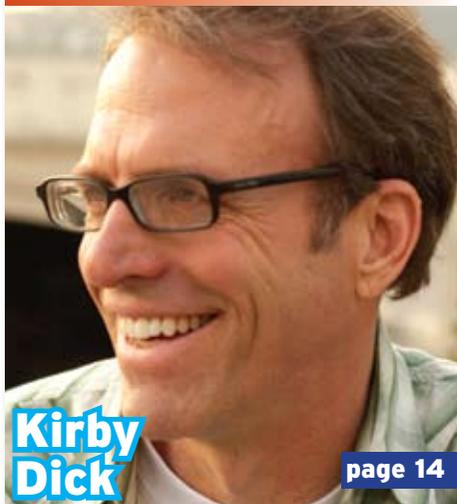


**Sandra Bernhard**

page 17



**Kirby Dick**

page 14



**Sotomayor Event**

page 9

## Rugby star is out, and winning big

BY ROSS FORMAN

Gareth Thomas, a muscled sportsman in the ultimate macho sport, was admittedly nervous before coming out this past December.

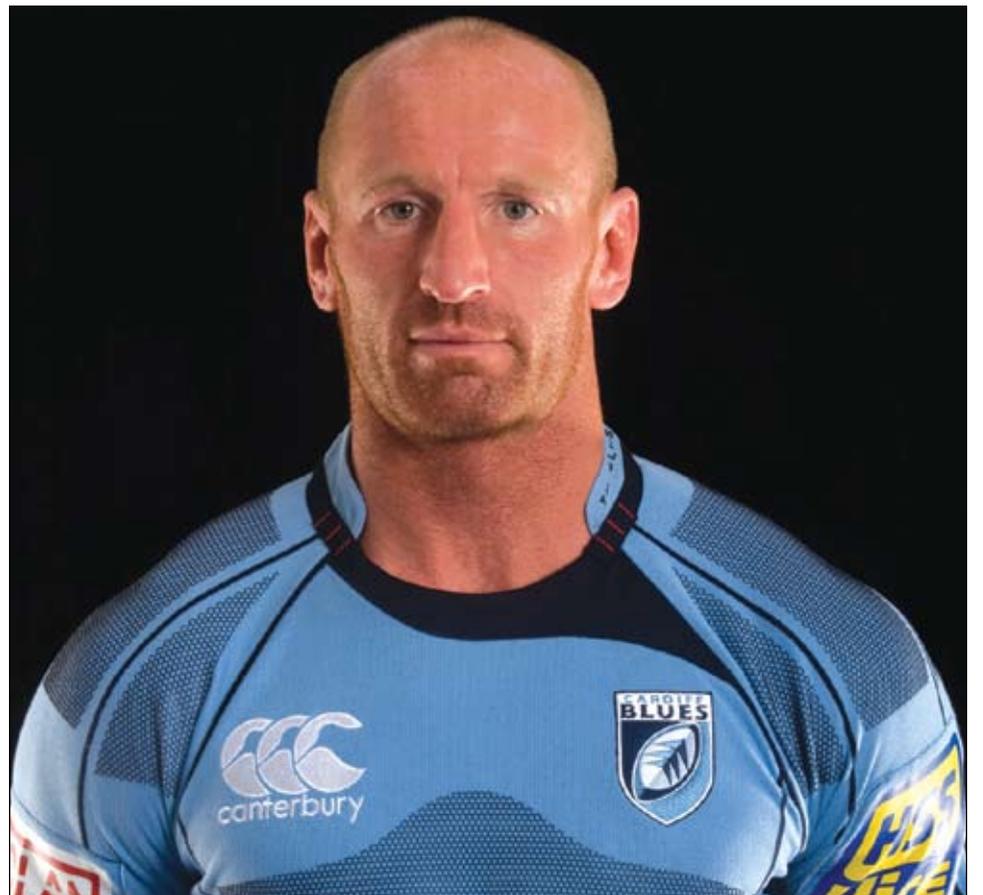
He had the normal and natural personal issues to consider of family and close friends. He also had teammates, coaches, opponents, fans and his worldwide appeal as one of the greatest rugby players ever.

"Right before coming out, I was really nervous," he said. "Sports—rugby, in particular—have been my life. I can never imagine living without sports or rugby. It's in my blood to play rugby. But I really was nervous for the reaction that I was going to get."

Especially since he made the meticulously-planned announcement in the morning, and then that afternoon joined his Cardiff Blues teammates for a match against Toulouse—which was a team he previously played for, and a hostile place for opponents.

"I thought the reception I'd get [before] that game might be a bit frosty, but actually, when my name was announced, and then when I took the field, it probably was the loudest cheer of the day—and that totally blew me away," Thomas said. "Ever since then, all I've heard is cheers. I think people appreciate what I've done and

Turn to page 19



## Chicago's Chasnoff wins leader honor

BY MICKI LEVENTHAL

Salome Chasnoff, founder and executive director of Beyondmedia Education, has been named a Leader for the 21st Century by Women's eNews in the category of "Seven Who Invent a Better Future." Chasnoff, who received the Ida B. Wells Bravery in Journalism award, will join her fellow awardees at a gala celebration in New York May 6.

In addition to the activism on behalf of women and girls for which Chasnoff won the award, she and her organization provide media education and advocacy for LGBT youth.

"I am really thrilled to receive this journalism award," said Chasnoff. "It has been a battle for us as we have been in a nether space. Funders who support journalism saw us as the arts. Funders who support arts saw us as journal-

ists. Nobody really understood or valued what we did. The value of story telling and first voice is beginning to be understood; McCormick Foundation [the philanthropic arm of the Chicago Tribune] is now one of our major funders."

Chasnoff's journey into media activism began when she was a PhD student in performance studies at Northwestern University. As part of her dissertation project she worked with a group of pregnant teens and produced the documentary "Looking at Teen Motherhood: The Fantastic Moms Video." Through the honest telling of their own stories, the project assisted the young women in changing both their self images and status within their communities. For Chasnoff, the experience helped crystallize the importance and validity of what she named "first voice, the first-person accounts of lived events and experience."

The marginalization of women's voices, particularly in the news media became apparent to Chasnoff in 1995 when traveled to Beijing to attend the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. The documentary she produced about the conference led to the first iteration of Beyondmedia, which was originally established as a commercial venture to distribute the documentary.

In 2000, Beyondmedia incorporated as a not-for-profit educational organization. Today, Chasnoff leads the organization and staff in providing education and services in four program areas. Girls! Action! Media!, Women and Prison, and Q'd in Media provide their cohorts with media arts skills and technology to tell their own,

Turn to page 6

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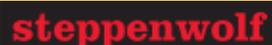
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Photos on left side of cover (from top): Photo of Sandra Bernhard by Jasmine Hirst; PR photo of Kirby Dick; photo of Gabriel Gomez by Tracy Baim



Justice Albie Sachs (above) recently talked about marriage equality in South Africa. See page 6.

Photo by Micki Leventhal



Comedian Lisa Lampanelli gets nasty with Windy City Times. See page 16.

Photo by Karen Moskowitz

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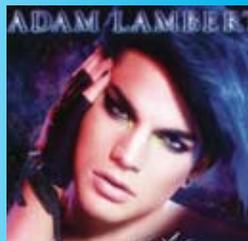
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### ANALYZING ADAM

Adam Lambert's debut CD, For Your Entertainment, is not living up to the hype, commercially speaking. Andrew Davis looks at the album, song by song.



### OUT OF AFRICA



Center on Halsted's Gregory Gross talks about an initiative to help Zimbabweans infected with HIV/AIDS.

Photo courtesy of Gregory Gross

### WHAT CAN BROWN DO FOR YOU?

This week's Pop Making Sense looks at more ear-catching musicians, including V V Brown (right).



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# Nat'l ACT UP-like network forming

BY REX WOCKNER

Around 45 LGBT activists of varying national stature met at the Highlander Research and Education Center in rural Tennessee in late January to create a new national LGBT direct-action movement.

"We had one thing on our agenda: Discuss ways to build a national network of activists to demand full equality now," said Kip Williams and Robin McGehee, who are best known as key organizers of last year's National Equality March on Washington, D.C.

"We believe that it is time to escalate our demands through coordinated nationwide nonviolent direct action, and we hope to build a broad base of organizers to work with all who struggle for justice and dignity in their lives," they said.

The gathering reportedly was invitation-only and all-expenses-paid. No press releases have been issued and details of who was there and what happened have been difficult to come by, though Williams and McGehee answered questions from this reporter by e-mail.

Veteran New York City activist Ann Northrop was among the attendees. Writer Dan Savage and activist legend Cleve Jones were invited but didn't go.

According to veteran activist Larry Kramer, the gathering was "bankrolled" by Jonathan Lewis, the son of one of the founders of Progressive Auto Insurance. Richard Socarides, who was President Bill Clinton's adviser on gay issues, was "involved with helping him set it up," Kramer said.

"They had one open meeting at the (LGBT) center here (in New York City) to see if there was activist energy and they seemed to be pleased there was," Kramer said. "The people invited to



**Around 45 LGBT activists of varying national stature, including National Equality March leaders Kip Williams and Robin McGehee, met at the Highlander Research and Education Center in rural Tennessee in late January to create a new national LGBT direct-action movement. Photo by Rex Wockner**

Tennessee were people that were known activists, mostly younger ones who had helped Cleve on the march."

Williams and McGehee said the people who attended the gathering are "sick of delays, compromises and excuses."

"Some who joined us have been activists for many years; some are new to the movement—all brought a vast depth of knowledge and a readiness to fight for a more just and equal world for all," they said.

Without mentioning names, Williams and McGehee said of the attendees: "Some have worked on national LGBTQ issues, such as ACT UP, Equality Across America and Join the Impact; some were connected to organizations outside of LGBTQ rights, such as PETA, Presente.org, Unite Here, Colorofchange.org, Greenpeace, etc. In our outreach we purposefully looked for those who were supporting and advocating for LGBTQ working people, communities of color, and trans rights."

Williams and McGehee said there was nothing "secret" or exclusive about the gathering, but there were limited resources and space.

"We know that many people across the country feel the same way, and that many have been actively working within their own communities for a long time," they said. "The Highlander Center can comfortably accommodate about 35 people, and we broke those limits because we wanted more people to participate in the conversation."

"We had no secrets, only limited space and resources, and a very short time to organize this retreat. We wish we could have invited thousands. We want to work with everyone to help inspire our community to bold action. ... We want to make the White House and Congress take notice. And we want everyone who stands in the way of full equality to be held accountable and wonder what just hit them."

For more information or to join the network, e-mail [kip@neworganizing.com](mailto:kip@neworganizing.com).

Among the famous people who have trained at the Highlander Center over the years were Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

## Judge in Prop 8 trial outed

The San Francisco Chronicle has outed Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker, who is overseeing the Prop 8 same-sex marriage trial in California. Testimony has ended in the case, and final arguments from both sides are expected soon.

According to the Chronicle, the fact that Walker, an Illinois native, is gay is actually an open secret and is widely considered to be a non-issue. See the story at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/02/07/BACF1BT70N.DTL>.

This brings up the issue of whether sexual-ity matters in this case. If Walker was straight, would he have to recuse himself?

Writers Phillip Matier and Andrew Ross state: "Many gay politicians in San Francisco and lawyers who have had dealings with Walker say the 65-year-old jurist, appointed to the bench by President George H.W. Bush in 1989, has never taken pains to disguise—or advertise—his orientation. They also don't believe it will influence how he rules" on the Prop 8 case.

Ironically, Walker is the attorney who took a case against the gay community, and late activist Dr. Tom Waddell, when the U.S. Olympic committee sued to deny the Gay Olympics the right to use the Olympic word; they were forced to change to Gay Games. Walker was a private attorney back then, representing the IOC, which had never challenged other groups from using the word.

The Chronicle reports that the Prop 8 case was actually assigned to Walker randomly. The lawyer for the pro-Prop 8 side claims they would not make an issue of Walker's sexuality if the case goes to the U.S. Supreme Court, the paper reported.

## PROP 8 TRIAL

### City attorney Therese Stewart

BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

SAN FRANCISCO—The fact that Therese Stewart hasn't gotten much publicity during the landmark federal court trial challenging Proposition 8 isn't really a surprise: Lesbians do tend to be invisible.

But Therese (pronounced tuh-REZ) Stewart has a fairly visible role—right up there with the big guns of Ted Olson, David Boies and Charles Cooper, the nationally known attorneys at the center of the publicity.

Stewart, known as Terry to family and friends, gave an opening statement for the City of San Francisco, right after Olson did for the plaintiff couples and Cooper did for the Yes on 8 defense. In addition, she provided a direct examination of George Chauncey, an expert witness on the history of gay discrimination.

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NATIONAL NEWS



She was born in San Francisco in 1957 and grew up in Marin, thinking she might run for Congress someday. As a kid, she recalls, she put on a man's suit and carried a briefcase that, in retrospect should have been a hint that she might grow up to be gay.

"But I didn't figure it out til I was 24," said Stewart. Her spouse, Carole Scagnetti, an attorney and head of Marriage Equality USA, teases her about that.

She was smart, as a kid, and liked theatre—and that, she says, evolved naturally toward a career in law.

She got her law degree at University of California at Berkeley and now supervises about 100 other attorneys in City Attorney Dennis Herrera's litigation office.

Herrera, Stewart and a team of other attorneys from that office have been defending the city's position that same-sex couples should be able to marry. It's a legal battle Mayor Gavin Newsom engaged in February 2004, when he directed city officials to treat gay couples equally. And they've been involved in it long before this trial, *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*. Stewart, in fact, delivered the oral argument for the city's position before the California Supreme Court in 2008, winning the decision that led to same-sex couples being able to marry in the state.

She's also been serving in an unofficial role as a sort of sounding board for several national gay legal organizations that are naturally very interested in the outcome of the trial. Those groups sought to be named as intervenors in the case but were rejected by U.S. District Court Chief Judge Vaughn Walker.

Stewart says she sees some representatives from the groups in the courtroom every day—such as Shannon Minter and Christopher Stoll of the National Center for Lesbian Rights—and she checks in with others, like Mary Bonauto of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders.

"We don't want the right hand and left hand working at cross purposes," explained Stewart, noting that GLAD has its own litigation concerning same-sex marriages, awaiting action in a federal court in Boston.

But she's also clear that she and San Francisco attorneys are not setting strategy in the case. That's the role of Olson and Boies and she seems very confident about the work they're doing. In particular, she praises Boies as "an amazing trial lawyer."

"Nobody in the nation has the trial skills he has," said Stewart.

On a recent afternoon, as she was walking away from the federal courthouse in downtown San Francisco with rush hour traffic clogging up the intersection as she was preparing to cross the street, a man driving a large freight truck rolled down his window and yelled out to her.

"Hey!" he said. "I know you! Thank you for all you've done for us!"

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# Gay candidates net mixed results

NEWS ANALYSIS BY ANDREW DAVIS

On Feb. 2, Illinois voters weighed in on some unusually competitive primary races, and a few surprises emerged—with one being that gay candidates fared better outside Cook County than they did in it.

For many candidates, the extremely low voter turnout hurt them, with everything from the weather to people not wanting to commit to one political party being factors.

In one of the few races that had national implications—the race for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Roland Burris and once occupied by President Barack Obama—openly gay candidate Jacob Meister withdrew Jan. 31, and threw his support behind State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias. Meister told Windy City Times, “It’s about party unity. ... I’ve gotten repeated and very in-depth assurances from him about his dedication to the LGBT principles, and that he is willing to ‘burn political capital’ to move the agenda forward. And he has guaranteed that he is going to work with me, and he is going to adopt my policy agenda.” Giannoulias eventually won by a slim margin over former Chicago Inspector General David Hoffman; Cheryl Jackson finished third.

With Republican Scott Brown winning the U.S. Senate seat in Massachusetts formerly held by the late Ted Kennedy, the White House has definite interest in the winner of the Illinois race.

Some interesting and hard-fought races took place for seats in the Illinois General Assembly. In the 7th District (Illinois Senate), incum-



John Dalton.

bent Heather Steans defeated openly gay candidate Jim Madigan, who would have been the first out state senator had he prevailed tonight and in the general election, 65 percent to 35 percent. Madigan told Windy City Times, “It was a tough thing to challenge a candidate who had all the ward organizations. We did our best and came up short. I think the things I advanced as my priorities and that I critiqued about the establishment are things I still believe in. I’m very glad we did what we did.”

In the 5th District (Illinois House), incumbent Ken Dunkin fought back a stiff challenge from openly gay candidate David Schroeder in the Democratic primary.

Also, in the only race to feature two openly gay candidates, incumbent Democratic state Rep. Deb Mell (40th District) defeated Joe Laiacona 66 percent to 34 percent. Mell, who currently does not have a general-election opponent, told Windy City Times, “I really love my area, and I’m just really honored that they like the job I do—but there’s still a lot of work to do, and I’m just going to continue.”

Another gay candidate, Ed Mullen, ran against Dan Farley and Ann M. Williams in the Democratic primary for the 11th District seat in the Illinois House, but finished third; Williams pre-

vailed. Greg Harris, the only openly gay man in the General Assembly, was not opposed. Bob Mueller, another out candidate, ran uncontested in the Green primary for the 47th District seat in the Illinois House.

The judicial races had comparable results. Last year, Sebastian Patti made history as the first openly gay person in the Illinois Appellate Court when he was appointed by the state’s supreme court. However, Patti was not elected to the post, and Mary Rochford won. Patti will return to Cook County Circuit Court since he had not resigned his post there.

As for Cook County races, lesbian candidate Linda Pael was involved in a tight Democratic primary race for the Dolan vacancy, but ultimately lost to Susan Kennedy Sullivan. On her Facebook page, Pael posted Feb. 2, “Well, it was close... We gave it our all! Thanks so much for all your support and encouragement. Thanks too for your votes. I’ll be back!” Candidate Joanne Fehn lost to John Callahan.

Lesbian candidate Mary Trew had her own tight race, but she ultimately finished second to Steve Bernstein. Trew told Windy City Times that she was “disappointed” but was “pleased with how we did.” There were six Democratic candidates in the Cook County Circuit Court, 9th Subcircuit, “A” vacancy race.

In the race for Metropolitan Water Reclamation District commissioner, Todd Connor finished fifth in a contest in which the top three vote-getters in each party moved on to the November election. On his Facebook page, he acknowledged his supporters, writing, “I cannot thank you all enough for such a great effort—I am so proud to know and be associated with so many great people!”

## Outside Cook County

John Dalton easily won the Democratic primary for the 16th Circuit, Kane, “A” vacancy. Following his victory, he told Windy City Times, “[The win] was very humbling. As I said last night to the people gathered at my house last night,

a candidate is not a campaign ... and I had a tremendous amount of help. It was really overwhelming to get that kind of support from my friends and my community.” If Dalton defeats Republican David Akemann in November, he will be the first out candidate in Kane County history and the first judicial candidate outside of Cook County to win; however, Dalton stressed that although “it would be progress for the movement, I’m not running as the gay candidate. We’re asking what is a traditionally conservative collar county to put aside its prejudices and vote based on qualifications—and, last night, I think they did that.”

Both downstate gay candidates won uncontested races. Kent DeLay will compete against Republican Raymond Poe in November for a seat in the state House (99th District), while Christopher Boyster is vying for a spot on the 29-member Sangamon County board. (Sangamon County includes the state capital, Springfield.)

Boyster told Windy City Times Feb. 3 that “the chairman of the Democratic Party called me and said, ‘I think we just nominated the first openly gay man in the history of the city.’” In November, Boyster will compete against Bill Moss, a two-term incumbent who is vice-chair of the local Republican party.

## Governor’s race; Cohen

There were only two candidates in the Democratic primary for governor—but they waged a war of words that made the race extremely tight. On Feb. 4, Dan Hynes conceded to Pat Quinn after a vote in which the current governor won by fewer than 7,000 votes.

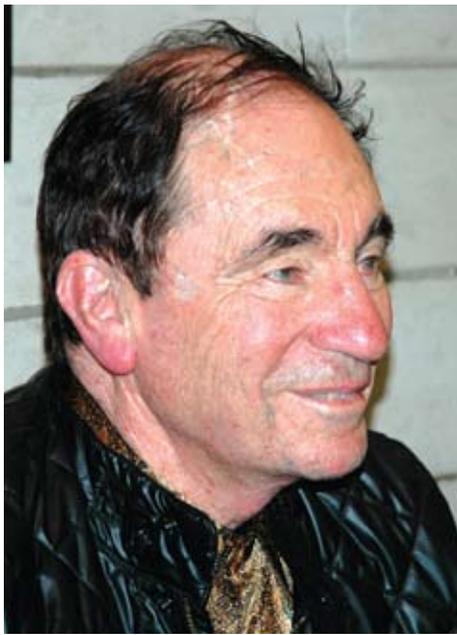
The lieutenant governor’s race—which usually does not receive much press—got plenty of ink, thanks to Democrat Scott Lee Cohen, who withdrew after a firestorm that included allegations of domestic abuse, a relationship with a prostitute and financial troubles. (Quinn said Feb. 8 that Cohen should not be reimbursed for the \$2 million Cohen personally put into his own campaign.)



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Justice Albie Sachs. Photo by Micki Leventhal

## Justice Albie Sachs on gay marriage in South Africa

BY MICKI LEVENTHAL

South African Constitutional Court Justice Albie Sachs spoke on *The Secular and The Sacred: The Right of Same Sex Couples to Marry* at The University of Chicago Feb. 3. It was the culminating talk in a public lecture series based on his new book, *Reason and Passion: The Strange Alchemy of Life and Law* (Oxford University Press USA, 2009). Sachs is teaching at the university as the first Richard & Ann Silver Pozen Visiting Professor in Human Rights.

Sachs is one of the most revered and respected crusaders for human rights and dignity in the world. After more than 30 years as an anti-apartheid activist, he served as a member of South Africa's post-apartheid Constitutional Committee that crafted the country's bill of rights to include prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

As constitutional court justice, he authored the 2005 ruling that declared as unconstitutional common law definition of marriage as being "between one man and one woman." The ruling stated that the exclusion of same-sex marriages in South Africa law "represented a harsh if oblique statement by the law that same-sex couples are outsiders, and that their need for affirmation and protection of their intimate relations as human beings is somehow less than that of heterosexual couples." The finding, in response to a suite brought by a lesbian couple, mandated that the legislature had one year to rewrite the law.

The year-long struggle that ensued between South African marriage equality advocates and proponents of a traditional religious definition of marriage resulted in the landmark civil-union bill that states, in part: "Civil Union means the voluntary union of two persons who are both 18 years of age or older...."

While believing that "the antiquity of a prejudice is no reason for its survival," Sachs nonetheless maintained that the Constitutional Court "is a court for the whole nation, the gay pride marchers and the Christians" who believe in the heteronormative definition of marriage. He stated that it was incumbent upon the court and legislature to "take belief seriously" and "convey that in the judgment."

As is the case in the United States today, there was a sizable contingent that expressed support for civil union for gays and lesbians, but could not abide having the word "marriage" applied to such unions. The South African court however, maintained that separate was not equal because such separation negates human dignity.

As the law is now written, "civil union" applies to all persons under South African law, with each couple having the option to choose the designation of civil union or marriage, civil partner, husband, wife or spouse. This choice also allows for heterosexual couples who have a philosophical concern with the institution of marriage to opt for civil union and enjoy the legal benefits and obligations of such a contract.

The Civil Union Act also allows for Marriage Officers, civil and clerical, to opt out individually from performing same sex civil unions or marriages, based on personal religious beliefs or convictions.

While the presentation, attended by numerous law students and professors as well as LGBT activists, was compelling and educational and it was thrilling to be in the presence of such a remarkable person, the tactical take-away for U.S. marriage equality activists was necessarily limited, due to basic differences in constitutional law.

During the Q&A, this reporter asked Sachs to offer compare-and-contrast thoughts on two points: the fact that the US Constitution does not include protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and our country's constitutional and political disconnect between human rights and states' rights. Understandably, Sachs demurred, saying that he would not like an American judge to come to his country and advise him on South African constitutional law.

Despite this, Sachs added that if South Africa was able to find a way in law to "include people who were rendered invisible" and create a more just society, our courts surely can find a way.

"I thought it was a masterful explanation of how the case developed, the issues he needed to balance as a judge, and how South Africa came to be one of the few countries in the world to treat LGBT people with complete equality in terms of marriage rights," said Douglas M. Foster, associate professor of journalism at Medill at Northwestern University and author of the forthcoming book *At the End of the Rainbow: South Africa's New Struggle for Freedom* (W.W. Norton, 2011). "The decision he authored on behalf of the Constitutional Court pressed Parliament to do the right thing, and so the result was shared, in a sense, between the judiciary and the legislative branches.

"I suppose the steps the advocates took serve as a reminder, for us, that this battle, like every struggle for equality, needs reinforcing pressure in the courts, in the Congress, on the president—but also family-to-family, door-to-door, and in the streets," concluded Foster.

Albie Sachs was born in 1935 in Johannes-

burg to Lithuanian Jewish immigrant parents and raised in an atmosphere of conscience and activism. He started his own trajectory in social justice in 1952 when he took part in the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign, an involvement that marked his first arrest. At 21 Sachs began practicing law in Cape Town, dedicating his practice to clients charged under racist statutes and repressive security laws.

In 1960 the new Republic of South Africa institutionalized apartheid and outlawed the African National Congress (ANC). Sachs endured several arrests and in 1963 he was put under a "banning order": he could not publish his writings, speak publicly or meet socially with more than one person at a time. In 1966 he married fellow activist Stephanie King and the couple went into exile in England where Sachs completed his doctoral studies at the University of Sussex and published several books. After 11 years and the birth of two sons, the marriage dissolved and Sachs resettled in the new nation of Mozambique, working with other South African activists-in-exile to bring an end to apartheid. In 1988 Sachs survived a car-bomb assassination attempt in which he lost his right arm and the sight in one eye.

The apartheid government of South Africa succumbed to international pressure in 1990,

releasing Nelson Mandela from jail and recognizing the ANC. Sachs returned to South Africa, was appointed to the Constitutional Committee and then the Constitutional Court, serving for fifteen years to help guide his country into a new era of legal equality and justice. Sachs now teaches and lectures internationally on the law and human rights.

## Common Threads event March 1

In a joint event, Common Threads founder Art Smith will share his 50th birthday celebration with Common Threads' World Festival 2010 Monday, March 1, at Soldier Field, 1410 S. Museum Campus, 6-9 p.m.

Dozens of chefs are slated to participate in this year's event, including Top Chef's Carla Hall, Gale Gand of TRU, Stephanie Izard of Girl & The Goat, Graham Elliot Bowles of Graham Elliot, Mark Mendez of Carnivale and Sarah Gruenberg of Spiaggia.

VIP access includes a pre-event cocktail reception at 5 p.m. and an after-party at The James Hotel at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$250-\$500 each; see [www.CommonThreads.org](http://www.CommonThreads.org).

For more information, contact Linda Vavra at 312-996-6354.

## SALOME from cover

authentic stories, be they young women, current or former female prisoners or LGBT youth. Teach Beyondmedia works with Chicago Public School teachers to integrate media arts into existing curricula.

"A critical piece in our work is that we take young people through the whole process from media literacy through production and distribution," explained Chasoff. "At the very beginning we expose them to different media and the messages that inform the media. They learn to employ agency and critical discrimination. Many of the groups have specific identity issues—queer youth or girls with disability issues—we look at representations in mainstream and alternative media and assist them to decide how they want to address those representations through their own work."

"Salome has always been thoughtful about how to bring people in who are often on the outside," said Mary F. Morten, 2010 recipient of Equality Illinois' Freedom Award. "Whether it's the disability community, LGBT youth or women who have been incarcerated, her work has always been about inclusion and access. Under her leadership at Beyondmedia, the group really addresses how they think outside of the more traditional uses of media to reach communities that are underrepresented and often marginalized in the mainstream."

Q'd in Media works with LGBT youth to create media products that assist them in organizing and educating communities, both gay and straight. In collaboration with Broadway Youth Center of the Howard Brown Health Center and About Face Theater, Beyondmedia produced HIV: Hey It's Viral, a sex-positive video addressing HIV/AIDS prevention and activism from a youth perspective. Chasoff said that the DVD has been approved by the Chicago Public Schools and will be in every Chicago high school by the fall. The team is currently conducting teacher training with CPS physical education/health education teachers. A team from Children's Memorial Hospital is evaluating HIV: Hey, It's Viral and once it's approved, the DVD will be distributed nationally.

"Our goal [with the work around HIV/AIDS] became to change the conversation around sex education in Chicago, to move it from being fear based to being direct, compassionate, honest open and medically accurate without all the fear and moralizing," said Chasoff, who is developing several new projects around LGBTQ sexual health targeted toward assisting queer youth in forming and maintaining better relationships, including an anti-bearbacking campaign.



Salome Chasoff. Photo courtesy of Tara Malik

"But we don't limit sexuality to sexual behavior—it's a much wider topic for us," said Chasoff. "Our sexuality evolves from the very first moment of life. We talk about self-perception, self-expression, relationships and what we expect for ourselves from those relationships. Queer youth have no [positive] images, as straight you do, with which to build behavior for their early romantic ideations."

Young filmmakers with Q'd in Media have also produced *Can LGBT + School = Safe?*, a video that explores the problems experienced by queer youth in school settings and offers solutions including how to start a Gay-Straight Alliance at school. A third video in the Q'd series is *A Fish (almost) Eaten by a Shark*, which tells the story of a young Latina woman trying to start a Gay-Straight Alliance at Schurz high school and confronting her principal's homophobia.

Chasoff encourages queer youth to get in touch with Beyondmedia through the Web site. "We work with interns every semester," she said. "Become active. Start a GSA at your school. Beyondmedia will provide support and partner with organizations."

This fall, Beyondmedia celebrates its 10th year of collaborating with underserved and underrepresented communities to tell their stories and organize for social justice through the creation and distribution of media arts. Find out more at [www.beyondmedia.org](http://www.beyondmedia.org).

Women's eNews is an alternative new source covering issues of particular concern to women and providing women's perspectives on public policy. Find out more at [www.womensenews.org](http://www.womensenews.org).

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## Activists upset with Fiorito development

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

Members of the LGBT community expressed dismay after the Cook County State's Attorney's office announced that it would not seek charges against police officer Richard Fiorito. Fiorito, who separately is the subject of a federal civil-rights lawsuit, was under investigation for allegedly falsifying DUI arrest reports.

LGBT activists, including members of the Gay Liberation Network (GLN), have demanded charges against Fiorito, as well as his removal from the police force (pending results of a CPD internal affairs investigation, he is currently on administrative duty). Those activists—as well as plaintiffs in the lawsuit against him—accuse Fiorito of operating with an anti-gay animus, including using anti-gay slurs over the course of arrests.

Fiorito works out of the 23rd district, which covers the Boystown area.

Mary Cay Marubio, a criminal defense lawyer who has represented some of Fiorito's DUI arrestees, said that she was "disappointed" at State's Attorney Anita Alvarez's decision not to pursue the investigation into Fiorito.

"I don't think the right decision was made," Marubio said.

Andy Thayer—whose group, GLN, has organized protests against Fiorito—said that Alvarez's office's refusal to continue the investigation "says volumes about their disrespect toward LGBT citizens."

Thayer alleged that of the nearly 40 plaintiffs in the civil case against Fiorito, the state's attorney's office interviewed only four. "We had evidence they weren't doing a serious investigation," Thayer said.

He speculated that because the state's attor-

ney's office continued to use Fiorito's testimony against DUI arrestees until November 2009, Alvarez declined to bring charges in order to spare her office the embarrassment of having prosecuted defendants with tainted testimony. Windy City Times first reported the lawsuit against Fiorito in March 2009, the same month that Alvarez ordered a grand jury to look into his activities.

Marubio concurred with that assessment. "I don't know that they want to open that can of worms," she said.

Another attorney familiar with the case, who asked not to be named, said that the state's attorney interviewed only five of the 34 people who have filed lawsuits against Fiorito. Sally Daly, a spokesperson for Alvarez's office, said that "inconsistencies" between what was alleged in the lawsuit and what was found in the criminal investigation accounted for that office's decision to drop the case. Daly told Windy City Times last week that the office had "interviewed dozens of witnesses" over the course of the investigation.

Chicago Police Department spokesperson Roderrick Drew said that the internal-affairs investigation into Fiorito is ongoing. "The decision not to press charges," Drew said, "means [the CPD doesn't] have to put the internal review on hold due to any criminal proceedings."

## AFC: Obama AIDS funding falls short

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) has issued a press release saying that the White House's budget, unveiled Feb. 1, does not provide nearly enough to assist HIV prevention and care services across the country.

"Even with the nominal HIV funding increases proposed by the Obama Administration, fewer HIV prevention and care services will be provided across the country because of disastrous state budget cuts, which will only widen the gap in unmet need," said David Ernesto Munar, AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) vice president.

The release cites states' own cuts as well as a discretionary spending limit imposed by President Barack Obama for blocking any effect the funding increases may have. A 2009 National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors survey revealed that states had already cut their HIV and viral-hepatitis budgets by almost \$170 million.

As an example of what AFC said is a nominal increase, Obama has requested seeks a \$20 million increase for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program—much lower than the community request of \$370.1 million. The White House's Jeff Crowley has responded, "We can't fill in all the state budget cuts."

On the national front, groups such as Project Inform and the the American Academy of HIV Medicine have issued releases stating that they are not entirely satisfied with the proposed increases.

## Chicago attorney helps N.Y. gay student's family

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

Chicago attorney Jay Paul Deratany—whose practice, The Deratany Firm, chiefly handles personal injury litigation—has agreed to take on the case of a mother who removed her gay son from school after repeated bullying incidents. That case, in which mother Rhonda Mangus was charged with educational neglect for attempting to home-school her son, Michael, was brought and is currently under appeal in New York state. The Manguses live in North Tonawanda, N.Y.

Deratany, a prominent local figure who has run for Cook County Board of Review, told Windy City Times that he learned about the Manguses through his "computer guy." After hearing the details of the case, he said that he agreed to take it on *pro bono*.

When Michael Mangus was 13 years old, Dera-



Jay Paul Deratany. Photo by Andrew Davis

tany said, he came out to his classmates—only to be "taunted severely" for it. The Tonawanda News reported that Michael Mangus was the subject of "chronic physical and emotional abuse by his peers," including "at least one death threat."

His mother Rhonda, a substitute teacher at the school, eventually decided to home-school him. "What she wanted was a safe school environment," Deratany said.

Instead she found herself charged with "educational neglect"—the charge which is now being appealed. One important issue that the case revolves around, said Deratany, is the security of students.

"Gay and lesbian kids don't feel safe coming out," he said. "A duty of a school is to provide a safe environment to learn."

Deratany said that his firm is seeking local attorneys in New York to collaborate on the case, adding that they hope to work with the New York chapter of Lambda Legal.



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## NATIONAL PROFILE

# The Dinah turns 20: Talking with Mariah Hanson

BY MICKI LEVENTHAL

Club Skirts Presents The Dinah celebrates its 20th anniversary March 31-April 4, and if you are a woman-loving-woman and don't know what The Dinah is you are likely old-school, sports-free, crunchy-granola, nightclub-free or have been living under a rock in terms of popular culture—or a combination of several or all the above.

For those not in the know, The Dinah is by far the largest of a number of celebratory events that have grown up around the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) tournament held each spring in Palm Springs, Calif. In 1972, singer and television personality Dinah Shore founded the Colgate Dinah Shore Golf Championship and the golf weekend and surrounding festivities became forever associated with her name. The vibe between lesbians and women's golf being what it is, Sapphically-inclined women have for decades trekked to Palm Springs to see and be seen—and perhaps play some golf. By the late 1980s, folks were beginning to slowly open their

closet doors and the growing party scene was attracting thousands of women.

The year 1991 arrived and so did Mariah Hanson, a young San Francisco-based nightclub promoter. She had built Club Skirts, a successful business that produced women's parties, making good money for herself and the clubs, and bringing together hip young lesbians during the emergence of Lesbian Chic.

"I came in when the lesbian-chic movement was taking off. It got a lot of flack in the beginning because it was perceived as a sell out," said Hanson. "But for me it is just this progression toward our liberalization and our liberation. We shouldn't be homogenous. We really need to let people be who they are within our own community."

Hanson had been to Palm Springs during the golf tournaments, scoped out the growing but decentralized party scene and thought she could do better. She did, attracting 1,200 women to the first Dinah. For many years, Club Skirts teamed up with the Los Angeles-based Girl Bar, but that partnership split in 2006 and since then Hanson has focused on making The Dinah the event for the annual Lesbian pilgrimage to Palm Springs.

She appears to be successful. According to her press release, in 2009 The Dinah welcomed more than 10,000 women, a number that represents about a 50-percent market share for the weekend lesbian festivities.

"What I try to do is throw the best event that I can and then I look at what I did last year and I try to outdo it. If you make your customers

feel good and comfortable and welcome and you create an environment where your customers feel very accepted and you have a lot of choices in programming, that's going to resonate with our community. And I try to book talent that speaks to a pretty broad demographic and every year is different."

For the 2010 event, Hanson and her crew are once again working with "a great comedy show" and "emerging artists," although at the time of the interview Hanson demurred from sharing many details. With a past performer lineup that includes Sophie B. Hawkins, Pat Benatar, Margaret Cho, Joan Jett, Carmen Elektra, Suzanne Westenhoefer, The Pussycat Dolls, Betty!, India Arie, Kathy Najimy, Sandra Bernhard, Indigo Girls, En Vogue and—just last year—Katy Perry and Lady Gaga, Hanson clearly has a commitment to top talent and a remarkable instinct for identifying the Next Hot Thing.

In addition to the entertainment events, of course, are the parties: pool parties, cocktail parties, dinner parties, dance parties and "go-go" parties. There are also the Dinah Comic, wet T-shirt, "Hottest Lesbian" and the lube-wrestling contests.

Despite the admittedly bacchanalian atmosphere, there is also a political/cultural motivation for Hanson, who sits of the board of Equality California and is a staunch supporter for marriage equality.

"I've been pioneering sponsorships for 20 years and, at the beginning, sponsors weren't putting money into the lesbian market at all, barely into the gay market. Now it's a sponsor's dream market and that translates into good for the community. Advertising changes paradigms," said Hanson.

While the perception of LGBT activism might be more subtle with The Dinah than outright political organizations and PACs, "everything we're doing is positive and its end goal is civil rights," said Hanson. "You've got a town like Palm Springs, a Republican town that would not contract with me until six months out because they didn't want to commit to a lesbian group if they could get any other business. Now all of a sudden, whether it was because we made so much money for them or maybe it's because this group is so great, they fight [to book the event]. It's just really fun and uplifting and empowering; these hotels love this group. All those little things add up. Yeah, it's a party, but it's more than a party."

The acts at this year's event include Salt-n-Pepa, Rosie O'Donnell and Ke\$ha. See [TheDinah.com](http://TheDinah.com).



Debbie Allen. Photo by Emmanuel Garcia

## Debbie Allen talks art at Columbia

BY EMMANUEL GARCIA

Emmy Award-winning actress and choreographer Debbie Allen was the guest speaker Feb. 2 as part of a series for Columbia College Chicago's African Heritage Month. Allen dined with a group of students before she arrived to a packed hall at the Ludington Building, 1104 S. Wabash. A video montage described Allen as a renaissance woman in the entertainment industry for her multifaceted career as a dancer, choreographer, producer and actor. The video was followed by a solo dance performance by Columbia College student BreAnne Ashley, 20, to Sade's "Jezebel." Vice President of Institutional Advancement Eric Winston introduced Allen to a standing ovation.

Allen gave a candid motivational speech about the importance of looking inward to self and outward into the world to discover the artistic voice. "You have to know what's happening in the world, because what is your art, your journalism, your photography, what is it going to be about? Who are you, when you look in the mirror? Who is looking back?" asked Allen. In January Allen turned 60, a personal milestone she shared with the audience. She described the racial divide in the U.S. during her youth and her family's move to Mexico City when she was 9 years old—an experience she says greatly influenced her and gave her a positive perception of herself. "As a young child I was perceived as someone who was not able to master the fine arts, [that] this was not part of my DNA. Well that was their opinion, that wasn't mine or my mother's," explained Allen.

Allen said she was shocked in 2004 when she discovered that her sister, actress Phylicia Rashad, was the first African-American actress to win the Tony Award for Best Performance by a Lead Actress when she achieved the feat that year. In 1997 Allen became the first African American to produce a major motion picture by backing the film *Amistad*, a project she owned the rights to for over ten years.

Allen isn't slowing down, having recently choreographed Mariah Carey's world tour. Also, she is set to direct an episode of TV's *Grey's Anatomy*.

The Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media and the office of Multicultural Affairs at Columbia College Chicago sponsored Allen's talk. To view a listing of future events for African Heritage Month, visit [www.colum.edu](http://www.colum.edu).



LEFT: Salt-n-Pepa; RIGHT: Mariah Hanson. Photos courtesy of Mona Elyafi



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## BEHIV teaming with leather club

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

This year's event will be Saturday, Feb. 27, 9 p.m.-12 a.m., in the Club Room of Touché, 6412 N. Clark. Admission is \$25 per person or \$40 per couple, and is required for entry. Raffle and auction items will be available for purchase during the reception, as well as during other activities running until the bar closes. All proceeds will benefit BEHIV.

See [www.behiv.org](http://www.behiv.org) for more information.

## Chicago Takes Off back March 6

Co-chairs Adam Colangelo, Kyle Heath, Dan Paterno and Paul Trout will host the 4th annual Chicago Takes Off. A production of HIV/AIDS

agency Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN), this year's event will again be expanded to two shows, 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m., at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage.

This year's theme is "TV LAND: Outside the Box," which will incorporate naughty twists to classic shows. Chicago Takes Off has raised more than \$300,000 for TPAN, making it the second-largest fundraiser for the organization.

Tickets are \$50-\$300. Please visit [www.ChicagoTakesOff.org](http://www.ChicagoTakesOff.org) or [www.TPAN.com](http://www.TPAN.com).

## Pornuary at Brown Elephant thru Feb. 14

Howard Brown Health Center's Brown Elephant Resale Shop, 3651 N. Halsted, is holding its porn sale, Pornuary, through Sunday, Feb. 14.

The Brown Elephant is also accepting donations. For more info, see [www.howardbrown.org](http://www.howardbrown.org).

# QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

**"IT HAS BEEN QUITE A JOURNEY FOR (PROP 8 FEDERAL CASE LAWYER) TED OLSON.** He's gone from being the conservative lawyer who helped crown W. by winning the *Bush v. Gore* case before the Supreme Court, to being a lesbian. 'Maureen,' he told me in his gravelly voice, 'one of the biggest lesbian groups in this country told me I'm already an honorary lesbian.'" — *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd, Jan. 16.

**"WE'RE GOING TO EXPLAIN WHY ALLOWING SAME-SEX COUPLES** to have that same right that the rest of us have is not going to hurt heterosexual marriages. It has no point at all except some people don't want to recognize gays and lesbians as normal, as human beings." — *Prop 8 federal case lawyer Ted Olson to The New York Times*, Jan. 16. The case is ongoing in San Francisco.

**"THERE ARE NOW THREE CLASSES OF CALIFORNIANS:** heterosexual couples who can get married, divorced, and remarried, if they wish; same-sex couples who cannot get married but can live together in domestic partnerships; and same-sex couples who are now married but who, if they divorce, cannot remarry. This is an irrational system, it is discriminatory, and it cannot stand." — *Federal Prop 8 case lawyer Ted Olson writing in Newsweek*, Jan. 9. The trial in the lawsuit arguing that Prop 8 violates the U.S. Constitution began Jan. 11 in San Francisco.

**"THE SINGLE BIGGEST REASON OBAMA'S HOPE BUBBLE BURST IS** because of the unintended convergence of left and right opinion-making. The cauldron of opinion that churns incessantly on blogs, Twitter, social networks, and in the elite media generates the storylines that filter across the national and local press, providing the fodder for public opinion. Stalwarts of the left, dedicated to principles not personalities, hammered the administration; couple that with the partisan criticisms from conservatives and libertarians, and the net effect was to alter conventional wisdom and undercut Obama's image and message." — *Former Hillary Clinton adviser Peter Daou writing at Huffington Post*, Jan. 20.

**"TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN BE A PART OF THE EPIC MOVEMENT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS.** Visit The Human Rights Campaign at <http://www.hrc.org/> and support the True Colors Fund. This Year I Resolve to Join the Conversation on Equality. I will Stand Up and be outspoken about Same Sex Marriage and Let Freedom Sing." — *Top-10 pop singer Jason Mraz on his blog*, Dec. 31.

**"(I DON'T TALK ABOUT MY PERSONAL LIFE) BECAUSE I DON'T WANT** to bore people stiff with my dreary, dysfunctional, endlessly repeating similar relationships that last from three weeks to three months to nine months or whatever." — *Gay actor Rupert Everett to Britain's The Guardian*, Nov. 29.



**(In) the naughty aughties ... even celebrities ... couldn't help Tweeting their every thought.**

—Michael Musto

**"(IN) THE NAUGHTY AUGHTIES ... EVEN CELEBRITIES—**who'd long built up a wall of privacy by hiding behind lying publicists—couldn't help Tweeting their every thought, caught up in the universal need to connect, to emit, to admit, and to bore." — *Gay Village Voice columnist Michael Musto*, Dec. 29.

**"I'VE BEEN IN A RELATIONSHIP (WITH RYAN SPAHN) FOR A WHILE NOW,** and if you just met the two of us together we'd be 'gay.' But that somehow means anything that happened before (we met) didn't count—and I don't feel that way. I know that some people feel that way. They were with women, but it always felt wrong. But it didn't for me. It felt right at the time. It didn't work out, but it also didn't work out with other men—many times. That's why 'gay' never seemed right." — *Ugly Betty actor Michael Urie, who plays Marc St. James, to The Advocate*, February issue.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

## Sotomayor 'comes home'



Eighteen years after his death from AIDS complications, Chicago AIDS activist Danny Sotomayor "came home" as part of an exhibit at the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture in Chicago's Humboldt Park.

A gay Puerto Rican/Mexican man, he grew up in Humboldt Park but was not always accepted there. Now, the institute is fully embracing him with an exhibit of his editorial cartoons, photos of him in ACT UP and other remembrances, including a famous protest sign against Mayor Daley. The exhibit is up through early March at 3015 W. Division, but a special event Feb. 5 marked the 18th anniversary of Sotomayor's death.

Jose Lopez, executive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, welcomed Sotomayor in strong language condemning homophobia in the Latino communities. Juan Calderon, director of Vida/SIDA, and Marilyn Morales, an institute board member, were the forces behind the exhibit at the institute, while Sotomayor friends Lori Cannon and Victor Salvo are the curators of materials commemorating the sharp-witted and talented artist's short life. Cannon told stories of both Sotomayor and his late partner, the writer Scott McPherson (Marvin's Room).

Dr. Gabriel Gomez (right photo), a professor of library science at Chicago State University, was the featured speaker. He was a contemporary of Sotomayor's, and shared stories of the challenges Sotomayor faced not just from AIDS, but from homophobia.

After the speeches, the film *Short Fuse: Portrait of an AIDS Activist* was shown. In the left photo, the individuals are (from left): Jose Lopez, Marilyn Morales, Lori Cannon, IPRAC Volunteer Luisette M. Hernandez, Veronica Ocasion, Juan Calderon and Victor Salvo. Text and photos by Tracy Baim; more photos online at [www.windycitymediagroup.com](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com)

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**CHASSE  
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## CBS does it again

CBS just can't seem to get the Super Bowl right.

In 2007, the last time CBS broadcasted the game, the station ran into controversy when it showed the now infamous "Snickers kiss commercial," which told the story of two male mechanics who accidentally kiss after trying to eat the same Snickers bar.

In a rare show of ideological concordance, the commercial managed to draw ire from both the right, who predictably disliked the commercial's "homosexual undertones," and the left, who took offense to the ad's stereotypical displays of masculinity.

Three years later, CBS managed to stub its toe once again, with an even more controversial crop of Super Bowl commercials.

Over the past few weeks, women's advocacy groups have been telling anyone who will listen that CBS has shown its socially regressive hand this year by allowing a Focus on the Family sponsored pro-life ad to run during the big game. And the failure by CBS to include a commercial created by the gay dating site ManCrunch.com, which shows two male football fanatics locked in a tender—albeit extremely un-genuine—em-

brace, seems to support their point.

However, I contend that CBS is not simply morally conservative, but actually decades behind the morality debate entirely.

CBS spokeswomen Shannon Jacobs, while addressing the ManCrunch controversy, stated that, "after reviewing the ad, which is entirely commercial in nature, our standards and practices department decided not to accept this particular spot." ManCrunch's representatives have gone on record as saying that the rejection letter they received from CBS explained that their commercial was "not within the Network's broadcast standards for Super Bowl Sunday."

Really, CBS? I can understand if the higher-ups at the Columbia Broadcasting System decided to reshape the station's image into one of moral rightness—that's right as in not left, and has nothing to do with not being wrong—but, perplexingly, CBS managed to fall short on even building up this mode.

Over the past few years, most of the controversy involving Super Bowl ads has come from the puerile advertising department at GoDaddy.com.

If you haven't had the pleasure of stumbling upon a GoDaddy commercial, let me present the basic structure to you: Spokeswomen Danica Patrick is barely clothed or surrounded by barely clothed models and, after a series of events that resembles a lead-up to a bad porn flick, Patrick tells the audience to go to GoDaddy.com to set up their very own domain name—because nothing screams hot action like a new URL for your online custom T-shirt company.

Anyway, this year CBS was given a golden opportunity to prove the "straightness of their moral compass" when GoDaddy submitted three 30-second commercials for the Super Bowl. Two

of GoDaddy's ads were leaked onto the Internet before game time, so eager GoDaddy fans could see what was in store for them come Super Bowl Sunday.

The first leaked commercial, entitled "Lola," features the fictional tale of a former pro football player who, after football, decided to follow his dream of becoming a truly fabulous fashion designer and is able to get started by setting up his very own design Web site with GoDaddy.com.

The other ad depicts two geeky men creating multiple domain names with GoDaddy.com because every time they set up a new url Danica Patrick dances provocatively in a skimpy outfit on their laptop.

Let's see: A story of a fabulous fashion designer, highlighting plenty of gay stereotypes, and an ad featuring near nudity. Seems like an open-and-shut case for the "moral" CBS, right? Ban them both, right, CBS?

Well, the station got halfway there and decided the ex-football player with a dream was not CBS-worthy, while the skimpily dressed online sex show was green lighted as "meeting Network's standards for Super Bowl Sunday."

So what does this all mean? To me it shows that CBS is not just heterosexual and anti-feminine, but is stuck so far behind the times that homophobic chauvinists from the 1980s might be hard-pressed to defend the station's logic.

I can't wait to see if CBS' standards will have progressed to a point that they represent anything close to modern ideas about respect and tolerance by the station's next Super Bowl broadcast in 2013. They probably won't, but one can certainly hope.

**Chasse Rehwinkel is a blogger who is also a contributing reporter for Windy City Times.**



**MARGARET  
HOOVER**

## Why I'm joining the fight for marriage equality

If you are uncomfortable with gay marriage, I encourage you to pay attention to the landmark civil rights trial that recently took place in California.

The federal trial *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* challenges the constitutionality of California's Proposition 8 ban on gay marriage. Two couples argue that they have a constitutional right to marry, and that California's law denies them due process and equal protection under the 14th Amendment, relegating them second-class citizens.

You may think, "San Francisco liberals at it again! Hijacking the courts, inventing new constitutional rights!" Stop there. The lead counsel in the case is George W. Bush's solicitor general, who successfully argued *Bush v. Gore* before the Supreme Court in one of his fifty-five performances before the nation's highest judicial body. He is Theodore "Ted" Olsen, a founder of the Federalist Society, constitutional law expert and one of the most respected conservatives in America.

Mr. Olsen thinks constitutionally guaranteed rights ought to transcend left-vs.-right and Democrat-vs.-Republican divides. (He even recruited legal opponent David Boies as co-counsel.) I agree with him. And as a proud Republican representing a younger generation of conservatives that cherish individual freedom, I am honored to join the American Foundation for Equal Rights' (AFER's) advisory board.

I encourage everyone, but especially Repub-

licans, to consider Mr. Olsen's arguments on the merits, both in his opening statement and throughout the trial's ensuing three weeks. The plaintiff's counsel seeks to convince Judge Vaughn R. Walker that the Supreme Court has already decided in *Loving v. Virginia*, *Turner v. Safely*, and *Lawrence v. Texas* among others, that the right to marry is a fundamental right currently denied to an entire class of American citizens. This is unconstitutional.

We Republicans have often found ourselves on the wrong side of civil-rights struggles since the 1960s, but there was a reason that Martin Luther King, Jr.'s father is said to have supported Republicans.

Republicans were historically the party ever-expanding freedom to disenfranchised minorities, from newly liberated slaves to giving women the right to vote. Susan B. Anthony was a Republican. By supporting the AFER trial we have an opportunity to establish our historic credibility on civil-rights issues once again. But we should support marriage equality because it is the right thing to do.

Gays and lesbians are our friends, neighbors, doctors, colleagues, sisters and brothers. Does it sit well with you that because of their sexual orientation, a factor outside one's control, that they should have less rights and protections in the eyes of the law? While increasing acceptance of gays marks my generational experience—Ellen DeGeneres is welcomed into the living rooms of millions of Americans daily, an impossibility in even my childhood—many who are older than me fear that if gays and lesbians can marry, what's next? They worry that homosexual marriage degrades the integrity of heterosexual marriage. They fear that their children might be exposed to alternative lifestyles that will impact them negatively, or argue that the purpose of marriage is procreation. If you are uncomfortable with gay marriage, I encourage you to pay attention to this trial, the plaintiffs, the defense and the spectrum of experts, historians, psychologists, economists, political scientists, who will testify as to the effects and detriment of Proposition 8. In the words of NAACP chairman Julian Bond, "The humanity of all Americans

is diminished when any group is denied rights granted to others."

Some Republicans support gay rights, but prefer progress through legislative action or majority rule at the ballot box, rather than judicial action. But what if a democratic election imposes mandates that violate a citizen's constitutional freedom? In the event that majority rule insufficiently protects individual liberty, our system of checks and balances puts forth that it is the role of the courts, to guarantee and protect the rights to individual Americans.

That's why the Supreme Court, in 1967's *Loving v. Virginia*, legalized interracial marriage—six years after our current president was born to an interracial couple. At that time 73 percent of the population opposed "miscegenation." How long would it have taken to change popular opinion, for the minority to democratically win their constitutional rights? As Martin Luther King, Jr. famously asserted, "Justice delayed is justice denied."

For those of you who would label me a "RINO" (Republican In Name Only) for taking this stand, I direct you to Vice President Dick Cheney, whose conservative credentials are impeccable, and who answered a question on the topic before the National Press Club audience June 1, 2009 by saying simply, "...freedom means freedom for everyone."

Please visit Facebook pages for Republicans for Marriage Equality and American Equal Rights Foundation to follow the details of the trial. [*Editor's note: The trial is currently on hiatus.*]

**Margaret Hoover is a conservative commentator and Fox News contributor. This viewpoint originally appeared on FoxNews.com and was submitted to Windy City Times by the the Griffin/Schake communications firm.**

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"Windy City Media Group generated enormous interest among their readers in this year's LGBT Consumer Index Survey. Out of approximately 100 print and online media partners who participated in the survey, Windy City was the best performing regional media in the U.S. Only survey partners with a nationwide footprint were able to generate a greater number of responses." —David Marshall, Research Director, Community Marketing, Inc.

## GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

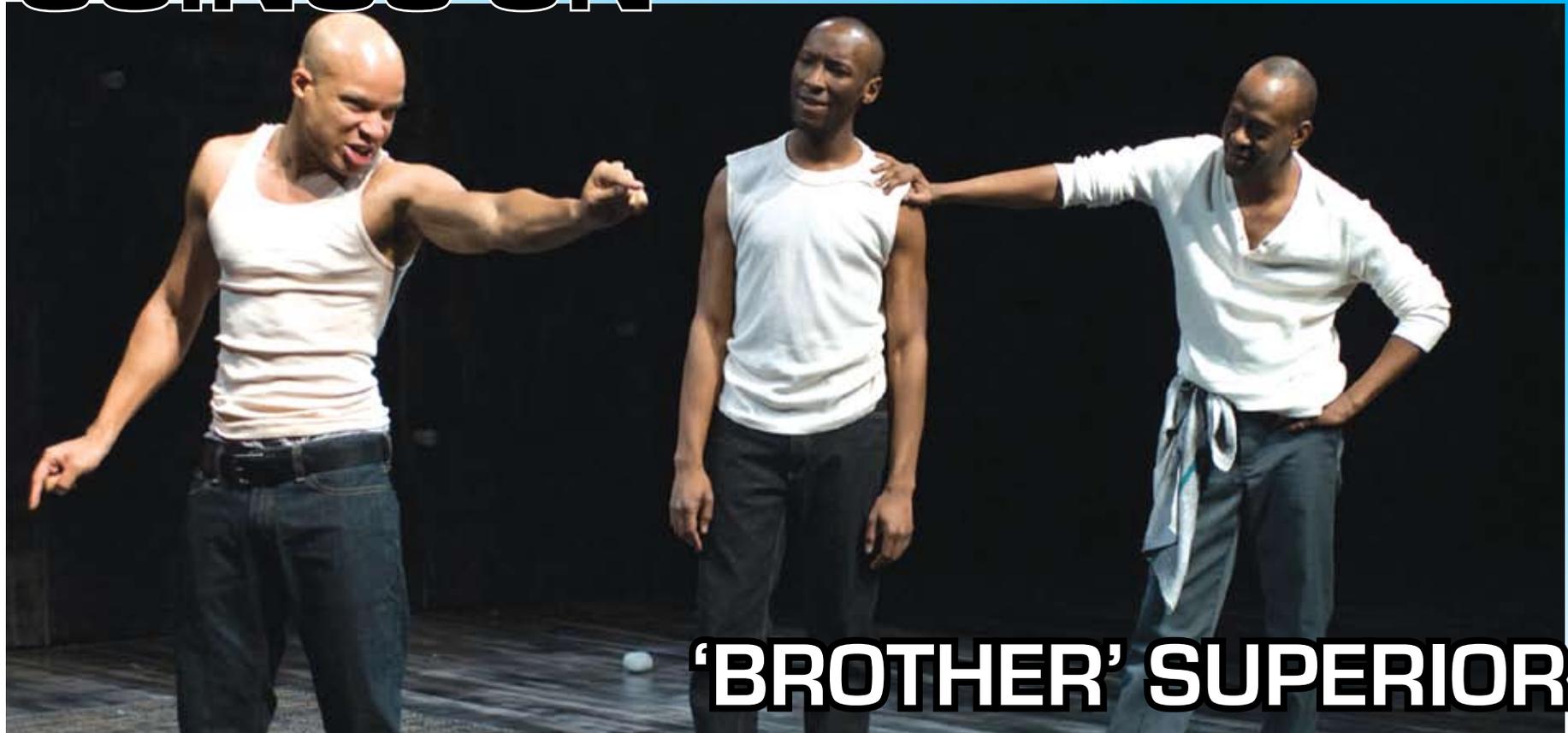


Photo by Michael Brosilow

## 'BROTHER' SUPERIOR

From left: Glenn Davis, Phillip James Brannon and K. Todd Freeman star in Steppenwolf's The Brother/Sister Plays. See page 15.

## SPORTS

House party.  
Page 22.

Photo courtesy of Dean Nelson



## MOVIES

Valentine's nay.  
Page 14.



## PROFILE

Simply Sandra.  
Page 17.

Photo by Jasmine Hirst



## Dancin' Feats

BY ALICIA WILSON

This month the selection of dance performances is full of kinetic movement, classical story, technological feats and spirited fun. Whether you are looking for a place to take a Valentine's date, seeking out high-energy entertainment, or just needing a pick me up from the dreary winter, be sure to check out what is happening in the Chicago dance scene in the next few weeks.

**River North Chicago Dance Company** (RNCDC) continues its 20th-anniversary season with a Valentine's Day-weekend performance showcasing a variety of choreographers. The evening will feature a world premiere by Robert Battle, artistic director of New York's Battleworks Dance Company. Also by Battle is a solo entitled "Ella," which celebrates the vocals of Ella Fitzgerald. Lauri Stallings returns to RNCDC with her world premiere entitled "Suppose." Stallings is an in-demand, cutting-edge choreographer, and her work explores connections of emotion and form through highly physical movement. RNCDC Artistic Director Frank Chaves returns his work "Forbidden Boundaries," and Sherry Zunker brings back "Evolution Of A Dream" from the company's fall show.

The performances will take place at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph, 8 p.m. Feb. 12-13; \$30-\$65. For more information, call 312-334-7777 or visit [www.harristheaterchicago.org](http://www.harristheaterchicago.org).

**The Joffrey Ballet** presents Cinderella at The Auditorium Theatre. This classic story of rags to riches is expressed through the technically stunning dancers of The Joffrey and choreographed by Sir Frederick Ashton. As is tradition in this ballet, male dancers portray the overbearing, evil stepsisters. The production is set to Serge Prokofiev's gorgeous musical score, with sets and costume design by David Walker.

Performances will take place Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress. The shows are various times Feb. 17-28; \$25-\$145.



Troika Ranch. Photo by Alexandra Matzke

For more information call 800-982-2787 or visit [www.joffrey.org](http://www.joffrey.org).

**Jump Rhythm Jazz Project** continues the celebration of its 20th-anniversary season with a performance at the Dance Center of Columbia College. This company is known for its vocal-rhythmic technique that emphasizes full-bodied rhythmic-making to express inner energies. "Jump Rhythm Technique" was developed by Artistic Director Billy Siegenfeld, and is geared to all people who love moving to the beat.

The company won an Emmy in 2007 for the documentary Getting There: Jump Rhythm Jazz Project. The works that come out of Jump Rhythm Technique are high-energy and movement-driven story dances. Jump Rhythm Jazz backs its movement with beat-rich music such as blues-and-funk-based rock, jazz and world music. Their program is a mixture of premieres and classics, all choreographed by Siegenfeld.

In the theme of love that comes up around this time of the year, Siegenfeld will premiere a duet that is an exploration of a wry romance between two people. The dance is backed by a quartet of scat-singing cupids based on the words of the Gershwin brothers and the music of James Brown.

The performances will take place at the Dance Center of Columbia College, 1306 S. Michigan, 8 p.m., Feb. 18-20; tickets are \$24-28. For more information, call 312-369-8330 or visit [www.colum.edu/dancecenter](http://www.colum.edu/dancecenter).

**Troika Ranch** is based in New York City and Berlin Germany, and comes to Chicago with its newest evening-length work "Loopdiver," which follows its fall 2009 premiere. Led by co-Artistic Directors Mark Coniglio and Dawn Stoppiello, this company seeks to create art that best reflects and engages contemporary society. The name Troika Ranch comes out of Coniglio and Stoppiello's creative methodology. This process involves a hybrid of dance, theater and media that makes up three elements working together (Troika) in cooperative interaction (The Ranch). In the 1990s, Troika Ranch was one of the pioneers in an emerging field known as Dance and Technology. Its work is driven by the concept of interaction from inspiration to presentation of the dance. Troika Ranch produces live performances, interactive installations and digital films, combining traditional elements with advanced technologies.

"Loopdiver" comes out of a two-year process involving motion capture and Coniglio's Isadora software, a programming environment that provides interactive control and real-time manipulation of digital media. Technology maintains its perfection and precision in this dance that derives movement and multimedia elements from interwoven loops of prerecorded material. Elements caught in this loop include movement, text and digital media such as video, sound and light. A juxtaposition of technology and human beings is created as the Troika Ranch dancers are put up against these loops of technology, struggling to escape the externally imposed rep-

etition that is both dreamlike and maddening.

Troika Ranch will perform at the Dance Center of Columbia College, 1306 S. Michigan, March 4-6 at 8 p.m.; tickets are \$24-28. For more information, call 312-369-8330 or visit [www.colum.edu/dancecenter](http://www.colum.edu/dancecenter).

## CRITICS' PICKS

**Kink**, Annoyance Theatre, through March 6. Director Rebecca Sohn oversees just another day in suburban paradise with Mom as the closet dominatrix and Dad as the closet cross-dresser. Meanwhile, the kids are getting ready for that freakiest event of all: high school homecoming. CS

**August: Osage County**, Cadillac Palace Theatre, through Feb. 14. You'll kick yourself if you end up missing Tracy Letts' epic dysfunctional family drama—especially if you consider the high caliber cast (or if you missed it the first time around back in 2007). SCM

**Hughie/Krapp's Last Tape**, Goodman Theatre, through Feb. 21. Eugene O'Neill's lonely old man struggles against the dying light, while Samuel Beckett's embraces it—and Brian Dennehy plays them both to perfection in this double bill. MSB

**The Year of Magical Thinking**, Court Theatre, through Feb. 14. Her husband dropped dead as her daughter lay dying, launching writer Joan Didion's remarkable struggle with the concept and reality of grief. Mary Beth Fisher channels Didion in this solo work. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

## THEATER REVIEW

## The Brother/Sister Plays: In the Red and Brown Water, The Brothers Size, Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet

Playwright: Tarell Alvin McCraney  
At: Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted  
Phone: 312-335-1650; \$20-\$70  
Runs through: May 23

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

It was a smart idea for the playbill to include a genealogy chart. Each of the three stories comprising the collectively-titled Brother/Sister Plays may be viewed individually, but it is almost impossible not to unite them into a comprehensive saga depicting three generations of a rural bayou-country community at once familiar and exotic. Before we are done, we will see one character lose both the wife and the brother he loves, through no fault of his own. Two men will be destroyed by their unavowed affection for one another, the women who bear them children likewise emerging emotionally crippled—and what of the offspring whose history is a legacy of intrigue and silence?

Tarell Alvin McCraney recounts these tales in language that shifts smoothly from the weighty oratory we associate with the late August Wilson to the vivid imagery characteristic of the regional idiom (where a taciturn lad is accused of being “shy between the teeth”), enhanced by lyrical descriptive passages—in particular, odes of a sensuality bespeaking the gay status of both playwright McCraney and director Tina Landau. But what keeps the dramatic flow from miring down in verbal density (did I mention the many significant dreams related by the dreamers?) is a presentation style reminiscent of Story-Theatre



The Brother/Sister Plays. Photo by Michael Brosilow

third-person narrative.

Thus, the actor playing, say, Shango may say to us “Shango smiles,” before doing so—a technique facilitating intellectual distance that, in turn, allows short rest periods within our empathetic involvement (this is not an excuse to zone out, however, since the spoken “stage directions” often reveal important insights as well). There are also soliloquies and asides, confidences delivered at us with full eye contact. There is music, too—some integrated into the action as a reflection of the ethnic culture, and some rooted in bedroom singalongs to the radio.

The total time required for these chronicles is three hours and 40 minutes, but this is not another August: Osage County. Steppenwolf Theatre’s repertory arrangement permits playgoers to attend the two-hour double-ticket of The Brothers Size and Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet, or the 100-minute In the Red and Brown Water, on different nights, while fans of festival theater can take in all three in a single day on

weekends. But make no mistake—McCraney is a star on the rise. No matter in what increments you discover this for yourself, you won’t be sorry.

## THEATER REVIEW

## Blue Door

Playwright: Tanya Barfield  
At: Victory Gardens Biograph, 2433 N. Lincoln  
Tickets: 773-871-3000;  
victorygardens.org; \$20-\$48  
Runs through: Feb. 28

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Every play has architecture—inciting incidents, central conflict and expository material—upon which hang the play’s dialogue, imagery and tone. The difficulty with Blue Door is architecture that’s awkward compared to the richness of language and spirit hanging upon it.

This two-character, 95-minute play concerns Lewis, a sixtiesomething African-American professor at a prestigious university. The first college-educated member of his family, Lewis rose from the underclass through academic achievement and assimilation, marrying a white wife. Now, in 1995, she’s left him because he refused to join the Million Man March and remember his blackness. Alone and fueled by insomnia, soul-searching Lewis confronts the specters of his great-grandfather, grandfather and brother representing (respectively) the slave forebear, the forebear lynched while trying to vote, and the drug-taking sibling whose life ended violently. For his part, Lewis argues his entire Upper Middle Class success is the result of his being better than the best and overcoming stereotypical assumptions.

Well, his ancestors and brother are stereotypes and/or clichés of African-American heritage. Their stories are powerful and they represent the frequent reality of American Black history, but that doesn’t make them compelling, nor does it make their arbitrary appearances on stage less forced. What does make them compelling is author Tanya Barfield’s rich, poetic language and rhythms when actor Lindsay Smiling—playing all three spirit figures—revs up the storytelling. Maybe Barfield should forget dramatic structure and just tell stories.

There’s undeniable American truth in Blue Door—the title represents the color believed to protect family unity—of which I’m witness and heir. My father went from impoverished child of immigrant parents to the Upper Middle Class in one generation, without benefit of college. Of course, he was white. Lewis—like many African Americans—can count five or six generations on this continent with few of the opportunities open to my father.

At the end of Blue Door, Lewis sings a long-forgotten African song with great-grandfather Simon: a song taught to Simon by his African-born mother and which Simon taught—at 100 or so—to baby great-grandson Lewis. But Barfield leaves the jury out on what impact this night will have on Lewis. His journey of reconnection is far from complete and even some Black observers may question its authenticity and/or necessity. We are stuck in the architecture of the play which, in a way, leaves the house without a roof.

Veteran trouper Bruce A. Young inhabits Lewis with a combination of world-weary defensiveness and puzzlement. As Lewis’ relatives, Smiling equals the imposing Young in his commanding voice and physical stature, so that one truly seems the youthful embodiment of the other. Director Andrea J. Dymond doesn’t impose an interpretation. Her staging is simple and effective on Keith Pitts’s unit set featuring Liviu Pasare’s fluid video designs.

## Online This Week:

- The Island
- Distracted
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## SPOTLIGHT



No, this isn't John Van Druten 1951 Broadway adaptation of Christopher Isherwood's Berlin Stories (which also inspired the 1966 musical Cabaret). Instead, **I Am A Camera** is Greg Allen's new photography-centered theatrical experiment to question how visual imagery shapes our memory and the world we live in. **I Am A Camera** plays 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays until March 13 at the Neo-Futurarium, 5153 N. Ashland. Tickets are \$10-\$15; call 773-275-5255 or visit [www.neofuturists.org](http://www.neofuturists.org). Photo by Greg Allen



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# KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES



Bradley Cooper in Valentine's Day.

## Valentine's Day 'de-gay'd'; Frozen; film notes

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

We're Here, We're Queer but We Ain't in the **Valentine's Day** Trailer: I'd thought about this time of year I'd be giving you my review of Valentine's Day, this year's all-star rom-com being released to coincide with the lover's holiday (He's Just Not That Into You was last year's), as the movie has been promoted heavily for months. But Warner Bros. hasn't screened it in time to meet Windy City Times' deadlines. (Fox is doing the same thing with The Wolfman and Paramount with Shutter Island.) Increasingly, this gun-shy attitude on the part of the studios with regard to early reviews and an insistence on review embargos (usually until the day and, at times, the exact hour of the "official" Chicago release date) has been a particular bane for weeklies like WCT—especially when the movies in question have already opened in New York and Los Angeles, been reviewed and have been the sub-

ject of lots of discussion on the Web.

With Valentine's Day this vexing trend is compounded by the fact that the film—which, by the look of the trailer, features multiple variations of straight couples and singles celebrating Valentine's Day—actually includes a gay couple (played by Bradley Cooper and Eric Dane). But this hunky twosome are not featured together in said trailer or marketing materials for the movie. The relationship between Cooper and Dane is supposed to be a surprise reveal, which offers one reason why at least earlier versions of the trailer would suggest to audiences that Cooper and Julia Roberts are a couple in the film (with Dane barely glimpsed and alone). But even Cooper, when I interviewed him last June during The Hangover press junket, had already heard that the Internet was abuzz with the news about he was once again playing gay and coupling with Dane onscreen—although he was quick to point out disappointment at the surprise being revealed.

Nevertheless, the cat has been out of the bag for over six months about the "surprise" subplot in the film and, in light of the de-gay-ing of re-

cent film trailers like Taking Woodstock and A Single Man, one would have hoped Valentine's Day wouldn't have gone down the same road of gay invisibility. At least one of the trailers, posters or production stills could have thrown us a bone and shown the duo together. Our People deserve better than this, Hollywood.

Writer-director Adam Green who has specialized in the horror genre now brings us **Frozen**, a not-bad (though far from great) reason for a chilly winter night out at the movies. Three college kids (Shawn Ashmore of the AIDS drama 3 Needles, Jamie Babbit's The Quiet and the X-Men series; Kevin Zegers who played gay in Transamerica; and TV star Emma Bell) can't afford the price of three lift tickets during a trip to their local ski resort. But after forking over \$100 they're determined to get their money's worth and they convince a none-too-bright chairlift operator to give them one last chance at the slopes before the place is closed for the night. Naturally, the chairlift is shut down and the resort quickly deserted, leaving our three stuck midair, facing the elements and who knows what else far below them in the icy, snowy cold?

Frozen is yet another variation on what happens when some irresponsible teens/college kids do something they're not supposed to and suffer major (usually tremendously gory) consequences. Though the set-up plays on a common, usually unspoken fear among skiers and Green keeps the suspense up for awhile, the movie could have used an appearance by Bigfoot or some other supernatural or science-fiction creature or element to its story (*a la* The Ruins). Actually, it could've used anything, because after one character jumps and is set upon by wolves, the other two pretty much sit there and talk, ar-

gue, get frostbite and stick to the chairlift (like the kid sticking his tongue on the flagpole in A Christmas Story) until the last act, when one of them finally decides to take action.

Without a supernatural/sci-fi/criminal angle there aren't a lot of possibilities unlike, say, Open Water, which managed to stay terrifying because you knew at any second those sharks could come back. With Frozen, it's Adam Green who has a lot more than the elements to fend off; there's that fickle audience—bored, snappish and impatient—inclined to give his okay movie the big chill.

### Film note:

—The Music Box, 3733 N. Southport, is going all out for Valentine's Day with a weekend of romantic, sexy fare beginning Friday, Feb. 12, with the midnight movie cult favorite The Room. Star Tommy Wiseau will appear in person at both the 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. screenings. Then on Saturday, Feb. 13, at 7:30, for the third year in a row, the Lavender Cabaret presents The Hottest Night of Winter, the return of Michelle L'amour's "Belles and Whistles" burlesque revue show. Finally, on Sunday, Feb. 14, at 2 p.m. the historic theater will present its annual Valentine's Day screening of the film classic Casablanca. Joe Savino hosts a special "Sweetheart Sing-Along" of classic love songs with lyrics projected on the screen and organ accompaniment by Dennis Scott. A portion of ticket sales for the Casablanca screening will benefit Gilda's Club of Chicago. See [www.musicboxtheatre.com](http://www.musicboxtheatre.com).

Check out my archived reviews at [www.windycitytimes.com](http://www.windycitytimes.com) or [www.knightatthemovies.com](http://www.knightatthemovies.com). Readers can leave feedback at the latter Web site.

## Kirby Dick expresses his 'Outrage'

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Eight months after the May 2009 release of *Outrage*, his third documentary with prominent gay themes (*Twist of Faith* and *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* being the others), filmmaker Kirby Dick is still outraged. That's not just because the subjects of his latest film—ostensibly closeted politicians voting against their own kind, the shameful history of this practice and the question of outing itself—are still blithely moving forward, thanks to a pass seemingly given them by the mainstream media. It's also because many in the mainstream media reacted to the film with kid gloves—going so far as refusing to reveal the names of some of those profiled in the documentary in their coverage (which seemed to reinforce the message of the movie).

Then, just as *Outrage* was coming to DVD the media-watchdog organization GLAAD bypassed the film in its list of nominations for the year's best documentary because it didn't want to "glorify a movie about people who run from who they are"—an oversight that quickly brought a disgruntled response from members of the LGBT media. In an exclusive interview with Windy City Times, Dick was ready to give an update on that situation, talk about the history of his passion for gay injustice (he's straight), and a lot more.

**Windy City Times: What's up with this GLAAD situation?**

Kirby Dick: I was actually kind of hurt by that. I had interviewed Neil Giuliano, the former executive director of GLAAD. He's in the film and is very supportive of the film and makes some very strong arguments about the closet and GLAAD nominated *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* for a GLAAD award and I thought...

**WCT: A slam dunk, right?**

KD: Well not just a slam dunk but, "we're



Kirby Dick.

fighting for the same cause here, side by side." So I was just so surprised that they decided to not really even consider it. That was kind of a blow. I mean an award's just an award but it felt like your friend didn't invite you for dinner or something.

**WCT: And the response about why they didn't consider it was so disingenuous.**

KD: Yes. If there ever was a film that was eligible this one met their criteria to a "T." I think it was a number of things which I don't want to speculate on too much. But certainly one of them, I'm sure, is that some people that were uncomfortable because there were obviously some gays and lesbians in the film that are not portrayed in a positive light because they shouldn't be, of course. But on the other hand, too, this is all about the heroism and persistence of gay journalists and gay activists over the last two decades. This is really an untold story as far as the mainstream media is concerned and these people are heroes to me and to a lot of people.

Find out who Kirby Dick would've had accept an Oscar if *Outrage* had been nominated for an Academy Award (and won) at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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## 'Gays Got Talent' searches for top Chicago performers

CHICAGO—Windy City Media Group (WCMG) wants to show the world that "Gays Got Talent."

The company behind the popular Windy City Gay Idol, now in its 8th year, has provided a stage for Chicago's best singers. Now WCMG expands the search for the most diverse and talented acts in Chicago's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community with Gays Got Talent. The 2nd annual event will challenge America's Got Talent to include more GLBT talent on their show.

The search will begin with two events at Spin (Feb. 25) and Roscoe's (March 3) and will showcase any new talent who sign up to compete alongside some of the community's best professionals in the world of music, comedy, dance, drag and more. Up to 20 contestants will perform each night. The act receiving the most audience votes will win \$100 cash and will advance on to the Finals. The second and third place vote getters will also advance the Finals. The judges will vote two additional acts through to the Finals.

The search culminates March 20 with a big talented gay variety show at Sidetrack where someone will be crowned the audience favorite, winning \$1000 cash, American Airlines tickets, Steppenwolf theater tickets, Miller Lite and Skyy vodka merchandise and more. Plus all acts at the finals will be submitted on DVD to the casting department of TV's America's Got Talent.

CALLING ALL professional and amateur singers, dancers, impersonators, poets, drag artists, jugglers, comics, and more! Come audition for Gays Got Talent at either Spin or Roscoe's to hopefully land a spot at the coveted big finals show. Remember, the audience votes! So bring



your friends to vote for you. There is limited space to compete so arrive early. Three-minute limit for your act.

Judges for Talent will include well-known performers, casting directors, and celebrities. The fee is \$10 to compete, \$5 to attend. Amy Matheny, host of Windy City Queercast, is the host of the Gays Got Talent series.

### Casting call:

—Thursday, Feb. 25, Spin bar, Halsted and Belmont, 8 p.m. sign-up, 9 p.m. start time

—Wed., March 3, Roscoe's bar, 3356 N. Halsted, 8 p.m. sign-up, 9 p.m. start time

The Big Gay Talent Show finals will be at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, Saturday, March 20; the door opens at 1 p.m. and the show starts at 3 p.m. The \$10 cover includes a drink ticket and entry to win American Airlines tickets and more.

Premium sponsors include Miller Lite and Skyy Vodka.

Get your act together!

For more information and to see rules and regulations, visit [www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=25024](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=25024).

Windy City Media Group produces Windy City Times, Nightspots, OUT! Resource Guide, Identity online, WindyCityQueercast.com and QueerTV-Network.com. Windy City Media Group is also the producer of these annual events: Windy City Gay Idol, 30 Under 30 and the Windy City Times Theater Series. To download all of the products visit [www.windycitymediagroup.com](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com). Send questions to [publisher@windycitymediagroup.com](mailto:publisher@windycitymediagroup.com) or call 773-871-7610.

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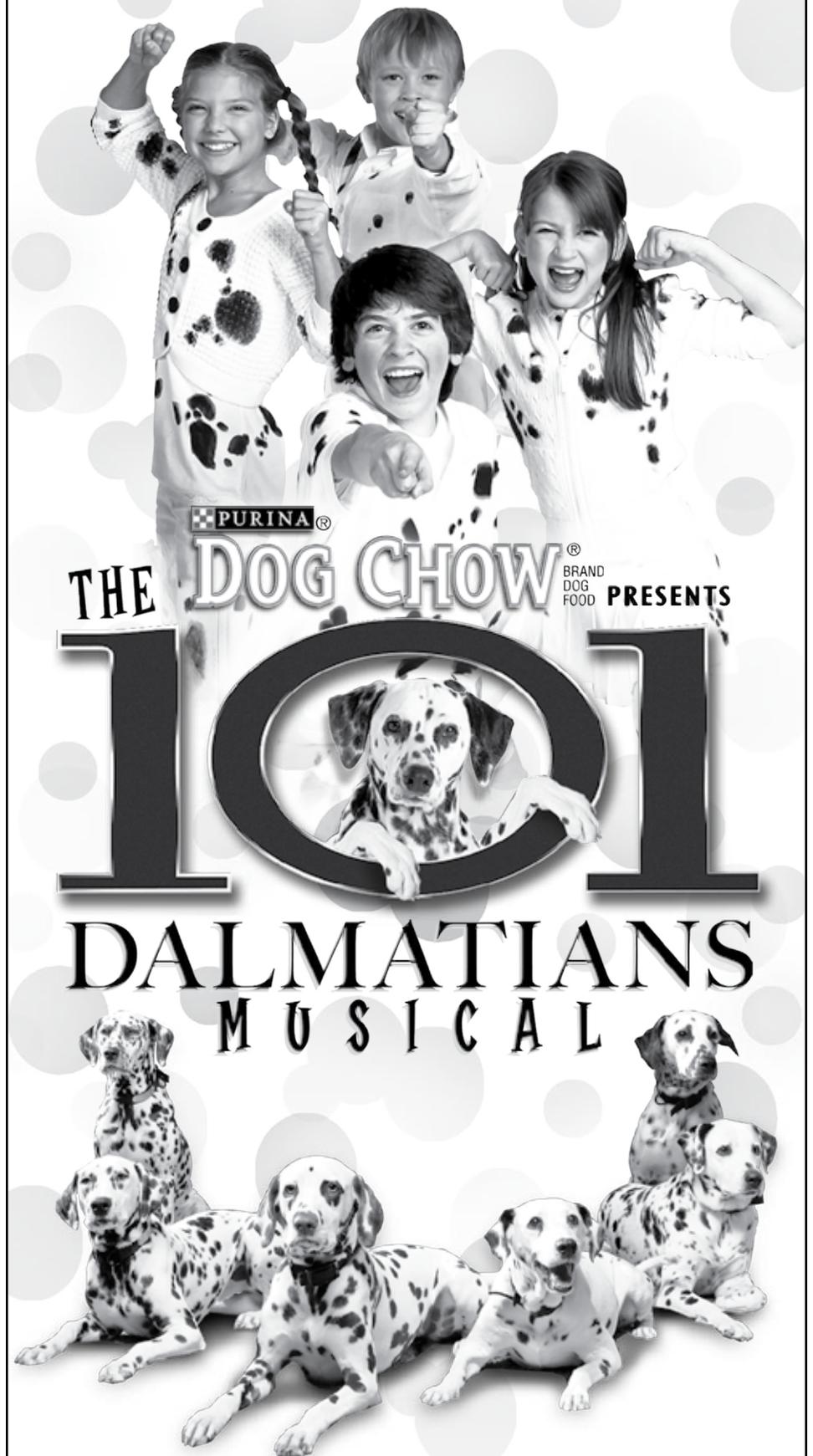
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MOVIES

# Orgasm, Inc.: Sexy title, political film

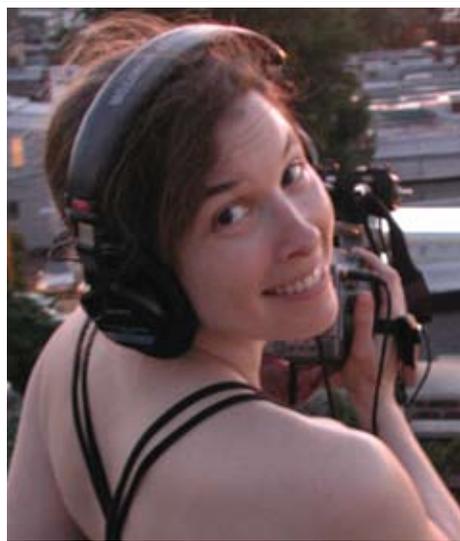
REVIEW BY TRACY BAIM

Medical and pharmaceutical interference in what are often problems fixable through more basic solutions is the focus of this excellent new documentary from filmmaker Liz Canner. *Orgasm, Inc.* is showing at the Dyke Delicious series at Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N. Clark, appropriately on Valentine's Weekend: Saturday, Feb. 13; 7 p.m. social, 8 p.m. screening; \$10; 773-293-1447.

Canner's access to people working on drugs and surgical solutions to the newly created disease "Female Sexual Dysfunction," or FSD, shows just how compromised our Western medicine really is. FSD, in fact, was a disease diagnosis pushed in part by pharmaceutical companies developing the female equivalent to Viagra for men. The concern is, the orgasm-related problems many women face are far more complex than men experience and, in fact, many women interviewed had orgasms—they just thought they were not "normal" because they did not have an orgasm during intercourse.

This is not a lesbian film and, in fact, that's the only disappointing aspect because Canner did not address lesbian sexuality at all—except in a short, funny clip about a woman who is now happier with her sex life now that she's with a woman. But the film is still a wonderful behind-the-scenes investigation.

Canner's access started several years ago when she was hired to edit erotic videos for an unusual pharmaceutical company using the films



**Orgasm, Inc. director Liz Canner.**

to gauge sexual response in women. Because she worked with the company, she was able to get ground-floor interviews as the company, parallel to others, worked on a "female Viagra." The company spokespeople were surprisingly candid with Canner, perhaps both optimistic and naïve to her intentions. They later refused to return her calls.

Canner's research is very compelling. She looks at other companies and their drug trials, surgical procedures (including plastic surgery to make women "pretty" down there), and pushes to find medical/pharma solutions to problems that might be solved otherwise. Especially interesting was a woman sales rep for a vaginal cosmetic-surgery company—she was conflicted about the message it sent to women.

The film is also funny, including an animated "race" depicting the battle to win the FSD drug war.

There are heroes and no-nonsense activists, but Canner is also not just demonizing all the medical/pharma folks. Some seem to actually believe what they are selling, and in fact some problems may have a medical basis. But Canner shows that it is dangerous, no matter what the problem, to have the pharma industry involved in actually "creating" a disease where one did not exist before.

I watched this film with a group of women, in-

cluding someone in the pharmaceutical industry, and she was impressed with the approach, as were the others. We laughed and were shocked, and especially felt very well-informed after the 73-minute film was over.

If *Orgasm, Inc.* wasn't so sadly a true documentary, it could have passed for a very funny mukumentary.

See [www.orgasminc.org](http://www.orgasminc.org).

NUNN ON ONE: COMEDY

## Lisa Lampanelli gets—what else?—down and dirty

BY JERRY NUNN

Lisa Lampanelli, "Comedy's Lovable Queen of Mean," is coming to Illinois once again, and *Windy City Times* has the scoop on what makes this comedienne tick, including her gay best friend. [Note: If you are easily offended, then this interview might not be for you.]

**Windy City Times:** Hi, Lisa.

Lisa Lampanelli: Hi, homo! How's your cornholer? If you are not old enough to get that reference, then fuck you.

**WCT:** Of course I do. we are around the same age.

LL: Oh? How you doing, dirty faggot?

WCT: I get all your jokes. I have been reading your book *Chocolate, Please*.

LL: Good, there ya go. So what's happening at the *Windy City Times* faggot newspaper?

**WCT:** It's freezing here in the Windy City!

LL: Are you freezing your cunt off? I know exactly how you feel.

**WCT:** So we have to get the gays to travel out Aurora, Ill., to see you.

LL: See that's what I love, playing these Wheatons and Weekaugans and shit. All the



**Lisa Lampanelli. Photo by Karen Moskowitz**

fags come out and it scares all the people in the suburban towns.

**WCT:** You have done a lot of celebrity roasts. Would you want one done to you?

LL: Yeah; it is the biggest honor in the world to be the actual subject of a roast because that means people like you enough. The dirty Jews over there at Comedy Central only do it if there is money in it for them and ratings. So it would mean that I am wildly popular, pretty and skinny.

Lisa Lampanelli performs Thursday, Feb. 18, at 7:30 p.m. at the Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena, Aurora. Visit [www.paramountaurora.com](http://www.paramountaurora.com) or [www.livenation.com](http://www.livenation.com).

Find out more about Lisa—including if she thought a joke ever went too far—online at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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**NUNN ON ONE**

**Sandra Bernhard on life, love—and Mariah Carey**

BY JERRY NUNN

Sandra Bernhard is celebrating V-Day in Chi-town with five performances over Cupid's weekend. She is out to prove that "Sandy Loves Chicago!"

**Windy City Times:** Hi, Sandra. We are all very excited that you are coming to Chicago.

Sandra Bernhard: I couldn't be more excited to be coming!

**WCT:** You are doing five performances, which seems like a lot.

SB: Yes, and yet not really. I am used to doing extended runs in New York. Five shows seems like a drop in the bucket but I am glad that I am going to be there for a few days and settle in and people will know about it. It is nice to come into a city for one night and the next day people will go, "She was there last night?" This is an opportunity to everyone to come to see the show so it is exciting.

**WCT:** Well, I am happy to get the word out about the show. I have been a fan of yours for a long time.

SB: Good, thank you.

**WCT:** This is a benefit for Personal PAC, which is an organization dedicated to electing pro-choice candidates.

SB: Yes, I have come in to doing something for them a few months ago, and I think it is a great organization. It is one of the most comprehensive in the country for getting women's reproductive rights on the books. They are super on it, together and really have women's backs in a great way.

**WCT:** Are you singing at your performances this time out?

SB: Yeah, it's my one-woman extravaganza. I



Sandra Bernhard. Photo by Jasmine Hirst

will be doing my stories, monologues, observations—all woven in and out of songs.

**WCT:** So you will have your band there.

SB: Yes.

**WCT:** What was it like singing with Chrissie Hynde?

SB: It was amazing. She is one of the greatest voices of our time. She is a really generous cool person. She is totally unimpressed with herself. She has a global view of life and the world. She is super-inspiring and a great talent. She plays the guitar almost like no woman or man can.

**WCT:** When I saw Shakira trying to cover "I'll Stand By You" at the Haiti telethon, I wanted Chrissie!

SB: Oh, I know.

**WCT:** You might bump into Mariah Carey when you are in town.

SB: Well, you know Mariah and I have been destined to hang out for a long time. I have done my Mariah bit. I hope by now she understands that I think she is great. It's kind of deconstructing pop culture. When you are a part of pop culture you might be in the cross hairs. Really, Mariah is so talented and so eccentric. I would never seriously tear her down because she is a great talent, crazy and interesting.

**WCT:** She was actually pretty good in the movie Precious.

SB: She was great in Precious.

**WCT:** I want you to know that I thought "I'm Still Here Damn It!" was brilliant.

SB: Thank you.

**WCT:** What do you think of comics like Lisa Lampanelli and Sarah Silverman, who I interviewed recently?

SB: I think that they speak to their particular experience in life, to the things that have informed them as women and trying to be a part of the comedy scene. I was really lucky because I got out of the mainstream comedy scene when I was really young—right after King of Comedy—and I kind of never went back to it again. I have always forged my own unique path in the comedy and entertainment world. Personally, I find it very uncomfortable to do stand up and be that verbose. I look at the world in a different way. I think what they do is very interesting, but it is not my particular style. It doesn't engage me. It's not a put-down. I think they are very talented.

**WCT:** I understand. How was this movie you did called Dare?

SB: My friend David Brind wrote it. It was a great cast. It was a bisexual coming of age film and touches on all sorts of sexuality. I play a

therapist. It should be out on disc very soon.

**WCT:** Is there anyone you would like to work with in a movie but haven't?

SB: Oh yeah, tons of people. I would love to work with Almodovar but my Spanish is not up to speed.

**WCT:** I love him!

SB: I know. Listen, there are projects that some of the young guy directors have. I think I could fit in with a lot of different venues. It is just a matter of connecting. When the right part comes along, it will happen.

**WCT:** And now a woman is probably going to win an Oscar for best director.

SB: And deservedly so, that was by far my favorite film of the year.

**WCT:** Any future projects for 2010?

SB: There is potentially with a lot of them. I don't want to call it a reality show but it is me mentoring people and finding interesting entertainers. That is something we are out pitching. There is a show that I wrote with a really talented writer and we are trying to get that set up for me to be in. It is a cable television project. I am up for countless TV and film things but so are a lot of other people. You go in, audition and hope to nail something really soon, as well as perform live.

**WCT:** You are going to be here on Valentine's Day—any advice for the lovers?

SB: Valentine's Day is amateur time. I think the good ones hide out on Valentine's Day.

**Whether you are single or as a couple come check out Sandra Bernhard performing at the Lakeshore Theater, 3175 N. Broadway, on Feb. 11 at 8:30 p.m. and Feb. 12-14 at 7:30 p.m., with an additional performance Feb. 13 at 10:30 p.m. For VIP tickets that include special seating, backstage pass, photo, autographed CD and opening-night party at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, call 312-422-0005. For more information visit [www.Personalpac.org](http://www.Personalpac.org) or [www.lakeshoretheater.com](http://www.lakeshoretheater.com).**



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Sammy. Photo courtesy of Anti-Cruelty Society

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## RUGBY from cover

they appreciate the taboo that I've broken, and the guts and courage it took to do it.

"I knew that my teammates would create a safe environment for me. They make me want to train everyday and then play on the weekends. I think they have helped re-light my passion for rugby."

Thomas, 35, is a Welsh rugby player—but certainly not just any rugby player.

"Gareth is the ninth all-time leader in totals tries, the equivalent of a touchdown in American football," said Paul Cannella, one of the top players for the predominantly gay Chicago Dragons rugby club. "Think about the level of scoring in terms of American football and the top ten running backs of all time [in the National Football League]. Gareth would be mentioned alongside Jerome Bettis, Marshall Faulk, O.J. Simpson and Eric Dickerson. He's an all time great."

And here's the big catch: Thomas is still active.

Thomas has done what no athlete has done in the NFL, the National Baseball Association (NBA), the National Hockey League (NHL), Major League Baseball (MLB) or Major League Soccer (MLS): reveal that he is gay while still playing.

"I think it's really cool to have a player of his caliber not only come out, but continue to play," Cannella said. "[Rugby] is one heck of a tough sport to play and a lot of nasty things can happen down in the trenches. My guess is that he has paid his dues, [so] his team will embrace him and rivals will as well. He is an admirable leader both on the pitch and off."

Thomas played for the Wales National Team during 1995-2007, and set history when he became the first Welshman to win 100 international caps in rugby union. He also has had stints with the British and Irish National Teams.

"I obviously opened up a different side of me to the person who everyone thought they knew," Thomas said. "All of a sudden, people are very interested in this other side of me."

"The greatest thing is, as far as my career goes, nothing has changed. Everyone around me knows that, when I go to work and perform my job, I am the same guy that I always have been—and I appreciate that. Just because I came out as gay does not make me any softer."

"Being in the environment of sports, I thought I might have to fear [for myself] after coming out. But actually, it's the complete opposite."

A month after coming out, Thomas has not had any negative reaction, although he braced for the worst.

"I've always been the person to stand up and say, 'This is how it is, like it or lump it,' whether it be in sports or life in general," Thomas said. "So, I wasn't really fearful [about coming out]; I



**Gareth Thomas (left). Photos on this page and on the cover courtesy of Thomas**

thought I was making a stand and I felt that the time was right. I believe that everyone has the right to be whoever they want to be.

"And the reaction has been amazing."

"I thought what could be the worst case possible, but the reaction has been good. I've gotten an amazing amount of support from my teammates, from my coaches, from my family, from friends, from complete strangers. So many people have said how much my story has helped them. To hear my story, to hear what I dealt with, they could relate, and I was fortunate enough to help them."

Thomas' worldwide impact extends well beyond the pitch where he's made his biggest impact to date.

Thomas is a role model. He was before coming out, and arguably a bigger one now. It's a role he cherishes.

"I take being a role model very serious. I know, as a role model, that you have to very carefully watch what you say and do," Thomas said.

"It's such a powerful story because of my [on the field] achievements, but, the reality is, I'm lucky to be at the very top of my game. I know there are many people, at lower levels of this sport and in other sports, who are struggling with this same issue. Coming out has almost been easier because of my success, yet I thought

it would make it a lot more difficult.

"Let me put it in this perspective ... if I was just a local baseball player, playing in the park with some mates, coming out may have been a lot tougher."

"The heights I've accomplished in rugby have helped soften the blow."

The impact of Thomas coming out immediately spread to media outlets worldwide. In fact, Sports Illustrated is sending a reporter overseas for a week with Thomas.

Thomas' fan mail certainly has picked up since coming out and the letters are coming from all over the world, he said.

"I told my story because I wanted to help people, especially youngsters in the U.K. But this story has quickly become a lot bigger than [just about] me, a lot bigger than the game of rugby," he said.

"I am right now the happiest I've ever been, and this is something that I've always wanted for my life. I can finally be at peace with myself. Whenever I had issues in the past, be it injury- or money-related, it was always quadrupled by the fact that I was hiding this secret."

"But I am now who I want to be."

Thomas was married to his childhood sweetheart, Jemma, from 2002-2006. The couple married in St Brides Major, and filed for divorce in 2007.

Those four years were "difficult," he said.

"I loved my wife and I took my vows very seriously," Thomas said. "To cheat on my wife ... to be unfaithful to my wife made a lot of demons in my heart; it made me into a person who I didn't like when I looked in the mirror. I was happy with my wife and I intended to spend the rest of my life with her, but that wasn't to be. I think we're both in a happier place now. As much as I was struggling to deal with my demons, she was as well. I know it was tough on her."

"I knew I had to stop lying to her. I also had to stop lying to myself."

Thomas, while married, cheated on his wife with men, "very, very, very few" times, he said.

"Rugby took my mind off what I was thinking, these thoughts that I didn't want to have," Thomas said. "Being in a combat sport, I was able to take out a lot of anger and frustration, including sexual frustration."

Thomas admits that, while in London, he could blend in with the crowds and would go to gay clubs. "I regret that to this day," he said.

Thomas is now single, yet not actively looking for Mr. Right.

"I've gone through so much [that] I feel I need to deal with this myself," he said. "It might not be right to bring someone into my life at this stage, at least until I'm more settled."

But, he added, "I want to find a man [who] makes me as happy as I was with my wife."

So who is Mr. Right?

"Wow," he said, laughing. "My interests are sports and working with children, so [if] it would be someone with the same interests, that would be great. Someone who is as passionate as I am."

## A local take on Gareth Thomas

BY ROSS FORMAN

Gareth Thomas plays for the Cardiff Blues rugby club, which is like being a member of such prestigious, world-renowned teams as the New York Yankees, Pittsburgh Steelers, Los Angeles Laker, or even the Chicago Cubs.

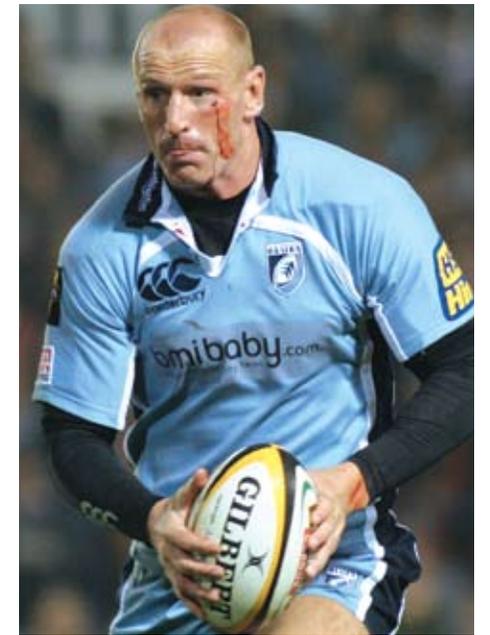
Thomas is the team's star.

And gay, Thomas announced in December.

"I'm sure he's going to get called names and someone is going to take a cheap shot [at him, eventually], but overall, it won't be a big deal and he'll have 14 teammates ready to back him up," said Paul Cannella, the former president of the predominantly-gay Chicago Dragons rugby club. "In the last five years of playing in CARFU (Chicago Area Rugby Football Union), there have been less than five incidents that I would say were associated to the fact that a majority of [the Dragons'] players are gay. The odd or funny thing is, three or four of the times a name was called, or punch tossed, our player involved was straight."

"Overall, CARFU is a phenomenal and accepting organization. Couple that with the baseline that all ruggers respect other ruggers for having the heart, guts, body and mindset to step out onto that pitch to play the greatest game in the world."

Cannella added: "I'm really glad to see leaders like Gareth coming out. It will only make it easier for others to do [so], regardless of whether they are [an] athlete or not, in their youth or later in life. It's just a matter of time until we [see] the first big outing in the U.S. for an active professional player. Several will follow and, within five years after the first, there will be at least one in every major sport. Be strong and be who you are, so you can live your life to the fullest."





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# calendar

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## Wed., Feb. 10

**Color of AIDS series** reports NBC-5 Chicago is producing the "Color of AIDS" campaign on HIV/AIDS and communities of color, with reports airing every day at 5am and 5pm Feb. 8 - Feb 12. 5pm, <http://www.nbc5chicago.com>

**Columbia College Chicago presents: The Wild Party** Columbia College Chicago presents The Wild Party by John LaChiusa and George C. Wolfe. 6:30pm, <http://www.colum.edu/theater>

**Bisexual Panel Discussion Group** Casual, peer-led conversation group on the second Wednesday of each month. 7pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, <http://www.centeronhalsted.com>

**Board Game Night with Sapphic Adventures** Join ladies from Sapphic Adventures for a night of board games and casual social. Please do bring your own games to share! We have over 900 members and focus on women-only social events outside bars. 7pm, <http://www.sapphicadventures.org>

## Thursday, Feb. 11

**Princess Zindaba Nyirenda** Princess Zindaba "Zindie" Nyirenda was raised in privilege during Zambia's economic boom. After she relocated to the U.S. she watched in horror as life in her homeland rapidly disintegrated under economic devastation and the influx of AIDS/HIV. Zindie founded a non-profit organization to equip and empower local leaders in neglected villages of Africa. 1:15pm, Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St., <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

**Sweet Tooth: A Charity Bake Sale + Art**

## IT PLAYS IN PEORIA Friday, Feb. 12

The lesbian movie **Hannah Free**, which was filmed in Chicago, will premiere in Peoria, Ill.



**Exhibition** The Chicago Urban Art Society, Chicago's emerging not-for-profit art organization, is proud to present Sweet Tooth: A Charity Bake Sale & Art Exhibition. Chicago Art District 2003 South Halsted Street; 6pm, 773-318-9407, <http://www.chicagourbanartsociety.org>

**American Veterans for Equal Rights (gay veterans) Monthly meeting.** AVER is a non-profit association dedicated to full and equal rights for all present and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces. 7:30pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, <http://www.averchicago.org>

**Sandra Bernhard after party** benefits Personal PAC Following her opening at the Lakeshore Theater, 3175 N. Broadway, Sandra Bernhard will attend an opening night party benefitting Personal PAC, the pro-choice political action committee dedicated to electing pro-choice candidates to state and local office in Illinois. Front row reserved seat, back stage pass, photo with Sandra and an autographed CD, \$250. Reserved seats and the party,

\$100. Available only through Personal PAC. Bernhard's Lakeview show begins at 8 pm and the party begins after the show. 8pm, 312-422-005, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St, <http://www.personalpac.org>

## Friday, Feb. 12

**Busch Fest, four Early plays by drag theater legend Charles Busch** Featuring Busch's: Vampire Lesbians of Sodom, Sleeping Beauty or Coma, Theodora She-Bitch of Byzantium, and Pardon My Inquisition or Kiss the Blood Off My Castanets running in repertory Friday and Saturday nights. Charles Busch came to theatrical prominence in 1984 when his hit play Vampire Lesbians of Sodom. Through Feb. 20; 12pm, 800-838-3006, Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark, <http://www.buschfest.com>

**Desire .10 Queer Caucus Art Exhibition** Logsdon 1909 Gallery is proud to announce the opening of a multi-media group exhibition entitled Desire .10. The show will feature the work of members of the Queer Caucus, a division of the College Art Association. The exhibition will be on view until March 6, 2010. 6pm, 312-666-8966, <http://www.logsdon1909.com>

**Hannah Free screens in Peoria** The Peoria, Ill., premiere of Hannah Free, a film starring former Peoria resident Ann Hagemann opposite Emmy Award-winner Sharon Gless. Hannah Free is an independent Chicago made film about two women who shared a loving relationship throughout their lives, only now one must fight to keep that love alive. Ann Hagemann will attend the screenings of the film for talk-backs afterwards. Hannah Free also features a cast of Chicago stage veterans and was shot entirely on the South Side of Chicago and in Beecher, Illinois. \$10 at the Peoria Theater. Free parking. [www.peoriatheater.com](http://www.peoriatheater.com) One night only. Second show 7:30. 7pm, 309-202-2278, <http://www.hannahfree.com>

**River North Chicago Dance's Valentine Show** River North Chicago Dance Company continues its 20th anniversary season with the annual Valentine's Weekend Engagement, Feb. 12 & 13. 8pm, 312-334-7777, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph Dr, <http://www.rivernorthchicago.com>

**Tamale Presents LOL-Vickie Shaw** Vickie Shaw is a seasoned comedian addressing the triumphs and trials of being a woman, a mother and gay in America. Only \$10, 21+; 8pm, Circuit Night Club, 3641 N Halsted St

**Jeannie Tanner**, (You Can Kiss Me into Anything) Vocalist, composer and trumpeter Jeannie Tanner blends jazz, blues, R&B,

pop and Latin rhythms into her unique sound and is now embarking on a television and film career. \$15 Reservations by phone suggested; 9pm, 312-642-6805, <http://www.jeannietanner.com>

## Saturday, Feb. 13

**Blake Lewis appearance at Borderline** American Idol season six runner-up, Blake Lewis, will perform a live DJ set at Borderline Music. The singer-songwriter will also sign autographs. His second album Heartbreak on Vinyl was released this past October. 2 pm, 773-975-9533, Borderline Music - Lakeview, 3333 North Broadway, <http://www.borderlinemusic.com>

**Fat Saturday Ball: Allure!** "Revolution Never Looked So Glamorous!" is an annual fundraiser for EdgeAlliance (AIDSCare). The theme for this year's gala is promising to reprise the glory days of 1930's and 40's cinema. 7pm, Westin Chicago River North, 320 North Dearborn Street, [http://www.edgealliance.org/pages/fat\\_saturday\\_ball/52.php](http://www.edgealliance.org/pages/fat_saturday_ball/52.php)

**Dyke Delicious: Orgasm, Inc.** The strange science of female pleasure Dyke Delicious screening series, exclusive Chicago engagement. Shocking and hilarious documentary filmmaker Liz Canner takes a job editing erotic videos for a drug trial for a pharmaceutical company. 7 pm Social Hour, 8 pm screening. Co-sponsored by Black Cat Productions. \$10. 7pm, Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N Clark, <http://www.chicagofilmmakers.org>

**Vickie Shaw's "Cabin Fever Follies!"** Direct from her la-la-pa-Lesbo tour...a benefit for YouthOutLook of the western suburbs. \$25/students \$15. [info@youth-outlook.org](mailto:info@youth-outlook.org); 7:30pm, 630-415-2053, <http://www.youth-outlook.org/>

**Singing Out with Glee** Don't miss this Song and Dance Cabaret Show to raise fund for arts education in the Chicagoland area. \$5 Suggested Donation Party begins at 9pm, Show at 10pm. 9pm, 773-604-1892, @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St., <http://www.artreachspotlite.com>

**URBANO President's Day Party** URBANO's Hip Hop Presidents Day Party at Circuit features DJs Anton, Corons & Kenae spinning Hip Hop, House & Reggaeton. Sexy URBANO Go Go Boyz. 11pm, (773)957-4021, Circuit Night Club, 3641 N Halsted St, <http://www.urbanochicago.com>

## Sunday, Feb. 14

**So in Love...with Broadway Valentine's Day** Chicago favorites Laura Freeman and Bradford Newquist with pianist William Underwood bring together a glittering mosaic of the world's favorite American music. \$20 in advance/\$25 at the door; 2pm, 847-677-7761, <http://www.skoietheatre.com>

**Roman Catholic Mass** Dignity-Chicago celebrates a Roman Catholic Mass every Sunday, 5PM, at Broadway United Methodist Church 3338 N Broadway St, Chicago, IL 60657; 5pm, <http://dignitychicago.org/current.htm>

**Show Your Love For Haiti-Valentine's Day Alternative** Old Town School and Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti are partnering for earthquake relief with nine bands: Darwin Noguera and Evolution Trio (Latin Jazz), Tchaka (Haitian), Ecos del Pacifico (Afro-Colombian), Mexican Folkloric Dance Company, The Pilgrim Jubilees (Gospel), Jimmy Keane and Sean Clelland (Irish accordion and fiddle), Tamboula Ethnic Dance (Haitian), Seneke West African Dance Ensemble. \$25; 7pm, 773-728-6000, Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N Lincoln Ave, <http://www.oldtownschool.org>

## Monday, Feb. 15

**Essay Fiesta** is a monthly, first-person reading series and benefit that features some of the best writers, comedians and journalists in Chicago. 7pm, <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=logo#/pages/chicago-il/essay-fiesta/16883778753?ref=ts>



## FUNNY GIRL

**Fri-Sat., Feb. 12-13**

Vickie Shaw (above) will make 'em laugh at Circuit and at the College of DuPage.

Photo by  
Kat Fitzgerald  
(MysticImagesPhotography.com)

## Tuesday, Feb. 16

**Mauro Fiore to Speak at Columbia College** Fresh from an Academy Award nomination this week as director of photography for the box office record-setting film Avatar, cinematographer Mauro Fiore will be the featured speaker for Columbia College's Conversations in the Arts: Media in the 21st Century. 7pm, 312-369-7420, Film Row Cinema of Columbia College Chicago, 1104 S Wabash, 8th Floor, <http://www.colum.edu/conversations>

**Drag Race hosted by Frida Lay** Frida Lay hosts Chicago's only amateur drag contest every Tuesday at 11pm in Roscoe's front bar. Drag Race has been a hit since its premier in 2000. 11pm, Roscoe's Tavern, 3356 N Halsted St, <http://www.roscoes.com>

## Wed., Feb. 17

**The Joffrey Ballet presents** The Joffrey Ballet's 2009-2010 "Season of Legends" continues with Sir Frederick Ashton's Cinderella, back by popular demand. Widely considered one of the greatest ballet interpretations of this timeless fairytale, Ashton's Cinderella is an enchanting fantasy full of splendor, humor and magic. 7:30pm, 800-982-2787, Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E Congress Pkwy, <http://joffrey.org>

## Thursday, Feb. 18

**9th Annual Freedom to Marry Reception** With more than 60 community partner organizations and over 400 attendees, "Freedom to Marry" has been a favorite event celebrating and advocating for marriage equality in Illinois. Hosted by Lambda Legal with hors d'oeuvres, wedding cake, drinks, "Let Them Eat Cake" (a short theatre performance advocating marriage equality), and DJ Harry. Lauren Hernandez at [lhernandez@lambdalegal.org](mailto:lhernandez@lambdalegal.org); 6pm, 312-663-4413, ext 327, <http://www.lambdalegal.org/events/>

**Jump Rhythm Jazz Project Performances** Jump Rhythm Jazz Project will mark its 20th anniversary with a program at The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago. Join us for three evenings of rhythm-driven story dances performed to the sounds of jazz, blues, funk, rock, and world music. 8pm, (312) 369-8330, <http://www.colum.edu/dancecenter>

## Friday, Feb. 19

**Chicago League of Lady Arm Wrestlers** Ladylike ass-kicking, Chicago style. At 9:30 pm, the lady wrestlers enter, and the battle begins. Final match and championship-crowning is at 11:30 pm, after which the regulation arm-wrestling table is open to all. Open bar and audience participation. \$25 includes open bar or \$5 and cash bar. 9:30pm, <http://www.sideshowtheatre.org>



## WED HEADS

**Thursday, Feb. 18**

The 9th Annual Freedom to Marry Reception will take place at the The National Mexican Museum of Art, 1852 W. 19th.

Photo from the 2009 event by Emmanuel Garcia

# BILLY MASTERS

"I hope you die, so I can be the last Golden Girl!"—According to the New York Daily News, this is the card that accompanied the flowers Betty White sent to Rue McClanahan, who is recovering from a stroke. We're told Rue laughed out loud—and looked over her shoulder!

My buddy Greg Louganis will be appearing in *The Little Dog Laughed*, which is part of the Broadway Series at the Indian Wells Theater on Cal State's Palm Desert campus. This is interesting for a variety of reasons. First of all, he'll be playing a devastatingly handsome up-and-coming movie actor who is the last person anyone would think is gay. Tom Everett Scott was 36 when he did it on Broadway. Rupert Friend is 28 and is currently playing the part in London. So given Greg just turned 50, this will add a fascinating dimension to the play. Then there's the question of the nudity, which I know you'll all be particularly interested in. Needless to say, I'm gonna head out to see it sometime during the run (April 16-25), so I will definitely give you a full report.

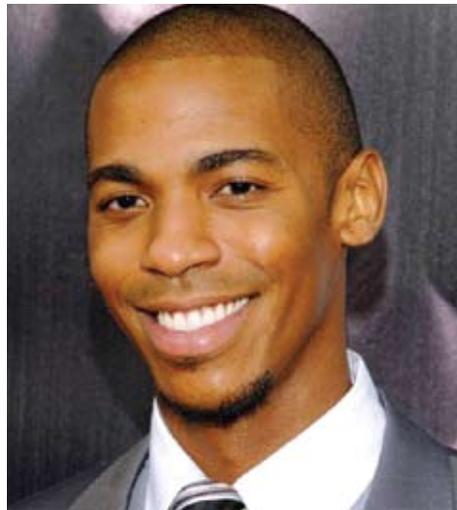
But that's not all. Greg has launched a campaign to be cast on the next season of *Dancing with the Stars*. I think that's a brilliant idea and would love to see him on the show. However, I'm told producers feel Greg has too much dance experience and not enough star power. Uh, check your previous rosters, people—compared to some of the DWTS alum, he's Michael Phelps (to me, he's bigger). By the way, rumor has it Pamela Anderson is in the running to join the "Dancing" cast. They must have added the ever-popular "Lap Dance" to the competition!

I know it's too early to have a favorite story of the year, but this one is definitely in the running. On Feb. 4, male model Nick Snider was arrested for public drunkenness and disorderly conduct in Batesville, Ark. When the police first approached him, he told them, "I am a very famous model." And he's right—Snider was named the world's fifth most successful male model by *Forbes* in 2008. Alas, this didn't impress the cop, who arrested Nick and put him in the back of the patrol car to bring him to the county jail where he would be charged with public intoxication and disorderly conduct. During the ride, Snider allegedly told Deputy Brian Luetschwager, "If you stop [the car], I'll suck your dick and balls if you let me go." Shockingly, this approach was not successful. He repeated the offer to policemen at the jail (and, I'm guessing, to some of his fellow inmates). He did manage to accomplish one thing—he was also charged with illegally attempting to influence a public servant.

Bette Midler just wrapped up her very successful run at The Coliseum at Caesars Palace. Celine Dion sent a video, chastising Bette for singing her song (Midler does a bit of "My Heart Will Go On"). BTW, rumors abound that Celine will be

back at Caesars shortly. Marie Osmond reminded everyone that she's celebrating 45 years of performing in Vegas. And the lovely and ageless Gladys Knight explained how she convinced Bette that she could (and should) do the show—and paid tribute to Midler with her exquisite rendition of "The Way We Were." Since we got a great audio of the show, we'll run some clips and pics from the finale on BillyMasters.com.

Photos have surfaced of the Kellan Lutz underwear ad for Calvin Klein—and they're hot! But Kellan has some competition—CK also shot sizzling Mehcad Brooks, Fernando Verdasco and Hidetoshi Nakata. Abs and baskets everywhere! They all look amazing, and they'll all turn up on BillyMasters.com.



Nothing comes between Mehcad Brooks and his Calvins.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Nate in Key West: "Have you seen *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*? Brando Eaton plays a gay student and he's gorgeous! What do you know about him? And what pics do you have? And is he gay in real life?"

That name sounded so familiar to me, and then it hit me—I recently ran a clip of him from *Dexter*. Before that, he was naked with Seann William Scott. Not in real life (that I know of), but in the film *Balls Out*. Sure, with that cast and that title, it sounds like a gay porn. Seann's playing tennis in a jock strap, and he and Brando end up in the shower together. And yet it's not porn—it's just a bad film no one saw! Most people know Brando from *Zoey 101*, a show one of my nieces watched. He's even hotter in the show Nate is writing about, which is on ABC Family Channel—a station I don't believe I've ever turned on. We did track down some clips of him with his shirt off and he's quite spectacular. Although he plays gay convincingly, there's no evidence that he is in real life. However, he's obviously a supporter. Last summer, he appeared in a parody of the film *Quarantine*, which was called *Queerantime*! In this short, kids in a high school caught "the gay" after being taught about same-sex marriage. He's seen briefly running through the halls in a towel. Loads of pics and clips on BillyMasters.com.

When a top model is begging to bottom, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Have I mentioned my birthday is coming up? Yes, Chicago, on Feb. 13, Billy will be a chronological year older—even if his spirit is fighting it every step of the way! Feel free to join in the celebrations at [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com), where we routinely fulfill all of your salacious celebrity needs. If you've got salacious personal needs, feel free to write me at [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before Greg and Pamela dance in their old swimsuits! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



Greg Louganis has dance fever.

The season belongs to the **KING OF HEARTS** and maybe the Queen!

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# Pride House debuts at Winter Olympics

BY ROSS FORMAN

The LGBT community certainly will have a proud presence at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver (Feb. 12-28), even if there are not any openly gay athletes.

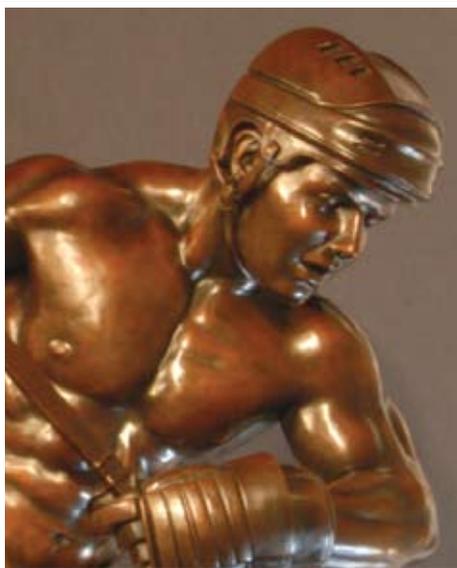
The first-ever Olympic Pride House will be located in the boutique hotel known as The Pan Pacific Whistler Village Centre, marking the first time in Olympic history that gay athletes will have a dedicated place to relax with family, friends and fans.

The Pride house was coordinated by GayWhistler.com, whose WinterPRIDE gay ski week has been named the number-one gay-ski event in the world by Gay.com and PlanetOut.

Pride House will be open Feb. 8-March 24, for three events: The Olympics, WinterPRIDE and the Paralympics.

"This is a very exciting time for the resort of Whistler, and I am thrilled to be able to contribute in making these games one of the most inclusive to date," said Dean Nelson, 40, of Whistler, who is the CEO/executive producer of GayWhistler.com and Pride House. "There is a lot of excitement and energy around what we are creating with Pride House. It has never really been done before, and that is giving people a new reason to be excited about the Olympics.

"The [local] annual Gay & Lesbian ski week, WinterPRIDE, normally happens the first week of February. With the 2010 Olympics scheduled [to start] the week following, we needed to look at how we could work with our local community, tourism bureau and the Games producer in find-



A work by Pride House artist Edmund Haakoson. Photo courtesy of Dean Nelson

ing a time slot that would work for everyone. We determined that the transition period of March 1-8 in between the Olympics and the Paralympics would work best for everyone. Once we had secured the festival's week we began working on a strategy to be part of the Olympics by creating a venue that would be a fun and celebratory place while creating a dialogue on homophobia within sport and beyond."

Nelson said the only expectation for Pride House is "to create a warm, welcoming environment where like-minded individuals can come and cheer on their favorite athletes, meet people from around the world, and to create a dialogue on homophobia within sport by having this diversity pavilion part of the Games."

Pride House has several events planned, including special movie screenings of Training Rules, presented by CAAWS, the Canadian Association for Advancement of Women in Sports & Physical Activity; and Beyond Gay: The Politics of Pride, presented by PFLAG Canada (Parents &

Friends of Lesbians & Gays). Both screenings will include special post-screening panel discussions featuring Canadian Olympic gold medalist Mark Tewksbury as emcee. Plus, there will be a special presentation by Pride House artists Edmund Haakoson and Jeff Sheng.

Pride House Whistler's maximum capacity is 100 people; the Pride House Vancouver Celebration Venue's is about 300.

"Our primary goal for Pride House is based on awareness and creating dialogue on homophobia within sports and at the community at large," said Nelson, who has lived in the skiing mecca of Whistler for 15 years. "Therefore, our goal is not determined by [the] number of visitors. We know that people will be curious about the pavilion and will want to come and experience the pavilion and see some of the art exhibitions we will have on display, watch the Olympics, hang out and meet interesting people from around the world."

And what about safety?

"The resort community is a very open and welcoming environment that embraces the value of being authentic," Nelson said. "The community is very proud of the initiatives that we are creating and our fight for respect and equality throughout the world. We do not anticipate we will have [anti-gay] problems, but [we are] working with the Pan Pacific Whistler Village Centre and the local authorities. We have procedures in place that we are able to act upon should the need arise."

Nelson, who is single, said his favorite sports are snowboarding, hiking and mountain biking. And, naturally, he is a fan of the hometown Vancouver Canucks of the National Hockey League (NHL). His favorite pro athlete is international rugby sensation Gareth Thomas who, in December, announced he is gay.

Nelson participated in the 2006 and 2009 World Outgames in Montréal and Copenhagen, respectively, in the human-rights conferences.

"It is our hope that London 2012 will want to continue with the concept and produce Pride House and, more importantly, in Sochi in 2014 [since] being gay in Russia is not as comfortable. Having this pavilion [in Sochi] could be a safe and welcoming venue for many. We would be honored to have this as a legacy we are able to offer future Olympics," Nelson said.

Nelson said he does, in fact, expect Pride House to be visited by Olympians, along with their family, friends and allies, regardless of sexual identity or preference.

"Pride House is a substantial investment, considering we are renting prime space during the Olympics for a total of 42 days, spanning the Olympics, WinterPRIDE and the Paralympic Games," Nelson said. "Pride House is only made possible by the generous support of our sponsors that believe in the concept and want to be part of this historical event. Our sponsors include: St. Paul's Hospital Foundation-BC Centre in Excellence in HIV/AIDS, Barefoot Wines, Whistler Beer, Whistler Water, Ethical Bean Coffee, Interactive Male, Sugoi, Air Canada, GLISA, InterPride, Travel Gay Canada, Qmunity-BC's Queer Resource Centre, Virgin Radio, Whistler Question, Pink Banana and LOV Magazine.

So how will Pride House be judged a success?

It already is, Nelson said, "in that our goal was to create a dialogue on homophobia and raise awareness.

"We have already generated good pre-Olympic coverage on the pavilion and anticipate once the world media descend on Vancouver/Whistler that will only intensify with even more global coverage. In the last couple months, we have seen

some high-profile athletes and coaches come out and we hope with Pride House it may give the nudge, the inspiration to others to come out and celebrate their full authentic selves. Having more positive role models for our youth to look up to and inspire to. Perhaps this may prevent one less teenage suicide, public pressure may help repeal legislation that openly discriminates against LGBT people."

Pride House has already received incredible worldwide media coverage in such outlets as the New York Times, Globe & Mail, National Post, UK's Guardian, Italy's Republic and Australia's DNA magazine, plus various radio and TV networks.

"The Olympics made producing the annual Gay & Lesbian Ski week a bit more complicated," Nelson admitted. "Some of our venues have changed slightly and it has also meant that we are keeping the programming of WinterPRIDE quite streamlined. It has forced us to be very proactive and get all of our programming in place well ahead of schedule. Pride House is just complimenting those efforts.

"We encourage everyone to come out and support the initiative by talking about homophobia and celebrating our accomplishments. Facebook, Twitter, blog your experiences and share your stories. By being more visible, it gives us the ability to move forward and inspire others around us to live full authentic lives and being proud of who we are."

## Female arm wrestlers Feb. 19

The Chicago League of Lady Arm Wrestlers is holding "CLLAW V" Friday, Feb. 19, at The Mystic Celt, 3443 N. Southport, 9 p.m.-12 a.m.

Tickets are \$25 and include access to a three-hour open bar. Proceeds from the benefit, brought by Sideshow Theatre Company, will benefit Rock for Kids. See [www.cllaw.wordpress.com](http://www.cllaw.wordpress.com) or [www.SideshowTheatre.org](http://www.SideshowTheatre.org).

## Red Stars holding winter clinics

The local women's pro team Chicago Red Stars is holding multiple soccer clinics throughout Chicagoland.

Several sessions include the opportunity to learn alongside Red Stars defender and 1999 World Cup champion Kate Markgraf as well as Red Stars forward and former University of Illinois All-American Ella Masar. Space is limited for the Red Stars' winter clinics, so register early.

Contact Red Stars Camp Director Kate Westfall at 708-496-9511, or register online at [ChicagoRedStars.com](http://ChicagoRedStars.com). Winter sessions run through Feb. 27.

## Skibudz going to Whistler, B.C.

The LGBT club Skibudz is going to Whistler, British Columbia, March 2-7 for Whistler's Winter Pride.

Members are staying at the Coast Blackcomb Suites at Whistler, which is a "ski-in/ski-out" location.

Direct flights from O'Hare Airport to Vancouver are available, and are most expensive than flights that have layovers in Seattle, Wash. A bus is available for about \$108 Canadian (\$101 U.S.) round trip. A lift ticket is approximately another \$350 Canadian (\$326 U.S.).

See [www.skibudz.org](http://www.skibudz.org).

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Sidetrack	3	2	Sidetrack	3	2	Spin	2	2
Roscoe's	2	3	Sofo	3	2	Taste of Heaven	2	2
Hamburger Mary's	1	3	Gotcha Covered Blinds	3	2	Triad Entertainment	1	4
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**Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC**

A widely published author and speaker, Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas.

He is a longtime advocate for and member of the LGBT community, and is involved in several charitable groups, community associations, and professional organizations.

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