

John D'Emilio, Ph.D., is a professor of history and gender and women's studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His landmark biography of Bayard Rustin was a *New York Times* "Notable Book of the Year" and won the Stonewall Award of the American Library Association.



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GUEST VIEWPOINT



MARCELLAS REYNOLDS

A gay take on Big Brother

Marcellas Speaks: Big Brother's Marcellas Reynolds on the show, the other gay house guests and his life now.

"Aren't you...?" "Didn't you go to school with my sister?" "Oh my God! Marquesas! From Survivor!" I've heard all these things. I'm Marcellas Reynolds, forever to be known as "Marcellas from Big Brother." Kinda like "The Artist Formerly Known As Prince", though not as cool. In some ways it's like being a porn star. It only takes one movie to be a porn star and one show to be a reality star.

In 2002 I was home in Chicago when a friend who worked for the show's producers asked me to do Big Brother. I'd never watched Big Brother. I was ending my model career and had begun fashion styling. In fact my agents at Ford Chicago warned me against doing the show. "It will ruin your career," they said. It wasn't until I caught my boyfriend cheating on me with a guy from The Real World that I decided to do it. "If he wants a reality star, I'll be the biggest in the World," I cried while filling out the 20 plus page application. 2 weeks later I was in L.A. for finals, a month later I was in the House.

It wasn't until the door closed behind me that fear of being gay on TV hit me. At 22 I came out after a rather disastrous engagement to a beautiful, young actress who dropped me to follow her dreams to Hollywood. And boy did I come out. I was a waiter at Marche, a hip Chicago restaurant where I was discovered by the owners of Aria Model and Talent. It was hip to be gay as a waiter and even hipper as a model. Male models are anonymous, but walking onto the Big Brother set was public in a way that I'd

never been exposed. Instantly I was hit with the weight of representing both the African American and homosexual communities. That weight made me cold and unfriendly. I didn't want to open my mouth for fear a purse would fall out. I wouldn't talk or interact because I didn't want to be "too Black" or "too gay."

The 1st week of Big Brother 3 was hard. I felt I'd made a huge mistake. I wanted to go home. And the House Guests were more than happy to oblige; I was nominated for eviction. And then it happened; I opened up and became myself. I came out and discovered it was okay to be the "Black, gay guy." I managed to stay 10 out of 12 weeks. 69 days! I'm the gay contestant that has gotten farthest in the game. I hold the record for the most HoH wins and (infamously) veto wins. And I made the biggest mistake in reality TV history. Yeah I'm pretty much reality royalty. A true Big Brother All-Star.

Big Brother has a great history of representing the LGBT community. Starting with Bunky Miller (season 2) who spent his season in tears to me, who blew my chance @ \$500,000 by failing to use the Golden Veto, to Will Winkle, the nurse from NY (a neither here nor there player) to Ivette Cordero, the Cuban-American lesbian who had an amazing capacity for racist rhetoric, to our newest gay house guest Joshua Welch. Joshua was just evicted after spending 56 days in the Big Brother house. I must say I was getting worried! Was Joshua the one who would dethrone me as the ultimate gay player?! Okay I may not be the ultimate, but I'm the gay who has gotten the farthest in the game. Wait a second...Ivette was runner-up season 6. Am I not the ultimate gay player? Hm mm... Well I was chosen for All-Stars and no other gay (or lesbian) was. I'm an All-Star dammit! Which only means I had 2 shots @ winning \$500,000 and lost twice.

But back to Joshua. Much has been said about Joshua. He's abrasive. Misogynist. He's even a bully. It's a strategy used successfully by many straight male house guests. In fact the past 2 seasons, two of the meanest players in Big Brother history have won; Mike Malin, won All-Stars and Dick Donato, who actually referred to a fellow female house guest by the "c word" won season 8. Straight males get to be mean.

They get to be bullies and no one says a word and if they do it's "them" behaving badly. The individual. But if the gay guy behaves badly, he's making "us" look bad. We as the LGBT community must stop thinking of ourselves as monolithic. What one gay man does should not define or demean our entire community. I did Big Brother. My actions speak only of me. I'm not here to represent any community. And neither is Joshua.

A lot has been written about the gays on Big Brother and on reality TV in general. Many feel that only feminine men are cast, that are overly-dramatic. I find that particularly insulting since it's been lobbed at me many times. Can there ever be one gay man that everyone embraces? No, because no one can encompass all the mythical qualities that make a perfect human being. Being human is about being flawed. About making mistakes and falling. It's about learning from our mistakes and getting up, dusting ourselves off and trying to be better. It's about growth.

Reality TV at it's best is a great mirror into worlds we may otherwise not see. It can show us that we are all human no matter what our differences. Who doesn't remember Pedro Zamora from The Real World and his poignant struggle with HIV? He put a face on a disease many knew little about. Pedro's triumph of spirit was his own. It was beautiful to watch and made amazing TV. At the end of the day that's all we the viewer did, watch and as a performer that's all he did, perform. The same can be said of anyone who does any reality show. One woman is not a representative of all women. Neither is any man, regardless of his race or sexuality.

I look forward to meeting Joshua. I want to welcome him to the Big Brother family. 56 days in the Big Brother house, away from family, friends and real life, is no small feat. I want to congratulate him on a job well done. And, besides, he's hot.

Marcellas Reynolds is a correspondent for E! Networks' E! News Daily and host of Style Networks' Shop Like A Star. Look for Marcellas on upcoming episodes of How Do I Look? For more information, visit www.marcellas-reynolds.com.

LETTERS

The Steans event

Dear friend:

After winning the Democratic Primary election for State Senate in Illinois' 7th State Senate District, I was sworn in as State Senator. I am replacing retired State Sen. Carol Ronen, who recently resigned her position.

It is challenging to fill the shoes of someone who has such a long record of accomplishments. I will meet this challenge by thoroughly reviewing legislation, learning and working with my colleagues in the State Senate, and constantly seeking input from my constituents on the issues that are vital to our health and prosperity. I look forward to working on behalf of our diverse community and contributing a new voice to discussions on the policy reforms needed in our state.

Since taking office, I have been in Springfield for legislative session and was appointed to serve on three committees: Human Services, Insurance and Local Government. My quick appointment has also allowed me to immediately begin working on the priorities I discussed during the primary campaign, including comprehensive state educational funding reform; stronger environmental policies for Illinois; ending pay-to-play politics in our state; and addressing our dire state fiscal health.

My success as your state senator will be determined by the quality of our dialogue on issues that impact our community and State. To ensure I obtain feedback on vital issues, I am developing a number of communication avenues. I will be forming a Policy Advisory group, establish office hours at various locations throughout the District, attend as many block club and other community group meetings as possible, and regularly communicate via email and newsletters.

I welcome any questions, concerns or suggestions you may have. You may call me at the District office (773-769-1717) or my Springfield office (217-782-8492) or e-mail me at hsteans@senatedem.ilga.gov.

Thank you for reading my first communication as your state senator. It is a profoundly humbling and exciting task to attempt to reflect the wonderful diversity this District has as your voice in the Illinois State Senate. I look forward to working together to create better state accountability for meeting the needs of all of our residents.

Sincerely,
Heather Steans State Senator—7th District

Pot and heavy

Dear Editor:

I'm responding the the outstanding letter from Jerry Pritikin: "Pot Peeve" (4-2-08).

I'd like to add that one of the medications prescribed by my personal physician, for my arthritis pain and inflammation, has the rare potential side effect of death. In other words, if I take this medication as prescribed, I can die as a result.

On the other hand, marijuana has never been documented to kill a single person in the 5,000 year history of its use.

For me, marijuana is the more effective medication. Right now, if adult citizens opt for the safer and more effective medication, they are subject to arrest and being sent to jail with violent criminals.

Is something wrong with this situation? I think so.

Kirk Muse
Mesa, AZ

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Tahjaleenie "Mega Body" Tahji. Photo courtesy of Tony Arrington

Body language: A dancer confesses

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Domestic violence, sexual experimentation, relationships, date rape, steroid use and suicide are just some of the topics covered in Tahjaleenie "Mega Body" Tahji's book *G-String Dreams: True Confessions of a Male Exotic Dancer*. Before talking at the April 3 Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus (CBGMC) forum "Sex and Eroticism," Tahji discussed bisexuality, dancing and HIV/AIDS with Windy City Times.

Windy City Times: You cover so much in this book. Why share all of this with the public?

Tahjaleenie Tahji: Well, I've been through so much as a human being, a man and as an entertainer. I'm glad to be at the stage where I am now, [but] I'm tired of people asking me certain questions. Also, this gives me an opportunity to educate my children; I want them to know what the real world is like.

It's hard talking about sexuality and [other issues] because I come from a Christian family background. Me becoming an exotic entertainer—I had no idea that this [career] was something that was already in my family. I thought, "I'm seeing Mom dance, and I'm seeing Chippen-dales dance," but even after I wrote the book, my grandmother sat me down for two to three hours and said, "This is no mistake." Nobody wanted to tell me what was going on. I'm finding out that a whole chapter is missing from my book.

WCT: I was going to save that question until the end, but I'll ask it now: Was there anything you don't have in this book that you wish you had included?

TT: Just the realness of what my mom's and dad's [lives] were. I wish they had told me the truth: that they had done what [I do]. My dad brushed it off as ballroom dancing. [My parents] didn't really walk me through the journey of same-sex relationships and all that stuff. It was more like, "When are you going to get out of that?"

WCT: So both of your parents were dancers?

TT: Yes. My grandmother sat me down and explained it to me. My [parents] and my dad's mother used to be female exotic dancers. I asked her why no one told me this before and she said, "Because you became more successful than anyone else who did it in the family. ... You went further than anyone else; you went on national television and now you're an author. I believe that your mom and dad are jealous of you." I thought that maybe it's true, [but] maybe it isn't.

WCT: I thought you were going to say that maybe your parents were trying to protect you.

TT: No; I don't see my mom and dad trying to protect me [from] this entertainment industry. At first, they didn't seem all that shocked and they were happy that the money was coming in. That's one thing I learned about family: When you're doing well, they all start coming at you. As soon as you hit rock bottom, no one wants to talk to you.

[That being said,] one of the biggest inspirations in writing this book was to say to everybody, "Regardless of what happens to you, don't give up on your dreams. Your dream is your dream." I enjoy the exotic [dancing] world, but there's no big future in it; there are no contracts or endorsements.

There are a lot of deep things in this book, such as domestic violence and HIV/AIDS. I'm blessed in that, after 13 years in this industry, I'm HIV-negative, but I could have been positive. I could've just been out there wildin' out.

WCT: How prevalent would you say HIV/AIDS is within the exotic-dancing industry?

TT: It's not known because no one is saying anything. I know that after my friend, Sensational, died in New York that no one said anything. We really do not promote any shows that raise awareness about [HIV/AIDS]. I try to put condoms in people's hands [where I'm entertaining], and a lot of women are like, "Condoms. Wow. What am I supposed to do with this?" Some women took it as a good thing; others took it as a bad thing. A lot of religious folk are upset about condoms because, if we give them to teenagers, they see it that we're giving teenagers a green light [to have sex].

WCT: How much longer do you think you'll dance?

TT: I'm getting into acting and the recording business; I admire rappers like LL Cool J and Will Smith, who don't use terms like "bitch" and "ho." My daughter would be like, "Daddy, why did you have to say that?"

As for dancing, I'm still able to do it. [Tahji is 41.] I enjoy it, but there's a lot of wear and tear because I [physically] pick up a lot of men and women. But my dream is to have a microphone in my hand and [rapping]. I also want to continue writing books.

Read the entire interview at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Find out more about CBGMC at www.lovelybrotha.com.

Windy City Times is seeking to recognize 30 more outstanding LGBT individuals (and their allies) who are under 30 years of age.
DEADLINE: FRI., APRIL 25

THE WINDY CITY TIMES NINTH ANNUAL 30 SEEKING nominations!!! UNDER THIRTY AWARDS

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

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

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

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

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"THERE ARE PROBABLY TONS OF GAYS AND LESBIANS IN THE UNITED STATES WHO might like to emigrate—who might like to be 'exported'—to saner countries. To places like, oh, Canada, Spain, Holland, etc., basically anywhere in the EU with the possible exception of Poland. You know, places with decent economies, strong currencies, marriage equality, and far, far fewer right-wing religious douchebags running around ruining everything for everyone else. ... I'm confident that with your organization's resources, and its proven ability to raise money, you could more than cover emigration expenses for hundreds if not thousands of gays and lesbians that might like to watch the coming financial collapse of the United States from Paris, London, Rome, or Madrid." — *Gay writer Dan Savage responding to Sprigg on the blog of the Seattle alternative weekly newspaper The Stranger, March 20.*



We called it the Friday night special ... a hard-core consensual sex orgy.

—Teddy Pedersen, talking about three-way sex with former New Jersey Gov. Jim McGreevey (right) and his then-wife, Dina



Wockner News photo by Andrés Duque

"MOST HETEROSEXUALS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S ILLEGAL to get married in 49 states in the U.S. for gay couples; they don't understand that even if you have a legal contract with your spouse, your legal next of kin can and will challenge it, if you die or get sick; most heterosexuals have no idea that America bars gay spouses from immigration, and bars all HIV-positive non-Americans from even entering the country. ... The main reason for this, I think, is not so much homophobia, as the fact that most heterosexuals simply cannot imagine falling in love with someone, and being told by their own government that they cannot marry him or her. The experience of gay couples is simply beyond most straight people's experience. If it happened to any of them, there would be outrage." — *Gay writer Andrew Sullivan on his blog, Feb. 27.*

"MARRIAGE EQUALITY FOR GAY AND LESBIAN COUPLES IS another barrier that's falling, and I couldn't be happier about that. ... I have several friends that have outlasted both of my marriages, that are raising wonderful children together, that have been together in gay unions for over 25 years, so they're doing a better job than I am. ... When my children look at a loving, committed relationship, some of their finest role models are the gay and lesbian couples that they have had in their lives." — *Ugly Betty actress Vanessa Williams (who plays Wilhelmina Slater) accepting a Human Rights Campaign award at the group's annual Manhattan dinner, Feb. 23.*

"[NO] PEERING INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S STALL. ... No sitting, kneeling or lying down on the floor. No sitting on fixtures not meant to be sat upon." — *Restrictions to be imposed in public toilets by a measure under consideration in the Minnetonka, Minn., City Council, which is unhappy that cruisers have turned a city park's restroom into a tearoom, according to WCCO-TV. Violators would be charged with a misdemeanor and banned from all public toilets in the city for one year.*

"WHILE I MUST CONFESS I'M LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT the candidacy of Barack Obama, I ardently hope that he will defeat Hillary Clinton. I can't forget Hillary's position in support of the Defense of Marriage Act and her scabrous abstinence-only preachings while first lady, any more than I can erase from my brainpan Obama's using gay-hostile preacher Donnie McClurkin to shill for votes in South Carolina, or his refusal to be photographed with San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom because he feared that might be interpreted as support for gay marriage." — *Longtime independent journalist Doug Ireland writing in New York City's Gay City News, March 13.*



"YOU JOURNALISTS LIKE TO THINK THAT WHEN WE TALK TO YOU, that is our official coming out, but we have been out for ages before that. Brad and I support many nonprofits in Los Angeles and appear together on annual dinner programs as sponsors or various other events where we are listed together. Our names are carved in granite on the donor wall of East West Players; we have been out. You don't have your names carved in granite and say you are not out." — *Actor George Takei, who played Sulu in the first Star Trek series, to the Florida gay magazine The Gazette, February issue.*

"WE CALLED IT THE FRIDAY NIGHT SPECIAL ... A HARD-CORE consensual sex orgy." — *Teddy Pedersen, 29, a former driver for now-gay former New Jersey Gov. Jim McGreevey, claiming he had three-way sex with McGreevey and his wife, Dina, multiple times from 1999 to 2001, to the New York Post, March 16.*

"HE LIKED WATCHING ME, AND SHE WOULD WATCH ME while she was [performing sex acts] with Jim. In my opinion, me being a part of their sexual relationship enhanced it for both of them." — *Teddy Pedersen, 29, a former driver for now-gay former New Jersey Gov. Jim McGreevey, claiming he had three-way sex with McGreevey and his wife, Dina, multiple times from 1999 to 2001, to the New York Post, March 16.*

"THIS HAPPENED, THIS HAPPENED IN THE PAST, and now we need to move on with our lives. For all of our sakes, particularly our daughter, we need to close this chapter and look toward the future. This was referenced in an earlier draft of my book, and I had it removed. I still hope Dina and I can resolve our issues privately." — *Jim McGreevey, confirming Pedersen's story in a March 17 statement.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by
Julieta
Cervantes

GONE, BABY, GONE

The Armitage Gone! Dance troupe is profiled in Dancin' Feats. See below.

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Teddy, set, go.
Page 14.

MOVIES

'People' person.
Page 20.

ART

Well 'Sprung'.
Page 18.

Dancin' Feats

BY ERIC EATHERLY

Karole Armitage has had a very busy career as a dancer and a dancemaker. She has danced to works by George Balanchine and Merce Cunningham. She has choreographed and directed work in Europe for over 15 years. She has even rubbed elbows with legendary dancers like Mikhail Baryshnikov and Rudolf Nureyev; fashion designers such as Jean Paul Gaultier and Christian Lacroix; and even the Queen of Pop, Madonna. Now, she's focused on her own New York-based company, **Armitage Gone! Dance**, which makes its Chicago debut Thurs.-Sat., April 17-19, at the Dance Center of Columbia College, 1306 S. Michigan.

The program for Armitage Gone! Dance's Chicago engagement offers two pieces created by Karole Armitage, "Ligeti Essays" and "Time is the echo of an axe within a wood." The first is named after György Ligeti, the late Hungarian composer who Armitage regards as "one of the great renegades of 21st-century contemporary composing." The piece uses 15 short songs by Ligeti, each one working like a *haiku*—short, simple, but full of meaning—to express a different state of mind. They range from dreamlike to sarcastic, and humorous to poignant, and are danced by a different combination of dancers—solos, duets, trios and so forth. For Armitage, the work is a metaphor for the different ways people come together. "What does it mean to be human today?" is one of the questions Armitage asked herself for inspiration, she explained. "The piece explores the philosophy of embracing the whole range of human existence. ... It's both violent and beautiful." The movement for each piece is very much rooted in Ligeti's evocative music. Armitage said, "The dance makes love to the music. Much like the physical act of making love, it's about two independent people coming together and making something happen." The dance plays out on a gray-floored stage, ringed by fluorescent lights and accompanied by an enigmatic silver tree, a set designed by interna-



Armitage Gone! Dance. Photo by Julieta Cervantes

tionally acclaimed visual artist David Salle.

The second work Armitage presents, "Time is the echo of an axe within a wood," set to music by Bela Bartok, is not so much about different states of mind as about how time works in the mind. "It's more about psychological time," she explained. "Memory, dream, fantasy, nightmare." For this work, the set uses a beaded curtain that distorts light and darkness. Shadows of the dancers who have just gone off stage or are about to come on linger in the periphery, creating surreal phantoms, a fitting metaphor for the different conscious and subconscious parts of the mind.

In both works Armitage showcases her unique movement aesthetic, which she describes as having "the refinement of ballet but the freedom and personality of modern dance." The choreography is an organic combination of fluid sculptures, showing off the dancers' flexibility, versatility and profound relationship with gravity. Armitage, who says she is very inspired by the grace and fluidity of Japanese calligraphy, explores the entire space around the moving body, warping and curving space with a sense of sensuality that becomes primal and almost even erotic. For Armitage, that's the point. "It's all about the sensuality of being human," she said. But through the graceful forms she creates, there is a clear eye for detail and an em-

phasis on precise technique. While exploring themes of humanity and connectivity, Armitage does nothing short of create works of startling beauty.

Don't miss this rare opportunity to see one of contemporary dance's most influential voices. 312-344-6600; \$24-\$28.

Also look forward to these coming performances:

American Ballet Theatre (ABT) gets audiences in the mood for spring with the Chicago premiere of *The Sleeping Beauty*, with staging by Artistic Director Kevin McKenzie, former ABT ballerina Gelsey Kirkland and Michael Chernov. ABT brings this classic fairy tale about the beautiful Princess Aurora and the evil sorceress Carabosse to life in a lavish all-new production. Seven performances only, Wed.-Sun., April 9-13, at the Civic Opera House, 20 N. Wacker. 312-902-1500; \$30-\$110.

The Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago, presents the latest creation from the **Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company**, Chapel/Chapter, Wed.-Sat., April 9-12. Through a seamless blend of dance, music, text and video, Chapel/Chapter addresses the news media, the judicial process and the prison system in an evocative tale of violence, morality and humanity. 312-397-4010; \$28-\$40.

Circle in the Square: New Works in Dance Theatre will present six world-premiere dances Fri.-Sun., April 11-13, at the Elizabeth F. Cheney Mansion, 220 N. Euclid, Oak Park. Each dance is made especially for a different room in the house and features choreography by Winifred Haun, Andrew Adams, Erika Gilfether, Christopher Ellis and Dawn Marie Galtieri. 773-782-9471; \$20-\$25.

Inside Chicago Dance presents its third annual spring concert Fri.-Sat., May 2-3, at Ruth Page Theatre, 1016 N. Dearborn. The program this season is inspired by American abstract artist Jackson Pollock. Drawing from his "drip period," each dance becomes a multimedia experience that unfolds different aspects of Pollock's life and art. 312-337-6543; \$15-\$20.

If you're feeling especially inspired by these wonderful dance performances and you want to learn some fancy moves of your own then there is a brand new Web site that will be an invaluable tool. TakeChicagoDance.com, sister site to **SeeChicagoDance.com**, is a comprehensive catalog of all the various classes, teachers and studios in the Chicagoland area. Users can search by class style, schedule, location or level, and can even search for social-dancing venues where to show off new moves. Bookmark it and get dancing!

CRITICS' PICS

I Am Who I Am (The Teddy Pendergrass Story), Black Ensemble, open run. Rumors swirled when an accident left soul-sweetman Pendergrass in a wheelchair, but it couldn't silence his golden voice. Sit back and enjoy the music in Black Ensemble's bioplay. MSB

A Man of No Importance, Bailiwick, through April 20. This musical by the creators of *Ragtime* is better and more affecting than the meandering 1994 film it's based upon. It's a nicely performed tale of a Dublin bus conductor gingerly coming out in the 1960s. SCM

Sleeping Beauty, American Ballet Theatre, Auditorium, April 9-13. Marius Petipas' evocative original choreography, Tchaikovsky's lush score and the ABT's artistry tell the classic fairy tale of a sorceress' curse, a beautiful princess and a charming prince. CS

A Steady Rain, Royal George, through June 8. Keith Huff's harrowing, hard yet poetic cop buddy drama is back and better than before, subtly improved by director Russ Tutterow and galvanized by actors Randy Steinmeyer and Peter DeFaria. Don't miss! JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan
and Sullivan

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Kevin McIlvaine in *I Am Who I Am*.

Kevin McIlvaine: Soul man

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Black Ensemble Theater's *I Am Who I Am* chronicles the life of soul singer Teddy Pendergrass—and one of the reasons that the production has been widely acclaimed is Kevin McIlvaine's portrayal of the more mature Pendergrass. McIlvaine—who is an entertainer and a minister—talked with Windy City Times about the musical, Pendergrass and the Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

Windy City Times: Tell me about your background. How did you come to be an entertainer?

Kevin McIlvaine: I became an entertainer because I saw one of my church members per-

forming in a play. It was very exciting, [and] I thought, "I could do that." I went to audition at the ETA Creative Arts Center [in Chicago] for one of those plays, they gave me a shot and the rest is history.

WCT: Being a minister, how do you reconcile your religious side with some of Pendergrass' songs, which are known for being pretty sensual?

KM: Well, we're all human beings and everybody has not been saved all of their lives, and you have to go through some things. How are you going to know how good God is unless you've gone through something? No one goes through life untouched by pain and tragedy. It's not how you fall down, but how you pick yourself up, that determines your true character.

WCT: What was it like meeting Teddy Pendergrass?

KM: It was fabulous. Just to see the humbleness of this man and how he took this situation and [realized] that he still has a purpose. I believe that he's the only quadriplegic to get a recording contract. Many of the songs he's made since [Pendergrass' 1982 car accident] have been nominated for Grammys.

WCT: You and the show have gotten incredible reviews.

KM: Thank you. I'm just enjoying the opportunity to portray someone who is alive, and who has made an impact in American music. What I will tell you is that I really admire how Teddy Pendergrass takes care of his mom. He is truly a man who makes sure that his family is taken care of.

WCT: You're portraying Pendergrass, of course, but you've also portrayed historical figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Frederick Douglass. Which has been the most difficult role?

KM: Frederick Douglass, without a doubt—because I've never heard his voice. We've heard the voices of [many figures], but there's nothing of Douglass on tape. We're fortunate to have his writings, though. He lived a long time, taught

himself how to read and then wrote. He was, without a doubt, the greatest civil-rights leader of the 1800s.

WCT: Is there any other person you'd like to portray or is there a fictional role you'd like to take on?

KM: I don't know about fictional, but I like to portray people [such as abolitionist] David Walker, [Haitian leader] Toussaint L'Overture and [jazz singer] Johnny Hartman.

WCT: Now who's going to portray you?

KM: I don't know; I don't make enough money to have someone portray me. I feel fortunate and blessed that God has [given] me enough talent to bring this history to life and to inspire young people. That's what it's all about.

WCT: Let me ask something a little different: Being a minister, what are your feelings regarding the situation involving the Rev. Jeremiah Wright?

THEATER REVIEW

Boneyard Prayer

Playwright: Conceived by Frank Maugeri, written in collaboration with Seth Bockley
At: Redmoon Central, 1463 W. Hubbard
Phone: 312-850-8440; \$15, \$35
Runs through: May 11

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

There's a gorgeous melancholy to Redmoon Theater's *Boneyard Prayer*, as well as a timbre as rich and sorrowful as the loam over an ancient grave. Conceived and directed by Frank Maugeri, the piece taps into the grief of the profound and the eternal while telling a story of exquisite specificity that echoes into the universal.

Boneyard Prayer is as terrifying as it is beautiful in its depiction of the supreme fallibility of human beings. Though lilting, haunting music by Charles Kim and a story by Maugeri written in collaboration with Seth Bockley, the tumble from happiness and security to lost, living ghost is revealed as a spiral made up of the tiniest steps, each one infinitely easy to take. In the best of times, the Depression-era hobos and lonesome tramps of *Boneyard Prayer* could create a powerful story. Today, as thousands lose their homes to predatory lenders and the most basic health insurance is only a dream for millions, Redmoon's fable is little less than galvanizing.

The dichotomy between the harrowing journey of Martin and Alice from their exuberant, turn-of-the-century dance-hall romance to soul-crushed pennilessness in 1938 and the sheer beauty of the storytelling is hypnotic. Co-director Tracy Otwell's set design incor-

KM: Rev. Jeremiah Wright is a fantastic preacher. He's been at [Trinity United Church of Christ] for over 30 years, and they're going to [scrutinize] one little comment? C'mon, now.

You have to understand the importance of the African-American church to our people. At one point, that was the only place for [Blacks]. Anybody who has one of the largest congregations in Chicago has to be doing something right.

I believe that we live in a country where you're allowed freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. If that's what our constitution is about, then that's something we have to stand for. Just because one person makes a statement that everyone doesn't agree with... you just a person based on his character, not based on one sentence he said.

See www.blackensembletheater.org for more information about *I Am Who I Am*.

porates 641 pounds of dirt (we'll take their word for the weight), a literal representation of dust to dust. As the story unspools, this sepia graveyard world of ashes and grit morphs into a shadowscape of freight cars, tenement apartments, third-tier vaudeville stages and the vast, cold and frightening terrain of the homeless.

The mesmerizing fable of Alice and Martin begins with a musical invocation from Alice as she cradles an infant in a coffin-sized square of light. "Someday, we're all gonna go back home," intones Kasey Foster's Alice, and it's with a voice that could draw tears from statues. The baby is dead, and as she buries it in a moment both shocking and gentle, the stage opens up into a world of hard labor and harder drinking.

With comic shadings slyly reverberating from *Waiting for Godot*, we meet Martin (Alex Bal-estrieri, voice colored by both defiance and desperation), the husband who left Alice 23 years earlier in a tragic, alcoholic haze. Like some deeply damaged Odysseus, he's finally come home.

A ragtag ensemble of gravediggers tells the redemptive tale of Martin and Alice in song and by manipulating a pair of eerily expressive puppets. Jesse Mooney-Bullock's weathered, wooden Alice and Martin—each hand-carved from single slabs of wood—are simply extraordinary, their lined, exhausted faces summoning the spirit of the late, great Dorothea Lange's iconic photos documenting the Depression.

Irreparable loss and sublime, divine forgiveness—both are embedded in the brutal poetry of *Boneyard Prayer*, which surely stands as one of Redmoon's finest achievements.

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Photo: Carol Rosag

SPOTLIGHT



Los Desaparecidos—The Disappeared Ones—is the name given to those kidnapped and presumed killed by right-wing death squads in modern South American nations. But in Barbara Lhota's world premiere play for *Babes With Blades*, the title has a different context. This swashbuckler is set in 16th Century Spain and follows the lives and loves of two sisters through clandestine trysts, blackmail, plots and counterplots. It's the first *Babes With Blades* show to have men in the cast, but that doesn't mean the women won't swing a wicked sword, or that a whiff of same-sex love won't waft through the air. *Los Desaparecidos* runs through May 11 at the Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark; 773-880-0016; \$17-\$20. Photo by Beth Cummings



Dreamlandia. Photo courtesy of Teatro Vista

THEATER REVIEW

Dreamlandia

Playwright: Octavio Solis

At: Teatro Vista at Victory Gardens

Greenhouse, 2257 N. Lincoln

Phone: 773-871-3000; \$15-\$35

Runs through: May 4

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Dreamlandia is exactly the kind of play that Teatro Vista should be producing. The play endeavors to explore contentious issues of immigration, economics and Mexico-U.S. relations.

Problem is that Dreamlandia playwright Octavio Solis meanders so much with his weird and posturing plotting that it becomes a wearisome place to visit by the end. And that's despite Teatro Vista's insightful and darkly funny staging by director Cecilie Keenanwith and an acting ensemble that gives impassioned performances.

Dreamlandia is Solis' messy, magical realist portrait of an extremely dysfunctional family that straddles the border between El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico. And this isn't just any family—it's a metaphorical one that damn-ingly shows the contrasting mindsets between the two countries and how the U.S. exploits its southern neighbor.

Dreamlandia begins with a violent and deadly birth. Rich and powerful CEO Celestino (Craig Spidle) refuses to take his cocaine-addled Mexican girlfriend to a U.S. hospital, so he gets assistance from a Mexican midwife named Dolores (Charin Alvarez), who is also the mistress of Celestino's crooked border patrolman brother, Frank (H.B. Ward).

The baby survives, but when the mother doesn't, Celestino has Dolores and her children (through Frank) deported. He then proceeds to have his new son, Lazaro (Tony Sancho), raised like a chained animal on an island in the middle of the Rio Grande River.

It's bizarre plotting like this that makes the serious and important points of Dreamlandia hard to swallow. I'm sure Solis was hoping the dark humor and wacky situations would make the contentious issues easier to take, but in a way it just cheapens them by playing things mainly for laughs.

That's a pity because Teatro Vista has gone all out on Dreamlandia with great production values (particularly the dreamy video projections by Luis DeLaTorre and Reyna Diana) and incisive acting.

As Blanca, Dolores' grown daughter out for vengeance, Jessica Camacho is very much the heart of the production, honestly showing the anger and resentment of a child denied happiness due to circumstances of her birth and her mother's mistreatment.

On the humorous side, Marcus Catillo is great at Blanca's mentally challenged brother Pepin, who has choice comic bits (especially with night goggles) with the border patrolmen of Troy Martin and Mitch Salm. Sandra Delgado is also pitch perfect as Vivian, Celestino's newly acquired wife who coldly and calculatingly sells her Mexican brothers and sisters short as she greedily takes in the wealth and status of her new position.

So in the end, Dreamlandia is an extremely frustrating experience. There is so much right about Teatro Vista's imaginative and well-acted

production, but so many annoying things about Solis' ambitious but ultimately unsatisfying writing.

THEATER REVIEW

Kane

Playwright: conceived and written

by Nicholas DuFloth

At: Silent Theatre Company at Edgewater Presbyterian Church, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr

Phone: 773-597-5403; \$20

Runs through: April 20

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The action opens with a newscast announcing the death of American tycoon William Rupert Kane after a long illness. His final words were alleged to have been the single word, "Adelaide," an enigmatic legacy triggering a media frenzy as reporters search in vain for clues to its significance...

All right, so an original plot is not the main attraction in this "satirical homage" to the legendary Orson Welles film, Citizen Kane. Nor is it the irony of the Silent Theatre Company—a troupe devoted to the replication of pre-sound cinema—selecting a "talkie" as the focus of their latest production. What renders Nicholas DuFloth's proposal to update the 1941 screenplay so conceptually impressive is the accuracy of his analogical choices, both in the text—where the ambitious Kane strategically marries the daughter of an Internet mogul, for example—and in the technology employed in the quest to identify the mysterious Adelaide.

Ah, yes—the technology! In 1941, news was gathered by journalists packing notebooks and reel-to-reel tape recorders, often accompanied by photographers toting bulky flash cameras and even more cumbersome movie equipment. Nowadays, the team assigned to assemble a television retrospective on the deceased magnate has all these at its service, but it has so much more: The video score assembled by Krzysztof Piotrowski, Victor Holstein and Dave Cullen encompasses live satellite feeds (complete with characteristic stop-motion resolution); hand-held mini-cams (including a sequence where the footage records the flight of a tabloid snoop pursued by security guards); PDA candid shots; interviews in remote sites featuring cavelike acoustics and ambient noise; and a fully-produced TV movie (only briefly viewed, but keep an eye on the credits). Oh, there are some live-action scenes, too, accompanied by incidental music from a stageside jazz combo.

Most astonishing, however, is how efficiently this ambitious project is executed, clocking in at a tidy 70 minutes even on its opening night, when the electronic cues balked occasionally (perhaps exacerbated by overlap from the tech-heavy show sharing the space at Edgewater Presbyterian).

Triple threat Nicholas DuFloth, in addition to writing and directing, turns in a charismatic performance as the complex hero, flanked by a trio of actors in a multiplicity of roles, and the aforementioned cluster of musicians. Look for this show to do Chicago proud when Silent Theatre embarks on its 2008 summer tour.

THEATER REVIEW

Lust, Lies and Marriage

Playwright: Traditional, adapted

by Antonio Fava

At: Piccolo Theatre, 600 Main, Evanston

Phone: 847-424-0089; \$25

Runs through: May 10

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

The 500-year-old Italian tradition of *commedia dell'arte* has given us Punchinello, Harlequin, Pantaloon, Punch and Judy and the very word "zany." *Commedia*-influenced Shakespeare and Moliere and has inspired comedy right down to modern TV sitcoms—which is funny because no one in all the world knows precisely what it was like, although we know what it looked like through period sketches and engravings.

Semi-improvised *commedia* didn't use written scripts but only story outlines (there are hundreds) in which stock characters—lovers, parents, braggarts, simpletons, fools, servants—were identified by signature costumes and partial masks. Actors in close-knit companies knew one another's abilities and responded to each other and to audiences with improvised dialogue and actions around familiar storylines. Singing, dancing, tumbling, juggling and the use of a literal slapstick might be part of a *commedia* show. Actors had signature stage business, too, called *lazzi*, with direct modern equivalents. Think a Danny Thomas spritz-take or Fonzie with his thumbs saying "Aaaayyyyy!"

Modern interpretations of the old outlines and character types differ vastly. I've seen dozens of attempts at modern *commedia*, most of which overkill the slapstick or founder for lack of intense physical discipline. The stories themselves—often about young lovers assisted by clever servants to overcome obstacles to their happiness imposed by their elders—seem silly

(and yet are no sillier than most sitcoms).


The very best *commedia* I've seen was a guest company presented several years ago by Court Theatre. The physically skilled lead actors knew how to be quietly funny, working slowly and in low key to build their characters and comic business. Recall how Laurel and Hardy built their scenes together. They never were frantic until the moment they had to be.

This effort by Piccolo Theatre is the second-best *commedia* I've seen, which is saying a lot. It was developed and directed by Italian master Antonio Fava, returning to Chicago as a guest artist. His Piccolo troupe has a strong sense of action, comic technique and physical contrast. The pompous Doctor (Amy Gorelow) and clever servant Coviello (Sam Wootten) are a Mutt & Jeff combo. Tall Wootten's comic understatement has particular charm. The hen-like innkeeper Rosetta (Deborah Proud) and her profoundly simple Pulcinella (John Szostek) also provide fun. The four young lovers are pretty and enthusiastic but every bit as silly as everyone else. I missed the touch of poetic nobility *commedia* lovers sometimes have as contrast against their controlling elders. Even with *commedia*'s fast pace the show seems a little long, and 95 minutes without an intermission might make a better evening.

The traditional costumes (Michelle Rossi, Angela Elowsky), authentic leather masks (Fava) and simple platform stage (Szostek, Kurt Sharp) provide flavorful and historic *commedia* trap-pings.

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MUSIC

Girl in a Coma lives it up

BY AMY WOOTEN

Latina rock band Girl in a Coma has been enjoying a whirlwind of success.

Although they've been on the road building a loyal fan base for years, the San Antonio, Texas, trio, who takes its name from the Smiths song "Girlfriend in a Coma," rose to success after the release of its debut album *Both Before I'm Gone* on Joan Jett's Blackheart Record label.

The band, which fuses its rock and punk influences over lead singer Nina Diaz' vocals to create a unique sound, consists of three tough,



Girl in a Coma. Photo by Michael Rubenstein

tattooed young women: sisters Nina and Phanie Diaz and out lesbian bassist Jenn Alva.

Windy City Times spoke with Alva in anticipation of the band's upcoming April 10 show at Ronny's Bar, 2101 N. California. See www.mp-shows.com.

Windy City Times: Does it get tiring to be on the road so much? I know you spent years on the road building a fan base before you really started to get recognition.

Jenn Alva: Driving-wise, but I think we handle it pretty well. We like it.

WCT: When did you first pick up the bass?

JA: I started playing in 1992 because of [drummer] Phanie [Diaz] — I met her when I was 12. I got a bass and she started teaching me.

WCT: You two have been best friends for a really long time. What did you first initially bond over? Was it music?

JA: It was music. She had a Kurt Cobain magazine. I was the loudmouth in the class, always getting in trouble. I told her, "Aw, I love Nirvana!" We just started talking because of music. Then, that summer, we were just calling each other, not making any sense on the phone and

being silly and stuff.

WCT: When did [lead singer] Nina Diaz [Phanie's younger sister] come into the picture? When did you realize she had an amazing voice?

JA: That wasn't until probably late 2000. She was interested in playing guitar. We knew she was learning and Phanie taught her basic chords and stuff, and she took it from there. She had a birthday party and she played with like her brother and one of her friends from school, and it was just covers and stuff. But she was really shy. We couldn't even hear her sing, really. That day, on the porch, she said to us, "Hey, I wrote a song. Do you want to hear it?" We heard it and our mouths dropped.

WCT: What is it like to have grown up openly lesbian in Texas?

JA: Texas is so big, so there's so many different—not necessarily stereotypes—but expectations of Texas. We're from San Antonio, which is great. Once you start passing Austin and keep going down, it's completely different. It's definitely north Texas versus south Texas. South Texas is more Mexican-American culture. My family is Mexican, so coming out to them was like, "Well, we kind of don't agree with that, but we're going to love you anyway." I think that's how it goes here, though I can't vouch for anybody but me. San Antonio is a great city. I love living here.

Read the whole interview at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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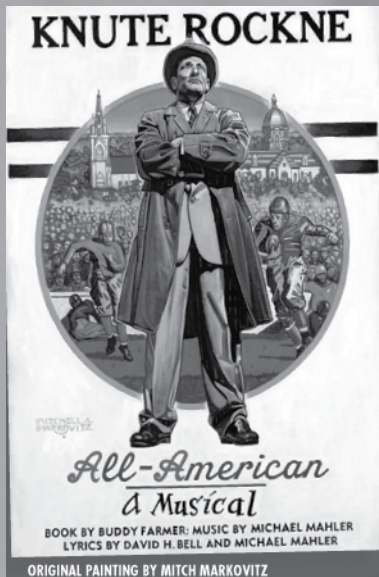
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Upcoming shows

Listed below are upcoming local concerts that, for various reasons, may be of special interest to the LGBT community. Venues are in Chicago unless otherwise indicated:

—**April 10:** Bitch & The Exciting Conclusion, Schubas, 3159 N. Southport

—**April 12:** Sasha & Digweed, House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn

—**April 14:** Styx and Koko Taylor, Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield

—**April 15:** Chevelle, House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn

—**April 16:** Laurie Anderson, Harris Theater, 205 E. Randolph

—**April 17-18:** My Chemical Romance and Billy Talent, Congress Theatre, 2135 N. Milwaukee

—**April 19:** Mannheim Steamroller, Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena, Aurora

—**April 19:** Kathy Mattea, Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N. Lincoln

—**April 19:** The Four Tops, Peoria Civic Center, 201 SW Jefferson, Peoria

—**April 20:** Brian Mazzaferri, Breakers Broken and Packey, Double Door, 1572 N. Milwaukee

—**April 20:** Lynyrd Skynyrd, Prairie Capital Convention Center, 1 Convention Center Plaza, Springfield

—**April 22:** Carrie Underwood, Peoria Civic Center, 201 SW Jefferson, Peoria

—**April 23-24:** Joe Jackson, Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield

—**April 26-27:** Mary J. Blige and Jay-Z, United Center, 1901 W. Madison

—**April 27:** Holly Near and emma's revolution, Wellington Avenue United Church Of Christ, 615 W. Wellington

—**May 2:** Kate Nash, Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield

—**May 8-9:** Dolly Parton, Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State

—**May 16:** KT Tunstall, Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield

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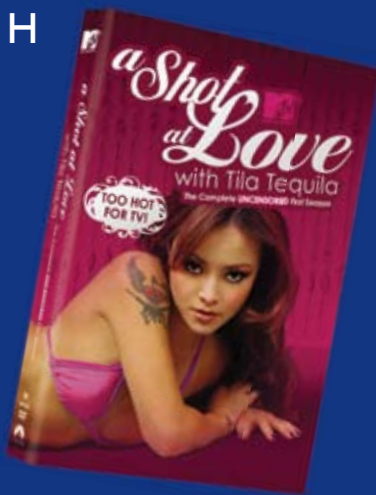
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'Spring' Awakening

Windy City Times photographer Steve Becker (whose "Rose," a manipulated Polaroid image, is pictured left) is among the artists featured in the "Sprung: A visual Commemoration of Spring" exhibit at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. "Sprung," which will run through April 30, features several other artists, including Rob Porazinski, Jesus Solis, Meridee Hodges, Joey Wozniak and Rene Alvarez. Image courtesy of Becker



There's Something About Harry

An LGBT reception in support of Illinois State Rep. Harry Osterman, D-Chicago, was held Fri., April 4, at Big Chicks, 5024 N. Sheridan. Osterman could not make the event because of a family matter, but that development did not stop people from coming out and enjoying the event. Photo by Mel Ferrand

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was filed by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. File no. D08111812 on the MAR 20 2008 under the assumed name of BS Unique Store with the business located at 1917 W. Touhy Apt 1 Chicago, IL 60626. The true name and residence address of the owner is: Amiku A. Egbebi, 1917 W. Touhy Apt 1 Chicago, IL 60626. **(4/16/08-3)**

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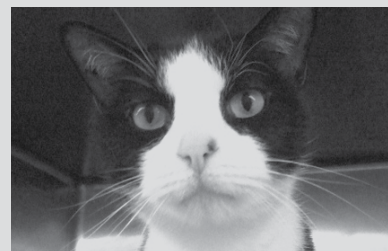


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Society, where he was surrendered due to an allergic family member.

To learn more about Austin or other adoptable pets, visit www.treehouseanimals.org or call Tree House Animal Foundation at 773-784-5488, ext.# 235.



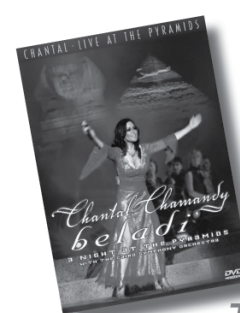
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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Smart People, Chaos Theory

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Director Noam Murro—who has directed commercials for Nike, Volkswagen and Starbucks—moves into feature films with **Smart People**, a movie far from the sleek advertisements these would have suggested. It's the story of the re-awakening of an overbearing college professor and his family: Lawrence Wetherhold (Dennis Quaid), son James (Ashton Holmes) and daughter Vanessa (Ellen Page), a caustic high school overachiever. They're a trio that characters from Margot at the Wedding would love. Audiences who love seeing cranky, emotionally blocked characters find their prickly way to redemption will be happy to endure the withering onscreen insults, but I didn't have much use for these dyspeptic folks and was happy to see them go at the fade-out.

The plot of *Smart People* has two threads: a tenuous romance between Lawrence and former student and current doctor Janet (Sarah Jessica Parker), who attends to him in the ER after he has an accident. The other plot involves the arrival of Lawrence's ne'er-do-well, self-absorbed brother Chuck (Thomas Haden Church), who is in the movie to represent the not-so-bright

audience members. Chuck screws up constantly but lets it roll off his back and he exhorts the uptight, brainiac Wetherholds to do the same. The movie details the convergence of these two emotional ideologies.

Lawrence, meanwhile, is about as uptight as they come. To make him appear more "professor-like," I guess, Quaid is given a beard; a phony, protruding gut (in real life the actor is renowned for his six pack abs); and an acrid personality—one so disagreeable that his own publishers suggest he title his next book, *You Can't Read*. Vanessa is even more of a pill. When Janet phones her up from the ER to inform her of her father's accident, Vanessa is so tart that Janet calls her a "bitch." I thought, "My sentiments exactly" and then wrote on my notepad, "Why does this actor irritate me so much?"

Here I must confess that I have my own cranky axe to grind: I can't stand Ellen Page. I know, I know, most of the movie going world seems to find this young actress God's gift to cinema, but I am not among them. I have seen Page in *Hard Candy*, *X-Men: The Last Stand*, *Juno* and, now, *Smart People*. I have also watched her interviewed by Barbara Walters and others on TV, and I honestly can't tell the difference between the condescending teen on the screen and the condescending young adult off of it. Maybe Page's screen personality just rubs me the wrong way—the way that Jennifer Aniston's bangs always do, the way that Tom Cruise's overwrought intensity does. Everyone, critic and casual moviegoer alike, has inexplicable reasons why they either respond or don't respond to certain film personalities. But responses can change: I used to feel the same antipathy (big-time) toward Richard Gere, and now like him in just about everything he does. And I loved Aniston's performance in *Friends With Money*. So maybe Page will grow on me as the movies add up—but maybe not.

Part of my crankiness has to do with not just Page but with the over-familiarity of the movie, which comes not just from seeing Baumbach's pictures, but a whole crop of similarly driven indie films. In fact, I assumed this was an Alexander Payne movie until I saw Murro's name in the credits, so closely does it resemble plot



Ellen Page in *Smart People*.

points from *Sideways* and *Election*. Personally, I like my crabby conversion character movies along the lines of, say, *The Accidental Tourist*, where the transformation of fussbudget William Hurt to an unpredictable life of messiness with kooky Geena Davis was accompanied by the syrupy, plaintive John Williams music. Maybe Page could play the Geena Davis part in the eventual remake. She could add her innate know-it-all attitude to the role. Maybe by then I'll even get her and will respond—but maybe not.

Another screen hunk—Ryan Reynolds—also steps out of familiar territory in **Chaos Theory**, a movie that starts out promising a modern-day Rock Hudson-Doris Day sex comedy and then segues into a sodden relationship drama, although neither is particularly satisfying.

I am big on the "To Do" lists but Reynolds' character, Frank Allen, a renowned efficiency expert, has got me beat by a mile. This is a guy with note cards in his pocket—he's anal to the point of pathological. Naturally, Frank's obsession is going to get off-track in a major way—hence, the potentially naughty Hudson-Day sex mix-ups, where a series of misunderstandings widens until the male character has dug a hole so deep with the leading lady he might as well keep going until he reaches China. The plot heads off in this direction, and the Bacharach-

Mancini '60s soft-pop loungy background score help take it there.

But Reynolds is no Hudson or Jack Lemmon, and Emily Mortimer—as his frustrated wife, though fine—doesn't exactly have the effervescence of Day or Dorothy Provine. Reynolds tries hard but doesn't seem to have the talent for farce and there's none of the madness or gleeful desperation in his eyes needed for such a role. Stuart Townsend, in the Dean Martin smarmy best-friend role, offers promise, as does Constance Zimmer as Mortimer's acidic gal pal. However, both are sidelined when the movie veers into deep waters (though Townsend is brought back as a plot device).

One thing is for sure: The movie lives up to its title. How else to explain the random switch from such a dizzy set-up with such promise to a typical, by-the-numbers relationship drama? Chaos theory, indeed.

Film Note

—The 24th Annual Chicago Latino Film Festival continues through April 16 and includes the Chicago premiere of *Tal Como Somos* (Just As We Are), a documentary that follows the lives of six Latino gay and bisexual men (including a Chicago couple) and a transgender woman. It screens Fri., April 11, at 8:30 p.m. at Instituto Cervantes, 31 W. Ohio. Jesus Ramirez-Valles and Judith McCray—the film's executive producer and, director-producer, respectively—are both Chicago residents. My interview with Ramirez-Valles—an associate professor of public health at the University of Chicago whose research of the impact of HIV/AIDS and the stigmatization of Latino LGBT persons within their own community forms the basis of the documentary—appears in this week's online edition of Windy City Times. For more information about the festival, visit www.LatinoCulturalCenter.org or phone the fest's hotline at 312-409-1757.

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

Crew and View



The Windy City Gay Idol series continued April 1 at Crew, 4804 N. Broadway. In an unusual development, four people—Jennifer, Jennifer, Edward and Kevin—advanced to the semifinals, as opposed to the usual two. Photos by Kirk Williamson

In the Closet



The fun continued April 3 as Windy City Gay Idol took place at The Closet, 3325 N. Broadway, where the winners were Lori and Alexis. Idol will next be at Club Krave, 13126 S. Western, Blue Island, on April 9 and Scarlet, 3320 N. Halsted, on April 16. Photos by Kirk Williamson

WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, April 9

CALOR HAH: Hombres Apoyando Hombres. For gay/bi men with HIV/AIDS, in Spanish. 7-9 p.m., 3220 W. Armitage, 773-235-3161 ext. 223

Equality Illinois Lobby Day for Civil Unions in Illinois. Free, buses depart on Chicago's North Side at 7 a.m. to Springfield after a short stop in Bolingbrook, depart 6 p.m., see www.eqil.org, 773-477-7173 or email info@eqil.org

Partners for Rogers Park Announcement and discussion of results of a renters' survey and what they imply. 6:30 p.m., Parish Center at St. Jerome's Church, 1709 W. Lunt Ave.

Windy City Gay Idol 2008 Sixth event of 6th annual talent search contest. 9 p.m. signup/10 p.m. start, Club Krave, 13126 S. Western in Blue Island, www.windycitymediagroup.com for rules/regulations, www.myspace.com/2007windycitygayidol

Women & Children First Bookstore Isabel Allende: The Sum of Our Days. Tickets free with book purchase, Swedish American Museum, 7:30 p.m., 5211 N. Clark St., call 773-769-9299 to order book and reserve ticket

Thursday, April 10

About Face Theatre Wonka Ball kick-off party. 7-9 p.m., Hamburger Mary's, 5400 N. Clark St., RSVP to membership@aboutface theatre.com

CALOR Nonclinical Mental Health Support Group for men and women. Bilingual. 6-8 p.m., 3220 W. Armitage, 773-235-3161 ext. 232

Lifeline Theatre 25th Anniversary Benefit, featuring "Strangers with Candy" actress Amy Sedaris. 6:30-10:30 p.m., \$100 a ticket, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St., 773-761-4477 for tickets

Ronny's Girl in a Coma performs, local band 8 Inch Betsey opens. 2101 N. California Ave. 9 p.m., \$7, www.mp-shows.com

Schubas Bitch and the Exciting Conclusion perform to promote their new EP,

"B+TEC." 3159 N. Southport Ave., see www.bitchmusic.com or www.myspace.com/bitch for more info

Point Foundation Benefit. Cornerstone Society event. Hosted bar and hors d'oeuvres. 6-8:30 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., RSVP required at 866-337-6468, www.point-foundation.org

Friday, April 11

Instituto Cervantes World premiere of Tal Como Somos (Just As We Are), a documentary about Latino gay and bi men, and a trans woman, at the 24th Chicago Latino Film Festival. Meet those behind the film. 9 p.m., 31 W. Ohio St., tickets at door, see www.latinoculturalcenter.org

University of Illinois at Chicago Multi-university conference on Black and Latino/a sexuality: "Race, Sex, Power: New Movements in Black and Latino/a Sexualities." Through April 12. 725 W. Roosevelt Rd., see <http://condor.depaul.edu/~rsp2008/info.html>, email racesexpower08@gmail.com for more info

University of Illinois at Chicago Race, Sex & The Spoken Word, an evening of performance and poetry with Staceyann Chin, Achy Obejas, Marcus Van. 8-10 p.m., 728 W. Roosevelt Rd., free and open to public

Victory Gardens Literally Sexy, a very sexy variety show, featuring The Flaming Dames, GayCo, The Neo-Futurists and more, hosted by David Cerda, \$15, 10:30 p.m., 2433 N. Lincoln Ave., 773-871-3000, victorygardens.org/literally-sexy

Women & Children First Bookstore Nancy Goldstein: Jackie Ormes, The First African-American Woman Cartoonist. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Saturday, April 12

AIDS Foundation of Chicago Gospel benefit, "Surely He's Able to Carry You

Through," featuring 18 vocalists from churches throughout Chicago. 6:30 p.m. doors open, 7 p.m. performance, \$25 general admission, \$20 general admission from groups of 10 or more, Whitney M. Young High School, tickets at www.theatermania.com, www.sparrowsflightproductions/pages/events.html, New Sound Gospel (10723 S. Halsted), 773-785-8001 and Betty Jo's Gift Shop (1521 W. Roosevelt, Broadview). See www.aidschicago.org.

Asians and Friends Gay Beach Blanket Bingo. 7-10 p.m., \$10 for first three Bingo cards, Joel Hall Dance Center, 1511 W. Berwyn, BYOB, RSVP at 312-409-1573

Center on Halsted Human First 2008 Gala, a benefit gala to support COH. Emcee/host: Kate Clinton. Honoring Dr. Patrick Sheahan. 6:30 p.m. cocktails and silent auction, 8 p.m. dinner, celebrate until 1 a.m. with live music and dancing, Hilton Chicago, International Ballroom, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs 5th annual Creative Chicago Expo. More than 20 workshops and top resources, services and spaces for art community. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph St., www.chicagoartistsresource.org

Davenport's Beckie Menzie & Tom Michael perform in new show, Postcards from the Road: The Travel Show. Every Saturday in April. 8 p.m., \$18 cover, two-drink minimum, 1383 N. Milwaukee Ave., RSVP recommended at 773-278-1830

Sunday, April 13

Achurch4me/MCC Worship service. 11 a.m., Center on Halsted's Hoover-Lepien Theatre, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Archdiocesan Gay and Lesbian Outreach Chicago Sunday Mass. 7 p.m., 700 W. Belmont, www.aglochicago.org, aglochicago@sbcglobal.net, 773-525-3872

Brando's L Lounge, a party designed by women for women. 9 p.m.-2 a.m., 343

S. Dearborn, free admission

Pillar of Love Fellowship Church Service. 1 p.m., Center on Halsted's John Baran Senior Center, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Take Back the Night-DuPage Chicago NOW members and YWCA present social bands and non-profit organizations to raise awareness. \$6, North Beat in Downers Grove, satm@uic.edu for more info

Monday, April 14

Crew Pub Quiz Night with Sister Mary Monistat, 4804 N. Broadway, 773-784-CREW, worldsgreatestbar.com

Tuesday, April 15

Elmhurst College Historian and professor John D'Emilio speaks on "Homophobia and Social Justice: Lessons from the Life of Bayard Rustin." 7 p.m., Frick Center, Founders Lounge, 630-617-3033 or charleyh@elmhurst.edu for info

Homolatte Xan and Liz Snively perform. 7:30 p.m., free, Big Chicks/Tweet, 5124 N. Sheridan, www.homolatte.com

The Spot Michael Hutchings and Keith Stoneking's latest cabaret, "Michael and Keith Hit the Spot." Tuesday nights, 8 p.m., \$10 at door, The Spot, 4437 N. Broadway

Wednesday, April 16

Jackhammer Destination DJ contest, help choose Chicago's next top DJ, \$8, 10 p.m., 6406 N. Clark St., 773-743-5772

Windy City Gay Idol 2008 Seventh event of 6th annual talent search contest. 7 p.m. signup/8 p.m. start, Scarlet's, 3320 N. Halsted St., www.windycitymediagroup.com for rules/regulations, www.myspace.com/2007windycitygayidol

Women & Children First Bookstore Gregg Shapiro, Scott Free & LaNita Joseph: Poetry Reading and Musical Performance. 7 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Thurs., April 10



'CANDY' GIRL

Amy Sedaris—well-known from her lead role on TV's Strangers with Candy—will be at Lifeline Theatre's 25th-anniversary benefit at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington.

Fri., April 11



ELDERS, STATESMAN

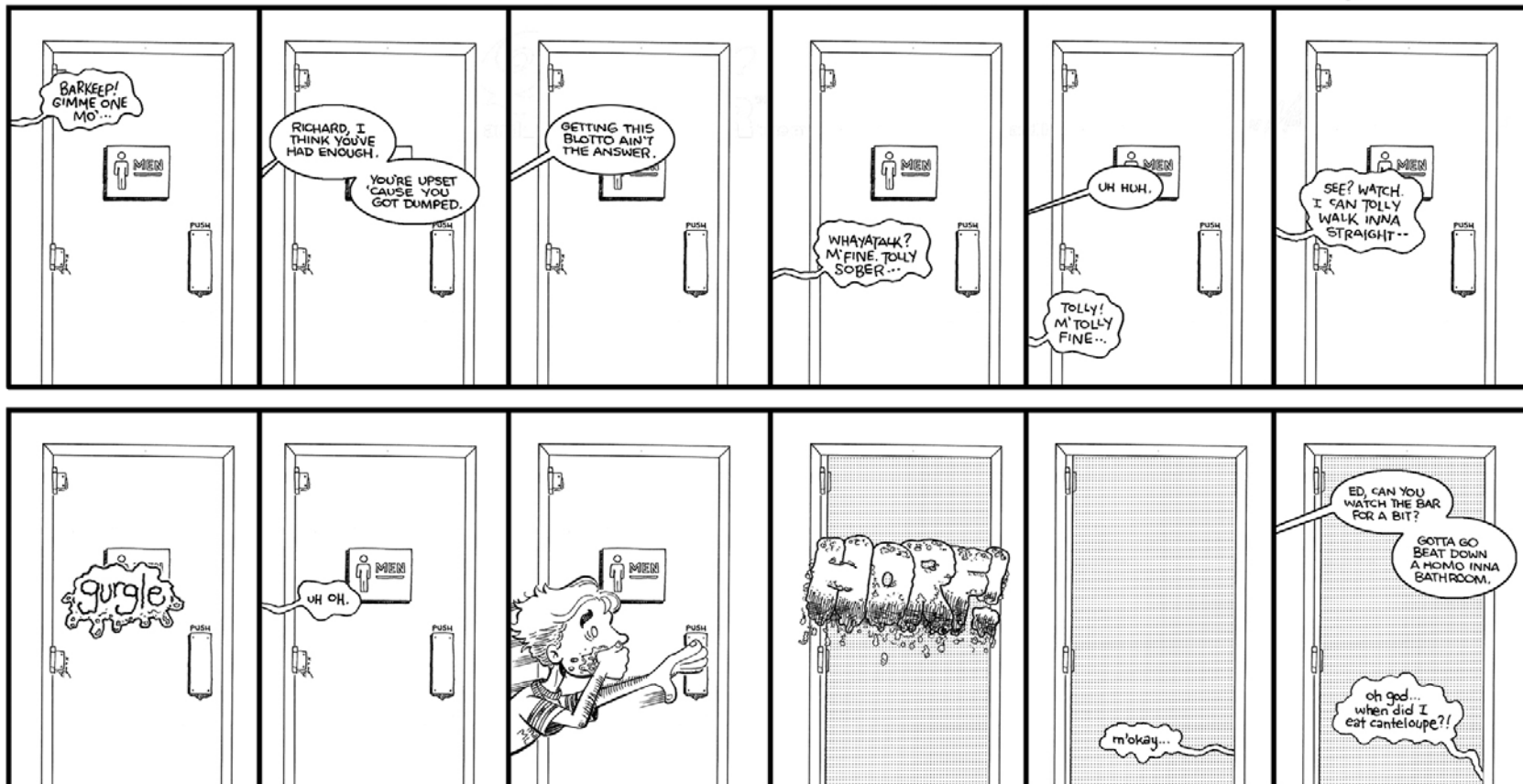
Former U.S. Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders will take part in the "Race, Sex, Power" conference at the University of Illinois at Chicago, 725 W. Roosevelt. The event concludes Sat., April 12.

Photo courtesy of Tonia Tiewul

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CONTINUED...



Ronnie Kroell. Photo courtesy of Bravo

‘Supermodel’: Ronnie does Chicago proud

BY JERRY NUNN

Many people watched what happened when 24 aspiring models were whittled down through the weeks on Bravo’s Make Me a Supermodel challenges. America decided again and again who would win. After interviewing Ronnie Kroell back in January for Windy City Times, it was exciting to see him triumph after hard critiques and, ultimately, wind up as the runner-up in the competition.

In an e-mail interview, Kroell talked about the competition, his mother and his own future.

Windy City Times: Congratulations on making it into the final two for Make Me a Super-

model. You did Chicago proud! How does it feel to be home in Chi-town?

Ronnie Kroell: Thank you. I love New York, but I am “in love” with Chicago. I jumped into my car, rolled down the windows, blasted the radio and screamed with happiness as I cruised down Lake Shore Drive and admired the skyline. It’s been wonderful to have Chicago’s support throughout this challenging competition. It’s a journey that I will not soon forget.

WCT: It was great to see you improve so much throughout the show. What was your favorite challenge?

RK: I would have to say that my favorite challenge was working with Lemon, the snake, in a tank full of water on one of the most frigid days of the year. After being placed in the bottom three for two weeks in a row that shoot was my opportunity to prove to the panel that I was not just an “all-American boy” but, rather, a strong model with the ability to show versatility.

WCT: Was it hard being “up for the vote” by the judges and then America obviously liking you?

RK: Each time I went before the panel I had prepared myself for the worst. This industry is tough and, therefore, the panel had to be critical of us; otherwise, we would never grow. I was elated to know that America saw my passion, my heart and my improvement throughout the competition. America gave me the gift of seeing out this incredible journey to the very end and for that I am sincerely thankful.

WCT: Which judge’s advice helped you the most?

RK: Jennifer Starr was quite possibly one of the most difficult panel members to impress. Many times in the competition, she stated that it would be difficult for me to overcome the all-American catalog look and break into high fashion editorial. While her harsh critiques were difficult to swallow, her advice of spending more time on the treadmill and less time on weight training would help me to slim down and achieve

greater versatility.

WCT: I liked how your mother visited you on the last episode and you didn’t have the drama of the other people. Was it weird being around Ben’s wife?

RK: Umm ... can you say *awkward*? I was a little nervous initially to meet April because I wasn’t sure how my friendship with Ben was being portrayed. It turned out that she thought it was very sweet and she herself wanted a “Bronnie” T-shirt. I couldn’t believe that my mom made the trip out to see me in NYC, especially since she has a deep fear of flying. I am really lucky to have such an incredible mom who supports me in all that I do; she has been a role model and a true inspiration. In fact, I think she now has more fans than I do. LOL!!

WCT: How did it feel being in the top four and, finally, the top two?

RK: It was an honor to be in the top two with Holly [Kiser, the eventual winner]. She and I share the similar struggle of trying to break into the modeling industry for the past 10 years, and this competition has given us both the opportunity of a lifetime. Even though I did not “win”, in my heart I have already won and will continue to follow this dream with a smile.

WCT: Are you going back to school now or has the show changed your plans?

RK: Actually, I am currently considering an opportunity to be represented by NY Models and plan on moving forward with my journey to become a supermodel. [Getting] my degree is a *must*, but where I choose to complete that degree is to be determined. I have not made any solid plans as of yet, but rather I am simply taking some time to enjoy my family and friends. I believe that knowledge is the key to success in any industry. Most importantly, I am eager to

learn, not only about modeling, but about life in general. What more can one say—it certainly is an adventure!!

WCT: What advice would you give the wannabe supermodels for season two?

RK: 1. Dream BIG! 2. Lead with your heart and follow through with your head. 3. Never give up on your dreams and they will not give up on you. 4. Treat others with respect and gratitude. 5. Just be you—an amazing, talented, incredible you.

WCT: Thanks for taking the time to chat with me again, and welcome home!

RK: Thank you; the pleasure is truly mine. I appreciate all the kindness and support that Windy City Times has shown me throughout the competition and look forward to chatting with you again soon. “Watch what happens...”



Ronnie Kroell and ‘Supermodel’ winner Holly Kiser. Photo courtesy of Bravo

SPORTS NEWS Tennis sign-ups April 19

Sign-ups for Second City Tennis will take place Sat., April 19, 4-6 p.m., at The North End, 3733 N. Halsted.

The sign-ups are for singles and doubles. The cost is \$25 for singles (\$40 for each person in doubles).

The regular season begins Mon., May 5, and the season-ending playoffs are set for Sat., Sept. 13. Players compete at mutually agreed dates, times and locations during the season.

For doubles, league matches are played on Sunday evenings, 4-8 p.m, at the Diversey courts, 2800 N. Lake Shore.

See www.SecondCityTennis.com or e-mail Jeff Book at summersingles@secondcitytennis.com for more info. Doubles players should contact Todd at summerdoubles@secondcitytennis.com.

Beach v-ball sign-ups May 3

Individual and team registration for CMSA beach volleyball will take place Sat., May 3,

2-6 p.m., at The Fat Cat, 4840 N. Broadway.

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

Dales retires

The Chicago Sky announced April 5 that veteran forward Stacey Dales is retiring from the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) to concentrate on sports broadcasting.

Dales announced her retirement in a letter to fans on the Sky Web site at www.chicagosky.net. She played two seasons with the Sky and three with the Washington Mystics.

Chicago Force announces schedule

The Chicago Force, a local women’s tackle-football team, has announced its 2008 schedule.

The regular season will feature eight games—four at home and four away. Home games will be played at Holmgren Athletic Complex, 3225 W. Foster, on the campus of North Park University.

See www.chicagoforcefootball.com.

Boystown Pool League

Week #6	W	L	Sex & Candy	74	70
Rack’em Bitch	89	55	Shot Blockers	71	73
Ball’N Hand	82	62	Miss Cues	68	76
Hot Rack	81	63	Mixed Breed	65	79
Git’R’Dun	77	67			

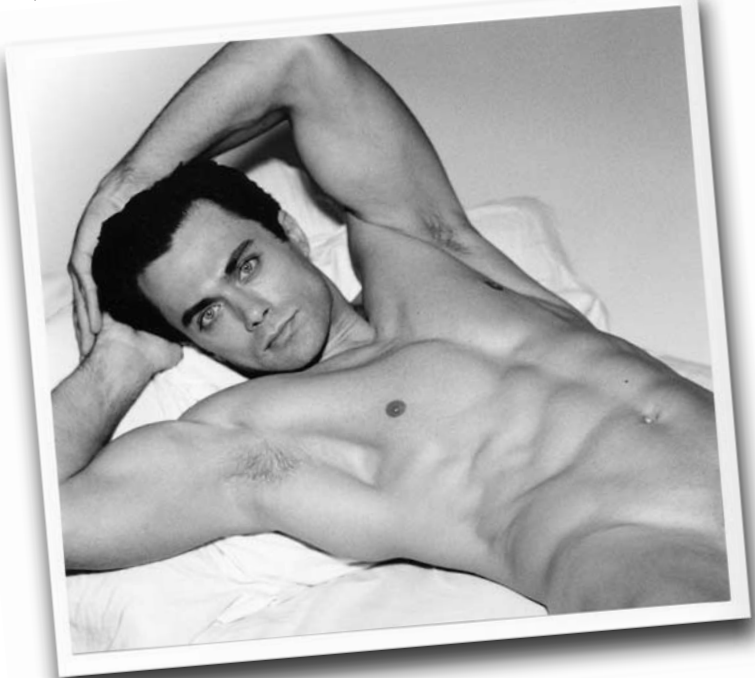
Bowling - CMSA Mixed Standings

Division A	W	L	North End	38	60	Rough Trade	59	39
Cornelia’s	66	32	Gutter Fluffers	37	61	Wells Fargo ONYX 5	58	40
Hamburger Mary’s	67	31	5 Pins 10 Balls	35	63	Juana Bees	53	45
GYOF	61	37	REMAX Edge	35	63	Windy City Sweets	53	45
Funky Five	55	43	Marty’s	17	81	Wicked	50	48
Second to None	53	45				Looney Tunes	46	52
FVB Interiors	47	51	Division B	W	L	Castaways	45	53
Jury’s	45	53	Bobby Love’s	88	10	Scot Sholtz	40	58
Bowlers-A-GO-GO	42	56	Halsted Bar & Grill	70	28	Extremely Striking	37	61
Bowlers	40	58	Great Scots	67	31	Lady & Her Tramps	35	63
Crew’s Ball Busters	39	59	Salon Michael	60	38	Done More 5 Less	30	68

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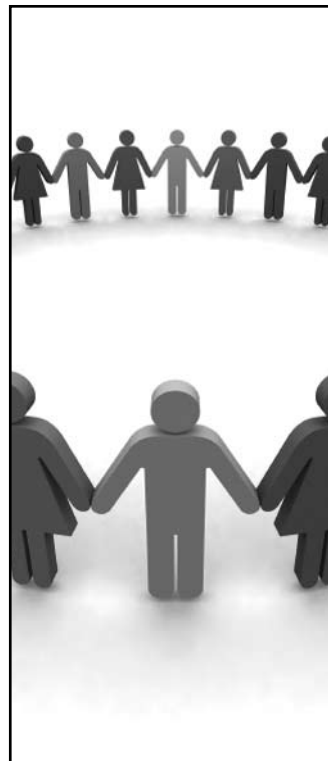
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