

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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JUNE 25, 2008 • VOL 23 NO 41

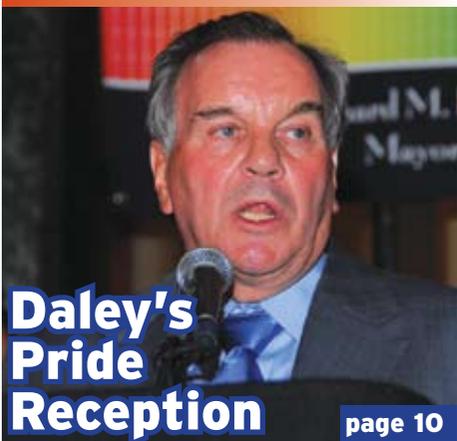
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## OUR 2008 PRIDE ISSUE



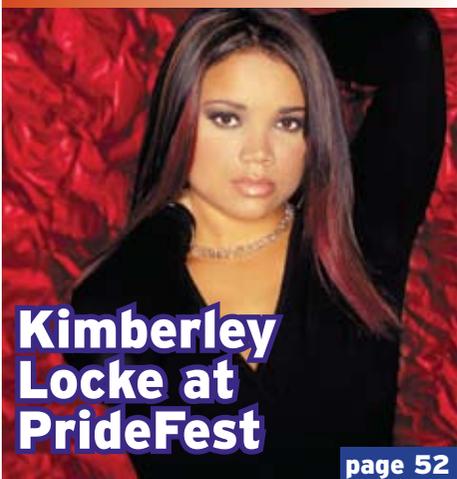
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**Daley's Pride Reception**

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THE WINDY CITY TIMES NINTH ANNUAL

# 30 UNDER THIRTY HONORS



pages 33-39

Back row: Pat Posey, Ronnie Kroell, Steven Rosengard.  
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This week's online-only features include:  
 -Media Watch  
 -"Keen on the Trail"  
 looks at the vice-presidential search

This week's extended features include:  
 -A look at Andersonville's Green Genes (right)



Photo courtesy of Christina Isperduli

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**nightspots**

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 SSION takes teh stage at Berlin after the Pride Parade.  
 Photo courtesy of SleazeTone.com



Lyle Ratcliff (center) and his partner, Terry Tyll, may be the ones getting married, but ring girls Natyllie (left) and Madelyn take center stage here. Photo by Rex Wockner

## Goin' to the chapel: Same-sex marriage in Calif.

BY AMY WOOTEN

It's been over a week since California started issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, and the demand has remained steady throughout the state.

All 58 California counties started officially issuing marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples on June 17, a little over a month since the state's highest court made a ground-breaking ruling that lifted California's same-sex marriage ban. Gay and lesbian couples all across the state and country have taken advantage of California becoming the second state in the U.S. to legalize gay marriage. Massachusetts is the only other state that has legalized same-sex marriage. Since June 17, there has been a steady

demand for marriage licenses.

The L.A. Times reported that in the first week of legalizing gay marriages, over 6,300 couples—both gay and straight—have been issued marriage licenses, which is twice the average number for this time in June. On June 17 alone, the day gay marriage officially became legal in California, over 2,700 couples received marriage licenses. Normally, under 500 are issued on that particular day, reported the L.A. Times.

Counties across California saw large increases in the number of licenses issues, including Palm Springs, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Fresno and Redding.

All eyes were on California the evening of Mon., June 16, when a two long-term same-sex couples kicked off the legalization of gay marriage by exchanging vows. Some county clerks also choose to extend their hours and start issuing marriage licenses after 5:01 p.m. that day.

Among the first to wed were long-term lesbian activists Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, who are both in their 80's and have been together for over 55 years. San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, who had declared marriage legal in the

city four years ago, repeated the couples vows during the ceremony.

Also wed that day was lesbian couple Robin Tyler and Diane Olson, who were original plaintiffs in the case that led to the historic California Supreme Court decision. They were wed in Beverly Hills.

While most of the media frenzy has ended, demand for marriage licenses has not. Counties across California report a steady demand for marriage licenses, indicating that many gay and lesbian couples opted to wait a few days for the media circus to dwindle before they exchanged vows.

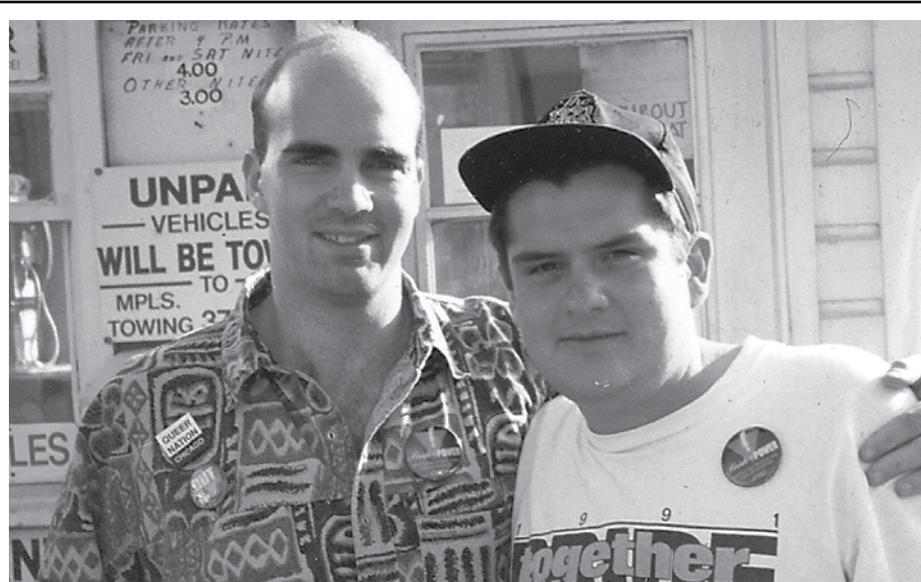
For example, on Sat., June 21, West Hollywood held a day-long gay marriage marathon, where over 100 same-sex couples tied the knot. In Orange County, which issued over 500 marriage licenses in the first week, there was an increase in demand for licenses right before the weekend,

on Thurs., June 18, and Fri., June 19. Many local newspaper reports indicate that demand won't be dwindling any time soon.

However, citing a possible overwhelming demand for marriage licenses, clerks in relatively conservative Butte, Calaveras and Kern counties stopped performing weddings last week—for gay or straight couples—altogether, according to the Associated Press.

The University of California-Los Angeles' Williams Institute estimates that half of California's gay and lesbian couples (or over 50,000 couples) will wed in the next three years if gay marriage remains legal. And since gay marriage isn't limited to California residents, The Williams Institute also estimates that over 67,000 same-sex couples from out of state will flock to California to tie the knot.

—Assistance by John Lendman



### WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT Castillo/Pennycuff

Robert Castillo, 40, and John Pennycuff, 44, will remarry in a civil ceremony at San Francisco's City Hall Fri., June 27.

In 2004, the couple went to San Francisco and got married. However, a subsequent decision by the state's supreme court nullified their marriage.

In lieu of a reception, they ask that friends, family and well-wishers cheer on the newlyweds at Chicago's 39th Annual Pride Parade Sun., June 29.

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Joey Mogul. Photo by Yasmin Nair

## Groups address police brutality

BY YASMIN NAIR

Chicago recently became a finalist in its bid to host the 2016 Olympics. An umbrella group of local activist organizations and Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) is using this media attention to highlight Chicago police brutality. At a June 19 press conference outside Mayor Daley's office and an evening community forum at the Broadway United Methodist Church in Boystown, the group argued that Chicago did not have a right to host the Olympics given its record on police brutality, especially towards members of the LGBTQ community. Sponsors of the events included queer groups Amigas Latinas, Equality Illinois, and Gay Liberation Network.

A central case is that of Alexander Ruppert, a gay man who alleges that he was severely beaten by police officers in June 2006. Ruppert received 16 stitches to his left eye, and his injuries, photos of which were displayed prominently at the press conference, include a fractured nose. Ruppert could not be present because of his medical condition, and was represented by his attorney Jon Erickson.

According to Robert Schultz, a field organizer

for AIUSA, the Ruppert case is only one of many which create a "pattern of abuse" against LG-BTQ people. Wendy Park, of the American Civil Liberties Union, called for "meaningful reform." This includes changing a police union contract provision which prevents the Independent Police Review Authority from investigating anonymous complaints about "anything short of criminal conduct" on the part of police officers, even though anonymous citizen complaints against citizens are routinely addressed. Schultz said that "Chicago is a global city and we take pride in that— but that brings responsibilities and obligations. One is the rule of law, which should apply to both police and civilians."

Is using the Olympics to highlight police brutality a symbolic gesture, and will the group go so far as to ask the International Olympics Committee (IOC) to reject Chicago's bid on grounds of its history of police brutality? What about human rights abuses in other finalist cities, such as Rio de Janeiro? Schultz's responses to these questions were non-committal; about the IOC, he said: "We'll take whatever steps are necessary." The evening forum featured panelists who made it clear that they could and would take those steps.

Jon Erickson spoke again about his client, while Frankie Brown described being dragged from his home in Markham, Illinois, by police officers who entered his home insisting that he had drugs on the premises. According to Brown, the police repeatedly called him a "fag." The panel also discussed the tensions between youth of color and police in and around the Center on Halsted in Boystown. Ambrose said that he and his friends have been constantly harassed and picked up. Recently, 4 youth were put in jail for 24 hours, according to Ambrose and "This happens on a daily basis." Youth advocate Father Tommy Avant-Garde, also known as Tommy Sampson, said that adults and youth "were trying to be pro-active so that we don't have incidents of harassment."

Joey Mogul, an attorney, and Pat Hill, from the group Black People against Police Torture (BPT), addressed the local and international frameworks around Chicago (and U.S) police brutality and the Olympics. According to Mogul, those most abused tend to be transgender or non-gender conforming people of color because police officers see themselves as enforcers of normativity. For instance, a black butch lesbian arrested in Boston for disruptive behavior was handcuffed more tightly than required. When she asked an officer to loosen the handcuffs, she received the response, "If you want to act like a man, I'll treat you like a man."

Such cases of intimidation are, according to Mogul, the reason why "the experiences and stories of survival of LGBT people do not come to light." Mogul also said that, "While we struggle as advocates, organizers, and activists, we lose sight of the fact that LGBT people of color are also victims of police violence. In the queer community, mainstream LGBT organizations are not dealing with the racist, transphobic violence that queers are facing."

Mogul advocated using international human rights treaties to publicize the ways in which local law enforcement failed to follow the same. In 2006, she was part of a contingent that testified on Chicago police torture cases before the United Nations Committee Against Torture, which monitors compliance with the U.N. Convention Against Torture. Mogul said that this testimony was part of the reason why the U.S. Attorney's office "has subpoenaed 10 officers to the Grand Jury."

Hill said that "Chicago does not deserve to host the Olympics." Citing the Jon Burge case, she said that BPT has issued a statement opposing the Olympics in Chicago because the city has "failed to prosecute the police officers and officials who committed acts of torture, and the United States has engaged in numerous human rights violations [as documented by the United Nations]."

## Jeanne White to appear at Center

Center on Halsted will celebrate National HIV Testing Day with a special appearance by tireless HIV/AIDS advocate Jeanne White, mother of the late teenager Ryan White.

On Fri., June 27, Jeanne White will speak about her family's experience with HIV during a free 9 a.m. presentation at the Center, 3656 N. Halsted. Ryan White was an Indiana teen who became the poster child for HIV/AIDS in the '80s. His family battled against the public school system during a time of widespread misinformation and ignorance about the disease. His mother, a tireless HIV/AIDS advocate, founded the Ryan White Foundation in 1992, two years after her son's death.

The day's programming will begin with an 8-9 a.m. breakfast, followed by White's presentation. The day's events will also include breakout sessions on HIV and substance-abuse and women's issues. In addition, free rapid HIV testing will be available all day.

An RSVP is required to the free event. See [www.centeronhalsted.org](http://www.centeronhalsted.org) or call 773-472-6469, ext. 485.

## Daley joins HIV campaign

Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley recently joined a national campaign that aims to help curb the spread of the disease by encouraging people to get tested.

Daley joined the National Association of People with AIDS and OraSure Technologies' Mayors Campaign Against HIV, along with roughly 70 other mayors from across the country. Participating mayors will help spread the message that getting tested for HIV is fast and easy by getting tested themselves.

The campaign coincides with National HIV Testing Day, which is June 27.

## Dr. Stephanie Maj wishes

the community a Happy Pride!

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### PASSAGES

#### Walter Netsch

Walter A. Netsch Jr., a prominent architect who was the husband of pro-LGBT-rights advocate and former Illinois State Sen. Dawn Clark Netsch, died June 15 of pneumonia at the age of 88, according to the Associated Press.

Walter Netsch was a Chicago native; he graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and later served in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He spent nearly all his architectural career in the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, designing what many considered to be geometrically intricate buildings. Among his famous projects are the University of Illinois at Chicago campus and the U.S. Air Force Academy chapel in Colorado.

Netsch is survived by his wife, two nephews and a niece. A memorial service is planned.

### PASSAGES

#### Melvin Pitstick

Melvin N. Pitstick of Aurora, Ill., passed away Sat., June 21, according to the Chicago Tribune. He was 77.

Pitstick was born July 29, 1930, in Aurora, and graduated from East Aurora High School in 1949. He worked for the Bank of America for 39 years, and retired in 1992.

Pitstick is survived by his longtime partner, Ted J. Marrow (of Chicago), and a cousin, Ronald Pitstick (of Aurora). Visitation took place Tues.-Wed., June 24-25, at Herdegen-Brieske Funeral Home, 1356 W. Wellington. The private interment will be held Thurs., June 26, at Aurora's Riverside Cemetery.

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Left, from top: Albright, Wosylus and Sullivan. Above: Simpson, Bidwell and Darby. Right: Zasadil and Kalafut.



### Chicago honors LGBT veterans

The city of Chicago held its annual tribute to LGBT veterans under beautiful skies at Daley Plaza June 23. Speakers included: Will Schmutz (director of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, or CHR, Advisory Council on Veterans Affairs); Bill Greaves (director of CHR's Advisory Council on LGBT Issues); Dana Starks (chairman of CHR); veterans Ed Wosylus, Jim Darby and Jean Albright; and minister Anthony Sullivan (Pillar of Love Fellowship Church). Travis sang for the crowd, Melissa Terrill and Susan Jones of Lakeside Pride Marching Band performed taps, and Jodi Hains provided sign language interpreter services. The posting of colors was done by Wosylus, Albright, Travis and Darby in addition to veterans Ann Bidwell, Louis Kalafut, Larry Simpson, Ed Zasadil. The wreath with a pink triangle was placed at the Eternal Flame. Photos by Tracy Baim. More at [www.windycitymediagroup.com](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com).

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Some of the youth present at Saturday's rally and march. Photo by Yasmin Nair

## Saturday night's alright for marching

BY YASMIN NAIR

The Coalition for Justice and Respect organized a "Unity March Against Racism and Harassment" in the Boystown area. This was the latest such event in Chicago to address the tensions that have pitted youth of color against police officers, condo dwellers, and business owners.

On June 21, approximately 20 people gathered at the Corus Bank parking lot on the corner of Halsted and Belmont to hear brief remarks from speakers. Marc Loveless introduced the speakers by saying that "this march is not the answer to anything, but the beginning of a conversation and dialogue. Instead of pointing fingers at African-American trans youth, police should look at the source of the problems facing them." Andy Thayer, of Gay Liberation Network said that

citizens "still had the freedom to assemble."

Both Thayer and Father Tommy Avant Garde addressed the issue of sex work/prostitution, accusations of which have led residents and police to complain that youth are in the neighborhood only to "hustle." Thayer suggested that police consider punishing the johns as well because "it takes two to tango." He added that it was pointless to blame youth for taking on prostitution in an economy that gave them no opportunities or jobs.

Father Avant Garde said that the youth had every right to congregate in Boystown, given that it was their area as well: "As long as there are goal posts with rainbow flags on them, this is Boystown," and queer youth have a right to be there. Addressing the charges that youth traveled in gangs to create trouble, he said, "Everyone who wears a hat and baggy pants is not a gang-banger." Darrell Gordon pointed out that police harassment is "not a new problem; we need to make these figures [statistics on police harassment] available."

Gregory Norels, of the Bayard Rustin Access Center, planned as a resource center for queer African-American youth, talked about the need

for police officers to treat youth with respect. He also encouraged the youth present to know their rights and to immediately report harassment as it occurred. Several young people in the audience spoke about the continual harassment they faced from police. One of them said he'd been taunted with racial slurs, while another said "I was walking at 2 a.m. and they [police officers] asked me if I was working."

After opening speeches and a brief performance by Erthe St. James, the crowd walked down Halsted chanting slogans like, "Racism on Halsted's got to go."

## Windy City Media Group goes 'green and global'

Windy City Media Group (WCMG), the producers of Chicago's award-winning gay newspaper Windy City Times, is leading the way in the GLBT community by going "green and global" this summer.

The trend of newspapers seems to be moving to mobile newsrooms, creating "mojos" or mobile journalists. WCMG already uses the work of more than 50 journalists and photographers from all over the globe, from South Africa to China, Germany to Mexico, to write for the publication. The approach of using writers from all parts of Chicago and the world has served the publication well for more than 24 years, which is why the company is now going completely mobile as part of move to be more "green."

Mobile journalists from WCMG will be able to be out in the community more often with their laptops and cameras capturing the stories as they happen, writing them immediately and getting even more breaking news onto www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com. WCMG already took a step towards being greener as they kicked off 2008 with their entire publications (Windy City Times and Nightspots) also being available on their Web site, ads included, as downloadable PDFs. This allows thousands of additional people to read the paper without having to print more issues on newsprint. The Web site also includes full archives going back to 1998.

Going mobile is not completely new to WCMG, as they have spent two years developing and leading the way with their Queercast, a GLBT bi-weekly podcast. Host Amy Matheny has been "out on the streets" gathering stories, photos and premiere interviews from Chicago and Las Vegas to New York and Toronto, of which can be found on www.WindyCityQueercast.com. It's only natural that the print journalists of WCMG would follow suit in this age of getting information to readers as quickly as it happens.

Mojos are the key to staying ahead of the competition. "We have always prided ourselves on being out in the community," said Publisher Tracy Baim. "This change will give our writers and photographers much more freedom and flexibility, and allows them to save time and money. Why waste energy going to a physical, static office, when they can work out in the community where they live? With the energy crisis adding costs to delivery and distribution, it only makes sense to move resources from a physical office and have our editorial team working out in their communities." The ad sales and business teams

of WCMG went mobile two years ago.

The media landscape in Chicago and around the U.S. is changing rapidly. WCMG has stayed ahead of the curve by providing comprehensive and original content for more than 24 years. Dozens of reporters and photographers provide unique content to WCMG publications each week. WCMG does not rely on any wire services for the news. Rather, it has developed a pool of award-winning professionals to develop original reporting on news, entertainment and features. "Content" is the buzzword of the new media world, and WCMG provides a large of volume of new content each week to its print and web readers and listeners. Other Web sites, including ChicagoPride.com and Edge, also utilize the original content of WCMG.

Windy City Times will continue to be delivered weekly to more than 600 distribution outlets in and around Chicago. Windy City Times is the only Chicago gay publication that is independently audited, by Verified Audit Circulation.

Windy City Media Group produces Windy City Times, Nightspots, OUT! Resource Guide, Identity online, and Windy City Queercast. Windy City Media Group is also the producer of these annual events: Windy City Gay Idol, 30 Under 30 and the Windy City Times Theater Series. See www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com for a listing of journalistic and community honors.

## ChicagoPride.com marks five years with new Web site

ChicagoPride.com, an online resource for Chicago's LGBT community, has marked its fifth anniversary by releasing a new version of the popular Web site.

Launched by GOPride Corporation June 23, 2003, ChicagoPride.com quickly became a leading regional Internet LGBT city guide by providing local news, exclusive interviews, photo coverage, free personals, business directory and a fast-growing social network.

This month, ChicagoPride.com will introduce its newly designed site that will showcase new and innovative ways for Chicago's LGBT population to connect and network.

ChicagoPride.com will also celebrate Pride weekend with a booth at Pride Fest, Sat., June 28, and a float during the 39th Annual Pride Parade, Sun., June 29, with 103.5 KISS FM featuring DreX from KISS FM and Windy City Media Group 30 Under 30 special honoree Ronnie Kroell from TV's "Make Me a Supermodel."

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# Happy Pride Month

to all in

## Chicago's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Communities



**City of Chicago**  
**Richard M. Daley**  
**Mayor**

Paid for by The Richard M. Daley Campaign Committee



### Birds of a feather

Chicago House held its Birdhouse Auction/Cocktail Party June 19 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago. The chic venue was the perfect backdrop for the silent-auction items, which ranged from the traditional to the highly innovative. Also on hand were Kristi Gorsuch and Beth Somers (and treats) from Sweet Miss Giving's Bakery (www.SweetMiss-Givings.com), which provides job training and work experience to low-income and disabled people. "It's a six-month internship run twice a year. We have some areas set up in baking production; packaging and assembly for our gift baskets; delivery assistance and customer service; and, eventually we'll be looking at retail space for a storefront," Gorsuch told Windy City Times. "We're teaching [people] transferable skills to get them back into the permanent workforce." Photos and text by Andrew Davis; see more at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



### Mayor honors LGBTs at reception

More than 700 people attended Mayor Richard M. Daley's annual Pride Month reception of the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues at the G.A.R. Hall at the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph, on June 17.

CCHR LGBT Director Bill Greaves read the mayor's pride proclamation, officially declaring June as Pride Month in preparation for the 39th annual Pride Parade.

Mayor Daley, who was wearing an "I support marriage equality" pin—on the first full day of legal same-sex marriages in the state of California—thanked the LGBT community for having such a positive impact on Chicago.

"What this community does for our city and our society, I am very proud of," Daley said to the crowd. "This community ... represents the spirit and commitment of our great city. You can see the city changing constantly by the great influence you have."

Greaves thanked Marc Loveless, Ben Montgomery and Michael O'Connor for their contributions to the Illinois Lottery's "Red Ribbon Cash for Quality of Life," where 100 percent of the net proceeds go towards HIV/AIDS prevention services.

The CCHR LGBT Advocacy Council and also honored three students—Phil Miatowski, Chris Jessup and Sean Tenner—in their efforts in lobbying for civil unions.

Also in attendance were 44th Ward Alderman Tom Tunney, Illinois State Representative Greg Harris and Chicago Police Superintendent Jody Weis, to name a few. Text by John Lendman; photos by Kat Fitzgerald (see more at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com and www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)

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# NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY AMY WOOTEN

Oregon Republican Sen. Gordon Smith apologized for **comparing gay marriage to polygamy** during a gay rights forum in Washington, D.C. The lawmaker said he was sorry for his "confusing" comments linking the debate over gay marriage to the persecution of his Mormon ancestors for the practice of polygamy. "I meant no offense by sharing that part of my history," Smith said in a statement.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network is calling **President Bush's pick for the Presidential Medal of Freedom "outrageous, insensitive and disrespectful" to lesbian and gay troops** currently serving in the armed forces. Bush awarded Gen. Peter Pace, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the highest civilian award, on June 19. Last year, in an interview with the Chicago Tribune, Pace called gays "immoral."

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) has released new information revealing that **women make up almost half of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" discharges—even though they compose only 15 percent of the armed forces**, according to PR Newswire. SLDN Executive Director Aubrey Sarvis called the revelation "shocking" and added that "[w]omen, in particular, have been caught in the crosshairs of this counterproductive law."

The Human Rights Campaign is calling for **an investigation of police brutality against a Memphis transgender woman**. A recently released video shows Duanna Johnson, who was arrested on a charge of prostitution, being beaten by a police officer and maced while another officer held her down at Shelby County Criminal Justice Center. In a statement, HRC's Joe Solmonese said, "This type of profound violence is the exact thing that police officers are supposed to protect people from." The national gay rights organization is calling for a full criminal investigation of the police brutality case.

According to controversial and conservative radio host Michael Savage, **the "homosexual mafia" is destroying the minds of children**. In response to a caller who discussed having to explain to his child why two men were holding hands, Savage replied, "You've got to explain to the children ... why God told people this was wrong. You have to explain this to them in this time of mental rape that's going on. The children's minds are being raped by the homosexual mafia. That's my position. They're raping our children's minds." This isn't the first time "The Savage Nation" radio host has made homophobic remarks on air. In 2003, Savage was canned by MSNBC for anti-gay comments.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) recently filed a **sex discrimination lawsuit on behalf of a transgender truck driver**. The suit claims that Kaylee Seals was illegally fired by the Old Dominion Freight Lines, where she worked for over two years, for "impersonating a female." Before being fired, Seals had told her employer that she would be transitioning from male to female, and also informed her supervisor of harassment she received from other employees because of her appearance. During her time working for Old Dominion Freight Lines, Seals received a number of awards for her work.

**A gay man who has protested against the federal Defense of Marriage Act by not paying his taxes** for five years may face up to 15 years in prison. The IRS charged Charles Merrill, 73, with tax evasion. His trial will begin in November. Merrill started his protest back in 2004 out of anger that he and his long-time partner must file their taxes separately because the federal government does not recognize same-sex relationships.

Family Equality Council, a gay rights organization, blasted national entertainment corporation **TiVo for partnering with the anti-gay national group Focus on the Family**. TiVo is sponsoring and endorsing Focus on the Family's "I Know a SuperDad Essay Contest." In a letter to TiVo, Family Equality Council executive director Jennifer Chrisler wrote, "Aligning yourselves with Focus on the Family for the 'I Know a SuperDad Essay Contest' sends the message that you support anti-LGBT politics and the hate speech Focus on the Family regularly spreads." Family Equality Council is asking TiVo to withdraw its support of the contest.

**A New York transgender rights bill advanced June 3 in the general assembly** by a 102-33 vote. The Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act now moves to the Senate. New York banned discrimination based on sexual orientation in areas of housing, credit, public accommodation and employment in 2002, and if passed, this bill would extend protections on the basis of gender identity and expression. In addition, if passed, the bill would add gender identity and expression to New York's hate crimes law.

Pop star and LGBT ally **Cyndi Lauper will make an appearance on an upcoming episode of a popular soap**. Lauper will appear and perform her hit song "True Colors" on the July 3 episode of CBS' "As the World Turns." During the show, she will act and sing, promoting her new album while also supporting the storyline between characters Luke and Noah, who recently broke up on the show.

**Young actor Shia LaBeouf (Transformers; Indiana Jones) recently apologized for a YouTube video** in which the star calls his friend an anti-gay slur at a house party. LaBeouf's rep said the actor is "very embarrassed" about the video, and regrets using the word in any capacity. According to his rep, the slur was used in jest, and the video was recorded several years ago.

# QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

**"WELL, FIRST OF ALL, I MADE A STATEMENT WHEN I was governor and I stand by it today.** Love is bigger than government. Who the hell are we as a government to tell people who you can fall in love with? I think it's absurd—the fact that it's even being debated. We can solve the problem simply. Government only acknowledges civil unions, then you don't have to put your sex down. Let the churches acknowledge marriage. They're the private sector. If they don't want to acknowledge it, they have every right to do so. How on earth can we even entertain the fact that government should have the ability to tell you as an individual who you can fall in love with? Ridiculous. ... You can't take a civil rights issue and put it up to a vote. If you did that, we might still have slavery if it was allowed to be voted on." — *Former Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura discussing the California voter initiative to amend the constitution to undo the Supreme Court's legalization of same-sex marriage, on MSNBC, May 22.*

**"I'M 66. IF THEY HAD LET ME GET MARRIED 10 YEARS AGO,** I would have been 20 pounds lighter and I wouldn't have needed airbrushing." — *Veteran lesbian activist Robin Tyler as she married Diane Olson, granddaughter of former California Gov. Culbert Levy Olson, June 16 in Beverly Hills, to the Los Angeles Times. Tyler and Olson, 54, have been together 15 years.*

**"GAY MEN AND LESBIANS HAVE PROSPERED BECAUSE** they've refused to acquiesce to the notion that they should hide their lives from public view. Two by two they've adopted children, bought homes, volunteered in their communities and slogged through life together just the way hetero couples do, except without preferential tax codes, inheritance rights and the automatic assumption that they can make decisions for one another in emergency situations. Too often, without legal protection, they have found themselves dependent on the kindness of those who were not kind, like the man in Indiana who became severely disabled and whose parents prohibited his partner of 25 years from visiting him in their home." — *Newsweek columnist Anna Quindlen, June 9 issue.*

**"MY BROTHER'S GAY—WE'RE BOTH GAY—AND IT WAS A SOURCE OF** great, uh, pain for my mother. Not that she didn't love us and was devoted to us, but it was awkward for her with her Southern family. She was just happy not to read it in the paper." — *Lily Tomlin to the Oregon gay newspaper Just Out, May 30.*

**"(WE'RE) GOING TO WAIT UNTIL IT'S LEGAL EVERYWHERE,** because otherwise, I said to Kelli, we'll be going around touring the country on the marriage tour every state by state. Once it gets to be at the federal level, once every state recognizes the marriages of every other state, I think that'll be the time we would do it." — *Rosie O'Donnell on getting married, to the Associated Press, June 5.*

**"I CERTAINLY OWE MY BEGINNING TO GAY MEN** because I started out in Greenwich Village and gays were the first ones who thought I was funny." — *Comedian Joan Rivers to the Pittsburgh gay newspaper Out, June issue.*



**(We're) going to wait until it's legal everywhere.**

—Rosie O'Donnell, on getting married



GLAAD photo



**"NO ONE IN A BAR IS CRUISING THESE DAYS!** (And I don't just mean they're not cruising me.) The reason for this hideous turn of events is quite simple: They already got laid 80 times that day thanks to Internet hookups! ... Manhunt has completely destroyed the sexual frisson in once-alluring nightspots!" — *Village Voice columnist Michael Musto on his blog, June 13.*

**"LISTEN, ANDERSON COOPER REPORTS ON** hard news in places like Karachi. And in Pakistan, they'll kill you if they find out you're gay. So I'm not going to be the one who asks Anderson Cooper if he's gay, OK?" — *Comedian Kathy Griffin to the Dallas Voice, June 6.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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# GUEST VIEWPOINT



**DR.  
KEVIN  
FENTON**

I encourage Americans to join the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its partners June 27 in our nationwide effort to reduce the number of people in this country who don't know their HIV status. The CDC estimates that about one-fourth of the more than one million people living with HIV in the United States don't know they are infected. HIV testing is a critical step in reducing HIV infections.

CDC once again strongly supports National HIV Testing Day, an annual campaign organized by the National Association of People with AIDS. The theme of the campaign is significant—"Take the Test. Take Control."

Knowing your HIV status empowers you to help prevent the spread of the disease. If you

are infected, you can take steps to protect your health and that of your partners as well as seek life-extending medical treatment. People who learn they are not infected can take steps to help ensure they remain uninfected.

HIV remains a major public health threat. The impact in the African-American community, the Latino community and among gay and bisexual men of all races is severe. Blacks and Hispanics each represent about 13 percent of the population (in the 33 states where there is long-standing, name-based HIV reporting), but bear a disproportionate burden of the U.S. HIV epidemic. Blacks account for almost half of new HIV diagnoses and Hispanics account for about 18 percent (in the same 33 states). And across all races and ethnic groups, men who have sex with men account for nearly half of all people living with HIV in the United States. It is critical that we reach these and other at-risk populations with HIV counseling and testing services.

Each year we strive to test as many people as possible. This year we are engaging new partners and taking advantage of innovative technologies

to increase participation in testing events. Also, CDC has created new text messaging and social networking Web site campaigns ([www.cdc.gov/features/hivtesting/](http://www.cdc.gov/features/hivtesting/)) to increase awareness of the importance of knowing your status and what you can do to help stop the spread of HIV. CDC has collaborated with partners to promote the KnowIt texting campaign that allows you to text your zip code to 566948 (KnowIt) and receive a location for a local testing site.

CDC and its partners are committed to preventing HIV infection; however, we cannot do it alone. We need your commitment as well. I encourage you to take the test, and take control.

To find out more about HIV/AIDS and where you can receive a confidential HIV test, visit [www.hivtest.org](http://www.hivtest.org) or call 800-CDC-INFO.

**Dr. Kevin Fenton is the director of the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.**

## A matter of race

Dear Windy City Times Editor,

I read the Windy City Times article by the Rev. Deborah Lake ("The problem is...", 6-11-08) with great disappointment. Apparently, she subscribes to the theory that repeating an untruth will eventually make it true. That theory runs into conflict when up against the determination that all that is needed for evil to triumph is for all good people to do nothing. In this case of the fate of young African-American gays, lesbians and trans individuals on Halsted Street, doing nothing is not an option and remaining true to the facts is essential.

First, the vast majority of the youth who are out are not teenagers; most are adults between the ages of 18 and 24. They are there with their peers, who can't get into the bars on Halsted for various reasons. More directly, it is not just because they have been kicked out of their neighborhoods but because there are no entertainment establishments that cater to them in their own neighborhoods. That is not a failing of these neighborhoods or communities, but just a statement of the facts. Within the Black communities where there are gay and lesbian bars and clubs, the businesses and promoters are thriving. Also, when organizations have provided alternatives to their populations, young African-American gays, lesbians and trans individuals respond and support these events in the hundreds.

The image that is being promoted by Lake and her colleagues is so unfair and untrue. The greatest tragedy is the separating of these young people as being "different" or "other". When I first came out as an African-American gay man, what was supportive and encouraging was that my experience of growing up gay had a thread of similarity with other Blacks and non-Blacks. Setting these young people aside deprives them and limits the development of the lesbian and gay community as a whole.

This was the purpose of the June 21 march. It is titled a "Unity March against Racism and Harassment in the Gay and Lesbian Community," and that is the point. There needs to be an acknowledgment that there is better place than this finger pointing and name calling. The point is that the only way to heal is to address the problem. Failing to deny the pain that has been caused will not heal it. Like any other wounds physical or practical unless addressed it will fester and worsen with time. This march says defiantly that one thing that can help anyone in coming out or supporting people to reach their fullest potential is to help to build a per-

son's self-esteem. The advantages of building other forms of self-esteem have been noted and documented. In this situation, there are African-American LGBT individuals of other generations who are coming together to support these young people in their quest for space in the gay communities.

Now, the Lake article lays out challenges and claims involvement in the process of deliberation. I've attended all but one public forum and I have participated in several meetings—and not once have seen Lake at these events. Neither have I seen nor heard of her organization being visible on the streets with these young people. This is significant only to have a firm reference that simply is not observed. The lack of this specificity makes her assertions silly, at best. For those of us who have been active in relating to and responding to the young people we know what we have been working on in terms of seeking new spaces, looking for alternative events and establishing grassroots-based initiatives. If space and time permitted, I would be able to tell you about the Bayard Rustin Access Center, the ball community, Youth Pride Center, the Youth Empowerment Center and others. The Coalition for Justice and Respect receives requests for support weekly from young lesbian and gay African-Americans. We have open communications with the Chicago Police Department headquarters and district commanders as well as the State's Attorney Office administration.

My personal involvement came from young people's requests to be an advocate for them. It is an honor, and I have called upon my peers in other places of power, like Ben Montgomery of the Congressman Danny K. Davis' office, to assist in cultivating resources.

It is with that spirit that I would encourage Lake and any others who has a social conscience to come to this march and support these young people. For over a year now, we talked about these issues in guarded terms. The time is for healing to begin.

Let every step we take be toward a better day than today.

Sincerely,  
Marc Loveless,  
Coordinator, Coalition for Justice and Respect

**Rev. Deborah Lake responds:** Mr. Loveless' letter to the editor of Windy City Times is just another installment in his almost year-long campaign to personally attack me and spread misinformation about the community work done by Sankofa Way. I am not sure why he started this campaign except for the fact that I disagree with his ap-

proach to addressing some of the problems that Black LGBT people face today.

I have worked with young people in many settings as a minister and as an activist. Although I do not routinely engage in name-dropping, in this context I point out that I have addressed matters that affect the quality of life for young people in places like the CORE Center, Youth Pride Center and Sankofa Way, and in congregations in Massachusetts, Illinois, New York and Maryland. Over years of ministering to young people and their families, I have learned that, too often, the first people to violate Black children are the adults in their lives. Too often the first to do harm are adults who are parents, clergy, teachers, community leaders and, yes, LGBT adults.

Race is part of America. Everything we do is done in the context of our personal racial background and our country's racial history. Understanding the pain we have experienced due to racism is an integral piece of claiming our American identity. Knowing that we each must find ways to heal from racism is how we come together and build healthy, diverse and productive communities. As Black people when we see racism as the cause of our problems all while we refuse to explore the effects of our hurting each other, we fail to own our destiny. We fail to change what we can control—ourselves. Instead, we put our fate in the hands of the 'other' and become locked in an endless battle to change the archetypal racist. I wonder if Mr. Loveless has not entirely healed from painful experiences in his life. He would not be the first person to make the mistake of using political activism to suppress the pain of unresolved personal conflict.

Mr. Loveless is, of course, correct in the observation that healing from hurt requires that we take action. We should, indeed, take action. We should act to make our lives better. Sometimes the action we need to take is to seek professional help in resolving personal conflicts. We should act to make life better for those around us. Sometimes the action we need to take is to claim responsibility for our own destructive behavior. We should act to address injustice in the world. Sometimes the action that we need to take is to follow the wisdom of another.

I hope and pray that Mr. Loveless will be able to accomplish the necessary soul-searching that will lead him to understand where he is in his healing process. If there is any way that I can help facilitate his discernment, I would be happy to be of service to him.

God is with us,  
Rev. Deborah Elandus Lake,  
Sankofa Way, [www.sankofaway.org](http://www.sankofaway.org)

## LETTERS

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## Film a matter of life and meth

BY AMY WOOTEN

A disturbingly honest documentary about crystal-meth addiction and HIV screened June 19 at the Center on Halsted.

The film "Rock Bottom: Gay Men & Meth," an intense documentary about several gay men addicted to crystal meth, was shown, followed by a discussion with local health practitioners and the film's director, Jay Corcoran. "Rock Bottom" focuses largely on the drug's relationship to sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS. It was released about two years ago, but never shown in Chicago.

Prior to the screening, director Corcoran discussed the inspiration behind "Rock Bottom," which is his third film about HIV/AIDS and gay men. According to Corcoran, three years ago, his friend was hospitalized because of complications from meth use.

"It brought all those memories back of the late '80s in New York City," Corcoran told the audience. Seeing his friend in the hospital made him wonder: "What have we learned in the past 15 years?" He said he couldn't articulate what he was feeling, so he picked up a camera and started filming.

Corcoran followed seven gay men who used crystal for roughly two and a half years. At first, he said, people warned him not to do the film, fearing it would give Republicans and conservatives fuel.

"I feel to stay silent is even worse," Corcoran said.

A panel discussion between local health practitioners and Corcoran followed the film.

Howard Brown Health Center co-founder Dr.

David Ostrow said that unlike other films on meth that either "glamorize or demonize" the drug, he felt "Rock Bottom" showed the reality of meth addiction. For Ostrow, the film pointed out the necessity of primary prevention, which means preventing people from trying meth in the first place.

Howard Brown's Recovering with Pride program staff psychotherapist Dr. Lisa Rivitz called the film "powerful and balanced." She said that the clients she sees at Howard Brown usually haven't lost everything, contrary to popular belief. Rivitz was also pleased the film focused on the connection between sex and meth, an issue that many clients have with the drug.

Dr. Kevin Osten, of Lakeshore Hospital's VALEO recovery program, stressed the importance of the documentary's message of hope. "The greatest service to clients is to not make them feel bad about relapse," Osten said. "We should celebrate that they are back again and alive and willing to try it all again," he added.

During a Q&A portion following the panel discussion, participants touched on various topics, such as the number of people who know individuals who use meth only a handful of times with no severe consequences, and others who were overcome by the drug almost instantly. The health practitioners present agreed that meth impacts a broad spectrum of people and personalities. Other topics discussed was the internalized homophobia expressed by those documented in the film, how unsuccessful scare-tactics are in public health messages about meth and much more. Those present also agreed to participate in a possibly follow-up meeting about meth use in the gay community.

## Cyndi Lauper to headline Glamorama

Macy's upcoming Glamorama 2008 event benefiting the Art Institute of Chicago will time-warp to the '80s.

Pop icon Cyndi Lauper (who was recently in town in connection with her True Colors tour) and '90s hip-hop star MC Hammer will headline the annual fashion soiree, set to take place Fri., Aug. 22, at 8 p.m., at the Chicago Theatre.

A post-party at Macy's on State Street featuring dancing and '80s fare will follow.

Tickets are \$50 to \$1,000; call 312-902-1500 or visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

See [www.macys.com/glamorama](http://www.macys.com/glamorama).

## Chicago pays homage to Marilyn Monroe

An upcoming exhibition at the Chicago Cultural Center aims to capture actress and diva Marilyn Monroe's evolution from Norma Jean Mortenson to a cultural icon and star through 300 works done by over 100 artists.

"Life as a Legend: Marilyn Monroe" opens on July 19 and runs through Sept. 21.

Admission is free.

See [www.chicagoculturalcenter.org](http://www.chicagoculturalcenter.org) or call 312-744-6630.

## Candy Couture: Group throws sweet fundraiser

The Spina Bifida Association of Illinois can't wait to sink its teeth into the tasty designs being made for its one-of-a-kind fashion event and fundraiser, Sweet Chic.

Sweet Chic will feature well-known designers and their creations made from Tootsie Roll candy products. The event, which kicks off the association's 40th year anniversary, will take place Oct. 11 at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

See [www.sbail.org](http://www.sbail.org) or call Amy Maggio at 773-444-0305 for more information.

## LGBT-themed exhibition in Andersonville

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

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

## Dignity liturgy June 28

Dignity/Chicago, the advocacy organization for GLBT Catholics, will celebrate Pride with a Roman Catholic Mass Sat., June 28, 5 p.m., at 3338 N Broadway.

This liturgy will take the place of Dignity's usual Sunday evening service. There will be no Dignity Mass Sun., June 29. Call 312-458-9438 for more information.

## Chicagoan named GLAAD officer

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) announced that J. Michael Durnil will be its senior vice president, a newly created position at the national gay rights organization.

Durnil previously held positions at Roosevelt University, Elmhurst College, Illinois State University and St. Mary's University of San Antonio.

# Pride Parade

Chicago's 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Pride Parade  
Sunday, June 29

12 Noon: Halsted at Belmont  
Coordinated by PRIDEChicago



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*Ex-Marine and Activist*



The June Pride Month Calendar features over 100 different events organized by various community organizations and individuals.

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[www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org](http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org)

For the parade and all other Pride events ride the CTA/PACE/METRA  
[www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) (773) 836-7000



Tel Aviv Pride.  
Wockner News  
photo by Amit Lev

## WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

### Thousands march in Tel Aviv

Thousands of people marched in Tel Aviv's 10th gay pride parade June 6.

The march, funded by a \$75,000 grant from the city, also was a celebration of the new gay community center in Gan Meir park.

A small group of counterdemonstrators carried signs that said: "Animals! You have nothing to be proud of—take your medication," local media reported.

### Thousands march in Warsaw

Several thousand people marched in Warsaw's fourth gay pride parade June 7 with the theme "Live, Love, Be."

Counterprotesters from All-Polish Youth and

the National Radical Camp yelled insults at the marchers but there were no physical altercations.

A recent poll found that more than two-thirds of Poles wish gays wouldn't broadcast their sexuality.

In 2007, pride organizers won a European Court of Human Rights case against former Mayor Lech Kaczynski, who is now Poland's president, over his attempted ban of the 2005 parade.

The court said the city breached European Convention on Human Rights provisions on discrimination, freedom of association and assembly, and access to an effective remedy.

### Lebanese LGBTQ women form new organization

Lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer women in Lebanon have formed a new organization called MEEM.

"The group was created on the idea that women should be encouraged to empower themselves and each other through mutual support," organizers said in a statement.

"Our goal is to create a safe space in Lebanon where LGBTQs can meet, talk, discuss issues,

share experiences and work on improving their lives and themselves."

### Budapest police chief bans, unbans Pride

Budapest Police Chief Gábor Tóth banned the city's gay pride parade on June 11, then unbanned it on June 13. The parade takes place July 5.

Tóth originally said the parade would cause too much disruption of traffic.

That led to a denunciation from the executive director of the European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association, Patricia Prendiville, who said: "We consider his decision as a sign of giving in to the threats of ultranationalists. The traffic hindrance explanation and an earlier suggestion to the LGBT activists to organize a stationary event in an area remote from the city center are just excuses for the unwillingness of the Budapest police chief to take his responsibilities seriously to ensure order."

In changing his mind, Tóth said freedom of assembly and opinion should take priority over traffic delays.

"We hope the police have understood that it is their job to protect the march from attacks, and not to try to avoid the attacks by banning the march," commented Gábor Kuszting of Hungary's Association of People Challenging Patriarchy. "We hope that they have learned from last year's serious attacks and will appear in adequate numbers to protect us."

Last year, hundreds of skinheads, neo-Nazis and others threw eggs, bottles, smoke bombs, Molotov cocktails and plastic bags of sand at the 2,000 marchers. They also pelted police with beer bottles and physically attacked several marchers. One truck in the parade caught fire when a Molotov cocktail landed on it.

The counterdemonstrators shouted, "Faggots into the Danube, followed by the Jews," "Soap factory" and "Filthy faggots."

Dozens more of the pride attendees were attacked in the vicinity of the post-parade party at the open-air, riverside Buddha Beach nightclub, the parade's endpoint.

Parade organizers said police failed to protect pride celebrants from anti-gay mobs, did not patrol the area of the post-parade party and did not respond to emergency calls.

### Same-sex marriage bill to be introduced in Tasmania

Tasmanian Greens MP Nick McKim will introduce a bill to legalize same-sex marriage in the state Parliament July 1.

If it passes, Tasmania will become the first Australian state to open marriage to gay couples.

Marriage has been considered a federal rather than a state matter in Australia, and a federal law explicitly bans same-sex marriage. But McKim said new legal research has revealed that states are not barred from legalizing same-sex marriage on their own.

Should Tasmania do so, the federal government could reverse it only via a High Court challenge.

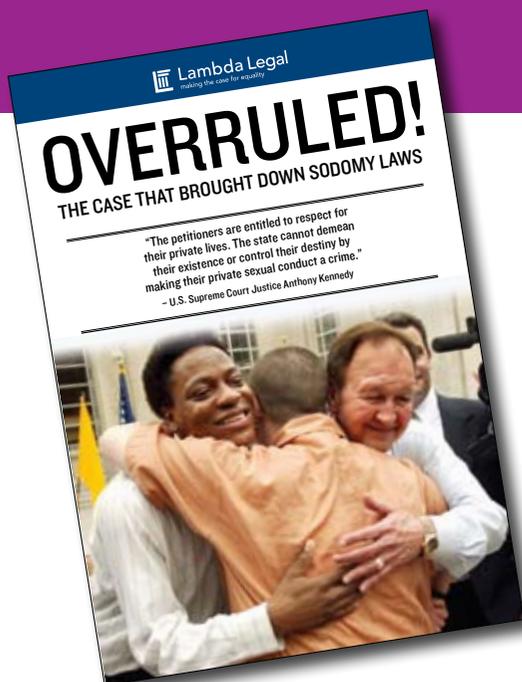
Tasmania already has a law that grants many of the rights and obligations of marriage to registered same-sex couples.

But a spokesman for the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group, Rodney Croome, said that doesn't constitute true equality.

"It's painful for many same-sex couples to see their counterparts in places like California taking solemn legal vows of lifelong commitment while knowing they cannot do the same in their own country," Croome said.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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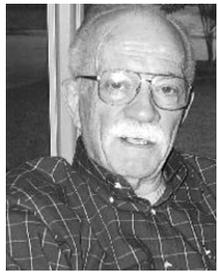
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Visit [www.lambdalegal.org/overruled](http://www.lambdalegal.org/overruled)

## Gay Gerontophobia

The following essay appeared in the Nov. 5, 1998 *Windy City Times*. At the request of a reader, we are reprinting it for *Pride 2008* because the issues are still relevant today. Charles-Gene McDaniel worked for 16 years at Roosevelt University, retiring as head of faculty of journalism and communications and professor emeritus. He lives on the North Side of Chicago.

BY CHARLES-GENE MCDANIEL



While out riding my bicycle on a fine summer day, I passed a young woman who was wearing a T-shirt that read, "Old age is not a disease." As a relatively healthy member of the senioratriot set, I could not agree more.

Tell that, however, to young gay men who treat older men as pariahs ready to be carted to an ice floe to drift out to sea and an icy death. On that bicycle ride I was wearing a T-shirt that read, "Born in the U.S.A. a long time ago." I'm old and proud and gay and proud.

Gay men and lesbians complain about homophobia and this grievance, as it should be, is the core of gay political action. But gay men especially engage in gerontophobia. And here phobia applies in its original sense, meaning fear rather than hatred, although the result is at least the appearance of hate toward the aging, whose presence is considered visual pollution when they appear on the streets in the gay ghettos. Lesbians seem less obsessed with appearances and embrace their sisters across generational lines. The young gay hunks and pretty boys should take heed.

Old people hold the mirror of our own mortality before us and we do not like what we see. Even more pronounced among gay men is the disturbing reminder of the transience of youthful beauty and vitality, the inevitable wrinkles, graying and balding, vision and hearing impairment and the southward migration of various body parts. To the young narcissists, it is as though aging were contagious. There is no turning back the clock, though, even should we foolishly want to, and there is no vaccine against it.

Everybody gets old if he is lucky. Getting old is what happens when we live a long time. American culture in general puts a premium on youth because, for one thing, the young spend more

money. That attitude is even more pronounced in the gay subculture, in which social institutions and services are geared to the young, with few available to the aging. Where are the gay retirement communities? Gay social groups for the aging? Gay nursing homes? Gay and lesbian people did an extraordinary job in coming together to press for specialized facilities for people with AIDS, who are overwhelmingly young. They also have devoted prodigious amounts of volunteer time into raising money and providing personal services to people with AIDS. Their interest wanes when it comes to caring for gay and lesbian people who are suffering from cancer or the debilitating effects of stroke or arthritis. The health-challenged gay and elderly find themselves isolated and alone or, if they are in an extended care facility, among people who share nothing of their culture, nothing of their past.

Among gay social institutions there is none more gerontophobic than the bars, which are notorious in the first place because of the attitude of the gay bar-goers, but where there is mega attitude against any older gay man who might foolishly wander into one of these noisy, smoky dens seeking companionship among his "brothers." The young are offended if an older person even says hello to them. They may not only ignore the greeting but emphasize their disdain with a verbalized "get lost." A greeting does not mean the lonely older man wants to unzip the jeans of the younger, although were it to come to that, the younger men might learn that good sex does not have to be frantic but can be warm and caring.

Other cultures, especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, venerate the aged. Even young gay men are friendly toward old gay men and care for them. They recognize what might come as a surprise to American bar bunnies: Gay geezers have a lot to share – the wisdom that comes from their long life of experience and learning. We fought the battles and suffered the indignities and abuse and imprisonment that made present liberation possible. Together we can make further progress toward gaining equal rights and ending gay-bashing.

Life is tough enough without suffering the added hurt that comes from rejection by other gay men. Next time an old man says hello, smile and return the greeting. Even give him a hug. It will make his day. Yours too.

## MOMBIAN Tales for Teens

BY DANA RUDOLPH



Two new works and one re-release share the real and fictionalized stories of teens with LGBT parents, shining a light on this often-overlooked part of our community.

Tru Loved, now making the rounds at LGBT film festivals, features an all-star cast including Jasmine Guy, Jane Lynch, Alec Mapa, Nichelle Nichols, Alexandra Paul and Bruce Vilanch. Najarra Townsend, who plays the title character Tru, is a relative newcomer, but has already won two best actress awards for her work in the film.

Tru is a high school sophomore who moves with her lesbian moms away from San Francisco and her gay dads to conservative, suburban southern California. She befriends gay, closeted football star Lodell and decides to start a gay-straight alliance (GSA) after hearing homophobic remarks from classmates. She falls for one of the first members, Trevor—a straight boy being raised by his gay uncle. Tru has, however, already promised to be his girlfriend. Can she stay true to both herself and those she loves?

Writer/director Stewart Wade and producer Antonio Brown are partners in life as well as film, and are themselves raising a 14-year-old son. Their family, and the other gay families they know who have teens, were part of the motivation for the picture. "I hadn't seen any movies that represented those kids," said Wade.

Brown also noted that he and Wade are an interracial gay couple like Tru's moms. "There's a little bit of us in that film," he said. "It's really about tolerance and acceptance on so many levels, and that acceptance begins with self-acceptance."

In addition to drawing on their own experiences, they reached out to COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere), PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), and the Gay-Straight Alliance Network to help create "an authentic world for Tru and her friends."

Despite the input of these advocacy groups, Wade says he worked hard to avoid preachiness. "That was very, very important to me. ... It's really more like a contemporary Disney film, a family film, except the families in this

case happen to be gay and lesbian families. ... I think the comedy is what helps people get it. It isn't beating you over the head."

The couple is working to secure a theatrical release for the picture. In the meantime, you can catch it at Family Week in Provincetown as part of the COLAGE programming (see [www.colage.org](http://www.colage.org)), or look for screenings near you at [www.truloved.com](http://www.truloved.com).

Meema Spadola's *Our House: a Very Real Documentary About Kids of Gay & Lesbian Parents*, profiles five actual gay and lesbian families with teens or pre-teens. First released in 2000, it has just come out on DVD, along with bonus footage of the families today. Spadola, who was 10 when her mother divorced her father and came out, made the film because, like Wade and Brown, she wanted to see representations of families like her own. "I felt really isolated," she explained. "If I had been able to turn on the television and see a program about kids with other gay and lesbian parents, that would have radically changed my life."

Troy Johnson's new book, *Family Outing*, is a scathing, funny, ribald case study in what can go wrong when that honesty and openness are missing. At 10, in the middle of the Reagan era, Johnson found out his divorced mother was a lesbian when her ex-girlfriend outed her. His descent into juvenile delinquency, alcohol and heterosexual promiscuity might seem like proof of the ultra-right's assertion that LGBT people shouldn't have children, but Johnson makes it clear the root causes were the secrecy, homophobia and shame imposed by society, not his mother's sexuality itself.

The book chronicles his journey to this realization without sugar-coating his own initial bigotry. Instead of "feel-good psychobabble about 'embracing our differences'" he says, "someone needed to say exactly what a shallow, self-absorbed teenager thought about the situation while he was experiencing it." He spends most of his adolescence trying to reassure himself he is not also gay. His chapter on COLAGE is titled "Freaks Everywhere." This is a story of personal growth and redemption, a tale of coming-of-age as well as coming out as a member of an LGBT family. Johnson's message is stronger because he never makes the process seem easy.

Lighthearted fiction, documentary or biting confessional memoir—those looking for stories of teens in LGBT families are likely to find something to appeal to them in these works.

**Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian ([www.mombian.com](http://www.mombian.com)), a blog and resource directory for LGBT parents.**

**Read the entire column at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).**



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Citywide Pride is a coalition of Chicagoland companies coming together during Pride Month to celebrate diversity in the workplace.

What follow are wrap-ups from just two of the series of lectures the organization sponsors. For more information, see [www.citywidepride.info](http://www.citywidepride.info).

## Forum focuses on LGBTs' legal, financial hurdles

BY YASMIN NAIR

The law firm of Hinshaw and Culbertson, 222 N. LaSalle, hosted a presentation by Kyle D. Young, a financial advisor at Wachovia Securities, titled "Financial and Legal Challenges for the GLBT Community." This was part of the Citywide Pride events, which are designed to promote "advocacy and equality for LGBT employees" in the corporate workplace. The same-sex marriage movement often raises the issue of what happens to the assets of a couple upon the demise of one partner, arguing that estate law and benefit packages favor married, opposite-sex

couples; Young discussed financial strategies in this context.

Young used the term "non-spouse" throughout to indicate those who might be affected by the death of a partner/close friend and who stood to lose substantially because federal laws do not recognize non-spousal partnerships, regardless of their sexual orientation. According to Young, who spoke on June 18, while things have improved for LGBTs in the corporate sector, there's still progress to be made. Only nine states give out same-sex benefits (New York, California, New Jersey, Vermont, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Alaska, Oregon, and California). Only 198 of the Fortune 500 companies offer LGBT benefits.

According to Young, these state and corporate benefits are ineffective when federal law doesn't recognize non-spousal partnerships, and this can have far-reaching effects. In the case of pension plans, if a partner in a same-sex couple [or an unmarried couple] dies before the benefits start, those benefits are lost. In the case of a federally recognized spousal relationship, the husband or wife inherits.

In terms of Social Security benefits, same-sex

partners are not eligible to receive their partners' benefits [this also affects those who are opposite-sex and/or single - their social security benefits cannot be passed on to a non-spouse].

The Illinois state Estate Tax can be as high as 16%, if the estate is over 2 million and "this leaves your designated beneficiaries with a fraction of the assets left to them."

How might non-spousal couples ensure that survivors receive the maximum benefits and assets? Young said the first strategy was to "be pro-active" and to create a "wealth management roadmap" which included planning every financial aspect, including long term health care. He emphasized the importance making sure that one's benefits were clearly earmarked, and "making sure that financial advisors and attorneys have copies of all beneficiary forms."

But in an economy where the median household income is less than \$50,000, how many people, LGBT or straight, are effected by estate taxes, which only affects a small minority of the wealthy? Young responded that he didn't "want to generalize, but very often those within the LGBT community do have incomes higher than the general population - they're more educated and have higher degrees."

He also suggested the LGBT people file Federal income tax forms as "single," with an asterisk next to the word, and a reference to DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act); this, according to Young, creates visibility around the effect of DOMA on LGBTs and non-spousal relationships.

## Speakers lend financial-planning tips

BY AMY WOOTEN

Many lesbian and gay people are in the dark when it comes to their finances.

At a recent Citywide Pride event hosted by Merrill Lynch and the law offices of McDermott, Will & Emery, 227 W. Monroe, "Out in the Workplace, but in the Dark About Your Financial Future? Ten Things You Need to Know about Employee Benefits and Financial Planning," speakers gave useful tips for the benefit of both employer and employee.

During the first portion of the presentation, McDermott, Will & Emery's Todd Solomon provided helpful hints for employers about domestic partner benefits. Although many big companies

now offer such benefits, Solomon warned that they need to make sure they are doing all they can be doing for their LGBT employees.

For instance, employers need to make sure that the cost of domestic partner benefits aren't higher than the cost for spouses. They also need to make sure they don't require too much proof of domestic partnership, considering most companies don't even ask for a marriage license for their straight employees. Companies who provide domestic partner benefits also need to check that they are applying the best policies and being fair and equal, such as equalizing parental leave policies and ensuring drug plans don't have transgender exclusions.

In addition to making sure benefits are friendly to all employees, companies should also apply best practices by creating LGBT networks, partnering with other employee resource groups and supporting the LGBT community, Solomon added.

Until the federal government recognizes same-sex relationships, companies need to make sure they are treating their employees and their employee's partners equally, Solomon said. He is looking forward to possibly having civil unions in Illinois. Although it won't have an impact on federal benefits, it will clue more local companies into the needs of their LGBT employees. "It will do a lot for bringing this higher up on the radar screen for Illinois companies," Solomon said. "It will continue to bring attention to the issue."

For the second portion of the afternoon presentation, Merrill Lynch discussed financial planning for lesbians and gays.

Merrill Lynch's senior financial advisor Nora Winsberg called LGBT financial needs "special needs" due to their complexity. "We don't have equal rights a simple marriage contract would convey," Winsberg said.

According to Winsberg, financial matters for LGBT people are very complex. She advises that lesbians and gay men work with an expert, such as a financial advisor or attorney, for lifetime planning such as financial planning, wills and trusts, child care and adoption agreements and more.

Until same-sex marriage is recognized at the federal level, unfortunately life planning can be incredibly confusing and difficult for gays and lesbians, she said. Among some tips she had to offer: double check the titling of your assets (is your ex-boyfriend on there?); continually update your beneficiary designations; consider rolling over your 401(k) assets into a traditional IRA; make sure you have all the necessary documents for estate planning (such as a living trust and will, HIPPA releases, a domestic partnership registration, etc.).



Kyle Young. Photo by Yasmin Nair

Dignity - Chicago

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## GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Image courtesy of Kelby James Russell

## FULL OF GLEE

The renowned Harvard Glee Club is just one of the many groups/performers coming to Ravinia this summer. See more below.

## EVENTS

Having a blast.  
Page 56.

Photo courtesy of Lynn Malec



## MOVIES

French spies.  
Page 26.



## MUSIC

Locke and load.  
Page 52.



## THEATER

## Measure for Measure

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

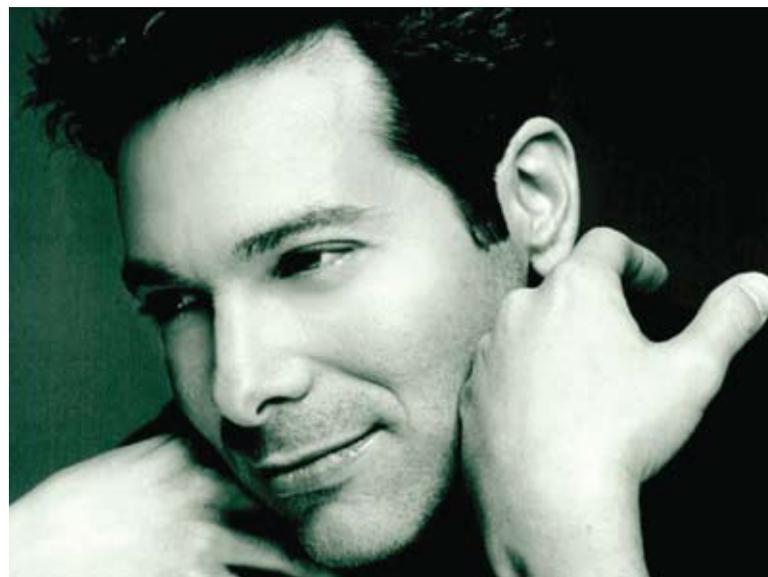
Summertime is when music goes outdoors, highlighted by the Grant Park Music Festival in downtown Chicago and the Ravinia Festival in Highland Park. Both offer widely-varied programs, outdoor picnicking, cool lake breezes and a relaxing atmosphere. Both also offer numerous programs of interest to LGBT audiences, some of which feature gay artists and/or composers, both living and dead. We take time to highlight them for this special Pride Month edition of Measure for Measure.

The Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus actually perform in Millennium Park in the alien spaceship known as the Pritzker Pavilion. It offers several thousand free seats (although the best seats are reserved for members of the Grant Park Concert Society) and a large lawn for picnics with fab Chicago skyline views. The 2008 concert line-up includes musical selections by several out composers (and, quite probably, several not-out composers), but none more frequently than Peter Tchaikovsky, who's all over Grant Park like a bad rash this year. Still, he isn't alone.

**June 27-28**—Lord Benjamin Britten's "Les Illuminations" is performed in a concert of 20th-century masters that also includes works by Vaughan Williams and Bartok (*Note:* This is in Millennium Park's Harris Theatre, not at the Pritzker Pavilion.)

**July 2, 5**—WFMT program host Bill McGlaughlin narrates a program exploring American music, with works of iconic gay late-bloomer Leonard Bernstein included along with pieces by Gershwin, Chadwick, John Adams and various Chicago composers.

**July 3**—The annual Independence Eve extravaganza always features a fantastic fireworks display that kicks off with Tchaikovsky's explo-



Michael Feinstein.  
Photo courtesy of Kyle Whitney

sive orgasmic "1812 Overture" (at Petrillo Music Shell, not Pritzker Pavilion).

**July 9, 11**—Tchaikovsky's last symphony (No. 6), the romantically weepy "Pathetique," is the featured work in concert by the Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Hanna Lintu and also offering works by Sibelius and Szymanowski.

**July 13**—The great violinist and conductor Pinchas Zukerman leads the orchestra in works by Bach, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky, this time his "Romeo and Juliet": Overture-Fantasy.

**July 29, 31**—Sing out, Louise! It's gay night in composer heaven in a program of vocal music performed by the Grant Park Chorus, conducted by Christopher Bell. Under the title of Made in America, this concert offer works by John Corigliano, Aaron Copland and Samuel Barber among other composers, living and dead. At the Harris Theater.

Complete Grant Park Music Festival details can be found at [www.grantparkmusicfestival.com](http://www.grantparkmusicfestival.com).

The Ravinia Festival, in north suburban Highland Park, isn't free and it charges for park-

ing, but it's the summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and annually offers the greatest living soloists, conductors and chamber players—the superstars of serious music. Musical fare ranges from concert opera to great orchestral music to intimate recitals to dance. Ravinia also offers pop and jazz programs but they aren't the concern of Measure for Measure. Ravinia facilities include two sit-down dining options plus gourmet take-out food and an ice cream shop. New this year: Ravinia's first bar. You'll find all the info at [www.ravinia.org](http://www.ravinia.org).

For all that glory, what Ravinia lacks this season is a strong and obvious LGBT presence. There's very little Tchaikovsky, Bernstein, Copland, Barber, Britten, etc. There's a single work by John Corigliano and a smattering of Franz Schubert but we can only have our suspicions about him. There's no Ravinia theater event this year, as the multi-year Sondheim series culminated last season with Patti Lupone in Gypsy (leading to her recent Tony Award), thus cutting off another usual avenue of LGBT presence. Thank goodness Ravinia isn't short of divas this season, or we don't know what we'd have to talk

about.

**July 5**—The Harvard Glee Club (in the Martin Theatre). A large group of attractive college boys in blazers who sing well. We went to school in Boston and met many Harvard men. They aren't all straight.

**July 6-7**—This is it! Two intimate recitals in the Martin Theatre by the incomparable Barbara Cook, the queen of the Great American Songbook and legendary Broadway leading lady.

**July 9**—Violinists don't come any cuter than Joshua Bell—although he must be over 30 by now—and few are as talented. Bell performs the very challenging Sibelius Violin Concerto with the Chicago Symphony under the baton of Leonard Slatkin.

**July 13**—A Martin Theatre recital by beloved pianist Emanuel Ax features solo works by notorious heterosexual Franz Liszt and his curly-haired questionable contemporary Franz Schubert. The deal with Schubert is that he never married, traveled exclusively with male friends and died at 29. So how can you know for sure?

**July 19**—The great diva Kiri Te Kanawa is in concert with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) under Ravinia music director James Conlon. Dame Kiri will sing works by Richard Strauss, Canteloube and Puccini among others. The voice is superb. The question is: will she be warm and generous or cold and aloof?

**Aug. 3**—Best of Broadway finds the CSO, under Erich Kunzel, with soloists and chorus performing songs by Cole Porter and Lenny Bernstein, among other composers of Great White Way fame.

**Aug. 17**—The great diva Michael Feinstein, the out pianist and singer, performs with Jane Monheit in an evening of Gershwin under the stars.

**Sept. 1**—Celebrate Labor Day with the working man's friend, Peter Tchaikovsky. His Piano Concerto No. 1 and his "1812 Overture"—with live cannons—will be performed by the Ravinia Festival Orchestra under Erich Kunzel, with piano soloist Andrew von Oeyen.

The next play from the Pulitzer Prize winning author of *August: Osage County*



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Jacques Brel's *Lonesome Losers of the Night*. Photo courtesy of Theo Ubique Theatre

## THEATER REVIEW

### Jacque Brel's Lonesome Losers of the Night

Playwright: Jacques Brel,  
translated by Arnold Johnston  
At: Theo Ubique Theatre Company  
at No Exit Café, N. Glenwood,  
6970 N. Greenwood  
Phone: 773-370-0235; \$20  
Runs through: Aug. 30

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

One of the most recognizable songs by Belgian-French singer and composer Jacques Brel is "*Ne me quitte pas*," best known in English as "If You Go Away," as translated by Rod McKuen. But the literal meaning of the French phrase is "Don't leave me." There's a big difference in tone between McKuen's future conditional version and the passionate imperative of the literal translation.

Theo Ubique Theatre Company previously had great success with a revue of Brel songs using the standard and familiar translations, but came to know the material well enough to understand something was missing—something in the nature of raw, rough poetry found in Brel's slangy original French. So for this new show, they set about creating their own renditions with translator Arnold Johnston. Those familiar with the famous revue Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris may miss famous tunes such as *Carousel* and *If We Only Had Time*, but will find other well-known numbers freshly revealed, such as *Amsterdam* and the *Song of Jacky*. There are new gems, too, as *Lonesome Losers of the Night* introduces unfamiliar Brel songs.

The 90-minute show has the loosest of structures: Two soldiers stop by a waterfront bar and share stories, drinks and time with the bartender and the local hooker through songs of longing, songs of lust, songs of drinking, songs of betrayal and songs of ego, a Brel specialty. Johnston's translations are wonderfully vigorous, colorfully colloquial, deliciously vulgar and sometimes unexpectedly poetic. The *Song of Jacky* is one of Brel's egotistical tunes, famous from the earlier Jacques Brel revue for its catch-line "cute, cute, cute in a stupid-ass way." In Johnston's version, the line is rendered "handsome and dumb and an absolute shit."

Just two songs later, in a striking change of tone, Johnston, music director Joshua Stephen Kartes and director Fred Anzevino, offer a profound reminiscence of childhood, "*Mon Enfance*," with the powerful image of "winters spent in the womb of the family home/A great ship of stone ... What surprised me the most was to be part of a clan/Who had taught me to cry for my innocence lost." I don't mind saying this unfamiliar Brel treasure blew me away.

The four singers are veterans Jeremy Trager, Jenny Lamb, Eric Martin and Chicago newcomer Chris Damiano: attractive—even sexy—players who blend well together in several tight harmony sections and also have their individual moments to shine. Staging is relatively simple in the intimate No Exit Café (food and non-alco-

holic drinks available), with a small bar set, the piano and the occasional use of café aisles.

To close with the cliché, *Lonesome Losers of the Night* is a winner.

## THEATER REVIEW

### Woody Guthrie's American Song

Playwright: music by Woody Guthrie,  
arrangements by Jeff Waxman,  
book by Peter Glazer  
At: Blindfaith Theatre  
at the Greenhouse, 2257 N. Lincoln  
Phone: 773-871-3000; \$18-\$20  
Runs through: July 20

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Whether you know it or not, you've heard—and maybe even sung—a song by Woodrow Wilson Guthrie. In grade school, at summer camp, on a picnic or at a Pride rally, you have almost assuredly experienced one of the songs now so much a part of our nation's heritage that it comes as a surprise to most people when reminded of their lone composer, who died in 1967 at the age of 55.

There's a reason, however, why this revue is titled Woody Guthrie's *American song*. Audiences who dismiss its selection of material as imperfect biodrama mistake author Peter Glazer's mission, which is not to glorify a man, but a culture. Guthrie himself shrugged off credit for his "compositions," declaring them to be mere reflections of observations gathered on his "roams and rambles" among the rural population displaced by the Great Depression. (It's easy nowadays to equate "migrant" workers with foreign-born immigrants, forgetting a time when long-entrenched American citizens toiled in strangers' fields, living in tents or trailers before moving on to the next harvest. Pay attention—you may soon see them again.)

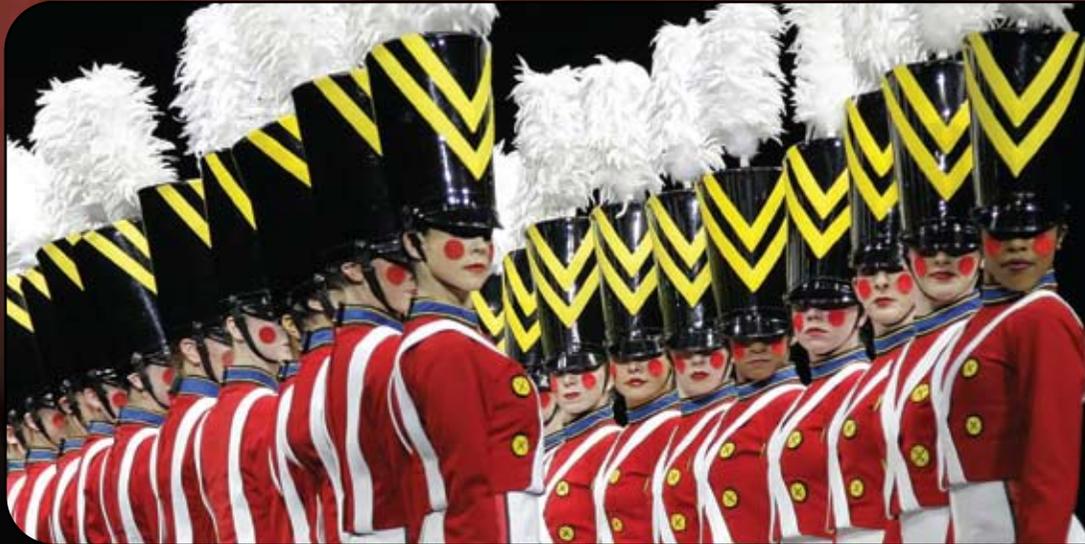
So whether our guide is enlightening us to life in the California camps with "End of My Line," or New York's Bowery with a merry "Hard, Ain't It Hard," the emotion evoked is the gloomy despair of the refugee followed by a grim determination to endure. For every lament like "Deportee," "Nine Hundred Miles" or "I Ain't Got No Home In This World Anymore," we get flashes of humor, such as the satirical "If You Ain't Got The Do-Re-Mi" and of faith in a better world to come—as with the refrain to "Worried Man," which declares defiantly, "I'm worried now/but I won't be worried long."

Blindfaith Theatre's decision to house its production in the cozy downstairs studio at the Greenhouse may have been rooted in budgetary concerns, but the intimacy of the quarters facilitates the empathy generated by the ensemble of speaking characters who also sing and play their own guitars—with additional heft contributed by four auxiliary instrumentalists—our freight-train troubadour's battered Stella six-string caroling as brightly as the Guilds and Martins kept wisely in the background by director Nicolas Minas and music director Shaun Whitley. By the time we are invited to join them (in a chorus of "Union Maid"), most playgoers will have already done so much earlier.

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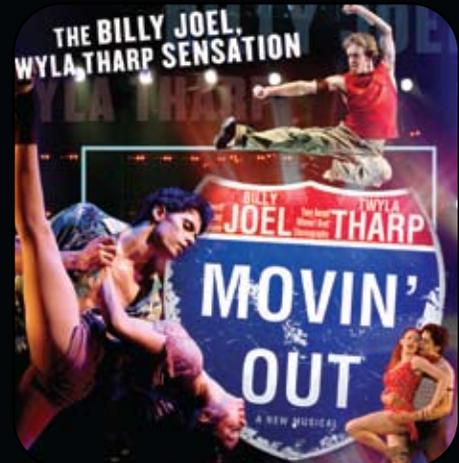
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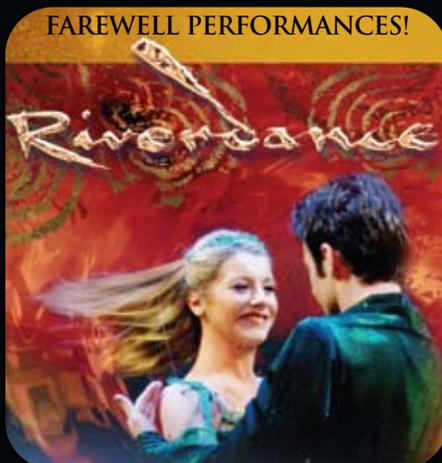
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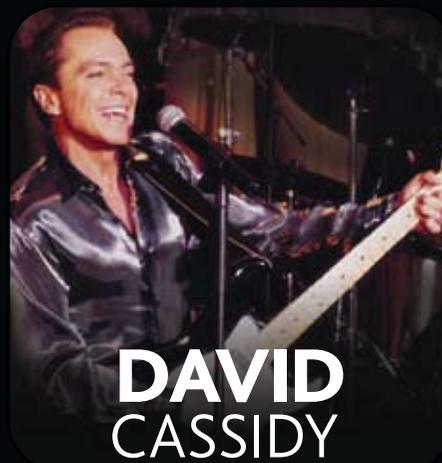


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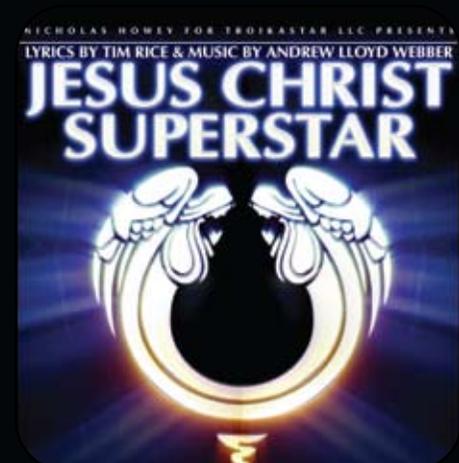
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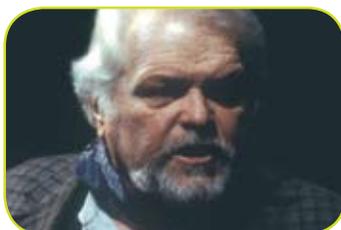
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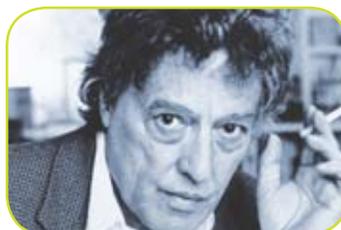
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## THEATER REVIEW

## Bloody Bess: A Tale of Piracy and Revenge

Playwright: John Ostrander  
and William J. Norris,  
based on a concept by Stuart Gordon  
At: BackStage Theatre Company at  
The Storefront, 66 E. Randolph  
Phone: 312-742-8497; \$20  
Runs through: July 20

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

"There is scarcely [anyone] who, at some period in life, has not wished [they] were a pirate" mused scholar-explorer A. Hyatt Verrill—an observation borne out in popular fantasy from Robert Newton's Long John Silver to Johnny Depp's Captain Jack Sparrow. In 1973, Stuart Gordon, John Ostrander and William J. Norris—all members of a fledgling Chicago theatre group called the Organic Theatre Company then forging a reputation for athletic epics—decided that what the burgeoning off-Loop theater scene needed was a swashbuckling pirate yarn featuring a cutlass-swinging *belle sabreur*.

Our heroine, Elizabeth Presberty, soon to be known by the fearsome sobriquet "Bloody Bess," is an amalgam of several real-life historical figures—notably Mary Read and Anne Bonny. But though the play bearing her name encompasses many of the elements we have come to associate with its genre, the authors' times are reflected in its unmistakable populist ethos. What motivates the governor of Tabago's gently bred daughter, kidnapped and held for ransom by seafaring marauders, to engineer a rampage through the Caribbean colonies—assisted by that same outlaw band—is her realization that however cruel and crude her captors may be, the handsome English officer now in charge of her father's domain is far more corrupt than those he would declare "criminals."



**Bloody Bess: A Tale of Piracy and Revenge.**  
Photo by Heath Hays

Extravagant shipboard battles require fighting room beyond the resources of most non-equity theater troupes, but the BackStage Theatre Company is fortunate to have secured not only the spacious city-built black-box Storefront Theatre, but award-winning Geoff Coates as both its production and its violence director (the latter title shared with David Skvarla). Under their guidance, the spectacle-driven narrative (enhanced by Tom Haigh's original music, invoking vistas of limitless adventure) delivers thrilling martial exhibitions showcasing the multicultural composition of the bandit privateers. And if the physical elements sometimes overpower the comic-book text (a not-uncommon occurrence in shows of this nature), leading the actors to deliver every speech at snap-crackling intensity, what does that matter when you have brawny buccaneers, expatriate aristocrats, scrappy (but soft-hearted) *hombros*, exotic African fugitives and a good-woman-done-wrong uniting in a death-before-dishonor match against the WASP establishment? Haaargh! Pass the rum, matey!

## Lily Tomlin at Rosemont Theatre Nov. 1

One of America's queens of comedy, the legendary Lily Tomlin, will take the stage of the Rosemont Theatre, 5400 N. River, Sat., Nov. 1, at 8 p.m. for "An Evening of Classic Lily Tomlin." The one-night-only performance is a free-wheeling one-woman show featuring "guest appearances" by some of Tomlin's best-known characters.

Tomlin's first television appearance was on The Gary Moore Show (1966) and in 1969 she joined the sketch-comedy TV hit "Laugh In," where she became known characters such as the devilish six-year old Edith Ann and telephone operator Ernestine. Her film credits include Nine to Five, I Heart Huckabees, Nashville and A Prairie Home Companion.

Tickets are \$37.50-\$75. Call Ticketmaster at 312-559-1212; visit Ticketmaster outlets or the Rosemont Theatre box office; or visit [www.Ticketmaster.com](http://www.Ticketmaster.com).

## SPOTLIGHT

### War Garden



During World War I, the 17th Ladies' Auxiliary wanted to assist the war effort by planting a vegetable garden in Streeterville, the fertile lakefront landfill created by Captain George Streeter. But the hard-drinking, scheming curmudgeonly lakeboat skipper claimed it as his own domain, separate from Chicago and even from Illinois. **War Garden: An Experiment in Patriotic Agriculture** is a family-friendly, outdoor pageant that portrays The Battle of the Cabbage between the Ladies and Cap Streeter using period music, songs and costumes. Running under one hour, War Garden is being performed in city parks to promote community gardens, and features pre-show activities kids will enjoy. War Garden is presented by Walkabout Theater and NeighborSpace (sic), through July 27. Call 773-527-0341; \$10 suggested donation. Photo by Seth Bockley

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## THEATER REVIEW

## The Mysterious Elephant and the Terrible Tragedy of the Unlikely Addington Twins (\*who kill him)

Playwright: Emily Schwartz  
At: The Strange Tree Group at Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division  
Phone: 773-598-8240; \$20-\$40  
Runs through: July 19

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The full title of The Strange Tree Group's latest production is The Mysterious Elephant and the Terrible Tragedy of the Unlikely Addington Twins (\*who kill him).

Typically, such a long title is the mark of something self-importantly pretentious—or something so cutesy that the saccharine will poison you.

Though there are overly whimsical elements in Emily Schwartz's comedy with music, this merrily macabre production is neither too serious nor twee to be detrimental to your health. In fact, The Mysterious Elephant is a thorough delight that playfully toys with the whole notion of storytelling.

You know you're in for something different when you're greeted pre-show to the cast singing and playing an assortment of musical instruments amid Galen Pejeau's wonderfully decaying drawing room set that would do the late cartoonist Edward Gorey proud. Then accordionist Thomas Zeitner takes his place inside an elephant assemblage and the story begins.

We meet the long-lost Addington twins of Esther (Carol Enoch as the petulant and severe



The Mysterious Elephant...

one) and Edward (Matt Holzfiend as the overly emotional one). In their tattered clothes, they tell of their woeful lives in song and how they ended up in the ancestral home of their late eccentric Aunt Ernerstine (an imperious Jennifer Marschand).

What they find there is the nefarious Narrator (quite the moustache twirler in Weston Davis' performance) who has omnisciently been altering the lives of generations of Addington ancestors to horribly tragic ends (in rhymed poetry, no less). They subsequently come to life in their oil paintings to confirm this fact and retell their stories (a device previously seen in Sansculottes Theater's 13 Dead Husbands). Running throughout each story is a bizarre mechanical elephant that now is winding down toward its death in the drawing room.

Where it gets really interesting is when the twins revolt against the narrator and try to make their ending a happy one. And that involves finding a key to wind up the elephant.

Director Carolyn Klein skillfully keeps you guessing at how things turn out. She also reins

in all the wacky characters and great dialogue so everything is pitched perfectly by this ultra-talented ensemble of 13. (Note to Chicago actors: Learn a musical instrument to up your chances of employment.)

Everyone in the cast delights through his or her judicious mugging and cheery willingness to go to the extremes of their characters' messy downfalls. Scott Cupper, in the duo roles of the moldering corpse of nephew Christoff and the imperious hog merchant Captain Mandy, is of particular comic note, as are Enoch and Holzfiend, who maintain their composure amid all the inspired silliness.

So don't let the long title of The Mysterious Elephant deter you from going. This uniquely theatrical comedy is full of surprises that engage you from start to finish.

## THEATER REVIEW

## Relatively Close

Playwright: James Sherman  
At: Victory Gardens  
Biograph Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln  
Phone: 773-871-3000; \$20-\$45  
Runs through: July 13

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

James Sherman's world-premiere comedy Relatively Close has a thoroughly manufactured quality of a TV sitcom mixed with a Neil Simon play. If that's your thing, by all means go to the Victory Gardens Biograph Theatre and laugh your head off.

But Sherman's cadre of quirky characters for Relatively Close feels like mixed-and-matched oddball patches deliberately sewn together to clash. Instead of letting the comedy develop organically or pushing it to be a breakneck farce to match John C. Stark's handsome two-tier multiple bedroom set, Sherman's formulaic construction feels like a set-up.

That sitcom impression also extends to an Act II moment when two disparate characters bond over the realization that they don't have to live up to labels and stereotypes applied to them (cue audience to go: "Awwwww"). The hurriedly pat solution to the show's major conflict also feels like a sitcom neatly wrapping up its issue/conflict of the week.

Relatively Close pits three grown Jewish sisters and their diverse spouses against each other as they vacation in the family's disputed Michigan beach house. Since the house wasn't bequeathed to a particular sister, they spar about what's to become of it.

The eldest, Jan (Penny Slusher), is a perky Republican aldermanic candidate for Chicago's 43rd Ward who is married to wealthy Iranian-American businessman Yousef (Usman Ally). She wants to sell the house for a multi-million dollar profit and she'll use her surface niceness to ruthlessly get her way.

Much-married middle sister Beth (Laura T. Fisher) and her new African-American husband,

Arthur (Dexter Zollicoffer), try to use his position as a Chicago college provost to make over the beachhouse as a summer artists colony. Youngest daughter Marlene (Wendi Weber) wants to keep the house in the family, though she appears to be easily swayed. (Marlene also has a clinical shyness disorder, so she uses a ventriloquist's dummy to help her break the ice).

Add into that mix Beth's antisocial teenage son named Dylan (David Gonzalez) who does slam poetry and Marlene's overly sarcastic (and unfaithful) Jewish husband, Ron (Daniel Cantor). With such a diverse familial crowd the fur flies on cue, though the wounds are only light scratches (this is comedy resembling a sitcom after all).

Each one of the actors does good comedic duty, through some like Cantor and Slusher push harder than necessary. Director Dennis Zacek manages the comic timing well, through the expansive and detailed set feels underutilized (characters not conversing in scenes are left to do silent busywork in their respective rooms when they would normally be offstage).

Relatively Close at has all the earmarks of a mainstream crowd-pleaser. And in this summer season, that's just fine. Just don't look too closely or you'll notice the obvious seams joining it all together.

## CRITICS' PICS

**Dante Dies!! (and then things get weird)**, Side Show at Chicago Dramatists; through July 13. Thoughtful and entertaining one-man show based on Dante's Inferno impresses with Walt McGough's soberly silly script and Matthew Fletcher's elastic performance. SCM

**Dead Man's Cell Phone**, Steppenwolf Theatre, through July 27. Amidst all the Tony roar at Steppenwolf let's not forget Sarah Ruhl's romantic play, where the references range from Greek myths to Lewis Carroll, and even the dead live happily ever after. MSB

**Funk it Up About Nothin'**, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, through Aug. 3. The clever young creators of The Bombitty of Errors do a rap take on Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, a 90-minute whirl of rhymes and sexual innuendo, some of it gay. JA

**The Last Days of Judas Iscariot**, Gift Theatre at Victory Gardens, through July 20. If God forgives all, why was Judas damned to an eternity of unbearable grief? This other-worldly wickedly sardonic, wildly funny courtroom drama tackles that thorny question. CS

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

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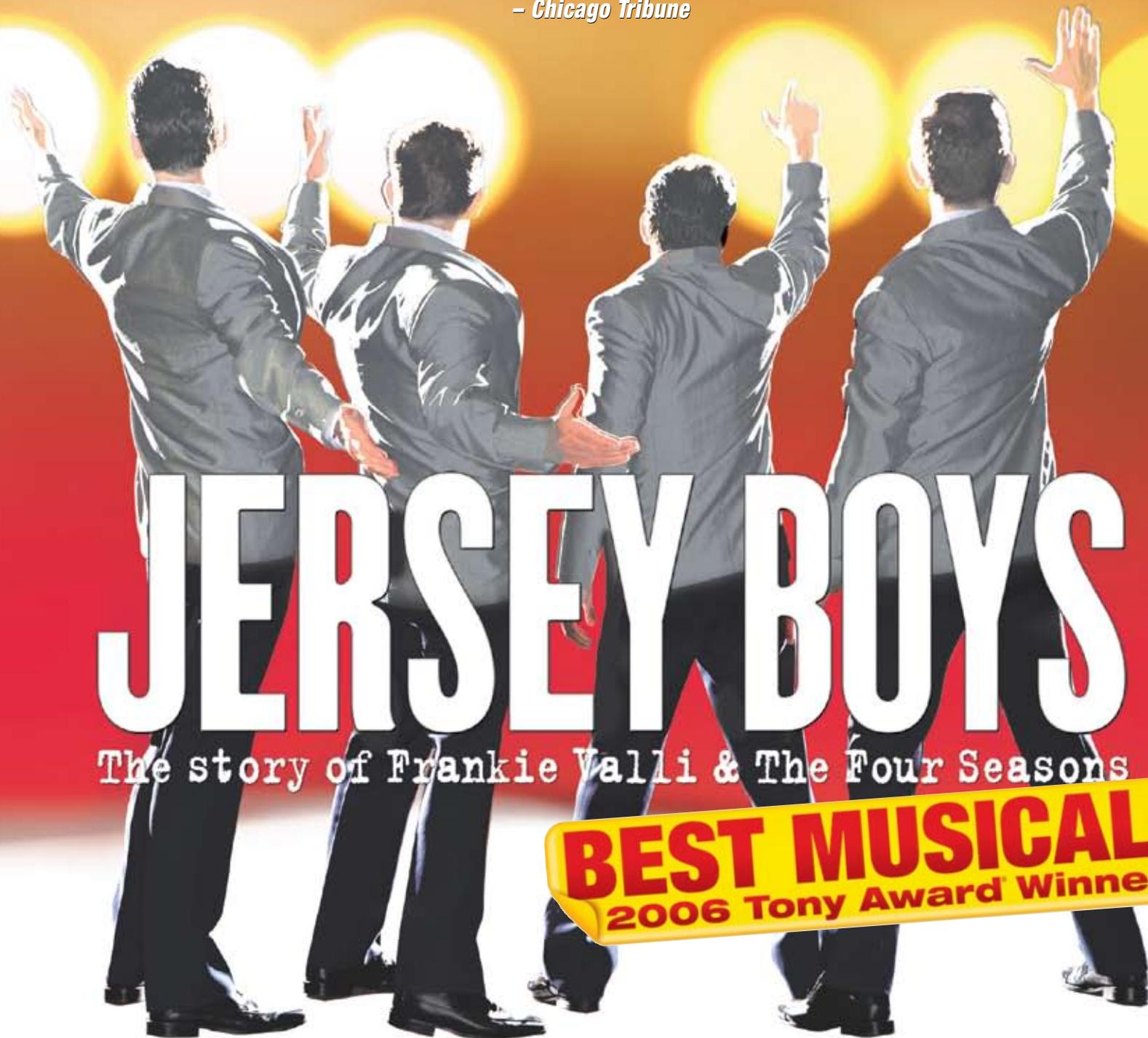
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# KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

## OSS-117: Cairo, Nest of Spies; Film Notes

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

I thought after the okay-but-not-great Get Smart that I wouldn't have much use for another spy spoof anytime soon. But a French twist on the genre, **OSS 117: Cairo, Nest of Spies**, in spite of its hamstrung title, has made me revise my opinion. The film is the first distributed by Music Box Films, an adjunct of Chicago's Music Box Theatre. The movie is set in the 1950s (but looks and sounds like the James Bond of the 1960s). The "OSS-117" of the title refers to Hubert's (Jean Dujardin) spy designation (a variation on "007"). Hubert is a cross between Austin Powers and Inspector Clouseau but like those two bumblers, his sharkskin suits and phony bravado somehow make him an irresistible chick magnet. Hubert is sent to Cairo to pick up where a fellow agent left off after being murdered. In the movie's first of many homoerotic references, each time the agent's name is mentioned Hubert daydreams wistfully about a day on the beach frolicking and wrestling with him and then snaps back to reality with a smile on his face. Later Hubert tells a gorgeous brunette accomplice (in the Elizabeth Hurley role) that his revolver (which he holds at crotch level) has "Unsealed lots of lips of both men and women" as he threatens her.

The homoerotic subtext is continued in the racy dialogue during a sequence in a steambath in which Hubert seems to enjoy his rubdown a little too much. When Hubert is trapped inside a pyramid with some Nazis, they taunt him with gay slurs about his love of "wieners," purposely misinterpreting remarks Hubert made in the sauna. He emphatically denies any gay proclivities (and beds the requisite female beauties), but the point is referenced again and again for comedic effect throughout the movie, with Hubert each time denying any gay bent but—

given the homoerotic beach-scene reverie—he perhaps denies too strongly. Regardless of Agent OSS 117's true sexual nature (perhaps a sequel will flesh this out), OSS 117: Cairo, Nest of Spies is a gently amusing and a stylish addition to the spy spoof genre with an engaging cast and suitably silly performance by Dujardin. In French with subtitles.

The film plays an exclusive engagement at the Landmark Century Centre Cinema beginning Fri., June 27. [www.musicboxfilms.com](http://www.musicboxfilms.com)

### Film Notes:

—Queer filmmakers Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato have made a host of provocative reality shows and documentaries (both short and feature-length), including *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*, *Gay Republicans*, *Party Monster* (both a doc and dramatic version with Dylan McDermott playing club owner Peter Gatien, my former boss), *101 Rent Boys* and my personal favorite, *Inside Deep Throat*. Now the duo have lensed **When I Knew**. The half-hour film, which is based on the book by Robert Trachtenburg, covers a wide spectrum of folks reminiscing directly to the camera about the moment they realized they were gay. As expected, the stories present a wide range of recollections—funny, terrifying, sad, heart-wrenching—and the filmmakers' simple approach wisely allows the storytellers to speak for themselves. *When I Knew* premieres on Cinemax June 26 and will be concurrently available on DVD.

—The Gene Siskel Film Center kicks off a series devoted to the great Italian director **Luchino Visconti** with a screening of his 1971 homoerotic masterpiece, *Death in Venice*, Thurs., June 26, at 6 p.m. Based on Thomas Mann's novella, Dirk Bogarde plays a German composer who becomes obsessed with a beautiful blonde, androgynous boy while on vacation in Venice. The series also includes a June 28th and July 1st screening of Visconti's infamous and lurid (it was originally X-rated) *The Damned*. This 1969 epic focuses on a wealthy industrial family getting into business with the decadent Nazis. The film, which includes Helmut Berger as a murderous pedophile and transvestite, includes a recreation of "the night of the long knives," the notorious evening in which Hitler ordered the massacre of his political enemies, including a battalion of his openly gay officers and soldiers. It screens June 28 and July 1. The little-seen, more comedic *Conversation Piece* from 1974 finds Burt Lancaster as a bookish history professor, whose life is disrupted by some very spirited new neighbors. They include the petulant, hunky Berger, who soon awakens desire in the fossilized Lancaster. The movie screens Tues., July 15. Gay audiences will also appreciate a rare chance to see an uncut, newly minted print of Visconti's 1972 film *Ludwig*, his lavish biography of Bavaria's gay king (with Berger again in the title role) who built fairytale castles, commissioned

operas from Wagner, and eventually went mad. It screens Sat., July 26, at 3 p.m. The series also includes several other Visconti films. [www.siskelfilmcenter.com](http://www.siskelfilmcenter.com)

—TCM (Turner Classic Movies) will broadcast a three-film tribute to the late dancing and musical sensation Cyd Charisse Fri., June 27 (check local listings for viewing times). In 1952's *Singin' in the Rain*, Charisse memorably tempts Gene Kelly in the film's ballet finale, "Broadway Melody," while in 1953's *The Band Wagon* she co-stars with Fred Astaire—and the two dance what may be film's most erotic and romantic number, "Dancing in the Dark." Later, in the equally renowned "Girl Hunt Ballet," Charisse's justly famed legs, encased in a shimmering red dress, wrap around Astaire as she vamps him around

the barroom setting. The TCM tribute concludes with Charisse's 1957's re-teaming with Astaire, *Silk Stockings*, a lesser effort (even with a Cole Porter score) that nevertheless offers her plenty of opportunities to display those gams and her innate classiness. Charisse left Hollywood by the early 1960s for nightclub work and television appearances, but she made a brief but memorable appearance in Janet Jackson's 1990 video for "Alright," which paid tribute to the Hollywood musicals that she had illuminated.

Check out my archived reviews at [www.windycitytimes.com](http://www.windycitytimes.com) or [www.knightatthemovies.com](http://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*.



Forgiving the Franklins.

### DVD REVIEW

## Forgiving the Franklins

REVIEW BY STEVE WARREN

Perhaps the surest proof of the success of "faith-based" films is the backlash represented by the likes of *But I'm a Cheerleader* and, now, *Forgiving the Franklins*. These dark satires aren't anti-religion like Bill Maher's forthcoming *Religulous*, but are anti-religious extremism.

With a color palette that would have seemed garish before *Speed Racer*, writer-director-cinematographer-producer-editor Jay Floyd tells the story of a devout North Carolina family that undergoes a conversion that makes them more open about their sexuality.

Like Tracey Ullman's concussion in John Waters' *A Dirty Shame*, of which this is a superior and far subtler version, a car crash changes the perspective of three members of the Franklin family.

Frank Franklin (Robertson Dean) is the patriarch, a square-jawed square. His wife Betty is played by Teresa Willis as the love child of Lily Tomlin and Mary Woronov. She tends the house and bakes cakes for bake sales. While their bedroom activity illustrates the joylessness of sex, Betty is an "ice queen" in a way that doesn't involve frigidity and also smokes in secret.

High school football-playing Brian (Vince Pavia) listens to showtunes. "This music is so faggy," 15-year-old sister Caroline (Aviva) teases. Brian protests that their dad listens to it, too, and it's OK because "he was in the Navy." Brian says his coach is "hard on" him (pun intended, but not by Brian). Caroline is a cheerleader who starves herself.

When their family car is rammed by a truck, Caroline sustains a hip injury that may end her cheerleading career. The other three seem to be in a coma for three days but actually go to a kind of purgatory, where they have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ (Pop DaSilva), who looks nothing like his photos. He's busy cutting down crosses, which he disses as a "marketing tool."

Jesus pulls apples out of the Franklins' brains. If they represent the fruits of the tree of knowledge in Genesis, they have the opposite effect. The trio emerge from their comas with their sexuality heightened, and they don't care who knows it.

Brian comes home beaming because Coach Caldwell (Khris Scaramanga) buttfucked him in the shower. His parents are glad he's finally out, especially Mom, who always knew: "He's such a dreamboat and there's never been a girl." Caroline, however, is horrified: "My brother's a fag and my parents don't even care!"

Betty starts retrieving the morning paper wearing nothing but her slippers and, more significantly, starts communicating with her husband about her sexual desires. When they openly discuss the improvement in their sex life they become outcasts in the community. Caroline seeks protection from Peggy Lester (Mari Blackwell), her godmother and Betty's best friend—until now. Peggy has an agenda even she may not realize she has.

Somewhere in there this dark comedy loses its sense of humor as it plunges toward a conclusion, even though the stylized, over-the-top acting assures us its tongue is still in its cheek.

Most of the actors attack their roles with relish and a consistent style, stopping short of winking at the audience. Pavia looks too old for 18 but Floyd says he chose him for that reason: "I didn't want the scenes with the Coach to be too loaded. The sex scene needed to look like it was between two consenting adults because it is between two consenting adults." To reinforce this he has the Coach ask Brian if he's 18 and willing before fucking him.

Despite all the mutual consent the R rating is partly because of "a scene of aberrant intimacy." Whether that refers to the gays in the shower or the straights with ice cubes we may never know.

*Forgiving the Franklins* deserves a spot on the Cult Classics shelf next to Paul Bartel's *Eating Raoul*. It may show a few self-styled religious types that their form of virtue is its own punishment.



OSS 117: Cairo, Nest of Spies.



"Scarred" from *S is for Sexy*.

## DVD REVIEW

# S is for Sexy

REVIEW BY STEVE WARREN

Like some relationships (or is it just me?), *S Is for Sexy* gets the sex out of the way early, then lets people get to know each other. These seven shorts, five of whose titles begin with the letter "S" (as does "shorts"), take you around the Western world in 20 gays (more or less), with stops in London, Paris, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Germany and the Netherlands.

If sex is all you're interested in—in which case you should just watch a porno—you can quit after "Serene Hunter," which has more fucking in a few brief scenes than the other six combined (not that some of them aren't sexy). The final short, "Shahram & Abbas," isn't even about gay men, just faux gays; however, these two book-ends are the best films in the set. (There are no bad ones.)

"Serene Hunter" is like a feature compressed into 13 minutes. It begins leisurely enough in music video fashion, as Luc (Eric Debets) cruises the Seine without a *bateau mouche*. He's commitment-phobic until he meets and moves in with Sebastien (Jonathan Stringat), but he admits the person he's come closest to loving in his life is Jon (writer-director Jason Bushman), an American who visits Paris every summer. Sure enough, along comes Jon for his annual visit...

"Solace," directed by Michaline Babich, is one of at least three shorts in the collection that involve computer hookups. Pretty young Hugo (Joey Tuccio) is invited out to Beverly Hills by mysterious, older Brett (Richard Courtney). Things develop slowly and the ending's a bit of a head-scratcher but an air of possible danger provides momentum that's otherwise lacking.

On the other hand, the danger in "Scarred" comes out of left field, after a photographer connects model Rafi with her client, Joe, and it seems to work out. Rafi has a long scar on his right cheek and is used to being stared at and even rejected because of the scar.

There's a different twist on discrimination in Rick Hammerly's "Signage," in which the writer-director plays Lex, who fears being shunned in bars because he's in his 40s. One night he meets Jonathan (Jason Wittig), who is half his age and deaf. They have problems hooking up but not for the reasons you—or they—might expect.

"Mr\_Right\_22," by Reza Rameri, is totally German but the dialogue is in English and the story universal. Adam (Phillipp Denzel) comes to a bar to meet "Dave," who will not only be his first computer hookup but his "maiden voyage" in gay waters—if "Dave" shows up. It's a long wait and Adam imagines the worst, between sympathetic interludes with waiter Luc Feit.

"41 Seconds" is a quickie that lasts only about six times as long as its title. It barely even qualifies as a sketch, as two straight friends argue about who's the better kisser. They don't exactly resolve the question but their attempt to is fun to watch—and pretty hot.

"Shahram & Abbas" is the longest short, clocking in at just over half an hour. Two Iranians—strangers to each other—land in the Netherlands seeking asylum. Shahram suggests to Abbas, who has a wife back home, they pose as

boyfriends because everyone knows they hang gays in Iran. While they wait for a ruling, Shahram is attracted to an African woman, and an Iranian man who may really be gay is attracted to Abbas. It's not the queerest thing you've ever seen but it's a sweet dark comedy that shows Shahram and Abbas is not Farsi for Chuck and Larry.

Several of these shorts could be expanded into big-budget features, but you can see them first in unplugged, unpadding form. To me, that's sexy!

## DVD REVIEW

# 2 Minutes Later

REVIEW BY STEVE WARREN

Michael Dalmer (Michael Molina), a gay insurance investigator, investigates the disappearance of his photographer gay twin brother, Kyle (Molina)—with a little help from lesbian private investigator Abigail Marks (Jessica Graham)—in *2 Minutes Later*. Robert Gaston's movie has the production values of a pilot for a Logo series, which means it's slick and easy to watch but unlikely to win any awards.

The title refers both to how soon you'll forget the movie after watching it and the age difference between the twins. Kyle is older and always flaunted his superiority until the brothers pretty much stopped communicating. Although Michael has the grievances (Kyle stole his boyfriend) it's Kyle who chose to avoid closeness with his twin.

We see what happened to Kyle in a pre-title sequence. He drops off a model/trick, "Tevin with a T" (Joe Almanza), after a session and is confronted by a man (Peter Stickles) with a gun who tells him, "You see too much." Kyle is shot in the ensuing chase and manages to drop the memory card from his camera in a mailbox be-

fore reaching an inconclusive conclusion.

Michael, in Philadelphia for another case, stops to visit his brother. He's mistaken for Kyle, who he realizes no one has seen in two weeks. Soon Abby shows up, having been hired by Kyle's manager to look for him. They team up and follow clues, including the photos Kyle mailed to himself, engaging in banter that's lighthearted but never funny.

The trail leads to New Milford—and several hot models. Both investigators find more flirtations—who knew lesbians have more sex in public restrooms than Larry Craig?—than facts along the way. The killer is on their trail before they're on his, and even after he shoots at them they break into his apartment to look for clues instead of calling the police.

Although one of the main characters is a lesbian, *2 Minutes Later* is obviously designed more with gay men in mind. The film's centerpieces are flashback montages to Kyle's photo sessions, with copious frontal nudity. (The DVD includes additional photos.)

Although the technical work is proficient, the writing, direction and acting are all subpar. Better work in any of those areas might have raised *2 Minutes Later* to the next level. It's not painfully bad—just a decent time-waster you can watch and forget two minutes later.

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## WINDY CITY TIMES



## Our Fifth Annual Pride Literary Supplement

Pride Month is a time of year when the diverse segments of GLBT community come together to collectively celebrate all the things we are. Together, we celebrate the past, embrace the present, and work towards the future. We celebrate pride in those who came before and all who are yet to come. Pride is a place of arrival as well as the journey. Pride is what makes you happy, what makes life worth living, and what you survived that may have made living hell. Pride is an act of expression.

This year the submissions for the fifth annual Windy City Times Literary Supplement proved to be an embarrassment of riches with quality original GLBT expression pouring in from writers worldwide. Choosing the pieces that will become the Pride literary supplement is never easy, and this year was especially challenging. If space allowed, we could have easily doubled the number of winning entries and been thrilled with every piece. Regrettably, some difficult cuts had to be made. We wish to extend our deepest thanks to all those who took the time and effort to express their pride on paper and enter work for consideration.

The theme for this year's literary supplement is OUTBURST. OUTBURST proved a wonderful starting point for the expression of our simultaneously unique and varied experiences. OUTBURST is a word of movement. It is an emergence, a blossoming, an explosion, an opening, a release, an expansion, a coming out, a declaration, and even an orgasm. It is a moment of growth and oftentimes of courage.

What could be more perfect for this time of year?

So here is our OUTBURST, the Fifth Annual Windy City Times Pride Literary Supplement. We hope you enjoy it.

*With Pride,*  
Kathie Bergquist  
Owen Keehnen  
Editors

Kathie Bergquist is co-author (with Robert McDonald) of *A Field Guide to Gay and Lesbian Chicago*. Her writing has appeared *The Harrington Lesbian Literary Quarterly*, *The Advocate*, *OUT*, *Girlfriends*, *DIVA*, and *Curve* magazines, and in the books *Best Date Ever* and the forthcoming anthology *Best Lesbian Romance 2009*.

Owen Keehnen is a Chicago-based writer and journalist currently working on a humorous fictional memoir. He lives in Rogers Park with his partner, Carl, his dogs Flannery and Fitzgerald, and Kitten the cat.

### It Will Always Grow Back BY CHELSEY CLAMMER

"Coral, are you sure you're ready to do this?"

"Yeah, I am," I said attempting to hide the uncertainty that lingered in my throat. "Just do it before I change my mind." Angelina shrugged her shoulders with a mischievous grin as she picked up the electric razor. A metallic buzz whirred into action, while a vibration tingled through my body. The razor cut through my wavy brown hair like it was on a mission to get to the root of a problem, to make way for a clean slate. Or, at least for a bald head. I gasped. Angelina's wrist flickered over the curves of my skull with swift and assured motions. Her cigarette dangled out of the corner of her mouth, each inhalation a small drop of nicotine, providing her with an I.V. of concentration. My mind was raw with excitement. My scalp became raw from the razor.

Sooner than I could have imagined, it was over. Angelina turned off the blade and brushed her palm over my head, swooshing the remaining tips of my longhaired past into the

air. Clumps of brown hair had slithered into the sink; the rest gathered around our feet like hungry kittens.

"Welcome to the land of obvious dykes," Angelina smirked at my new hairstyle.

When did I get this gay? I had only been out for a year, and now here I was a young lesbo of nineteen looking like a dyke with nothing to lose. The days of worrying about wearing a rainbow necklace to school were far behind me. I used to toe the line of public displays of gay pride, unsure of my ability to stomp the big dyke foot ahead of the small closeted one. Now look at me: bald in all my lesbian glory, begging for the throngs of attention I will inevitably draw from the disapproving eyes of normality. But I wanted that attention. I wanted to disgust all those small-minded heteros, to put them in their place, to let my newly shaved head glisten with joy and scream, "Hell yeah I'm a dyke!" It was a reassurance that would give me a sense of pride—a tool for survival.

"Your mother is going to hate this," my best friend reminded me. Angelina's almost-gone cigarette jutted out from her mouth, the hairs of her upper lip curling back in fear of the hot cherry that promised to singe them with every word.

"If she really loves me then she won't mind being re-introduced to my bald head," I hoped out loud. Gazing at my newly acquired dyke identity in the mirror, I realized I should stop thinking about my mother. I needed to feel certain about the change I had just made in my life, not doubting the consequences of it. Too late to consider the consequences, Coral. This is who you are now. I continued to stare at my exposed head, brushing away the ticklish little shaved-off hairs that littered the back of my neck.

*Chelsey Clammer is a queer, feminist and disability-rights activist and scholar. Her writing has been featured in Make/Shift magazine, on feministing.com and in her four self-published zines.*

### Of Past and Present BY KEVIN C. ROOKER

I found the book in a resale shop. Past And Present was a college textbook and the last owner had been "A.E. Peterson, 403 S. Sixth, C. Phone 2168." Inside the back cover were notes to a speech that began, "Students of 1937." But it was the notes elsewhere in the palm-sized book that convinced me to buy it.

On page 104, after a long discussion on philosophy and religion, the owner had underlined, "First, get your man...he can learn to do all things..." a pencil line directed the reader to the sentence with the words "How to get real man".

Page 216, following the words "One thing I do know" the passage "Never, on this earth, was the relation of man to man long carried on by Cash-payment alone" had been underlined.

And on the last page, again in pencil, a handwritten conversation:

"If you must know, I am still a virgin!"

"I'll break you for \$ .50."

"You're not pretty enough."

"Ever heard of 'Little America' or the 'Howdy Club' in Greenwich Village."

"where homos congregate"

"Want to sleep with me tonite?"

"Why sleep?"

I paid for the book and walked out of the shop, nodding.

Sometimes, an outburst can come quietly.

*Kevin Rooker will be turning 50 in July and has already hired several people to insist that he looks much younger. He's always wanted to be in the Pride parade, but guesses he never will as he doesn't have anything pierced and wouldn't look good in a dress.*

### O Briar Rose BY RICHARD FOX

O Sleeping Beauty!  
O embowered castle!

O catch-as-catch can!  
O mood ring! O cock ring! O O-ring!

O forecast!  
O revenue goals!

O jellyroll!  
O violin!

O penetration!  
O kiss! O termite! O love!

*Richard Fox's work has appeared widely in many literary journals, and has been the recipient of awards and grants from the Illinois Arts Council and the City of Chicago. His first book of poetry, titled Swagger & Remorse, was published in December, 2007.*



# OUTBURST

Windy City Times'  
Fifth Annual Pride  
Literary Supplement

## Untitled BY JESUS ENCINAR, TRANSLATED BY LAWRENCE SCHIMEL

sé que resulta ridículo pero,  
dónde piensas pasar la noche vieja?  
qué color combina para las cortinas?  
cómo te gustan los raviolis?  
quieres pasar conmigo  
el resto de tu vida?

no quiero volver a llamar  
a un anuncio de chico busca chico.  
ni visitar más ciudades  
solo.  
amsterdam! amsterdam! no me verás más.  
no quiero dejar más ligues  
en esquinas con dinero para  
un taxi.  
ni tener que  
volver a pisar un bar,  
pedir una copa  
buscar un rincón  
esperar  
el hombre que me haga olvidar  
el vacío de los domingos,  
la soledad de mi cama,  
mi necesidad

i know it must sound ridiculous but  
where do you think you'll spend new year's eve?  
what color goes best with the curtains?  
how do you like your raviolis?  
do you want to spend  
the rest of your life with me?

i don't want to call again  
some classified of man seeks man.  
nor to visit more cities  
alone.  
amsterdam! amsterdam! you won't see me again.  
i don't want to leave more hook-ups  
on the corner with money for  
a taxi.  
nor need to  
set foot again in a bar,  
ask for a drink  
find a corner  
wait for  
the man who makes me forget  
the emptiness of Sundays,  
the loneliness of my bed,  
my need

*Jesus Encinar is a Spanish entrepreneur whose companies include Idealista.com, Floresfrescas.com and 11870.com. Other translations of his poems have appeared in the UK journal CHROMA and in the anthology Poetic Voices Without Borders. He lives in Madrid, Spain.*

*Lawrence Schimel is an author, anthologist, and translator who's published over 90 books in different genres, among them Best Gay Poetry 2008, Fairy Tales for Writers, Two Boys in Love, First Person Queer and The Future is Queer. He lives in Madrid, Spain.*

## All About My Mother: *A black man not on the DL tries to come out to his mother* BY VICTOR YEATS

Coming out is an intimate confession. I've come out to myself, my friends, and to complete strangers the first time meeting them, but not to my mother. I keep conversations with my mother about work and food. The last time my mother asked if I was dating was seven years ago. I was in college. I had a canned spiel ready. I'm waiting till I finish school I said. I don't know if she believed me or not. Read Psalm 23 before you go to bed she said. I finished college, went on to grad school and got a job. In between finishing college and getting a job, I had one boyfriend, five pseudo-boyfriends, three Web romances and a number of unremarkable dates. My mother knows nothing about any of them. Our relationship is

more like co-workers than mother and son. Four of my friends have come out to their mothers. They talk openly about their dating drama with their mothers. Imagining my mother and I talking about how difficult it is to find a guy I want to date, I cringe. That sounds too personal. I visited my mother recently. We live in the same city but I rarely go see her. She asked if I was gay without directly asking. She proceeded to read Bible scriptures to me and ended with "but I still love no matter what." I looked her, looked at the ground, and across the room at the blank TV screen. I saw the picture of me as a baby on top of the TV. I played dumb. She changed the topic. Now when I get the courage to call my mother, my

heartbeat will speed up when she pauses abruptly or starts a question with "Tell me. Tell me, 'Are you gay?'" I think she's going to say. I can't imagine telling my mother I'm gay. Even though I know she knows. Mother, I'm gay. It sounds so simple written. Mother I'm gay. I could write "I'm gay, Mom," in a Hallmark card and mail it to her. Most likely, it'll come out through an argument, on a holiday or a birthday—the way my true feelings come out with my mother.

*Victor Yates is a freelance writer and author of The Taste of Scars, his first novel.*

## May Queen BY MATT ZAKOSEK

The first time I saw him, I was running late for class. I was walking funny because I had just traded in my backpack for an over-the-shoulder bag, and I was having a hard time finding my center of gravity. Those bags were all over the place that spring, the same spring everyone started using the word metrosexual, and the fact that you were carrying one implied that you were either a homosexual or didn't mind being mistaken for one.

So I bumped into him on my way across the Quads because—let's face it—I was staring. My over-the-shoulder bag slid down my body until it cinched around my waist like a belt. I blushed as I rearranged it because I had to fumble with my pants, and fumbling with my pants reminds me of sex. Frank watched as I readjusted myself.

"You all right?" he asked.

"Sure," I responded, flashing him my sexiest, most flirtatious grin.

Frank was a Greek god with long sideburns and a Roman

nose. Despite the rising temperature, he was wearing a hoodie with a blazer over it. Normally I loathed that combination, but somehow, it looked original on him—even though they were selling blazers with the hoodie sewn into them at Urban Outfitters for \$49.95 a pop.

I thought he was the sexiest boy I had ever seen. OK, so maybe not as sexy as Eric Bana or Owen Wilson or Luke Wilson or Jake Gyllenhaal or Ethan Hawke or Russell Crowe or Michael Pitt or Adam Rapp or Matt Damon or Rufus Wainwright or Brandon Flowers or Ben Affleck or Matthew McConaughey. But as sexy as anyone I had ever seen in real life. You know—a college guy.

Years of gender-studies programs and gay/straight alliances at progressive urban high schools had taught us the perils of heteronormativity (that is, assuming everyone is straight until proven otherwise). But Frank fit into a particular category—the Indie-Rock Aficionado—that, for all its posturing, didn't leave much room for sexual deviation. A guy tells you

he listens to the latest hipster bands—and I'm not even going to give examples because whoever I name will be hopelessly uncool by the time anyone reads this—and it's a sure bet all he wants is a skinny girl with cat's-eye glasses and a copy of The Communist Manifesto to rest his beer on.

"So you're gay. Right, dude?" he asked me.

I hadn't expected to discuss this so soon. "Um, yeah," I muttered, not because I was ashamed, but because I don't want to be reduced to my sexuality, you know?

Frank just nodded. "My younger brother's gay," he said. "Took a guy to his high school prom."

I didn't know anything about Frank's younger brother, or even about Frank, really. But at that moment, all I wanted to do was go back in time, find a high school, and take a guy to the prom—if that's what it took to impress him.

*Matt Zakosek's work has appeared in the Chicago Sun-Times, the Chicago Reader and the Windy City Times.*



Windy City Times'  
Fifth Annual Pride  
Literary Supplement

## The Coffee Cake BY COLLEEN MCKEE

I would say that I covet  
my neighbor's wife, if only it seemed  
she belonged to him, if only  
they matched, like salt and pepper shakers,  
like something so obviously...domestic.  
But look at them—she's short, he's tall,  
she's fair, he's dark...  
OK. So they match.

I watch them cross the threshold  
of their door, everyday,  
shivering close and holding hands,  
cold breath balloons  
of bright conversation  
rising from their chapped and rosy lips...  
and then there is the key—  
that key I covet also—twisting  
in the lock.

I know what they talk about, because  
they are my friends. We all have wine  
on Friday nights. We grouse  
about our jobs. We talk about  
the things we've read, what's in the news; it's nice.  
And then I cross the alley, and then they go  
to bed. But she is

my best friend. And there are spots of time,  
spots of tea, with her alone—  
kitchen time, I call it—  
scattered throughout the week. It's just enough  
to string me through, to stitch me through  
those seven days.  
We tear off buttery crumbs  
of streusel cake, we roll them into spheres,  
sugary worlds  
of conversation.

Her green eyes wander up the walls  
as she recalls  
just what it was  
that her husband said,  
as my eyes fix upon her mouth  
to some forgotten crumb.

One day is different. She is sad.  
She wants to talk, she says,  
but never mentions why.  
She picks at coffee streusel,  
she pinches at her cuffs, and then

she's kissing me, an awkward, funny kiss,  
just barely licks my lips.  
Then she jumps back, like a rabbit,  
stands against the sink,  
and stares at me. My heart  
is clattering in its cage of ribs  
like a grasshopper, caught  
in a glass.

*Colleen McKee is the author of a collection of poetry, My Hot Little Tomato, and co-editor of an anthology about women and health care, Are We Feeling Better Yet? She may be reached at lilyofthegutter@yahoo.com.*

## Autobiography BY ARDEN ELI HILL

You tell a joke and the joke is,  
I lie to guys in chat rooms.  
I tell them I have an eight inch cock  
when its really nine,  
and I laugh

The next joke is,  
Sometimes I tell them I use to have a nine inch cock  
but now I have nothing.  
This time I don't laugh at the joke.

Your voice is as low as mine,  
your chest as flat as mine,  
your cock a mystery I can't compare my flesh to.  
The word nothing stuck in my throat like a something  
What if I said nothing.

What if I said sex-reassignment surgery is not that funny.  
Besides, it reforms the penis into a clit and a cunt  
and no one with a clit and a cunt considers them nothing.  
What if I said nothing, instead remembered  
Louisiana, the rain when I was a child,  
taking off my clothes, and wondering if I was a seal  
because of the way water curved down my body,  
because I wasn't a boy, because I couldn't be a girl.

What if I said something?  
What if I told you what it's like  
to suck the cock of a boy  
who pulls his cock from the dresser drawer  
slips it down his pants out the fly  
and jokes about an instant hard on?  
In a joke you say the word nothing.  
What if I tell you the boy is a boy like me?

You tell a joke and everyone  
in the room laughs but me.  
Silence draws your eyes to mine.  
The word, nothing, is something  
I can't let go of. I remember  
the lover I held after surgery,  
how when she healed I slipped into her cunt  
and sucked on her clit until she came.  
What if I tell you nothing  
of what happened next?

Everything I did to her body,  
she did to mine.

What if I tell you I have a nine-inch cock  
and an eight-inch cock and a seven-inch cock  
an every increment you can by at the store inch cock?  
What if I write about my cock  
right after I write about my cunt?

What if I is the orb that sees,  
the flesh made word,  
the flesh made space  
the silence made flesh?  
What if I the poet,  
the persona, the he, she, they, we?  
Where will you  
be listening from?  
What will you believe?  
What if it's nothing?

*Arden Eli Hill's publishing credits include Willow Springs, Slow Dancing to Invisible Music, and the Lambda Literary Award winning anthology, First Person Queer.*

## Lesbian Studies BY MARY MERRIAM

O my muse, promiscuous muse, my bunny,  
hop off paper, hop in my arms, my darling  
muse not mine, my everyone muse, please let me  
touch and amuse you.

Now the past is sliding away, past harm's way,  
past the nightmare hidden in sex's dream, when  
you, in need, decided to strip and show your  
body to die for.

Naked, word hot, here are your breasts, *I'm breathless*  
*writing this, yes throbbing and flushed*, your memoir's  
pictures move me far from a text perusal,  
*write me, I'm lovesick.*

*Mary Meriam is most proud of her first book of poems, The Countess of Flatbroke (afterword by Lillian Faderman); her Sapphics version of a poem by Sappho, published by Literary Imagination (poetry editor, Marilyn Hacker); and her sonnet about waltzing with Julie Andrews, which was a finalist in A Prairie Home Companion's Bed of Roses Love Sonnet Contest and read on National Public Radio.*



# OUTBURST

Windy City Times'  
Fifth Annual Pride  
Literary Supplement

## My Imaginary Cock BY LAURA MADELINE WISEMAN

First, my imaginary cock abstains from personal hygiene.  
I leave lotion by the sink, but my cock prefers to fester.

My cock throws out the floss, toothpaste and rinse.  
I buy sacks of peppermints and arrange them on platters.

Mildew and dust collect in the shower, tub and commode.  
I clean the bathroom in gloves. All this, my cock ignores.

Then, my imaginary cock renounces the neighborhood norms.  
My cock works on the car and blasts public radio past three.

My cock stores old appliances on the lawn by the gnomes.  
I implore my cock to mow over the violets and dandelions,

but it's like I'm talking to myself. Trick-or-treaters knock.  
My cock refuses to answer the door. The suckers go untouched.

Third, my imaginary cock ignores the laws of the streets  
and declines to signal lane changes, turns or stops.

My cock drives on both sides of the solid yellow line.  
Please, I say, some rules are created for a reason.

My cock studies the scenery as the odometer climbs.  
I squeeze my imaginary cock as we hit a pair of doves.

Finally, my imaginary cock chooses to be socially inept.  
At meetings my cock moans for a full seven minutes.

My cock chats on the cell phone at the restroom urinal.  
During polite lunchroom conversation my cock sings.

My cock allows inner thoughts to become outer thoughts.  
I need to get laid, my cock says, "Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!"

When my officemate asks, "How are you?" my cock unloads.  
I grab my cock and excuse myself from the office.

In the car I say, I love you, and turn the key to the ignition.  
I try again, Tell me what's wrong, but the only sound is me.  
*Laura Madeline Wiseman is writing her dissertation in Nebraska.*

## Dahling BY WAYNE CRAWFORD

His friends call him Dahlink or Dahling.  
His only friends. All of them. Artists.

They alone love

decorative lamps, foot stools, paisley tears, flower  
vases, off  
-white walls, tall

men with large  
eyes and black

beards. They alone

shine, live under  
spotlights, in front of stagelights—olaf  
john don harry  
rosalina alice  
meghan euclaire  
find everything—magnifico

(some ministers would bar them from places of worship  
fearful the flash of their smiles might outshine the star  
of bethlehem  
or david)

bette barbra  
cher — impersonators

drinking wine rum whiskey

collapsing over sofas  
beds bodies

someone always sighing  
someone always snapping

get up girl you're not judy  
you're not even liza.

*Wayne Crawford, born and raised in Illinois, a former Chicagoan, is a poet who lives in Las Cruces, N.M. He edits the online literary journal Lunarosity and co-manages the annual anthology Sin Fronteras: Writers Without Borders.*

## I Want To Eat Chinese Food Off Your Ass BY SHANE ALLISON

You know what?  
You know what I want to do?  
I want to eat chicken chow mein off yr ass  
I want you naked on a six-foot platter with roast pork  
Chow mein served on your ass.  
I want chicken with black bean sauce, and I want it off your ass.  
Fried chicken nuggets with broccoli eat it off your ass.  
I want to eat Double Delight Baby Shrimp off your ass.  
I want to flick little green peas out of the crevice of your ass.  
Diced chicken with cashew nuts on your butt.  
I want to know what a barbecue spare rib tastes like eaten off your ass.  
That, and sautéed shredded beef sautéed on your ass.  
I want to eat sweet and sour pork off that ass.  
Moo Go Gai Pan off that ass.  
Mongolian beef off that ass.  
Honey garlic chicken, egg foo young off your ass is what  
I want to eat.

Can I eat fried dumplings off your booty?  
I will not take "Hell, no" for an answer.  
Can I lube your bubble butt up with duck sauce and lick it off?  
I love egg rolls, but the thought of an egg roll  
sticking from your ass, really sends me.  
I like fantail shrimp and teriyaki beef as much as the  
next Chinese food connoisseur, but the thought of  
eating them off your bum sends shock waves through my taste buds, my love.  
So how about it?  
Can I eat cold noodles off your butt?  
How about soy bean cake and chicken with oyster sauce?  
Can I eat shrimp with snow peas off your buns?  
Shrimp with broccoli off your ass.  
Eating shrimp with peppers and tomatoes off your ass.  
Eating butterfly shrimp off that ass.

Vegetables egg foo young and roast pork egg foo young off your glutes.  
Chicken egg foo young and shrimp egg foo young  
Off your hind end.  
I want your ass, but only if I can eat orange beef off that ass.  
I wonder how subgum wonton tastes eaten off your ass?  
I will do anything to find out.

*Shane Allison is the editor of Hot Cops: Gay Erotic Tales and Backdraft: Fireman Erotica.*

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WINDY CITY TIMES

THE WINDY CITY TIMES NINTH ANNUAL

# 30 UNDER THIRTY

## 2008

### CHRIS JESSUP

21, CIVIL-UNIONS ADVOCATE



Chris Jessup, 21, a native of Roswell, N. M., came to Chicago in June 2005 after graduating from Robert H. Goddard High School.

Jessup currently attends DePaul University, where he just completed his third year as an undergraduate student double majoring in political science and women's and gender studies with concentrations in public policy and social justice. He is seeking a minor in LGBT studies. He was recently accepted into the women's and gender studies five-year Bachelor's and Master's program, and will start graduate studies this fall.

He is a co-founder and lead organizer of the Web site, [CivilUnionsIllinois.org](http://CivilUnionsIllinois.org), which was born out of the grassroots efforts of over 8,000 young Illinoisans on campuses across the state who want a better life for themselves, as well as a more just and progressive Illinois.

Inspired by these young people who came together online to support equality and fairness, [CivilUnionsIllinois.org](http://CivilUnionsIllinois.org) works in conjunction with Equality Illinois, the ACLU, Lambda Legal, Equal Marriage Illinois, Stonewall Democrats, Young College Democrats, Log Cabin Republicans, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Human Rights Campaign and Gill Action Fund to promote civil unions in Illinois.

[CivilUnionsIllinois.org](http://CivilUnionsIllinois.org) is dedicated to generating grassroots support for Illinois House Bill 1826, which would provide committed opposite-sex, same-sex and senior couples with basic, fundamental rights under state law. Whether on college campuses, online forums or the main streets of Illinois towns, [CivilUnionsIllinois.org](http://CivilUnionsIllinois.org) is mobilizing and educating voters to support equality and fairness. As lead organizer, Chris speaks to multiple student and senior groups and others interested in marriage equality and civil unions about the importance of civil unions in Illinois.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Chris is the oldest of five and is a member of Delta Tau Delta International Fraternity, Iota Alpha Chapter.

### JEN RUDE

28, ASSOCIATE PASTOR



Jen Rude is a 28-year-old Pisces. She knows all the 50 states in alphabetical order and has lived in six of them, having moved to Chicago three years

ago. Although as a child she aspired to be the first woman president of the United States, she currently serves as associate pastor at Resur-

rection Lutheran Church in Lakeview and on the Youth Outreach Team at The Night Ministry (working with young people who are experiencing homelessness and queer youth). Rude was the 12th "extraordinarily" ordained queer Lutheran pastor in November 2007. She graduated from Augustana College in South Dakota, and then thought she would try a more progressive and queer-friendly area of the country. In Berkeley, Cal., she earned her Master's from Pacific School of Religion and learned why the city is affectionately nicknamed "Bezerkeley." Her favorite things about Chicago include the lake, summer festivals, public transit and Midwestern friendliness.

**DID YOU KNOW?** A childhood gymnast, Rude has been sighted more than once doing cartwheels on the streets of Chicago. Her first job was at Dairy Queen and she continues to love ice cream and all things sugary. As for her childhood, although she doesn't remember it, surely her subconscious is still working through the trauma of the time when she was two and a half years old and she slept through the whole night with a dead mouse in the foot of her pajamas. She is not a fan of animals to this day.

### PATRICIA POSEY

22, HOMELESS-YOUTH ACTIVIST



Patricia Posey, 22, was born and raised in Chicago's South Side in a single-parent home. Although both her mother and father were figures throughout her life, she faced serious trails alone. Posey attended Hyde Park High School from 1999 to 2004. She repeated her senior year due to the harsh realities of living an openly gay life. In November 2004, she became permanently homeless after her mother discovered she was a lesbian. In turn, she moved into a transitional shelter that became her home for the next four years. In January 2004, she was elected the GLBTQ chair of the National Network for Youth policy board. Posey served for two years before her advancement to the executive board. She is currently working for the state of Illinois and continues her quest to end youth homelessness.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Posey has started attending college. She participates in extracurricular activities, including college basketball.

### MICHAEL VINSON

23, SCHOLAR



Michael L. Vinson, 23, is a Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholar and the African-American Fellow at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. A graduate of Harvard University, where he received his bachelor's in government, Vinson was an active member of the John F. Kennedy Institute of Politics and served as the first openly gay president of the Kuumba Singers, an ethnically diverse choir that specializes in gospel, African folk songs and Negro spirituals. As president, he was able to secure the Rev. Peter J. Gomes, Plummer Professor of Christian Morals and Pusey Minister in the Memorial Church, to serve as a faculty advisor.

Additionally, Michael co-founded BlackOut, a safe, confidential space for exploring issues of sexuality and gender for African-American students. A venue for soulful, affirming conversation, BlackOut gave students (whether out of the closet or not) an opportunity to dialogue with each other about the unique challenges gay, transgender, and questioning African-American young people face.

**DID YOU KNOW?** A native of Atlanta, Ga., Vinson is still trying to memorize the "L" map, accept the horrendous winter weather and embrace the Cubs (not the Sox). He witnessed the end of "the curse" in Boston—perhaps he can work a little magic in Chicago, as well.

### RAY PRATHER

27, ATTORNEY



Ray Prather, 27, is the owner of Prather Law Office, a law firm dedicated to estate planning, probate and related litigation. His practice includes helping couples and individuals achieve their diverse estate planning and charitable giving goals. Prather presented and participated in panels relating to estate planning including "Estate Planning for LGBT Couples" at Howard Brown, "Money Matters Workshop: Financial and Estate Planning" at Center on Halsted and "Take the Power Symposium: Strategies for Life and Financial Planning" for Lambda Legal.

Prather has been a key leadership volunteer with Lambda Legal for the last two years. He began in 2006 as a legal intern in the Midwest Regional Office, where he assisted Lambda attorneys on issues related to freedom of speech (providing research for Lambda Legal's amicus curiae brief in the "Bong hits 4 Jesus" case,

Morse v. Frederick, before the U.S. Supreme Court), equal protection and due process in the Iowa marriage case and sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace. He is a founding member of Lambda's Chicago Leadership Council and has organized Lambda Legal's Market Days presence last year, as well as this August.

He was recently appointed to Lambda Legal's National Planned Giving Council and is serving his second year as a member of the Illinois State Bar Association's Standing Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, where he is on the awards subcommittee. Ray graduated from Augustana College with a degree in accounting and received his J.D. from the DePaul University College of Law. Ray's prior experience includes clerking for Supervising Judge Drella Savage in the Domestic Relations Division of Cook County Circuit Court.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Prather ran cross country and track in college and recently took up cooking (including brunch involving fried oyster omelets).

### GABRIELA ZAPATA

25, COUNSELOR/MUSICIAN

Gabriela Zapata is a 25-year-old queer Latina who moved to Chicago in 2005. She has worked in the HIV field since then as a case manager, prevention counselor and as co-founder of the Advocacy Committee at Chicago House.

She is very active in her community, and was a central organizer of Ladyfest Chicago 2007, a grassroots festival celebrating women in activism and the arts that raised over \$3,000 for the Chicago Women's Health Center and Rape Victims Advocates.

Zapata plays the saxophone and trumpet, and sings in local queer feminist punk band The Pussy Pirates, who have performed to raise money and awareness for activist organizations, including HIV/AIDS Resource Center and Food Not Bombs. The Pussy Pirates enjoy support from Riot Grrrl Ink, the largest LGBTQ label in the world, and are looking forward to releasing their second full-length album in the fall. She has been playing classical piano since she was 3, and counts it among her most favorite things to do. Her other passions include nature, poetry, social justice, pizza, religion, body modification, literature, travel, language, riding her bike, recycling, animal rights, solitude, long-boarding and chocolate.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Gabriela loves her neighborhood, where she lives with her long term companion and is the proud mother of two doggies who brighten her every day with their fiendish humor and devilish talents.



## ANNIE GREGORY

### 28, GRANT AND CONTRACT MANAGER

Annie Gregory, 28, currently is the manager of grant and contract compliance at Howard Brown Health Center. In this role, she helps ensure Howard



Brown's compliance with fiscal, legal and programmatic requirements. In addition, she improves the lives of LGBT people by developing and maintaining grants and programs for vital health and wellness services. She has a particular interest in the development of programs addressing the health disparities experienced by lesbians, racial/ethnic minorities and transgender persons.

A 2005 graduate of DePaul University College of Law, she was a board member of DePaul's Public Interest Law Association and the DePaul Outlaws. She was also a member of the DePaul Journal of Sports Law and Contemporary Problems, an academic journal in which she published an article about homophobia and discrimination based on sexual orientation in athletics.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Annie's first job was de-tassling corn in rural Illinois when she was 14.

## LIESEL S. FISCHER

### 28, ARTIST



Liesel S. Fischer, 28, has been advocating for LGBT rights for over a decade. Born prematurely on a bus while her parents were vacationing in Italy, Fischer was already fighting as she entered into the world. She feels that it is only natural for her to continue advocating for the issues she believes in.

Originally from Iowa, she has lived and traveled abroad extensively, and became proficient in German while studying at the University of Lüneburg in Germany.

Fischer is now a Chicago artist who has donated dozens of pieces to various charitable organizations, including the Center on Halsted, Howard Brown Health Center, Heartland Alliance's annual Art Against AIDS event and the Tri-State AIDS Christmas Project.

She has been a Junior Board member with Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights since 2005, and was recently elected to serve as the Board's Benefits Chair/Vice President. She acted as Art Chair for Heartland Alliance's 2008 Art Against AIDS event, which became the most successful event in the event's history. She has been an active volunteer with several local and national LGBT supportive political campaigns, and is currently a member of Human Rights Campaign and Stonewall Democrats.

Fischer also participated with her softball team in the 2006 Chicago Gay Games. Currently, she is working on her doctorate in clinical psychology, with an emphasis on diversity, gender and LGBT issues.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Fischer also volunteers as

an events coordinator for Tellofilms.com, which is a lesbian entertainment Web company based in Chicago.

## WILL WHITE

### 27, SINGER



Will White, 27, was born in Punta Gorda, Fla., on the Gulf—south of Tampa and Sarasota.

After his partner Matt and his wonderful family, his number-one passion is singing, although he does enjoy good friends and great wine whenever possible! He has been truly blessed to work with the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus over the past five years. Interestingly enough, he has been featured in leading female roles with CGMC so much that audience members still have a hard time believing he's actually a man! What we endure for our love of the theater. Let's face it, roles are tough to find when you're an upper tenor who looks good in a dress!

White actually has been out and proud since the age of 14. As the only out gay student in his high school, Will fought for the first LGBT student organization, which was founded upon his graduation. Since moving to Chicago, Will has also broken barriers in the workplace. While working as the faculty coordinator at Northwestern University's law school, he urged his department to become "safe-space certified"; those spaces let gay students know where they can turn for support.

White would like to thank Windy City Times for this honor and thanks Lee Neubecker for his support and nomination. Most importantly, he gratefully acknowledges the work of the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus and his friend Patrick Sinozich, CGMC's artistic director.

**DID YOU KNOW?** White moved to Chicago in 2002 when the heat of the South became too much to bear.

## LIZ MARR

### 26, ROCKINPRIDE CO-FOUNDER



## R.J. SARNA

### 26, ROCKINPRIDE CO-FOUNDER

At age 20, Liz Marr and her friend R.J. Sarna started a group called Pride Gathering, which threw picnics in the suburbs. At age 26, Marr decided to reform the group and make it bigger with more of a purpose. With the help of her friends, lead photographer Nick Miller, lead promoter Brad Stone, co-founder R.J.

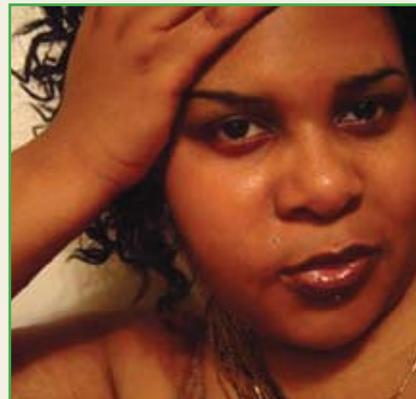


Sarna and the newest member, her fiancé, photographer Brittany Whittemore, they started making a Myspace site that provided info on youth groups, gay friendly businesses, gay friendly groups and events. RockinPride also helps with clubs and groups starting out in the suburbs that are open to the LGBT community and want to spread the word. R.J. Sarna, 26, has always felt a desire to promote LGBT equality and awareness. At Loyola University Chicago, his interest piqued in the campus LGBT organization, where he remained active in as an undergraduate and co-chaired as a senior. During his tenure, he organized fundraisers and events, helped bring the AIDS Quilt to campus, participated in the Day of Silence and invited high-profile speakers like Danny Roberts from "Real World: New Orleans" and Kyan Douglas from "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" to speak about their experiences. In addition to his work with RockinPride and preparing for the Dental Admissions Test (DAT), Sarna co-hosted a podcast, the Daily4Play, that combined his two passions—health care and the LGBT community.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Sarna hopes to enter dental school in the fall of 2009, and eventually do research and cater his practice to a largely LGBT clientele.

## ERNETTA PROCTER

### 23, PERFORMANCE ARTIST



Every day is a prosperous day for artist and author Ernetta Procter, 23. Better known as "Phenomenon" by the performance arts community, she has stunned many onlookers with her persistence and progression. In 2007, her performance pieces of poetry were released on audio entitled "Hood Politics," causing a riotous reaction from suburbia due to the urban reality depicted in her work.

This revolutionary continues to use her poised persona and anointed gift for poetry as a spoken-word artist to educate and mentor at risk youth. Along with pursuing a career in English and communications, the youthful powerhouse has dedicated her time and talent to many nonprofit agencies for positive causes. From the Forces of Nature Dance Company and 21Brothers Organization of Masons and Eastern Stars, to the Department Of Children and Family Services Transitional Homes, Procter is on a mission.

The 2007 Truth award for best poet was issued to the Verbal Balance Poetry Ensemble, in which Procter is a neophyte and active member. This touring artist and slam champion also finds time in her schedule to teach performance poetry for the Art Music Poetry Program.

Today, she continues to work toward her personal goals, such as the release of her first book, *The Lesbian Chronicles*, which exposes the urban lesbian lifestyle of African-American women. She also continues to work toward being a positive role model for LGBT and African-American youth.

**DID YOU KNOW?** She will stampede children and helpless pets, just to catch an ice cream truck. She's not proud of it but, hey, it's life. Ice cream ROCKS!

## JULIEN JACQUET

### 30, GAY GAMES VOLUNTEER

Julien Jacquet, 30 (29 at the time he was nominated), is a French citizen permanently living in Chicago since 2004. He was the co-chief information officer of the Chicago Gay Games. Thanks to



a network of some of the best LGBT professionals and volunteers in Chicago and around the world, he successfully led the delivery of the technology that supported the event.

Jacquet credits the great spirit of participation, inclusion and personal best found in all the partners and volunteers of the Gay Games for the success of the event. He hopes to reconnect with these amazing LGBT key players in a similar context as he aspires to work for the Chicago 2016 Olympics once done with his master's.

He is a graduate from Sorbonne University, the *Ecole Supérieure d'Informatique-Electronique-Automatique* and the Illinois Institute of Technology, and is a current student at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

Jacquet is also the co-chair and co-founder of the LGBT network of his company, the world's fifth-largest investment bank, where he is currently employed in the Chicago financial market section as the ranking technology officer. With his group, he participated in diversity events in Edinburgh, Scotland, and has encouraged senior management to tap into their diverse workforce with the help of organizations such as Stonewall UK.

He has lived and worked in London, Sydney, Hong-Kong, Tokyo and Paris.

He participated in programs run by the AIDS Council of New South Wales (ACON) in Australia and worked as a volunteer for the Sydney 2002 Gay Games.

**DID YOU KNOW?** A fun, unexpected thing happened to Jacquet at the closing ceremony of the Gay Games. After a rehearsal with Mayor Daley and other staff and volunteers, he enjoyed a dance with one of his friends to the music of Cyndi Lauper, who was doing her own rehearsal in the empty stadium.

## MYRL BEAM

### 25, TRANS-YOUTH WORKER



Myrl Beam, 25, is a self-described "transfagot" youth worker in the struggle. He currently works as the transgender care coordinator at Howard Brown Health Center, working primarily as a case manager in the daily drop-in program with trans and gender non-conforming youth experiencing homelessness.

Beam is also very involved in anti-violence and social-justice activism, currently working with the Chicago Queer Transformative Justice Working Group and providing trainings and workshops throughout Chicago.

**DID YOU KNOW?** A graduate of Oberlin College, Beam enjoys Bravo reality television, gardening on his back porch and being the godparent of a chihuahua named Chanel.

*Jam presents*

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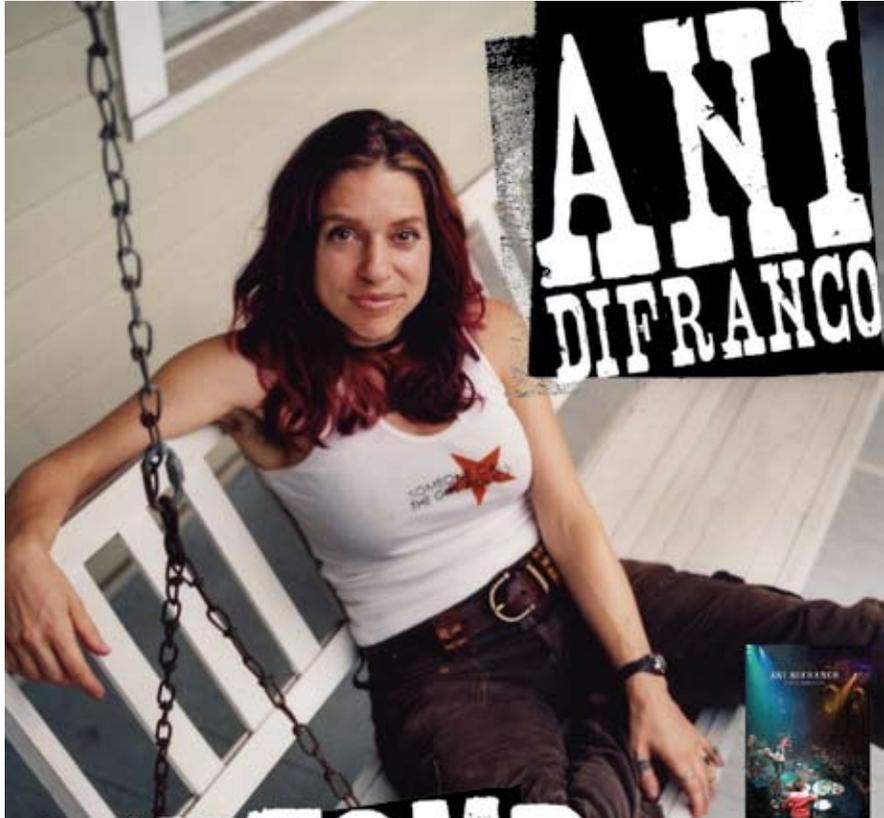
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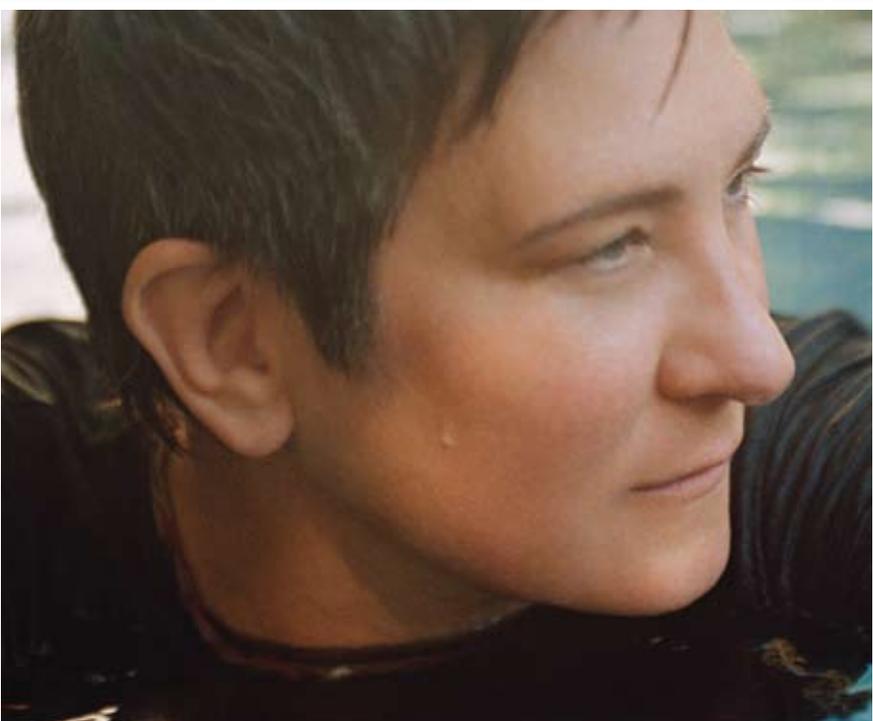
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## ALI ABBAS

### 20, SCHOLAR/ACTIVIST



Ali Abbas is an American by way of Lebanon. He was born in the Western suburb of Carol Stream, Ill., after his parents fled their invaded home country. Abbas came out during his senior years of high school, and faced objection by

his parents and alienation from the LGBT community. This inspired him to do volunteer work that focuses on raising awareness of LGBT issues on a global scale and raising awareness of hateful policies within the LGBT community.

In 2007, Abbas was named a Point Foundation Scholar. The Point Foundation is the country's largest publicly supported organization that grants scholarships to LGBT students.

Abbas is a philosophy major. His areas of interest range from inter-community identity politics, economic analysis and foreign policy. A student at DePaul University, his current projects include a piece on "The Boondocks," using the television show as a case study for the analysis of communities and applying that to the current identity crisis facing the LGBTQ community in terms of marriage "equality." Another project focuses on ending the occupation of Palestine and Iraq and working towards economic equality in trans-continental labor industries.

Abbas is also a published writer. His work, which aims to advocate for greater acceptance within the LGBT community, among other issues, has appeared in several local newspapers.

**DID YOU KNOW?** He is a fan of "The Boondocks" and Pugs. He also secretly makes digital music in his free time.

## TAYLOR CASEY

### 25, TRANS YOUTH ADVOCATE



Taylor Casey, 25, has been with Broadway Youth Center (BYC) a year now, working on the Life Skills project. Life Skills is an HIV Intervention for young transgender women, which Taylor co-facilitates and does massive recruitment and retention work for.

Since being at BYC, Casey has become even more involved, serving on numerous community committees, doing speaking engagements and co-facilitating trans-inclusion trainings for schools, businesses and other non-profits. In addition, she has become an integral part of the Trans Youth Resources and Advocacy (TYRA) drop-in team, providing a weekly safe space for trans youth of all varieties to come, socialize and build community together. Her work, her passion and her commitment have made her a central figure in Chicago's LGBTQ youth community. Her mission, within all of this work, is to promote healthy attitudes about gender expression, including the idea that one does not have to aim to "become" a woman or a man—that being trans (or anywhere along the wonderful gender spectrum) is beautiful all by itself.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Before Life Skills, Casey was very active within the LGBTQ community, serving as a mentor to many young trans people.

## BETHANY MINOR

### 23, LCCP ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Bethany Minor is a 2008 graduate of Northwestern University, where she majored in history and political science, with a minor in Asian-American studies.

She is originally from Senatobia, Miss., but grew up in Memphis, Tenn. She has been a resident of Chicago for about two and a half years.

Minor was a counselor with the LGBT Center at Duke University in Durham, N.C., before moving to Chicago. She first became active in LGBT organizations in the Chicagoland area with the Rainbow Alliance at Northwestern. She served as social chair, which gave her the opportunity to get better acquainted with other collegiate LGBT organizations around Chicago, such as DePaul and Loyola. Continuing her social activities, she also has done promotional work throughout Chicago.

Beginning in the summer of 2006, she began a very productive relationship with the Lesbian Community Care Project (LCCP) as an intern. Since then, she has had the honor of spearheading outreach efforts for LCCP at events like Northalsted Market Days and the Andersonville Midsommarfest. She also served as a board member for the 2007 LCCP Ball, which is the largest event for LBT women in the Midwest. She has recently been asked to further her commitment to LBT women health issues in Chicago by joining the LCCP advisory board.

She plans to attend graduate school next year, where she hopes to pursue a degree that will allow her to continue her passion for advocacy work in women's health.

**DID YOU KNOW?** She has 10 tattoos and is planning her next one as you read this.

## MADSEN MINAX

### 25, MUSICIAN



Madsen Minax, 25, is a multimedia artist, musician and activist. After growing up in the scenic woods of northern Michigan, he trained as a filmmaker at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and classical

quartet composer at *Hogeschool voor Muziek en Technologie* in Utrecht, The Netherlands. Minax spends much of his time playing upright bass in the duet music project Actor Slash Model, utilizing songwriting and vaudevillian performance to address political issues, identity, queerness and kink. In addition to music performance, Actor Slash Model also collaborates in other media; the duo are currently producing an experimental documentary exploring trans and gender variant identities as they related to music and performance, wherein Minax is directing his first feature-length film, scheduled for completion in 2009.

The project has received two consecutive Chicago Artist Assistance Program grants through the Illinois Arts Council and Department of Cultural Affairs, as well as the Crossroads Fund Fire This Time Grant 2007.

Minax's films have screened nationally and internationally in cities including Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Berlin, Germany, Copenhagen, Denmark, Sydney and Perth, Australia.

His other current projects include co-organizing "Threat Level Queer Shorts," a bimonthly film and video-screening series to showcase independent work made by queer filmmakers

internationally. He also works with Beyond-media Education as a videographer and editor with a current focus in HIV/AIDS prevention education.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Minax is an active participant in Chicago leather culture, working hard to bridge the gap between gay male leather culture and the interrelated issues of kink in queerness and trans identity through volunteer work and workshop facilitation. Minax is also a volunteer and member of The Leather Archives and Museum in Chicago.

## JASMINE THURMOND

### 22, TUTOR/RADIO CO-HOST



Jasmine Thurmond, 22, is a Chicago native. She recently made her return to the city after a two-year residency in Jackson, Miss. As a student at Jackson State University, she dedicated her leisure time to the organiza-

tion IamSeven, which focuses on exposing underprivileged youth to art culture.

Now residing in Chicago, Thurmond has a personal academic tutoring small business for youth in pre-kindergarten through 12th grades, where she seeks to not only educate youth, but also positively guide them into success. She is a student at Chicago State University, where she is an avid volunteer in the Gwendolyn Brooks Writing Center and vice-president of the LGBTQ organization Helping Educate Regarding Orientation (HERO). She is fulfilling a longtime dream of hers as she wears the hat of "G-Spot Radio Show" co-host. The "G-Spot" is an Internet radio show geared towards an audience of LGBTQ women. On the show, Thurmond focuses on discussing issues that are relevant to the women of her community, while also including pertinent topics from popular culture.

**DID YOU KNOW?** In her free time, she volunteers at the Center on Halsted, performs at Pow Wow Poetry Night and attends live music venues.

## ANDRE BROWN

### 25, HIV-PREVENTION COORDINATOR

Andre Brown is currently the Youth HIV Prevention Program Coordinator at the Broadway Youth Center (BYC). In his position, Brown works to provide HIV and STD testing, health education programming and a variety of outreach programs to young people ages 12 to 24 years old. He enjoys working with young people and finds the relationships he builds with them to be the most valuable and rewarding part of his job.

A native of Flint, Mich., Brown came to Chicago in 2007 after completing his Master's in public health at the University of North Carolina. He has been doing HIV prevention work since 2002, while a student at the University of Michigan. His travels to South Africa in 2003 to do HIV prevention work solidified his desire to dedicate his work to addressing the issues related to this disease.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Brown's secret passion in life is music. He enjoys listening to music (live

and on CD), wants to learn the piano and wants to record an album.

## LAURA VELAZQUEZ

### 29, ANTI-VIOLENCE ADVOCATE

Laura Velazquez started with Center on Halsted as the victim advocacy coordinator in 2004. Her 11 years of experience in anti-violence advocacy includes her time as a victim legal advocate



at a domestic violence shelter and as a police officer in the Western suburbs, where she saw first-hand the legal issues faced by victims of violence. She has training certificates in both domestic violence and sexual assault crisis intervention, and is active nationally in prevention, education and outreach efforts that increase the awareness of violence issues in the LGBT community.

Velazquez received her law enforcement training in 2002 at the Illinois State Police Academy in Springfield, Ill., where she lived for 12 weeks of paramilitary instruction. Laura graduated as the recruit class vice president.

While serving as a police officer, she continued her fitness training and returned to boxing classes. Laura previously boxed at a gym where she and her best friend were the only females in class. During a boxing workout, Laura broke her "gun" hand, resulting in her leaving the force shortly after. That is when Laura left her hometown of Aurora and moved to Chicago.

**DID YOU KNOW?** In her free time, Velazquez enjoys cheering for the White Sox and Bears, is a music and movie buff that include classics, especially Audrey Hepburn features. If you have ever met her, she will shake your hand and may ask "How do you do?" in honor of Eliza Doolittle, Hepburn's character in "My Fair Lady."

## TIMOTHY BECHTEL

### 29, CLIENT-SERVICES COORDINATOR

Fluent in Spanish, Timothy Bechtel is currently the client services coordinator for the Mental Health Program at the Center on Halsted, providing culturally competent mental health services to the Center's Latino and English-speaking consumers. He serves as a full member of the Chicago Department of Public Health HIV Prevention and Planning Group, and he facilitates an ongoing support group for LGBT individuals with HIV.

Bechtel graduated with a master's in social service administration from the University of Chicago, where he interned at the Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture and International Faces, two programs of Heartland Health Outreach that work with immigrants and political refugees. Tim also served in the Peace Corps for two years, working as a health promoter for the public school system in Guatemala. He is currently completing his hours for his license in clinical social work, which he is scheduled to receive by the end of this year.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Bechtel picked up the guitar about four years ago, and continues to struggle with it. Also, he has not paid for a haircut since high school!



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## DANIEL POHL

### 29, DISEASE INTERVENTION SPECIALIST



Since coming out to mostly not surprised and very supportive friends and family starting at age 15, Daniel Pohl, 29, has been involved in helping the LGBT community. After unsuccessful attempts to start the Rockford area's first GSA at Harlem High School and to convince Rockford's adult LGBT organization to host a youth group, he went on to be active in UIUC's queer community and, in 1999, co-founded the Coming Out Support Group for students there that endures to this day.

Shortly after graduation, Pohl was hired in October 2001 as an HIV/STD health educator at Howard Brown Health Center, where he continues to work in the field of prevention as manager of Disease Intervention Services. This program was created in partnership with the Chicago Department of Public Health as a response to increased rates of syphilis among men who have sex with men, and has evolved into a nationally recognized model of cooperation between a community-based organization and a health department. Day-to-day, he talks primarily with gay or bisexual men to find out if they have syphilis, HIV and/or other STDs and answers questions, gives information and encourages them to tell sexual partners or to allow him to do anonymous partner notification on their behalf. He has participated in technical assistance and cultural competency trainings with numerous health departments and national organizations and has been a contributor to research that highlights the program's successes, as well as its approach to using the internet to locate and inform sexual partners of potential exposure to STDs.

When he's not "stomping out syphilis," Pohl enjoys catching up with friends, da Cubs, playing softball (go Elephants!) and spending quality time with Chad, Tussy and Ramen.

**DID YOU KNOW?** He loves both karaoke and skinny dipping, even though people cringe at both!

## DEREK BRITTON

### 25, AIDS ADVOCATE

Derek Britton is a force to be reckoned with in the LGBT community. His passion to increase awareness of the affect of HIV amongst his peers led him to become a founding member of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) Junior Board. He has served as a leader on the Junior Board's executive committee and social and planning committee since its 2005 inception, and also as vice president and acting president in 2007. Britton has been a contributor to many AFC events including the AIDS Run/Walk, World of Chocolate, and the Junior Board's own Blue Bash and Make a Statement: Design for the Cure. He has also served on the benefit committee of Dance for Life Chicago since 2006.



Britton has also played a hand in LGBT advocacy by co-creating HomosAreAHoot.com, an organization that creates opportunities for fun, cheeky and stylish ways to give back to LGBT charities of choice. Currently, Campus Pride, PFLAG and The Point Foundation are beneficiaries.

**DID YOU KNOW?** In the professional world, Britton serves as the director of marketing for Chicago-based travel technology group. He is a graduate of London College of Communication, University of the Arts London and lives in Humboldt Park.

## LISA KATONA

### 27, LCCP PATIENT NAVIGATOR



Lisa Katona has always been interested in the intersection between physical health, mental health and social justice. Educated at the University of Michigan School of Social Work,

Katona has training and experience working with a variety of LGBTQ-related issues, including individual and family clinical practice, gender issues, sexual health and domestic violence. Her interest in social justice and women's health began at Oberlin College, where she trained her college and community-based peers in women's health issues. In graduate school, Katona not only worked as a domestic violence counselor, but she also assisted the Intersex Society of North America in researching quality care for individuals receiving medical assistance, and was involved in a clinical preceptorship in sexual health through the University of Michigan Hospital.

Since her arrival to Chicago two years ago, she has been working at the Howard Brown Health Center. Initially, Katona worked as a case manager for individuals living with HIV, and is now the newest addition to the Lesbian Community Care Project (LCCP), as the patient navigator for the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program. Additionally, she is completing a two-year postgraduate fellowship with Live Oak, providing psychotherapy to individuals and families, as well as trainings to organizations and communities.

**DID YOU KNOW?** She got stuck in a tree in her own backyard, and the fire department had to be called to get her down.

## SIMON STRIKEBACK

### 29, MUSICIAN AND TRANS ACTIVIST

Simon Daniel Fisher, or Simon Strikeback, grew up first in Rogers Park and later in a near northern suburb. He was a queer activist in high school, creating a student support group and working with Better Existence with HIV (BEHIV) as a youth educator. While at DePaul University, he joined Lesbian Avengers, and in 1999, helped revitalize Camp Trans to protest transphobic policies in women-only spaces. Strikeback was a lead organizer with the project until 2005. After living at IDA, a queer rural community for three years, he returned to Chicago and co-created the trans performance duet Actor Slash Model, currently producing a documentary about trans and gender-variant musicians. This fall, Strikeback will begin graduate study in interdisciplinary humanities at the University of Chicago.

Strikeback is currently on tour with Actor Slash Model, gathering interviews for the film and playing shows across the Northeast. At the moment, he is probably trying to fit four people, three cameras, all of their belongings and a seven-foot upright bass into the car.

Other current projects include the zine "Bound to Struggle: Where Kink and Radical Politics Meet," which brings together the words and art of a diverse group of practitioners of both kink and radical politics. He also co-



rates Threat Level, Chicago's bimonthly queer short film series that raises money for his and other Chicago-based trans-focused documentaries. He also is a core member of the Chicago Childcare Collective that offers free child-care to social justice organizations in the city.

**DID YOU KNOW?** His new favorite thing to imagine is how to re-create the 1930's phenomena, The Pansy Craze, a sociopolitical movement with a large base in Chicago. He suspects it will involve people of many different genders, booty dancing and a lot of pink.

## HECTOR SALGADO

### 26, OUTREACH SPECIALIST



Hector Salgado is an outreach specialist for Project VIDA, where he has worked since 2003. There, Salgado created an outreach curriculum to increase the number of group

participants and formed several collaborate relationships with various organizations to make sure prevention information and materials are provided at their venues. Salgado has also helped create curriculum and facilitated discussions with Project VIDA's youth group on topics such as gay history, HIV and dating violence. Prior to his work at Project VIDA, Salgado took part in Public Allies Chicago's Ally Apprenticeship Program, where he worked at the Greater Chicago Food Depository as their recruitment and retention specialist in the Community Kitchens Program.

Salgado has also served as president of the Latin American Student Organization and president of the Student Government Association at Richard J. Daley college, a college advisor for SERAS youth leadership group in Little Village and vice president of the District Wide Student Government Association. He is a member of the University of Illinois in Chicago's PRIDE program and has worked with the Oak Park Gay and Lesbian Association (OPALGA) to help organize the first Latino MSM retreat.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Salgado is working on his Bachelor's in political science with a minor in Latino studies at UIC, and has volunteered in various voter registration and youth organizing drives.

## TOM KELLY

### 25, POLITICAL ORGANIZER

Tom Kelly has been a resident of Chicago for six years, after spending his first 18 in Stevensville, Mich. The oldest son of Tom and Sheila Kelly, he attended public schools and was very active in the Boy Scouts, earning his Eagle Scout badge. However, it was his interest in politics and public policy that brought him to Chicago, where he attended DePaul University.

While at DePaul University, Kelly was a member of the university's rugby team and DePaul College Democrats, among other activities. During his freshman year, he took Dr. Elizabeth Kelly's course, "Creating Change: LGBT Politics," which introduced him to LGBT policy and sparked his interest in LGBT equality issues. Dr. Kelly also encouraged him to take an internship on U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel's 2002 congressional campaign, which began his career in political campaigns.

Shortly after the 2002 congressional race, Kelly took a job with then State Sen. Barack Obama, who had recently announced his candi-



dacy for the U.S. Senate. After working on the 2004 primary and general election staffs, he continued his work with Obama as an assistant to then political director Dan Shomon. This lasted until September 2005, when he began work as campaign manager for Assessor James M. Houlihan's re-election campaign.

During this time, he was accepted to the University of Oxford for a master's in social policy. While at Oxford, he focused on developing his understanding of gender and public health issues, and became active with both the Democrats Abroad UK and the Oxford University Stop AIDS campaign. In 2007, he graduated from Oxford after completing a thesis titled, "Understanding the Continental Divide: How do we explain the different developments between the American and Canadian systems for managing health risks."

In November 2007, Kelly returned to the United States to work on Obama's presidential campaign as a field organizer. Over the past few months, he has organized in Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana, in addition to drafting a field plan for Equality Illinois and volunteering with the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Kelly will be leaving the Obama campaign shortly, as he has recently been accepted to Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government to pursue a Master's in public administration.

## TYJUAN CRATIC

### 23, POLITICAL ACTIVIST



TyJuan Cratic, 23, born and raised in Chicago, attended John Hope College Prep and De La Salle Institute on the South Side. He started early in his life working for gay issues and a political agenda, lobbying while in high school for SB 101, the Human Rights Amendment in Illinois. This is where he got the first taste of political and legislative work that would benefit people he had never met.

Cratic began his studies at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, majoring in political science. There, he soon became president of the SIU College Democrats. Appointed to the SIU Student Health Advisory Board, TyJuan, spent three years working to establish domestic-partner benefits for students and university employees. This was achieved in 2005, a great victory for the SIU LGBT community.

Later in 2005, after SIU's Chancellor made condemning comments about homosexuality, he was appointed to represent undergraduate students on the Provost GLBT Ad hoc Committee. As the only undergraduate student on this committee, he found it important to hold the university to the fire to change outdated policies.

Cratic was a part of recommending a change in university policies that blocked same-sex couples as live-in resident hall directors and establishing hate crime reporting after several hate crime situations occurred on campus. One of the recommendations he was truly proud of was paving the way for the SIU GLBT Resource Center.

In 2007, he was elected as the Illinois Federation of Political Affairs' vice president of political affairs, bringing the organization to fight for two political issues in Illinois: civil unions and lowering textbook cost for college students. On April 5, he was elected president. Cratic made civil unions one of the top legislative and political issues of his term, and established a grassroots campaign for four democratic congressional races in Illinois.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Cratic has taken one year away from SIU before graduation to work at a Chicago law firm.

**TONY LEWIS****27, THEATER MASTERMIND**

Tony Lewis was born in Louisville, Ky., to Bill and Mary Anne Lewis and has one older sister, Tricia. From messy fingerprints and notebook doodles to angst poetry, art has been a driving force for

Lewis since his early years. Growing up, his cousins were his cast in yearly holiday productions (sometimes against their will). What started as little pageants grew as Tony did. Quality of scripts, sets and costumes were not lost on these shabby basement productions, and his family was always anticipating their little thespian's passion. His family has always been a huge influence on his life as an artist and gay man. He performed throughout high school, and when the time came for higher education, he wanted to continue to follow this driving passion in his life.

Lewis attended the Theatre Conservatory at Roosevelt University. During those four years of theater and life training, he grew as an artist and man. When graduation came, an idea began to formulate in his mind. He began to work on an adaptation of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Gender changes, addition of an anti-gay marriage decree and alteration of Shakespeare's fairy-filled forest to a vagrant-filled "Boyshood" provided Tony a voice and message for the gay community. His youthful optimism told him he better get it produced with haste before gay marriage was legalized, so he and fellow Roosevelt alumni formed the theater company MidTangent Productions. For the past three years (currently in rehearsals for the fourth) MidTangent Productions has brought A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Queer Tale to the stage, along with other productions like Fascination, I Am Hamlet and @mosphere 54. With the support of over a hundred artists, designers and supporters, this dream was made a reality.

**DID YOU KNOW?** In addition to theater, Lewis is also a singer, choreographer, fiction writer and professional event planner.

**AMY GREGORY****28, REGISTERED NURSE**

Amy Gregory, 28, currently works to care for members of the LGBT community by providing world class medical care as part of the team of Howard Brown



Health Center's John S. Baran Center for Medical Services. In this capacity, she provides expert and compassionate care for those living with HIV/AIDS and to all LGBT persons seeking comprehensive medical care at Howard Brown.

She graduated from the DePaul University College of Nursing in 2006, and is a member of Sigma Theta Tau, The National Honor Society of Nursing. Gregory is currently fulfilling requirements for the Family Nurse Practitioner program at DePaul University, and is set to graduate in June 2009. She hopes to continue her work in LGBT health field, especially women's and lesbian's health, STDs and HIV/AIDS.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Her "root" was when she developed a crush on Dottie Henson in the movie A League of Their Own when she was 12.

**SPECIAL AWARDS:**

Two local celebrities who have done the Chicago LGBT community proud are also being honored by Windy City Media Group:

**RONNIE KROELL****25, MODEL AND 4+1 PRODUCTIONS FOUNDER**

Ronnie Kroell, 25, is a political science major at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In addition to his passion for politics, he has a deep love for the arts. He has pursued acting and modeling for many years, and celebrated his most recent success as runner-up on BRAVO's "Make Me a Supermodel."

Kroell is a man with strong convictions, and has never allowed obstacles to stand in his way. Rather, he chooses to focus on the glass being half full and greeting every challenge with a smile. Most importantly, as a man that happens to be gay, he does not allow his "personal orientation" to solely define his life's journey or how he interacts with individuals from all walks of life.

As founder of 4+1 Productions, he is a proponent of "bridging diversity through the arts," and is an advocate for opening lines of communication and inspiring others to just be themselves. Kroell is currently working on finishing his degree, writing a book and living each day to the

fullest. He is thankful to his family, friends and to the community for their support of his efforts and hopes that they will continue to watch what happens.

**DID YOU KNOW?** While he considers himself to be an ordinary guy, he also acknowledges that he has extraordinary dreams and believes that anything is possible (including his dream of being President of the U.S.).

**STEPHEN ROSENGARD****30, FASHION DESIGNER**

Born and raised in Chicago, 30-year-old Steven Rosengard was hooked on design as early as age 11, when he realized the people he loved to sketch "needed clothes." The greats of Hollywood's Golden Age—Katherine Hepburn, Rita Hayworth, Doris Day and Lauren Bacall—they were the inspiration for Rosengard, and by the age of 14, he was researching fashion history and making his first dresses.

The youngest of four children, Steven spent his

free time drawing figures, designing gowns and exploring fabric. His path to fashion led him to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studying Dutch, but he ended up at Chicago's Columbia College for fashion design. He traveled abroad, where fashion and fabric continued to captivate him in places such as France, England and Italy. Today, he creates effortless, dramatic and elegant day and evening looks, tailored for real women who have to look good while going through their daily lives.

Rosengard's passion and unique curiosity for all things fashionable have made him a rising star in Chicago's design community. His focus, with direct inspiration from Yves St. Laurent, centers on natural fabrics that bring a simple, yet elegant, perspective to women's day wear. He hopes to rid the fashion world of non-natural fabric and take day dresses to a level every woman would covet.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Rosengard eats ice cream with milk poured all over it (like how you eat cereal). He was also the only Project Runway contestant that understood what Heidi was saying when she would be ranting in Dutch.

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### A big thank-you

Thanks to everyone who turned out to Circuit, 3641 N. Halsted, Fri., June 13, for the Windy CityGay Idol finals. Cori Calderon (upper left photo) edged Antonio King and Marla Depew to claim the crown—and won more than \$5,000 in cash and prizes. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald

THANKS TO THE BARS FOR GIVING US SUCH TALENT!



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## BOOKS

# Fire in the hole! David Sedaris

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

In David Sedaris' latest collection of humorous essays, *When You Are Engulfed in Flames* (Little, Brown and Company), the North Carolina-raised, openly gay humorist shares laugh- and cringe-inducing experiences involving longtime boyfriend Hugh Hamrick, sex-obsessed cab drivers, airplane passenger drama, quitting smoking in Japan, run-ins with people he despises, and even a bizarre, brief friendship with a neighborhood child molester. These days living in France and England, Sedaris returned to the states for a book tour and, during a stop in Chicago, took time out for a chat about his book, his Gawker-alleged advances towards male fans, and whether he'd put on an elf suit again.

**Lawrence Ferber: The last time I interviewed you a few years back, you mentioned that you had started an essay on befriending a neighborhood child molester, but couldn't figure out a way to finish it. That story appears in *Flames*, so how did you find your way to completing it?**

David Sedaris: Well, it helped that he died. I didn't have to worry about him being hurt by the story, but even then it took me a few years to write. Someone was commenting, 'why is it you have sympathy for a child molester but you have no sympathy for a woman who wants to swap seats with you on a plane?' And I thought, well, the child molester never did anything to me, he was always nice to me. But I think often you have to get a certain distance from a story in order to write about it.

**LF: So you're waiting for a lot of people to die right now so you can finally finish a bunch of uncompleted stories, is that what you're saying?**

DS: That's exactly what I'm saying.

**LF: I also love the story about the straight cab driver who kept pressuring you to discuss your sex life and hook up with lesbians.**

DS: It's my belief that all men know that cab driver. I was in Toronto and I went to a barber shop and I got my hair cut and the guy, who was Italian, asked me where I live and I said I live in France and he said, "Do you get a lot of pussy in France? Do you get a lot of French pussy?" Does that ever happen to you? It'll be a barber or a cab driver and part of me is like, can't you tell I'm gay?

**LF: I think you should get into cabs wearing a bib that, instead of a picture of a lobster, has a picture of a penis.**

DS: [Laughs] That's a good one. [Laughs more] Oh goodness.

**LF: Have you considered being a Santa's elf again? Would you revisit the experience?**

DS: No, I did it for two years and that was kind of enough for me. It would seem gimmicky,



David Sedaris.

The reason that [Santaland Diaries] story worked was I just needed a job and they hired me. I didn't get the job to write about it. I feel like when you do things specifically to write about them you're trapped into writing about them. You're under pressure to find what's interesting about them. I would rather have all that come about organically."

**LF: Now that you have mined most of your life for material, how do you go about filling up the well with fresh experience for stories? Do you ever turn to Craigslist for ideas? There's crackpot everything on there.**

DS: No, I don't know anything about it. I saw the internet for the first time last September, and I got my very first e-mail about ten days ago. The first one in my life. Hugh set something up so I could get e-mail. I can sort of understand what people are talking about—e-mail is good if you don't want to talk to people. Like sometimes you call and somebody's girlfriend gets on and you have to say, 'how are you doing?' You'd just as soon leave a message. I can see that. The Internet is so new to me. I didn't realize you could just go on and lie about people. I can get on a computer right now and write "Michelle Obama said to me she hates Jews." Somebody called me the other day: "Oh, there's that thing on Gawker that you try to pick guys up during your readings." I've never done that. Ever, ever, ever. I will have gifts for teenage girls when I go on tour because I'm always honored when they come and it's fun to make a big deal out of a teenager. I take the shampoo and conditioners from my room, and yesterday I went to the museum and got a bunch of cheap bracelets. I'll often talk about how pretty she is, like, "It must be so good to be you, and you're what guys in prison dream about." But a guy? I won't talk like that to a teenage boy because I don't want it to be weird or uncomfortable. Early on I saw

somebody on a book tour try to pick someone up from the audience. They respect you and are in awe of you so it would be weird to put any move on them. Plus, I'm involved with somebody. So I was appalled because I've never done a thing like that.

**LF: Anything else online that has surprised you so far?**

DS: I went on YouTube to hear Billie Holiday and then it said, "What do you think of this?" It's Billie Holiday singing *Strange Fruit* in 1955. What do you mean what do you think of it? Who the fuck cares? Are you going to give a thumbs-down? And then someone commented, "Oh, she needs to take singing lessons from Diana Ross, there's somebody who knows how to sing." And then someone below that responded, "Shut up asshole," and the other person said, "You're an asshole, you shut up." I didn't know that stuff existed! It's like talking during a concert—shut the fuck up, Billie Holiday is singing!

**LF: Does your sister Amy pressure you into putting her in more of your stories?**

DS: I gave her good lines in this book. She has the best lines. But no, no she doesn't. I've written about Amy before but I never said she was an actress, because if you write someone is an actress they become suspicious of their motives. Oh, that person can't really be behaving that way because they want attention. And Amy is not really that kind of a person.

**LF: During last year's controversy over fabrication in memoirs, a *New Republic* article lumped you in as one of the guilty. Your thoughts on that, a year later?**

DS: The [author of that article] is an editor at *Outside Magazine*; he fact-checks, fixes grammar in stories about camping. This guy went to North Carolina with my book *Naked*, and this was a book in which a cat is hit by a car, dies, comes back to life and speaks English—and that's the book he's fact-checking. The things he came up with, like I got the building style wrong in the mental hospital where I volunteered when I was

15. I don't really feel like he came up with anything. If it was a story on the styles of buildings, of mental hospitals in the United States, then I think that would be pretty glaring but people don't read me for that. I'm a humorist. So I guess I was surprised.

**LF: You have homes in [England] and France, where same-sex civil unions exist. Have you been keeping an eye on the gay marriage struggle here in the USA?**

DS: I guess it's one of those things where when people oppose it I don't understand what they're talking about. I watched this Chris Rock concert and he was talking about how people say gay marriage threatens the sanctity of straight marriage but Michael Jackson got married. There are shows like "I Want to Marry a Millionaire." How sacred can it be? It's just something I don't understand the opposition to. I don't understand how, if two lesbians want to exchange bad poetry on a mountain top, that would threaten the marriage of the people who grew up next door to me in North Carolina. I don't get it.

**LF: Any plans to get married or a union with Hugh?**

DS: We've been together for 17 years. I know straight people who just don't see the need to get married; they just live together, and I think we're like that. That said, if you handed me a piece of paper and said you can save 18 cents by signing this piece of paper, I would sign the piece of paper. In France right now they have civil unions but Hugh and I haven't done it yet so if I were to die tomorrow he would have to pay 60 percent inheritance tax on our apartment. It would go down to 30 percent if we had a civil union. It saves money so I would do it because it saves money.

**LF: What else is in the works?**

DS: I just have my hands full on this tour and I have a book I turn in a year from now, little fables about animals. It's all new fiction.

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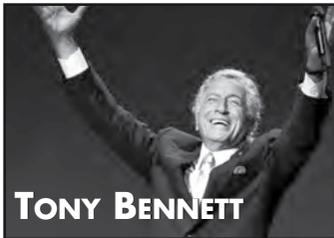


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## BOOK REVIEW

## Us Ones in Between: A Novel

Written by Blair Mastbaum  
\$14.95; Running Press;  
207 pages

REVIEW BY YASMIN NAIR

Blair Mastbaum's latest novel takes its name from the Spencer Krug/Sunset Rubdown song: "I've heard of pious men/And I've heard of dirty fiends/But you don't often hear/Of us ones in between." Kurt Smith is one of those living a life "in between" in Manhattan, as a recent art school graduate who came with a full painting scholarship at Cooper Union but hasn't painted much recently.

He complains that he didn't know "how to go out and network and make small talk with a bunch of lame people at a bunch of pretentious parties that I was supposed to attend if I was ever going to be a well-known artist in New York."

What emerges from Kurt's first-person narrative is a bleak set of circumstances and surroundings

that shed more light on a certain kind of art world than on Kurt himself. Through Kurt's eyes and recollections, we see glimpses into what it takes to succeed as an upcoming artist, especially a young queer-identified artist. Kurt went to school with the sort of young men and women destined to make their mark in an art and media world always eager to taste the Next New Thing, and his commentary on them is scathingly funny and perhaps even accurate even as we recognize the bitterness from which it emerges.

One of his on-occasion friends is Sherlock, whose paintings of young men are now collected by the likes of Charles Saatchi. His art will soon have an entire book dedicated to it with the title: Teenage Wreck and Heart. As Kurt puts it sardonically, "The title is perfectly evocative of nothing, just like everything young artists are creating these days." And then there's Billy, his ex-boyfriend who plays guitar in a band called On the Wings of Love, that's just become the hottest act in town.

Kurt keeps track of his old friends from a grungy studio apartment that's slowly baking in the summer heat. Mastbaum effortlessly evokes this bleak world and its denizens, relaying its details with the simplest but most concise brushstrokes. At one point, Kurt walks by a "twenty-year-old boy on a razor scooter screaming, 'Hark! Hark!' I roll my eyes. If there's a new 'it' phrase, this skinny fashion victim ... would know it." It's a fly-by moment, but vividly descriptive of a world where everyone's constantly trying to be right on the edge of the new.

All of this is a backdrop to the drama unfolding around Kurt. Among his unfinished projects is a novel about Elliot Collinsworth, who takes pleasure in pushing young men into the path of incoming subway trains and watching them scream in pain as their legs are sliced off. Suddenly, the news in the real world is full of a mysterious killer who does exactly what Kurt imagines Elliot doing.

He writes about going around town and eye-

ing young men on the train, both as sexual objects and, ostensibly, as research subjects for his novel. What, he wonders, would it feel like to actually push someone off the platform? That question's often interlaced with the question of what it might feel like to kiss or fuck the young man in question, turning his obsession into an interesting sexual fetish. Eventually, both Sherlock and Billy suspect Kurt of being the pusher and start to insist that he turn himself in.

As this tautly written novel progresses, it be-

comes less clear whether Kurt's actually writing about wanting to push young men, or if he is in fact Elliot, and/or if the novel is a novel about himself. Mastbaum's prose is spare but vivid, exposing both Kurt's inner and outer worlds while maintaining a sense of suspense about the blurring between reality and unreality. The strange conclusion is a fitting end that may well be another beginning.

Yasmin Nair can be reached at [welshzen@yahoo.com](mailto:welshzen@yahoo.com). She also blogs at [bilerico.com](http://bilerico.com).

## Attending the Lambda Literary Awards

BY TERRI SCHLICHMEYER

I have a confession to make. I am a book geek.

My house is full. I have a library in my lower level, no lie. Every room except the bathroom has books in it.

Check that. There are books in the bathroom, too.

I have piles and piles of "must-reads" all over the place. The thing is, the list is fluid like mercury, always changing. There's always something to top what I'm reading. I guess you could say I have levels of "must-read".

Which is why it was imperative that I attend this year's Lambda Literary Awards, held May 29 in West Hollywood, Calif. I needed more must-reads.

This was a banner year for the Lambda Literary Awards (known informally as "The Lammys"). Recently officially endorsed by the City of West Hollywood, the awards will be presented in that beautiful city permanently, according to the director's letter. They've got big plans for the future, you can bet, and this

years' presentation was the perfect kick-off.

First, an aside: I love food. I love unique salads and I love flavors that I would never think to put together. I'm telling you this because the Awards Committee had me hooked the minute I walked in the door. They fed us with salads to die for, a meat dish, and this potato creation that had to have come from somewhere north of clouds. I spent most of the entire cocktail hour talking with presenters, authors, and Beautiful People. Even the Mayor of West Hollywood was there.

Then they ushered us into the theatre. There, we were entertained by the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles (Who can come to my house any time and sing for me. I love a capella!), we laughed with the Gay Mafia, there were skits and presentations, a heart-wrenching In Memorium film that almost made me cry, and wonderful words from some of the absolute best LGBT writers and authors who gave us scads and scads of must-read books..

Ann Bannon (author of The Beebo Brinker Chronicles) got special recognition, as did Malcolm Boyd (Are You Running with Me, Jesus?) and Mark Thompson (Gay Body: A Journey Through Shadow to Self). All three were presented with Pioneer Awards.

For a complete list of winners, see [www.lambdaliterary.org](http://www.lambdaliterary.org).

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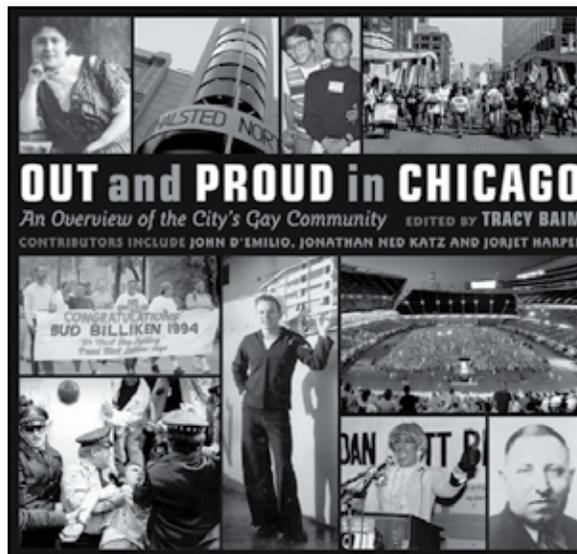
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## BOOK REVIEW

## à la Cart: The Secret Lives of Grocery Shoppers

Written by Hillary Carlip  
\$17.95; Virgin Books;  
120 pages

REVIEW BY YASMIN NAIR

According to Hillary Carlip, she's been collecting shopping lists—other peoples' lists—since her teens. Some of these are detailed, with subheadings for beverages and dairy. Other are scrawled on the insides of matchbooks. At least one is cryptic enough to suggest a wicked sense of humor: "Mouse traps. Cheese. Mouse."

Carlip began to imagine the lives and bodies of the people who made these lists. She set about collecting clothes from thrift stores and, with the assistance of photographer Barbara Green and makeup artist Chris Nelson, posed as the imagined characters in brief photo essays. The mousetrap list? It's supposed to belong to Derrick, the morbid 22-year-old who still lives with his mother, and spent his childhood killing and mounting bugs. And he's been diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

Then there's Helen, whose grocery list cites brand names. That's because Helen is an assiduous coupon-clipper who saves an average of \$209 each month. She has to, because she's an obsessive crafter, as is obvious from the handmade Holly Hobbie denim shirt she's wearing. Her husband, fed up with her spending so much money on crafting supplies, has drastically limited her allowance, hence her coupon cutting mania. And then there's Kim, the belligerent alcoholic, suddenly faced with an adult daughter whom she'd given up for adoption as a baby. Kim stands confusedly in the grocery store with a bottle of Jack Daniel's in hand, wearing a leather vest with the words, "Born to be wild."

For the most part, Carlip's recreated characters are from the middle to working classes (if such distinctions can even be said to exist in these economically strained times). A rare exception is Dr. Bloom, who's busy shopping for ham, roast beef and smoked turkey at the supermarket to prepare for dinner with Gloria Steinem; the head of the Feminist Majority; and the president of Girl's Inc. Dr. Bloom has two daughters who've failed to live up to her feminist principles—one's dropped out of school and the other's in her third marriage.

What are we to make of Carlip's recreations of American life as lived through shopping lists? The detritus of other people's lives can be fascinating. And yet, her literary and visual portraits are troubling. It's not just the looks that Carlip emulates, with ashy grey makeup and strangely askew noses and eyes standing in for racial/ethnic features of people of color (Carlip is white), but her renditions of their lives.

à la Cart is not meant to be a serious ethno-

graphic study, but its facile nature says a lot about the class-based stereotypes on which we operate. Carlip falters in the rare instance she attempts to portray the upper crust: Dr. Bloom is much more likely to have catered her affair than serve deli meat. Carlip's typical of American humorists who are comfortable imagining the lives of the poor or stuck-in-the-middle class as hilarious tales of underachievement.

Take Maggie. Ever since she saw Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, she's struggled to find clients and still dreams of her Prince Charming/Richard Gere coming to rescue her—she's always wanted to be "a hooker with a heart of gold." It's phrases like that which reveal how embedded Carlip is in the clichés through which we're encouraged to imagine that Maggie's too dumb to realize that *Pretty Woman* was a fantasy.

Tuyen is the Vietnamese immigrant who still remembers her childhood in Vietnam and "the mid-Autumn Festival where children parade ... carrying colorful lanterns, and receive moon cakes." What's a tale of a Vietnamese immigrant without lanterns and moon cakes? Carlip rehashes every tired cliché about who people are based on their income and where they come from. It's like watching Cindy Sherman pose as Anna Deavere Smith performing on race in America, and I don't mean that as a compliment. Sure, the book's meant to be a joke. But what are we laughing at, exactly?

Yasmin Nair can be reached at [welshzen@yahoo.com](mailto:welshzen@yahoo.com). She blogs at [bilerico.com](http://bilerico.com).

## BOOK REVIEW

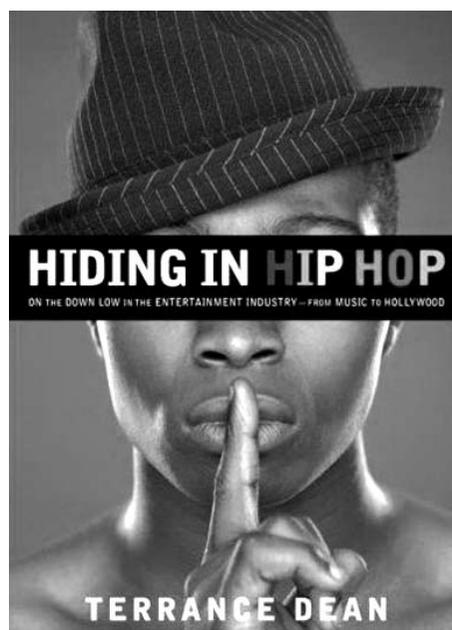
## Hiding in Hip Hop

Written by Terrance Dean  
\$23; Atria Books; 305 pages  
REVIEW BY YASMIN NAIR

By now, the term "on the down low" has become a part of everyday language. Beginning with J. L. King's 2004 book, *On The Down Low: A Journey into the Lives of "Straight" Black Men who Sleep with Men*, the term has defined our perception of Black men's lives.

Men sleeping with men while acting straight isn't, of course, restricted to the Black community. And yet, public talk of the down-low phenomenon stands in for any kind of sustained discussion about homosexuality in the Black community. The high rates of HIV infection among Black women foster a further demonization of Black men, who are portrayed as deadly carriers of the virus. The result is a lack of systemic analysis of the causes of the spread of HIV among vulnerable populations, such as inequality or the high numbers of incarcerated black men—and women—who spend lives in jail without access to condoms or any HIV prevention resources.

Terrance Dean's new book, *Hiding in Hip Hop*, is about the down-low phenomenon in the music industry. It's also a memoir of growing up in Detroit and Dean's flight out of there. One of his



earliest memories is of waiting while an intruder repeatedly raped his mother after threatening the four-year-old Dean with a gun.

Dean made it into the entertainment industry, where he found a community of people on the down low, including studio executives and musicians. According to Dean, the community in L.A. was cohesive enough to meet for regular social gatherings as well as the requisite sex parties. There are torrid, if sometimes fanciful, descriptions of sex that are a bit Harlequin Romance-ish.

The book doesn't reveal who's gay/bisexual in entertainment, but discusses the social and economic conditions that foster the down-low phenomenon. *Hiding in Hip Hop* tells us what we may already suspect about the implicit and explicit practices of racial exclusion in the entertainment industry. At one point, Dean worked as a production coordinator on "The Keenen Ivory Wayans Show," fresh on the heels of the comic's hit "In Living Color." He describes the clueless-

ness of white executives—who wanted Wayans to appeal to "middle America"—about the existence of Black actors: "it was always like pulling teeth to get the talent bookers to understand who some of the most prominent [B]lack actors were." Under these circumstances, where most white gay actors are compelled to be closeted, Black actors must remain even more so.

The book's sometimes confusing in its chronology, and latter parts, where Dean writes about founding various organizations to enable, first, Black entertainers to speak about race in the industry and then about sexuality, read a bit like resumes listing his professional accomplishments. That said, this is far less sensationalist than it could have been—and actually provides some insights into the operations of the industry outside of the questions about sexuality.

The question is: What function will this book perform in a culture always eager for yet another reason to demonize Black men as dangerously duplicitous? What are the power differentials in the entertainment world where white lesbians like Ellen are more out than Black lesbians or gay men? Does simply being out solve the problems of an industry that makes enormous profits while paying pittances to some? Ellen's at the height of her popularity and lauded for her outness. But we forget that she was among the first to cross the writer's strike picket line—that fact should matter more to us than the fact that she's out.

Dean isn't accountable for all these issues. As *Hiding* amply demonstrates, the phrase "We are everywhere" means empowerment for some. When applied to queer Black men in the entertainment industry, it could be construed as a threat to those who'd like to continue demonizing their presence. But as we read and discuss his book, we might consider the larger economic and political context in which sexuality operates.

Yasmin Nair can be reached at [welshzen@yahoo.com](mailto:welshzen@yahoo.com). She also blogs at [bilerico.com](http://bilerico.com).

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BY SCOTT BENSON

Fried's Cat Shelter, just an hour's drive east from Chicago, was founded by Hans and Lucille Fried in 1977. The Frieds, who came to the United States in 1939 from Nazi Germany, sold their home in the 1970s to buy an old roadside motel in Michigan City. They turned the motel into a no-kill, cageless shelter for homeless and abandoned cats.

Hans became known by his favorite saying: "To save a life is more in conformity with God's law than to kill." Hans and Lucille felt that spaying and neutering would correct the problem and be a more humane solution. It was their dream to



Jazz and Oreo, pets for adoption.

create a safe haven for all felines who needed it. The Fried's passed away more than 10 years ago, but their legacy is still being carried out at their shelter.

There are several ways to help Fried's Cat Shelter. Monetary donations are always welcomed, as well as any employer-matching gift programs and willed benevolences. Donations of food, litter, cleaning supplies and other items always help. If you can travel to Michigan City, or live in the area, volunteering at the shelter helping to clean and groom the cats is appreciated. Adoptions of felines are also possible—Fried's has, at any one time, 300-400 cats on site. Fried's also has a "Sponsor a Kitty Program" to help out the less fortunate cats. In addition, the facility has a newsletter.

Learn more about Fried's Cat Shelter at [Friedscatshelter.org](http://Friedscatshelter.org). It's at 509 Indiana

Highway 212 in Michigan City, Ind. Business hours are Thurs.-Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m. The mailing address is P.O. Box 241, Michigan City, Ind., 46361-0241.

**Pets for Adoption:**

Jazz and Oreo are two very cute and sweet black and white kitties! Jazz and Oreo are 4 years old, and came to us when their owner was moving to a no-pet apartment and had to leave them behind. Both Oreo and Jazz are a bit on the shy side, but remain very sweet and lovable girls. We are sure that once they find their forever home, they will relax and their wonderful personalities will blossom! Jazz and Oreo would do best in a home where any children are age 10 and up. If you are looking to increase your family with one or two whiskered faces, please come and meet Jazz and Oreo just ask for Tab Band #669096 and #669097. For more information about animals available for adoption, please call 312-644-8338 after 11:30 a.m.; see [www.anticruelty.org](http://www.anticruelty.org).



Topo (pictured above with her other mom, Danica) only had to put on her simple sunbonnet to nap the title of Prettiest Dog in Andersonville at the Andersonville Midsommarfest two weekends ago. Topo is now a four-time winner!

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## VEHICLE REVIEW

# 2008 Saab Turbo X

Saab on Steroids

BY JOE LAMURAGLIA, GAYWHEELS.COM

I was in Boston, Mass., as a guest of Saab recently to drive the production version of the 2008 Saab Turbo X. We covered the North American introduction earlier this year and having spent a brief time behind the wheel of a prototype (with a hot Swedish engineer), I was looking forward to spending time with the final product.

The newest addition to the Saab 9-3 lineup, the 2008 Turbo X is a celebration of 30 years of turbo-charged Saabs and more specifically, a modern interpretation of the Saab "black turbos" of the past. With 280 HP, 295 lb-ft of torque, Saab's innovative Cross-Wheel Drive (XWD), a lowered sport suspension, unique titanium-colored wheels, carbon-fiber interior treatment and a smaller, thickly padded steering wheel, the



Turbo X takes a very competent 9-3 to the next level.

### Saab: They have great seats, right?

When you think of Saab, you don't necessarily think of high performance. Most wouldn't think that a sexy Saab 9-3 could take on the boys from Bavaria when it comes to performance and up to this point, they couldn't.

Saab's Achilles heel was one of the things that made it unique in the first place; front-wheel drive. It is very difficult to make a high-performance FWD vehicle perform. Placing the engine and drive wheels up front increases passenger room and provides amazing traction in inclem-

ent weather but in the handling and control department it can't compete with RWD or AWD.

Enter the Turbo X. The sport suspension, advanced all-wheel-drive system and the additional horsepower make this Saab speak Swedish with a German accent.

The difference compared to the standard 9-3 is evident both on the road and the track. Where as the 9-3 Aero is sporty the Turbo X is downright aggressive. On the roads around Andover, Mass., the sport suspension was on the verge of being harsh, but no more so than, say, a BMW M3 or Mercedes C63 AMG.

That is heady company when it comes to comparisons and while the steroid Saab isn't quite in the performance leagues of those beasts in a straight line, the Saab Turbo X's turbo-charged 280 HP are nothing to sneeze at. I was able to hit illegal speeds quite quickly and was impressed at how the beefed up 9-3 handled lane changes and on-ramps with ease. Mated with either a 6-speed manual or 6-speed automatic, the Turbo X turns up the excitement quotient.

### Fast or agile? What about both?

Once we hit the track the real nature of this Swede came to the surface. We had no competitors on hand to verify it but the engineers swore that the Turbo X can out slalom some of the best from Germany. After a few laps in both the Sedan and SportCombi (wagon for those of you that don't speak Saab) I had little reason to doubt them. The vehicle attacked the course

with a throaty growl from its tailpipes and handled the twists, turns and panic braking without complaint. The superb handling is a result of the advanced XWD system balancing the torque not only between both the two axles but also between the rear wheels via the first application of an electronically controlled, rear limited-slip differential (eLSD) in the segment.

### Is there such a thing as too stiff?

Some of the technology that makes the Turbo X so superb also limits its appeal. The suspension is clearly geared more for cornering than carpooling, and many consumers will find it too harsh for daily use. For the 600 lucky souls who get their hands on this limited-edition vehicle, there will be no complaints. Like all sportscar owners, they are willing to give up some comfort for performance.

Fortunately for everyone else, the XWD drive technology will be available in the 9-3 Sedan and Sport Combi later this year and the Turbo X's project leader hinted that other features (sport steering wheel, carbon fiber trim, and suspension) may be options on more mundane 9-3's in the future.

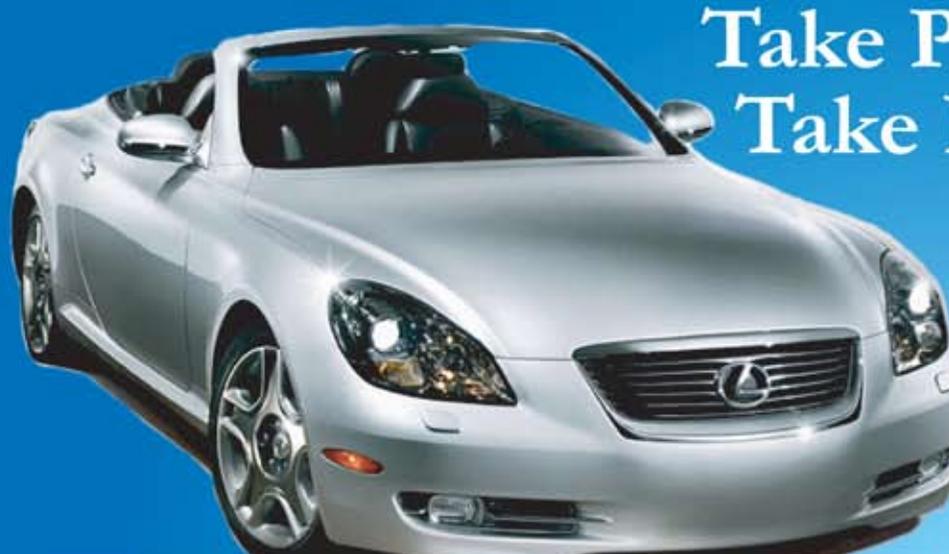
The 2008 Saab Turbo X sedan starts at \$42,510 and the Turbo X Sport Combi starts at \$43,310. They are on sale now and volume is limited to 600 vehicles in the United States so if you want what Saab calls a "future classic" you better hurry.

See [www.gaywheels.com](http://www.gaywheels.com).



The 2008 Saab Turbo X. Photo courtesy of Saab

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Pontiac G8 GT. Photo courtesy of Pontiac

## Tasmanian Devil on wheels: Life with a Pontiac G8 GT

BY JOE LAMURAGLIA, GAYWHEELS.COM

I spent a week with the latest sports sedan from Pontiac—the 2008 G8 GT. Before all you geography nerds get your panties in a bind, I know that the Pontiac G8 is built in Adelaide, South Australia, not in Tasmania. But if you had to come up with pithy titles to grab people's attention, you'd know that there is something called "creative license."

There is more than geographic relevance to the title of this article. The G8 and the cartoon character named the Tasmanian Devil not only share a birth country, but they have some distinct personality traits in common as well. For example:

—Warner Bros.' character has the face only a mother could love but on some level, you want to hug him.

The Pontiac G8 is far from gorgeous on the outside, but it is attractive and athletic enough to get your attention, especially in the CFM-Red (Come-F\*\*k-Me-Red) that we drove.

—WB's "Taz" is calm at rest but turns into a hot tranny mess when upset, wreaking havoc and destruction wherever he travels.

The Pontiac G8 GT is perfectly composed running errands or cruising on the highway, but when you stomp on the gas you awake the beast. The 6.0L small-block V-8, producing 361 horsepower and 385 lb.-ft. of torque, comes to life and rockets you to wherever your wheels are pointed. If you really want to tap into its devilish nature, turn the traction control off and channel Taz himself as the G8 GT will smoke out and make a scene prior to catapulting you down the road.

Are you getting the analogy? It isn't exactly fair to the G8, specifically from an aesthetic point of view, but it is the best way to describe the beautiful insanity of this car. On one hand, it is a large, solid, roomy four-door sedan that happily performs its daily duties of carpooling,

shopping and commuting. On the other, it is like that crazy cartoon beast from Australia that will kick some serious bum and take no prisoners.

I've had the pleasure of spending over a week in the aforementioned CFM-Red G8 GT, and I am still trying to figure out how the Aussies built a better American sedan than anyone on our home turf. The vehicle I've been piloting around Nashville will hit 0-to-60 in a claimed 5.3 seconds. After nailing the throttle just about every time I drive it, I have no reason to doubt it. You can feel the engine twist on its brackets and pour forth pure power. There have been more than a few embarrassed stoplight challengers driving the best from Germany.

There are a lot of really fast cars on the market and sub six-second 0-60 times are becoming commonplace for performance vehicles. What makes the my G8 GT's performance interesting is that it has a sticker price under \$32K! The only option it is missing is the sunroof, and adding that brings the grand total to \$32,745 before destination. There is very little on the market today that can deliver that performance for the price and seat up to 5 people.

You are probably thinking that with such a massive engine, the fuel economy is atrocious. Surprisingly it isn't. The base car with the V6 is rated at 17/25 city/hwy and the beastly GT is rated at 15/24 city/hwy. Not hybrid numbers for sure but rather respectable for a car that puts such a huge smile on your face. Considering that its key competitors, Nissan Maxima and Dodge Charger SRT-8 get similar mileage but have a higher cost of entry, the G8 GT starts making sense.

Not all is perfect with the G8 though. There has been much criticism from my fellow journalists about the interior of the G8. Their complaints range from the lack of a power seat back adjustment to what they perceive to be a less-than-perfect center console. My perception, somewhat clouded by years in product planning at an OEM, is that there is no perfect car. In addition, when you bring a vehicle in from a foreign subsidiary the home market gets precedence when it comes to features and design. In my opinion, the interior of the G8 GT is good, not class-leading but definitely above average.

With that said, I do wish that satellite radio was available and while GM's Turn-by-turn directions from OnStar is an excellent feature, some will miss the availability of a screen-based navigation. Then there is the issue of the two digital gauges at the top of the center instrument panel. The shine brightly and make sure you are aware of the battery voltage and oil pressure. Important things to the enthusiast but to the average American driver, they will be distracting. Put the radio station information in that space and let the "check engine light" handle the rest.

Visibility in the car is good fore and aft, but the side-view mirrors are a little on the small side. A backup camera would be a nice option as well. The only other complaint from my camp

is that the exhaust note could use a bit more testosterone.

I'll give a final report on highway manners after my trip from Nashville to Atlanta this coming Sunday. Until then, enjoy the photos below.

Sun., June 15, 2008—I just drove the G8 the 3.5 hours from Nashville to Atlanta and I can report an average of 23 MPG for the highway portion of the trip. The G8 is very much at home on the open road and it is easy to forget the massive engine under the hood—that is until you decide to pass and it all comes back in a glorious sensory experience. My average speed was 78 so I imagine achieving the stated 24 MPG is simply a matter of a lower velocity.

If you are in the market for a 5-passenger American performance sedan that happens to be from Australia, head on down to your local Pontiac dealer. After all, who doesn't like an Aussie accent?

### Likes:

- Power and more power
- Solid chassis
- Roomy interior with kudos going to rear seat room
- Great stereo
- Did I mention power?
- Sporty yet compli-

ant ride. Road trip car for sure.

—Great value—Starts at \$27,595 for V6 maxes out at \$32,745 for G8 GT

### Dislikes:

- No satellite radio available for the the first year
- Exhaust note could be more butch
- Side view mirrors aren't big enough
- Styling is a bit "boy racer" for my taste. May look better in darker colors.
- Radio reception is subpar.

See [www.gaywheels.com](http://www.gaywheels.com).



The author with a Pontiac G8 GT in, yes, Gay, Ga. Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com



John Voelcker. Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

### PROFILE

## John Voelcker, writer/consultant

BY JOE LAMURAGLIA, GAYWHEELS.COM

- Place of birth:** London, England
- Age:** Fortysomething
- Year, make and model of your first car/truck:** 1961 Morris Minor 1000 Traveller (woody wagon, which my family bought new in the U.K. and I still have)
- Occupation:** Auto-technology journalist and digital media consultant
- Employer:** Self-employed
- What did you think you wanted to be when you grew up?** An engineer and businessman
- How long have you worked in the auto industry?** That's sort of hard to answer. I sold my first freelance article to Old Cars Weekly at age 14, entirely by accident; I sent them a manuscript, and they sent me back a \$15 check. But I didn't write consistently until 2003, when IEEE Spectrum asked me to do the annual "Top 10 Tech Cars" feature—and I realized it was then or never. Five years later, I

love it. I just wish I could do it full-time.

—**What do you drive now?** 2000 Subaru Outback wagon (bought on eBay)

—**Are you out at work?** I'm out everywhere.

—**Was being gay ever an issue at any of your jobs?** No, although I came out later than many (in my late 20s). If anything, it's the opposite; I try to disarm people by having a sense of humor about it. Plus, in the New York media world, it's just not an issue! I mean, I had an editor who brought the whole magazine to watch me being arrested (at a nonviolent civil-disobedience protest 15 years ago) and cheer me on. I guess that's New York for you, huh?

—**If you had one piece of advice to give to a gay person wanting to work in the auto industry, what would it be?** Accept yourself for who you are; use gentle humor to get through awkward moments; and never back down. No job, no relationship, no situation is worth compromising your honesty, your self-respect, and the things we all know to be true. At the same time, be respectful and acknowledge openly that some people are not as comfortable with it as we would hope.

—**OK, here is the fun part: If you had \$25,000 and had to buy a new car, what would it be and why?** Joe, you gotta up these price ranges. \$25K barely gets me the new Outback I'd like!

—**Same question but bigger budget—\$50,000:** Hmmmm. Would that get me an Audi S4? Or most of one?

—**If money were no object and you had to drive it every day:** Easy. It's the Bentley Continental GT—one of the most beautiful new cars on the road and it's enormously practical (though I'd be wracked with guilt over the fuel economy).

—**What is your favorite car of all time and why?** Oh, God, that's almost unanswerable. It'd be easier for me to write 2,500 words on it than to give you a single one ... sorry.

—**If your car/truck could talk, what would it say about you?** "Wash me!"

—**Finally, why do you want to be featured on Gaywheels.com?** You asked, and I'm a sucker for flattery, heh heh.

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Please add tax, title, license and doc. fee to all above prices/payments. All finance programs with approved credit and no money down, unless otherwise stated. \* Per the Automotive News new & used car sales volume for CY2006. Does not imply each store is the largest.



2009 Jaguar XF. Photo courtesy of Jaguar

## VEHICLE REVIEW

## 2009 Jaguar XF

BY ZACH TAYLOR, GAYWHEELS.COM

In case you haven't heard, after a rocky 17-year marriage, the Ford Motor Company just dumped Jaguar. And like many fresh divorcees, the British automaker is reinventing itself with a sleeker look, a younger attitude and a sexy tat on the ass. The result is Jag's sizzling, all-new XF sports sedan.

The XF is a thing of edgy beauty, with a bulging hood, raked glass and the hunches of a steroid-loving powerlifter. With the low profile and muscular stance, when approaching traffic, the XF menacingly purrs in its Brit accent, "Please do make way before I stick my nose up your boot." And as the Jag whips past, the last thing that humbled drivers will see is that hot emblem of a springing cat on the XF's trunk lid.

Inside, the XF's cabin will please drivers both the old-school and iPhone-loving contingents.

As in any Jaguar, the leather is double-stitched, the hardwood is perfectly polished and the carpet is thickly plush. The XF's front seats simultaneously cosset in grand style and provide the requisite firmness for spirited driving. The rear seats are equally lavish, but are best reserved for the vertically modest thanks to the XF's sharply sloping roofline.

The stately interior appointments highlight the XF's bounty of 21st-century gadgets. The start/stop button of the XF's keyless ignition system pulses like a beating heart. And when that button is pushed, a gear-selector dial rises from the center console and then awaits a quick twist to set the XF moving. Connections—both Bluetooth and wired—abound for music players, cell phones and data-storage devices.

On the road, the XF is a cat after prey. The XF shares its powertrain, steering and braking components with Jag's super-sick XK models. A silky six-speed automatic transmission is mated with a choice of engines, either a naturally aspirated, 300-bhp V-8 or a supercharged, 420-bhp V-8. According to the folks at Jaguar, these engines

launch the XF from 0 to 60 mph in 6.2 and 5.1 seconds, respectively.

During a recent test drive, the XF tore up the twisty blacktop just north of the Mexican border. The supercharged V-8 shot the sedan off the line. (I also tested an XF equipped with the 300-bhp plant and suggest definitely snagging a super-8, as the performance bump is more than worth the minimal decrease in fuel economy.) The XF's crisp handling and 20-inch tires kept the sedan

planted during high-speed cornering. And when I was ready to throttle back, the XF glided down the freeway with a ride fit for royalty.

Jaguar already has fallen into bed with a new suitor, as Tata Motors of India nabbed the company from Ford. But if the XF is the new face of Jag, can this Bollywood romance last? The Big Cat is hot again, and plenty of perspective mates are sure to come around lifting their tails.

See [www.gaywheels.com](http://www.gaywheels.com).

## VEHICLE PREVIEW

## 2009 Dodge Durango Hybrid

BY JOE LAMURAGLIA, GAYWHEELS.COM

Thurs., June 19, 2008—I am in Boston, Mass., as a guest of Chrysler to drive the 2009 Chrysler Aspen and Dodge Durango HEMI® Hybrids.

The heart of the Hybrid drivetrain was co-developed with GM and BMW, so the performance and functionality of the Hybrid system shouldn't be much different than the one in the GMC Yukon Hybrid we drove recently. It will offer an average of 20 percent improvement in fuel economy, with the majority of improve-

ment coming in city driving.

The biggest difference so far is that Chrysler is offering this technology in their vehicles that are priced "nearly \$8,000 below the competition," to quote the Chrysler press release. The MSRP (manufacturer suggested retail price) for the 2009 Dodge Durango HEMI Hybrid is \$45,340 and the 2009 Chrysler Aspen HEMI Hybrid is \$45,570—and both prices include destination.

To be fair, the Durango and Aspen aren't nearly as large as the Tahoe and Yukon that they are comparing them to but they do offer similar passenger and towing capacity (6,000 lbs). With fuel prices the way they are, these Hybrids just might make sense.



2009 Dodge Durango Hybrid. Photo courtesy of Dodge

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## COMMERCIAL CLOSET

## Macy's shows 'marriage' to gays

BY MICHAEL WILKE



Just weeks after the California Supreme Court said "I do" to same-sex marriage, Macy's West division ran full-page newspaper ads in San Francisco and Los Angeles showing two wedding rings and the headline,

"First comes love. Then comes marriage. And now it's a milestone every couple in California can celebrate."

Same-sex marriages in California began in mid-June, so all the new couples are going to need lots of gifts. The newspaper ads support wedding registries at Macy's, one of the nation's largest department stores with 810 stores in 45 states, which replaced the "bride/groom" language on its registries in 2005.

"We already had registration for same-sex couples, but after the landmark decision by the Supreme Court, we wanted to let the same-sex community know we're in the registration business," says Molly Hernandez, special services market of Macy's West for 259 stores.

It's unclear if the Macy's marriage ad will appear more, but Hernandez says, "I'd love it to run again." (The ad ran with a different headline earlier this year in the Seattle Gay News, "You're making a commitment, and so are we.")

Macy's, which celebrates 150 years in 2008, has itself shown greater commitment to the gay and lesbian marketplace lately, and plans to continue to increase its efforts nationally.

"Last year we really stepped up our efforts," says LaTonya Lawson, VP-Broadcast, New Media and Campaign Planning for Macy's West. "We felt

we needed to have a marketing group to advance in a really targeted way to be more relevant" to a gay audience. "To do a better job with Pride, we got a float and brought 150 employees. It was great; everybody was all over it. It was a fun event!"

Pride parade program ads from Macy's West last year showed same-sex couples of varying ages, genders and ethnicities with headlines like, "Pride is more than the name of a parade." Another from Macy's East, showing two same-sex couples holding hands, carried the headline, "Pride is always in fashion."

At the downtown Union Square location in San Francisco, in June the store runs dedicated Pride tribute windows, a cocktail party in the visitors lounge, and special offers through partner hotels and airlines.

Gay Pride activities also happen at some of the Macy's East division's 253 stores. The flagship Herald Square store creates tribute windows and has had floats in the New York City Pride Parade for the past five years, and a number of other stores also create Pride windows, including Philadelphia Center City; Washington, D.C., Metro Center; Minneapolis; and Chicago State Street stores.

Yet in Boston in 2006, controversy erupted when a conservative group called MassResistance objected to the store's Pride window, which featured two male mannequins—one with a Pride flag around his waist. The mannequins were removed but the background featuring Pride event dates remained in the window.

"We believe in diversity, and our customers are very important to us," Macy's East spokeswoman Elina Kazan told the Associated Press. "But (the display) did offend a few of our customers, and we had to re-examine it."

But the Pride windows have been back each year, and this year Macy's also participated in the Newly Wed New York event in Rochester, a GLBT wedding expo organized to celebrate the state's decision to recognize same sex marriages performed elsewhere.

Taking the strong regional activities of its di-

visions to the next stage, "next year the plan is to make this more of a national strategy," says Lawson.

## Other retailers celebrated gay pride and marriage earlier

Although Macy's is the biggest retailer to create same-sex marriage ads and use store windows to celebrate Pride, it isn't the first.

In 1997, Diageo's liquor brand Bailey's created its first gay-specific ad by pairing two male-faced coffee cups together when Hawaii looked like it was going to be the first state with same-sex marriage.

In 2001, Northeast department store Fortunoff ran outdoor ads in New York City featuring openly gay Village Voice columnist Michael Musto wearing a wedding veil to promote its own wedding registry. Also that year, Grupo Campari's Skyy Vodka showed a woman on her knees proposing to another woman with a ring in a martini glass, and AIDS drug Sustiva depicted two men actually marrying.

As Massachusetts own courts decided on same-sex marriage back in 2004, Kenneth Cole's New York City store windows displayed male mannequins holding hands near a sign that said, "Obtain marriage licenses here" and a road sign on the wall indicating "San Francisco 1943 miles, New Paltz 90 miles"—cities that spontaneously issued marriage licenses in the wake of Massachusetts' marriages. The wall was stenciled with "We see a pattern here."

Despite the stereotype that gay men like shopping, only a few fashion retailers have put a major stake in gay ground.

In 1996, San Francisco-based The Gap, Abercrombie & Fitch in Columbus, Ohio, and upscale New York store Bergdorf Goodman were also early arrivals. Saks Fifth Avenue and Armani Exchange arrived a year later, and in 1999 Bloomingdale's (once independent, now under Macy's) and Gap's Banana Republic followed. Few tried gay-specialized images, though.

A comparative latecomer, Macy's first ad ran an ad in gay media for its Web site in Febru-

ary 2000 on Gay.com, and in OUT magazine in 2003.

Meanwhile, less fashionable Wal-Mart quit before it got started. While it never got to the stage of advertising, it explored the idea during late 2006 and 2007 after becoming a corporate sponsor of the National Lesbian & Gay Chambers of Commerce before backing out under fire from conservative organizations.

Still, other retailers continue to try out the market. Target Corp. took some steps with OUT magazine in 2007, and H&M did, too, in February.

As more states recognize same-sex unions of all kinds, retailers have much to gain by advertising that they're ready to serve all the happy new couples.

## Business news

—Prenuptial agreements are not just for heterosexual couples. According to GFN.com, same-sex couples need domestic-partnership contracts even more than their opposite-sex counterparts; the division of assets can be tricky, especially since almost every state lacks judicial protection regarding such matters (for gay couples). The contract should cover everything from asset division to health-care decisions.

—The OUT Traveler has come out with its list of the top gay-friendly hotel companies. Kimpton Hotels came in at number one—partially because of the face that it has scored a perfect 100 in the Human Rights Campaign's Equality Index for four consecutive years. Other companies making the list include W Hotels, Hyatt, Red Carnation and Joie de Vivre.

—The Chicagoland Affiliate of Out & Equal meets for breakfast 9-11 a.m. on the third Saturday of every month at the Lucky Platter, 514 Main, Evanston. See [www.outandequal.org/affiliates/chicago/default.asp](http://www.outandequal.org/affiliates/chicago/default.asp) for more.

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Betty Tsamis. Photo by Natalie Marionneaux

BUSINESS

# Betty Tsamis opens local law firm

BY ROSS FORMAN

Betty Tsamis began practicing law in 2001 while living in Colorado, and was the lead counsel for a much-publicized case where she represented a pharmacist undergoing gender transition.

She returned to Chicago in 2005 and was licensed legally in Illinois in 2006.

In 2008, she started the Tsamis Law Firm, P.C.

"I've worked for very small to mid-size law firms and, to be quite honest, I really wanted to go out and do my own thing. I wanted to see if I could be successful at my own my law firm, and so far it's been working out very well," Tsamis said. "I always felt like something was

missing when I was working for other attorneys and other law firms.

"I've seen some very strange things at various law firms that I've been at. It seems as though the people we represent sometimes get lost in the mix.

"I have been on both sides, meaning, I have represented both people and also entities/companies, so I have had the perspective from both sides."

Her firm will concentrate on business, employment/HR law and GLBT matters.

"The most fantastic work experience I've had was when I was working for a mid-sized firm in Colorado, and they really had the focus on doing the right thing," Tsamis said. "It was at that firm where I worked on two high-profile case, both of which received wide-ranging media exposure—and that's when I realized that being an attorney was the right thing [for me] to do. Unfortunately, my dad became very sick in Chicago and he passed away, and I then decided to come back home. Or I probably would still be with that law firm in Colorado."

Tsamis has worked with clients in various industries: food/restaurant; oil & gas; aviation; telemarketing; retail; wholesale; and professional service organizations. She also has worked with GLBT companies and GLBT individuals on various matters.

"I couldn't be happier now, being the master of my own universe, so to speak," Tsamis said. "More important, I get to apply my values in the practice of law and practice the way I feel good about practicing. Some of my core values are, providing affordable, competent legal services—and not turning someone away and helping someone out, be it an individual or business, however possible.

"One of the things I pride myself on is, out-of-the-box thinking on creating fee agreements that actually work, not just for the attorney, but also for the clients. I want to reach out to those who may not have the full resources up front, or they may have limited resources, or they may not have any resources. I really pride myself on

being very creative on how I can help people." Tsamis said she expects to add another attorney to the firm in the next year possibly, but never a huge mega-firm.

"Within the GLBT community, I want to continue representing GLBT individuals in the areas of employment- and business-law," she said. "I also want to work with individuals in other areas, such as contracts and litigations, plus domestic partnerships.

"I also want to work with GLBT business owners, particularly small, start-up companies, emerging companies, and entrepreneurs."

Tsamis said she "couldn't be happier" since

she's now working for herself. "I feel like I have found myself as an attorney and have really come into my own," she said. "I can't see myself going back to working in a law firm for someone else after having this experience [running my own firm]. I could see working with other attorneys, but I can not see myself as anything but self-employed at this point."

Tsamis is an active volunteer for the Chicago Lighthouse, which supports people who are blind.

**For more information on Tsamis Law Firm, P.C., contact Betty Tsamis at 312-827-7973 or TSAMISLAW@aol.com.**



## It's in the genes

Lesbian partners Heather Muenstermann (left) and Christina Isperduli have a standard morning routine. They walk together to Isperduli's job as a software engineer, where she starts every weekday at 9 a.m. Muenstermann then continues to Green Genes, 5111 N. Clark (www.green-genes.com), where she opens the new eco-friendly boutique they co-own that specializes in green goodies for kids and adults. The store officially opened in late March and had a grand-opening party complete with green music, organic baby food testing, green book reading and green adult snacks. Photo courtesy of Isperduli; read the entire article at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

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President,  
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# Combination Locke

BY ANDREW DAVIS

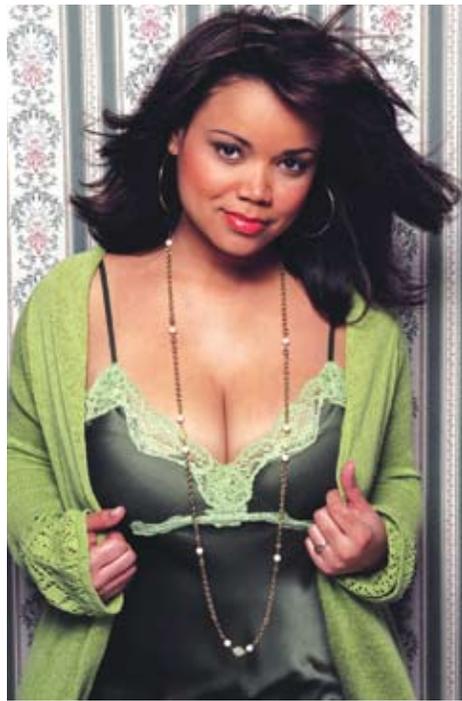
Kimberley Locke became a part of the national consciousness when she was a finalist on season two of TV's "American Idol," finishing third to Clay Aiken and eventual champion Ruben Studdard. She's since parlayed that result into being a successful entertainer, combining careers in music (including the smash single "8th World Wonder"); television ("Celebrity Fit Club," co-hosting "The View"); and modeling/endorsements (Jenny Craig). She also has become quite the gay icon, and will perform at Chicago PrideFest Sat., June 28.

**Windy City Times: When I prepped for this interview, the first thing I came across was a YouTube video of you performing in your underwear for hundreds of men. What was going on?**

Kimberley Locke: I was on a Princess cruise, which was an all-gay cruise, back in October. It was right when I was in the middle of doing "Celebrity Fit Club." Of course, every night there was a freakin' party; it was the epitome of "party ship," OK? That night, there was an underwear party. So I had bought this cute little dress, but then I thought, "Everybody else is in their underwear—their tighty-whiteys, spandex and all that stuff." I was probably one of 20 girls on the cruise.

Of course, when I'm around my gay boys, I know I feel safe; I know no one's going to hurt me. So, I said, "Fuck it," and I let these two guys who I had been hanging with come up and take off my dress. But, you know—everything ends up on YouTube.

**WCT: That's so true. I remember reading about Beyonce falling down the stairs during a concert and then asking fans to not put it on YouTube. Good luck with that.**



Kimberley Locke.

KL: Honey, I saw that on YouTube. Everybody saw that one, right?

**WCT: You're from Gallatin, Tenn. What is that city like?**

KL: Hmmm ... what is Gallatin like? Gallatin is like Mayberry [from TV's "The Andy Griffith Show" and "Mayberry, R.F.D."]. It's probably a little bigger than Mayberry, but when I was growing up, it was very small. Everybody knows everybody—it's one of those towns where everybody knows your business.

**WCT: I know what you're talking about. [Locke laughs.] I was born in a small southern town. However, that southern food is great.**

KL: Oh, yeah. Every Sunday after church at mama's house—it was the real deal. I'm supposed

to go home [soon,] and my mama thinks she doesn't have to cook anymore because everyone's out of the house. She thinks she's on vacation—but not when I'm home. [Both laugh.]

**WCT: Are you a good cook?**

KL: I am, actually. I don't get to do it very much, but I love to cook. I love to be in the kitchen—especially now that I've lost weight. I'm always looking for a healthy way to make my favorite meals. When I'm home, I love to go to the grocery store, and cook.

**WCT: You mentioned your weight loss. It's been 40 pounds, right?**

KL: Yes, and I just came back from a run; I'm training for an October marathon [the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C.]. It's over 100 degrees in New York today and I just ran three miles—and I thought I was going to die. It's nasty [out here]; it was even hot in the shade.

But I have lost 40 pounds, and running the marathon keeps me motivated and keeps the weight off. Now that I've lost [the weight], I don't think I'll gain it back, but you always have that five-pound play in your weight. I'd like to lose another 10 pounds but I've already lost 40, so I'm not going to stress over it. I was watching Tyra Banks the other day and she said, "I fluctuate between [dress sizes] 6 and a 10." I said, "Hallelujah. Me, too!"

**WCT: I read so many reports of people who become a bit too carried away [with losing weight].**

KL: It's easy to do that, though. It's easy to become obsessed with it. I've had to put myself in check a couple of times: You want to weigh yourself all day, every day—and that's not [healthful]. When I'm really trying to lose weight, I weigh myself when I wake up, because that's my true weight; then, I don't worry about it. [However,] most of the time, it's just once a week.

Another thing is that, when I was really dieting, I'd like to weigh myself because I'd like to

see what foods trigger my body. Everybody has a trigger, whether it's sweets, carbs or something else; my body has a weird reaction to salt and carbs like those found in bread. Alcohol is another [trigger]. A lot of people have the same triggers, but you have to figure out how to balance [them].

But it's easy for people to become obsessed—especially when they start losing a little weight. You're like, "Aw, shit..." [Interviewer laughs.] Then your body plateaus and then you become frustrated.

**WCT: There are a lot of [temptations] out there—like macaroni and cheese—but I do try to work out every day.**

KL: I love that, though. [Gay men] are so fit. You know what to do to get your bodies; when you say, "I'm going to do it," then you fucking do it. That's something to be admired—but the funny thing is that you all are drawn to big women.

**WCT: Well, we're drawn to fierce women.**

KL: OK—fierce women who happen to be big. [Laughs] I just did L.A. Pride and I was inspired seeing all those hard-bodied boys running around.

**WCT: When did you first realize you had a gay following?**

KL: Immediately after "American Idol." It was bizarre. I don't know why or how—it is what it is. At first I was curious about it; then I let it go—now I have three or four fan bases. The performances for my gay fans are the jobs that are the most fun 99 percent of the time. The gay community just wants to have a good time, and I feel so comfortable in my own skin I give them a good time. They let me perform, and they don't judge me. I don't get a lot of the bitchiness; a lot of the fans are genuine. How often do you get to stand in front of a group who accepts you for who you are?

See next page

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## LOCKE from page 52

Most fans are [cool]; that YouTube clip you mentioned popped up on Perez Hilton's Web site and some people were being mean. Then I realized, "This is not your fan base." These are just bitchy queens who don't have a life, and they probably don't like themselves.

**WCT: Speaking of someone [people might view as] a "bitchy queen," can we discuss Dustin Diamond for a second? [Note: On "Celebrity Fit Club," Diamond bad-mouthed Locke most of the season. The situation culminated in an extremely heated exchange where he called her a "loser" and a "nobody," and she labeled him "two-faced" and "backstabbing."]**

KL: He's not a queen—he's just bitchy. [Both laugh.]

**WCT: So I take it you two haven't kissed and made up?**

KL: Oooh—honey, please; he wishes he could kiss me. [His attacks] were unnecessary. I never figured out what the deal was, and I didn't try to. I'm the kind of person who, if you cross me once, I'm just done with you. One of the things on the show that got me so upset was that I was trying to stay poised and be a good representative for not only women, but Black women as well—but it was hard because I wanted to rip his head off a couple times.

**WCT: Of course, I have to ask about "American Idol." What I want to know, though, is if you caught this past season [which David Cook won]?**

KL: I thought this past season was very boring. I was very unimpressed with most of the contestants.

**WCT: I'm still wondering how Jason Castro made it to the final four.**

KL: He's cute; that's all. He looks good in a pair of jeans—you gotta give it to him. But he was as dumb as a box of rocks.

**WCT: Yeah, and that's usually how I like 'em [Locke laughs loudly: "I love that!"], but not on "AI."**

KL: It'll be interesting to see what they do next year. I'd like to see them go back to the basics and stop giving them so much in the beginning. It's like they have nowhere to grow to. Make [the contestants] sing the track; when you have a 20-piece band behind you, anyone can sound good.

**WCT: It might be interesting if they incorporated a little choreography.**

KL: Hmm. But those people—did you see them in the finale?

**WCT: Yes. Poor Brooke White...**

KL: They looked a mess.

**WCT: You've covered a lot of songs. Who would you want to cover your songs?**

KL: Oh, God. Who? I don't know; I hadn't thought of it that way. I think that, since a lot of my songs skew country, I'd like to have a country artist sing some of my songs. When my first single came out, they thought it was Shania Twain.

**WCT: You're coming to Chicago...**

KL: It'll be my first Pride in Chicago. Are there some motorcycles involved in the parade?

**WCT: There's a group called Dykes on Bikes.**

KL: Oooh—I think I'm riding with them. I actually love Chicago as a city. I haven't been able to spend a lot of time there. I was there when I toured with Dave Koz; it stopped in Chicago but we were only there for a day. My mom and a couple of friends came in and we went shopping. But I have a pizza date coming up—and I love me some pizza.

Chicago PrideFest will take place Sat., June 28, 11 a.m.-9 p.m., at Halsted and Waveland; see [www.ChicagoEvents.com](http://www.ChicagoEvents.com). To find out more about Kimberley Locke, see the fan site [www.kimberleylocke.org](http://www.kimberleylocke.org).



Frenchie Davis. Photos courtesy of Stephen G. Ford

## PrideFest set for June 28

This year's Chicago PrideFest will probably be among the most soulful ever. Dance music legend Martha Wash of the The Weather Girls and C+C Music Factory; house-music chanteuse Inaya Day; and American Idol contestants Kimberley Locke and Frenchie Davis are among the artists set to perform.

The GLBT community-wide celebration will be held Sat., June 28, on Halsted and Waveland, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Held one day before the city's annual gay/lesbian Pride Parade, PrideFest is sponsored by the Northalsted Area Merchants Association.

Suggested gate donation is \$5.

In addition, a fun-filled pet parade, sponsored by PETCO and open to all, will be held at 1:00 p.m. Others scheduled to perform on Pride Fest's two entertainment stages include '80s pop sensation Tiffany, Chicago's '70s disco-funk band 7DEEZ, the Chicago Spirit Brigade and pop-music cover band 16 Candles.

See [www.ChicagoEvents.com](http://www.ChicagoEvents.com).



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# Girl Blast: Partying for 10 years

BY AMY WOOTEN

The annual post-Pride Parade bash for women, Girl Blast, is getting ready to celebrate a decade of dancing, partying and wild fun.

La Tache owner Lynn Malec almost can't believe her annual Girl Blast party will mark its 10-year anniversary on June 29, complete with music by DJ Beth, dancing, beer, burgers and lots and lots of ladies.

When Malec, former owner of Girlbar, first heard the news that Paris Dance, which threw an annual post-Pride party for women, was closing, she gave them a call and asked if she could carry the torch. She rented out lot space near Girlbar and the rest is history.

"It just kept growing and growing and growing," Malec said.

After a few years, Malec had to move the party over to the Ann Sather's parking lot to accommodate for the large number of local ladies who were coming to party down and let loose.

Besides attracting more and more women each



Girl Blast 2007. Images courtesy of Lynn Malec

year, Malec said that the party hasn't really had to evolve or change. "It works, you know?" Malec said, laughing.

"It's really expanded, but pretty much has changed its course," she added.

Girl Blast attracts women from all over—the Chicago suburbs, Michigan, Indiana and beyond. Each year, over 2,000 women participate in the parking-lot party.

"It's stressful to put it on, but it's definitely worth it," Malec said.

In the 10 years of Girl Blast's existence, Malec said the one disappointment is that there still aren't many nightlife options for lesbians and bisexual women.

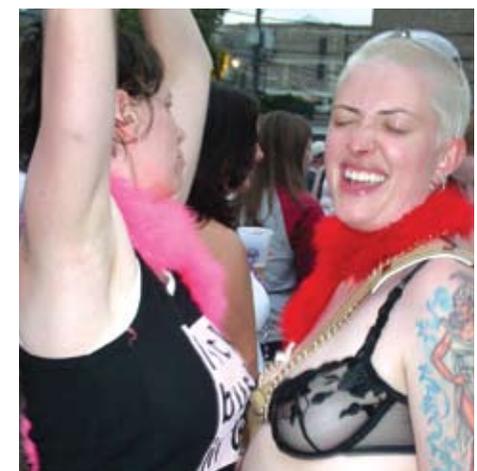
"I think that after I shut down Girlbar, the girl's options have completely diminished," she said. "It's unfortunate, but I think the big old party days and dance circuit days aren't as big as they used to be. We have so many other kinds of outlets now, and are more accepted, so we don't really need that as much. It's both good and bad

at the same time."

Malec encourages women who haven't tried out Girl Blast to stop by after the parade.

"It's a very safe and comfortable environment for them [women] to be themselves and celebrate who they are and the day," Malec said. "It's high-energy and lots of women. They pretty much come in and let their hair down and get crazy."

**Girl Blast kicks off in the Ann Sather parking lot, 929 W. Belmont, directly following the Pride Parade. The cost is \$12, and the fun lasts until 10 p.m.**



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## Michigan Womyn's Music Festival Aug. 5-10

This year, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival will take place Aug. 5-10 in Waltham, Mich.—and will include 40 performances; a film festival; an artisan/craft show; and a full roster of workshops, parties and dances.

Among the slated performances are The Vagina Monologues, directed by Alix Olson and featuring Elvira Kurt, Marga Gomez, Staceyann Chin, Olson and special guests; the alternative band BETTY; Toshi Reagon and BIGlovely; Holly Near; comedian Poppy Champlin; Ferron and Bitch; and rock quintet Antigone Rising.

Other scheduled activities include child-care camps; dance parties; and workshops about archery, sex, breast-casting, yoga and many other topics.

Tickets start at \$60. See [www.michfest.com](http://www.michfest.com) or call 231-757-4766.

## PERSPECTIVES

## Enduring love

BY KATE KENDELL, ESQ.



On the morning of June 16, I woke up with such a full heart and an amazing sense of *déjà vu*. I went to San Francisco City Hall, to the mayor's office, and witnessed history. I was surrounded by familiar faces, the faces of heroes. I stood before

two of the most extraordinary women in my life and watched them affirm their love and relationship. I watched Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin exchange vows, and as I watched, I had the full confidence that their marriage is as enduring as their love.

Four years ago, Phyllis and Del married in secret, with fewer than a dozen people in the room. When we all woke up the next morning, it was a different world. It felt unreal and magical, a dream I had to close my eyes to remember. Monday, June 16, 2008 was different. Phyllis and Del had time—although not much—to print invitations and plan a reception. Family and friends were able to make travel arrangements and fly in for the ceremony. Monday was a day full of joy and celebration, and I was so proud to pay witness to this moment in history and pay tribute to two of the founding mothers of our movement.

I asked Phyllis and Del what they planned to do after their wedding, and they said they wanted to have their party and then rest. They planned to play cards, read, watch the news, and attend a wedding of close friends. In other words, they planned to live just as they did yesterday, last week, last month, and last year. They planned to enjoy the extraordinariness of ordinary love, the comfort of sitting next to the person you love most in the world. Phyllis and Del have been sitting side by side for 55 years. Now, they will wake up and their love will be the same—extraordinary and ordinary all at the same time—but they will be married, a gift and a fundamental right they never thought they would live to see.

As I witnessed this extraordinary moment, I cried, welling up with tears of joy. I felt so lucky to be alive for this historic moment that I really cannot describe it. I know my heart will grow fuller and fuller as the days go on and more and more couples affirm their commitment and love. The celebration and joy will continue but, over

time, the weddings will become commonplace. The love will remain extraordinary, but our marriages will be beautiful and ordinary—as they should be. I very much hope that 10 or even five years from now, the right of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender couples to marry is no more remarkable than our right to a workplace free from discrimination, or our right to safe school hallways, our right to live free from violence, or our ability to live fully and openly. I know that in most places in this country none of this has been achieved. I know that in every state, regardless of what the laws say, there are LGBT folks who live lives tinged with fear and marked by bigotry. But I also know that today marks an unprecedented new beginning, and a turn away from the worst we have suffered.

It does not matter if you are gay or straight—today is about shared humanity and being in love—that's a *déjà vu* we all get to share.

**Kate Kendall, Esq., is executive director of The National Center for Lesbian Rights, a national legal organization committed to advancing the civil and human rights of LGBT people and their families through litigation, public-policy advocacy and public education.**

Photo by Trish Tunney

## WIU celebrates Gay Pride Month

BY DARCIÉ SHINBERGER

Thirty-nine years ago, on June 27, 1969, a group of men rioted following a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City. Dubbed the Stonewall Riots, this event is considered to be the beginning of the modern gay rights movement, and the month of June is traditionally noted as Gay Pride Month across the U.S.

Each year, to raise awareness of, and support for, the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) community and its allies, Western Illinois University's Committee on Sexual Orientation (UCOSO) gathers for The Big Picture event on the WIU-Macomb and WIU-Quad Cities campuses. This year's photo in Macomb was taken in April on the front steps of Sherman Hall.

In addition to the Big Picture, Western's student group, Unity, hosts GLBT Awareness Week every April, and the University also participates in National Coming Out Day in October; hosts GLBT-related discussions during the annual Campus Dialogues on Multicultural Issues Week; takes part in World AIDS Day in December; and recognizes the National Day of Silence held every April.

Western's first student organization dedicated to the support of the GLBT community was



Western Illinois University's Big Picture for 2008. Photo courtesy of Darcie Shinberger

formed in the early 1970s. The first GLBT Awareness Week was in 1987 and was known as "Gay and Lesbian Awareness Week." During the 1970s through 1981, the organization was known as "WIU Gay Activists Alliance;" in 1981, the organization changed its name to "Open Door;" and, in 1994, the organization changed its name to Bisexuals, Gays, Lesbians and Friends Association (BGLFA). In fall 2004, the group officially changed its name to Unity.

In 1987, Open Door literally followed their name by seeking administrative support of then President Ralph Wagoner. Student and faculty members asked Wagoner if he would add sexual orientation to the University policies that prohibit discrimination; this request was taken to Western's then-governance group, the Board of Governors Universities (BGU), and in July 1989, the BGU policies on discrimination were revised to prohibit discrimination of students and employees on the basis of sexual orientation.

For the first time, in the fall of 1990, faculty members covered material and showed diversity-related films during freshmen orientation sessions. According to UCOSO history archives, the hostile reaction of the Western students to the portions of class content that addressed the difficulties faced by gay and lesbian students shocked the teachers. Many members of the faculty reported this level of overt homophobia to President Wagoner, who reacted by appointing the first members to the President's Task Force to End Homophobia. The Task Force met for the first time Dec. 11, 1990 and continues today as UCOSO.

While student and faculty and staff organizations host numerous activities to support Western's GLBT community, the University Libraries has established the largest named GLBT film collection in the state. The collection, which was

established in fall 2006 as a result of a statewide grant and Unity donation, is available to college students and faculty from across the state. The collection consists of more than 250 films. A complete listing is available at [www.wiu.edu/library](http://www.wiu.edu/library), under "Gay and Lesbian and Film."

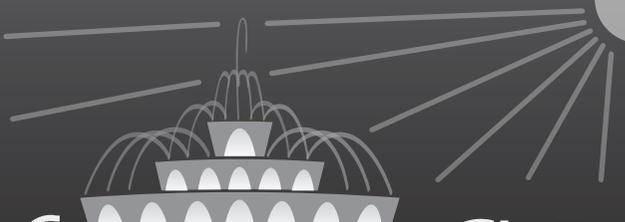
Each year at Western, Unity and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access sponsor "Safe Space Training" to give faculty, staff and administrators the opportunity to identify themselves as allies to GLBT students and colleagues. Students who see the Safe Space decal will know they are entering an environment where they can be free to share the issues they may be facing.

In addition, in July 2004 the University established itself as a leader in a program to reimburse benefits-eligible employees for a portion of the cost of purchasing health and dental coverage for same sex and opposite sex domestic partners and eligible dependent children of domestic partners. Since that time, the University has added group insurance benefits to same-sex domestic partners through the State of Illinois Group Insurance Program.

In keeping with Western's progressive leadership role with diversity and GLBT concerns among Illinois and universities nationwide, new inclusive language was added to Western's non-discrimination policy effective May 2. Gender identity and gender expression are now included in all of Western Illinois University documents containing the university nondiscrimination policy.

For more information on Unity or UCOSO, visit [www.wiu.edu/unity](http://www.wiu.edu/unity) or [www.wiu.edu/ucoso](http://www.wiu.edu/ucoso).

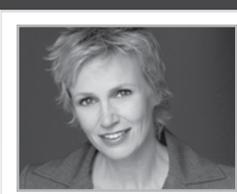
Read the full article at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).



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## PERSPECTIVES: YOUTH

## Not all girls prefer pink

*I've been harassed on the subway in New York simply because of my appearance. That's wrong.*

BY SHARLEEN SANTANA



As far back as I can remember, I was told that boys like blue and girls like pink. All the other colors, such as green and yellow, were viewed as "gender neutral." This may not seem like a big deal in the larger scheme of

things, but in reality it is. Boys are supposed to be masculine and girls feminine. Why should boys who wear pink be seen as less and girls who climb trees as anything different?

While growing up, I never liked pink or blue—but I did like to climb trees. I'm a girl who dresses like a boy and doesn't care about the world's opinion of me. You may think that I'm the worst influence your child will ever meet or the sweetest girl your kid will encounter—either viewpoint's fine with me.

The way someone dresses shouldn't determine whether that person gets a job or whether the person is able to ride the subway without getting harassed or searched. I have been subject to many "random" searches in train stations, and although it wasn't said I am sure the reason was because of my appearance.

As a proud member of the LGBT community, I believe that we should have equal rights. I think we should be able to show that we are gay or lesbian without being looked down upon or attacked by society.

New York City has passed laws to end the dis-

crimination against LGBT people. But they don't necessarily protect everybody. Can they protect me while I'm riding on the train with my partner? No. Many times on the train coming home from school I've been harassed or looked at wrongly by others. While anti-discrimination laws are in effect in New York to help the LGBT community, a lot of discrimination still goes on—whether it is said out loud or not.

Harassment against the LGBT community is a big problem across the globe. I read about police brutality in Russia, Poland and Iraq solely based on whom a person loves or how a person dresses. It's not right, and despite the many people and laws opposed to this behavior it continues to happen all around the world.

Wherever you go, whomever you love, however you dress, you should be proud. And you should be able to walk hand-in-hand without the threat of anyone interfering—especially on the subway in New York.

**Sharleen Santana is a student at the Harvey Milk High School, in partnership with Hetrick-Martin Institute in New York. She is studying journalism and communications through courses offered by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation and The New York Blade.**

## How do gay couples fall in love?

*Answer: The same ways straight couples do! (Though you won't learn that from mainstream media.)*

BY JASMINE WILSON

As a lesbian, I find it difficult to find an article about a lesbian or gay couple in the media. Often lesbian or gay couples are portrayed as not being really in love or as going through a phase. I don't believe that this is an accurate representation. Lesbian and gay couples do have genuine

feelings for their partners, but the absence of their stories in mainstream media gives the impression that the love between lesbian couples does not exist.

It does, in fact, exist. I know.

I am currently in a relationship. My girlfriend and I are in love with each other, and it is authentic. I've also met another lesbian couple who are engaged—you can feel that their love for each other is true. It is the same as a love between a man and a woman. Nothing is different except for the fact that they are both women. I want to show everyone that the love between gay couples is as real and passionate as the love between a man and a woman.

My girlfriend and I have been dating for a year and a month. We met through friends in February 2007. We flirted around with each other for a while before we made it official. The day it happened was when we were in class passing notes to each other and she wrote, "Would I date a friend?" I was hoping she meant her, so I responded, "Yes!" The next day we began dating. As we walked through the halls she held my hand and kissed me on the cheek. I was so excited because I really liked her and wanted to be with her. It was awesome to know that she felt the same way.

My girlfriend and I had no idea that we would become so attached to each other. I had no idea anyone else could understand me as well as she does. I had no idea I would feel so connected with her. We have that closeness that so many people want but can't achieve. She is like my other half, she means everything to me and I would actually do anything for her. I put her before me—and I've never done that for anyone before. The bizarre thing is, she feels the exact same way.

In my experience, there is no difference in the process of falling in love between two young women and a straight couple. I'm sure many people who consider themselves straight have shared experiences similar to what I just recounted. If more stories like mine were present in mainstream media then people wouldn't get

the false perception that gay people don't have true love for their partners.

The mainstream media often show persistent images that promote inaccurate and homophobic images of gay people and their relationships. This year saw the release of a "Meet the Spartans," a parody of 2007's hit film "300." In the spoof, the Spartans are represented not only as gay but also as inherently promiscuous, kissing and hooking up with random people. They aren't portrayed in relationships or even caring about them.

If viewers were never exposed to truthful information about gay people and relationships, they would only have this representation of us to base their opinions on.

This angers me. I don't understand why an accurate representation of lesbian and gay couples is often off the table for most mainstream media outlets. Why can't a gay couple ever be portrayed as really being in love or having serious relationships? There are so many real life stories that accurately portray us, but no one wants to use them as the basis for a movie, a television show or even a magazine story.

I want to read about us, see us and hear us as really loving our partners. I don't want to see our relationships reduced to mere sexual gratification, and I don't want to see us portrayed as "going through a phase"—that is very annoying and offensive. We know what we want and what we like. If media represent us fairly in the media then maybe so many people wouldn't have the negative perceptions of us. They'd understand that what we want and what we like in relationships is exactly like them.

**Jasmine Wilson is a student at the Harvey Milk High School, in partnership with Hetrick-Martin Institute in New York. She is studying journalism and communications through courses offered by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation and The New York Blade.**

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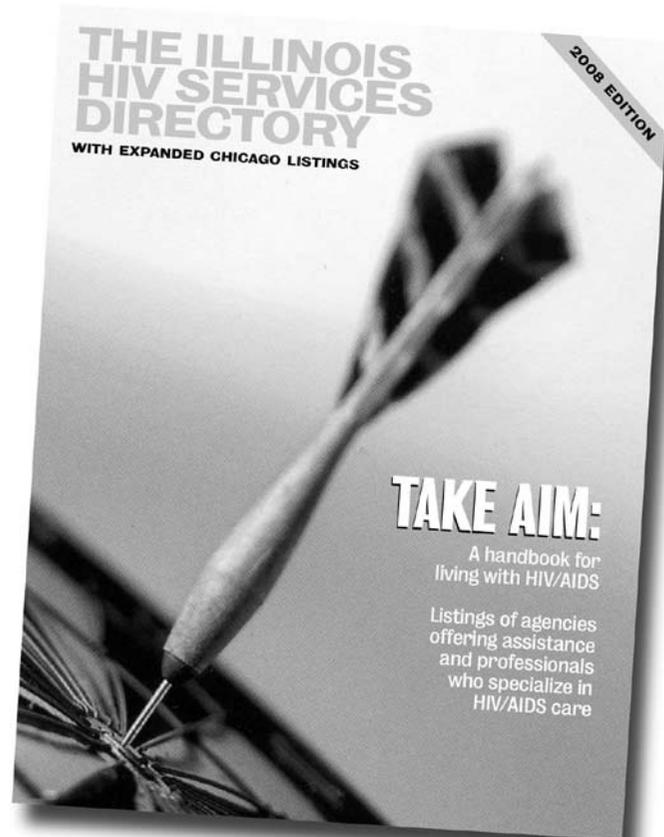
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## Andrew Christian: From rags to britches

BY MICHAEL A. KNIPP

If you spotted clothing designer Andrew Christian pounding the star-studded pavement of Hollywood Blvd., you might mistake him for a cleaner-cut Colin Farrell or, perhaps, a more rugged Robin Thicke.

But Christian is neither a reformed drunk from Dublin or a pretty-boy R&B balladeer.

Still, the 29-year-old Christian seeps sex appeal with the best of 'em.

Especially in his underwear.

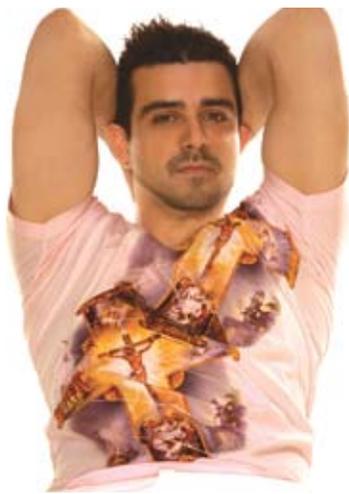
Born and raised in Fresno, Calif., and moving to Los Angeles at age 19, Christian is the proprietor of Andrew Christian Inc., the up-and-coming clothier that's giving Ginch Gonch and other alternative fashion houses a run for its money. Once a fledgling brand back in the late 1990s, Andrew Christian is now a popular and, more importantly, profitable endeavor that's outfitting gay America from its skin-tight shirt obsession to its super-low-cut skivvies.

Perhaps you've heard of Andrew Christian. If you haven't, then surely you've seen its ads. They feature taut models in various positions of bare-chested brotherly love, clad in nothing more than a pair of briefs.

By now, every in-the-know homo should have stumbled upon the single-shot spots. That's because they've appeared in myriad fag rags from D.C. to Dallas, New York to Newport. Beach, that is.

But while these scenes of PG-13 playtime emit an aura of sex and excitement, Christian's company wasn't always a label to which consumers flocked. In fact, it wasn't until recently that anyone knew it existed at all.

Christian's story starts out like most of those



Andrew Christian.

who head out west with twinkles in their eyes and a few dollars in their pockets. But unlike other hopefuls that land in L.A. seeking fame and fortune, Christian was content attending college to become proficient in his passion. Of the schools he applied to, L.A. Trade Tech—which the designer describes as “the more ghetto of the designs school in L.A.”—accepted him, giving him the experience he needed to eventually fly solo.

“I moved here to go to school for fashion design,” said Christian, from the floor of a Las Vegas fashion convention. “I worked for clothing manufacturers like KikWear and did freelance for Freshjive while working on my own line on the side. Even while working for these companies I knew I wanted to do my own thing. I used them as more of a learning experience, a stepping-stone.”

While that springboard proved worthwhile, Christian encountered problems along the way, namely, moving his products. Although he describes the southern California fashion scene as easier to break into than other areas, it still

wasn't a weekend in WeHo.

Like most companies, his startup was barebones and barely on its feet. Christian knew he had marketable merchandise, but he wasn't sure he had the funds to follow through. Ever determined to claim his piece of the American pie, however, he buckled down and made the best of his most abundant resource—himself.

“I was basically doing as much stuff on my own as possible,” Christian recalled of the first few years on his own. “I kept my payroll as low as possible. I ran my own errands, cut patterns myself, invoices, packed boxes myself. I was working very long days and weekends.”

“The toughest thing was getting people to know who you are,” he continued. “There are a million different companies out there; that was the biggest obstacle to overcome. There were lean times when I thought I wasn't going to make it, but I always believed I could do it. I just said, let me stick with this until I absolutely can't do it anymore. Finally, it paid off.”

It's paying off big time, too. Not only is Christian shipping his goods across the nation, he's also exporting it to customers in other countries. In addition, he has a list of celebrity clients that includes comedian Alec Mapa and former “Queer Eye” guy Jai Rodriguez.

But why all this sudden attention? Why, after 10 years of snipping and clipping, has the Andrew Christian clothing line only recently taken off?

It's simple, really: Christian became a contender in the Battle of the Bulge.

When Andrew Christian underwear debuted earlier this year—it was strictly sportswear beforehand—the vast array of colors and styles wasn't the only thing that demanded the attention of potential customers. Also peaking interest was an adjustable elastic strap sewn into the inside of each pair that worked as a sort of Wonder-Bra for the nether region. That's right, dubbed Show-It Technology, Christian's groundbreaking briefs, boxer briefs and jockstraps featured a de-

vice that offered PR for the penis while holding the male anatomy proudly in place.

“Whether you're male, female, straight or gay, it seems that most agree that size matters,” Christian said sheepishly. “Show-It Technology just facilitates the ‘bigger is better’ theory. It assists guys in showing off what they have.”

Or don't have, as is sometimes the case. But that's neither here nor there.

Though the line initially helped secure Andrew Christian a place on the fashion map, Show-It Technology was discontinued just a few short months after its launch. Christian says that despite the “technology” helping to broaden Andrew Christian's fan base, it ultimately scared a certain sect of its constituency.

“Seems like [Show-It] freaked out some people who are a little more conservative,” he admitted.

While Christian hopes that eliminating Show-It from his underwear will help generate a greater acceptance of the line, it doesn't mean that he has abandoned all attempts to innovate. Just the opposite is the case. Taking what he learned from his initial outing, the buff designer has launched a new feature in the near future.

“[We've introduced] one style that has a sort of butt lifter in it, called the Flashback,” he said.

Another recent announcement from Christian was his company's association with runway-walker-turned-reality-show-renegade Janice Dickinson. The pair have teamed up to place Dickinson's models, from her eponymous modeling agency, in Christian's clothing.

As a result of this win-win spin on piggyback advertising, new models are now appearing on the Andrew Christian Web site, and “The Janice Dickinson Modeling Agency” aired episodes featuring Christian.

Michael A. Knipp can be reached at michael.knipp@gmail.com.

Read the entire article at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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Sean Dorsey (above) and Shawna Virago, two performers from the Fresh Meat Festival. Photos by Lydia Daniller

## TRANSNATION

# Top trans events this Pride season

BY JACOB ANDERSON-MINSHALL

June has become the month for Pride celebrations and, for trans folks, this year offers more venues than ever to show your pride or protest the current political environment. A few events (past and future):

—**New England Trans Pride March:** With the organizers' slogan ("Remember Stonewall? That was us!") recalling the 1969 New York City riots, the First Annual New England Trans Pride

March ushered in the Pride season June 7 when Northampton, Mass.—the town best known as "Lesbianville, USA"—played host to 1,000 trans and ally marchers.

The following rally featured trans entertainers and speakers like folk singers Joe Stevens (of Coyote Grace) and Cathy Worthley, and activists Gunner Scott, Monica Roberts and Donna Rose. One of the event's organizers, Bet Power—director and curator of the Sexual Minorities Archives—urged lesbians and gays to "intensify their support of the transgender community."

—**Fresh Meat Festival:** Years before the debut of dedicated trans marches, San Francisco's Fresh Meat Festival provided an annual outlet for transgender artists and their supporters. Launched in 2001 by choreographer Sean Dorsey, Fresh Meat Productions supports established and emerging trans and queer artists. Seven years later, they're still the only festival of their kind in the United States, but they've gained such a following they've had to move to a larger theater.

Fortunately, the relocation to Project Artaud Theater now accommodates ensemble performances like the Transcendence Gospel Choir, the country's only all transgender choral group (featured in the documentary *The Believers*).

"The Transcendence Gospel Choir does exactly what Fresh Meat is all about," Dorsey contends. "[They] inspire, affirm, open hearts and minds—all while making really good art. [It's a] joyful, powerful, deeply moving articulation of the... strength of our community."

This year, Fresh Meat was able to commission five ensembles creating "cutting-edge work in traditional art forms." Dorsey admitted, "I want to have trans and queer communities... see ourselves reflected onstage in traditional culture, to reclaim our place in history as important culture bearers and leaders."

The 7th Annual Fresh Meat Festival ran June 19-22. This year's performance include the festival's first opera; trans performers Scott Turner Schofield and Ryka Aoki De La Cruz; and trans musicians Lipstick Conspiracy, Katastrophe and

Shawna Virago. The festival's Fresh Meat Gallery will exhibit work by transgender and gender variant visual artists.

—**San Francisco Trans March:** The Fifth Annual San Francisco Trans March, "Marching for a Gender Inclusive ENDA," will be held Frid., June 27. Festivities feature 30 trans and gender-variant bands, artists and performers. Former HRC board member Donna Rose will give the keynote speech. Nearly 7,500 people came out last year, and organizers are expecting over 10,000 participants in the march.

—**Trans Day of Action for Social & Economic Justice:** On the opposite coast, New York City will be celebrating the fourth annual Trans Day of Action for Social & Economic Justice June 27 at City Hall Park. Organized by the Audre Lorde Project's TransJustice project, the Day of Action hopes to develop solidarity with other civil rights movements and social justice organizations. Trans Day of Action (myspace.com/transjustice) organizers say they want to let the world know that "[t]he Stonewall rebellion is not over and we will continue fighting for social and economic justice, raising our voices until we are heard."

## —Twin Cities

**Trans March:** On Sat., June 28, Twin Cities Trans March organizers hope to avoid last year's snafu, when 200-250 marchers were stopped by Minneapolis police, who insisted

the marchers disperse or face arrest—despite a valid permit. The stand-off reportedly lasted 45 minutes before organizers agreed to suspended the rally.

Supporters view the second annual event as an alternative to Pride festivities they criticize for "commercialization [that] draws attention away from vitally needed activism and political education."

An all-ages after-party at Pi Bar will feature entertainers like "queercore" band Tough Tough Skin, drag performers Esme Rodrigues and Kysa Bong and the Androgyny Kings.

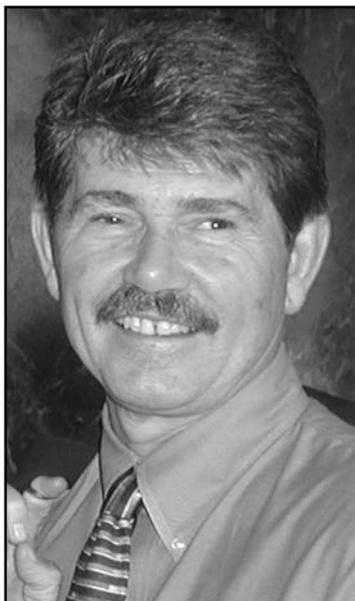
Expect even more options for supporting transgender pride next June.

**Jacob Anderson-Minshall co-hosts the monthly LGBT literary event, QLiterati! at Portland, Ore.'s Q Center. Contact him at [jake@trans-nation.org](mailto:jake@trans-nation.org).**

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Baby Dee. Photos by Jim Newberry

## TRANSNATION

### Baby Dee: Cleveland's harp-playing, tricycle-riding transgender legend

BY JACOB ANDERSON-MINSHALL

Fifty-something classically-trained musician, Baby Dee—who just began releasing albums this decade—has an eclectic resume (including stints as go-go girl and circus freak), and an equally colorful collection of friends including the “legendary strip club genius” from the East Village’s notorious Pyramid Club, who once set the stage on fire by shooting flames from her, uh lady-parts.

“All that stuff about my life—the oddities and stupidities of it, I find incredibly boring,” insists Dee now. “Which is not too say that I don’t love all the wonderful people I’ve known and loved—like Otter, the fire lady; or Jen, the bearded lady; or Eak, the strong man; or John Kamikaz, the prince.”

During those heady days of the 1990s, Dee gained her own celebrated status as a transgender street legend.

“I certainly don’t go around calling myself a legend. I guess it refers to my street act in Manhattan. Actually that act was kind of legendary. A concert harp on a high-rise tricycle, ridden by an oversexed, gender dysphoric cat is not something most people ... see on a regular basis. For me, it was just a great job.”

The one-time elevator operator and professional roofer also toured Europe with her tricycle, playing harp, while dressed as cat or bumblebee.

Before that, she performed as a “bilateral hermaphrodite” at Coney Island’s Midway.

“It was lovely there,” she recalls of the latter. “I [recently] played a show...with Jennifer Miller of Circus Amok. Jen was the bearded lady at Coney Island. That whole venture was about turning the tables on people. I’d been living in that transitional hell of being gawked at in public. The sideshow taught me that when you’re on stage—or up high on a tricycle—you can get away with things that could get you killed anywhere else.”

“At first,” Dee acknowledges about her carnival act, “I really, really hated having...half my body be perceived as male. But after the first week I got to enjoy it. I’d catch a man’s eye as a girl and then whirl around ... and I’d be the guy and say, ‘What the fuck are you looking at, you fucking faggot?’ It was great fun!”

“I always wanted to write music,” says the life-long musician who only began writing and recording songs eight years ago. “[I] tried and tried and failed and failed for years and years. It’s a great blessing, a great victory that I [am] able to write songs and have a life singing them.”

“I seem to have sort of a split personality,” Dee says in an attempt to describe her music. “There’s clearly two sides and one of them is very vaudeville-y, circus-y and the other is quite serious.”

Her fourth album, *Safe Inside the Day*, was released by Drag City earlier this year and lauded by Britain’s *The Daily Telegraph* as “the most remarkable record of the year so far.”

“It’s actually a pretty terrific album,” Dee agrees. “It’s the first thing I’ve ever done that I can say that about—because it’s not just me. It was collaboration with a lot of great people—who made the album great in spite of me.”

Dee’s Cleveland childhood still infuses each note. “I’m...imprisoned in my childhood. There are too many things I’m just not willing to let go of, things I refuse to forget.”

That’s not all bad. In the song, “The Dance of Diminishing Possibilities,” Dee recalls discovering a piano set out by the curb. Sanitation workers refused to haul it away (until it could fit in garbage cans), and four-year-old Dee joined neighbors in wrecking it. When the dust settled, she was delighted to discover that strings and soundboard remained, unbreakable. “There’s a harp in that piano,” Dee sings now. “And there’s a girl inside that boy.”

**Jacob Anderson-Minshall co-hosts the monthly LGBT literary event, QLiterati! at Portland, Ore.’s Q Center. Contact him at [jake@trans-nation.org](mailto:jake@trans-nation.org).**



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Tony Peraica (on right), and Rick Garcia (left) at Candidates' Forum January 25th, 2008 at Sidetrack

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**AFFORDABLE WITH PARKING:** Tasteful, top-floor 1-bedroom condo in nearby North Park, minutes to Brown Line. On-site storage area and parking included. GLBT-friendly building next to river and parks. \$149,900. Call Jozi at 773-398-7921. (7/02/08-2)

### CO-OP

**3500 N. LAKESHORE CO-OP:** 2BR + den, 2BA. Great lake, park, city views. All the vintage charm, wbf, high ceilings, central ac, w/d, eat-in kitchen, new baths. Nearby garage parking paid by seller for 1 year. \$499,000. Gloria Narrod, Baird & Warner RE 312-281-2330. (6/18/08-12)

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#### THREE + BEDROOM

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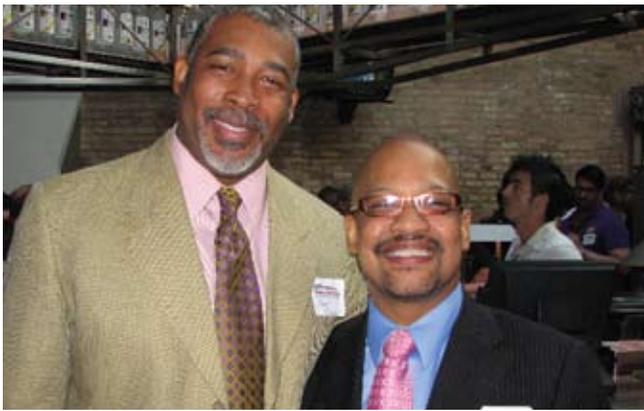
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## Anita Alvarez holds Pride reception

BY EMMANUEL GARCIA

A group of host members held a Pride Reception at Sidetrack in support of Anita Alvarez (in red in the picture directly above) in the general election for Cook County state's attorney.

In Feb. Alvarez became the first woman and the first Latino to win the Democratic nomination for Cook County state's attorney. In November Alvarez will run against Rep. Candidate Cook County Commissioner Tony Peraica.

Alvarez took time out from greeting supporters like Chicago Alderman Tom Tunney Metropolitan Water Reclamation Commissioner Debra Shore and Illinois State Representative Greg Harris to share her commitment to the LGBT community. "I started in this office wanting to help people and that's pretty much why I stayed. As far as the LGBT community I've handled cases of domestic violence, sometimes I think people forget that is an issue as well in this community, and it is an issue. I've handled cases from this particular community and those cases need to have special attention, they need people to be sensitive to what those cases entail, the general public forgets that it's an issue."

Debra Shore, commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, said, "It will be groundbreaking to elect a qualified woman, minority woman at that for state's attorney. It's so important that she support our community." Host Elizabeth Bautista added a different point of view, "One of the things for me is that we get all of those perspectives, when she is elected to determine hate crimes and what direction we are going to take with those decisions. That's why it's important to support her right now and let her know that we are here. We are professionals and live everyday lives like every other Illinois citizen."

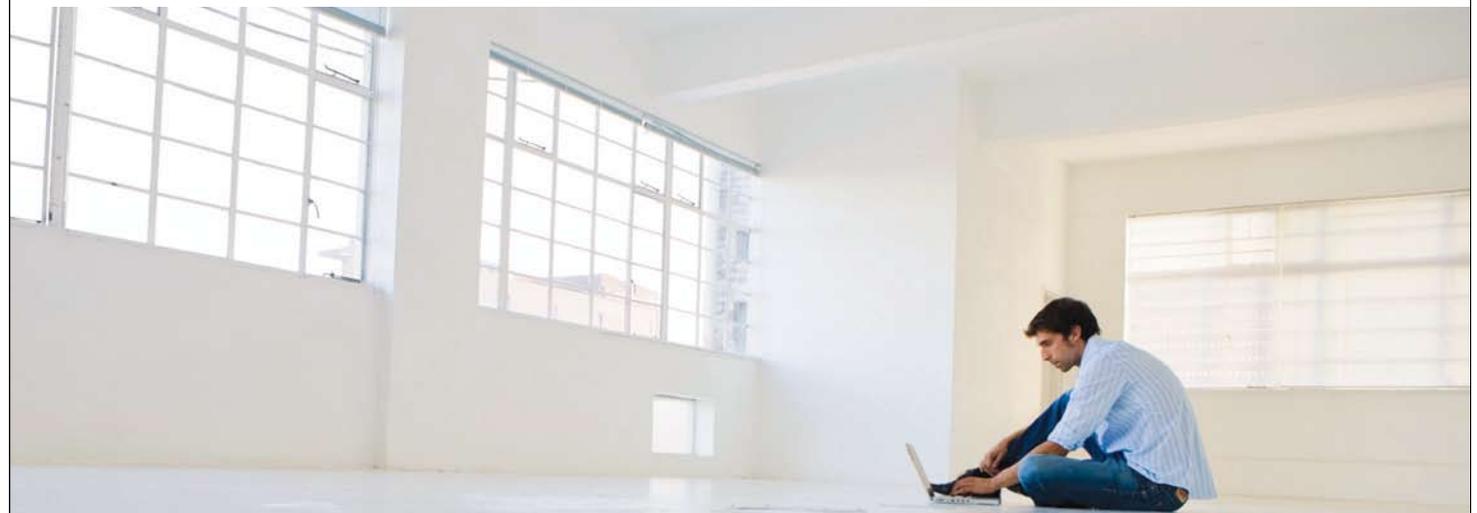
Speaking about a possible historic Illinois win in the November Presidential election Alvarez said, "It is very exciting, just the energy that that election has generated not just Barack [Obama] but also Hillary [Clinton] for Hillary running and going as far as she did. Particularly the younger voters, they got interested, got excited and energized I think that's good for all of us. I think coming from Illinois it's special. It's nice that we've been able to make that impact not just locally but nationally."

Alvarez will march in the 39th Annual Chicago Pride Parade for the first time Sun., June 29.

Photos by Emmanuel Garcia

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# Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel

NOTE: These are the last two cartoons by long-running artist Alison Bechdel. Due to other projects, she is putting Dykes to Watch Out For on indefinite hiatus.

**rent**

AS THE CAMPAIGN SEASON DRAGS ON, CIVILITY IS BEING STRETCHED TO A GOSSAMER FILAMENT.

ANTIWAR ACTIVISTS GROW BELUCOSE. OBAMA DOESN'T HAVE THE EXPERIENCE TO BEAT McCain. AND BELIEVE ME, ONCE THE BUSHIES START A WAR IN IRAN, WE'RE GONNA NEED TO BEAT McCain.

SPARROW, ARE YOU ON OXYCONTIN? RED STATED HATE HILLARY WITH THE WHITE HOT PASSION OF A BILLION BILIOUS RUSH LIMBAUGHS. THEY'LL MAKE MINCEMEAT OF HER.

LOOK, I DON'T EVEN CARE THAT HILLARY'S SUCH A HAWK. WE NEED A WOMAN PRESIDENT BECAUSE IT'LL EMPOWER GIRLS TO BE LEADERS, AND THAT'S OUR ONLY HOPE FOR EVER DISMANTLING THE PATRIARCHY!

EXES ARE GETTING EX-HER. GOD, MADELEINE, CONDOLEEZZA RICE IS A WOMAN. WOULD YOU VOTE FOR HER? I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'VE FALLEN PREY TO THE ESSENTIALIST FALLACY!

AT LEAST I HAVEN'T FALLEN PREY TO THE SAVIOR FANTASY. IF I HEAR ONE MORE PERSON WAX RHAPSODIC ABOUT HOW OBAMA INSPIRES THEM, I'LL COUGH UP A GIANT HAIRBALL OF HOPE.

CHILDREN ARE DIVIDED AGAINST THEIR PARENTS. I JUST WANT TO UNDERSTAND. IF THEIR POSITIONS ARE VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL, WHY ARE YOU SO SOLD ON OBAMA?

HE'S A MAC! SHE'S A PC! NEED WE SAY MORE?

PROFESSIONALS ARE NOT SO PROFESSIONAL. I JUST CAN'T SUPPORT HER, NOT AFTER SHE AND BILL SACRIFICED THE WELL-BEING OF MILLIONS OF KIDS AND SINGLE MOMS WITH THEIR "WELFARE REFORM" PLAN.

BUT WHAT ABOUT WHAT SHE TRIED TO DO FOR HEALTH CARE? WHY DOES OBAMA GET THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT JUST BECAUSE HE'S AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY?

HOW WILL IT ALL END? GIRLIE MAN, MANLY GIRL. IT'S ALL THE SAME TO ME.

J.R., SING THE SONG I TAUGHT YOU. YES WE CAN! YES WE CAN-A-N!

I NEED TO GO LOOK AT THIS BUT I THINK YOU HAVE A YEAST INFECTION.

# Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel

**sing, cuccu**

SUMER IS ICUMEN IN. BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE OUR FRENETIC FRIENDS WILL BE GETTING MUCH OF A FURLOUGH.

SVD'S DONE READING... BUT NOT WRITING. In conclusion, I think the main factor underlying the spread of this protestant work ethic has been the fact that it's such a widely pervasive concept. FINITO!

HEY, DR. K. I WAS HOPING TO TAKE THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF LEISURE FROM YOU NEXT FALL, BUT IT'S NOT LISTED.

SORRY, TIFFANY, NO LEISURE NEXT YEAR. I'M GOING ON SABBATICAL TO WRITE A BOOK. I'M MEGAN. WHERE IS THAT THING? ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN'T COME TO CAMP TRANS WITH US THE FIRST WEEK IN AUGUST?

I'D LIKE TO, BABE, BUT I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH VACATION TIME TO DO THAT AND PROTEST AT BOTH CONVENTIONS.

ESPECIALLY IF YOU END UP MAIMED OR IN JAIL. OR BOTH. AH, HERE WE GO.

IF YOU CAN'T HAVE A SECOND CHILD... NO, THERE'S NO ROOM FOR YOUR POOL, SWEETIE.

WE NEED THAT SPACE FOR THE TOMATOES IF WE WANT TO BE COMPLETELY FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENT THIS YEAR. BELIEVE ME, YOU'LL THANK ME IN FEBRUARY.

MO'S GOT HER WORK CUT OUT FOR HER. HERE'S TO YOUR SABBATICAL! AND A PULITZER FOR THE CONVERSION OF A DEADLY SIN: FROM SLOTH TO MODERN LEISURE.

WHAT A LIFE. NOTHING TO DO BUT RELAX, AND WRITE! HEY, I SENT IN THE SECURITY DEPOSIT FOR THE CABIN ON LAKE MINNEKOOPA! WE'RE ALL SET FOR JULY.

WAIT! IS THERE INTERNET ACCESS? CAN I AT LEAST USE MY IPHONE? I'VE GOTTA PUMP OUT A CHAPTER A MONTH TO MAKE THIS DEADLINE!

CAN I GET A SABBATICAL FROM MY GIRL-FRIEND?

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Mark Itell. Photo by Ross Forman

## SPORTS

## Gay boxer eyes pro debut

BY ROSS FORMAN

Mark Itell wants to have at least one professional fight, a boxing match that will prove he's battled—and beaten—Father Time, among others.

He's 45, living in Northwest Indiana, toiling in the amateur ranks, and just hoping to get a shot, somewhere, somehow. He's been an amateur for 20 years.

"When I started, I just thought [boxing] was a sport that you went in there and just started pounding each other, but there's an art to it," Itell said. "I started enjoying it enough that I got up enough nerve so that, at 40, I hired professional trainers. Then, at 43, I went to Kansas City for the Ringside World Championships and fought my first real fight. I lost, but it was an incredible experience."

His official record stands at 0-1, but he is 5-3-1 in exhibition fights.

"I just love the sport, and it's not as violent as people think," Itell said. "People often ask if it hurts, and it doesn't, really. It doesn't hurt when you get hit because you learn how to take a punch and not let it hurt."

Itell's first official amateur fight was about three years ago in Los Angeles. "I didn't do very well, but the experience was great," he said.

Itell now trains six days a week, usually for three hours a day. He's 5'9", weighs 170 pounds and battles in the light-heavyweight division.

"I just feel like I'm at that point in my life where I feel like I can do it," said Itell, which is scheduled to return to Kansas City Aug. 5-9 for the Ringside World Championships at the KCIU Expo Center, which is expected to draw more than 1,000 boxers of all different age- and competitive-groups.

Itell competes in the master's division, for those ages 35 and over.

"Basically, I'm trying to have as many fights as I can, so I can get better and better, to impress someone that I can do this [on a professional level]," said Itell, who is single, gay and claims Oscar de la Hoya as his favorite all-time boxer.

"I just have a deep passion for the sport. I just love the fact that it's challenging, that it's not easy. There's so much to the sport—the offense, the defense, the cardio, the conditioning, etc."

Itell also is a veteran Chicago-area softball player, with 20-plus years experience on the fields.

"Just because someone is a boxer, you can't just assume he or she is a violent person. That isn't always the case. There are so many nice, friendly guys," who also are boxers, Itell said. "I have a lot of people out there rooting for me, supporting me. They want me to fight; they want me to succeed."

Himself included, and hopefully on the pro circuit someone, even if it's just for one day.

**Mark Itell will fight Sat., July 12, at the Aragon, 1106 W. Lawrence. See [www.jabbboxing.com/events.html](http://www.jabbboxing.com/events.html) or call 312-733-5222.**



## Flag queens

The Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association's (CMSA's) women's spring flag-football league held its playoffs Sat., June 21, at Warren Park, 6621 N. Western. (The men's league has its playoffs a few weeks from now in the same venue.)

There are 12 teams in two divisions—and it turned out that both champions had incredibly close games. In the competitive division, Four Treys finally broke away from a tie game in the last few moments and scored a touchdown during a very strong drive down the field, where it dug deep and executed a perfect play. Meanwhile, in the recreational division, number-two seed Stone City (formerly the Diesel Daisies) upset the number-one team, Moaning Lisas, 20-19. Photo and text by Mel Ferrand

## 'Girlz.Got.Game' at Center

New Vision of Hope Foundation (NVHF), a non-profit organization, and E3 Radio, in association with the Center on Halsted, will present their first 'Girlz.Got.Game' 3-on-3 Basketball Classic and Health Fair Sat.-Sun., July 26-27, at the Center, 3656 N. Halsted. It will run 8 a.m.-9 p.m. on July 26 and 10 a.m.-7 p.m. on July 27.

Only girls and women 16-55+ can play, but the entire community is welcome to participate in the activities, which will include free HIV, diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol and BMI screenings, and much more.

All proceeds will benefit NVHF's Youth/Adults for AIDS Prevention Outreach Program and E3 Radio, which produces socially conscious programs. E-mail [3gclassic@gmail.com](mailto:3gclassic@gmail.com) for more information.

## Chicago Takes Pride in it's Diversity

### Congratulations to the GLBT community on the 39th annual Pride Parade



City Treasurer Stephanie Neely

[www.citytreasurer.com](http://www.citytreasurer.com)

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# WHAT TO DO?

## Wednesday, June 25

**Chicago Lesbian Brunch Group** City-wide Pride Women Only Happy Hour. Business casual, cash bar, no cover. 6:30-8:30 p.m., Victor Hotel, 311 N. Sangamon St., <http://gaypros.metup.com/283>

**Chicago Park District and Edgewater Chamber of Commerce** Outdoor movie in the park: "Hairspray." 8:30 p.m. (sundown), Hollywood Beach, 5600 North on the lakefront, free, [www.edgewater.org](http://www.edgewater.org), [info@edgewater.org](mailto:info@edgewater.org), 773-561-6000

**Gerber/Hart Library** Lecture: "Stone-wall" by Roger Goodman. 7 p.m., free, 1127 W. Granville Ave., [www.gerberhart.org](http://www.gerberhart.org)

**Scot's** Pride karaoke, 8 p.m. - midnight, 1829 W. Montrose Ave., 773-528-3253

**Women & Children First Bookstore** Terry Kapsalis: This Hysterical Alphabet. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-742-1284, [www.womenandchildrenfirst.com](http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com)

## Thursday, June 26

**Anti-Cruelty Society** Canine Cruise along the river and on Lake Michigan for pet owners and their dogs. 7 p.m., \$35 per person, RSVP required at 312-644-8338 ext. 307

**Asian Human Services** Empowerment 2 workshop for queer Asian men that covers topics like sexuality, racism, HIV/AIDS, homophobia, etc. 6-8 p.m., 4753 N. Broadway, free

**Chicago Gay Men's Chorus** Annual Pride performance: "The Boys are Back in Town." Through June 28. 8 p.m., Lakeview Presbyterian Church, 716 W. Addison, \$25 general admission, [www.cgmc.org](http://www.cgmc.org) or 773-296-0541

**Citywide Pride 2008** Pride on the Plaza: Networking with music and refreshments. 5:30-7:30 p.m., Chase Tower, Monroe Street between Dearborn and Clark, RSVP at [www.citywidepride.info/events.html](http://www.citywidepride.info/events.html)

**Lansky Career Consultants** Workshop: "Managing Your Gay/Lesbian Identity at Work." 6:30-8:30 p.m., free but advance registration required, 312-444-1500 for info

**Stonewall Association of Illinois** Straight Spouses Network meeting. 7 p.m., DuPage Unitarian Church, 4 S. 535 Old Naperville Rd. in Naperville

**Thurst** New Thursday night party, beats by Mike More and Tracey Tobey, half-price champagne bottles, 9 p.m. - 2 a.m., no cover, Avenue M, 695 N. Milwaukee Ave. 312-243-1143, [avenue-m.com](http://avenue-m.com)

**Women & Children First Bookstore** Susanna Lang: Even Now; Jac Jemc: poetry reading. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-742-1284, [www.womenandchildrenfirst.com](http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com)

**Youth Pride Center** Picnic. Includes BBQ, volleyball, swimming and more. 2-6 p.m., Jackson Park Beach, ages 21 and under, [www.youthpridecenter.org](http://www.youthpridecenter.org)

## Friday, June 27

**Bravo Network** Television program: "19th Annual GLAAD Media Awards." 6 p.m. on Bravo, [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

**Broadway Youth Center** Youth Performance Show: "Out in the Loop." 6:30-10 p.m., \$5 donation, 606 S. State St., [www.howardbrown.org/byc](http://www.howardbrown.org/byc), [youth@howardbrown.org](mailto:youth@howardbrown.org)

**Cake Chicago** "Sassy & Proud—A Pride Extravaganza." Featuring CC Carter, Cameron Esposito, Bridget Lyons, Carrie Lydon/Kate Rickenbacker, Typsi, Robert McDonald, Ripley Caine, Kirk Williamson, Cyra and Company, Julia Storke, Gregg Shapiro, DJ Sky. 9 p.m., \$5 cover, Red Line Tap, 7006 N. Glenwood

**Center on Halsted** National HIV Testing Day featuring HIV/AIDS education, prevention, testing and substance abuse issues. Breakfast with special guest speaker Jeanne White. See [www.centeronhalsted.org](http://www.centeronhalsted.org), 773-472-6469

**Chicago Gay Men's Chorus** Annual Pride

performance: "The Boys are Back in Town." Through June 28. 8 p.m., Lakeview Presbyterian Church, 716 W. Addison, \$25 general admission, [www.cgmc.org](http://www.cgmc.org) or 773-296-0541

**Chix Mix Productions** Party featuring L Word's God-des N She. \$30 at door, \$20 advance pre-paid at [www.chixmixproductions.com](http://www.chixmixproductions.com), Circuit Night Club, 3641 N. Halsted St., [chixmixproductions@yahoo.com](mailto:chixmixproductions@yahoo.com)

**Club Krave** Gay Icons of Yesterday and Today drag show, featuring Lindsey Devereaux, Tina Roberts, Serina Devine and more, 13126 S. Western Ave., Blue Island, IL, 708-597-8379

**Crew** Fratboy Friday with the Hot Jock Contest, 1st place \$300, \$3.50 Goose Island pints, 11 p.m., 4804 N. Broadway, [WorldsGreatestBar.com](http://WorldsGreatestBar.com)

**Gerber/Hart Library** Cinema Lesbiana. 7 p.m., free, 1127 W. Granville Ave., [www.gerberhart.org](http://www.gerberhart.org), [info@gerberhart.org](mailto:info@gerberhart.org)

**Hydrate** Tom Ford fashion eyewear show, 9-11 p.m., followed by DJ Ralph Rosario, 3458 N. Halsted St., [hydratechicago.com](http://hydratechicago.com)

**Scarlet** Pride kickoff party from 6-9 p.m., DJ AJ Dubbz at 11 p.m., 3320 N. Halsted St., [ScarletBarChicago.com](http://ScarletBarChicago.com)

**Spin** \$200 shower contest, sign up by 11 p.m., contest at midnight, George Michael ticket giveaway, 800 W. Belmont Ave., [spin-nightclub.com](http://spin-nightclub.com)

**Test Positive Aware Network** Anniversary Party. 6-8 p.m., 3439 N. Halsted, [www.tpan.org](http://www.tpan.org), [r.lindsay@tpan.org](mailto:r.lindsay@tpan.org), 773-989-9400

**Youth Pride Center** Curiosity Youth Jam/National HIV Testing Day Pride weekend kick-off dance. 8-11 p.m., free 8-9 p.m., \$5 after 9 p.m., 637 S. Dearborn, [www.youthpridecenter.org](http://www.youthpridecenter.org)

## Saturday, June 28

**Back Lot Bash** 5th Annual Back Lot Bash in honor of Pride weekend, with entertainment like DJs and live bands. Also after the parade on June 29. 3-10 p.m., parking lot behind Cheetah Gym, 5238 N. Clark St., [www.backlotbashchicago.com](http://www.backlotbashchicago.com)

**Broadway Youth Center** "Synergy" youth dance. 8-11 p.m., \$5 donation, for youth 24 and under, [www.howardbrown.org/byc](http://www.howardbrown.org/byc), [youth@howardbrown.org](mailto:youth@howardbrown.org)

**Center on Halsted** Pride Celebration for all. Food, beverages, fun. 5:30-9:30 p.m., \$10 (\$5 for youth, seniors and families), 3656 N. Halsted St.

**Chicago 3160** The Tajma Hall Show, with special guests Aurora Sexton and Monica Munro, 3160 N. Clark St., [chicago3160.com](http://chicago3160.com)

**Chicago Gay Men's Chorus** Annual Pride performance: "The Boys are Back in Town." 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., Lakeview Presbyterian Church, 716 W. Addison, \$25 general admission, [www.cgmc.org](http://www.cgmc.org) or 773-296-0541

**Chicago Pride Fest** 6th Annual Pride Fest, with live music, arts & crafts, food and more. Disco legend Martha Wash and '80s teen pop legend Tiffany. 11 a.m.-9 p.m., \$5 gate donation, Waveland & Halsted, [www.chicagoevents.com](http://www.chicagoevents.com)

**Citywide Pride 2008** Family, Friends & Allies Day at the Zoo. 11 a.m.-3 p.m., lunch and refreshments will be served, Lincoln Park Zoo, 2200 N. Cannon Dr., RSVP at [www.citywidepride.info/events.html](http://www.citywidepride.info/events.html)

**Club Krave** Pre-Pride party with DJ Mixmaster, 13126 S. Western Ave., Blue Island, IL, 708-597-8379

**Dignity Chicago** Pride weekend liturgy. 5 p.m., Broadway UMC, 3338 N. Broadway, 312-458-9438, [www.dignitychicago.org](http://www.dignitychicago.org)

**Dyke March Chicago** The 12th annual Dyke March. Gathering begins at 1 p.m. at 1800 S. Halsted, step off at 2:30 p.m., attendees march down 18th Street to rally at Harrison Park (1824 S. Wood), [dykemarchchicago@gmail.com](mailto:dykemarchchicago@gmail.com) or [www.myspace.com/dykemarchchicago](http://www.myspace.com/dykemarchchicago)

**Encompass** Pre-Pride Celebration, \$4 Jägerbombs, \$2 well, DJ Tiff,

**Frontrunners/Frontwalkers** Chicago 27th Annual Proud to Run, a 5K/10K Run & two-mile fun walk that celebrates gay and lesbian pride. 8:04 a.m., Montrose Ave., east of Lake Shore Dr., just north of Montrose Harbor, \$30 for run, \$25 for walk, registration at [www.signmeup.com/59364](http://www.signmeup.com/59364)

**Girlbar** Turkish Oil Wrestling, two hot girls, one night only, 4-10 p.m., \$10 w/ guest list, \$15 at the door, Circuit Nightclub, 3641 N. Halsted St.

**Girlie-Q Productions** "Almost Paradise: A Very Queer Prom," featuring live music by Congress of Starlings and Bric-A-Brac, burlesque performances, the crowning of a prom "king" and "queen" and more. Doors 9 p.m., show 10 p.m., \$15 (\$5 from every ticket benefits Beyondmedia), 21+, The Spot, 4437 N. Broadway

**Holy Covenant MCC** Pride service and picnic. Free, 9145 Grant Ave. in Brookfield, [www.holycovenantmcc.org](http://www.holycovenantmcc.org), [office@holycovenantmcc.org](mailto:office@holycovenantmcc.org), 708-387-1611

**Hydrate** Pride Bowl party, a benefit for CMSA, 7-10 p.m., open DJ decks 9-11 p.m., sign-up at 8 p.m., followed by DJ Laura B, 3458 N. Halsted St., [hydratechicago.com](http://hydratechicago.com)

**National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Chicago Chapter** Annual Pride Brunch. 11:30 a.m., Ann Sathers, 909 W. Belmont, [ricknlgja@yahoo.com](mailto:ricknlgja@yahoo.com)

**Randolph Street Market Festival** Chicago Antique Market and Indie Designer Market. Features more than 200 vendors. And June 29. 1350 W. Randolph St., \$10 general admission good for both days, [www.randolphstreetmarket.com](http://www.randolphstreetmarket.com), [www.chicagoantiquemarket.com](http://www.chicagoantiquemarket.com), [www.indiedesignermarket.com](http://www.indiedesignermarket.com)

**Scarlet** Back to the '80s party from 6-9 p.m., DJ Sangre at 11 p.m., 3320 N. Halsted St., [ScarletBarChicago.com](http://ScarletBarChicago.com)

**Sidetrack** Meet the guys of Wide Eye, 3349 N. Halsted St., [SidetrackChicago.com](http://SidetrackChicago.com), [wideeye.com](http://wideeye.com)

**Spin** Annual Pride Dance, DJ Riley York and VJ Bryan, 800 W. Belmont Ave., [spin-nightclub.com](http://spin-nightclub.com)

**Velvet Rope** First Post-Pride party, until 2 a.m., 728 W. Lake St., Oak Park, IL, 708-358-8840, [velvetropoakpark.com](http://velvetropoakpark.com)

Women of the Western Suburbs Picnic at a member's home. 2 p.m., free to WOWS members, \$5 for non-members, 847-622-4327 for more info

## Sunday, June 29

**achurch4me? MCC** Pride worship. 9 p.m., Center on Halsted Hoover-Leppen Theater, 3656 N. Halsted St., [www.achurch4me.org](http://www.achurch4me.org), 773-661-0936

**39th Annual Pride Parade** Annual Pride Parade coordinated by PRIDEChicago starts at Halsted/Belmont corner, proceeding North on Halsted, then South on Broadway, then East on Diversey to Cannon Drive. Parade steps off at noon, contact [PRIDEChicago@aol.com](mailto:PRIDEChicago@aol.com) or 773-348-8243 for more info, see [www.chicagoPrideCalendar.org](http://www.chicagoPrideCalendar.org)

**Back Lot Bash** 5th Annual Back Lot Bash in honor of Pride weekend, with entertainment like DJs and live bands. 2-9 p.m., parking lot behind Cheetah Gym, 5238 N. Clark St., [www.backlotbashchicago.com](http://www.backlotbashchicago.com)

**Berlin** SSION performs live, with The Capricorns, DJ Greg Haus, Gay Terrorist, hosted by Jilliam and Scott, 4 p.m., 954 W. Belmont Ave., [BerlinChicago.com](http://BerlinChicago.com)

**Broadway Youth Center** Youth Pride Zone. Youth-only space for those who want to watch the Pride Parade. 11 a.m.-3 p.m., 3179 N. Broadway, [www.howardbrown.org/byc](http://www.howardbrown.org/byc), [youth@howardbrown.org](mailto:youth@howardbrown.org)

**Circuit** Open at 11 a.m., come dancing right after the parade, 3641 N. Halsted St., [CircuitClub.com](http://CircuitClub.com)

**Club Krave** Join us after pride for karaoke, 13126 S. Western Ave., Blue Is-

land, IL, 708-597-8379

**Girlblast** Annual women's dance and event with guest DJs, food, dancing. After the parade until 10 p.m., \$12 at door, Ann Sather Restaurant parking lot, 929 W. Belmont

**Holy Covenant UMC** Celebration for Pride Sunday. 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m., 925 W. Diversey, [www.holycovenantumc.org](http://www.holycovenantumc.org), [office@holycovenantumc.org](mailto:office@holycovenantumc.org)

**Hydrate** DJ Laura B, 4-11 p.m., followed by DJ Jeannette, 3458 N. Halsted St., [hydratechicago.com](http://hydratechicago.com)

**John Waldron Arts Center** Love Makes a Family: Portraits of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People and Their Families text and photo exhibit. Every Sunday in June. 2-5 p.m., 6740 N. Oliphant Ave., donations accepted, 773-426-1168

**The Razors** Chicago's Gay Guy Triathlon Team presents its "Outreach" bike ride event, a 30-mile ride North through Evanston and Wilmette. 7:45 a.m. start at totem pole at Addison & Lake Shore Dr., followed by brunch, [www.chicagorazors.com](http://www.chicagorazors.com), [chicagorazors@yahoo.com](mailto:chicagorazors@yahoo.com) for info

**Rec Room** Alcoholics Anonymous Candlelight Discussion Meeting. 8:30 p.m. meeting and 9:30 p.m. pizza party, 4003 N. Broadway, [www.myspace.com/recreomchicago](http://www.myspace.com/recreomchicago), 773-321-0110

**Scarlet** All-Day Pride with DJs Carla Starla, AJ Dubbz, Kaztelli and Lego, 3320 N. Halsted St., [ScarletBarChicago.com](http://ScarletBarChicago.com)

**Scot's** Pre-parade brunch starting at 11 a.m., Post-parade BBQ, 3-7 p.m., 1829 W. Montrose Ave., 773-528-3253

**Second Unitarian Church** Pride Service. 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., 656 W. Barry, [www.secondunitarian.org](http://www.secondunitarian.org), 773-549-0260

**Sidetrack** Watch the parade on our large screen, open at 11 a.m., 3349 N. Halsted St., [SidetrackChicago.com](http://SidetrackChicago.com)

**Spin** Watch the parade with us, open at 11 a.m., 800 W. Belmont Ave., [spin-nightclub.com](http://spin-nightclub.com)

**Youth Pride Center** Pride Sunday Bash. Free for anyone wearing rainbow colors all night. 7:30-10:30 p.m., St. Peter's Gymnasium, \$7 if not wearing required outfit, [www.youthpridecenter.org](http://www.youthpridecenter.org)

## Monday, June 30

**Bailiwick** Opening night of "Lesbians Who Kill," a satirical look at what might motivate lesbians to become killers. 7 p.m., \$25 includes a reception following the performance, 773-883-1090 or [www.bailiwick.org](http://www.bailiwick.org) for tickets

**Crew** Morning After hangover day, 1/2 price double Bloody Marys and Mimosas all day, open at 11:30 a.m., 4804 N. Broadway, [WorldsGreatestBar.com](http://WorldsGreatestBar.com)

## Tuesday, July 1

**Homolatte** April Newman and Lydia Moore. Hosted by Scott Free. 7:30 p.m., free, Big Chicks/Tweet, 5024 N. Sheridan, [www.homolatte.com](http://www.homolatte.com)

## Wednesday, July 2

**Chicago Windy City Black Pride** Through July 7. Host hotel: Palmer House Hilton. Events include pride parties throughout city and more. See [www.chiblackpride.com](http://www.chiblackpride.com), call 773-991-7962

## Thursday, July 3

**Annoyance Theatre** "Dick O'Day's Big, Lovely Bingo." One night only. 8 p.m., \$10, 4830 N. Broadway, [www.annoyanceproductions.com](http://www.annoyanceproductions.com) or 773-561-4665 for tickets

**Chicago Windy City Black Pride** Official Welcome Party with DJ Lil' John and DJ Unknown (NYC). 10 p.m.-4 a.m., Ruby, 151 W. Ohio St., [www.chiblackpride.com](http://www.chiblackpride.com)

**Windy City Black Pride** Through July 6. Host hotel: Hyatt Regency McCormick Place. Events throughout week include workshops, youth events, vendor fair, poetry slam and more. See [www.windy-cityblackpride.org](http://www.windy-cityblackpride.org)

## Fri., June 27



## TAKING THE CAKE

C.C. Carter (left) will be among those performing at Cake Chicago's "Sassy & Proud—A Pride Extravaganza," taking place at Red Line Tap, 7006 N. Glenwood.

Photo by Linda "Kizzy" Ramos

## Sun., June 29



## RAZOR-SHARP

The Chicago Razors will hold its "Outreach" bike-ride event at Addison and Lake Shore.

Photo courtesy of The Chicago Razors

## Sun., June 29



## GETTING A LEG UP

The 39th Annual Pride Parade will step off on Halsted and Belmont at noon. Openly gay ex-Marine and activist Eric Alva will serve as grand marshal of the event.

Photo from the 2007 parade by Kat Fitzgerald

# CLASSIFIEDS

## ART

**CALL FOR ARTISTS:** Skokie Art Guild's 47th Annual Art Fair. July 12-13, 2008. Fine Art. Held on the Village Green, Oakton St., Downtown Skokie, IL. Prizes and Awards. For application/information contact [skokieart@aol.com](mailto:skokieart@aol.com) Tel. 847-677-8163 (6/25/08-4)

**ART OPENING:** Flourish Studios. 3020 N. Lincoln, Chicago, IL. July 12, 6-9 PM. Enjoy light refreshments and meet the artist. For more information, visit artist's website [www.taniarodamilans.com](http://www.taniarodamilans.com) (7/16/08-4)

## BODYWORK

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**HIV HYPNOTHERAPY GROUP:** Experienced PhD hosting group sessions designed to stimulate immune system. Sessions meet 2 times/ week. AM and PM available. Low rates. For details, call Dr. William J. Nasser, PhD at 219-331-4682. (7/16/08-4)

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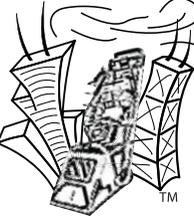
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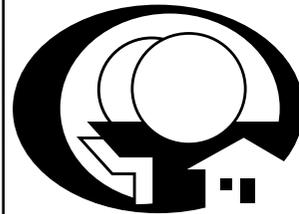
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Images from the 2006 Gay Bowl in Dallas. Photos by Ross Forman

## SPORTS

# Flag-football tournament debuts with 12 teams

BY ROSS FORMAN

The inaugural Pride Bowl is set for June 27-28 as the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) begins the groundwork to bid on hosting the 2009 Gay Bowl, the pinnacle of LGBT flag football that has traveled across America since its inception in 2002.

The Chicago Flames won Gay Bowl V in San Diego in 2005 behind MVP quarterback Will Ward, but Chicago has never hosted the tradition-rich event that the New York Warriors won for the second consecutive season last year.

The Pride Bowl will be held at Foster Beach, 5200 N. Lake Shore, with games running throughout the day, starting at 9 a.m.

"This is kind of a dry test-run because, yes, we definitely are exploring the idea of hosting the 2009 Gay Bowl," said Shawn Albritton, commissioner for CMSA's flag-football league, which starts its 10th season in September with a league-record 22 teams expected to participate.

CMSA has the world's largest LGBT flag-football league, and six Chicago teams will be among the 12 participating in Pride Bowl. The remaining teams will travel to Chicago from New York, Atlanta, Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles, among other places.

Every team is guaranteed four games, starting with pool-play on Friday, and then single-elimination playoffs on Saturday.

"We want to make this an annual tournament, regardless of whether or not we're hosting the Super Bowl," Albritton said.

Chicago's top teams for Pride Bowl are G-Spot and the Jackhammer Bears. Albritton, who plays center and linebacker, is joined on G-Spot by quarterback Mike Kenney and wide receiver/cornerback Andrew Burke. The Bears are led by quarterback Brandon Fogel and Dan Shever (center/linebacker).

Mary's Attic is Chicago's dark horse to advance deep into the Pride Bowl playoffs behind the play of quarterback Brian Kupersmit.

"We're the biggest [flag-football] league in the country and we want to be the leaders. Plus, we want to put on a good face for [the City of] Chicago and we just want to have fun," Albritton said. "Being the largest league, we feel a responsibility to see that the flag football movement continues to grow. We want to showcase our league."

The Pride Bowl will be a benefit for the Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) and the event will pay tribute to Anthony Castro, a gay player from Los Angeles who died last year. Each year, the board of the Chicago Pride Bowl will choose

a person or organization to honor. The honor would be someone who has gone above and beyond in their efforts to support tolerance, diversity and acceptance for the GLBT community.

"We want to be among the first cities to host an annual [flag football] tournament much like there are numerous tournaments [almost every weekend] across the country for softball," Albritton said. "Tournaments such as this are a blast above and beyond the on-field play. There's great camaraderie among the gay flag football teams, much more than in any other sport I play in."

There are only men's teams registered, and Albritton said he "was not sure" if any women registered for the Pride Bowl, but confirmed a transgender player from New York will be participating.

## Beach volleyball at record numbers

BY ROSS FORMAN

As the sun sets every Friday through mid-August, they invade Montrose Harbor. Most, of course, are Chicago residents, with some suburbanites sprinkled in—and even some from Michigan and Wisconsin.

The annual Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) beach volleyball league has truly skyrocketed in popularity. There are 140 teams this season, up from 111 last year. This is believed to be the world's largest LGBT beach volleyball league—definitely the biggest in the United States—and it fields the most teams in CMSA history.

"The beach is a very popular place to be and everyone just loves this sport," said Anton Mulvaney, 44, the league's commissioner. "Actually, though, I was concerned that there wasn't going to be the same amount of teams as last year, so I was kind of floored at the actual number of people who registered."

A large part of the credit for beach volleyball's spike in participation this summer goes to Denice Bardt and Stacey Ravenisi, who joined the 12-person board of directors on the recommendation of CMSA president Marcia Hill, when Mulvaney sought additional female support.

Bardt and Ravenisi spearheaded a "media blitz" about the sport, Mulvaney said.

The women's division this season is its largest ever. There are 20 women's teams, up from 12 last summer. Mulvaney expects that total to jump to 30 in 2009.

"It is quite an intense experience every Friday night. At times, I get teary-eyed, knowing that so many people are having such a good time," said Mulvaney, who is gay, lives in West Rogers Park and works as a clinical scientist.

There are six divisions for open play (with men's teams composing the majority of squads) and two for women. There are about 1,200 play-

ers this season, the most ever, with players ranging in age from 18 to 50.

"There truly is a division [of play] for everyone," Mulvaney said. "We really want to be inclusive, so we do not turn anyone away."

But that's forced a space issue. Or lack thereof, to be exact. With the season running 10 weeks, teams now only play seven of those weeks.

The league is considering using two beaches in 2009, Montrose and Foster, "so if we get into the 150- or 160-team-range, we then would be able to accommodate all," Mulvaney said.

"Unfortunately, there are only three teams in the competitive division. I just think the competitive guys are getting older [and not wanting to still play in that division] or moving out of the area." Still, Mulvaney wants to expand to at least six competitive teams in 2009.

Expansion would be especially beneficial since Chicago will host the North American Gay Volleyball Association (NAGVA) Championships XXVII next May, marking the fourth time the city has hosted the annual event—but the first time since 1991.

**CMSA will host the annual Queen of the**



CMSA beach volleyball. Photos by Ross Forman

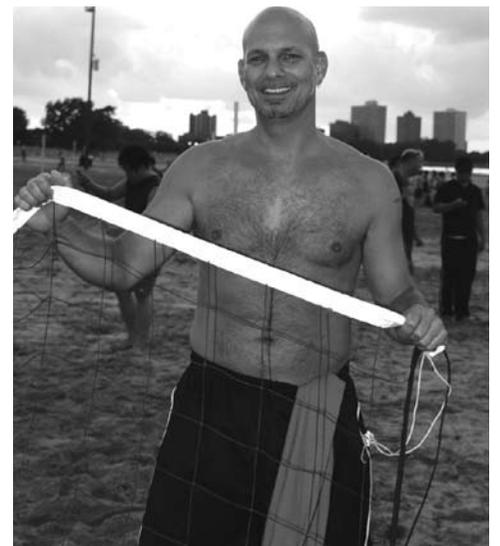
**Beach Volleyball Tournament June 28 at Osterman Beach (also known as Hollywood Beach), 5800 N. Sheridan, with registration starting at 8 a.m. There are two- and four-person divisions. See [www.chicagomsa.com](http://www.chicagomsa.com) or e-mail [chgovb2006@aol.com](mailto:chgovb2006@aol.com).**

## Chicago NFL Alumni and Sinai co-hosting benefit

Chicago NFL Alumni and Sinai Community Institute will present "Gala 2008: Celebrating 15 Years of Going the Distance" Sat., June 28, 6-11 p.m., at Cadillac Club at Soldier Field, 1400 S. Museum Campus. The event is black-tie optional.

There will be a VIP reception, Latin-inspired cuisine and a silent auction. In addition, former "American Idol" finalist Melinda Doolittle will perform.

For more information, please contact L-Wanda Holmes at 773-257-6070 or [hollaw@sinai.org](mailto:hollaw@sinai.org).



## WPSA celebrates first anniversary

BY ROSS FORMAN

The first anniversary party for the Women Playing Sports Association (WPSA) was held Sat., June 14, at Spyners Pub, 4623 N. Western.

WPSA co-founders Bobbie Briefman and Jean Miller welcomed players, families and friends for food, drinks and a live band.

"The highlight [of the first year] is the number of women who have come to play, especially basketball; I never imagined [basketball] would be as successful as it was," said Miller, 46, a Park Ridge resident. "We all still have a love for sports, but just aren't as competitive as we once were."

The WPSA softball season, with six teams and 120 players, runs through mid-August at Horner Park. Then the WPSA league, consisting of about 230 women—70 percent of whom are lesbian—shifts into volleyball mode, and then play basketball in late December.

Briefman said the WPSA is playing to expand its sports offerings over the next two years.

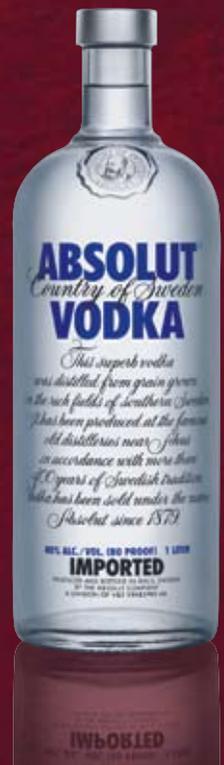
"The first year has been better than we ever expected," Miller said. "All of the local [sports] associations offer opportunities for people to play sports; we're not competition to one another. We want all of the other leagues to succeed like ours." Photo of Briefman (left) and Miller by Ross Forman

# IN AN ABSOLUT WORLD

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