

WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI AND TRANS COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

NOV. 5, 2008 • VOL 24 NO 8

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Jennifer Hudson

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Reeling 2008

page 17



Daniel Vosovic

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pick it up
take it home

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Yes, He Did!

But Calif. May Ban Gay Marriage

Barack Obama became a part of history Tuesday night; he is now the first African-American president-elect in the United States. Read more below and on page 4, and find out the latest results on www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com. Photo from MSNBC's coverage of Obama's victory speech.

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Confirming what most polls had recently indicated—and cementing his place in history—Sen. Barack Obama has become the first African-American president-elect in the nation's history, defeating Republican candidate Sen. John McCain.

A battle that was expected to be tight actually was over relatively early on Tuesday night. By 9 p.m. CT, CNN.com had already projected Obama as the winner in Ohio. No Republican has won the race for the White House without winning Ohio.

Also by that time, Obama had also been projected to win Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

By 10 p.m., Obama had 297 electoral votes—more than the 270 needed to win. As of 12 a.m. Wednesday, Obama had garnered 338 electoral votes to McCain's 156, CNN.com reported. Obama will be the 44th president of the United States.

Republicans cited various reasons for McCain's

loss, including the economy. "John McCain was leading" until the economic situation took a turn for the worse, Republican State Rep. Jim Durkin said on WGN-TV. "[McCain] was a victim of bad timing."

Chicago's Grant Park became the focal point of the nation Tuesday night, as Obama delivered his victory speech there. (Crowd estimates in the immediate park area were around 125,000.) Among the people there were Oprah Winfrey, who called the win "the most amazing night of my life." Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich added that "it's a historic [and] magical night," and referenced the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. when he said that voters selected him "based on the content of his character and not the color of his skin."

During his victory speech, Obama said, "To those who wonder if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still question the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer."

He added that the thought "that their voice could be that difference ... is the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican; Black, white, Hispanic, Asian; gay [and] straight; disabled and non-disabled—

Americans have sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of individuals, or a collection of red states and blue states. We are, and always will be, the United States of America."

In his concession speech, McCain said that Obama's "success alone commands my respect alone for his ability and perseverance—but that he managed to do so by inspiring the hopes of so many millions of Americans, who once believed that they had little at stake in the election of a president, is something I deeply admire." He went on to recognize the significance of the night for African Americans, and thanked, among others, his wife, Cindy; and his vice-presidential running mate, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin.

McCain also again expressed condolences to the Obama family for the loss of the president-elect's grandmother, who passed away the day before his historic win.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC)—the nation's largest LGBT-rights organization—issued a press release celebrating Obama's election. "This election represents a paradigm shift," HRC

Turn to page 4

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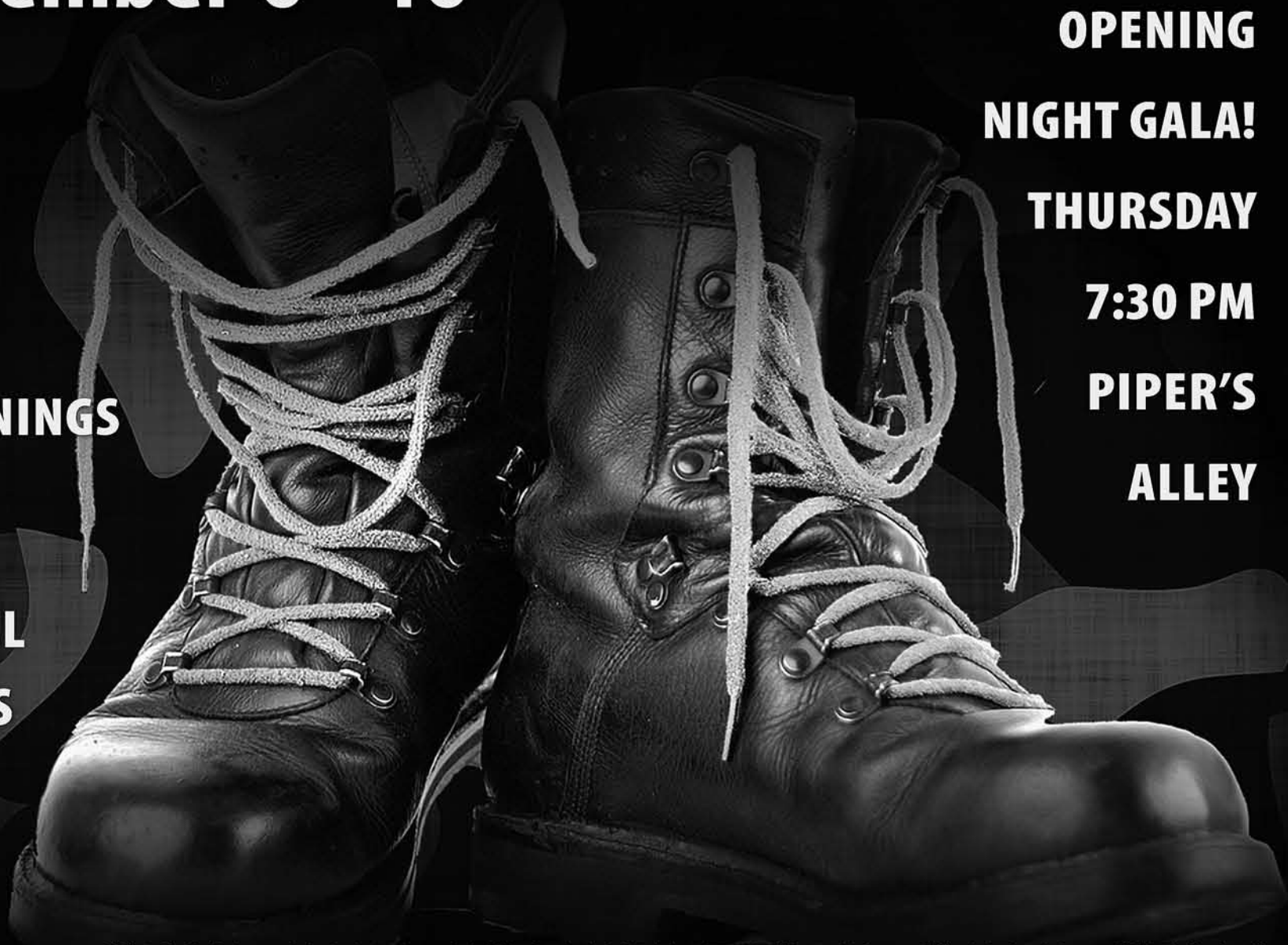


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Alison Bechdel—best known for the lesbian comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*—talked with *Windy City Times*. See more on page 20.

Photo by Greg Martin

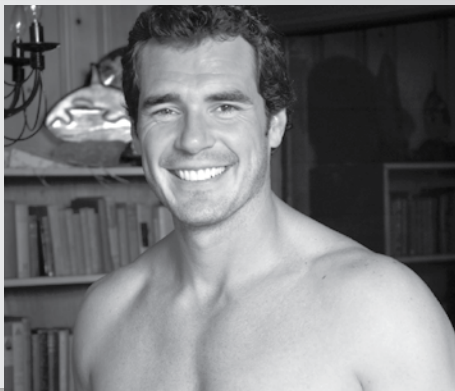


The opera *Margaret Garner* (above) is reviewed this week in *WCT*. See page 15.

Photo by John Grigaitis

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Features include:
—Dr. Hernandez's article
—Interior Motives
—Starrlight on Maria Montez
—Disc and That
—Dan Payne's 'Mulligans' stew (right)



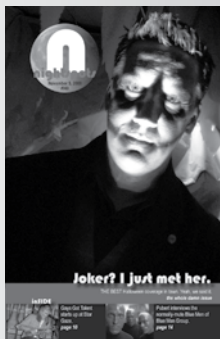
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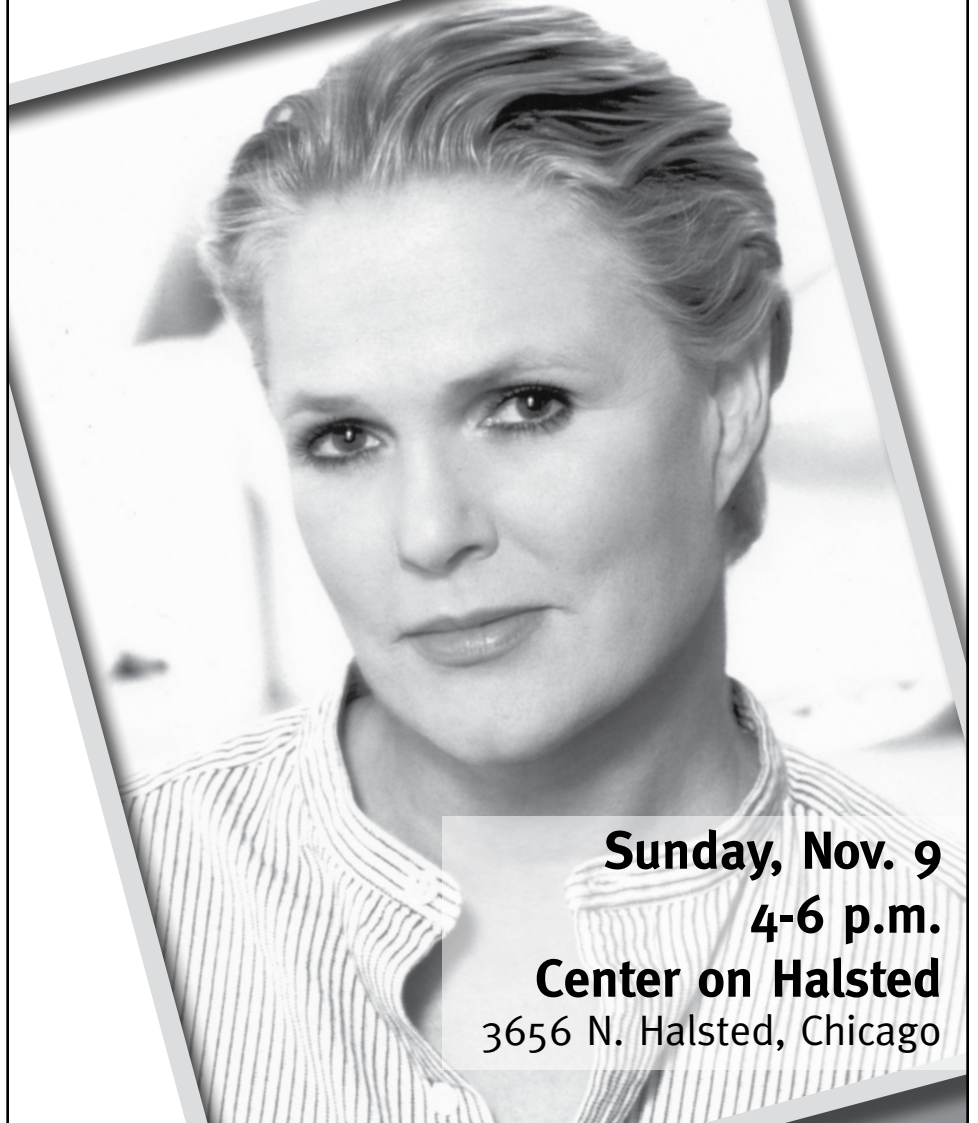
Photos by Kirk Williamson



Joker? I just met her.

Sharon Gless

at Chicago Event



Sunday, Nov. 9
4-6 p.m.
Center on Halsted
3656 N. Halsted, Chicago

\$50-\$100

Includes hors d'oeuvres and light beverages

Actor Sharon Gless will make a special appearance at a fundraiser for the film *Hannah Free*, now filming in Chicago.

Tickets Sliding Scale:
\$50 or \$100

Hannah Free is the story of a lifelong love affair between an independent spirit and the woman she calls home.

For a \$100 contribution (singles or couples) you receive a thank you credit in the film.

Gless, star of popular television shows *Cagney & Lacey*, *Queer As Folk* and *Burn Notice*, will play Hannah, a fiercely independent woman who fights to see her partner one last time in a nursing home.

You can pay online at www.HannahFree.com or send checks to: **Ripe Fruit Films, 1900 S. Prairie Avenue, Chicago, IL 60616**

The screenplay is based on award-winning playwright Claudia Allen's popular stage play of the same name. Allen is a writer-in-residence at Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago and has written more than 20 plays.

You can pay at the door, but only with check or cash. For reservations e-mail: info@hannahfree.com

Other actors include Taylor Miller of *All My Children* fame, Kelli Strickland, Ann Hagemann, and Jacqui Jackson.

Hannah Free will be directed by Wendy Jo Carlton. Director of Photography is Gretchen Warthen. Executive producers are Tracy Baim and Claudia Allen. The film is being produced by Ripe Fruit Films, a Chicago-based production company, for distribution in 2009.

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Illinois races:

Mell, Alvarez win

BY AMY WOOTEN

Election night was a historic evening for Illinoisans on many levels.

All eyes were on Illinois when it was announced that Chicagoan Barack Obama became the first African-American president. However, Obama's victory was not the only historical moment. The evening was also a victory for LGBT people and a number of their allies on the local level.



Deb Mell (left) and Anita Alvarez, two of election night's big winners. Photo of Mell by Suzanne Kraus

Illinoisans came out in large numbers to cast their ballots on Nov. 4. In Chicago, voters withstood long lines, sometimes several blocks long. Windy City Times heard complaints about broken ballot boxes, confused and overwhelmed election judges and lengthy wait times, but despite any hiccups, over 62 percent of registered voters in Chicago made it out to the polls.

The large voter turnout wasn't the only shining moment of the evening. Deb Mell made local LGBT history when she defeated two opponents by a landslide to become the first lesbian elected to the state legislature. Mell is well known for her equal marriage rights activism and the political involvement of her family. Her father is longtime alderman and Democratic Party heavyweight Dick Mell, and her brother-in-law is Gov. Rod Blagojevich. Mell took three-quarters of the Northwest Side's 40th District, defeating Green Party candidate, LGBT ally and immigrant rights

attorney Heather Benno and Republican candidate Christine Nere-Foss. Mell will join openly gay Rep. Greg Harris, who was uncontested this election, in the Illinois House.

Several LGBT allies also fared well, including Reps. Sara Feigenholtz (12th) and Harry Osterman (14th). Feigenholtz defeated Green Party foe Tim Quirk with 85 percent of the vote, and Osterman defeated Green Party candidate John Beacham with 86 percent of the vote. State Sen. John Cullerton defeated Republican opponent Jay Valko in the 6th District. Strong LGBT ally Heather Steans took 81 percent of the vote in the 7th District, defeating Green Party candidate Tom Durkin. Both Cullerton and Steans represent districts with a large number of LGBT constituents.

Several allies in the state legislature also ran uncontested, including Reps. Barbara Flynn Currie and Connie Howard, Sen. Iris Martinez and others.

The 65th District battle between long-time moderate Republican LGBT supporter Rep. Rosemary Mulligan and Democratic ally and pro-choice supporter Aurora Austriaco was very close. The 65th District, which is located in Cook County, includes areas such as Des Plaines, Niles and Park Ridge. Both ran a tough campaign the past several months, and although they ran neck-and-neck most of the evening, Mulligan came out ahead right before midnight with 54 percent of the vote.

The leaders of the Illinois General Assembly also won their races with a majority of the vote. Senate President Emil Jones defeated Republican opponent Ray Wardingly, and Speaker of the House Mike Madigan defeated foe Robert Faglietti. Both received roughly 80 percent of the vote.

Mell's win was not the only ground-breaking local victory of the evening. Anita Alvarez took the highest office for a Hispanic woman in Cook County history. Alvarez, who proved to be a strong LGBT ally during her campaign, defeated anti-gay Republican Tony Peraica and Green Party candidate Thomas O'Brien in the race for Cook County State's Attorney. During her victory speech, Alvarez said she is ready to roll up her sleeves and "get down to business." Alvarez prided herself in the fact that she took 75 percent of the vote, and recalled early on in her campaign when someone asked her husband, "Who is going to vote for an Alvarez?"

In other county races, Recorder of Deeds incumbent Eugene Moore and Circuit Clerk incumbent Dorothy Brown beat out the competition with a majority of the vote. Democratic incumbent Joe Berrios defeated his two foes to win the Board of Review 2nd District.

All three Democratic candidates who ran for the three open Metropolitan Water Reclamation District seats—Frank Avila, Kathleen Therese Meany and Cynthia Santos—won, as well.

Many Cook County Circuit Court judicial candidates ran uncontested, and 70 judges were up for retention. With nearly 75 percent of precincts reporting, Sebastian Patti, who made history when he became the first openly gay judge appointed to the bench, was retained.

Illinois voters also had the chance to decide whether or not the state could hold a constitutional convention in order to revise the 1970 Illinois Constitution. This is a question brought before voters every 20 years. During a constitutional convention, delegates from each senatorial district in Illinois get the opportunity to review the state constitution and make recommendations, which are then approved or disapproved by voters. Sixty-eight percent of voters voted no. Some opponents of the constitutional convention feared that if one was held, delegates would recommend amending the Illinois constitution to define marriage as being between one man and one woman.

Be sure to read the latest political news at www.WindyCity-MediaGroup.com

OBAMA from cover

President Joe Solmonese said. "The pendulum has swung away from the anti-gay forces that dominated the political landscape for too long and toward new leadership that acknowledges our equality."

Jody M. Huckaby, executive director of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), said, "All of us at PFLAG congratulate President-Elect Obama on his victory this evening. Tonight, our country has turned an historic corner, electing our first African-American commander-in-chief. As a United States Senator, and a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, Obama has been a steadfast friend to the LGBT community, our families and friends. We look forward to working with the new administration, and new Congress, in moving equality forward for our families and friends."

Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund, said, "This is the dawn of a new political era of hope and engagement in the life of this country. A new administration brings a promise for a sea change in the tenor of the national dialogue on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues."

Log Cabin Republicans President Patrick Sammon said in a statement that his organization "congratulates Sen. Barack Obama on his historic victory. While Log Cabin Republicans proudly supported Sen. John McCain, we recognize this important moment in American history."

Obama and his running mate, Sen. Joseph Biden, will take their oaths of office as president and vice president, respectively, on Jan. 20.

U.S. House and Senate

Most of the U.S. House and Senate incumbents prevailed easily in their races, including Dick Durbin, Jesse Jackson, Jr., Danny Davis, Jan Schakowsky, Luis Gutierrez and Rahm Emanuel.

Democrat Debbie Halvorson defeated Marty Ozinga in a heated race.

In the 10th Congressional District, Republican incumbent Mark Kirk again defeated Democrat Dan Seals to retain his seat in the U.S. House, according to CBS2Chicago.com. Kirk—who recently has served four terms in the U.S. House, representing a district that has become increasingly Democratic over the years.

In the 14th Congressional District, Democrat Bill Foster retained his seat, defeating Republican dairy magnate Jim Oberweis.

Proposition 8

Unfortunately, not all news is good for the LGBT community. As of 1 a.m. CT, the New York Times reported that Californians were supporting Proposition 8, which seeks to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses and prohibit recognition of same-sex relationships by state agencies, by 52.3 percent to 47.7 percent, with 41 percent of precincts reporting.

Early data showed, unsurprisingly, that Democrats and independents were tending to vote against Proposition 8, while Republicans were in favor of the measure, The Los Angeles Times reported. The survey also revealed that the proposition was trailing among white voters, but was ahead among Black voters; Latino voters were almost evenly divided.



President-elect Barack Obama.

The campaign was one of the costliest on both sides, with more than 60,000 people from all 50 states and almost two dozen countries contributing over \$60 million to support or oppose the proposition, according to the Associated Press.

Other items and races

California was the not the only state that had voters dealing with marriage-related issues. Regarding Florida's Amendment 2, voters

had to decide if they wanted to put a definition of marriage in the state's constitution stating that marriage is a union between a man and a woman, despite the fact that state law already says the same thing.

As of 11 p.m. Tuesday, the amendment was passing overwhelmingly, according to the Florida Department of State Division of Elections, Newsmax.com reported.

In Arizona, voters weighed in on a similar amendment, Proposition 102. The ban had more supporters than opponents in early returns, according to AZCentral.com.

South Dakotans voted 56 percent to 44 percent against an abortion ban that was designed to challenge *Roe v. Wade*, KXMC.com reported. The ban would prohibit abortions except in cases of rape, incest and pregnancies that threaten the life/health of the woman.

In a development some viewed as stunning, Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., lost her bid for re-election to the U.S. Senate to Democrat Kay Hagan. The campaign turned nasty in its final days, with Dole—who is married to former Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole—questioning Hagan's Christianity and, in turn, Hagan suing Dole. The victory also increased the Democrats' majority in the Senate.

Speaking of the Senate, CNN.com indicated at 9:25 p.m. Tuesday night that Democrats had secured 54 seats—with 51 needed for control. With the Democrats also controlling the House, pundits are expecting more liberal issues to be at the forefront.



An attendee writes about safety at the forum. Photo by Emmanuel Garcia

2009 Dyke March talks already begin

BY AMY WOOTEN

Discussion about where the 2009 Dyke March, held in the summer the day before the annual Pride Parade, has already begun.

This summer, Dyke March organizers made history when they decided to bring the annual grassroots event, typically held in the North Side neighborhood Andersonville, to Pilsen. The new location was the largest and most successful Dyke March in the 12 years of its Chicago existence, and a diverse group of people were involved in not only organizing, but also attending the event.

Last week, Dyke March organizers held the first of three community forums to gauge where the community thinks the next Dyke March should be held. According to organizers, they want the march to be held in a different neighborhood each year. During a recent forum, possible suggested locations included Chinatown, Downtown, Humboldt Park, Jackson Park and many others.

On Tuesday, Oct. 28, those interested in becoming involved in the process met at the Center on Halsted, discussing the pros and cons of the 2008 Dyke March, offering new ideas and

contemplating a possible future location for the annual event.

According to Dyke March organizer Tania Unzueta, two additional community forums will be held within the next month, followed by a town hall meeting. There will also be online discussion and an online poll. The decision process mirrors last year's. Unzueta told Windy City Times that organizers hope that a location will be chosen around January.

Those interested in suggested possible locations for the 2009 march can cast their vote in an online poll at www.myspace.com/dykemarch-chicago.

A date has not been chosen for the next community forum, but individuals can find out more at the group's Myspace page.

Ind. man charged with murdering Lakeview resident

BY AMY WOOTEN

An Indiana parolee was recently charged for the murder of a Lakeview Italian restaurant manager.

David Sidener, 50, of Evansville, was charged with first-degree murder and robbery. He appeared in bond court on Oct. 31. On Oct. 15, 47-year-old Randall Hilderbrand was found bound and beaten to death in the basement of Lucca's Restaurant, 2834 N. Southport. Money had been taken from the restaurant, as well.

Hilderbrand lived on the 3000 block of North Lake Shore Drive.

During the beginning of the investigation, police said the killer was a known acquaintance of Hilderbrand's, the Chicago Sun-Times reported. Police did not have any additional information as to how the victim knew his killer as of press time.

YPC receives \$100K because of WCT item

BY AMY WOOTEN

A community member recently donated \$100,000 to the Youth Pride Center (YPC) after reading a Windy City Times article about an event thrown by youth in early October.

The donation, which was not anonymous, but the name of the individual will be revealed later, is for "specific purposes," said YPC founder Frank Walker. Walker added that there are many legal

restrictions on what the money can and can't be used for. For example, the donation can't be used for personnel or political activities.

According to Walker, the donor said that when he was growing up, he did not have access to anything like YPC, and there weren't any mainstream organizations (non-clinical) run by people of color and specifically for youth of color.

Walker said that the money will go toward education incentives, cultural programming and possibly innovative health programming geared toward youth even outside of the center.

Because of the donation, Walker also expects that the youth center will be able to double the number of youth taken on several road trips to LGBT youth centers across the United States.



Studs Terkel with WCT Publisher Tracy Baim in 2005. Photo by Hal Baim

Studs Terkel dies

Studs Terkel—a Chicagoan who was an actor, radio host and Pulitzer Prize-winning author—died Oct. 31 at the age of 96, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

Terkel wrote several books, such as *Division Street America* (1966), *Working* (1974), *American Dreams: Lost and Found* (1980) and 1985's Pulitzer Prize-garnering *The Good War: An Oral History of World War II*. His newest work, *P.S.: Further Thoughts from a Lifetime of Listening*, will be published Nov. 3.

His memoir, *Touch and Go*, was published last year, according to the Community Media Workshop's Web site.

Terkel was also a radio personality, hosting a talk show on WFMT for 45 years (1952-1997).

In 2001, Terkel was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame as a friend of the community.

Every year, a select group of journalists is honored by the Community Media Workshop with awards named in honor of Terkel. Among past winners are Chicago Tribune columnist Mary Schmich and Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim. There is also a scholarship named in Terkel's honor.

PASSAGES

Gerald Arpino

Gerald Arpino, the internationally renowned co-founder and artistic director emeritus of The Joffrey Ballet, passed away Oct. 29 in his Chi-

cago home after a long illness at the age of 85, according to a press release from the dance company.

Arpino was born in Staten Island, N.Y., and received early dance training in Seattle by Mary Ann Wells. He co-founded The Joffrey Ballet with Robert Joffrey in 1956. Upon Joffrey's death in 1988, Arpino succeeded him as artistic director.

Arpino was the first choreographer commissioned to create a ballet to honor the office of the American presidency: *The Pantages and the Palace Present Two-a-Day*. In 1993, Arpino produced America's first full-evening rock ballet, *Billboards*, set to the music of Prince.

He served on numerous boards and councils including the national advisory council of the ITI/USA International Ballet Competition and the board of the Dance Notation Bureau. He was a member of the Arts Advisory Committee of the New York International Festival of the Arts.

Arpino was succeeded in the position of Joffrey Ballet Artistic Director by Ashley Wheater, a former Joffrey dancer and ballet master of the San Francisco Ballet.

He is survived by a cousin and great-grand nephew, both of Staten Island. A public memorial will be held Monday, Nov. 17, at 10 a.m. in the Gerald Arpino Studio at the Joffrey Tower, 10 E. Randolph. Donations in his name are being accepted by The Joffrey Ballet, Joffrey Tower, 10 E. Randolph, Chicago, IL 60601.



PREMIERE NIGHT FEATURE



SAVE ME

Directed by Robert Cary

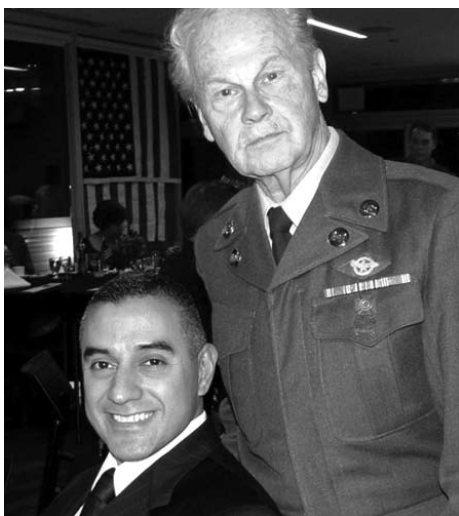
Starring Chad Allen, Judith Light, and our special guest Robert Gant.

Q&A session immediately after screening.

indianapolis LGBT film festival

NOVEMBER 14-16 2008

IUPUI CAMPUS CENTER



Eric Alva (left, with Ed Zasadi of American Veterans for Equal Rights) will emcee Lakeside Pride's concert. Photo by Tracy Baim

Lakeside Pride to hold Nov. 8 'Peace' concert

Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band & Wind Ensemble will present its concert, "Harmony and Discord: The Struggle for Peace" Saturday, Nov. 8, at Northside College Prep High School, 5501 N. Kedzie, at 7 p.m.

Among the songs that will be played are Hymn to the Fallen, Victory at Sea and the theme from the film Schindler's List. The event's guest emcee will be Eric Alva, a gay man who was the first man wounded in the Iraq War. Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. See www.LakesidePride.org.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) will a special pre-concert reception/fundraiser. Tickets to the reception and concert are \$50; proceeds will go to SLDN's efforts to help Chicagoans discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." See www.chicagoSLDN.com. Sponsors are The Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues; The American Veterans for Equal Rights; and Oak Park Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

Human-rights ordinance talk at Gerber/Hart

On Sunday, Nov. 9, at 4 p.m., Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville, will present a program marking the 20th anniversary of the passage of the Chicago Ordinance on Human Rights. Laurie Dittman, Rick Garcia and Arthur Johnston—three individuals instrumental in lobbying for the passage of the ordinance—will participate in a panel discussion moderated by Timothy Stewart-Winter.

The ordinance was enacted by the Chicago City Council Dec. 21, 1988, and took effect in mid-February of the following year. For more about the Nov. 9 program, see www.gerberhart.org or call 773-381-8030.

UIC creates grants to advance LGBT research

The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) announced that it recently awarded three grants for LGBT research.

According to a press release, the university's Chancellor's Committee on the Status of LGBT Issues awarded three LGBT seed grants to help advance LGBT research at UIC. The grants fund three projects that cover a range of disciplines. The recipients were psychology doctoral candidate Jessica Salerno, anthropology doctoral candidate Zachary Blair and College of Education associate professor Stacey Horn.

The LGBT Seed Grant Awards are sponsored by the Los Angeles-based David Bohnett Foundation, which awarded \$20,000 in June to start a seed fund.

Affinity hosting 'For the Bible' viewing

Affinity Community Services is hosting a viewing of the movie For The Bible Tells Me So on Saturday, Nov. 8 at 5650 S. Woodlawn in the Chris Moore Parlor. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the viewing starts at 7 p.m. A \$5 donation is requested.

The film focuses on five Christian families, each with a gay or lesbian child. Parents talk about their marriages and church-going; their children's childhood and coming out; their reactions; and changes over time.

Autism Speaks to hold 'Heroes' gala

The Chicago chapter of Autism Speaks will hold its first annual "Autism Speaks Heroes Ball" Friday, Nov. 14, at the Ravenswood Billboard Factory, 4043 N. Ravenswood, 8:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. Former Chicago Bear Gary Fencik will host.

One in 150 individuals is diagnosed with autism, making it more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes and AIDS combined. Among those with autism is Daniel Tammet, a gay British savant profiled on TV's 60 Minutes who is considered by some to be the world's smartest man.

Tickets are \$85-\$125. Visit www.heroes-ball.org or call the Heroes Hotline at 312-799-3298.

'Briggs Initiative' talk at Gerber/Hart

Charles Perry will speak on "The Briggs Initiative: A Thirty-Year Retrospective" Tuesday, Nov. 11, at 7 p.m., as part of Gerber/Hart Library's "The Cutting Edge: Young Scholars Share Their Work" lecture series.

Perry will discuss the history of California's Proposition Six, otherwise known as the Briggs Initiative—a statewide ballot measure put forth in 1978 that proposed barring gay men and lesbians from being employed by California public

schools as teachers and in other positions.

Gerber/Hart is at 1127 W. Granville. Call 773-381-8030 or visit www.gerberhart.org.

Donor leaves \$400K to Wis. LGBT foundation

Cream City Foundation—an organization for LGBT people in southeastern Wisconsin—has announced that Clarence Germershausen (a.k.a. John Clayton) left it a legacy gift of \$400,000. It's the largest gift in the foundation's 26-year history.

"Mr. Germershausen was one of Cream City Foundation's first supporters," said Tim Clark, the foundation's president. "We are honored to receive the generous and thoughtful bequest from Clarence. His gift makes it possible for us to strengthen our Mission Fund and future grant making efforts that advance LGBT equality." See www.CreamCityFoundation.org for more.

German soprano to visit Center

Center on Halsted announced that the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Roger Pines will moderate an intimate discussion with German soprano Marlis Petersen, who will star in Lyric Opera's upcoming production of Lulu.

The event will take place Monday, Nov. 17, at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, at 7 p.m.

The discussion will be followed by a reception. Tickets are \$10, and \$5 for students or seniors. See www.centeronhalsted.org for tickets.

'In the Life' airing Nov. 21

In the Life, the Emmy-nominated public-television series that delves into the LGBT experience, will air the episode "Lifesavers" locally Friday, Nov. 21, at 10:30 p.m. on WTTW-11.

This episode features people who have championed the vulnerable in our society: children, queer teens at-risk and the dying. Among those profiled are The Trevor Project, the only nationwide, around-the-clock crisis and suicide prevention helpline for LGBTQ youth; and Cynthia Wade, who won an Oscar this year for her lesbian documentary, Freeheld.

For more, see www.inthelifetv.org.

Project VIDA gala Nov. 18

HIV/AIDS agency Project VIDA will hold its 16th-anniversary gala Tuesday, Nov. 18, at the National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th. The VIP reception is 6-7 p.m., and the general reception is 7-10 p.m.

There will be a premium bar, a silent auction and live entertainment that includes mambo dancers, a hip-hop dance troupe and a live band.

Tickets are \$35 for individuals and \$60 for couples. Call 773-510-5027 or e-mail hector773@gmail.com.

LifeLube to hold another live podcast forum

LifeLube, Project CRYSP, Steamworks and the Feast of Fools podcast present the last live podcast forum of the year, titled "Tunnel of Love."

According to a recent press release, the discussion is about "keeping that booty healthy and happy." Featured panelists include Dr. Will Wong (Chicago Department of Public Health), Jim Pickett (AIDS Foundation of Chicago) and Chicago-based porn star J.C. Carter.

The forum will be moderated by the Feast of Fools' Fausto Fernos and Marc Felion.

"Tunnel of Love" is set to take place Tuesday, Nov. 18, at the Center on Halsted's Hoover-Lepien Theatre, 3656 N. Halsted.

The doors will open at 6 p.m., and the program will start at 7 p.m.

Information on how to RSVP will be announced soon.

Vital Bridges to celebrate 20 years

Vital Bridges, which helps provide food and other services to those living with HIV/AIDS, will celebrate its 20th anniversary during its Annual Holiday Brunch on Sunday, Dec. 7.

The event will take place at the Four Seasons Hotel, and will include music, live and silent auctions and more.

Tickets are \$250 per person. Call 312-948-2785 or see www.vitalbridges.org for more information.

Donor leaves \$400K to Wis. LGBT foundation

Cream City Foundation—an organization for LGBT people in southeastern Wisconsin—has announced that Clarence Germershausen's (a.k.a. John Clayton) left it a legacy gift of \$400,000. It's the largest gift in the foundation's 26-year history.

"Mr. Germershausen was one of Cream City Foundation's first supporters," said Tim Clark, the foundation's president. "We are honored to receive the generous and thoughtful bequest from Clarence. His gift makes it possible for us to strengthen our Mission Fund and future grant making efforts that advance LGBT equality." See www.CreamCityFoundation.org for more.

TYRA seeks performers

Broadway Youth Center's Transgender Youth Resource and Advocacy (TYRA) program is seeking "gender fabulous" performers for a trans-themed performance during the upcoming Night of the Fallen Stars event.

Interested poets, artists, dancers, musicians, comedians and other performers are welcome to contact Casey Schwartz at 773-935-3151 ext. 224 or caseys@howardbrown.org.

The 4th Annual Night of the Fallen Stars event celebrates the local transgender community. It will be held at the Center on Halsted on Nov. 16 at 7 p.m.

Mr. Chicago Leather Jan. 31

Touche announced that the 2009 Mr. Chicago Leather contest will take place during a packed weekend of events for the local leather community from Friday, Jan. 30, through Sunday, Feb. 1.

The actual Mr. Chicago Leather contest will be held on Saturday, Jan. 31, at 10 p.m. Other events over the weekend include cocktail parties, a tour of the Leather Archives & Museum and more.

See www.chicagoleather.org.

RENT, Rapp return to Chicago

Broadway in Chicago announced that RENT will return to Chicago next spring, featuring original Broadway cast members Anthony Rapp and Adam Pascal.

The limited engagement will take place March 31 through April 12, 2009.

Correction

In last week's election issue, the article on Judge Sebastian Patti should have stated that he was the first gay man appointed, not elected, to an Illinois judgeship. Tom Chiola was the first gay man elected to a judgeship.

Windy City Times regrets the error.

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SGT Marquell Smith served America honorably for 6.5 years, with time in Okinawa and Morocco. Under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy the military is not supposed to ask about your sexual orientation. Find out what you do if they ask.

CHICAGO GAY HISTORY

BY JOHN D'EMILIO



The Lavender Scare in Chicago

If you've ever taken a U.S. history course, you're bound to have spent some classes on the Cold War and McCarthyism. It was a paranoid time. Having just defeated fascist powers in Europe and Asia, U.S. leaders grew fearful of an imagined communist threat. The very phrase "cold war" suggested that peace was an illusion, that the country always had to be ready for war. For the first time, the U.S. built a large permanent military. Militarism became so powerful that even a former general like President Eisenhower told Americans to beware of "the military-industrial complex."

To many politicians and journalists, the communist menace was much closer than the Soviet Union. Joseph McCarthy, a senator from Wisconsin, built his career around accusing government employees of being disloyal. But McCarthy was not alone in this. Lots of public figures together helped make the hunt for communists and their sympathizers a national campaign. In the process, precious freedoms of speech and association were compromised, and lives were ruined.

What most history courses don't tell you, however, is this: During the McCarthy era, the witch hunters ousted a lot more gay men, lesbians and bisexuals from government jobs and the military than they did political radicals.

David Johnson, a historian who studied at Northwestern University and now teaches at the University of South Florida, has written a very gripping book titled *The Lavender Scare*. He offers a close look at life in Washington DC in the 1940s, '50s and '60s, when the purges of "sex perverts"—as gays, lesbians and bisexuals were labeled—were at their height and the persecutions most intense. He paints a terrifying portrait of government investigations, secret surveillance and police abuse. Women and men lived in fear. Co-workers and neighbors spied on one another and became informants. FBI and military investigators engaged in chilling interrogations of suspects. Thousands and thousands of folks lost jobs or were expelled from the military. Many others were cut off from prospective employment. Some packed up and left town; others took their own lives.

While Johnson naturally focused his story on Washington, D.C., reading his book made me curious as to whether there was a Chicago angle to the Lavender Scare. Of course, many federal employees lived in the city, from postal workers to those who staffed various federal offices, and they were subject to the ban on the employment of lesbians, gays and bisexuals. But I wondered how, or even whether, the investigations and purges were covered by the local press. Even if most of the action was in the nation's capital, did local news coverage bring the story into Chicago's homes? Did queers in Chicago know about what was happening? What impressions about gay men and lesbians did the press perpetuate?

Sure enough, the Chicago Tribune gave prominent coverage to the issue. The story broke early in 1950 when a State Department official mentioned in passing that a number of fired security risks were homosexuals. Over the next three years, the basic outline of the Tribune's articles remained the same: A lax Truman administration allowed "moral misfits" to remain on the government payroll. Although homosexuals could be found in every agency, they especially seemed to concentrate in the State Department. Because they were desperate to escape exposure, they easily fell prey to communists who blackmailed them into betraying government risks. Hence, they were all security risks. Only when Eisen-

hower became president in 1953 did the government take an aggressive stance, and the topic finally faded from view.

As I read through all these stories, a number of things stood out. Above all, the language dripped with contempt. It seemed designed to arouse outrage among straight readers and shame and terror among anyone who wasn't. Reporters routinely used words like perverts, degenerates, and misfits. They wrote of "unnatural tendencies," "sordid practices" and "moral depravity." Stories described the "shocked outcries" coming from "horrified legislators" who, the paper claimed, "recoiled" at what they heard in closed committee hearings.

The Tribune portrayed the nation's capital as a moral cesspool. Washington was overrun by unmarried females starved for love; Communist agents then "entice women into a life of eroticism." The city, it reported, was "infested" with "nests of perverts." Investigators testified about wild parties and sex orgies for lesbians and for male homosexuals.

The Tribune made the dangers seem immense and the risks very great. Senate investigators, it informed its readers, found that "one homosexual can pollute an entire government office." It described how, throughout history, moral weakness had been responsible for "the death of nations." In the midst of the Korean War, it told about sex perverts found in the American foreign service in both Korea and Hong Kong. These "moral degenerates" could be found in the most sensitive places. It reported that Russia kept lists of sex perverts in enemy countries like the United States.

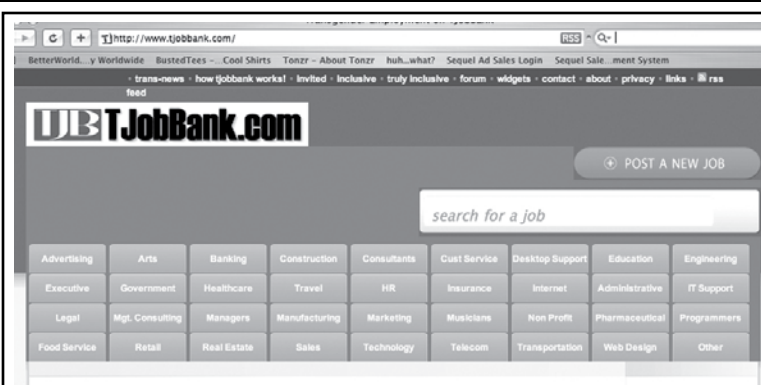
Then there was the matter of evidence—or, rather, the absence of it. Over and over, members of Congress like McCarthy and his allies made the claim that gay men and lesbians were susceptible to blackmail. The Tribune dutifully repeated this in virtually every story. But there were no examples, no instances, no hint of proof. The closest reporters came to a concrete example was a reference to a scandal in Germany 50 years earlier.

Most infuriating of all is the blatant partisanship that drove the Tribune's reporting. If you read its coverage closely, you'll notice that the paper is using the story as a way to attack Truman and the Democrats. The staunchly Republican paper of Colonel McCormick, as its conservative owner was known, employed the popular dislike of gays and lesbians to mobilize opinion against Democratic control of the federal government. McCormick despised President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal. He hated the expansion of the federal government created by Depression-era programs like social security, unemployment compensation, and subsidies for farmers. His paper used every opportunity that came its way to attack Democrats. Consider this headline: "Move to Oust Perverts in U.S. Jobs Defeated—Democrats Vote as Unit to Reject Proposal." Or this one: "Sex Perverts' Files Vanish, Probers Told; Insured Promotion in Truman Regime."

Compare the Tribune's coverage with that of the Democratic-leaning Chicago Sun-Times and the partisan motivations become even clearer. The Tribune went out of its way to exaggerate the dimensions of the problem. It used figures ranging from 4 to 8 percent to describe the size of the homosexual population; that would mean thousands of federal employees in Washington, and as many as 100,000 across the country. By contrast, the Sun-Times wrote in terms of "two ten-thousands of one per cent," a proportion so small as to be of no concern at all.

The McCarthy era was a scary time for anyone who didn't follow the sexual straight and narrow. Even those who didn't work for the federal government had to be aware that the witch hunters were on the offensive. In the early 1950s, the Tribune didn't have any counterbalancing news stories about the gay and lesbian community. "Perverts" and "degenerates" were all we were during the years of the Lavender Scare.

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TJobBank.com home page.

Web site finds jobs for trans individuals

BY AMY WOOTEN

After experiencing job discrimination firsthand, a Milwaukee woman decided to launch her own Web site to assist transgender individuals in finding employment with truly inclusive companies and organizations.

Jillian Barfield created TJobBank.com, described as the first and only organization dedicated to providing employment services to the transgender community—a historically underemployed population. TJobBank.com launched in July, and there are several job openings already listed on the site.

TJobBank.com doesn't just list open positions. Barfield takes it one step further, and validates whether or not an employer is truly trans-inclusive. The site also lists companies that have been invited to post jobs on the site and have not yet submitted anything.

In order to be categorized as "inclusive" on the Web site, a company accepts the offer to post on TJobBank.com. If Barfield can validate that it hires transgender individuals, it will then be placed on the "truly inclusive" list.

As it says on the Web site, the mission is to differentiate between companies and organizations that walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

Barfield started by looking at the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC's) Corporate Equality Index (CEI)—specifically at those companies receiving perfect scores. The fact that a former employer who had once told her she could not transition if she wanted to continue working there recently received a 100-percent rating caught her attention.

"I decided we needed validation to see if these companies are truly inclusive," Barfield said.

Currently, Barfield is reaching out to those on the HRC CEI, as well as companies and organization that have signed onto United ENDA. Several of those companies have posted positions. Barfield anticipates that the site will continue to grow as word spreads.

"When I started this, I knew it wouldn't happen overnight," Barfield said. "In a way, it confirms my suspicion that some of these companies don't walk the walk. I will just have to be relentless."

While the online resource continues to grow, Barfield asks that people working at an inclusive companies encourage their employers to list job openings on the site. To learn more, see www.TJobBank.com.



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NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY AMY WOOTEN

According to the Advocate, the FBI and the Secret Service are currently investigating **cyber attacks made on two Web sites campaigning against proposed anti-gay marriage amendments.** The attacks were made on sites campaigning against proposed same-sex marriage bans in both California and Florida. The sites targeted were NoOnProp8.com (California) and SayNo2.com (Florida). According to Equality California, NoOnProp8.com is already functioning properly again.

Three members of the Soulforce Equality Ride were recently arrested after they entered the campus of Southwestern Assemblies of God University. Soulforce riders travel to various Christian colleges across the U.S. Their mission is to have conversations about LGBT inclusion at Christian colleges and stress that Christian places of higher learning charge their policies to allow for such inclusion. The three riders were arrested and charged with trespassing, but have been released.

The city council in Columbus, Ohio, recently passed a **motion urging the state legislators to pass a gay anti-discrimination bill.** The measure, which would ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in areas such as housing and employment, was first introduced in March. However, there has been little to no action taken on the measure. Ohio's governor already said that if the bill lands on his desk, he would sign it.

Republican California Gov. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** officially said that he would

vote no on California's Proposition 8, which would ban same-sex couples from marrying. On Thursday, Oct. 30, Schwarzenegger issued a press release stating that he does not support the measure.

According to the FBI, hate crimes against gays were up in 2007, while other hate crimes (motivated by racial or religious bias) decreased very slightly. About 7,600 hate crimes were reported in 2007, which is roughly a 1 percent decline from the year before. While the overall number declines, however, the FBI reported that there was a **6 percent increase in anti-gay hate crimes.**

A popular **Huffingtonpost.com** blogger, **Carol Anne Burger, who has been very vocal on LGBT issues, committed suicide after murdering her ex-girlfriend.** She took her own life after police linked her to the murder of her ex-girlfriend, Jessica Kalish, who was recently stabbed to death over 200 times with a screwdriver. She was found dead before police were able to question her, shortly after she learned that they found her ex-lover's body. Kalish and Burger, although they had been broken up, still lived together. Burger shot herself in the head on Oct. 24 in the Florida home they had shared.

The AP reported that South Carolina voters recently received calls from a **fictional LGBT rights group.** Voters in two South Carolina counties received automated calls from a fake organization called the Alliance for the Advancement of Gays and Lesbians. The automated message asked residents to vote for Democratic candidate Mandy Powers Norrell because she supports gay rights and abortion. According to Norrell, she does not support either.

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) Executive Director Paula Ettelbrick is stepping down from her position after six years of service, according to a press release. The IGLHRC, which is based in New York, is a global human rights advocacy organization that seeks to secure human rights for those who are discriminated or persecuted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The families of 23 California elementary school students have had their **children removed from a music school class taught by a transgender man.** Several families were upset school administrators did not notify parents that the teacher had undergone gender reassignment surgery over summer break. Parents instead found out from their chil-

dren. So far, 15 families have had 23 children removed from the music class and moved into a gym class. School administrators said that did not notify parents about the employee because it would have violated privacy rules.

A new study of same-sex couples that tied the knot since gay marriage became legal in Massachusetts reveals the many reasons why they made their decision. In "Attractions and Obstacles While Considering Legally Recognized Same-Sex Marriage," which was published in the Journal of GLBT Family Studies, **24 percent of same-sex couples said they married to gain legal protections.** Twenty percent said they did it to make a public statement of their commitment. Thirteen percent said they wanted to gain legal protections for their children. Other reasons included gaining family acknowledgement of their relationship. Only 4 percent said they wed for political reasons.

Scientists from all over the world attending an international AIDS vaccine conference in Cape Town, South Africa, recently said that **it is impossible to predict whether or not they can create an AIDS vaccine in the future.** Many scientists added that the future looks bleak, especially because of the global economic downturn. They predict that the economy will deeply

impact AIDS research and the search for a cure. Scientists added, however, that they would not stop trying to create a vaccine.

The M·A·C AIDS Fund's Global Youth Prevention Initiative has given the New York's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center's Youth Enrichment Services Program **\$100,000 in grant money,** according to a press release. The fund was established in 1994 to support individuals affected by HIV/AIDS globally.

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected gay "Survivor" winner Richard Hatch's appeal of his conviction for failing to pay taxes on his prize money. Hatch, who is openly gay, won the first season of the hit reality show. In 2006, Hatch was sentenced to over four years in prison for tax evasion. He is scheduled to be released next October.

Out daytime TV show host **Ellen DeGeneres** called **Republican vice presidential candidate Gov. Sarah Palin out** during a recent episode of her show for supporting a federal ban of same-sex marriage. DeGeneres said, "Maybe it's because I'm gay that I think we should all be equal. But I feel that we're all equal."



SAGE holds confab, honors stars

SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders)—the world's oldest and largest non-profit agency dedicated to serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors—hosted its 4th annual National Conference on LGBT Aging, "It's About Time LGBT Aging in a Changing World," held Oct. 12-14 in New York City. In conjunction with the conference, SAGE celebrated its 30th anniversary with an awards dinner and gala, and unveiled an advertising campaign featuring SAGE members. Among those at the dinner was tennis legend Martina Navratilova (pictured, right, with comedian Kate Clinton), who was honored for her advocacy work. SAGE is the world's oldest and largest non-profit agency dedicated to serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors. Photo by Donna F. Aceto

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WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

Trans people and GLBT activists arrested in India

Police in Bangalore, India, arrested more than 40 transgender people and GLBT activists, and mistreated several of them Oct. 20, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported.

The events began with the arrests of five "hijras" (transgender people, intersex people and eunuchs who have no precise corollary in Western cultures).

When five activists from the Bangalore sexual-minorities organization Sangama then went to the Girinagar police station to assist the hijras, the activists were sent to a second police station where they were beaten and kicked. They were then returned to the first station, where two of the activists were sexually abused, HRW said. The five were charged with "unlawful assembly" and "obstructing a public servant," and jailed.

Later, about 150 activists staged a protest outside the second police station. Six activists who entered the police station were arrested, beaten and sexually harassed, HRW said.

After that, police targeted the remainder of the group outside, beating the individuals with batons and arresting 31. The activists were kept in a van for seven hours and were not fed or allowed to use a toilet for 18 hours, HRW said.

All arrestees appeared before magistrates on Oct. 21 and 22 and were released. But some still face charges ranging from extortion (in the case of the hijras) to unlawful assembly and rioting, HRW said.

Bangalore, one of India's most modern metropolises, is the nation's third-largest and fastest-growing city. It is nicknamed the Silicon Valley of India.

Australian activists seek apology from Jerry Lewis

The Australian Coalition for Equality called on U.S. comedian Jerry Lewis to apologize Oct. 26 for using the word "fag" at a press conference in Sydney two days earlier.

Asked his opinion of the game cricket, Lewis said: "Oh, cricket? It's a fag game. What are you, nuts?"

He then reportedly flounced about effeminately handling an imaginary cricket bat.

"Mr. Lewis owes an apology to the gay community, to cricketers, and to comedians for debasing their trade with his cheap homophobia," said ACE spokesman Rodney Croome.

Last year, during his annual Labor Day mus-

cular-dystrophy telethon, Lewis referred to a production crewman's imaginary son as an "illiterate faggot."

He later apologized, saying, "I obviously made a bad choice of words."

Comic who blasted pope won't be prosecuted

Famous Italian comic Sabina Guzzanti will not be prosecuted for saying in July that Pope Benedict XVI will go to hell for the church's treatment of gay people.

The decision not to pursue an investigation was made by Justice Minister Angelino Alfano. A local prosecutor in Rome had suggested Guzzanti's comments broke a law that protects the dignity of Roman Catholics.

A Vatican spokesman said the church approved of the decision to drop the matter.

Former UK soccer star cites 12 gay current players

Former UK professional soccer player Paul Elliott, who was the Scottish Player of the Year in 1990-1991, said Oct. 16 that he knows 12 current top players who are gay but not out.

Elliott spoke at a forum called "Homophobia—Football's Final Taboo" organized by the group Kick It Out, which is funded by soccer's governing bodies and "works throughout the football, educational and community sectors to challenge racism and work for positive change," according to its Web site.

Elliott said the players are reluctant to come out for fear of homophobic chanting at games and other negative reactions.

"I've known a dozen players who are gay," he said. "I understand why they do not want to come out. Like racism, there is no place for homophobia in sport."

Trans marriage case begins in Malta

A Constitutional Court case began in Malta Oct. 22 challenging a Civil Court decision that a post-op transsexual woman could not marry her fiancé because she is still male.

The Malta Gay Rights Movement said the case is the last stop before an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"GOD IS DEAD. OR RATHER, THE REPUBS' PARTICULARLY cruel version, a gloomy, tyrannical, guilt-slingin' God from Colorado Springs who loved war and smacked up women's rights and pretended to tolerate gay people even while hating 'what they do,' a God who snorted the Republican agenda like it was cheap meth in a Denver motel room, has proven to be a complete failure, an abomination of divine connection." — *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Mark Morford, Oct. 16.

"IF SOMEONE AS RIDICULOUS AS SARAH PALIN CAN MAKE IT TO that level, then there's

hope for all of us, right? Don't worry about education or achievement or hard work or self-sacrifice: if you can just convince other people of your value—without any facts or deeds to back it up—then you too can enjoy big cash prizes, get back at friends who have sex with your friends' wives, run up huge debts, you name it." — *San Diego gay blogger Chris Pratt*, Sept. 10. (cpratt.livejournal.com)

"MICHELLE AND I HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH many openly gay and lesbian friends and colleagues whom we have been close to for many years. While that fact has made the issues facing the LGBT community more personal, the fundamental reasons I have for supporting equality are greater than any individual. ... We need to end the divisive politics of George W. Bush and pursue policies that treat all of us, regardless of identity or background, with dignity, equality and respect." — *Barack Obama to the Washington Blade*, Sept. 10.

"I ALWAYS SPOKE OF JANE (WAGNER) VERY OPENLY, and everybody in the industry knew. Well, many people in the heartlands still don't get that I'm gay, that I have a partnership with Jane that's 37 years long, and after you're around for so long, it's sort of like grandstanding. What happened is that I was doing an interview and the guy finally just wrote it blatantly. When I was on the cover of Time and in Newsweek back in '77, (one article said) that I shared a house with Jane Wagner and the other one said I lived alone. So you never knew what anybody was gonna write." — *Lily Tomlin to Chicago's Windy City Times*, Sept. 24.

"I THINK THE IDEA OF POLY-RELATIONSHIPS IS GREAT. And it's open to me if I want that. My marriage is about 'Whatever happens, we'll stay together.' But it just hasn't come up yet. Being married is very important to me. It has utterly committed me to the fight for gay marriage. ... I've been with my husband for 10 years. There is an unconditional support and love there. That connection, feeling supported by someone emotionally has totally enhanced my life." — *Comedian Margaret Cho to the Ottawa, Canada, gay newspaper Capital Xtra!*, Oct. 8.



Many people in the heartlands still don't get that I'm gay.

—Lily Tomlin

"I HAVE TWO KIDS—ONE IS 6 AND ONE IS 12—and my 12-year-old daughter has not known ... anything but George Bush. At least (adults) have a memory of somebody different, and a prospect that there will be somebody different in the future. It's been horrible for her to listen to the president, and listen to this fear-based, warmongering, torture-supporting, homophobic, anti-immigrant bullshit. ... It's going to be really close in Florida. But my hope is that when Barack Obama wins, we're going to know that those were LGBT votes. And last time they used us as a wedge, but this time we're going to be the edge." — *Sex and the City star Cynthia Nixon (Miranda) speaking in Wilton Manors, Fla.*, Sept. 27, according to the *South Florida Blade*.

"MY FAVORITE GAY GUY IS ALWAYS ANYONE WITH a sense of humor and sense of style. I'm very disappointed when you meet that one gay schlub who has no sense of style. You're gay, you should know how to pick a chintz!" — *Comedian Joan Rivers to the gay newspaper Dallas Voice*, Oct. 10.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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PHOTOGRAPHERS Kat Fitzgerald, Mel Ferrand, Steve Becker, Steve Starr
ARTISTS/CARTOONISTS Alison Bechdel, Mikeoart
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Bruce DuMont's open letter

The selection of Focus on the Family, with Dr. James Dobson, into the National Radio Hall of Fame (NRHOF) has created controversy, led to two full-page Chicago Tribune ads and caused great pain to many in the gay community.

To better understand the controversy, people need to better understand the nomination and induction process of the NRHOF.

Since 1992, the steering committee of the NRHOF in Chicago (a project of the Museum of Broadcast Communications) has nominated individuals and programs for induction based on a criteria of on-air tenure and broadcast accomplishment.

Historically, these ballot nominations are mailed to dues-paying members of the museum and hundreds of established leaders of the radio industry for voting—and the actual induction. If you were not included in these two groups, you could not vote.

Earlier this year some steering committee members thought that requiring voters to be “dues-paying [m]useum members” was too restrictive—too much like a membership enhancement program—than a fair way to assess a nominee's popular support. So, the steering committee recommended a change to an online voting process, believing such a change would expand the voting base and raise greater visibility of the NRHOF and bring greater weight to its eventual inductees.

Since voting began in 1992, the NRHOF Steering Committee has never taken a nominee's political or religious views into consideration when making a nomination. Radio is an industry predicated on free speech—Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Howard Stern (who were nominated in the same category) do not see the world the same way. Past Radio Hall of Famers Franklin D. Roosevelt and Rush Limbaugh have provided different tones and messages via the airwaves ... and Paul Harvey is different from Garrison Keillor.

The steering committee has also never encouraged or discouraged any nominee from campaigning for votes. Oscar Award voting is frequently preceded by a full-page ad campaign seeking support for a particular nominee.

Focus on the Family led such a public online effort to turn out “its” vote. The committee is aware that other nominees did the same thing, and there is nothing wrong with such an exercise. Howard Stern urged his listeners not to vote for him.

In 2008, anyone who chose to vote online could have done so. Over 50,000 people voted for Focus on the Family—the largest vote total in NRHOF history. The vote easily out distanced its nearest competitor.

The 2008 public online voting period opened with a national publicity campaign May 1 and it ended July 15. On July 9—six days before the voting ended—the NRHOF received the first indication of any displeasure in the nomination of Focus on the Family. An obvious e-mail campaign led by Wayne Besen of Truth Wins Out suggested the steering committee withdraw the nomination, characterizing the words and beliefs of Focus founder Dr. James Dobson as hate speech and bigoted. They said the NRHOF was “endorsing” Dobson's views. We are not. Why did Besen wait until the end of the voting process to speak out?

On July 17 the steering committee obtained the final results from its independent online vote-tabulating service—and it showed that Focus on the Family finished first in its category. The steering committee discussed the protest but ratified the vote.

Some recent irate e-mails have suggested all previous Radio Hall of Fame inductees will be tarnished by the addition of Focus on the Family. Does anyone really believe that any fair-minded person will think less of fellow inductees Edward R. Murrow, Norman Corwin, Susan Stamberg,

Tom Joyner, Richard Durham, Bob Edwards or All Things Considered?

Do these irate people believe in free speech and freedom of religion?

Several gay-rights organizations now are leading a protest of the Radio Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Chicago on Saturday, Nov. 8. They have privately vowed to punish me personally and the Museum of Broadcast Communications (MBC) as an institution. Their goal is to shut off donations to our effort to build a new MBC in Chicago. They know that fiscal times are tough and they want to be the final nail in the museum's coffin. Shame on them!

Protesters should know that the NRHOF Steering Committee will review its voting process before the next selection period. A review was always part of our plan. I will personally urge a change in open online balloting. But for the integrity of the process, the results for 2008 will stand, with protests noted.

As a broadcaster; journalist; chairman of the NRHOF; and founder and president of the Museum of Broadcast Communications, I have been a public figure in Chicago for over four decades, and always treated the gay and lesbian community and its leaders fairly and objectively. My second wife, the late Kathy Osterman, championed gay rights. Kathy is an inductee into the Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame.

I am fully aware of the pain Focus on the Family has caused in the gay community; I have also read and heard about how the Focus on the Family broadcasts have helped people over the past three decades. But the Radio Hall of Fame induction is not about political or religious philosophy—or my personal opinion.

Sincerely,
 Bruce DuMont
 Chairman
 National Radio Hall of Fame

Hall over

Rather than just respond to the call for protest, I made an effort to read your open letter responding to the concerns of the LGBT community regarding the induction of James Dobson to the National Radio Hall of Fame. However, your justifications do not hold water.

First, using your logic, it would be entirely understandable for your German counterpart to induct Josef Goebbels—regardless of viewpoint, an even more effective communicator and orator than Dobson.

Secondly, Dobson contributes nothing to the airwaves except to provide a seemingly safe, “blessed by God” place to be prejudiced. Disregarding Dobson's ignorance of Christ's message (how ironic!), he has never been a broadcasting figure of any significance except to voice intolerance and bigotry, carefully cloaked in “religion” in order to allow him to more fully vent intolerance—no doubt to guarantee a ‘two-fer’ in constitutional protection.

Third, you observe in your open letter, “Does anyone really believe that any fair-minded person will think less of fellow inductees Edward R. Murrow, Norman Corwin, Susan Stamberg, Tom Joyner, Richard Durham, Bob Edwards or All Things Considered?” Hardly. That is not their concern. What should concern you is that you have made the award, at best, meaningless and, at worst, an embarrassment. At a time when the Museum of Broadcast Communications (MBC) is attempting to raise funds to complete its new home, rendering your “highest award” a subject of ridicule (and upsetting a group of people with, statistically speaking, both high disposable income levels as well as a generous tradition of philanthropy) is hardly quality stewardship of the MBC dream.

Fourth, you promise, “Protesters should know that the NRHOF Steering Committee will review its voting process before the next selection period.” Whether it is \$10 billion a month in Iraq, a governor unwilling to compromise on anything

or Wall Street's shell games, do you really believe the appropriate response is to say, “We did not make a mistake—but we may change it in the future?” We as a nation—not just the LGBT community—are not exactly predisposed to view favorably someone who cannot own up to an error. Your rather painfully convoluted explanation of the voting process could best be summarized by “We screwed up and let the process be seized by a narrow special interest intending to use our award to gain credibility.” Again, while Focus and Dobson will no doubt trumpet this award, I hardly think Garrison Keillor will have it on the center of his mantle.

Fifth, I certainly agree with those opposed to donating to a place that intends to permanently honor this individual. Mr. DuMont, this is not about a fundraiser, or an isolated evening as a one-off event; your institution will be permanently enshrining a “person” whose greatest contribution to this nation is hate speech. That, sir, is a fact, and it is unavoidable. (If you seek to disagree, I suggest that you simply Google “James Dobson” and let the evidence speak for itself.)

Finally—and it pains me to say this, for I have always respected you, and still have the greatest admiration and respect for your late beloved wife—I cannot believe that she would not have counseled some other course.

You (rather dismissively and emotionally, I observe) ask, “Do these irate people believe in free speech and freedom of religion?” Yes. And your argument is completely disingenuous. We are not arguing whether Dobson has the right to be heard; unfortunately, constitutionally, he does. Our disagreement is with you and the museum, who apparently believe that his “accomplishments” should be permanently honored. That is simply impossible for us to fathom: a museum supposedly dedicated to “freedom” celebrating one who would deny it. And until you and the board realize your own hypocrisy—instead of attempting to foist this off as pressure tactics from a “special-interest” group—I will make sure that every individual I know is aware of MBC's actions and my fervent desire that such an organization receive no further support (whether of individual, corporate or governmental origin).

Sadly,
 Dean Skora
 St. Charles, IL

School of thought

Dear Mayor Daley:

My primary concern for writing this open letter is to ask if the Chicago Public School System is large enough to encompass the safety concerns of LGBT students, and their families. The School for Social Justice Pride Campus certainly is not a solution to the pandemic of violence directed at LGBT high school students; however, it is a step in the right direction. The conception of the school was not to remove opportunities from straight students, but to expand those opportunities for everyone. It is an immediate response to a very real problem. As a mayor of this world-class city that hopes the host the 2016 World Olympics, our hope is that you will emphasize our commonalities rather than our differences.

The Rainbow Sash Movement supports the School for Social Justice Pride Campus, and I encourage both you and the Chicago School Board to make this proposal a reality. As a fellow person of faith we are called to promote the common good, by providing for the health, welfare and dignity of every student. We believe by promoting an environment where our differences are celebrated and not feared the Pride Campus will jump-start a seismic shift in how we view this problem in our city's educational institutions.

Sincerely,
 Joe Murray
 Executive Director
 Rainbow Sash Movement

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



SqueezeBox! (above) is one of many films slated for presentation at the local LGBT film fest known as Reeling 2008. See page 17.

THEATER

'Vine' and dandy.
page 14



CELEBRATIONS

Frights out.
page 18

Photo by Mel Ferrand



SPORTS

Run and done.
page 22

Photo from Ross Forman



Jennifer Hudson's rising star

BY AMY MATHENY

Editor's note: Obviously, the interview with Hudson occurred before the untimely tragedies befell her that involved members of her family. We here at Windy City Media Group extend our sincerest condolences to the Hudson family while presenting this interview with a rising superstar.

Jennifer Hudson is a hometown girl made good, very good. From local stages in Chicago to the national stage on American Idol, and the global stage with her Academy Award for Dreamgirls, Hudson is a shooting star. Now, she's released her self-titled debut CD (with the debut single, Spotlight) that entered Billboard's Top 200 and the R&B/Hip-Hop charts at #2. And if that is not enough, she co-stars in the film *The Secret Life of Bees*, which is currently in theaters.

Amy Matheny: Right after you were on American Idol, I was in a show in Chicago with Felicia Fields (Tony Award nominee for *The Color Purple*). She was in *Big River* with you at the Marriott Theatre in Chicago when you were a teenager. Could you have ever imagined that you would have a film career before a theater or music career?

Jennifer Hudson: Wow, I love that you brought that up! It's interesting because actually when I did theater, I didn't even act. I just sang one song [in that show]. So I never once considered acting. I always wanted to do music.

AM: On American Idol, you sang Circle of Life and Sir Elton John said you were a star! He said he'd work with you right then. Have you had any contact with Elton since then?

JH: I've gotten to see him a couple of times but we have not worked together. Hopefully, one day we'll perform together and maybe he'll write



Jennifer Hudson.

me a song. But, oh, I love that song! That's actually my favorite.

AM: He really stood up for you. He was as upset as I was when you were kicked off.

JH: He was! Nothing's better than to have Elton John in your corner.

AM: How do you feel about your gay fans?

JH: Oh my God! The gay community is my favorite group to perform for. ... I mean that's why I actually started. They supported me long before anyone else, way back even before *Big River*. I always say I must be fierce if the gay community thinks I'm fierce.

AM: And we do! We notice a diva right when she comes on T.V. Let me tell ya.

JH: [Laughs]

AM: This debut CD has R&B, pop [and] gospel, and you worked with amazing people. Tell us some of the big names joining you for this CD.

JH: Ne-Yo wrote Spotlight, and he also did another song on the album called I Can't Stop The Rain. Timbaland did Pocketbook, which I'm hearing the gay community is loving it right now.

AM: Yeah. Cause it's got some "tude"—some attitude!

JH: Thank you! [Laughs] I have the duet with Fantasia called I'm His Only Woman and Robin Thicke did Givin' Myself Over to You. Diane Warren wrote "You Pulled Me Through." Because of Dreamgirls, American Idol and Sex in the City, I wanted to make sure that I could have something on the album for everyone.

AM: It's also all the sides of you. You appeal to so many different people because you are all of these things. You are R&B, you are pop, you are Broadway, you are gospel, and that's what I think is so amazing about your career.

JH: Thank you so much! That's such a huge compliment. One thing I wanted people to get out of the album is another side of me. I've always considered my voice a tree with many branches, you know? I wanted to display that on this album. Being on Idol, you don't have enough time to do that. Or in Dreamgirls, I was portraying a character and singing the character's songs. This CD is a way to be able to say, "Now this is me and all of me."

AM: What song is most personal to you?

JH: Probably the gospel song Jesus Promised Me a Home Over There because, as we know, I didn't write anything on the album—[in] those to come, I will—but Jesus Promised... is a tribute song to God, my religion and to my grandmother, who I say is where I got my voice from. She led over 100 songs in our church choir, and that is one of them. That was my tribute to her. So I would have to say that is closest to home.

AM: The Secret Life of Bees—you're on a set with Queen Latifah, Alicia Keys ... they also walk that line of music and film careers. So does Ludacris who [you worked with on your CD]. Have you gotten any great advice from these people on [how to be in] both worlds?

JH: I think I follow best by example. I always say if Beyonce or Jamie [Foxx] or even Queen can get through this, then I know I can and I can straddle the fence of two careers of film and music. They were more like inspiration and the

outline to say "OK—they can do it, then it can be done." And they have been a huge support system.

AM: Did you enjoy filming *The Secret Life of Bees*?

JH: It was a lot of fun. The chemistry on the set was like family. Queen has the best energy in the world! She's just full of life and joy. And then there's Alicia, who's so nice and laid-back. So it was very easy. Plus we're all musicians too, so there was a lot of singing goin' on.

AM: What impacted you about the story?

JH: This film is based in the Civil Rights era, in the 1960s. So my character's trying to register to vote, and she's stopped and beaten by three white men just because she's tryin' to earn the right to vote. In developing my character, I had to go through a lot of research. It took me on a journey to learn a lot about our nations' history and African-American history, and it makes me appreciate today much more by seeing like, "Wow, we have options now." It makes me appreciate more today that we have the potential of having an African-American president or female vice president or, at one point, a female president as well. So I'm just glad to see people being open-minded to other things and accepting change.

AM: Well, your vast career has been a by-product of people who have gone before you, and others will come after you. Do you feel a responsibility being a role model?

JH: I just want to set a good example and be a good role model if I'm gonna be a role model. I don't try to dwell on it, but I guess being in the position I'm in, it just comes along with the territory. I don't mind it, but I want to make sure I set a good example.

AM: Were your grandmother and the other women in your family the key examples of that in your life?

JH: Definitely, definitely, for who I am today. You know, I came from a family with very strong

Turn to page 20

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Jill Grove in a 'Lulu' of a show

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Out mezzo-soprano Jill Grove is really excited to be play the Countess Geschwitz in the Lyric Opera of Chicago's new production of *Lulu*. Not only is it Grove's role debut, but she gets to play what is generally regarded to be the first openly gay character in opera.

"It really gives me an opportunity to find the character the way I want instead of trying to fit it into someone else's idea," said Grove about being in a new staging of the 1935 opera, as opposed to performing in a pre-existing production. "It's also with a director I love and respect and with a company I really feel comfortable with."

Interestingly enough, Geschwitz is not the first lesbian character Grove has sung on the operatic stage. Look up Grove in the world-premiere cast list of the 1995 opera *Harvey Milk* and you'll see she played two characters: the generic role of "Dyke" and activist Anne Kronenberg.

"This is certainly first time I've ever played opposite of my desire on stage," Grove said, clarifying that the other characters she portrayed weren't romantically motivated the way "Geschwitz is in love with Lulu."

Grove publicly came out by mentioning her longtime partner, Keren James, in a small 2002 profile in *Opera News* magazine. Since then, Grove's career has only grown in prestige, with major appearances at opera companies in New York, Santa Fe, San Francisco and Los Angeles (where she was recently directed by film legend Woody Allen in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*).

Grove's increased standing in the opera world prompted *Opera News* to feature her in a larger interview in its October 2008 issue. In it, Grove not only revealed that she and James are now officially married (having wed in their hometown of San Francisco the day after same-sex weddings became available last June), but they are now both proud parents of a seven-month-old son named Gryffen (born to James through an anonymous donor).

For Grove, there was no question that she would not be closeted as an opera singer.

"I'm so out loud with who I am, that this career was either going to work with me or it wasn't," Grove said. "I've been out to the world since I hit the auditions."

So far, Grove's sexuality hasn't had much play in terms of casting, since her vocal type dictates the roles available to her.

"I'm a mezzo, which means I'm usually cast as the scorned woman, or the mother, or the best friend, or the aunt," Grove joked. "I'm usually not the love interest, so my own persona or sexuality never really plays into things."

And since Grove admits to being a woman with curves, she hasn't often been called on to play opera's "trouser roles," where mezzos do male drag as prepubescent boys. So with *Lulu*, Grove is relishing playing the openly gay Geschwitz.

Out director Paul Curran specifically requested Grove to be cast as Geschwitz, but not solely because she's a lesbian.

"The vocal performance was by far the number-one question for me in casting it," said Curran, lavishing praise on Grove after working with her last season in the Lyric's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. "[Grove is] one of the most intelligent artists I've ever worked with—she's enormously intuitive so I love that about working with her."

Curran also wanted Grove's talents for *Lulu* since it is generally regarded as one of the most difficult operas in the repertory. Viennese composer Alban Berg composed *Lulu* in the spiky 12-tone style pioneered by composer Arnold Schoenberg. (Some people initially write it off as "atonal.")

Lulu is also viscerally and emotionally taxing for performers and audiences. Based upon Frank



Jill Grove.

Wedekind's once-banned plays *Earth Spirit* and *Pandora's Box*, *Lulu* is all about a sexually intimidating woman that drives men (and one particular woman) to their ruin before she herself is murdered by Jack the Ripper.

"*Lulu* is not graspable and that drives men crazy because they want to be in control of her," said German soprano Marlis Petersen, who plays the alluring and deadly title character.

"Geschwitz is one of those people who don't want anything of *Lulu*. She's just a giving personality and gives her love to *Lulu*," Petersen said. "*Lulu* isn't used to this."

"Geschwitz is a doomed character because like all the characters in the piece, she's driven by her obsession," Curran said. "But the one thing she doesn't mention to *Lulu* is sex. She mentions love and emotion—the men are sexually obsessed with her."

Curran is setting the opera in the 1930s since he wanted it be in a fascistic era when "it wasn't cool to be openly gay." The opera also has several characters who openly express their disgust at Geschwitz.

For Curran and Grove, being out and open has brought an extra dimension to staging *Lulu*. They're dead-set against depicting Geschwitz stereotypically as a more butch lesbian, opting for more femininity and elegance. (She is a wealthy countess, after all.)

"[We use our own experiences] within rehearsals to explore the limits of the sexuality in the piece," Curran said. "Jill can help us explore this and understand this better than other women who haven't had any lesbian experiences."

Indeed, Grove says she's drawing upon her own past "straight-girl crushes," although they were never as extreme as the one that holds Geschwitz in thrall.

"*Lulu* is bad news for Geschwitz," Grove said. "Every time she starts to step away and see *Lulu* in a real light, *Lulu* just reels her right back in."

There are times when Grove just wants to shake Geschwitz and say, "Just go away!" But Grove feels Geschwitz is persistent because, "she wants to save *Lulu*, and by being so close to her she thinks that she can protect her."

***Lulu* plays seven performances Nov. 7-30 at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker. Tickets are \$32-\$197. Call 312-332-2244 or visit www.lyricopera.org.**

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THEATER REVIEW

Seven Days

Playwright: Egan Reich
At: Steep Theatre, 1115 W. Berwyn
Phone: (312) 458-0722; \$18
Runs through: Dec. 6

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

I've sat through four-hour plays that seemed to last just minutes, and one-hour plays that felt like forever. At two and a half hours, *Seven Days* was eternity in purgatory. It was a good idea for Steep Theatre to celebrate its new theater space (and a fine space it will be once the paint fumes clear, with 130 seats and a gracious lobby) with a big world-premiere play by a company member. But *Seven Days* is impenetrable, episodic and pretentiously metaphoric. Its selection is unfathomable to me, and I'm a really smart guy with a lot of new-play expertise. It's not helpful that the play's most indelible images are of women gratuitously imprisoned and beaten.

Seven Days is set, vaguely, on America's frontier sometime after the Civil War and before the invention of the automobile. Folks travel by train and horse, and communicate by telegraph. But the play is intentionally anachronistic, with some characters dressed in perfectly modern clothes and others in 19th-century duds. There are references to meth addicts and flavored vodka. There are 20th-century phrases such as "I'm a dick" and "the private sector." There are flights of poetic fancy shoved against contemporary crudities. The Old Testament tale of Jacob's pursuit of Rachel by way of Leah is mirrored in the play's title and in the two women who interact with the putative hero, Herzog, a Jewish mine owner. Trouble is, Herzog is totally passive and reactive. He doesn't initiate a single action. The putative heroine, his intended bride, is a woman with two names and a blurry, never-explained past connection with one of the two chief villains.



Seven Days.

There's a corrupt senator, a vicious property developer, a journalist, a thief and 23 characters in all—played by 11 actors. Many characters come and go unnamed, and without exposition. How they connect to each other is a mystery. There are references to a foreign war, a political assassination, a failed economy. Metaphoric is one thing—playwright Egan Reich (assisted by the ensemble) has much to say about government, collusion and exploitation—but incomprehensible is another.

In a play as choppy and episodic as *Seven Days*, there's little opportunity for good acting. The best players have a few good moments based on their own personal intensity, but they have no character through-lines to play out, no development. How can they when so many appear in just one scene or a few scenes and then disappear without explanation? *Seven Days* is a play of non sequiturs in words and actions.

Steep Theatre isn't the first troupe to have growing pains in moving to a spanking new venue. Hey, it even happened to Steppenwolf. *Seven Days* is a growing pain, and a Big Pain at that.

THEATER REVIEW

Beauty on the Vine

Playwright: Zak Berkman
At: BackStage Theatre Company at the Raven Theatre Complex, 6157 N. Clark
Phone: 800-838-3006; \$20
Runs through: Nov. 23

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Zak Berkman's play begins as a diatribe on talk-radio cults, quickly morphs into a whodunit and finishes up as a feminist call-to-arms, with plenty of discussion *en route* on the folly of judging books by their covers. And damned if it doesn't do all this with such seamless guile that we remain as unaware of the transitions, as does the uncomprehending assassin whose refusal to look beneath the veneer of public images sets the plot in motion.

The image, in this case, is that of Lauren Chickering, poster girl (literally—we see the posters as we enter the theater) for conservative Republicans ever since a Christmas photo-op with then-President Reagan. Now 24 years old, she hosts her own radio show, proclaiming the party line to adoring teenage girls ("my chicklets") under the protective eye of her father/manager. But this right-wing Barbie has a secret agenda, known only to her husband—a music journalist just multiethnic enough to disturb her more extreme followers. After her murder by a hostile stalker, however, her plan begins to surface in

the wake of the discovery that several young women have had themselves surgically altered into eerily accurate facsimiles of their idol.

Beauty on the Vine is a play lending itself to many interpretations: Is Lauren's ambition rooted in altruism or egotism? If her career had not been curtailed untimely, would her celebrity have transformed her into a charismatic leader or a power-hungry tyrant—and to whom? Or does her manifesto simply reflect the aspirations of adolescent females everywhere? And what about the two men who love her, confronted by the promise of an artificial resurrection? Is their response selfish, blasphemous or only a reflection of any person grieving a sudden loss? What's in a name, anyway—or a face?

Berkman's mosaic disclosure takes us both backward and forward in time from the moment that Lauren meets Sweet, the man who will become her confidant, her mentor and, ultimately, her redeemer. In less adept hands, such a decision could muddy the arc of the story inexorably, but Berkman cares more about argumentative coherence than narrative dexterity. So does Jason Kae, whose direction of this BackStage Theatre Company production ascertains that we never lose our chronological bearings. Brenda Barrie turns in a marathon performance as the always-distinct three Laurens, ably supported by Gregory Isaac (looking very Mediterranean) and a cast of storefront-circuit stalwarts who inhabit their allegorical characters with serenely unswerving conviction.



Beauty on the Vine.

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SPOTLIGHT

A Jew Grows in Brooklyn



Jake Ehrenreich has played in rock bands and performed on Broadway. He's also the author and main performer of *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn*, a hit off-Broadway show favorably compared by some critics to Billy Crystal's *700 Sundays*. See if he garners as much love in Skokie as he did in New York (that's a pretty safe bet). *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn* plays 8 p.m. Nov. 5-9 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie, Skokie. Tickets are \$45-\$57.50; call 847-673-6300 or visit www.northshorecenter.org. Photo of Ehrenreich by Charlotte Nation



Margaret Garner. Photo by John Grigaitis

OPERA REVIEW

Margaret Garner

Composer: Richard Danielpour;

Libretto: Toni Morrison.

At: Auditorium Theatre of

Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress

Phone: 312-902-1500; \$40-\$150

Runs through: Nov. 9

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It has been decades since grand opera played at the historic 1889 Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University. So with the Chicago premiere of Margaret Garner Nov. 1, practically everything was in place to mark the triumphant return of opera to Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan's acoustic and architectural marvel.

Direct from Detroit's Michigan Opera Theatre where it debuted in 2005, Margaret Garner features spectacular singing, a fluid staging by director Kenny Leon and a truly American subject matter that lends itself to the heightened emotions of opera.

Alas, what prevented the occasion from being perfect was the opera itself.

Margaret Garner suffers from a weak libretto. I know it is sacrilege to say so, especially since Nobel laureate Toni Morrison penned it.

Like Morrison's acclaimed novel *Beloved*, Margaret Garner is based upon a shocking incident in American history.

In 1856, fugitive slave Margaret Garner and her family were facing recapture in Ohio. Rather than see her children return to slavery, Garner stabbed them. Her resulting trial was controversial because pro- and anti-slavery factions argued whether Garner should be tried for murder or destruction of property.

With so much complex material to work from,

it's surprising how dramatically inert and overly simplified Morrison's libretto can be. Many of Morrison's lyrics would read wonderfully on the page, but come off as oddly positioned and ponderous on stage. (The whole metaphorical business of "the nature of love" during the wedding reception was particularly labored.)

Also, Morrison focuses too much attention on puffed-up slave owner Edward Gaines when you'd rather learn more about the opera's title character.

Despite the problematic libretto, composer Richard Danielpour has created a melodic score of Americana with patches of Stephen Foster, gospel music and spirituals woven throughout. Conductor Stefan Lano brought out many colors in Danielpour's score and helped the cast to vocally shine.

Denyce Graves' dusky mezzo was a pillar of strength for Margaret (Tracie Luck finishes the rest of the run) and was matched by the muscular sound of baritone Gregg Baker as Margaret's husband, Robert. (Leonard Rowe plays the role on Nov. 8.)

James Westman was a melodramatically villainous bass as Gaines, with tenor Jason Collins adding more dastardly drama as slave foreman Casey.

Two lovely sopranos to look out for in the future are Kristine Biller Mattson as the abolitionist-leaning daughter, Caroline, and Mary Elizabeth Williams as Robert's mother, Cilla. (Karen Slack alternates in this role.) Williams' vocal range was particularly stunning.

So even if Margaret Garner is flawed as an opera, its appearance at the Auditorium is still an important occasion. Just being able to hear opera soar through the glorious acoustic of such a landmark theater is heavenly.

CRITICS' PICS

Dirty Dancing, Cadillac Palace Theatre, through Jan. 17. There's far more to this multi-million-dollar spectacle than all that superficial flash and dancing dazzle that'll make your jaw drop. More than mere romance and more than coming-of-age chestnut—Baby's journey is worth taking. CS

Edward II, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, through Nov. 9. It's the last days for a unique staging mixing actors and audience in a mosh pit. Marlowe's messy tale of gay king Ed never will be a good play, but director Sean Graney's trims make it a bloody and pithy power tale. JA

Jesus Hopped the A Train, Raven Theatre, through Dec. 6. The casting may not be perfect, but there's still plenty to recommend in Stephen Adly Guirgis' drama about two murderers who embrace religion in prison. SCM

The Picture of Dorian Gray, Lifeline Theatre, through Nov. 16. The scary season may be over, but the man with the face to, literally, die for has been given two more weeks to cast his seductive spell in this shivery adaptation of the Oscar Wilde classic. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

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The Thugs. Photo courtesy of Profiles Theatre

THEATER REVIEW

The Thugs

Playwright: Adam Bock

At: Profiles Theatre, 4147 N. Broadway

Phone: 773-549-1815; \$25

Runs through: Dec. 14

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Poltergeists and other site-bound spirits are often summoned forth by an overabundance of suppressed emotional energy, neurological impulses associated therewith charging the surrounding atmosphere much as electricity charges a magnet (explaining why a confluence of psychokinetic activity is frequently found in households with children undergoing puberty). The malevolent presence manifesting itself in Adam Bock's creepy little thriller, however, has chosen for its haunt a 16-story corporate high-rise, where it feeds off the anxiety of clerical workers reduced to infantile passivity by the pressures of urban life as we know it today.

We recognize the personnel from innumerable workplace comedies: the strait-laced supervisor, the toadying workaholic, the mischief-maker, the philosophical observer, the timid young ingenue, the mousy old lady whom everyone ignores (portrayed by Caroline Dodge Lotta, done up to look like the worried woman in the Roz Chast drawings) and the newbie who becomes a fresh audience for orientation to the status quo. But gradually, we become aware of tensions beyond the normal group dynamic. Two tenants of the building have recently died under curious circumstances, promoting a rash of employee absences, and exacerbating the paranoia of the survivors, despite the struggle of office managers to stave off disorder.

Oh, we can scoff at our medieval ancestors and their propensity for seeing demons lurking in ev-

ery dark corner, but as one insightful character notes "It's hard being scared!" In a world riddled with reports and rumors of imminent destruction, the smallest coincidence takes on ominous portent, ancient rites assume renewed credibility and the sudden darkness engendered by a power failure during a thunderstorm (municipal fire codes in this unnamed city apparently not requiring emergency-exit lights) can reduce even the most skeptical rationalist to blind panic.

Nothing could be easier than to play this malaise for laughs—ho-ho-ho, look at these scaredy-cats—but director Joe Jahraus and the tightly integrated cast assembled for this Profiles Theatre production (running in repertory with Men Of Tortuga) instead embrace the author's icily somber exploration of a microcosmic society on the edge of breakdown, taking full advantage of their circumscribed space and our confinement therein. When Bock finally permits his helpless denizens a small remedy for their abject terror, they may be too bewildered to wholly understand its therapeutic purpose—but we do, and the magnitude of our relief reflects just how skillfully we have absorbed his cautionary lesson.

THEATER REVIEW

The Brothers Karamazov

Playwright: Adapted by Heidi Stillman from the novel by Fyodor Dostoevsky

At: Lookingglass Theatre,

821 N. Michigan (Water Tower Water Works)

Phone: 312-337-0665; \$30-\$60

Runs through: Dec. 7

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Everything about The Brothers Karamazov is lusciously super-sized. The thickly serpentine story bursts at its gorgeous, intricately woven seams with voracious debauchery and true piety, with soul-trying passion and pure holiness, with madness and murder and money and mystery and this above all else—an utterly accessible exploration of an epic battle.

Here, in the bleak years of early 20th century Russia, harsh, inarguable feats of immaculately constructed logic go to war with breathtaking, unshakable and intellectually absurd faith.

The battle scarred factions are huge. The warriors—some 30 or more characters—stab the heart with their vividness. And the outcome? It gives nothing away to say that Dostoevsky creates a quiet, insistent prose aria that blooms like rubies from a rock, goodness in a world of unfathomable, capricious cruelty.

Director and adaptor Heidi Stillman doesn't capture the entirety of Dostoevsky's massive novel; there are missing characters and subplots. But she and her 15-person ensemble—a cast of both extraordinary individual performances and

heartwarming story that is both funny and poignant. I look forward to working with a terrific cast in Chicago."

Other actors include Taylor Miller of All My Children fame, Kelli Strickland, Ann Hagemann, and Jacqui Jackson.

Hannah Free will be directed by Wendy Jo Carlton. Director of Photography is Gretchen Warthen. Executive producers are Tracy Baim and Claudia Allen. The film is being produced by Ripe Fruit Films, a Chicago-based production company, for distribution in 2009.

Hannah Free will be shot in and around the Chicago area in Nov. 2008.

The general public can get involved by contributing funds to the picture and receiving a thank you in the film's credits. The Web site allows for direct contributions, which are not tax deductible. See www.HannahFree.com.

Sharon Gless will appear at a special fundraiser for Hannah Free Sunday, Nov. 9, 4-6 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. Tickets are \$50-\$100.

a unified, unwavering sense of overall purpose—surely capture Dostoevsky's intent and even essence. It's remarkable and riveting, all three and a half hours of it.

The titular brothers are the sons of Fyodor Pavlovich, a fellow whose grotesque sexual gluttony and rapine pursuit of pleasure are illustrated in a riotous, dialogue-free prologue that combines the irresistible, hedonistic lasciviousness of a brothel with blood-red fires of hell (a mighty tip of the hat to scenic designer Dan Ostling, sound designer Ray Nardelli and lighting designer Chris Binder who work similarly evocative magic throughout the entire panoramic sweep of "Brothers.")

As Fyodor, Craig Spidle hammers home a milestone role, giving audiences a hateful, hate-filled buffoon whose corruption is so complete he can scarcely be called a true father to his

sons.

And in that trio (or very probably, quartet) of sons, Dostoevsky creates a cross current of belief systems so strong that their intersection can only result in radical change or annihilation.

Dmitri (Joe Sikora) is ruled by passion and temper, a firebrand whose sudden free-falling plummets into obsessive love come twined with the ability to betray people without a thought to future consequences.

Ivan (Philip Smith, disappearing into some of his best work in years) appears to be a stone-hearted logician: If God existed, he reasons, children would not be tortured, innocents would not be at hard labor in Siberia. Ivan's opposite is Alyosha (Doug Hara, a white light of simple, honest goodness), a monk-in-training whose faith in God provides the bedrock of his entire

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MOVIES

Sharon Gless starring in 'Hannah Free'

Sharon Gless is set to star in the new independent feature film, Hannah Free, the story of a lifelong love affair between an independent spirit and the woman she calls home.

Gless—star of popular television shows Cagney & Lacey, Queer As Folk and Burn Notice—will play Hannah, a fiercely independent woman who fights to see her partner one last time in a nursing home.

The screenplay is based on award-winning playwright Claudia Allen's popular stage play of the same name. Allen is a writer-in-residence at Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago and has written more than 20 plays.

"I am delighted to be working with my friend Claudia Allen," said Gless, who previously performed in Allen's play, Cahoots. "This is a

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Reeling 2008— Week one overview

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Reeling 2008, the second oldest gay and lesbian film festival in the country (after San Francisco), turns 27 this year. Over the course of this year's 11-day fest (Nov. 6-16), audiences will get a chance to see close to 70 independent features and shorts ranging from documentaries to intimate dramas—all with a queer bent. In addition to Reeling's usual "something for every queer taste" line-up, fest organizers have added a new category: music videos. These will be showcased in a new series titled "Rock Reeling."

In addition to the multitude of film choices, Reeling once again presents a host of before-and-after screening parties and events. Eighties "Brat Pack" star Ally Sheedy, who appears in *Steam* along with Oscar nominee Ruby Dee, will appear in person at the fest in conjunction with the film's screening Friday, Nov. 14. Jay McCarroll, the first-season winner on TV's *Project Runway*, will also be at the fest Nov. 16 for the closing film, *Eleven Minutes*, a documentary that follows the colorful designer's attempts to reactivate his career.

Here are a few highlights screened from the opening-week schedule:

—Thursday, Nov. 6:

Breakfast with Scot: Tom Cavanagh (of the TV shows *Ed* and *Scrubs*) and Ben Shenkman (*Angels in America*) play, respectively, a closeted hockey player-turned sportscaster and his patient lawyer boyfriend who take temporary custody of an extremely flamboyant 11-year-old boy (complete with make-up and feather boas). Cavanagh is forced to deal with both his kid-phobic issues and his own internalized self-loathing in this intermittently funny comedy that's perfect, not-too-taxing fare for the festival's opening night. Screens at Piper's Alley, 1608 N. Wells

—Friday, Nov. 7:

Mulligans: When Tyler brings his college buddy, Chase, home for the summer a family drama erupts after Chase comes out—followed by Tyler's dad. Openly gay actor Charlie David (*Dante's Cove*, *Kiss the Bride*, *A Four Letter Word*) wrote, produced and stars in this moving drama that co-stars Dan Payne (see separate interview), and *Queer As Folk*'s Thea Gill.

Changing Spots: Molly Brite is a boozy former child star and Peg is her pregnant, ex-rocker girlfriend. When a director wants Molly for his next big film it seems that things are finally looking up—but not for long. It's a winning lesbian dramedy.

—Saturday, Nov. 8:

Trinidad: This is an eye-opening documentary look at Trinidad, Colo. (pop.: 9,000), the self-proclaimed "transsexual capital of the world." The film simultaneously focuses on the towns on-again/off-again tolerance for the procedure that's put the frontier town on the map; the transsexual doctor who performs the operation on other patients; and two financially strapped transsexuals who dream of opening a home where the patients can come to recover. Note: The film includes graphic footage of the genital-

reassignment operation.

Dream Boy: It's a dark, coming-out tale of a shy, sexually abused high school boy set in the backwoods of Louisiana with Diana Scarwid and a cameo by Rickie Lee Jones. From queer filmmaker James Bolton (*The Graffiti Artist*)

Pansy Division: Life in a Gay Rock Band: This is a winning documentary about the cutting-edge queer band that includes footage shot at Chicago's Aragon Ballroom.

—Sunday, Nov. 9:

Sex Positive: The efforts to convince gay men to practice safe sex in the early '80s by controversial activist Richard Berkowitz are mostly forgotten while those of his fallen comrade Michael Callen are well remembered. This memorable portrait of the prickly, forthright Berkowitz—a one-time S&M hustler—will hopefully redress that balance.

Otto; Or, Up With Dead People: Queer filmmaker Bruce LaBruce (*Hustler White*, *The Raspberry Reich*) returns with this gory, campy and very gay variation on the zombie flick. A gay zombie costume contest, hosted by local drag queens, will accompany the screening. Screens at the Lakeshore Theater, 3175 N. Broadway

SqueezeBox!: The "don't dream it, be it" ethos of Michael Schmidt's long running New York rock-n-roll drag-queen nightclub event is

palpable in this enervating documentary. Over the course of SqueezeBox's seven-year run, presided over by the no-nonsense *Missstress Formika*, everyone from Debbie Harry to Lady Bunny took to the stage. SqueezeBox was also ground zero for John Cameron Mitchell's Hedwig character. Tremendous concert footage is interspersed with reminiscences by those who were there and lived to talk about it.

—Tuesday, Nov. 11:

Seeds of Summer, Dog Tags and Ask Not:

Three films focusing on gays in the military and the U.S. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy are being shown, fittingly, on Veteran's Day.

Ebony Chunky Love: Bitch Can't Get a Date:

The title says it all in this amusing portrait of Keith Price, the gay African-American "large and lovely" stand up comedian and Sirius Radio host.

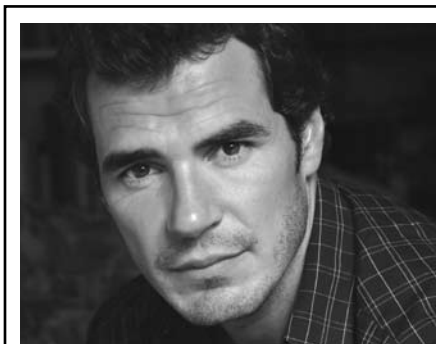
—Wednesday, Nov. 12:

Out Late: This film focuses on a trio of late-comers—a gay man, a lesbian and a transsexual—coming into their own after coming out in their sunset years.

Screenings for the festival will be held primarily at three locations: Landmark's Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark; Columbia College's Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash, third floor; and Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N. Clark.

Find out complete festival information (tickets, theaters and locations) by calling 773-293-1447 or visiting www.reelingfilmfestival.org. Highlights of Reeling's second-week schedule will run in next week's *Windy City Times*.

Check out my archived reviews and *Knight at Home* at the *Movies* column for DVD recommendations at www.windycitytimes.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter Web site.



'Mulligans' stew

Read an interview with *Mulligans* co-star Dan Payne (above) at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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CELEBRATIONS



Youth Pride Center's five-year anniversary gala, with attendees (left) and honoree Bill Greaves. Photos by Kaitlyn McAvoy

novel is a mix of, among other things, droll humor and explicit sex.

Lear joins the company of other award winners, including movie director Ang Lee, who won for his film *Lust, Caution*.

Provincetown hotel offers gay-wedding specials

The Commons, a hotel in Provincetown, Mass., offers many unique items.

In addition to beautiful architectural details, 12 spacious rooms and two suites feature hardwood floors, a tasteful combination of modern and antique furniture, and private marble-tile baths. Many of the rooms have balconies and decks with magnificent harbor views. The Commons complex includes the contemporary American bistro Level, and Pure, a trendy juice bar and sandwich shop. The hotel and the bistro combine to make a great site for a wedding and reception.

The lounge is located on the first floor and is beautifully decorated with a mix of modern and traditional Cape Cod accents. Among the features are in-room spa treatments.

See www.ptowncommons.com.

YPC marks five

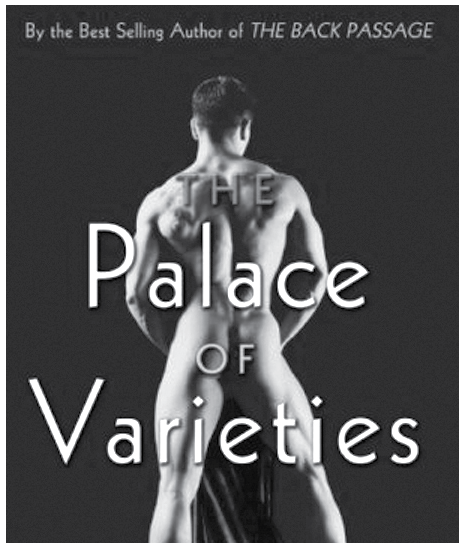
Youth Pride Center, a South Side not-for-profit organization who serves LGBT youth of color, hosted its five-year anniversary celebration Oct. 22 at the Marmon Grand, 2230 S. Michigan. About 50 people showed their support for

the organization by attending the celebration, which included performances by former and current YPC members.

Lakeview Action Coalition was given the 2008 Youth Advocate of the Year award and the 2008 Friend of YPC award went to mayoral liaison Bill Greaves, who is also a member of the Human Relations Advisory Council on LGBT Issues. "From the bottom of my heart, I appreciate this recognition," Greaves said after accepting the award

from YPC's founder, Frank Walker. Greaves also urged the youth to show their support for his latest project, the Social Justice High School-Pride Campus.

Katherine Harris, out actress and model who appeared on BET's *College Hill: Interns* reality show, was the keynote speaker of the night. Alderman Sandi Jackson, who was originally slated to be the keynote speaker, was unable to attend. Photos and text by Kaitlyn McAvoy



Gay erotic book honored

James Lear was named "Writer of the Year" for his novel *The Palace of Varieties* at the Sept. 12 Erotic Awards in London, according to a media release from Cleis Press.

Lear's honor was rare in that gay works are seldom awarded at this event. The book follows the exploits of a country youth who goes to the big city and gets a job at the titular venue. The



A boo-tiful night

Ghouls, goblins and at least one rodent celebrated Halloween last Friday as the annual Lakeview Halloween parade proceeded with its "Franken Rat" theme. Of course, there was more fun to be had at various nightspots than usual. Photos on Halsted Street and at the Andersonville club Star Gaze by Mel Ferrand. See many more Halloween pictures in this week's Nightspots.

Outer Focus Photos

- Commitment Ceremonies
- Civil Unions, Weddings
- Bridal, Trash Your Dress
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ONE HOUR DRIVE FROM DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - LaPORTE, IN: Great home on quiet lake in Laporte. This house has been professionally painted through out, with the kitchen having its own unique decorative look. It includes one of a kind concrete counter top on cabinets. There is even a custom-made faux-patina copper top on bar area. Hardwood floors on main level were ones pulled from a 100 year old building in Chicago. New carpeting has also been installed during the last few months on second level. The great room includes a wood-burning fireplace surrounded by built-in book cases. The master bedroom area has oversized cedar-lined closets with fantastic views of the lake. The master bath is Travertine marble with a large jetted tub and the main bath is custom ceramic tile. The exterior of the home offers seclusion, custom made deck area and your own fire pit to enjoy on fall nights. Some of the other fine features of this home include hardwood French colonial doors on the interior, second floor laundry area, and slate foyer. \$249,900. Tommy Sunn, Century 21 1st Team, Inc. 219-575-0881 www.tommysunn21.com (3/12/08)

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FOR RENT

STUDIO

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104 ELGIN, FOREST PARK: Quiet, Newly Renov, Lg 2Ft 2BR with Granite, new kitchen cabinets, new bath, appliances, floors etc. steps from green line, downtown Oak Park and FP. Huge closets, Lots of Light and vintage architectural charm. Garage parking, washer/dryer and basement for storage. 708-366-3945. (11/05/08-1)

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ADVERTISE HERE: Want to advertise your product, service, etc. to thousands of readers? Place an ad in the Windy City Times! We offer affordable rates, convenient service, and as a bonus, your ad runs in our online section for free. To place an ad, contact Cynthia at 773-871-7610, cynthia@windycitymediagroup.com, or go to our website www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

CLEANING SERVICES

CHESTNUT CLEANING SERVICES: We're a house cleaning service for homes, small businesses and small buildings. We also have fabulous organizational skills (a separate function at a separate cost that utilizes your assistance) for what hasn't been cleaned in many months or years due to long-term illness, depression, physical/mental challenges, for the elderly, if you have downsized and more. Depressed about going home to chaos? We can organize your chaos, straighten out your chaos, help you make sense of your chaos and finally clean what is no longer chaos. Can we help you? Bonded and insured. Chestnut Cleaning Service: 312-332-5575 (5/24/09-tk)

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LICENSED PSYCHOTHERAPY: 20 years experience providing counseling and clinical hypnotherapy. I specialize in relationship issues, childhood trauma, and recurrent patterns that inhibit potential. Individuals and couples. Starla Sholl, LCSW, PC, 773.878.5809, info@starlasholl.com www.starlasholl.com.

SUPPORTIVE COUNSELING FOR LGBTQ INDIVIDUALS: Supportive, insight-oriented counseling for LGBTQ individuals and couples. Treatment of depression, anxiety, relationship challenges, self-esteem issues, and substance abuse. Downtown loop location. 773-788-6151 www.dr-warner.com (12/03/08-12)

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PERSONAL TRAINER: Rachel Lavin, M. A. Realize your goals through 12 week success programs. Lose weight, get in shape and be the best you can be. 773-251-7874 (PP1/08/09PP)

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WEDNESDAY MORNING NEWSPAPER DELIVERY: Four hours, \$56. Must have car and insurance. Please call Jean at 773-871-7610.

EXECUTIVE INCOME FROM HOME: Ready to earn the living you deserve and the time to enjoy your life? Looking for successful motivated individuals only. Don't believe, Don't call. (800)439-1264 www.HighProfitTeam.com/konavision. (11/26/08-8)

INTERPRETER

FOR YOUR AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE/ENGLISH INTERPRETING NEEDS: To consult with you or your company with your ADA needs. Diana Thorpe CI/CT/NIC Master, Nationally Certified Interpreter, 773-401-1339, or e-mail thorpe2001@aol.com [P-TB]

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YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF!: Experience the therapeutic benefits of deep tissue/wellness massage by a licensed GBM professional. Relieve stress, feel better! Non-sexual. South Shore Area. In, \$65/hr. or \$85/1.5 hrs.; out, add \$20. 773-933-7219 or 773-576-4659. (PP2/19/09PP)

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BOOKS

Alison Bechdel keeps 'Watch'

BY AMY WOOTEN

Alison Bechdel may be taking a break from her much-loved *Dykes to Watch Out For* comic strip, but this cartoonist certainly isn't taking a breather.

Following the success of her best-selling graphic memoir *Fun Home*, Bechdel decided to take a sabbatical from *Dykes to Watch Out For* to focus on a new project. In the meanwhile, *Dykes to Watch Out For* fans can look forward to the upcoming release of a new anthology, *The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For*. The anthology includes favorites from all eleven *Dykes* volumes, plus a generous helping of strips that never made it into a *Dykes* book.

Bechdel reminisced with *Windy City Times* about *Dykes* and revealed some details about her new project. She will visit Chicago's Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark, Thursday, Nov. 13, at 7:30 p.m. for a reading.

Windy City Times: The new *Dykes to Watch Out For* collection is coming out Nov. 12, and contains almost all of the episodes. I think it's really cool that you have been doing *Dykes to Watch Out For* for 25 years now!

Alison Bechdel: Yes, I have!

WCT: Looking back when doing this collection, what kind of memories does it bring for you? You and your fans have seen these characters go through so many different story lines and grow older for 25 years now.

AB: I'm taking a break from the strip, and haven't been doing it since May. It's funny this book is coming out because I just haven't been thinking about the characters. I haven't gotten to the point where I'm even missing them yet. I'm relieved to be free of that deadline. I probably shouldn't say that. [Laughs]

WCT: Well, it's understandable. You have a lot going on! I heard you are working on a new project right now.

AB: Yes.

WCT: We'll discuss that soon. I know it's been a few months since you've thought about *Dykes to Watch Out For*, but for readers who maybe don't know, how did it all start for you?

AB: After I was done with college, I had always drawn silly pictures. I always drew men for some reason, and never drew women. But after I came out as a lesbian after college, it seemed really weird that I was drawing men and not women. I had to teach myself to draw women! But the only way I could draw a woman, in the early days, was if I thought of her as a lesbian, for some reason. So, I started drawing these lesbians.

It was really fun, freeing and exciting. It felt so good to be able to create images of people who kind of looked like me, because I didn't see women like me reflected anywhere in the culture. So, I just started drawing this series of silly drawings. It began in letters to a friend of mine, just purely for fun in this private letter. Gradually, I made more and showed them to other friends. I eventually started submitting them to a feminist newspaper. I just kept doing them. Other people seemed to like them, so I did one a month for this newspaper, and I never stopped, until last May.

WCT: It's published in a lot of LGBT newspapers, as well as feminist newspapers. At what point were you able to work on that full-time and make a living off of it?

AB: I was able to do that when I turned 30. I started with a full-time job, then a part-time job, then eventually, by the time I was 30, I quit and was just doing my comics. It was always a standing around kind of job. I would sell T-shirts, go to music festivals and do speaking gigs and freelance illustrations. But mostly that's what I did. I was a cartoonist.



Alison Bechdel. Photo by Greg Martin

WCT: What is the most important way you feel the strip had grown over the past 25 years? Additionally, what are some story lines that you grappled with that were maybe difficult for you?

AB: I think the strip changed by becoming more and more complex. I look at it over the years, and not only does the drawing get better and more detailed, but so does the writing. There is a lot more going on, and peoples' lives became more richly textured.

Difficult story lines for me were when one of my characters got breast cancer. That was pretty challenging. Actually, the whole Bush Administration has been quite a challenge.

WCT: That's for sure! I know that the writing is not only a strong point for your strip, but also for your other work. Do you write first and then draw? What is your process?

AB: I do. I write sort of in a story board format, where I don't actually have any drawings done, but I've got my panels mapped out. So, it's sort of thinking visually from the beginning, but without necessarily doing a lot of drawing, is how the story gets fleshed out.

WCT: I know you are taking a break, but do you see yourself continuing the strip? If so, for how long?

AB: You know, I've always said I'll do it until I keel over at my drawing board or until it was no longer viable, so I couldn't really make enough money from it. I think it kind of maybe reached that point. Not having keeled over, but it's become very hard to make a living from it.

WCT: Right. I can see it continuing to be difficult because so many LGBT and alternative newspapers are folding.

AB: Yeah, it's funny because the history of my comic strip is like a picture of the gay and lesbian newspaper community. These papers are folding left and right. I used to be in 70 newspapers, and by the time I quit it was down to maybe thirtysomething. Many of them could not pay, and it was getting really tough. On the other hand, the only reason I was able to do the comic strip and nothing else for all these years was because of these newspapers and because of gay and lesbian newspapers starting up in almost every major city in the country.

WCT: It didn't take very long for the tables to turn.

AB: [It was] definitely a rise-and-fall scenario. ... All newspapers, whether they are gay or not, are all facing this scenario because they are a dying medium.

WCT: Your memoir, *Fun Home*, was very successful. You had a lot of mainstream success, too. It was named *Time* magazine's top book of the year. Do you think *Dykes to Watch Out For* made that all possible?

AB: I think they are causally linked, for me, personally. I certainly gained drawing and storytelling skills through doing *Dykes* for all these years that I probably wouldn't have gained. Also, writing about dykes was a way for me to grapple with my own internalized homophobia and my own past. My mission for a long time was to prove that lesbians were real regular people, and that their stories are human stories worth reading. I kind of had to demonstrate that to myself before I could write this intimate memoir about my life. I also feel like it left some groundwork

in the culture, too. It was part of this gay and lesbian movement that made it okay to talk personally about our lives and tell our stories. It was a personal and cultural phenomenon for me.

WCT: Does the mainstream success of *Fun Home* show a cultural shift in how people perceive comics and graphic novels?

AB: The great thing about *Fun Home* is it just caught that graphic novel wave at that great moment. If it had been a conventional novel, it would not have had any of that impact. I was very lucky.

WCT: Was it kind of strange having all of this attention suddenly on you for *Fun Home* when you've been doing this for 25 years?

AB: Yeah, it was very odd! I sort of have a chip on my shoulder. Hey, I've been here all along. I'm sort of a little bitter. But it proved, too, that *Fun Home* was a creative leap beyond the comic strip, so I'm not that bitter. [Laughs] I'm just happy that I got recognized for what it was.

WCT: You are currently working on a new project. What can you tell us about this new project? Is it also a memoir?

AB: It's another graphic memoir. I decided what I'm really interested in is writing about myself. This book is about relationships.

WCT: So, are you looking back at your own relationships over the years?

AB: I'm using my own relationships as a laboratory to look at questions about the self and the other.

HUDSON from page 11

women, strong values and beliefs—especially my grandmother.

AM: So you're about to embark on a tour? [Note: Plans are currently on hold.]

JH: I am.

AM: With *Dreamgirls*, I'm sure you did a huge press tour, but how is this different being on tour with your music?

JH: Well, I got my feet wet just a pinch by touring with the American Idols and I know that is like the best feelin' in the world. This time I get to go out on my own; it won't be me and 11 others.

AM: No, it'll be you and an entourage of about fifty others! [Both laugh.]

JH: Yeah, with the band and the staff, I'm just lookin' so forward to it. I'm hoping at one point I could have an all-gay tour. I'm so serious! That's like my favorite audience. [I could] go from city to city and do like a concert for Gay Pride.

AM: Well, hook up with Cyndi Lauper. She's got the True Colors Tour each summer.

JH: I'll keep it in mind. I will!

AM: So what are you gonna miss most about Chicago when you're not here?

JH: Well, I just like the reality of Chicago. Chicago's so different from L.A. Chicago's very real and it's okay to be you and everybody's different, and, again, like I said, everybody's very real. And it's home. "There's no place like home." I still have my place in Chicago, and there's no other place I'd rather be, so it's still home regardless.

AM: You have met so many people in such a short time. Who were you most excited or most nervous to meet?

JH: Ah! Whitney still holds that place. Oh, I met some of everyone, but Whitney takes the cake. I never get starstruck, ever, and this is about the only time I ever got starstruck or [was at a] loss for words and it was bad. It was maybe last year or the year before, I can't keep track of it now, but I was at the Carousel of Hope event with Clive Davis and I sang for the event. I was waiting in the hallway to go in and everybody was mingling, and all of a sudden Whitney Houston—in the middle of a herd of men—come walkin' up, and I'm looking like "Wow, who's this with all these people?" and it's Whitney Houston. And I'm like "Oh my God, it's you! You're the one, you're the one." And

WCT: How long have you been working on it? Since May, when *Dykes to Watch Out For* stopped, or longer?

AB: Longer, since *Fun Home* came out, I guess. So, two years now.

WCT: When do you anticipate that it will be released?

AB: It's due next September. If I indeed turn it in on time, we're looking at 2010.

WCT: This new *Dykes* collection will tide fans over for a little bit, but a lot of people are eager to see new strips. When can fans maybe expect to see new strips again? Will it be a while?

AB: Yeah, it won't be until after I finish this next book.

WCT: What are some other projects you have been involved in?

AB: I've been doing some very fun graphic essays. I did a piece for *Entertainment Weekly* this summer about reading. I just contributed a graphic essay about Vermont for a book called *State by State*. It's a book about all of the states. It's really exciting to have time to do other projects. I'm very interested in the format of a graphic essay. I hope it's something that I will be able to do more of.

Alison Bechdel will visit Chicago's Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark, Thursday, Nov. 13, at 7:30 p.m. for a reading. See www.womenandchildrenfirst.com.

I couldn't move and I was just like sittin' in my seat, and I was just like "Aaaaah" and they had to hit me like, "Jennifer, get up, Whitney Houston's talking to you," and even then I was like "This is Whitney Houston."

AM: Is there anybody you still want to meet?

JH: Oooo, I have not met Mariah Carey yet. So I would like to meet her...umm...let me think, who else? I would like to meet Leona Lewis.

AM: That should be easy—just call Simon [Cowell].

JH: Well, our schedules keep clashing where we can't meet. I wanna say I've met pretty much everyone I want to meet.

AM: You've sung with Jennifer Holiday, Patti Labelle ... all these people, your idols. Have you sung with Gladys Knight yet?

JH: I haven't sung with her yet, but I have met her. I haven't sung with Aretha yet, but I sang for her and I've met her.

AM: So I guess there is still that to look forward to!

For more on the debut CD, visit www.jenniferhudsononline.com.



WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, Nov. 5

Test Positive Aware Network Committed to living education series. 7-9 p.m., 5537 N. Broadway, RSVP to 773-989-9400

Uncommon Ground 4 Women Only series. Each Wednesday, four female performers showcase their talents. 9 p.m., 1401 W. Devon, 773-465-9801

Thursday, Nov. 6

Breast Cancer Network of Strength Life in Balance, a survivorship conference. Nov. 6-8, Chicago Hilton and Towers, register at www.networkofstrength.org/lifeinbalance or 312-294-8576

Chicago Lesbian Gay International Film Festival Reeling 2008, showcasing groundbreaking LGBT films from all over the world. Through Nov. 15 at various locations. See www.chicago-filmmakers.org, www.reelingfilmfestival.org

Windy City Media Group Gays Got Talent contest (dance, comedy, magic, impersonation, drag, burlesque, music and more). 6 p.m. sign up, 7 p.m. start, \$5 cover, \$10 sign up for talent, \$100 to winner with most votes at each bar, Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark

Friday, Nov. 7

Better Existence with HIV Fundraiser and opening reception for "Emerging Energy," BEHIV's annual exhibition of artwork from Art Therapy clients and supportive individuals. Runs through Dec. 6. 5:30-7 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, www.behiv.org

Congregation Or Chadash Shabbat Services every Friday at Chicago's GLBT synagogue. 8 p.m., 5959 N. Sheridan Rd. (Emanuel Congregation building), 773-271-2148 or office@OrChadash.org. See www.OrChadash.org for details and other programs.

Flesh Hungry Dog Show "Celebrate or Commiserate: The Electoral Hangover," featuring performances by Major Tom, Aleks and the Drummer, Charles S. McVey. 9 p.m., \$8, 21+, Jackhammer, 6404 N. Clark St., www.fleshhungry-dog.com

SOFA Chicago 2008 15th Annual Sculpture Objects & Functional Art Fair. Through Nov. 9. \$15 for single day or \$25 for three-day pass, Navy Pier's Festival Hall, 600 E. Grand, www.sofaexpo.com, 800-563-SOFA or 773-506-8860

Velvet Rope Sean Wiggins live with Paul & Chandler for two sets. 8:30-10:30 p.m., 728 W. Lake St. in Oak Park

Youth Outlook (formerly Questioning Youth Center) and NCO Youth and Family Services 2nd Annual Forgotten Youth Conference. 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., professional \$50, student with ID \$25, \$ CEUs \$20, College of DuPage, Student Resource Center Room, Lambert & 22nd Street in Glen Ellyn, register at www.ncoyouth.org/lbgtq.htm

Saturday, Nov. 8

Affinity Community Services Viewing of For the Bible Tells Me So. \$5 donation, 5650 S. Woodlawn

Athenaeum Theater Haram Iran, a play written by Jay Paul Deratany, opening night. Runs through Dec. 7. 8 p.m., 2936 N. Southport, www.haramiran.com, www.ticketmaster.com for tickets

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus 5th Annual Lipstick and Lyrics Drag Show fundraiser, "Bad Girls." Doors 8 p.m., 9:30 p.m. show, \$20 door donation, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, tickets and info at www.cgmc.org or 773-296-0541

Chicago Lesbian Brunch Group Sandhill Crane Viewing and Hiking at Indiana Dunes. 10:30 a.m., contact pphd1226@yahoo.com or see www.meetup.com/queergirls

Chix Mix Chix That Rock women's music, artists and comedian event monthly. Features The Locals, Mieka Pauley, Kristen Key and LVN MUZIQ. See www.chixmixproductions.com for details

Gay Liberation Network Protest Focus on the Family's James Dobson in Chicago outside the Museum of Broadcast Communications induction ceremony. 5:30 p.m., Renaissance Chicago Hotel, 1 W. Wacker Dr., LGBTliberation@aol.com, www.gayliberation.net

Heartland Alliance The Candlelight Ball benefit. 8 p.m., \$225 and \$20 per raffle ticket, The Palmer House Hilton, 17

E. Monroe St., tickets at 312-660-1339 or <http://thecandlelightball.com>

Lakeside Pride Music Ensemble The Symphonic Band hosts its Fall 2008 concert. 7 p.m., \$15 suggested donation, Northside College Preparatory School, 5501 N. Kedzie Ave.

LifeLube "Tunnel of Love: Keeping that Booty Healthy and Happy" live podcast forum moderated by Feast of Fools, by LifeLube, Project CRYSP, Steamworks and Feast of Fools. 6 p.m. doors open for light nibbles and schmoozing, 7 p.m. program begins, Center on Halsted Hoover-Leppen Theatre, 3656 N. Halsted St., RSVP info TBA

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network Fundraiser with Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band and Lakeside Pride Wind Ensemble, "Harmony and Discord: The Struggle for Peace." Pre-concert gathering features Former Army Sgt. Darren Manzella, SLDN executive director Aubrey Sarvis and others. Tickets \$150 includes 6 p.m. gathering and 7 p.m. concert, Northside College Prep High School, 5501 N. Kedzie, tickets at www.chicagoSLDN.com.

Sunday, Nov. 9

Gerber/Hart Library Program marking the 20th anniversary of the passage of the Chicago Ordinance on Human Rights. 4 p.m., 1127 W. Granville Ave., info at 773-381-8030

Hannah Free Fundraiser for the film Hannah Free, now filming in Chicago. Event features Sharon Gless, who is appearing in the film. 4-6 p.m., \$50-\$100 sliding scale (you receive a thank you credit in the film), Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Windy City Media Group Gays Got Talent contest (dance, comedy, magic, impersonation, drag, burlesque, music and more). 9 p.m. sign up, 10 p.m. start, \$5 cover, \$10 sign up for talent, \$100 to winner with most votes at each bar, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted

Monday, Nov. 10

Chicago Human Rhythm Project Jubilee ...Tap into the Night, honoring

Elaine Cohen and featuring BAM!, Ted Levy, Be the Groove and more. 7:30 p.m. concert, followed by live auction and VIP reception, Chicago Center for the Performing Arts, 777 N. Green St., RSVP at 773-281-1825 or www.chicagoatop.org

Tuesday, Nov. 11

American Veterans for Equal Rights 16th annual With Liberty and Justice for All Veterans Day Dinner with special guest speaker Sgt. Marquell Smith, USMC. 6:30-10 p.m., Ann Sather, 929 W. Belmont, \$30 donation, call Jim Darby to RSVP or for info at 773-752-0058

Gerber/Hart Library Lesbian Book Group: Tipping the Velvet by Sarah Waters. 7:30-9 p.m., 1127 W. Granville Ave., www.gerberhart.org

Michigan City Public Library Screening of For the Bible Tells Me So followed by a presentation by a family featured in the film. 6 p.m., 100 E. 4th, Michigan City, Ind., 219-873-3049

Reeling Panel discussion about the image of Black gays in the media following the screening of Ebony Chunky Love. 7 p.m., Film Row Cinema at Columbia College, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., www.reelingfilmfestival.org

Wednesday, Nov. 12

Jake Daniel Vosovic (from the second season of Project Runway) appears for a book signing. 6 p.m., 939 N. Rush, www.danielvosovic.net

Maxim's: The Nancy Goldberg International Center Play on Cabaret Series: "Hotsie Hotsie." 7 p.m. reception, 7:30 p.m. show, \$25, 24 E. Goethe St., RSVP required 312-742-8497 or www.dcatheater.org

Spyners Pub Rock Reeling: Women's Music Showcase. Features performance by Sean Wiggins. 9 p.m., \$10 (\$8 members), 4623 N. Western

Uncommon Ground 4 Women Only series. Each Wednesday, four female performers showcase their talents. 1401 W. Devon, 773-465-9801

Sunday, Nov. 9



GLESS IS MORE

Actress Sharon Gless will be at a fundraiser for the movie Hannah Free (which she is currently filming in Chicago) at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

Wed., Nov. 12



CLOTHES-MINDED

Project Runway alumnus Daniel Vosovic will sign copies of his book, Fashion Inside Out, at Jake, 939 N. Rush. (He will also sign copies at Borders, 830 N. Michigan, on Thursday, Nov. 13, at 7 p.m.)

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



In more 'Ways' than one

Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore was recently in Chicago as part of a book tour for her latest novel, *So Many Ways to Sleep Badly*. The novel is about life and politics in San Francisco as seen through the eyes of a radical queer activist. Sycamore was recently named one of Utne Reader's "50 Visionaries Who Are Changing Your World." Her previous work includes the anthology *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity* and the novel *Pulling Taffy*.

Sycamore read excerpts from *So Many Ways to Sleep Badly*, and then took questions from a packed audience at Women and Children First, 5233 N. Clark, Oct. 29. Questions ranged from queries about Sycamore's writing process to the possibilities of queer politics. Speaking about contemporary gay politics and its emphasis on marriage, Sycamore, who's both an activist and writer, referred to a "gentrification of the imagination." Photo and text by Yasmin Nair



Someone's in the kitchen

Kitchen Aid, Out Magazine and the Hearty Boys (Steve McDonagh and Dan Smith) hosted a celebration for complimentary food tasting, drinks and cooking demonstrations at Hearty Boys Catering, 3819 N. Broadway. Around 60 people came to the Oct. 23 event to socialize and sample recipes from McDonagh and Smith, the Food Network star chefs who also conduct weekly classes and food demonstrations at their North Side location. The event's two three-minute demos were of the Hearty Boys' signature dish—a gorgonzola, fig and pecan cheese terrine—and of truffle brownies that McDonagh promised the crowd was "the best brownie recipe in the world." Photos and text by Kaitlyn McAvoy



Daniel Vosovic.

BOOKS

Daniel Vosovic's 'Fashion'-able book

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Project Runway alumnus Daniel Vosovic has parlayed his appearances on the show to success by designing sleek, modern pieces for women. Now, with the book *Fashion Inside Out: Daniel V's Guide to How Style Happens From Inspiration to Runway and Beyond*, Vosovic takes the reader behind the scenes and discusses the basics of everything from sketching designs to marketing.

Windy City Times: One thing I really like about this book is that it's almost like a fashion textbook, with interviews.

Daniel Vosovic: Exactly! I really wanted to bring the process of the fashion industry to the forefront. Yes, there are how-to elements with elements such as draping, but there's also expertise given from people at the top of their game, [such as] Heidi Klum, Nina Garcia, Tim Gunn and Diane von Furstenberg—all of these people who have been in the industry for years, and who have their points of view. But there are a lot of people who America may not know, like casting directors and stylists who [answer], "What does a stylist do?"

I think the goal of the book is for it to not just be a textbook for young designers, but also for people who are really interested in fashion and who really want to know how clothes get into stores and how this whole process works. I think there's been this shroud over the industry that was lifted a little on Project Runway, and I just love how much interest there's been. And even if you don't give a crap about how things [work in] the fashion industry, there are at least beautiful pictures to look at. [Laughs]

WCT: And there are a lot of pictures of you.

DV: I said the same thing to my art director: "There are a lot of photos of me." And he said, "Well, it is your book."

WCT: As we've pointed out, there are interviews in this book. What did it feel like to be a journalist?

DV: That's a very good question—that's the first time I've ever been asked that. It was, admittedly, very uncomfortable at first because I remember having to define what I do. Having to put into words why you make the decisions you make, and then talking to these other creative people, was all a bit alarming at first to some of them. It's hard putting into words why you do what you do and why you like what you like.

I definitely was emphatic to them, with me putting a microphone in their face and putting them on the spot. I had been there and done that, so I knew how to coax them to get real answers.

WCT: Speaking of the interviewees, I've decided that one of them is my new spiritual fiancé: [Marc Jacobs designer] Karl [Aberg].

DV: Don't you just love Karl! He's as adorable in real life as you think he is, and I just love where he talks about creating a character. I think that was a really unique peek into how that designer designs—and that's what this whole book is about. Yes, I'm showing you how I design, but I'm also showing other people's perspectives, and there is no right or wrong way to do this as long as you can get those ideas out of you and [eventually] onto a body form. Regardless of how you do it, it's important to create.

[Aberg] has great personal style, and he removed all ego from the conversation. He talked about his struggles—he was a hairstylist for a while—but he kept pushing. Yes, he works for a huge brand, but he enjoys the company and he likes what he does. That's what I wanted to showcase.

WCT: You say that people should push ahead, but aren't there times when people just aren't meant to be designers?

DV: I think that people are eventually weeded out, but I think that you have to look at someone who's been around for a while—not just two or three years—to see if there's substance there. No, not everyone should be a designer—and that reminds me of another point of this whole book: A lot of people think that being a fashion designer is the only way, but there are great jobs in pattern-making, styling and consulting. [Book interviewee] Elizabeth Benator is a fashion recruiter, so it's her job to get into the heads of these designers [and] figure out how they tick so she can meet with the design house to get a good fit. So you don't have to be a fashion designer to work in the fashion industry.

Daniel Vosovic will appear for a book-signing on Wed., Nov. 12, at Jake, 939 N. Rush, at 6 p.m.; and Thursday, Nov. 13, at Borders, 830 N. Michigan, at 7 p.m. See www.danielvosovic.net.

Read the entire interview at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



Ross Forman in Amsterdam. Photo courtesy of Forman

SPORTS

Dutch treat: The Amsterdam Marathon

BY ROSS FORMAN

Cheryl Ash McKenzie: I barely know her, but never will forget her.

We met Sunday, Oct. 19, about 10 miles into the 33rd Annual Amsterdam Marathon. We met as each of us was running solo *en route* back to the Olympic Stadium, which served as the start and finish lines for the 26.2-mile grind. She asked about my pace and my run-walk style, and then asked if she could run with me.

"Of course," I told her, thrilled to be running with someone, and not just my iPod.

For the next two hours or so, Cheryl and I ran side by side. I pushed her to the finish line at times. She did the same for me. She struggled some; I struggled some. She saw my friends along the course from the National AIDS Marathon Training Program, such as Chicagoans Katie, Beth, Dan and Steve, and Josh from Los Angeles, among others. I shared some Ritz crackers that Beth had been holding for me. We talked about our careers and she told me about her husband, Tim, who also was running, though at a much faster pace on this cool and mostly overcast day. We talked about her lack of interest in European soccer, which surprised me. And so much more.

Ultimately, we reached the stadium, together. We crossed the magical finish line, and then hugged each other.

It truly was a moment I'll never forget, quite possibly my fondest memory of the grueling journey, past windmills, around lakes, near some farm animals (pigs, sheep, horses, etc.) and more.

The Amsterdam Marathon was my third marathon, all completed in an 11-month stretch. Amsterdam and my first marathon, last November in Florence (Italy), were fundraisers for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. Nashville last April was simply Beth, Dan and I running with a goal of finishing, nothing more.

I'm still truly amazed that I've finished one marathon, let alone three. And the morning after the Amsterdam Marathon, as I boarded my nonstop United Airlines flight bound for Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, I felt fine. Sure, my quads were a bit tight, but hey, I just ran 26.2 miles, so perhaps they should be.

The support I've received for my marathons has been incredible—truly heartwarming. There are casual friends, longtime friends and people I've never even met but have read my running tales and decided to support the cause. Family members and family friends also have been there. There have also been countless business associates, including everyone associated with Total Nonstop Action (TNA) Wrestling, includ-

ing President Dixie Carter, who text-messaged me well wishes before and after the race. Many TNA Wrestling stars—such as Kurt Angle, Kevin Nash, Jeff Jarrett, Sonjay Dutt, Roxxi and Jacqueline, among others—also called and/or texted me their good wishes. Heck, about a month before leaving for Amsterdam, a few TNA Wrestling stars presented me a pair of brand-new Nike running shoes with their wishes.

When the leg pain was there in Amsterdam at, say, mile 22 or 23, it truly is amazing how the support of others helps motivate. I never once thought about stopping, knowing that so many others were, well, intrigued—if not amazed—that I have all of a sudden become a marathon runner.

And I'm not done running for 2008. Next up, it's the Honolulu Marathon, starting at 5 a.m., on Sunday, Dec. 14. This marathon also is a fundraiser for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. And this is the marathon that, of all I have done so far, is the one I am most excited about. Sure, the first was, and always will be, the most exciting, but I have so many close friends in Honolulu and have spent so many days on Waikiki Beach. Darren and John from the National AIDS Marathon Program will be in Hawaii, so seeing—and hearing—them on the course will be motivating. Hawaiian JR also will be running, which will be cool to see. My friend Hector from Orlando will be running in Honolulu too, though I know he'll in all likelihood finish ahead of me. Still, standing alongside Hector after the run, as we both will be wearing our medals, will be an honor. Hector, after all, has already finished an Ironman. (No, I don't plan to train for an Ironman.) I'll be running Honolulu with Dell, a Hawaiian friend who truly is a marathon veteran. This will be his 20th consecutive Honolulu Marathon, and though he's a much faster runner than I, he's agreed to do it at my best pace so we can finish together.

It's just like I did with Cheryl ... because that's how marathon memories are made.

To support my Honolulu run, see www.firstgiving.com/rossruns08. Thanks!!

Four cities named finalists for 2014 Gay Games

Groups from Miami, Cleveland, Boston and Washington, D.C., have submitted letters of intent to bid for the ninth edition of the Gay Games, to be held in 2014, according to a Federation of Gay Games (FGG) press release.

Bid documents are due to the FGG in March 2009. FGG site inspectors will then visit each city between May-August 2009.

The Gay Games have taken place in the United States four times (out of seven stagings), most recently in Chicago in 2006. The next Games will take place in Cologne, Germany, in 2010.

The ninth edition of the Gay Games will be held in 2014, and will include more than 30 sports and cultural events with over 12,000 participants and hundreds of thousands of family, friends, fans and spectators.

Men's basketball open-gym sessions start Nov. 8

The Windy City Athletic Association (WCAA) Men's Basketball League begins open gym sessions on Saturday, Nov. 8, at Amundsen High School, 5111 N. Damen.

The league is open to everyone, regardless of basketball or athletic experience. The Nov. 8 schedule is 12-1 p.m. (recreational); 1-2 p.m. (intermediate); and 2-3 p.m. (competitive).

See www.wcaasports.org for more information.



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