



Bea Arthur Dies

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Bon Foster Gala

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Wizard of Oz's Noah Aberlin

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nightspots pick it up take it home



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Gay marriages start in Iowa



The first same-sex marriage in Iowa took place outside the Polk County recorder's office. In photo, Shelley Wolfe (left) holds partner Melisa Keeton's hands while Reverend Peg Esperanza says a prayer at the end of their service, announcing the couple legally married. Photo by Matthew H. Smith

BY MATTHEW H. SMITH

Love is in the air. Despite a weekend of rain and thunderstorms, it seems a big, bright rainbow has at last formed over the city of Des Moines, Iowa—at least figuratively. Same-sex couples came to the Polk County recorder's office Monday to sign their marriage licenses after the April 3 unanimous decision to legalize same-sex marriage in Iowa. The enthusiasm was evident as couples signed the document that said, "Yes, it's official. We're married."

"Definitely other states are looking at us right now," Jason Edge said of the historic event. "And as they say, as Iowa goes, so goes the nation." He and his partner of a year and a half, Tim Lord, signed their marriage license moments before.

Andrew Mahoney-Lam and Grant Lam were the first couple to arrive shortly after 6 a.m., April 27. "The rights are what we want," said Mahoney-Lam, who has been with his partner for three years. "When you say equal protection for all, you can't leave out just one class of citizen because you don't agree with them." They were one of the first couples to sign their marriage license. Since Iowa typically has a three-day waiting period for licenses, Mahoney-Lam and

Turn to page 5

Pageant contestant talks about gays

NEWS ANALYSIS AND INTERVIEW BY REX WOCKNER

Either it is a nonstory that "the media" made into a huge story. Or the U.S. gay world hit some kind of tipping point, and it's no longer possible to "get away" with saying anti-gay things in many arenas—just as one can't get away with saying sexist or racist things.

At the Miss USA pageant April 19, judge Perez Hilton, the gay blogger, asked Miss California, Carrie Prejean, this question: "Vermont recently became the fourth state to legalize same-sex marriage. Do you think every state should follow suit? Why or why not?"

Prejean responded: "Well, I think it's great that Americans are able to choose one or the other. Um, we live in a land that you can choose same-sex marriage or opposite marriage and—you know what?—in my country and in my family, I think that I believe that a marriage should be between a man and a woman—no offense to anybody out there, but that's how I was raised and that's how I think that it should be: between a man and a woman. Thank you."



Former Miss USA contestant Carrie Prejean (above) is pictured during an interview with Rex Wockner. Photo by David Kendal

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29

See page 13 for more details

WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP THE EXPERIENCE YOU TRUST

Here are just a FEW of our dozens of people who contribute to the editorial side of WCMG: **Windy City Times, Nighspots, Windy City Queercast and QueerTVNetwork.com**

Windy City Media Group was named Best Gay News Source by The Chicago Reader.



Yasmin Nair
has fulfilled multiple roles for Windy City Times—including book reviewer, news reporter, photographer and op-ed columnist—since 1995.



Rex Wockner
has reported news for the gay press since 1985. His work has appeared in more than 300 publications in 38 countries.



Kat Fitzgerald
is a photographer and self-described “energizer.” She has been in photography for the past 25 years.



Emmanuel Garcia
has been writing for Windy City Times since 2003. He is also an editor at Windy City Media Group’s queertvnetwork.com.



Tracy Baim
started work in Chicago LGBT journalism in 1984. She co-founded Windy City Times in 1985.



Andrew Davis
is the managing editor of Windy City Times and Identity and has written for Outlines and Windy City Times since 1995.



Kirk Williamson
started with Windy City eight years ago as a sales rep and is now also managing editor of Nightspots, art director and a popular nightlife photographer.



Bob Roehr
has more than two decades of news journalism experience and is a Washington, D.C.-based correspondent focusing on politics and health issues.



Scott C. Morgan
is a freelance theater editor and has been a writer and a theater critic since 1996.



Amy Matheny
has been speaking for Chicago’s LGBT community since 1998 when she co-hosted the popular LesBiGay Radio. She founded Windy City Queercast.



Richard Knight, Jr.,
is the cinema writer for WCMG and knightatthemovies.com, and has more than two decades of experience as a cultural performer and writer.



Lisa Keen
has been covering the gay political beat for 30 years, delivering exclusives on individuals in all aspects of government, including President Barack Obama.



Mel Ferrand
has worked as a columnist and photo-journalist for Windy City Times for over a decade.



David Byrne
is the music columnist for Windy City Times: he has written the column Pop Making Sense and has interviewed various musicians for several years.



Tony Peregrin
has been a freelance entertainment/culture journalist and senior writer for Windy City Times since 1998.



Mary Shen Barnidge
has been a self-described “mercenary Chicago poet for 10 years, mercenary Chicago drama critic for 20.”



John Fenoglio
is Windy City Times’ newest addition and is a writer, reporter, new-media enthusiast and photographer who has interned at NBC.



Jonathan Abarbanel
is a member of the American Theatre Critics Assn., has reviewed for Chicago Public Radio and is an adjunct professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



Jen Parelo
is a long-time columnist for Nightspots and a published author.



Ryan Kolodziej
has been a nightlife photographer for six years with a special affinity for drag photography.



Jerry Nunn
has become an exciting adult film reviewer with his Nightspots column From the Booth and does star interviews in his Nunn on One column in Windy City Times.



Steve Starr
has photographed numerous celebrities and events, and has been writing his Starrlight column for over a decade.



Colman Domingo
is a series regular on the LOGO series The Big Gay Sketch Show and lends his theatrical flair to Windy City Queercast.



Catey Sullivan
is an award-winning critic who has been writing about Chicago theater since the local premiere of Angels in America in 1993.



John D’Emilio
is a pioneering historian of sexuality and the author or editor of six books, including a prize-winning biography of civil-rights leader Bayard Rustin.



Lawrence Ferber
is an entertainment and travel scribe who has contributed to Entertainment Weekly, The Advocate, New York Magazine, OUT, The Village Voice, Time Out NY and more.



Owen Keehnen
is a Chicago-based fiction writer and journalist whose work has been published in numerous periodicals and collections worldwide.



Jim Edminster
is a long-time Chicago writer and has covered the media world for Windy City Times for more than a decade.



Ross Forman
has written about the local and national LGBT sports scene for more than five years and has also written for such publications as USA TODAY and the Chicago Tribune.



Zachary Whittenburg
is a dancer and choreographer who covers the Chicago dance scene from the inside and has written for numerous publications since 2006.



Alexandra Billings
is an actress, singer, teacher, writer, blogger, activist and former radio host whose extensive theatre work has taken her across Chicago and to Los Angeles.



Billy Masters
is a comedian, personality and award-winning gossip columnist who has been syndicating his weekly column worldwide for the past 13 years.



Marie J. Kuda
is a long-time community writer, historian and archivist. She has written articles and columns for Outlines and Windy City Times for more than 20 years.



Jean Albright
served in the U.S. Air Force for 20 years, including writing for Stars & Stripes. She has worked for nearly 15 years for WCMG as an editor and Web site manager.



grayson
has been an arbiter of snark for Nightspots magazine since 2001.



Stephen Rader
has received many awards for his work in Chicago theater. He is also exec. director of Season of Concern, writes a popular blog and co-hosts Windy City Queercast.

The above people, plus dozens more, give WCMG an unequalled combination of experience, connections and continuity.

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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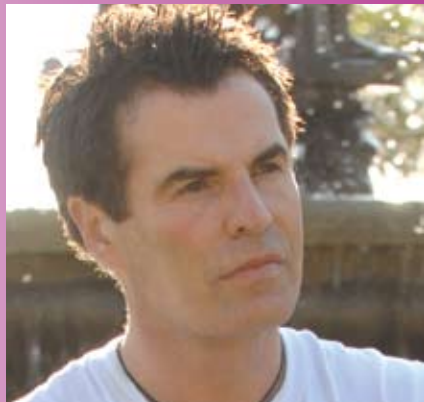


Rita Mae Brown was in Chicago and spoke about the animals. Find out more on page 6.

Photo by Mel Ferrand

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Kevin Grangier (above) will make history May 7 when he becomes the first gay client on Bravo's Millionaire Matchmaker. Read more about him on page 15.

Photo courtesy of Bravo

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- Features include:
- National and world news
 - An interview with gay rapper Bry'Nt (right)
 - Gay travel: Istanbul
 - Review of the book Open: Love ... Open Marriage



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Photo by Ryan Kolodziej



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John Berry sworn in as director of all federal employees

BY BOB ROEHR

The swearing in of openly gay John Berry as Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the agency that oversees nearly 20 million federal employees, marked a world of change from when the government would fire someone simply for being gay.

First Lady Michelle Obama attended the April 23 ceremony.

Berry chose Constance Berry Newman (no relation) to administer the oath of office. She first met Berry 18 years ago when she was Director of OPM and he was a legislative assistant to Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland), now House Majority Leader.

Congress was then considering major legislation to allow for adjusting pay scales according to the local cost of living and to compete with the private sector in hiring federal employees.

"I believe that without John's intellect, sensitivity to the issues, integrity and diplomatic skills the legislation would not have passed," said Newman. She called Berry "the perfect person" for the job.

"The sweep of history is on display this afternoon," Berry said near the start of his remarks. "I would like to recognize a civil rights pioneer who is with us today—Dr. Frank Kameny. He is a military veteran and a life-long activist."

First Lady Michelle Obama told the gathering that Berry "is a man of great charisma and poise, not just a nice person but a smart person, someone who understands the vision of what is possible in this agency."

Read the entire article online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Also, national and world news will be online this week, including news of the verdict in the Angie Zapata murder trial.

PAGEANT from cover

In reality, Americans can choose same-sex marriage only in Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts and, starting Sept. 1, Vermont. One would think Miss California might remember that tiny little battle over Proposition 8, but whatever.

Prejean, who came in first runner-up, later said, "At that moment after I'd answered the question, I knew that I was not going to win because of my answer."

Subsequent reporting revealed she apparently is right about that, which suggests that having "correct" gay positions has become more important than many of us might have assumed.

Yet, in a video blog, Hilton later opined: "She lost not because she doesn't believe in gay marriage. Miss California lost because she's a dumb bitch. OK? ... If that girl would have won Miss USA, I would have gone up onstage—I shit you not—I would have gone up onstage, snatched that tiara off her head and run out the door."

The boy does have a way with words.

Yet later, Hilton told MSNBC, "I called her the b-word and, hey, I was thinking the c-word, and I didn't say it."

One does not often hear "the c-word," even called just "the c-word," on MSNBC.

At any rate, Hilton appears to believe there is a way for a Miss USA contestant to oppose gay marriage—but that would be some way other than the way Prejean did it.

All of this resulted in so many media stories that Google News probably had to add server capacity. But the interesting question, actually, is: Was this a gay tipping point? All Prejean did—albeit not particularly articulately—was say that she believes marriage is between a man and a woman. Fifty-two percent of California voters think that, too. Or at least they did as of last Nov. 4.

But then there was Iowa. And Vermont. And 8 million media stories and TV things. The bottom line, I guess: If Miss USA can't dis the gays and

get away with it, then there probably now are many, many arenas in which one can't dis the gays and get away with it.

If that's true, a "tipping point" is probably exactly what we observed, and the orgy of media coverage may have been (sigh) warranted.

Rex Wockner: Clearly, nobody would ever get up there (at the Miss USA pageant) and say, "I don't think black people should be able to marry white people" or something like that. Or nobody would get up there and say something sexist. And people are wondering if maybe we've gotten to a moment in American culture where you can't really say something that's interpreted as anti-gay anymore, like you might have been able to five years ago. Do you think maybe that's what could have happened, or, if not, what do you think happened in Vegas that led to all this media stuff?

Carrie Prejean: I think the key thing is tolerance, and I think Perez Hilton had, obviously, a hidden agenda, because of the reaction immediately after the pageant. He didn't agree with what I said, therefore he wanted to go out there and bash me and say things that were very hurtful. So, I think that this wouldn't be happening right now had he not have done that. So, it would have just been me saying my own opinions, which I'm entitled to, just as you are, and I think it would have been over with. But the fact that he went out there and attacked me, you know, verbally, that's why this is all happening right now.

Rex: So, you think if you had just expressed your opinion that marriage is between a man and a woman, which 52 percent of the voters in California agree with you on that...

Carrie: Right, I'm representing not only the state of California but the majority of people in our nation.

Rex: So, do you think the reason it became such a big news story is because he called you a bitch?

Carrie: Um, I think that because of his expression and his verbal attack on me immediately after the pageant—I mean, he didn't even wait one day to do this attack—so I do think there was a hidden agenda there.

Rex: I saw on his blog that he wants to have coffee with you. Is that something you would do?

Carrie: Um, I'm not sure if I would have coffee with him. If I did, I'd bring (the Rock Church Pastor) Miles (McPherson) with me.

Rex: If you had it to do all over again, would you do anything different at the microphone at the pageant?

Carrie: No, I wouldn't do anything different. I think that I was entitled to my own opinion. He asked me, you know, how I feel about a certain subject and I gave him my honest opinion. So, no, I have no regrets.

Rex: Do you think that same-sex marriage is just a matter of time, that clearly society is evolving in that direction, and that we're going to look back on these days as the way we look back on days when white and black people couldn't get married to each other, or do you think it's going to be a very long fight to try to get Americans to accept that?

Carrie: I definitely think it's going to be a very long fight. As you can see in California, you know, we had already ruled that, you know, with

Proposition 8, that was already discussed that marriage is between a man and a woman. We voted on it. Um, so, I think that it maybe will be a matter of time, but I don't see that coming anytime soon.

Rex: And, I guess, last question: What would be so wrong with two women who love each other getting married?

Carrie: What would be so wrong with two women that love each other?

Rex: What would be so wrong with that? Yeah.

Carrie: What don't you see wrong with that?

Rex: I don't see anything wrong with it.

Carrie: Why?

Rex: Uh, why don't—oh, this is fun—why don't I see anything wrong with it? Uh, because they're in love with each other, and they want to spend their lives together, and marriage is kind of the way that our society recognizes that two people love each other and want to spend their lives together and make commitment and be financially intertwined and be faithful and, you know, permanent. So, why should that be something that gay people can't do? There's gay people all around us all the time.

Carrie: Exactly, and this is nothing against gay people. I have a lot of friends that are gay. This is not a verbal attack on gay people. It's just a matter of opinion, and the way that I was raised, the way that I was brought up, that was not an option. I knew I was going to marry a man growing up. And so, for me, it's a biblical thing, it's something that I was raised believing, um, that a marriage, you know, is between a man and a woman. Barack Obama even supports that. The majority of the people in our nation support that. The secretary of state supports that. So, I don't see anything wrong with it.

Rex: It's hard to argue with. I mean, you're right that 52 percent of California voters...

Carrie: Because Barack Obama doesn't agree with you, does that make him a bad president?

Rex: Uh, no, I kind of like Barack Obama as a president, actually.

Carrie: I do, too.

Rex: I understand that you were raised to believe that marriage is between a man and a woman, and I understand that you grew up knowing that you were always going to marry a guy, but you're heterosexual. Um, some people are born gay, maybe, you think?

Carrie: No, I don't think so.

Rex: OK, so now we're getting somewhere.

Carrie: I think it's a behavior that develops over time.

Rex: Why would someone choose it, given that if you choose that, you get discriminated against?


Carrie: Um, because obviously Perez Hilton doesn't think that there's anything wrong with it.

Rex: No, but if being gay is a choice, rather than something you're born with, why would you choose something that's going to lead to your being discriminated against? What would be the motivation?

Carrie: I'm not sure what the motivation would be.

Rex: OK. Me either.

Handler: I'm sorry, Rex, we've got to move on to channel 7.




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Carrie Prejean with Rex Wockner. Photo by David Kendal

Conn. governor signs marriage bill

Connecticut's governor, M. Jodi Rell, has signed legislation that removes gender references from state marriage laws, according to the Boston Globe. The measure also changes existing same-sex civil union into legally recognized marriages as of Oct. 1, 2010.

Last year, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage should be legalized in the state. Iowa, Vermont and Massachusetts also allow gay marriage.



Gov. M. Jodi Rell.

Another 11-year-old takes own life

Another 11-year-old has committed suicide as a result of gay slurs he received in school. According to the Washington Blade, Georgia student Jaheem Herrera hanged himself in his closet with a cloth belt April 16; Herrera's mother, Masika Bermudez, and other parents said children at the school taunted Herrera daily and called him "gay." Recently, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover—who was bullied for months at his school in Springfield, Mass., even though he did not identify as gay—killed himself.

Regarding Herrera, DeKalb County (Ga.) school officials have started their own internal investigation, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. The system's review, Superintendent Crawford Lewis said, will take place at the same time as talks that DeKalb District Attorney Gwendolyn Keyes Fleming plans to have with parents and educators involved in the case.

IOWA from cover

his partner went to the courthouse for a waiver so they could make their union official as soon as possible. The waiver was granted as many other couples followed suit. Mahoney-Lam said the process was very organized and very easy.

Yet none of this would be possible without the help of Lambda Legal and One Iowa. Justin Uebelhor is the communications director for One Iowa, the state's largest LGBT organization. One Iowa was founded in 2006 and has been working closely with Lambda Legal to make equality among LGBT couples a reality. Uebelhor hopes what has started in Iowa will continue to spread throughout the nation, as with the recent decision to legalize same-sex marriages in Vermont, effective in September. "It's really a monumental day and a monumental event for Iowa," he said.

Ingrid Olson and her partner of 11 years, Reva Evans, of Council Bluffs, have actually come back to Polk County, where their marriage license was initially rejected. They are one of six couples unable to attain legal rights to marry one another in the 2005 Lambda Legal case against Iowa, *Varnum v. Brien*. At the recorder's office with their son Jamison, the couple saw

Monday as a moment in their life where everything they worked for reached a much-anticipated high point. "It feels right to be here," Olson said. "It's the pinnacle for everything because it's what we've waited so long for—that state recognition. It really is the key."

"I've just got this big smile on my face," Evans said. "This is all so surreal for me. I'm very excited. There are couples that have been waiting 25 to 30 years for this, so I'm very excited for them, too. And I'm just excited to see everyone and to see history in the making." Olson and Evans plan on having their wedding on June 15, their son's third birthday. "His family has finally come full circle," Olson added. "I think in a way that's a gift to him. When he gets older he'll understand what we were doing was protecting him and his interests."

Robin Lambrecht and her partner Sharon Weitzell celebrated the emotional aspect of their relationship four years ago with a Holy Union Ceremony. Lambrecht said it's nice to now have the legal recognition to back up her commitment with her partner. "We never thought this would happen so late in life," Lambrecht said. Both she and her partner are in their 60s.

For Nancy Robinson and Laura Fefchak of Ur-

bandale, who were married in Canada in June 2006, today simply means their marriage will now be legally acknowledged by the state they reside in. "Now it no longer turns into a pumpkin when we come into Iowa," Robinson said of their Canadian nuptials.

Fefchak sees same-sex marriage as the civil justice issue of our time. "This will really change people's lives," she said. Fefchak said people from surrounding Midwest areas like Kansas City and Chicago now have someplace within driving distance that will accept their relationship. While she admits same-sex marriage won't be recognized upon returning to those states like Missouri or Illinois, she said, "It's a matter of time. We are so proud to be living in this place at this point of time."

Other couples see the signing of the marriage license as little more than a formality at this point. Lori Blachford has been in a committed relationship with her partner, Karen Utke, for 25 years. "We want the legal rights, and then we're gonna party," Blachford said.

But for Melisa Keeton and Shelley Wolfe, who have been together for two and a half years, Monday meant the world. Keeton and Wolfe already have a three-year-old son at home, and Keeton has another one on the way. Their official wedding—the first same-sex wedding performed in Iowa—took place outside the Polk County recorder's office after their waiver went through Monday morning. "It's a pretty powerful thing to hear, 'By the power invested in me,' and to have it legally mean something," Keeton said.

Looks like it's official. For many Iowans and same-sex couples across the nation, it's about time.

Readers can also follow Matt Smith's personal experience of this historic event on his blog at www.mattyfactory.com or follow him on mattyfactory.blogspot.com.



Karen Utke, left, and partner Lori Blachford remain in high spirits as they wait outside the Polk County recorder's office to sign their marriage licenses. Photo by Matthew H. Smith

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Rita Mae Brown. Photo by Mel Ferrand

Rita Mae Brown reveals animal instincts

BY MEL FERRAND

Standing in complete riding regalia, sans her horse, Rita Mae Brown mused on topics ranging from politics, drugs, and religion to aging, love, women and her seemingly favorite topic: animals.

One of the most revered and respected writers in the country; this 64-year-old spitfire didn't show any signs of slowing down as she addressed a full auditorium at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, as the keynote speaker for Gerber/Hart Library April 25. Originally scheduled to be in Chicago in September to coincide with the 35th anniversary of the publication of her first novel, *Rubyfruit Jungle*, and to serve as keynote speaker at Gerber Hart's annual benefit, Brown's visit was delayed by Hurricane Hanna.

Those in attendance would say it was well worth the wait, as she held the audience captivated with snippets of her mom's wisdom as well her own, for just under an hour wherein Brown pushed conventional opinions on a variety of topics. When asked what she thought about same-sex marriage rights, she replied, "I can't mate in captivity," borrowing a phrase coined by the now married Gloria Steinem. To make her opinion of the legislative system unequivocal, she added, "The difference between republicans and democrats is like the difference between syphilis and gonorrhea."

Brown's musings also included thoughts about women. She posited that, "we don't really know the potential of the female body" because we [women] are raised to be weak and therefore aspire not to develop or use our physical strength. She then further queried, "Why would anyone want to be weak?" as she continued her exploration of the American female experience.

However, she became most passionate on the topic of animals, notably those other than humans. By way of explanation she stated, "My first memory of life is a crib with a cat." In addition, she argued, the one unique trait that humans seem to have over other animals is the ability

to make compromises. She further suggested that development of this skill might be a critical goal toward the success of our survival. Brown further explained that she believes that no one can love as deeply as a dog, but said, [despite that] "My goal is to love as deeply as they do." She urged those in attendance to support local ASPCAs and summed up her talk with the statement that "Maybe the real goal is to be a little more like your dog."

It should come as no surprise that her upcoming novel is entitled *Animal Magnetism*.

Out and Proud signing at DePaul May 7

Barnes & Noble DePaul Center, 1 E. Jackson, will host a discussion and signing of *Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community* on Thursday, May 7, at 6 p.m.

Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim—who edited and co-wrote the book—and several of the contributors, including Marie J. Kuda, Ron Dorfman, Jonathan Abarbanel, Owen Keehnen, senior editor Jorjet Harper, Jeff Berry and senior editor William Kelley, will discuss the long and rich history of the city's LGBTQA community in Chicago. The book is lavishly illustrated with color and black-and white-photographs, and it draws on a wealth of scholarly, historical, and journalistic sources.

For more information on this event, call 312-362-8792 or visit depaul-loop.bncollege.com.

Our Sisters Bazaar at HBHC May 3

Our Sisters Bazaar—an event to help women struggling in these tough economic times—will be held Sunday, May 3, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., at the Howard Brown Center, 4025 N. Sheridan.

Businesses that will be represented at the bazaar include Women & Children First Bookstore, Forest View Lounge, New Victoria Publishers, Urban Café, Windy City Media Group, LC Publishing and the center itself. To participate or to donate to the event, e-mail oursistersbazaar@yahoo.com. Also, visit Facebook.com and search "Oursisters Bazaar" for updates.

May socials at Center

Men on Mondays will take place May 4, 6-9 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. Women on Wednesdays will follow on May 6, 6-9 p.m. Tickets are \$10, with a cash bar available.

For more information, contact Tom Ballentine at tballentine@centeronhalsted.org or call 773-472-6469, ext. 245.

The Lambda of Lincoln



Former President Abraham Lincoln made a guest appearance at Lambda Legal's annual Bon Foster Address, to the delight of a standing-room only crowd at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark, on April 23.

In celebration of his 200th birthday—and featuring one of only five original copies of his immortal Gettysburg Address, which is on special exhibit at the museum—"President Lincoln" read the list of sponsors of the event.

Lincoln wasn't the only cause for celebration; the Iowa Supreme Court's unanimous decision to legalize same-sex marriage in that state is Lambda Legal's most recent in a long list of successes in the courts. After receiving a standing ovation from the hundreds of people in attendance, Lambda Legal's Midwest Region senior attorney, Camilla Taylor, described her experience in Iowa. She explained that this case was brought by people in Iowa, and not imposed on them from the outside. Taylor found that Iowans live their state motto: "Our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain."

This annual event honors the memory of Robert Bonvouloir "Bon" Foster, the late civil-rights activist/attorney who died of AIDS-related complications in 1991 at the age of 36. Through his bequest to Lambda Legal, the Midwest Regional Office was opened in 1993. Text by Mel Ferrand; photos by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)

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Bar none: Gay clubs reject bachelorette parties

NEWS ANALYSIS BY YASMIN NAIR

Dawn Turner Trice's recent Chicago Tribune article, "Gay rights battle puts strain on parties," has created a stir. Trice noted that Geno Zaharakis of Cocktail, a gay bar at 3359 N. Halsted, does not allow bachelorette parties. Neither does the popular nightclub Sidetrack (next door at 3349 N. Halsted), co-owned by Art Johnston, who was quoted in the article. The story disrupts the popular mythology about the bond between gay men and straight women, and it shines a new spotlight on the gay-marriage movement, which has seen significant advances. Is the ban a sign of things to come, and what does it tell us about the historical relationship of gay bars to their neighborhoods and their clientele? Windy City Times spoke to the principal people involved and a historian of gay political life.

Zaharakis said that he had made the decision to ban bachelorette parties five years ago after dealing with a particularly unruly group, and was motivated partly by the behavior of straight women at his bar. As he put it, "I was at the bar and a couple of women came in, got rowdy, were kind of disrespectful to our patrons and treated [the bar] as a carnie show. We're not. [And] I don't feel that it's fair or just for women to come in and celebrate their upcoming marriage or nuptials when I, a gay man, can't get married and celebrate his upcoming nuptials because I don't have equal rights."

Johnston stated that the reasons for Sidetrack not hosting bachelorette parties had to do with the rowdiness of straight women at the events: "Because of their behavior, they are not among our most favorite clients." He added, "We don't

ban anybody. We just don't offer any particular packages or programs for bachelorette parties. Other bars do, and they do a fine job offering those services." Michelle Fire of Big Chicks said in an e-mail, "We have had no problem with bachelorette parties."

Given that wedding season is coming up, and the state of the economy, it seems unlikely that too many bars will follow Cocktail and Sidetrack's example. Even if this does not turn out to be a sweeping trend, the bar owners' decisions open a host of questions about the relationship of gay bars to their neighborhoods. Zaharakis describes his establishment as a neighborhood bar. Jennifer Brier, assistant professor of history and gender and women's studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, noted that, historically, gay bars have been sites of specific forms of exclusion such as race and gender expression based on clothing. She said that in the '40s and '50s, when gay bars were not owned by gay people but usually by the mob, gays and lesbians had to wear whatever clothing was deemed appropriate for their sex and "there was a fear of police harassment. There was incredible state and police surveillance."

According to Brier, while there were more openly gay and less restrictive bars through the 1970s, in that period "many gay men of color discuss being consistently excluded from bars that were overwhelmingly white. Marlon Riggs talks about it in Tongues Untied. It wasn't uncommon for them to be told they needed two or three pieces of identification to get into a bar, as opposed to what white clients were asked for. In fact, in the 1980s, ACT UP NY regularly said that it wouldn't hold fundraisers at bars that were known to be racially exclusionary."

Brier, a feminist, was also struck by some aspects of bachelorette parties that appear to have gone unnoticed in the mainstream coverage of the Cocktail ban. She said, "I'm disturbed by what it means that they can only have these parties in gay bars. It appears that there's no space for any kind of female sociability in a

straight bar; it's all sexualized. Why couldn't these young women just go to a straight bar in Lincoln Park? I'm not prudish, and I'm also not suggesting that getting drunk and losing control of your sensibility is a good way of being in the world. But, clearly, these women desire a kind of sexual freedom that has no space in heterosexual institutions. That, for me, suggests that women are not able to safely have a kind of freedom of sexual expression in straight spaces. That's intense. But instead of looking at those issues, we're concerned with this story of exaggerated behavior around certain bodies, with gay men being pawed and straight women being so tragically drunk that they can't control themselves."

Brier also questioned what aspects of gay

marriage in particular would incite such a ban. As she put it, "I understand the symbolism of the ban, and the argument. But is this what we really see as emblematic of marriage—rowdy bachelorette parties?"

As for what kinds of bodies are referred to in this recent controversy, one category of marrying people has been left out of the picture: lesbians. So far, there's no word on how lesbians conduct their bachelorette parties and whether or not their parties get as rowdy and if their presence might be as threatening to the decorum of gay bars and/or the institution of marriage. For now, Zaharakis plans on continuing his ban, despite the occasional complaint from straight women: "Everyone's entitled to their opinion, and I'm entitled to serve whom I want to serve."

Love and marriage



The GLBTQ Wedding Expo took place April 26 at the Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza, 350 W. Mart Center. The expo, produced by the Web site RainbowWeddingNetwork.com, featured more than 20 vendors providing attendees with samples; couples could taste, see and feel the possibilities of their ceremonies. To learn more, visit gayweddings.us.com. Text and photos by Emmanuel Garcia; see a video of the event at www.windycitymediagroup.com.



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AFC junior board's passion for 'Fashion'

BY BYRON FLITSCH

Strong fashion design often speaks for itself, but even stronger design speaks with purpose. Meld the two together and you have The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) Junior Board's "Make a Statement: Design for a Cure" event that highlights budding Chicago fashion designers and HIV awareness in its third annual runway show.

The May 7 event stemmed from Lucas Cowan, an AFC junior board member, who was interested in creating a fashion show that introduced talented fresh designers while promoting the necessity of status awareness. In June 2007, Cowan asked Ericka Chesnal, a fellow board member, to be co-chair. "The Junior Board wanted their own distinguished event that spoke to a younger demographic," Chesnal said. What started out as a "Project Runway feel" (originally, designers were given an allotted amount of red fabric to use for their designs) has developed in to a fashion-forward charity affair.

In its third year, attendees can expect a stylish evening hosted by Chicago personality Heidi Hess. The night will include music spun by DJ Casper, cocktails, raffles and a talk from Jack Mackenroth, known for his appearance on Project Runway and currently a spokesperson for Living Positive By Design—a positive outlook organization on living with HIV and presenting sponsor of Design For A Cure along with Merek & Co. "It's an event where people either come dressed chic or straight from work. Just come as you are," Chesnal said.

Attendees should also expect progressive fashions from up and coming Chicago based designers. Designers donate their time and supplies to create unique pieces ranging from 5pl't's modern and trim for the fashion conscious man to Kwabena's sophisticated African print couture. Other designers include: Kate Boggiano, Serpico, and Lara Miller. A variety of established Chicago retailers will also be featured, such as: SkinStinct, Universal Gear, and Akira.

The ultimate goal is to continually educate a younger demographic about health and responsibility. "The event's primary focus is to continually remind people what it really means to know your [HIV] status while having a good time raising money to help a cause," Chesnal said.

While the concept of meshing health and beauty isn't a new, it's a trend that will always be in fashion.

"Make a Statement: Design for a Cure" will take place Thursday, May 7, at River East Art Center, 435 E. Illinois; the VIP reception is 6-7 p.m. and the general reception is 7-10 p.m. Tickets are \$65-\$125; visit www.aidschicago.org/events/make_a_statement.php.

Daley double: Scholar talks local LGBTQ history

BY YASMIN NAIR

Chicago's infamous machine politics is as much the stuff of lore as a reality of Chicago life. Richard J. Daley, most associated with the machine, was mayor from 1955 to 1976. His son, Richard M. Daley, has been mayor from 1989 to the present. Except for a period of 13 years in the interim, there has been a Daley in power since the mid-1950s. The issue of what differences, if any, mark the tenures of the two men has been the subject of several books.

Timothy Stewart-Winter, a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Chicago, discussed the differences between the two Daleys in terms of their relationships to the LGBTQ community, in a talk entitled "Machine Politics and Queer Chicagoans Since 1955: From Daley to Daley." The April 21 event was part of Gerber/Hart Library's "The Cutting Edge: Young Scholars Share Their Work" series. Stewart-Winter's paper began by noting that the elder Daley was often held up as an exemplar of middle-class family values, with a Tribune article describing him as "a family man in a city of family men." Publicity photos of the mayor showed him at home with his wife and seven children, and much was made of the fact that he lived all his life in the working-class neighborhood of Bridgeport. Stewart-Winter pointed out that this "normative vision of family life" came with a reputation for being tough on crime, and that toughness included frequent raids on gay and lesbian bars and gathering places because the mayor "viewed gays as a law-enforcement problem."

The 1950s saw the enforcement of "disorderly conduct laws," which were broad enough to allow police to round up gays and lesbians for infractions as minor as "violations of city laws against cross-dressing"—which simply meant that women could be arrested for wearing fly-front trousers. The frequency of such raids prompted one gay writer to comment that "Chicago had quite a heat wave in the 1950s." Despite such repression, according to Stewart-Winter, Chicago queers found ways to continue sustaining a vibrant and underground subculture, especially in

the drag balls on the South side.

According to Stewart-Winter, 1968—the year of the Democratic Party crackdown on dissenters at its National Convention—was a distinct chink in the hitherto impenetrable Daley armor. This period saw the rise of the Stonewall generation and the growing perception among gays and lesbians that they needed to be out and to be more politicized. The 1970s saw more acceptance of gay life, with the Sun-Times doing a series of articles on gay life, with titles like "From Homebodies to Hustlers."

Richard M. Daley's emergence in public life has seen a marked difference in terms of the treatment of the gay and lesbian community. This mayor has the overwhelming support of the community and is known for several typically pro-gay moves and announcements, including a support for gay marriage. However, as Stewart-Winter pointed out, relations between the community and the mayor got off to an unsteady start. In 1989, the mayor had a "stormy confrontation" with organized gay constituents who

felt he had backed away from campaign promises. The following day, members of the activist group ACT UP and others were arrested as they protested the mayor. Over the following years, however, the mayor's relationship with the community strengthened. In 1997, he proposed the rainbow pylons in Boystown and, in 2009, appointed openly gay Ron Huberman as head of Chicago Public Schools.

Stewart-Winter took a few questions at the end of the talk, and one audience member asked what made Chicago's gay history any different from that of other major cities, which saw similar cultural and political shifts over the years. In response, Stewart-Winter said that Chicago gays had "less of an anti-establishment edge" but that in some ways they were more typical of the region than San Francisco or New York City might be in relation to their surrounding locales. For instance, said Stewart-Winter, Chicago is historically a very Catholic city, and it is also the biggest city not automatically associated with gay culture.

Under the leather



Leatherman Mark Austin, a former International Mr. Leather (IML) finalist, and Mistress Joanne Gaddy, retired mistress of IML, are teaching "Leather 101," a four-week course at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. The remaining classes in the series—which will be on Wednesdays through May 13—will cover such topics as Stonewall and the first leather competitions; the impact of HIV/AIDS on the leather community; and hanky codes. Admission is \$5. Photo (of Austin and Gaddy) and text by Andrew Davis

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SAGE among Quigley's requests

Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders (SAGE), located at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, is listed among U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley's, D-ILL., FY 2010 appropriations requests, according to a press release.

Regarding SAGE, Quigley—who was sworn in April 21—requested \$475,000 through the Health and Human Services' HRSA account.

Quigley also requested \$150,150 for VIDA/SIDA: The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, 2703 W. Division. The center provides services for those with HIV/AIDS.

Among his other requests were money for everything for PACE to the Lincoln Park Zoological Society Population Management Center.

U.S. Rep. Quigley co-sponsors hate-crimes bill

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley, D-ILL., has announced his decision to make his first co-sponsored bill in Congress the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 (LLEHCPA).

"We've come a long way in the last 20 years when it comes to equality," said Quigley. "But we've still got a lot of work to live up to the idea that all Americans are created equal."

The LLEHCPA will authorize the Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute certain bias-motivated crimes based on the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability.

As Cook County commissioner, Quigley initiated or help pass several pro-LGBT measures, including the one that created the Cook County domestic partnership registry, which allows domestic partners to more easily secure benefits for one another.

Tunney and others propose stimulus plan

Alderman Tom Tunney (44th Ward) and others announced a series of ordinances at the April 22 City Council meeting that will serve as a Chicago stimulus plan to help jumpstart the regional economy. The four measures, intended to help businesses and consumers alike, would encourage consumer spending and reduce the cost of doing business in Chicago.

Details of the plan include phasing out the employer head tax to encourage more hiring; eliminating downtown parking taxes only on weekends to encourage dining; streamlining operations regarding business licenses, permits and fees; and initiating a moratorium on future meter-rate increases until "pay-and-display" metering is installed.

Other aldermen who signed onto the plan included Robert Fioretti (2nd Ward), Pat Dowell (3rd), Walter Burnett (23rd), Scott Waguespack (32nd), Brian Doherty (41st), Brendan Reilly (42nd), Vi Daley (43rd), Helen Shiller (46th) and Gene Schuller (47th).

IDHR hosts fair-housing panel

In honor of Fair Housing Month, the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) hosted a panel April 22 at the James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph, that focused on how communities are coming together to address the escalating housing crisis, which has disproportionately affected immigrant communities, according to an IDHR press release.

The panel, "CommUNITY: Immigrant Communities Respond to the Housing Crisis," was designed to recommend strategies for community integration. Speakers included representatives from the Polish, African, Latino and other immi-

grant communities and Terry Keleher, executive director of the Applied Research Center.

In March, the IDHR became the first state agency to petition President Barack Obama to sign an executive order that would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in federally-assisted housing.

Chicago House events May 2-3

Chicago House & Social Service Agency, the first organization in the Midwest to provide housing and support for people living with HIV and AIDS, will hold its "Families for Families" special event and annual Brunch and Fashion Show May 2-3 in the Winter Garden Ballroom of the Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State.

"The theme is 'Fanta-Sea Island Fashion Splash,'" said Jeremy Hilborn, special events manager for Chicago House, in a statement. "It will be a warm reminder of tropical fun, featuring the sights, sounds and even flavor and spice from the islands."

The Families for Families event, to be held on May 2, is 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Tickets are \$40 for children and \$100 for adults. The Annual Spring Brunch and Fashion Show, on May 3, is from 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.; tickets are \$175 for garden seating and \$275 at the runway. Call 773-248-5200, ext 303, or visit www.chicagohouse.org.

OPALGA gala May 2

The 13th Annual OPALGA (Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association) Gala will be held Saturday, May 2, at The Hyatt Lodge at McDonald's Campus, 2815 Jorie, Oak Brook. Cocktails are at 6:30 p.m. and dinner is at 7:30 p.m.

The gala will mark OPALGA turning 20 years old. There will be a silent auction, live auction and raffle in addition to dancing. Formal attire is optional.

Tickets are \$190 each. Call 708-848-0273.

Health forum at Jeffery Pub

Brothers Health Collective will present a health forum, "Are Black LGBTs In Health Crisis Mode? Get the facts..." Wed., May 6, at Jeffery Pub, 7041 S. Jeffery, 6-9 p.m.

A special part of the event will involve the presentation of awards to Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Terry Mason and Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Damon Arnold. For more info, call 312-388-0431.

Florida lecturing at Columbia

Economist/lecturer/writer Richard Florida wraps up the fifth season of Columbia College Chicago's Conversation's in the Arts with his take on the economic intersection of institutions of higher education with the arts, culture and media industries of major urban areas, specifically Chicago, Thursday, April 30, in Columbia's Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash, 8th floor, at 7:30 p.m.

Among Florida's works is *The Rise of the Creative Class*. The public event is free but reservations are required; call 312-369-6600.

Pollock/Midler exhibit in River North

Artist Dellamarie Parrilli, in the tradition of abstract expressionists, is presenting "Jackson Pollock Meets Bette Midler" April 30-June 30 at the Palmer Gallery, 233 W. Huron.

A reception will be held Friday, May 1, 6:30-10 p.m. See more of Parrilli's art at www.parrilli.com; find out more about the gallery at www.thepalmergallery.com.

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"ONLY TEN YEARS AGO, IT LOOKED LIKE GAY PEOPLE WOULD NOT BE ABLE to marry until the cows came home. With an Iowa Supreme Court victory and the state legislature approving marriage in Vermont, gay couples will soon be coming home to their cows—with marriage licenses in hand. The farm teams have brought us major league victories and reinvigorated the GLBT marriage movement." — *Syndicated gay columnist Wayne Besen, April 7.*



Marriage? Babies? Please. I want to be illegal.

—Rupert Everett



"THAT (IOWA'S LEGALIZATION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE) CAUGHT ME, candidly, by surprise, proverbially flat-footed. It was around April 1st, so I thought, honestly, it was an April Fool's joke. ... Now you have four states that are legally sanctioning same-sex marriage, and New York and California are not among them. Who could have predicted that?" — *San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom to The New York Times, April 11.*

"IF THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS PROPOSITION 8, California will be an outlier in the ongoing history of equality that is now exemplified by Vermont, Connecticut, Iowa, and Massachusetts, as well as many nations around the world." — *Shannon Minter, legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights and lead lawyer for the gay side in the California marriage case, in an April 7 statement.*

"THE SUPREME COURT OF IOWA, IN A UNANIMOUS DECISION, has clearly stated that the Constitution of our state, which guarantees equal protection of the law to all Iowans, requires the State of Iowa to recognize the civil marriage contract of two people of the same gender. The Court also concluded that the denial of this right constitutes discrimination. Therefore, after careful consideration and a thorough reading of the Court's decision, I am reluctant to support amending the Iowa Constitution to add a provision that our Supreme Court has said is unlawful and discriminatory. As Governor, I must respect the authority of the Iowa Supreme Court, and have a duty to uphold the Constitution of the State of Iowa. I also fully respect the right of all Iowans to live under the full protection of Iowa's Constitution." — *Gov. Chet Culver in an April 7 statement.*

"SO THERE ARE THE VERMIN NOW CELEBRATING TWISTED PERVERSE MARRIAGE IN THE MIDDLE OF AMERICA, calling it a victory. It's a victory for perversion in my opinion. ... You want me to tell you what makes me sick? When I see two puffy white males kissing each other, I wanna puke. When I see two women kissing each other, on the lips, as lovers, I wanna vomit. Why? It's unnatural. It's against all of the laws of mankind. It is against all the laws of humankind. It is suicide for a society to embrace such behavior." — *Syndicated radio host Michael Savage, April 6.*

"I BELIEVE LIFE BEGINS AT CONCEPTION AND I BELIEVE THAT people who fall in love should have the option to get married. Lest we forget, our founding document, the Declaration of Independence, grants the same rights to everyone in this country—'All men are created equal.' If you think certain rights should

not apply to certain people, then you are saying those people are not equal. People may always have a difference of opinion on certain lifestyles, but championing a position that wants to treat people unequally isn't just un-Republican. At its fundamental core, it's un-American." — *Meghan McCain, John McCain's daughter, writing at The Daily Beast, April 13.*

"WHENEVER I GET A WEDDING INVITATION, I START TO SPEW CHUNKS all over the fine furnishings of my luxury co-op. What the invite signals is the realization that I'll be flushing away an entire day spent awkwardly standing around in a borrowed suit and gnawing at generic catered crabcakes and cannoli, all while having to cheer on two people I like who will surely be at each other's throats in six months. ... Why does your decision to tie the knot have to result in me eating sour fish tacos, engaging in small talk with people who think I'm caca, and spending hard-earned cash on a present you'll surely throw out the second the room clears?" — *Village Voice columnist Michael Musto writing on his blog, April 14.*

"I'M VERY BIG ON HUMAN BEINGS FINDING LOVE, ATTACHMENT and commitment and being faithful to it, because there's more to benefit when there is real true commitment and faithfulness to it. I still believe, as just every president has, and all the people who ran for office, that marriage is a sacrament between a man and a woman. So not calling it marriage works for me. But that two people would have that sort of commitment to me is very healthy and very positive thing in their lives and society as a whole. ... That's (same-sex relationships) a beautiful thing and a healthy thing." — *Laura Schlessinger (Dr. Laura), singing a new tune to CNN's Larry King, April 8.*

"THE GAY COMMUNITY TRIED TO MAKE A THING ABOUT THAT A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO. ... I don't try to run my children's lives, and he has been very supportive. He works for Eagle Forum. He runs my operations office and he's very supportive of all the positions that I've taken." — *Anti-feminist activist Phyllis Schlafly when asked by Time magazine on April 7, "You have a gay son, don't you?"*

"IF MORE HOMOSEXUALS WERE IN THE OBAMAS' LIVES, there is no way Michelle would have worn a twin set when she met the queen." — *Will & Grace co-creator Max Mutchnick to The New York Times, April 11.*

"MARRIAGE? BABIES? PLEASE. I WANT TO BE ILLEGAL. I want to live outside the mainstream." — *Gay actor Rupert Everett to The Daily Beast, April 6.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley


**REA
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Working toward a real economic recovery

Passage of the stimulus bill holds promise for at least beginning to alleviate some of the hardship inflicted by the economic turmoil enveloping the country.

It will likely create and save more than 3 million jobs, strengthen state safety nets and provide for the neediest among us during this crisis.

The Obama administration and many others hope this action will serve as a critical first step toward greater stability and economic recovery. But no one is wearing rose-colored glasses; clearly, an arduous road lies ahead.

Economic justice has always been a philosophical underpinning of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). We know that when there is an economic downturn LGBT people suffer the same risks as others, and then some.

Beyond the myth of large incomes and large living are the real stories of our lives. LGBT peo-

ple, already vulnerable and unprotected by most anti-discrimination employment laws and marriage laws, take multiple hits as large and small employers cut jobs, community-based nonprofits are forced to eliminate services and programs, and small mom-and-pop and pop-and-pop businesses shut doors.

All of this places LGBT people at a severe disadvantage in an economic climate such as the one we are currently in. NGLTF understands that stabilizing the economy stabilizes our opportunities—indeed, the opportunities of all people—to live decent lives and take care of our families.

That's why NGLTF's Action Fund has joined with other progressive organizations to support these recovery efforts. We are working with our partners under the leadership of Americans United for Change, Campaign for America's Future, US-Action, People For the American Way, AFSCME and many others as part of the Campaign for Jobs and Economic Recovery coalition to support the president's economic stimulus efforts. We know how critical it is that there be an LGBT organization and voice in this coalition.

The stimulus plan signed earlier this year by President Obama will go far to promote the economic stability of Main Street, support working families, and bolster those who live at or below the poverty line.

As layoffs have piled up by the hundreds of thousands, state-based, federally funded programs like unemployment insurance, Medicaid, health care for low-income people, and other

safety-net programs have been strained beyond capacity and are now threadbare. This new plan will at least start to provide some much-needed relief.

This is just the beginning of a long haul back to a healthy, robust economy and society. Over the weeks and months ahead, the Task Force will continue advocating for an economic recovery that is fair, humane and inclusive. We will also continue advocating for passage of a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and other legislation that gives people a fair shake and fair shot at keeping our jobs.

This means working for health-care reform and improved access to affordable quality health care. We know this must remain a core component in the president's economic recovery plan. LGBT people often cannot obtain health-care coverage on a partner's plan, and even when we are eligible for partner/spouse health-care coverage, we are penalized by being taxed on the cost of the benefit. This particularly cruel kind of economic discrimination against our community must end.

We believe a true economic recovery means that all people are given an equitable chance to thrive and contribute their full selves, talents and skills to their families, communities and country.

Rea Carey is the executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Learn more about the work of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force at www.theTaskForce.org.



LETTER

Oh, boy(cott)

An open letter to
Jamaican LGBT activists

Dear friends,

The "Boycott Jamaica" campaign launched by a handful of North American activists has elicited a great deal of controversy, with list serve postings often aimed at "point scoring" rather than clarifying the issues. This letter is an attempt not to embarrass the activists on the various sides of this dispute, but rather to calmly illustrate why we feel that unfortunately this particular boycott is an example of how *not* to voice international solidarity.

A core principle of any international solidarity campaign should be that the main organizations in the country most affected should direct the campaign. They are the ones who have to live (or possibly die) with the consequences and thus they should be the ones controlling it. In the case of the prospective Jamaican boycott this core principle was violated: No substantive discussions were conducted with Jamaican activists before it was launched.

The sad thing is that we have a famous example from history that might well have been imitated: the world-wide campaign to boycott South Africa. Because it was approved and directed by the main freedom organizations in that country, it was respectful of local activists and thus didn't have the kind of internal divisions about the campaign that we're seeing in the present boycott.

The result was that the campaign took on a truly international character, not just confined to a handful of activists, but embraced by people of good will of all races. Because it had such widespread support, including the almost unanimous support of freedom activists within South Africa, the campaign was able to isolate the apartheid regime, despite the best efforts against it of the American and several European governments. Because it was directed by South African activists on the ground who knew the lay

of the land better than anyone else, its targets were well-chosen (unlike the present campaign's targeting of Red Stripe Beer).

Therefore, on one point we must respectfully disagree with our friends in Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals & Gays (J-FLAG), who, in one of their statements, seemed to imply that boycotts never do any good. What one *can* say is that successful boycotts, like that against apartheid South Africa in the 1980s and Anita Bryant's Florida orange juice in the late 1970s, are rare and not easy to organize under the best of circumstances; when major missteps occur in the organizing, they have zero chance of success.

However, the central point that our J-FLAG friends insist upon is right on the mark—as helpful as outside activists can sometimes be in applying supplemental pressure to hateful regimes, the main battle must be organized and fought for by the activists inside the particular countries in question. Jamaican LGBT people must lead the campaign for LGBT freedom in their own country, as Russian LGBT people do in their country, African LGBT people in their countries, etc.

We are aware that the opinions of any LGBT community in any country around the world are not monolithic. Each of us is very aware of the many political divisions in each of the cities we live in. However, for there to be successful campaigns, whether locally alone, or in conjunction with outside activists, a substantial segment of the community in question must agree to them and be at the heart of their organizing. For there to be no substantive participation in this campaign by leading Jamaican LGBT organizations points to it being very poorly conceived.

Finally, most countries around the world have long and dismal histories of being dominated by one or another outside power, and most peoples in those countries harbor legitimate resentments against those histories of domination. It is thus a responsibility of LGBT activists living in those handful of countries that historically have been responsible for such domination—the United States, Russia and Western Europe—that we not replicate a "gay" version of that arrogant domi-

nation by failing to respectfully work with, or respect the wishes of, the activists indigenous to countries that historically have been dominated.

Active Jamaican participation in organizing the present boycott was at best an after-thought for the North American boycott initiators. The unfortunate result is that we now have a messy internal dispute on our hands that serves no one's interests, least of all Jamaican LGBT activists who already have more than enough urgent issues to deal with. This is tragic and need not have been.

We hope that future campaigns are undertaken with a good deal more thoughtfulness and preparation.

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GOINGS-ON

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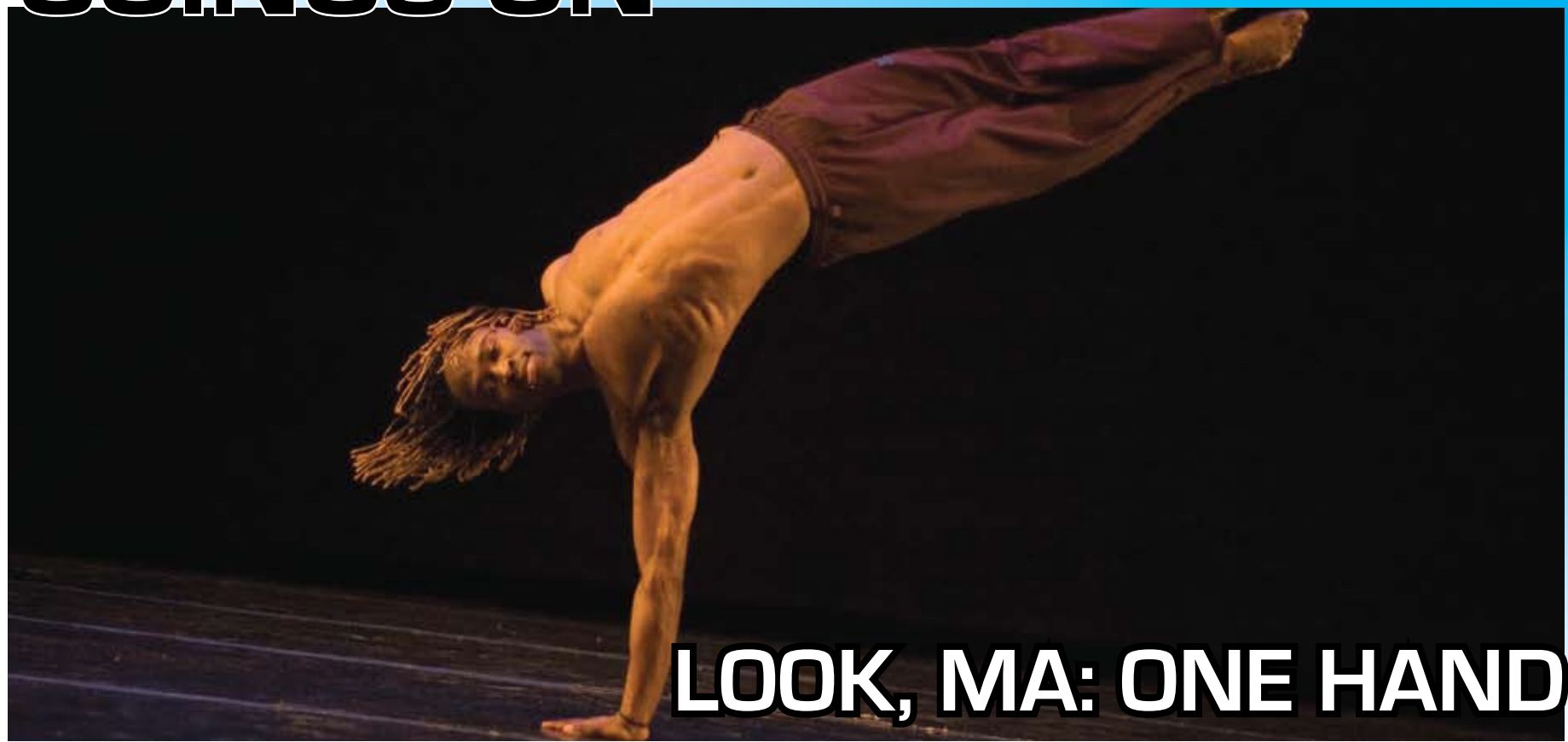
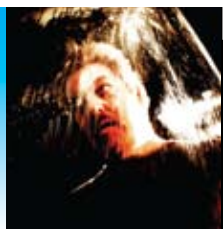


Photo courtesy of Mark Hackman

LOOK, MA: ONE HAND

Christopher Courtney is part of Chicago Dance Crash's all-male revue, Movement/Gentlemen. Read more on page 12.

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Dead reckoning.
Page 12.

MOVIES

Spacey 'Ghosts.'
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Play bowl.
Page 22.

Photo by Ross Forman

Scottish
Play Scott

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

A 'Ruined' Pulitzer win

The prideful chip resting on the shoulders of Chicago boosters just got a little bit larger—particularly for the theatergoing ones.

On April 20 Lynn Nottage's play, *Ruined*, won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Not only did Nottage's drama premiere last year at the Goodman Theatre, but that flagship Chicago theater institution also helped in its development.

True, credit is also due to the Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC) in New York, which co-produced the play. MTC's own Pulitzer track record is impressive—the company has produced four out of the past eight winners (*Ruined*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Doubt* and *Proof*). *Ruined* is currently playing off-Broadway through May 17, and no doubt questions about Broadway will be next.

This makes two years in a row that a play that started in Chicago has won the prestigious award. *Ruined* follows the Pulitzer won by Steppenwolf Theatre Company ensemble member Tracy Letts for his large ensemble drama *August: Osage County* (which is still playing on Broadway and soon to be launched on a national tour).

Best known for her dramas *Intimate Apparel* (previously seen at Steppenwolf) and *Fabulation*, or the Re-Education of Undine (seen at Next Theatre), Nottage became the second African-American woman to win the drama Pulitzer, following Suzan Lori-Parks' win for *Topdog/Underdog* in 2002.

Ruined is not only set amid the civil war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo, but it's partially inspired by Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*. *Ruined* focuses on the no-nonsense businesswoman Mama Nadi (Saidah Arrika Ekulona), a bordello owner who tries to keep her business neutral during the conflict.

But more importantly, *Ruined* grew out of Not-



Ruined. Photo by Liz Lauren

tage's own interviews with women victims of the recent war, many who were brutally raped and genitally disfigured by soldiers from opposing sides of the conflict. ("*Ruined*" is how these women are referred to.)

While I personally felt Nottage pulled her punches at the end by giving *Ruined* a cute "happy ending," her drama does raise awareness of the plight and perseverance of these women without being preachy or like a TV movie of the week.

So congratulations are in order for Nottage, the Goodman and MTC for their Pulitzer win. And if you care about these things, Chicagoans can congratulate themselves by pointing out that *Ruined* debuted here first.

Going Dutch

This week marks the local premiere of *Carousel* (A Dance), presented as part of the Joffrey Ballet's spring repertory program at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress. The piece by out British choreographer Christopher Wheeldon features a plot outline and music from the famed 1945 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical.

With songs like "If I Loved You," "You'll Never Walk Alone" and the title Waltz prologue, *Carousel* is a quintessential piece of Americana—as are all the works of composer Richard Rodgers and lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II.

So imagine the shock to theater fans who learned that the rights to the entire Rodgers and Hammerstein catalogue have been sold to the Netherlands-based Iagem Music Group, the music-publishing investment fund of ABP (the world's third-largest pension fund), and CP Masters BV, a European independent music publisher. The purchase price was not disclosed.

The Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization also represents more than 12,000 songs, 900 concert works and 100 musicals in America, including shows by Andrew Lloyd Webber, Stephen Schwartz, Irving Berlin and Rodgers' grandson, Adam Guettel (*The Light in the Piazza*, Floyd Collins). So that means that if you want to stage a production of *The Sound of Music* or *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, the money will soon be going to Amsterdam instead of New York.

The word on the street was that the heirs of these two theatrical giants wanted to get out of the management of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, so a buyer was sought. Theodore S. Chapin, the current president and executive director of the organization, is to be retained. Heirs Alice Hammerstein Mathias and Mary Rodgers Guettel (also co-author of the musical *Once Upon a Mattress*) are also to continue as consultants.

It remains to be seen if this sale means that we'll have more Rodgers and Hammerstein snippets popping up in commercials. I guess it won't

entirely be a bad thing. My first memories of hearing a Rodgers and Hammerstein tune was when Clairrol licensed the song "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair" for TV commercials on hair coloring products. It became "I'm Gonna Wash that Gray Right Outta My Hair."

Please send theater-related news items to scottishplayscott@yahoo.com.

CRITICS' PICS

A Chorus Line, through May 3. See Broadway's longest-running American musical now while it's still in town. You won't see a better recreation of Michael Bennett's landmark choreography and staging anytime soon. SCM

Diversey Harbor, Theatre Seven, through May 10. After a successful staging last year, director Brian Golden and his cast revisit Marisa Wegrzyn's moving, funny and wholly compelling tale of four disparate and lonely souls trying to connect over the course of one long, cold night in Chicago. CS

Ghostwritten, Goodman Theatre, through May 3. Naomi Iizuka's new work of magic realism views racial and cultural identity through a fairy tale lens as Rumpelstiltskin becomes a Vietnamese female demon. Excellent cast blends comedy and menace. JA

Private Lives, City Lit Theater, through May 3. No one really has to do a thoughtful in-depth production of a Noel Coward play nowadays, but City Lit defies such prejudiced expectations with this smart and funny romantic comedy. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge,
Morgan and Sullivan

THEATER REVIEW

The Revenants

Playwright: Scott T. Barsotti

At: WildClaw Theatre at Angel Island

Theatre, 735 W. Sheridan

Phone: Web only (TicketWeb.com); \$10-\$20

Runs through: May 24

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Mmmmmmmmm. Brains. Forget the backyard barbeque. Nothing says summer like a zombie picnic. And for that, sweet reader, you need look no further than the delightful splatterfest that is Wildclaw Theatre's *The Revenants*. Directed with a keen eye for bodily fluids by Ann Adams, Scott T. Barsotti's tale of the undead among us also transcends formula schlock. This, my friends, is a story of zombies in love. But we get ahead of ourselves.

The *Revenants* opens with unnerving scene. It's a mini-masterpiece of unnerving terror created in large part by bone-jarring sound design (Mikhail Fiksel), and ingenious lighting (Paul Foster.) Adams has Foster revealing only flashes of what's going on: Split-second apocalyptic images that go by so quickly you can't quite process them (which makes them all the more disturbing.) A flash of a distorted, dripping mouth, a festering wound, a body lurching and falling—everything is perfectly timed and perfectly pitched, culminating in screaming Mimi moment that literally shakes the seats.

Our heroes in this horrorfest are Karen (Jenny Strubin) and Gary (Ryan Dolan) and their spouses, Molly (Laura Hooper) and Joe (Brian Amidei). The foursome are holed up in what appears to be an abandoned garage of the sort that draws clueless hapless nubile teenagers in the likes of *Hostel* or *The Hills Have Eyes*. (Kudos to set designer Charlie Athanas for making the place look like Ed Gein's toolshed.)

The two couples have been friends forever but, alas, that friendship is under severe strain



The Revenants.

thanks to the zombification of Molly and Joe. Barsotti doesn't tell us how this unfortunate occurrence came about. All we know is that the world has become overrun with brain-eating, pus-oozing monsters, and for the purposes of this 80-minute tale, that's all the background we need. Unable to annihilate their spouses (with a bullet straight through the head, of course, being the only way to kill the undead), Gary and Karen have tethered Joe and Molly to the floor while they try to figure out their next move.

Karen, gazing into Joe's eyes, is certain "there's somebody in there" and becomes upset when Gary insists the zombies are brain-dead and cracks up watching them tear into chunks of rotten raw meat. Amidei and Hooper turn in startlingly vibrant performances considering they're playing a couple of corpses. They don't have a line of traditional dialogue, but the phlegmy wheezing and deep-throated gurgling they spew nonstop is varied enough to resemble some sort of grotesque, primitive language. Midway through, we became convinced that in real life, neither Amidei or Hooper is talking for the run of the production. How else could their

vocal cords possibly survive the battering they take at every show?

As the tightly paced story winds on (punctuated by some of the most effectively used black-outs we've ever seen), the intriguingly troubled history of this four-way friendship unwinds as the desperation increases. The end, as you might expect, isn't pretty. But it is as perverse a happily-ever-after as you could possibly want from a tale of love among ghouls.

THEATER REVIEW

Incomplete and Random Acts of Kindness

Playwright: David Eldridge

At: The Artistic Home (fka Live Bait),

3914 N. Clark

Phone: 866-811-4111; \$15

Runs through: May 17

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

If you find yourself thoroughly puzzled during the first 20 minutes of David Eldridge's play, you're not alone. This is a memory play, you see—a dramatic genre mandating mosaic narration subdivided into blackout-length sketches and bridged by a dizzying swirl of musical hooks and snippets, all of it requiring us not only to connect the dots, but to first rearrange them into a linear pattern. With patience, however, the vertigo gradually lessens to allow the pieces to come together.

When they do, we learn that our young working-class hero, Joey, has recently lost his beloved mother to cancer, and that, a mere three months later, his cab-driver father began dating the hospital nurse. These events plunge Joey

into severe depression, leading him to alienate both his upper-class fiancée and his best buddy. His co-workers persuade him to volunteer as a tutor at a school in the East End slums. There Joey and an immigrant African student bond over their love of pop music—until the inevitable urban tragedy strikes.

We've heard this story before, of course—gruff dad, doting mum, nuclear-family dynamics making for oedipal dependence, and doesn't every teacher see himself as an almighty rescuer? But England is not the United States. In a society stratified along lines far more rigid than ours, the conflicts associated with fluctuations in the status quo generate unease and guilt beyond our imaginations. So it's no wonder that Joey retreats into fantasies cobbled out of a self-styled Shintoism, the myth of Marvin Gaye and a long-ago California vacation with his ex-intended, to the dismay of those around him.

But the inside of a troubled lad's head is rarely easy to navigate, even if Eldridge's script wasn't riddled in regional argot unfamiliar to Yankee ears. (Joey's favorite expression is "You really take the piss out of me.") What's important, however, is not whether we're with Joey every minute, but that the actors remain always cognizant of their chronicle's narrative arc. And under Tim Patrick Miller's direction, the cast assembled for this Artistic Home production—from Joe McCauley's introverted antisocial Joey to Eustace Allen's array of kindly, but ultimately ineffectual, clergymen—guides us through Eldridge's 90-minute maze like capable nannies, assuring us that no child will be left behind before we emerge, united in fresh consciousness of the small graces offering comfort in an uncertain universe.

All-male dance series ends May 1-3

"Movement/Gentlemen"—a dance concert series presented by the male members of Chicago Dance Crash that shows them flexing their creative (and physical) muscle—concludes at the Chicago DCA Storefront Theater, 66 E. Randolph, May 1-3.

The concert features choreography by Crash Artistic Director Kyle Vincent Terry, and includes Paul Christiano (Chicago Magazine's 2005 Dancer of the Year), Daniel Qwan Gibson and Brian Hare among the dancers performing. Attendees can expect a mix of hip-hop, acrobatics and even an intimate *pas de deux*.

Tickets are \$17-\$22; call 312-742-TIXS, visit www.dcatheater.org or stop by the box office.

SPOTLIGHT



Babes With Blades, the company specializing in stage combat for women, is now parrying with the Bard. Director Kevin Heckman takes a *film noir* approach to this new all-female production of Shakespeare's regicidal drama *Macbeth*. Babes With Blades' *Macbeth* plays 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays through May 30 at LaCosta Theatre, 3931 N. Elston. Tickets are \$20; \$13 students/seniors. Call 773-880-0016 or visit www.babeswithblades.org. Photo courtesy of Babes With Blades

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Red Noses. Photo by Chris Ocken

THEATER REVIEW Red Noses

Playwright: Peter Barnes

At: Strawdog Theatre, 3829 N. Broadway

Phone: 773-528-9696; \$20

Runs through: May 23

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

When forces of profound social change are unleashed—whether intentionally (say, war) or unintentionally (say, economic depression)—it's difficult to put the genie back in the bottle. The French Revolution went through increasingly radical stages which only the combined forces of Europe could halt. Stalin and Mao imprisoned or executed many of their co-revolutionary comrades. Iranian students who supported the Shah's overthrow in 1979 didn't expect the strict fundamentalist repression they helped engineer.

Politically, *Red Noses* is about putting the genie back. It's set in 1348 France when bubonic plague killed one-third of the population. Not understood scientifically, the Black Death was considered God's wrath against wickedness, engendering off-shoot religious movements when the universal Catholic Church was weak. Once the plague passed, Pope Clement VI (in Avignon, not Rome) had to restore obedience to the Church and its allied secular governments.

On a metaphysical level, however, *Red Noses* is about a fundamental of faith: Do we love or fear God? Is life's cup half full or half empty? Is earthly existence a punishment or a joy? Father Flote, the play's heroic simple priest, believes laughter is the best medicine and finds a traveling clown troupe to fight the despair and anarchy of the plague years.

By turns serious or bizarre, *Red Noses* most definitely is a comedy—a sprawling pageant with several dozen characters. If well done, the verbal wit and physical comedy should be laugh-out-loud funny, and so they are in director Matt Hawkins's production. Scenically it's nothing special—some tricks with paint and body fluids are the chief visual devices—but with 23 actors in a small space, the focus must be on people and not scenery.

And what people they are! Stephen Taylor's martini-dry, razor-sharp Pope Clement is a joy. John Ferrick's kindly and sympathetic Flote is a blessing. Sarah Goeden's ethereal *Sonnerie* is radiant, wordlessly speaking the language of angels. And the clowns *really* are funny, among them blind juggler Anderson Lawfer and lanky assistant Andrew Trygstad. And the collective cast joyously takes up instruments as a jug band. Despite lacking impressive spectacle elements, this is engagingly theatrical theater.

I could quibble: the show is imaginative modern clown dress (Aly Renee Greaves, designer) with no 14th-century flavor. And 1980s pop tunes replace playwright Barnes' lyrics. Why not set Barnes' words to original music? Director Hawkins's program note says he equates the play to the Reagan-Thatcher era in which it was written, but it doesn't work on any obvious lev-

el. Yet the wildly imaginative *Red Noses* must have something to say to us, because this is the play's second production of this season. And a shining Nose it is. Could profound social change be around our next corner?

THEATER REVIEW

The Overwhelming

Playwright: J.T. Rogers

At: Next Theatre at the Noyes Cultural

Arts Center, 927 Noyes Street, Evanston

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

Runs through: May 17

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

It's not easy to reconfigure real-life genocidal atrocities into a *film noir* whodunit, but that's precisely what J.T. Rogers has done. Our setting may be Rwanda instead of Chinatown, but the famous tagline from Roman Polanski's movie lurks in the shadows, waiting to be uttered.

Our story begins with the arrival in Kigali of young American professor Jack Exley. He is there to research the AIDS-relief project administered by his former college chum, Joseph Gasana. Jack has brought his African-American wife, Linda, and estranged teenage son, Geoffrey, with him—after all, it's 1994 and the United Nations forces have imposed a cease-fire on civil strife. But even before we learn that Dr. Gasana has mysteriously disappeared, we suspect that things in this newly independent country are not what they seem.

It's not just hindsight that alerts us, nor even the vague paranoia that infects any excursion into an alien culture, but the preternatural *navet * inflicted by the author on his Yankees: Jack scurries from one office to another, demanding information regarding his missing colleague and protesting indignantly when none is forthcoming. Linda is squired about town by a seductively oily host lifted straight from the Victorian villains' mug file. And young Geoffrey pays a visit to a whorehouse, accompanied by a friendly houseboy. Their thorough obliviousness to ominous remarks reflecting the social order of their surroundings, and their reluctance to exercise the most elementary cautions prescribed to tourists make us wonder how these hicks ever survived at home. (Linda claims to be from *Detroit*, for chrissakes!)

Although the action encompasses extensive exposition of world events and recent history (but remarkably little onstage violence), there's no denying *The Overwhelming's* primary appeal as good, old-fashioned, hankie-twisting, neo-colonialist melodrama. Kimberly Senior directs a cast adept at lending solemnity to quasi-comic book characters, led by Si Osborne as the innocent hero whose existential escape routes are undermined by mistrust and corruption until he breaks like Winston Smith (*cf.* George Orwell's 1984) when finally cornered. Driving him to this crisis are Kenn E. Head, Dexter Zollicoffer, Jamie Vann, John Byrnes, Christoph Horton Abiel and John Nyrere Frazier, playing assorted spies,

thugs and inscrutable four-flushers.

If you come expecting a dryly academic liberal-humanitarian social tract (like I did), you'll miss valuable exposition and a lot of the fun, too. There will be plenty of time during the after-show discussions for righteous pronouncements on serious issues.

THEATER REVIEW Sketchbook Festival

Playwrights: various

At: Collaboraction at

The Building Stage, 412 N. Carpenter

Phone: 312-226-9633; \$25-\$40

Runs through: May 10

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Young theatrical hipsters rejoice! Collaboraction's 9th annual Sketchbook Festival is back with 14 new plays.

At the same time, I must offer a *mea culpa* because I was only able to catch seven of those works. (I had a scheduling conflict on opening night.)

Unlike other years when Sketchbook programs were divided into set "A" and "B" schedules, this year's mix of plays are scrambled from show to show. So I couldn't really remedy my absence because the set of seven plays you see one night may include ones you've already seen in another.

In a switch from previous seasons, Collaboraction has sought "devised works" by individuals or a team or artists instead of just by playwrights. This has given a much more conceptual and abstract bent to some pieces—many of which provoked a smattering of ponderous "I didn't get that one" audience statements.

One of those is Joseph Ravens' *Kattywampus*, which consists of a man wearing an oversized *papier-m ch * head contorting around a circular carpet patch while pulling out egg-shaped colored fabric balls from the crotch of his flesh-colored tights. Perhaps he's a symbolic baby in the womb, or a circus performer spreading some kind of venereal disease. (It's up to you to decide.)

Less of a head-scratcher is Mark Comiskey's live and playback video piece *The Gist*, in which three people (perhaps in a love triangle) symbolically struggle and look back on their fight over a fruit bowl.

Much more fun is Carolyn Hoerdemann and Atalee Judy's video-heavy *Fix Your Teeth B*tch*. It shows Hoerdemann as a nervous goth girl patient, possibly high on nitrous oxide, both embracing the fear and pain of dental work.

Sandra Delgado's devised piece *Para Carmen* feels like too much has been stuffed into one piece (which depicts an elderly Latina woman

facing death and flashing back to key moments in her life).

On the play side of things, Chelsea Marcantel's *Beatrice and Beau* is a hilarious examination of a romantic couple arguing over whether to take their relationship to the next stage (masterfully played by Sarah Gitenstein and Michael Salinas).

Far from just filling out the audience, Sean Graney's large ensemble for *What I Am Supposed to Be?* does bring into question (albeit briefly) the self-nagging we all do—be it inconsequential or of a national significance.

And for pure goofy fun, Scott Cupper has a ball as *The Dreaded Zeppelin*, a dangling aerial World War I German spy contemplating his existence in the clouds (the puppetry also helps to make this playlet work).

All in all, Collaboraction keeps up its Sketchbook credentials as a hip theatrical happening. As always, how much fun and depth you get out of the show is entirely up to you.

About Face to honor WCMG at Wonka Ball

About Face Theatre's Wonka Ball 2009—a celebration of past, present and future supporters of the theatre—will take place Thursday, May 7, at Salvage One, 1840 W. Hubbard. The main event begins at 7 p.m. with a VIP reception at 6-7:30 p.m.

This year, About Face will honor Tracy Baim and Windy City Media Group (WCMG) with the annual Leppen Leadership Award. WCMG is the largest chain of Chicago's LGBT online and print media, and this May marks publisher Tracy Baim's 25th anniversary as an out journalist. Windy City Times, Chicago's oldest gay newspaper, is among an elite group of the top gay newspapers in the United States.

"About Face is honored to present Tracy Baim and Windy City Media Group the Leppen Award for their profound contribution to the City of Chicago," Metzgar said in a statement.

Featured performers at the 2009 Wonka Ball include the cast and band of the hit new production of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, drag sensation Dida Ritz and the New York nouveau-nerd band *The Gay Agenda*. More than 600 people are expected to attend this year's Wonka Ball, which will also feature live entertainment, a silent auction and an open bar.

Past attendees have included Mayor Richard M. Daley and Mrs. Daley, Nate Berkus, Top Chef finalist Dale Levitski and Project Runway contestant Steven Rosengard.

To purchase tickets or for more information, visit www.aboutfacetheatre.com or call OvationTix at 866-811-4111.



The Overwhelming. Photo by Michael Brosilow

**NUNN ON ONE:
THEATER**

Noah Aberlin: 'Oz' and effect

BY JERRY NUNN

Friends of Dorothy will once again be traveling "Over the Rainbow" at the Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, April 30-May 3. Windy City Times spoke with the Scarecrow, played by Noah Aberlin, to pick his brain and hear about this production of The Wizard of Oz.

Windy City Times: Hello, Noah! Tell our readers about your background and what has brought you to the wonderful world of Oz.

Noah Aberlin: Sure. I am from Brooklyn, N.Y. I graduated from Syracuse University. This is my third national tour. I did a tour with The Producers and Contact, which was a strictly dance show. I just did Candide with the New York City Opera.

WCT: What attracts you to these musical projects?

NA: I started as a dancer and then did musical theater when I was in high school. I found I had a knack for it and fit in real well. The heightened emotions of theater, dancing and singing have always appealed to me in a performance.

WCT: How similar is this production to the 1939 MGM movie version?

NA: We stick very close to the movie script. We have all the same songs. There is actually a song



Noah Aberlin (right) is the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*. Photo by Michael Brosilow

called "The Jitterbug" which was cut out of the movie for timing issues that we have put back in. It's just before the winged monkeys come to pick Dorothy up and steal her away.

It is pretty much the movie onstage, with some theatrical elements to make it more entertaining for a live audience.

WCT: How is it different?

NA: We pick local children to play the munchkins. We have a small cast of shorter adults who are mixed in with the kids. The children are auditioned a few months before the performance. They are taught the dance, then are put in the

show. They get to experience backstage life and being a professional actor. This also keeps it different in every city.

WCT: That sounds darling. Does the show run long because of all the aspects being brought back in?

NA: It runs two and a half hours, and that includes a 20-minute intermission. It's very fast-paced so it doesn't seem long.

WCT: How much do you love getting to sing the classic song "If I Only Had a Brain?"

NA: It's lots of fun—that song in particular. I have a background in gymnastics and dance, so

I add that into my performance. When the choreographer and I started working on the song, I was given a lot of liberties, so we played around for a few hours to see how much I could bend.

WCT: Your character is referred to as "Hunk." What about him is a hunk?

NA: It's just one of those old time names. The three of us are Zeke, Hickory and Hunk. Those are names you don't see anymore. I don't think it means he's an actual hunk although Dorothy may have a little crush on him. I think I am a pretty attractive guy but I don't think that's why they cast me. [Laughs]

WCT: I read all the L. Frank Baum books growing up as a child. What do you think about the characters that make them so popular today in shows such as *Wicked*?

NA: The characters are just enough human and just enough fantasy to make people associate with them. They can be as much of a real person and a fictional character as the actors lets on or the audience will let them be. I relate it to the Harry Potter books of today. He is a young boy with issues but has the magic element also to deal with. In L. Frank Baum's world, the Scarecrow is just an average guy that gets picked on and is not too bright. He actually turns out to be really smart and intuitive. There are little bits and pieces that everyone can relate with.

Looking to relate to your childhood? The Wizard of Oz will be at The Chicago Theatre, located at 175 N. State. Tickets are \$25-\$75 each; visit www.thechicagotheatre.com or call Ticketmaster at 312-559-1212.

TELEVISION

'Millionaire Matchmaker,' make me a match

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Bravo TV's *The Millionaire Matchmaker* will make its own kind of history Thursday, May 7, when Patti Stanger attempts to help a gay client, Kevin Grangier, find Mr. Right. Grangier talked with Windy City Times about his experience on the show and about Stanger herself.

Windy City Times: First, how did you come to be on the show?

Kevin Grangier: Well, you know—dating dilemma. [Laughs] The concept of the show, of course, is Patti working with you to find the appropriate match and I, like everyone else in dating history, have come across hurdles I don't seem to be able to overcome myself. I approached Patti about assisting me, and that turned into what we'll see May 7.

WCT: You're described as a workaholic. I can relate; I often tell people that work is my mistress.

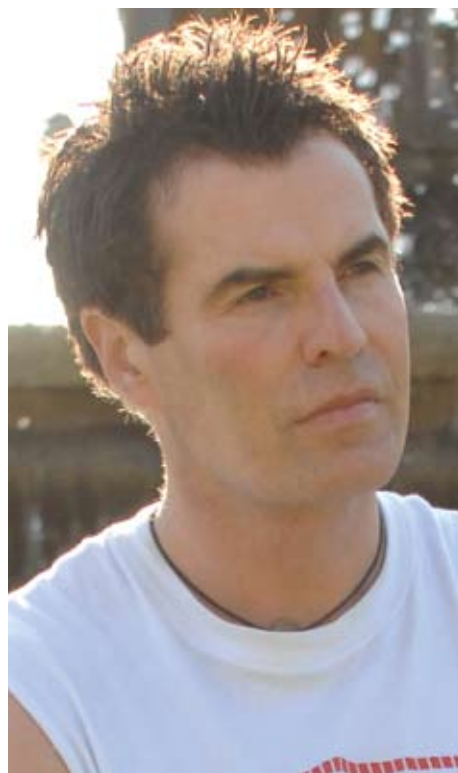
KG: Yes, she labeled me as a workaholic. I would call myself very dedicated to my company and clients. [Grangier owns a PR/marketing firm.] However, people outside my own personal circle would think that I'm a workaholic. I do say that I'm married to my company and refer to my employees as my children.

WCT: What were your impressions of Patti?

KG: I like Patti, and we got along very well from day one—but Patti can be brutal; she very clearly has opinions, and she is very thoughtful and wants to share them with you. And she wants to help fix any areas of concern you might have. But in that process, she can be intimidating and tough, and I got along with her very well. And I was her first gay client, so there was an educational component to this entire process and that may have softened things a bit.

WCT: In the episode, she says some things [some members of the LGBT community] may find off-putting, such as using the phrase "the gays" in "I love the gays."

KG: I haven't seen the final cut of the show, but she did refer to our society as "the gays," [although] I don't find that offensive and I wouldn't take it down a path. I think, for some-



Kevin Grangier. Photo courtesy of Bravo

one who hasn't worked with us before, I think that's what she thinks is the correct terminology, and I know she was very excited to work with me.

WCT: Moving on to the mixer [to meet potential dates], what was that experience like? Did you find it intimidating at all?

KG: It was absolutely intimidating. Not knowing what you're getting into, and not knowing the people—or never had seen them before, it was something I was a little bit anxious about. You don't know what they're looking for, you don't know if you're going to meet their expectations—and it's a bunch of gay guys, and you know how tough that can be. [Laughs] It was like to go to a bar at Any City, USA. However, it was also exciting; it was a fun event, and it was fun getting to meet everybody.

WCT: I know there's a whole lot of editing involved, so tell me: Did you get as much time to meet the prospective dates as you needed?

KG: Oh, absolutely not. [Laughs] My personality is to get to know somebody. While I immediately

know if I'm physically attracted to someone, I like to go beyond that and get to the second layer before I make a decision. In addition, I'm not used to being in a room with a bunch of people and my objective is to figure out which one I want to date. Usually, my objective is to find a common denominator. I would've wanted to spend a lot more time with a lot of them—although I wouldn't have necessarily wanted to date them.

WCT: Taking the show's title into account, how concerned were you that you could be matched up with a gold-digger?

KG: Well, obviously, you're concerned about that, but it is what it is—and I've certainly been around the dating path for a long path. I was cautious, as I always am. There were guys in the mixer who I definitely stayed away from because I thought [money] was their primary objective, but someone who's in my shoes would be pretty used to dealing with that.

WCT: I don't want to give too many details away, but were you content with how your date went at your home in Kentucky?

KG: Yes, I was. [We] didn't know what to expect, but that was equally as awkward. You're spending a couple days with someone you've just met briefly, and you haven't talked since that initial meeting. Plus, you have a camera over you the whole time.

WCT: And you planned all the details of the date?

KG: Yes, which was tough to do. Given my schedule, just being there was tough. But I wouldn't have done that any differently for anyone visiting me from L.A.

WCT: If you had to do the show all over again, would you do anything differently?

KG: [Pauses] That's a good question. I would've been much less nervous approaching the show. With a company, employees and brand-name clients, I was cautious about everything I did. But looking back, all of my clients know I'm gay so it would probably make more sense to just jump in and be perfectly content with everything. I would've been a little less cautious, I think. However, it was a fair experience.

WCT: There were two millionaires on the show, as is standard. What did you think of the other millionaire, Anthony?

KG: I thought he was quite interesting. I just found him a colorful person. I didn't look at him as a millionaire; I just looked at him as a guy with an interesting job [Las Vegas hypnotist headliner] and an interesting life. Throughout the course of the evening [of the mixer], people kept telling me they thought I was the straight one and that he was the gay one, and there was something a little comforting about that; I think his highlights may have had something to do with it.

For more information on *The Millionaire Matchmaker*, see www.bravotv.com.

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BY DAVID BYRNE AND TONY PEREGRIN

The **Indigo Girls** are showing off "the power of two" with the release of *Poseidon* and the *Bitter Bug* on the duo's own label IG Recordings. This is the pair's first independent effort since its 1987 debut, *Strange Fire*. This "Poseidon adventure" is also available in a limited edition with a bonus disc containing stripped-down acoustic arrangements of the set's material. Highlighting this release are the closing track "True Romantic," Emily Saliers' "What Are you Like?" and a reworking of "Driver Education" from Amy Ray's solo album, *Prom*. Kick off Pride weekend with an outdoor concert, as The Indigo Girls are performing at Ravinia on Friday, June 26.

Iconic out singer-songwriter **Gretchen Phillips** returns with her first new album in five years with *I Was Just Comforting Her*. Here, Phillips seamlessly glides from the bitter retro twang of country music on "Honey, I Feel So Good" to the

progressively electro-hued "Your Drinking" and "Red State/Blue State" to the seductive jazz leanings on the steamy "Swimming." Escaping the summer in The Lone Star State, the Texas Music Hall of Fame inductee will be at Women and Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark, on Saturday, June 20, at 8 p.m.



Indigo Girls.

Sure, **Sandra Bernhard** recounts an evening with Stevie Nicks in one of her memoirs, but a concert keepsake from a night with Nicks in The Windy City is now available. The DVD Live in Chicago and its companion album, *The Soundstage Sessions*, have Nicks' signature warble and doe eyes in fine form. Here, Nicks delivers staples like the restructured "Stand Back" and an orchestral version of the beloved "Landslide" as well as a cover of "Crash into Me" by Dave Matthews. This marks the first of her shows to be recorded live since 1985. Bonus tracks "Enchanted," "Gold Dust Woman" and "Edge of Seventeen" are available exclusively on iTunes. Recently, Nicks told *The New York Times*

that Lindsay Lohan can purchase her life story for a biopic "over my dead body." When the right star is found, that will make quite a film.

On her fourth outing, *Testimony: Vol. 2, Love & Politics*, **India.Arie** finds herself in a much better space. Her insights are beautifully married to a neo-soul sound. On "Psalms 23" she remains hopeful: "You won't get the best of me, even though you broke my heart, I'm gonna pick up the pieces." On top of finding balance and enlightenment through music, Arie serves as a goodwill ambassador for UNICEF. The Grammy winner's take on Don Henley's "The Heart of the Matter" can be heard in the trailer to *Sex and the City: The Movie*. Arie's tour will have a stop in Chicago on Sunday, May 17, at The House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn.

Country-music sensation **Martina McBride** debuted on top of the country charts and crossed over to the top 10 on the pop charts with her 10th studio album, *Shine*. The Kansas native is even reaching out to her LGBT audience with a cover article in *Out* magazine—a rarity in the more conservative country genre. Don't worry, though: McBride's "What Do I Have to Do" is not a remake of Kylie Minogue's hit of the same name. Two of my friends met McBride as her career was about to take off at one of her shows. Both said how beautiful, talented and down-to-earth she was, all of which transcends into her music.

It's back to the "trailer park" for **Beth Orton**. The British singer-songwriter has reissued a limited edition of her folk-meets-electronica full-length debut, *Trailer Park*. This set cemented the buzz that Orton created by teaming with The Chemical Brothers as well as William Orbit, before he worked on Madonna's *Ray of Light*. This remastered double-disc set features Orton achingly singing on the singles "She Cries Your Name" and "Touch Me with Your Love." The lat-

ter is remixed by Andrew Weatherall (Primal Scream, New Order, One Dove). The bonus disc contains B-sides, the instrumental version of "Touch Me with Your Love," rarities and covers of "It's Not the Spotlight," a minimalist take on the Ronettes' "I Wish I Never Saw the Sunshine" and "Dolphins." Chicago's Terry Callier guests on "Dolphins" as well as on "Lean on Me." The Legacy Edition of *Trailer Park* will tie over fans, as Orton will release much-awaited new material later this year.

George Michael singing about cheating on his girlfriend with another woman? It must have been the '80s. The chart-topper "Careless Whisper" recently has been redone by Seether. The South African band morphs this evergreen from its familiar soulful power ballad into a writhing uncomfortable rock confessional, replacing the saxophone solos with dirty guitar licks. Seether's version is available as a single on iTunes. Many have done remakes of "Careless Whisper," including flash-in-the-pan British dance vocalist Sarah Washington, Bananarama, Dave Koz, Tamia and The Gossip. Seether named itself after Veruca Salt's breakout song.

The **Red Hot** organization is back with the double-disc compilation, *Dark Was the Night*. This set will ready listeners for Lollapalooza and Pitchfork music festivals with contributions from mainstays in the alternative music scene such as Grizzly Bear, Antony Hegarty, Sufjan Stevens and Chicago darling Andrew Bird. Here, My Brightest Diamond strips down Nina Simone's classic "Feeling Good." *Dark Was the Night* also features some peculiar pairings such as Feist with Grizzly Bear on "Service Bell" and The Books featuring Jose Gonzalez doing "Cello Song." Other charitable compilations in this series include the Cole Porter tribute *Red, Hot + Blue* and the lively *Red, Hot & Dance*.

CULTURE CLUB

OLD TIMES
BY HAROLD PINTER
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About Face theatre

WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP



Ghosts of Girlfriends Past; Sita Sings the Blues; film notes

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Love's old bittersweet song—the favorite subject matter of all the arts and the movies, in particular—is at the heart of two very different films opening this weekend. **Ghosts of Girlfriends Past** is a good example of a slick, standard Hollywood studio-produced romantic comedy that utilizes a clever conceit—a retelling of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*—and some expert supporting comedic performances to help it squeak by while **Sita Sings the Blues**, an enchanting animated film that links a classic Indian myth with the relationship breakup of its maker Nina Paley, is breathtaking in its originality and heralds the arrival of a major new talent.

Matthew McConaughey stars in *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past* as Connor Mead, a successful photographer who is an unrepentant, callous womanizer. At his younger brother's wedding, which is being held at the Newport estate of his dearly departed Uncle Wayne (Michael Douglas)—from whom Connor learned to be such a skirt-chaser—he's informed by the spirit of his uncle that he will be visited by the ghosts of three former girlfriends, given an overview of his prodigious sex life and, if lucky, a chance to redeem himself in the eyes of the woman (Jennifer Garner) that he never really wanted to let slip away.

Director Mark Waters, who has made a series of audience-friendly but hardly challenging movies (*The Spiderwick Chronicles*, *Just Like Heaven*, *Mean Girls*), stays safely within the confines of the worked-over script by Jon Lucas and Scott Moore. McConaughey shows his dazzling smile (although he doesn't remove his shirt nearly enough for my tastes) and Garner flashes her dimples while Robert Forster, Emma Stone, Lacey Chabert and Noureen DeWulf provide laughs and Breckin Meyer, Anne Archer and Daniel Sunjata offer heart. It's not easy to make a romantic comedy centered on an egocentric guy who'd rather "fork than spoon" audience-friendly, but the *Christmas Carol* template helps Waters do the trick. As the film neared its inevitable conclusion my mind conjured up nice twists on the title and the central conceit—wouldn't a gay version of this be a hoot?



Sita Sings the Blues.

At the other end of the love spectrum is *Sita Sings the Blues*, which filmmaker Nina Paley has given the tongue-in-cheek subtitle "The Greatest Break-Up Story Ever Told"—and she may be right. Paley, a cartoonist and sometime animator, takes the story of the abrupt end of the relationship with her husband and artfully links it to the myth of the Hindu goddess Sita, who was also spurned by her warrior husband, Rama, after being kidnapped by an evil king. Paley envisions Sita as a sort of curvaceous variation on Betty Boop and gives her the same kewpie-doll sexiness. In a series of trippy musical numbers, Paley has Sita sing via the sublime vintage recordings of '20s torch-song vocalist Annette Henshaw. (So pervasive and winning is this unique idea that Henshaw is credited as the "star" of the movie.)

The dazzling musical numbers have the same trippy animated quality and wry humor that pop artist Peter Max brought to the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*. (The movie's a persuasive argument for the continuation of 2-D animation—this is anti-Pixar.) Sita's story is narrated by three shadow puppets who gently and playfully argue with one another over variations in the myth and are contrasted by Paley's own sudden marital breakup.

Startling in its delightful originality, *Sita Sings the Blues*—Paley's feature debut—is a cogent example of an artist drawing on her experience and shaping it into a unique vision. The film makes its Chicago debut at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State, beginning Friday, May 1. Although Paley prefers filmgoers see it in a theater (where ticket sales will benefit her), the movie is also being offered online as a free download in order to reach the widest audience. See www.sitasingingtheblues.com.

Film notes:

—There will be an encore screening and advance DVD release of the Chicago indie feature **Mass Romantic** at the Landmark Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark, Thursday, April 30, at 7:30 p.m. A meet-and-greet with the cast and director Richard Paro will kick off the event at 6:30 p.m. *Mass Romantic* is a relationship drama that follows a group of activists and academics in search of love while working on political art. Queer politics and transphobia are just two of the topics touched on in the film; see www.mudgeonsoul.org.

—**Facets Night School** is a new, weekly mid-night movie series focusing on offbeat cult films chosen and hosted by Facets Cinematheque's resident staff of film buffs. The initial lineup—set to run beginning Saturday, May 2, at Facets, 1517 W. Fullerton, and continuing through Saturday, June 27—encompasses a large assortment of genres, including horror, sci-fi, kung-fu, exploitation flicks and a healthy slice of oddities. The series kicks off with Alejandro Jodorowsky's *The Holy Mountain* from 1973. A lecture by host Brian Elza precedes the screening. \$5 per lecture/screening. www.facets.org/cinematheque

—**Queer Cinema 101**, the five-week LGBT film series hosted by local gay film critics, continues Monday, May 4, with 1986's *Parting Glances*, hosted by Chicago Free Press film critic Gregg Shapiro. *Parting Glances*, a loving examination of a gay couple living in New York City at a turning point in their relationship, was one of the first indies to deal frankly with AIDS and other issues relevant to the LGBT community. Richard Ganoung, star of the movie, will be in attendance and will participate in a post-screening Q&A with audience members. The film will screen at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, in the Hoover-Leppen Theatre. A \$5 suggested donation is requested. Visit www.centeronhalsted.org or call 773-472-6469, ext. 245.

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



Bea Arthur.

Bea Arthur dies at 86

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Goodbye, Sweet Bea: Bea Arthur, star of the long-running hit TV sitcoms "Maude" and "Golden Girls" and award winning Broadway stage actress passed away peacefully on Saturday, April 25, at the age of 86. Arthur, a long-time friend of the gay community, was beloved for her acidic way with a wisecrack, her spot-on comedic timing, ribald sense of humor and one-of-a-kind baritone singing voice. Arthur's breakthrough came in 1955 when she played the role of Lucy in the legendary production of Bertolt Brecht's "Threepenny Opera" on Broadway opposite Lotte Lenya. Just over a decade later she essayed the memorable role of Vera Charles, the drunken hambone sidekick to Angela Lansbury's Mame, winning a Tony and introducing her signature song ("The Man in the Moon") in the process. Arthur went on to recreate the role in the 1974 film version alongside Lucille Ball. But it is *Maude* (1972-1977) and *Golden Girls* (1985-1992) that brought Arthur lasting fame. Both shows continue to be extremely popular with LGBT audiences, something acknowledged by Arthur, and both television shows tackled gay subject matter with storylines that argued for equality for gay people.

In 2001, Arthur toured with her one-woman Tony-nominated show, *Bea Arthur: Just Between Friends*. She was overwhelmed by the reception the show received in front of a largely gay audience in Provincetown, Mass. "Oh my God, it

was like I was visiting royalty. Truly, truly, I've never felt so loved and wanted and needed in my life," she told *Instinct* magazine. In 2003 she appeared in out director Rick McKay's documentary *Broadway The Golden Age*, reminiscing about the early days of her career on Broadway. Arthur also made a memorable cameo appearance along with Patrick Stewart in *Out There*, a television special produced by Comedy Central in 1993 that was one of the first television showcases of gay and lesbian comedians. "Everybody Today Is Turning On," a song from her 1979 CBS variety special, was dedicated to the pleasures of getting high and sung with another gay icon, Rock Hudson; the video has become a YouTube favorite. Locally, a reunion duet of "Bosom Buddies" with her Mame co-star Angela Lansbury from the 1987 Tony Awards has been a weekly staple at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, for years.

"There is still so much intolerance," Arthur told *Instinct* magazine, referring to the attitudes the gay community faces. "We need to change that." Arthur, who was married and divorced twice, is survived by two sons and two granddaughters.

WCT reviewer in horror movie

Steve Warren, whose reviews of movies and videos occasionally run in *Windy City Times*, has a major part in *Scarce*, a Canadian horror movie that will be out on DVD May 5.

Warren plays Ivan, who lives with Wade (Gary Fischer) in a rural cabin with a dungeon in the basement. In the movie, three young snowboarders get stranded nearby and wind up in the dungeon.

Warren has a number of independent productions awaiting release, including *Lynch Mob*, *An Inconvenient Tax*, *Paper Boys*, *Game Over*, *Special Affects*, *Missing* and his first western, *The Gunfighters' Last Stand*, all filmed in Georgia.

At the movies

The Chicago Latino Film Festival opened with a present—actually *El Regalo/The Gift*, a hit movie from Chile, which was shown at AMC River East 21, 322 E. Illinois, on April 17. The opening-night gala included food, drinks and Chilean dancers. Among the other films shown was *Silent Shame*, a film about how HIV impacts one Latino family.

—Jerry Nunn

Movie kind of love



Five gay critics—(from left) Gay Chicago Magazine's Charlie Shoquist, *Windy City Times'* Richard Knight, Jr., Chicago Free Press' Gregg Shapiro, Gay Chicago's Jonathan Lewis and Time Out Chicago's Hank Sartin—each lead a night discussing an LGBT-themed film in *Queer Cinema 101*, which is running Mondays through May 11 at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. Photo by Rick Aguilar

WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, April 29

Civil Union lobby day, Equality Illinois. Buses depart Center on Halsted 3656 N. Halsted St at 7 a.m. and from Oak Park at 7 a.m., stopping briefly in Bolingbrook from 8 to 8:20 a.m. Equality Illinois 773-477-7173 or info@eqil.org

Equality Illinois Spring Wine Tasting Party \$20 at door. 6 to 9 p.m. Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce Mix and Mingle. 6-9 p.m. \$20.00/\$30. Embassy Suites Chicago-Downtown, 600 N. State. Contact: Christina Pinson 773-303-0167

Ghost Factory Reading & Release Party featuring editor David Peak, contributors Kathie Bergquist, Christina Correa, Jesse Morrison, Maggie Ritchie, and Jessica Young. 7 p.m. Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St. 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Chicago NOW Lesbian Rights Team 7 p.m. lobby Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Sapphic Adventures, 7 p.m. La Touche French Bistro, 1475 W. Balmoral www.meetup.com/sapphicadventures

Windy City Gay Idol, Chicago's biggest LGBT contest, eight rounds in eight bars, over \$5,000 in cash and prizes. 8 p.m. signup/9 p.m. start Mary's Attic 5500 N. Clark Cynthia@windycitymediagroup.com www.windycitymediagroup.com/Idol2009.html

Thursday, April 30

16th Annual Dining Out for Life benefits AIDSCARE and spreads awareness. Reserve at www.diningoutforlife.com/Chicago

Newtown Writers Fortnightly Writing Workshop 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Gerber-Hart Library 1127 W. Granville Ave. www.newtownwriters.org

Poetic Voices Without Borders 2 for National Poetry Month and the release of the Gival Press anthology Poetic Voices Without Borders 2, will include Chicago-based writers Nina Corwin, Gerard Wozek, Kristy Bowen and Gregg Shapiro. \$5 suggested donation. 7 to 9 p.m. John Baran Senior Center, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted

Rape Victim Advocates "When a Friend

Discloses" Workshop 7:30 p.m. Info: Carrie at prevention@rapevictimadvocates.org or 312-443-9603 Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St. 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Submit a DVD by today for Make Us A Musical! Make a queer musical for Threat Level's next evening of queer shorts. Send a playable DVD NTSC, contact info and a one line synopsis. to: Feder/Roskam, 1265 W Early Ave #2 Chicago IL 60660. Screening May 15th.

Friday, May 1

The Flesh Hungry Dog Show presents, Welcome The Stranger, three out of town bands, The Nice Device (Detroit), Big Fun 4ever (Milwaukee), and Charles S. McVey (Lawrence, KS). The show will also feature "Bag of Fun" prize giveaways from The Pleasure Chest, rare and vintage film, special guest performers from Girlie-Q Burlesque, and DJ Sky. 9 p.m. Jackhammer 6406 N. Clark St. 773-743-5772 www.fleshhungrydog.com.

Jackson Pollock Meets Bette Midler, opening artist reception 6:30-10 pm through June 30. The Palmer Gallery, 233 W. Huron St. 312-274-1222

Martha Stewart signs copies of her new book, Martha Stewart's Encyclopedia of Crafts, and best-seller Martha Stewart's Cooking School. 1 p.m. Macy's on State.

UIC's 3rd Annual Rainbow Banquet featuring Lavender Graduation, Celebrating the Class of 2009 Mixer, keynote speaker will be lesbian and writer Dorothy Allison. 4 p.m. Banquet follows, Jaks Tap, 901 W. Jackson. lthomson@uic.edu 312-413-8619

Saturday, May 2

Chicago House Fanta-Sea Island Fashion Splash fundraiser, a weekend of fashion. "Families for Families" on Saturday is everything family-friendly, including kids fashions and entertainment. 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. \$40 kids/\$100 adults. Winter Garden Ballroom, 400 S. State St., Harold Washington Library. 773-248-5200, ext 303 or www.chicagohouse.org. Also see Sunday.

Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Asso-

ciation, 20th anniversary. Hyatt Lodge, Oak Brook. 708-848-0273 www.opalga.org

Sunday, May 3

Chicago House Brunch and Fashion show, with designers Custo Barcelona, Vizeau, Hickey Freeman, Jorge del Busto, His Stuff and Macy's. Lunch, Jewell Events Catering; deserts, Sara Lee Corporation. 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. \$175 for Garden Seating and \$275 at the Runway. Winter Garden Ballroom, 400 S. State St., Harold Washington Library. 773-248-5200, ext 303 or www.chicagohouse.org

Dorothy Allison and Thomas Glave. Women and Children First, 5233 N. Clark, 4:30 p.m. Glave will be reading from his new collection of stories, The Torturer's Wife. See www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

PFLAG—Hinsdale chapter meets the first Sunday of every month, 2-4 p.m., Hinsdale Unitarian Church, 17 West Maple, Hinsdale.

Our Sisters Bazaar, for women with economic struggles. Bazaar will have free items for unemployed/underemployed women and a re-sale area. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Howard Brown Center, 4025 N. Sheridan. Participate or donate: our-sistersbazaar@yahoo.com or 630-341-0549

Monday, May 4

Parting Glances screening, part of Queer Cinema 101, five week film series through May 11, the best of gay cinema chosen and hosted by gay film critics, this week Gregg Shapiro, Chicago Free Press. Partially sponsored by www.HannahFree.com, the forthcoming lesbian themed film shot in Chicago and starring Sharon Gless (trailer shown before screenings). Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. 773-472-6469 www.centeronhalsted.org

Tuesday, May 5

Carol Anshaw (Aquamarine) will read at The Parlor Tuesday, May 5th, 2009 at 7p.m. The Green Lantern 1511 N. Milwaukee; www.thegreenlantern.org

HOMOLATTE is a bi-monthly, all-ages, queer music and spoken word series in Chicago. Lisa Grayson and Artimus

Singers 7:30 p.m. Big Chicks/Tweet 5024 N Sheridan 773-728-5511

Thursday, May 7

AVER (GLBT Veterans) 7 p.m. Center on Halsted 3656 N. Halsted www.centeronhalsted.org

Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community discussion and signing 6 p.m. with editor Tracy Baim and contributors, Marie J. Kuda, Ron Dorfman, Jonathan Abarbanel, Owen Keehnen, senior editor Jorjet Harper, Jeff Berry and senior editor William Kelley will discuss the long and rich history of the city's LGBTQA community. Barnes and Noble DePaul Center, State and Jackson. 312-362-8792 or www.depaul-loop.bncollege.com

Out and CHM Surviving Reagan, Chicanos recount LGBT history in the '80s, from AIDS to Bowers v. Hardwick. 5:30 p.m. cocktails, 6:30 p.m. program, 8 p.m. after-party. Tix \$10/\$12 at Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St. www.chicagohistory.org

Wonka Ball 2009, About Face Theatre's annual fundraiser. 6-7:30 p.m.: VIP recep 7-11 p.m. main event. Salvage One 1840 W. Hubbard St. RSVP by April 30. www.aboutface theatre.com/events.html

Friday, May 8

"Caliban, Dancing" questions of responsibility and consequence mingle with sexuality and the right to die. 8 p.m., \$15. Through May 24. Chicago Actors Studio 2040 N. Elston Ave. 773-282-0344 or www.nufanensemble.com

Saturday, May 9

HRC Chicago's Families with Children Group at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago's Target Family Day. Group will meet at 10 a.m. in the MCA's Kanter Meeting Center. Jan Greenberg, author of Chuck Close: Up Close, Frank Gehry: Outside In, and Action Jackson, speaks and signs new book, Side by Side: New Poetry Inspired by Art from Around the World. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Museum of Contemporary Art 220 E. Chicago Ave. RSVP at www.hrcactioncenter.org

Sunday, May 3



LEI GROUND

Chicago House's Brunch and Fashion Show will be held at Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State.

Photo from the 2008 Brunch and Fashion Show by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)

Sunday, May 3



HOME OF THE GLAVE

Thomas Glave (above) and **Dorothy Allison** will read at Women and Children First, 5233 N. Clark.

Photo by Evangelos Dousmanis

BOOK REVIEW

Facebook Me!

Written by Dave Awl
\$19.99; Peachpit Press; 216 pages
REVIEW BY TRACY BAIM

The wit of Chicago gay writer and performer Dave Awl comes shining through in his new book titled, appropriately, **Facebook Me! A Guide to Having Fun With Your Friends and Promoting Your Projects on Facebook**.

I am usually not a user of "how-to" books, preferring just to jump right into Facebook, Twitter and the rest of the social media world. Facebook Me! Is about as different from a how-to manual as you can get. Even if I didn't participate in the Facebook cult, I would have found this book enjoyable. It not only lays out the process of how Facebook works, but it adds humor to very practical insights about the mega phenomenon sweeping the globe.

Facebook recently changed its design, which means parts of the book will need updating. But it doesn't really matter. The basic way Facebook works is unchanged, and Awl's wonderful prose makes it an important and worthwhile read for anyone using the site for social, non-profit or business purposes. He has sections on privacy, applications, photos, videos, groups, pages, ads and everything else you need to know.



"Facebook is constantly evolving, so I knew while I was writing the book that by the time it made its way to readers some of the pictures and instructions would no longer exactly match what's on the screen," Awl said. "But the most important parts of the book are still timely. The heart of my book is its big-picture content—explaining how people can use Facebook effectively to spread the word about creative projects and events, and helping readers figure out the etiquette of social networking. I'm working on plans to set up a blog where I can post updates about changes to Facebook and other social net-

working sites."

Awl said he is not a fan of most of the recent Facebook design changes: "I think they made the site more visually confusing and harder to use for most users. But I'm optimistic that over time some of those problems will get fixed and the design will improve."

As a media person, I appreciated the useful tips and numerous examples and illustrations that make it easier to communicate exactly the information you want posted to the world. Since joining Facebook late last year, I have actually found it extremely useful to my "old media" work. For example, I have read great opinion columns posted and requested reprint permission for Windy City Times. I have found and interviewed subjects for dozens of news articles and features. I have found new promotional partners for Windy City Media Group. Windy City Media Group and Nightspots post weekly updates and photos for our fans (please friend us!). I also created a group for Hannah Free, the film I am producing.

And probably most important, and most frustrating to a media company, I am seeing a huge change in the way LGBT groups are communicating their events. Many are ignoring the traditional press releases sent out to media and instead just posting on their Facebook pages. While this gets them exposure to their known universe of supporters, they are missing out on communicating events to the greater LGBT com-

munity. So I Facebook them but also let them know to also send traditional press releases out, or you won't get into most calendars, or get covered by traditional LGBT media and Web sites.

Awl's book is highly recommended even for the more experienced Facebookers out there. More important, Awl understands that Facebook is just part of the way people, organizations and businesses need to share information. Sometimes, you might want to pick up a phone, or meet for coffee.

Stonewall winners

Light Fell by Evan Fallenberg is the winner of The 2009 Barbara Gittings Literature Award and Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America 1861-2003 received the 2009 Israel Fishman Non-Fiction Award as the American Library Association's (ALA's) Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table named its Stonewall Award recipients.

Works that received "honor awards" included Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South by E. Patrick Johnson (who teaches at Northwestern University) and Sex Variant Woman: The Life of Jeannette Howard Foster by Joanne Ellen Passet.

This year's awards will be presented during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago July 9-15. See www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/glbtrt/stonewall/stonewallbook.cfm.

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BILLY MASTERS

"What I won't do is cast another fortysomething sexy blonde. Nicollette performed the aging, neighborhood tramp better than anyone has ever done before."—Marc Cherry, "Desperate Housewives" creator, shares his thought about departing castmember Nicollette Sheridan. There's a compliment in there somewhere.



Tim Gunn makes being single for 26 years work. Okay, maybe the occasional HJ.

Since I was in Boston celebrating Easter with my family, I missed out on the Las Vegas opening of "Peep Show". Jerry Mitchell's extravaganza was the hot ticket in Sin City and brought out some big names, including Charlie Sheen, Bruce Vilanch, Susan Anton, Perez Hilton, Donald Trump, and Lindsay Lohan. That last name led to all sorts of conjecture that Lohan wants to strip on The Strip when Kelly Monaco's contract expires this summer. And when it was learned that Lindsay flew in on the producer's plane, it seemed more than just a casual visit. As it turns out, most of the glitzy folk at the opening were flown in on said plane. And Lindsay had a good reason to be there—she's apparently good friends with co-star Mel B. Despite some reported comments to the contrary, her people are saying she wasn't there scoping out a future gig. We went directly to sexy Jerry, who told us he's interested if she is: "Eight shows a week takes a lot of dedication. If she's game, I'd still be delighted!"

One show opens in Vegas, another closes. Elton John just took his final bow at Caesars. His three-year deal started in February of 2004 and,

whaddaya know...he stayed for five. I think he summed it up best: "The ex-home of Celine Dion. And now it's the ex-home of Elton John as well. Who are you going to get to fill in our shoes now? You've got Bette Midler, you've got Cher. It's gonna be the Village People next!"

While I was in Boston, I filled in as co-host of "One in Ten", the weekly GLBT radio program on WFNX. I am sure many were surprised that I asked auteur Del Shores to be a guest—heck, I even surprised Del! He's taken issue with some of my coverage of his projects, but I think he now knows that I have the utmost respect for what he's achieved. The reason for the interview was regarding the fate of his "Sordid Lives: The Series" on Logo. At this point, it looks like the show is over. Despite tossing tons of money into "Drag Race" and reruns of "The Sarah Silverman Program", no one at Viacom (Logo's parent company) seems all that eager to raise a nickel for a second season of "Sordid". Del's disappointment is compounded by the fact that the actors haven't been paid their residuals for the show—and he blames the production company for that. You can hear all the juicy details because I'll post some of our interview (including Del taking issue with this very column) on BillyMasters.com.

For years there have been rumors that sexy singer Gavin Rossdale had been romantically involved with notorious Brit drag queen Marilyn. This rumor picked up steam when Boy George mentioned it in his 1995 autobiography. Now, Marilyn herself (himself?) has come forward to clear the air. "He was the love of my life," the gender-bending rocker tells "In Touch Magazine". Why didn't s/he tell all earlier? "He was just becoming successful in America. I agreed to lie against every grain of my being. We were together for five years. But it felt like 40." Despite this story (and a really hot picture of the duo which we'll post on BillyMasters.com), Gavin's reps have issued a firm denial. Denial is the right word for it, Gavin.

Rossdale has a few kids. So why can't John Barrowman? Johnny and hubby Scott Gill are building a home in Wales that will be big enough for a sizeable family. "We're going to have six bedrooms in it and we feel like we've got a lot to offer. A family unit is what you make a family unit. I'm a big family man and I have this feeling I would be a good dad. I am ready for it." I bet it won't be the first time he'd be called Daddy!

Incidentally, a new alleged nude shot of Barrowman has surfaced. I say "alleged" because the head is cut off the pic. So, I'm not swearing this is legit, but I'll still post it on BillyMasters.com—along with the one I know is real!

The dashing and dapper Tim Gunn made a startling revelation: "I haven't been on a date in 26 years." But don't worry—he swears he's happier alone. He says he doesn't have time for a relationship and doesn't miss being in one. Of course, he doesn't tell us when the last time he had sex was—which is another matter entirely.

We must send out congrats to our buddy (who we never hear from anymore) Michael Cunio. You may remember Mikey from the flick The Fluffer (he was, indeed, the fluffer). Now he's joining the Chicago cast of Jersey Boys. The hit musical is playing at the Bank of America Theatre.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Harry in Las Vegas: "I just saw Britney Spears in concert and she had the hottest dancer with a shaved head who she kept fondling. I was wondering who he was and if he's family."

I believe you're talking about Chase Benz. The 21-year-old dancer is one of Brit's favorites. I

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Windy City Gay Idol - Crew

The competition builds as three new contestants—Keven (top, left), Matt (top, right) and Jessica (below, right)—join the ranks of Windy City Gay Idol finalists at Crew on Tuesday, April 21. Catch the next preliminary round Wednesday, April 29 at Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St. Photos by Kirk Williamson, Cynthia Holmes

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BILLY from page 20

doubt he's family since rumor has it he's been thisclose with Britney since the tour began. Of course, this makes sense since he's from Tennessee (like Brit's first love, La Timberlake), and he's a back-up dancer (like her second husband, K-Fed). Although Chase reportedly has a girlfriend back home, he and Brit have engaged in some harmless flirtation on the road that has led to some heavy petting—how the heck is that harmless? This might explain reports of the duo sequestered in a bathroom in a Montreal nightclub for about 10 minutes—an admirable length of time, I'd say. Perhaps Spears just wanted to confirm those rumors that Chase

is quite well-endowed. I could have guessed that judging from the size of the codpiece he sports on stage. We've found some sizzling pics which we'll share on BillyMasters.com.

When Britney doing someone in a bathroom is news, it's time to end yet another column. Cher is saying farewell and Britney is linked with a back-up dancer—it's almost as if we're in summer reruns. And yet, you'll only find first-run gossip at www.BillyMasters.com. If you've got a question, concern, or a scoop, drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I go on a date with Tim Gunn (we could both do worse)! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

Poetry Center & SAIC offering residency

The Poetry Center of Chicago and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago are awarding a poetry residency in the heart of Chicago's downtown.

One poet will be awarded a month-long poetry residency with housing. This residency is open to poets who have published no more than one book of poetry, not including self-published work. In addition to housing, the poet will receive a \$1,000 stipend; the poet is responsible for his/her own travel and meal expenses.

The submission deadline is Friday, May 8. See www.poetrycenter.org.

'80s tour in June

"Regeneration Tour 2009"—featuring 1980s pop icons ABC ("When Smokey Sings"), Berlin ("No More Words"), Wang Chung ("Dance Hall Days"), Heaven 17 and Cutting Crew ("I Just Died in Your Arms Tonight")—is coming to the Rosemont Theatre, 5400 N. River, Friday, June 26, at 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$39.50-\$69.50. Visit www.ticketmaster.com or call 312-559-1212.



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SPORTS/RECREATION

Judson bowled over by league

BY ROSS FORMAN

Juana Judson was invited to join the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) bowling league five years ago, but was hesitant. She's straight and just didn't know if that would be a problem in the predominantly gay league.

However, after her first season (2004-05), she was so respected by her peers that she was voted in as vice-president of the league.

"I took that [vote] as quite an honor being that it is a gay league," said Judson, 49, who is divorced and living in Old Irving Park.

Judson, born and raised on Chicago's North Side, is still a board member—and also an active bowler, competing on a team appropriately named The Juana Bees.

So why participate in the CMSA bowling league?

"The camaraderie," Judson said without hesitation. "The people are friendly. You get to meet a lot of different people. I'm not shy and I just like to be around people who like to have a good time."

The CMSA bowling league, which runs from late August through early May, is a 32-week grind. There are 32 teams this season, up 30 from the 2007-08 season.

Teams are composed of five bowlers, with up to three substitutes.

The action is held at Waveland Bowl on Friday nights, with CMSA occupying 32 of the building's 40 lanes. The other eight were used by a church group.

"I just love the game," said Judson, who has bowled since she was 16. "With bowling comes drinking ... and this is a Friday night league. How perfect. I've met a lot of great people over the years, made some real good friendships. It's



From left: Juana Judson, league president Forrest Bourquin and treasurer Amy Jakubiak.

just a good time."

And she's also brought her son, Chris, 25, into the league. He, too, is straight.

"It's a good time, a very welcoming climate, whether you're gay or straight. People are just there to have fun, make friends," said Judson, who once bowled a 296.

The league features players from the city and the suburbs, and even some from Indiana and Wisconsin. Bowlers range in age from 21 to 70. About 90 percent are male, and about 93 percent are LGBT.

The 2008-09 season features five new teams and a lot of first-time bowlers, Judson said: "They may not be great bowlers average-wise, but they have a lot of fun." There are two divisions, which are not based on competitive skill level.

Judson confirmed that league organizers could, and might, expand to 40 teams for the 2009-2010 season.

And what about the traditional wacky bowling shirts?

"Believe it or not, the gay community isn't big on 'goofy bowling shirts,'" Judson said. "And that kind of surprises me. On one hand, gay men love to put on a show. But on the other hand, gay men like to look good, so they don't want to look goofy."

Report focuses on negative recruiting

BY ROSS FORMAN

Helen Carroll knows first-hand the value and importance—and certainly the potentially damaging consequences, especially on recruiting—of addressing discrimination in college athletics, especially related to sexual orientation, either actual or perceived.

She is a former college basketball coach, who claimed the NAIA National Championship in 1984 at the University of North Carolina-Asheville; and she later was a Division III athletic director for 12 years.

She is now the Sports Project Director for the San Francisco-based National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), a post she's held for six years.

Carroll and Dr. Pat Griffin, the director of It Takes a Team! Education Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Sports, an initiative of the Women's Sports Foundation, joined forces to address the issue.

They co-wrote "The Positive Approach: Recognizing, Challenging, and Eliminating Negative Recruiting Based on Actual or Perceived Sexual Orientation," published by the NCLR.

"The report came out of a think-tank [in 2006] where we got leaders from every part of sports together," Carroll said. "The reason we did [the report] was, we wanted to be able to establish a guide or a way for athletic leaders, parents and student-athletes to talk about this unethical practice that involves sexual orientation. The reason is, this has been so silent; there hasn't been open dialogue about what it is, what's happening and how it influences sports, [and] what could possibly be done to curb, slow down or eliminate this unethical practice.

"You can't really eliminate, slow down or even address a problem unless you're willing to talk about it."

The 20-page report offers a comprehensive analysis of negative recruiting based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, and recommends practices and policies to eliminate it. Negative recruiting, according to the report, is the practice of playing on homophobic stereotypes to deter recruits from attending rival athletic programs by alleging or implying that a rival coach or team members are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

So, is negative recruiting truly a problem, and how big?

"That's the question that is always asked," Carroll said. "It has always been a problem, especially in women's sports, though it's hard to be quantitative about it because people really won't speak about it. But if you're in sports—especially if you're a woman in sports, either coaching or playing—at some point, you're going to be faced with this, definitely.

"Putting an end to negative recruiting is critical, not only to protect LGBT players and coaches, but also to attract and retain the best, most qualified coaches. As long as any athlete or coach can be harmed by being tagged with the 'lesbian' or 'gay' label, the goal of achieving true equality in sports will remain out of reach."

In 2001, NCLR became the first LGBT organization to tackle the rampant homophobia and transphobia in sports with the launch of the Sports Project. NCLR's Sports Project works on all levels of athletic competition, from the NCAA to the NFL, to ensure that LGBT athletes can compete and participate openly and equally.

Carroll said the negative recruiting definitely has been an issue with coaches, because they haven't had a way to get help, stop it, or even talk about it.

"If you're a woman, and this is happening

to you from someone else in your conference, whether you're a lesbian or not, you usually don't say much about it because you want it to just go away—and so does your athletic director and your school," Carroll said. "It's [been] very difficult for coaches to do anything about this [practice] because they haven't had the support or the way to do it. But this report, what it does is, it gives practical ways for administrators and coaches to talk about it and what to do, how to manage it.

"When this happens, it affects the entire athletic department, not just one coach and one team."

Carroll said she wished such a report was around when she coached and was an athletic director, "because it's a practical guide."

She added: "Instead of just talking about how this [practice] is a terrible thing, this report talks about what to do about it and how to do it."

The Positive Approach is available in PDF format online at www.nclrights.org/sports.

AIDS Walk/Run registration starts

Online registration for AIDS Run & Walk Chicago 2009 is now open at www.aidsrunwalk.org.

To participate alongside thousands of supporters Saturday, Oct. 3, in Grant Park, visit www.aidsrunwalk.org and click "Register Now." E-mail runwalk@aidschicago.org if there are any questions.

AIDS Run & Walk Chicago 2008 raised more than \$500,000. To further support these local organizations, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) will give 100 percent of all money raised by CommunityDirect teams back to the participating HIV/AIDS service organizations.

Gay rugby film out on DVD

Walk Like a Man: Blood, Sweat and Queers—a documentary that follows two top gay rugby teams in their quest for The Bingham Cup—is out on DVD.

Narrated by former rugby champion, openly gay Ian Roberts, Walk looks at the defending champions San Francisco Fog and the upstart Sydney Convicts as they prepare to do battle in New York. Individuals from each team (including a woman who plays with the Fog) talk about everything from coming out to preparing for the tournament.

The film is currently airing on Logo as part of its "Real Momentum" Documentaries at www.loogoonline.com/documentaries/. To purchase, see www.therugbyfilm.com.

Sports discrimination movie at fest

Training Rules—a movie that chronicles a lawsuit filed in 2006 by student athlete Jennifer Harris against Penn State University and women's basketball head coach Rene Portland—had its world premiere at The Philadelphia Film Festival/CineFest 09 April 4.

Portland—who resigned in 2007 after winning more than 600 games at Penn State—was found guilty of creating a "hostile, intimidating, and offensive environment" based on Harris' perceived sexual orientation.

See www.trainingrules.com.

USA defends women's hockey title

The United States defended its women's World Hockey Championship title April 12 in Hameenlinna, Finland, beating Canada 4-1 as defenseman Caitlin Cahow's two goals, according to www.CBSSports.com. The U.S. won its first title five years ago in Sweden.

In the bronze-medal game, Finland defeated rival Sweden 4-1.

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