



Boys in the Band

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Freedom to Marry

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Cubs' Laura Ricketts: Owner making history

BY TRACY BAIM

When Laura Ricketts and the rest of her family closed on the deal to purchase the Chicago Cubs baseball franchise last fall, the furthest thing from her mind was the impact this would have on the gay community. Even though Laura was an out lesbian activist and philanthropist in Chicago for several years, the Cubs deal was all about the team.

A few months later, Ricketts does realize the impact of being the only openly gay owner of a major league men's sports franchise in the U.S., and also a rare woman owner and board member. She wants to make sure to serve both the Cubs and her community well.

And this year, Ricketts, 42, and her partner of five years are not just becoming part of Cubs history, they are also welcoming a new Cubs fan into the family: Laura is pregnant and is expecting a baby girl in May.

"We're extremely excited [that] we're expecting a baby in spring," Laura said. "This is a big year for us, not only in regards to the Cubs acquisition, but if you can imagine, for my partner and I an even bigger blessed event. My whole family is excited."

Laura sat down for an interview with Windy City Times at Wrigley Field Feb. 17, as the Cubs head into Spring training and her family looks forward to their first season as owners of the



Laura Ricketts poses in front of Wrigley Field Feb. 17. Photo by Hal Baim

Turn to page 6

Obama's health plan excludes LGBTs

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

President Obama released a new health care reform bill Monday that he says incorporates work done in the House and Senate and adds ideas from Republican members of Congress. But there's no inclusion in this new proposed measure of any of the gay-related provisions in the original House bill.

But it's not all bad news. The president's proposal calls for \$11 billion for "the operation, expansion, and construction of community health centers" around the country. And that money could help at least some LGBT and HIV centers around the country.

Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., the openly gay member of Congress who was a leader in adding pro-gay provisions to the House health reform

bill, says she hasn't given up hope. She called President Obama's proposal Monday "an important step forward" that "helps to regain our momentum" on health care reform efforts.

But, she added, "it is not the final word."

In fact, it's not even a bill, yet. The president's proposal is a "new starting point," as White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs put it during a routine press briefing Monday. Gibbs and other White House spokespersons have been cautious in laying out what they believe will happen next on the proposal. A key turning point, they say, will be a much-publicized summit Thursday between the President, Democratic leaders, and key Republicans.

But prospects for the leaders to agree on at least a draft bill for the Senate and House to take up anew has already been dimmed by statements from Republican leaders who are sup-

posed to be heading into that crucial Feb. 25 meeting.

"The president has crippled the credibility of this week's summit by proposing the same massive government takeover of health care based on a partisan bill the American people have already rejected," said House Minority Leader John Boehner. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell echoed Boehner, calling the president's proposal "another partisan, back-room bill."

Prospects for adding back in the pro-gay House provisions are, of course, even worse and have clearly not improved since last December when they failed to make it into the Senate bill. And the Senate bill is where the president's proposal starts.

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The Ring (above) is one of the productions reviewed in Windy City Times this week. Read page 13.

Photo by Michael Brosilow



Movie critic Richard Knight, Jr. reviews The Ghost Writer and Sissy Boy (above). Find out more on page 14.

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Photos on left side of cover (from top): Photo of two members of The Boys in the Band cast by Carol Rosegg; photo from Freedom to Marry by Emmanuel Garcia; photo of Megan Matteson courtesy of Matteson

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IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING

Etiquette expert Steven Petrow (right) talks with WCT about the proper manners regarding all sorts of situations, including coming out of the closet.



Photo by Ernest Dollar

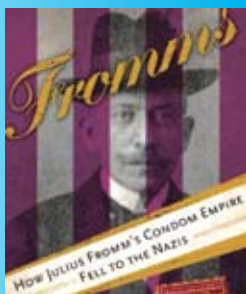
IT'S A HISTORY TO ME



Rev. Irene Monroe (left) has written a provocative piece, "Do we still need to celebrate Black History Month?"

PAGE LEFT

Read riveting reviews of And Party Every Day: The Inside Story of Casablanca Records and Fromms: How Julius Fromm's Condom Empire Fell to the Nazis (right).



Lieberman to introduce DADT repeal

BY CHUCK COLBERT

The push to end the U.S. military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy gathered significant momentum this week as Sen. Joe Lieberman, D. Conn., announced he would introduce legislation soon to repeal the federal law banning openly gay service.

The New York Daily News broke the story early Feb. 22. "I've been asked by both the White House and by advocacy groups in the gay rights community to be the lead sponsor, and I am glad to do," Lieberman told columnist James Kirchick.

By mid-morning, Lieberman issued a statement. "I will be proud to be a sponsor of the important effort to enable patriotic gay Americans to defend our national security and our founding values of freedom and opportunity," he said, noting his long-standing opposition dating back to its inception.

"To exclude one group of Americans from serving in the armed forces is contrary to our fundamental principles as outlined in the Declaration of Independence and weakens our defenses by denying our military the service of a large group of Americans who can help our cause," he said.

In his remarks, Lieberman credited President Obama for his "leadership," as well as "support" from Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Michael Mullen.

For any number of reasons, lift-the-ban proponents believe Lieberman, a strong military defense "hawk," is best suited to champion repeal, including his seniority on the armed services committee, close ties to the defense establishment, and credibility with the active duty ser-



U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman.

vice members and veterans, according to Alexander Nicholson, executive director of Washington, D.C.-based Servicemembers United, the nation's largest organization of gay and lesbian troops, veterans and allies.

Additionally, repeal advocates hope Lieberman's status as an Independent would bridge between the partisan divide over repeal, with few Republicans favoring repeal and many Democrats in support. Lieberman even has close ties with McCain, who ardently opposes any changes in the policy.

Sure enough, all eyes are on U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine. As ranking member on the

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, she serves along with Lieberman, its chairman. His good working relationship with her could help bring her on board as a co-sponsor.

"We remain hopeful the Senate bill introduction will be bipartisan and look forward to the specifics on language and a timeline," said Aubrey Sarvis, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), which seeks to provide information and assistance to service members threatened or discharged under the policy.

"We hope the Lieberman bill closely mirrors the Military Readiness Enhancement Act in the House of Representatives," he added, referring to a bill introduced to lift the ban by Rep. Patrick J. Murphy, D-Penn., an Iraqi war veteran, which now has 187 House Sponsors—just 31 votes shy of the 218 votes to assure repeal in the House.

Meanwhile, the details of Lieberman's proposed legislation have not yet been made public. Accordingly, Nicholson of Servicemembers United declined to comment "about the extent to which our proposal is being utilized to construct the bill," he said. Still, "We've been working with [Lieberman's] office closely and the White House, though, so I think we'll be pleased."

Several weeks ago, Servicemembers United in fact released a repeal proposal, right after Secretary Gates and Joint Chiefs chair Adm. Mullen, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee, indicating their support for allowing gays to serve, but only after a year-long study, which would allow the Pentagon to analyze implementation before the actual repeal takes effect.

Gates voiced hope that within 45 days steps could be taken to ease enforcement of the current policy.

So far the reaction from leaders of leading gay-rights organizations has been immediate and upbeat. "Senator Lieberman's announcement of the introduction of a Senate repeal bill is a welcome development following what has already been a historic several weeks in the campaign to end 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,'" said Human Rights Campaign (HRC) President Joe Solmonese.

"As a member of the Armed Services Committee and a longtime leader on issues of national security and foreign policy, Senator Lieberman's leadership on this bill is another positive sign that 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' can end this year."

Grassroots activists and gay-rights organizations show little sign of letting up in marshalling of public support to end "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." HRC, the nation's largest gay political organization, recently launched a lift-the-ban initiative, called "Voices of Honor," to organize veterans in key states that may lobby for critical to votes in the House and Senate to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

Additionally, Internet activists have ramped-up advocacy, with a bloggers' "swarm" announced last week calling on HRC to press its influence on Congress and the White House for repeal.

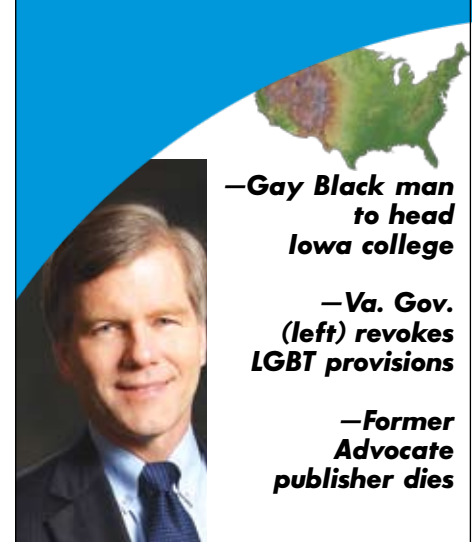
The California-based Courage Campaign, an Internet based advocacy organization, preservers with a letter writing campaign—now nearly 500,000 strong—of correspondence to the President Obama, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and the Army in support of ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

The push to lift the ban on gays in the armed forces took off last month when the president called for its repeal during the State of the Union Address. Secretary Gates' and Admiral Mullen's testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, days later, boosted repeal efforts.

Since then former Secretary of Defense Colin Powell and former Vice President Dick Cheney have also called for a review and end to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," adding more momentum.

Passed by Congress in 1993 and signed into law by President Bill Clinton, "Don't Ask Don't Tell" mandates the discharge of openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual service members. So far nearly

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NATIONAL NEWS



—Gay Black man to head Iowa college

—Va. Gov. (left) revokes LGBT provisions

—Former Advocate publisher dies

14,000 service members have been fired for forced out under the law since its implementation in 1994, including 800 people with specialties such as Arabic language expertise, according to SLDN.

But gay-rights advocates believe repealing the ban is long overdue, pointing to changes in public opinion polling that show overwhelming support for allowing gays to serve. A recent Washington Post/ABC News poll, for example, conducted last week found that 75 percent of Americans believe openly lesbian and gay citizens should be able to serve in the U.S. military, compared to 44 percent who favored openly gay service in 1993 polling.

What's more, recent polling data from the Center for American Progress found that voters value skills over sexual orientation and that repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is not a polarizing issue among likely voters, even in 2010 battleground congressional districts and Senate races.

The price tag of enforcing the policy is staggering, another reason offered for repeal. A 2005 estimated from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that the cost of discharging and soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen fired because of their sexual orientation during the first ten years of the policy totaled at least \$190.5 million, amounting to roughly \$20,000 per service member discharged.

And yet a more recent study by the Palm Center, a think tank at the University of California, Santa Barbara, found that the GAO's analysis left out of consideration the high cost of training discharge commissioned officers for being gay. Factoring in that cost, the Palm Center calculated a \$363.8 million total cost to taxpayers, representing a \$173.3 million increase—or 91 percent, more than the GAO's original estimate.

Meanwhile, debate continues this week on Capitol Hill over ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," with testimony expected before the Senate Armed Services Committee from the secretaries of the Army and Navy, along with their respective service chiefs.

This week, the Palm Center is also set to release a report, a comprehensive new study on foreign militaries that already allow openly gay service members. The 152-page report, "Gays in Foreign Militaries 2010: A Global Primer" concludes that a quick implementation of the change is not disruptive and in fact is the preferred strategy.

The study's principal author, Nathaniel Frank, who also wrote the book "Unfriendly Fire: How the Gay Ban Undermines the Military and Weakens America," said in telephone interview that the study's finding stands in direct opposition to the views of Pentagon leaders, who have asked for a year or more to end and are also opposed to the 1993 Rand Report, which found that "phased-in implementation might allow enemies of the new policy to intentionally create problems to prove the policy unworkable."

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LOCAL NEWS

Drug task force starts Web site

BY ANDREW DAVIS

In a meeting held Feb. 17 at the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), 333 S. State, the Chicago Task Force on LGBT Substance Use and Abuse announced that it has started a Web site that functions as an information repository.

The Web site, www.ChicagoLGBTSubstance.com, has several pages, including "Body, Mind, & Soul," which discusses emotional and mental health in addition to the physical; "Substances," which tackles alcohol, opiates and tobacco, among other drugs; and "Chicago Services," which provides a list of references and agencies that aid in drug treatment, but which also includes a chat room.

Pamela McCann, one of the task force's new co-chairs, stated that the site cover material the task force developed over nine months. She also discussed the recent Creating Change conference that took place in Dallas and how the social/online media is "generation-specific." McCann added that the Twitter hash tag for that conference is "cc10," meaning that tweets that mention an item with a "#" prefix will appear when the tag is typed in the search box; she said that one has been proposed for the task force.

Simone Koehlinger, a former co-chair who is the CDPH's director of the office of LGBT health, gave a presentation on the top 10 lesbian health priorities. In doing so, she cited a paper from the Gay & Lesbian Medical Association entitled "Top 10 Things Lesbians Should Discuss with their Healthcare Provider."

The issues covered in the paper include breast cancer, depression/anxiety, heart health, gynecological cancer, fitness, tobacco, alcohol, substance use, domestic violence and osteoporosis. During her talk, Koehlinger presented several startling statistics—including that, according

to one study conducted by Chicago Health and Life Experiences of Women (CHLEW), 20 percent of bisexual women and lesbians in the sample had attempted suicide at least once. However, the "good news," as Koehlinger stated, was that the study also found that 47 percent of lesbians had seen a mental-health professional within the last two years.

Ed Negrón, the task force's other co-chair, said that the group will explore aspects of LGBT health that reflect the entire community. Negrón said that the task force will "focus on one letter at a time in the LGBTQ community, which will give us a wider range of [ideas] to come up with."

Reflecting a new agenda that includes quarterly meetings instead of monthly ones, McCann said that the next general meeting will take place May 19. However, a March 2 meeting is planned that will focus on the task force's direction; consultant/executive coach H Walker is slated to attend.

HUD housing forum Feb. 25

U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Assistant Secretary Raphael Bostic will host a town-hall meeting Thursday, Feb. 25, at Chicago City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle, Room 201A, 1-4 p.m., with members of the LGBT community to explore the issue of housing discrimination that specifically targets them.

HUD is preparing to launch a groundbreaking national study of discrimination against members of the LGBT community regarding the sale and rental of housing. Before designing this research effort, HUD is conducting a national listening tour with public meetings slated for Chicago, New York City and San Francisco.

Others slated to attend at Bill Greaves, liaison to Mayor Richard Daley and Director of the Advisory Council on LGBT Issues, and Simone Koehlinger, LGBT director for the Chicago Department of Health.

OBAMA from cover

"The president's proposal assumes the base Senate bill," said Shin Inouye, a spokesman for the White House with LGBT media. But Inouye pointed out that the president's proposal does include "data collection."

The "data collection" mentioned in the House bill called for the establishment of an office of Assistant Secretary for Health Information to promote the collection of data about "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" (along with a great many other categories) to help identify health issues and the need for programs. The proposal posted by the White House Monday calls for improved "data collection and analysis, facilitates better data sharing, and requires the development of standards for the collection of data regarding the nation's health and the performance of the nation's health care, including health disparities."

Ronald Johnson, deputy director of the AIDS Action Council, said he is concerned that some aspects of the House bill that were favorable to the LGBT communities will be left out but that the proposal is still "a moving ball."

Johnson and Darrel Cummings, chief of staff for the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center, said the \$11 billion designated for community health center money is a definite plus.

Cummings noted that the Los Angeles center has earned designation as a "Federally Qualified Health Center-Look Alike"—a designation that means it is eligible to receive funding under the Public Health Service Act money for underserved populations but has not yet received any.

"We have been awaiting notice of funding availability for some time now and are very hopeful that this legislation would create the funding necessary for that to happen," explained Cummings.

Most LGBT and HIV activists had supported the House bill because it included key LGBT



U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin.

specific provisions, including provisions. In addition to the data collection, it prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the provision of health care; enabled people with HIV and low incomes to obtain Medicare coverage earlier in the course of their illness; and eliminated the tax that gay employees must pay if their same-sex partners or spouses receive health coverage from their employers' plan. Straight employees don't pay that tax but, for gay couples, the coverage is characterized by the federal government as additional income for the gay employee.

Baldwin said Feb. 22 she would "continue to fight for all of my priorities in the final healthcare-reform bill, including those related to LGBT health."

Baldwin warned last September that there were "many reasons why people in the LGBT community ought to be following the health care reform very closely."

"Our lives are very much going to be affected by this legislation," said Baldwin at the time, in a videotaped message, "and certainly our health is."

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CUBS from cover

Cubs. The team is among the country's most loved, despite having not won the World Series in 102 years.

Laura and her three brothers (Pete, Tom and Todd) grew up in Omaha, Neb., in the 1960s and 1970s. Laura was the third oldest. Their father J. Joseph Ricketts founded the company later known as TD Ameritrade in the 1970s, and he and his wife Marlene worked extremely hard to grow the company. It took years for their sweat equity to pay off, but it did just that and the family joined the ranks of the country's richest once TD Ameritrade, an online brokerage firm, went public.

Tom, the second oldest child, spearheaded the Cubs effort. Laura said that the plan came about in part because the family wanted to work together in a family business environment again. All the family members are co-owners, and the four siblings make up the board of directors. Tom is Executive Chairman of the Cubs, and the most hands-on day-to-day.

Laura's area of emphasis for the Cubs is government relations, community relations and philanthropy, specifically through the Cubs Care charitable giving. Chicago Cubs Charities has given millions of dollars over the years, including donations to neighboring gay groups such as Center on Halsted (the gymnasium is sponsored by the Cubs), Howard Brown Health Center and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

"Since 1991 Cubs Care has given over \$15 million. They've given over \$1 million a year the last five years," Laura said. The mission is to make grants to non-profits that aid children with special needs, support youth sports programs, help victims of domestic violence and assist social service efforts in Lakeview. "In general, I'd like to see all of those efforts expand, we should be doing more, and the family and the team have expressed an interest in expanding," Laura said. "I think the Cubs have come quite a long way, there's just always more that can be done. I'd like to see it expand for the LGBT community. We hosted the Closing Ceremony for the Gay Games in 2006, and we support LGBT organizations within our community."

Exploring the world

All four Ricketts children were encouraged to explore their own passions, and all four ended up in Chicago for college. Todd attended Loyola while the others went to the University of Chicago. Laura started as an economics major then took a break before returning to get a degree in philosophy in 1995. After working in the "real world," Laura returned to school, this time to receive a law degree from the University of Michigan in 1998. Chicago pulled her back, and she worked at a law firm before leaving to follow her entrepreneurial spirit, co-founding the internet venture Ecotravel, LLC, where she is still the president.

The timing of Ecotravel's formation wasn't ideal: starting an online venture to promote ecotourism right before the 9/11 tragedy and the dot.com bubble bursting. Laura and her partners realized that in order to weather the challenging environment they would need to take a more long-term approach and alter their business plan.

"I began getting more involved with LGBT volunteering as well as housing issues," Laura said. "A lot of my time was going to help nonprofit organizations. One was Housing Opportunities for Women, where I now chair their leadership council. They provide comprehensive support services for women. They find them permanent homes, it's not a shelter, and then they provide support to help them avoid homelessness again. They deal with the issues that made them homeless to begin with, the underlying issues, such as domestic violence, health issues and substance abuse."

By the mid 2000s, Laura also was getting more involved in the gay community, specifically through Lambda Legal.

"The political environment several years ago

made me realize the importance of being out and standing up for myself, and really being involved in my community," she said. "I had participated somewhat in all sorts of organizations in Chicago, but I was really impressed with Lambda Legal, the impact they have not just on individuals but on the community as a whole. I was also trying to help get more women involved. A lot of fundraisers in the community are very male, so I started working with Mona Noriega who was at Lambda at the time, and Cindy Homan at Lambda, to start doing women's social events. We also partnered with lesbian entrepreneurs and other women's and gay groups. We worked with GayCo (a performance group), the Chopping Block, and others to make women aware of the important work Lambda does. The reach of their work is amazing."

Laura continues on Lambda Legal's national board, where she has served almost five years. She's also on the board of GayCo and has co-chaired events for Equality Illinois (which recently honored Laura for her work) and Howard Brown Health Center.

Laura has also gotten more political, and served on Barack Obama's LGBT finance committee during the 2008 campaign. She now co-chairs the Democratic National Committee's LGBT Leadership Council nationally. "The aim is outreach to the LGBT community, and also to do fundraising within the LGBT community," she said. "It's really to raise the visibility of our issues."

What does Laura think of the recent call by some gay activists to "pause" donations to the DNC until more movement is made on gay issues? Laura said she has "mixed feelings."

"I appreciate the impatience," she said. "I think it's created a healthy dialogue, which is needed. I think that we need more people speaking up, saying it's not enough, that we don't have enough. We need that advocating voice. It also needs to be constructive, to open the dialogue. At the same time, we really need to strengthen the president's hand. I appreciate the pushing ... I want these rights, too But I don't think withdrawing from the process is the answer. In the end it's good more people are speaking out."

I really believe Obama's heart is in the right place, and that he fully intends to follow through on his campaign promises. I have no doubt about that. It's a matter of a timetable. And of course, for us, tomorrow is too late, and yesterday is not fast enough."

For Laura, coming out to her family as a Democrat may have been more difficult than coming out as a lesbian.

"I grew up in a very conservative family. Nebraska is very conservative," she said. "I was raised Catholic. On the gay issue, my family was immediately accepting. Every single member of my family is supportive, they all love my partner and treat her as a member of the family, an in-law. I came out to various family members in my early 30s. I didn't really come out to myself until I was about 30. I knew, but I really didn't take the step and come out until then."

The harder one was explaining her political views. "While there are differences of opinion in our family, we're all very accepting of each other," she said. "And we appreciate the different perspectives. I grew up white, middle class, conservative and Christian. When I came out, suddenly I was the other. I think it's a real gift to have that perspective, and it helps me appreciate when people have a different perspective. It makes me appreciate my family members when they have a different perspective."

Laura's brother Peter Ricketts was the Republican nominee for the 2006 U.S. Senate seat from Nebraska, where he and his family live. He ran on a very conservative platform, including against gay marriage and abortion, and was helped in his unsuccessful bid by George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

"When he ran for office, we talked about the issues more," Laura said. "At the time it was more of an issue, it was more relevant. We're on opposite sides of some issues. ... I don't know

about other families, but in our family we're always going to have differences of opinion, on not just political issues. I don't know any family that doesn't have that. There's always that underlying relationship and underlying affection we have for one another. I can't see anything affecting the overall relationship. When you love somebody, your motivation is to really have a serious dialogue."

About being raised Catholic, Laura also has mixed emotions. "I think that being raised Catholic really provided a lot of valuable underpinnings, as to who I am, how I live my life. I think there's a lot of beauty and truths that I've been taught, in how to live, how to conduct yourself and walk in the world. To whom much is given, much is expected. That comes very much from my Catholic upbringing. You can see that in my whole family, particularly with regards to the Cubs. While it was very hard-won fight to become owners of the Cubs, I think we all greatly appreciate the unique position we are in. How fortunate we are to really be stewards of this amazing and historic franchise. We don't take that lightly at all. To appreciate that, while it's a



From the October 2009 press conference announcing that the Ricketts family purchase of the Cubs franchise had gone through. Photo of (from left) Pete, Tom, Laura and Todd Ricketts courtesy of the Chicago Cubs Baseball Club, LLC/Stephen Green

very privileged position, it's also a responsibility to the fans, the city, the community, and part of that is the LGBT community. To appreciate this privilege that has been given to us, to make something out of it, to give back, to do something good with it."

Laura's own interest in sports came at an early age. "I like to say I was the best athlete in the family," she said, laughing. "My mother would agree with that, but my brothers might argue. I was always in some kind of sport, year-round. Softball, volleyball, basketball, track. All year round. Softball was my primary sport. ... I really loved softball. Growing up in Nebraska, the whole family were Cornhusker football fans. There aren't a lot of pro sports there. ... So coming to Chicago, it was fabulous, there are so many great sports teams, and the Cubs are a big part of that."

Laura also says that Title IX, which mandated equality for women in sports, was just in time for her own athletic interests. "I think you can track the year that my Little League division started offering softball to girls back to Title IX. My brothers had participated in baseball, and it's something I wanted to do as well. Participating in sports, particularly team sports, I find teaches you so much about how to work with people, it teaches you teamwork, how to be a team member, whether in athletics or at work."

Buying the Cubs

The family's interest in sports thus made it appealing when Tom first suggested they purchase the Cubs. But where did they get the money for the purchase? That traces back to their family's roots.

"My parents founded Ameritrade in various iterations in the mid 1970s. We were not raised

with money at all, we were the poorest on the block," Laura said. "My parents scrimped and saved and every penny went back into the business. We grew up watching them work hard, and with that work ethic, putting in the hours. Obviously, it paid off for them, they are very successful, but all the success they really earned. Ameritrade didn't become as big as it did until most of us were grown. Ameritrade went public when I was in law school. My father really encouraged us to really go and find our own careers and passions, and after age 30 we could consider coming back to work for Ameritrade. I did think about it briefly, but decided I wanted to stay in Chicago."

Ameritrade did eventually bring a lot of wealth to their family, "but it's no longer our family business, and hasn't been for a long time. [But] we all grew up with a sense of family working together to really build a quality product," she said.

It was Tom's idea to pursue the Cubs. "He realized the Tribune would likely be wanting to sell, and thought this might be a way we could put some of that community family wealth together

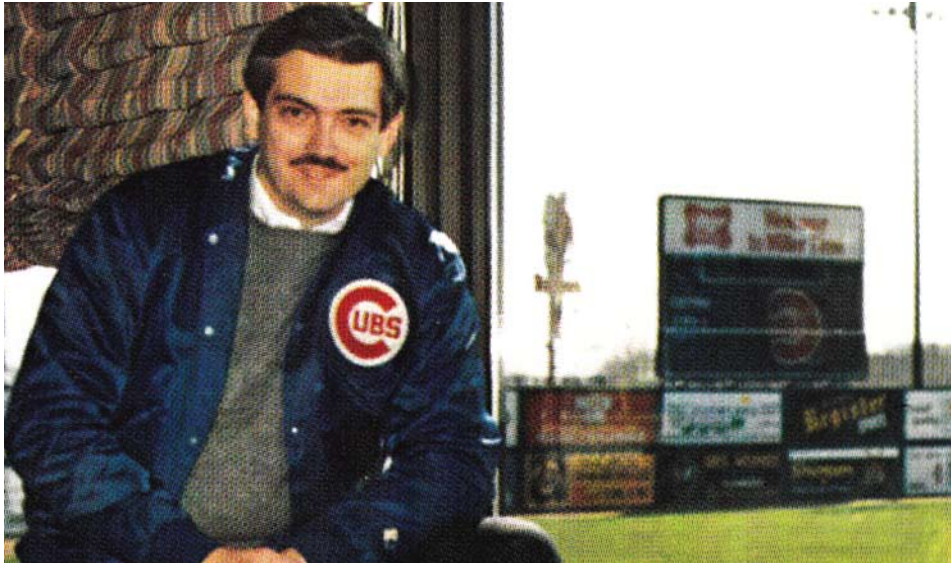
and it would be a way to bring the family together to create some of that family business environment for all of us," Laura said. "It would be a project we could all participate in for generations to come, not just us but our children and their children."

"I think we all kind of thought it was a bit of a dream. We've all been Cubs fans for years. Tom was really our leader. The Cubs are fortunate to have Tom at the helm. He has the personality and character that is so well suited to the job and he was able to navigate the whole family through the process. He's very smart, patient, he's very strategic, he is very diplomatic, and an incredibly hard worker. At times during the [years-long] process various family members wanted to just give up, it was so hard, and complicated. Tom was right person to help us stay on course and weed through the details and ramifications. We were all part of the process but the bulk of the work fell on Tom's shoulders."

"Because of the nature of the family ownership and because it is a significant investment for the family, all of us intend to be a little more involved than you might find for the average board member of a corporation," Laura said. "I actually am spending a fair amount of my time on Cubs business and I could be doing a lot more."

When the \$900 million purchase of the Cubs went through in October 2009, the Ricketts family outlined three primary goals they had for the franchise. First, they want to "build a winning organization both on the field and off. That means being competitive every year and bringing a World Series championship to the city," Laura said.

Baseball history includes gay owner of minor league Cubs franchise



Rich Eychaner in his minor league days.

BY ROSS FORMAN

Laura Ricketts is the first openly gay owner of a major league men's sports team, but Chicago Cubs' history also includes a gay man who was part owner of a minor league Cubs affiliate.

Rich Eychaner (brother of Chicago gay philanthropist, Democratic Party donor and business owner Fred Eychaner) was asked to invest in an Iowa-based minor league affiliate of the Cubs in late-1981. And Eychaner told Ken Grandquist, who was looking to purchase the team, that, yes, he would invest, but with a clause.

Eychaner told Grandquist: "I don't invest in places that I'm not involved in from a management standpoint. At least on the Board of Directors."

Grandquist considered Eychaner's stipulation for about six weeks and then, in early-1982, called to welcome Eychaner -- and his money -- to the minor league team.

Eychaner was a Vice President for the Cubs' AAA affiliate, which is the highest-rung in minor league baseball, truly one step from the majors.

Eychaner spent four seasons with the team, which he was largely responsible for re-naming the Iowa Cubs from the Iowa Oaks, and also changing the team's uniforms to match the Chicago Cubs. He also was a TV color commentator for the team's Iowa Cable Network broadcasts. And, he helped the team sell all of its box seats for the 1982 season, which was a team first.

"In 1981, I was looking for something that would help tie me into the community," Eychaner said. "The baseball team seemed like a logical fit."

Eychaner was one of four primary team owners, and he was the third-largest investor of the four. "The club took off and did well," he said.

"My four years with the team was a lot of fun."

Eychaner, now 61, was an openly gay, high-ranking team executive -- and he did not endure any hardships over his sexuality.

"Obviously there were no openly gay players," during his tenure with the Iowa Cubs, "but someday we'll have an openly gay player," said Eychaner, who is originally from DeKalb, Ill.

The Iowa Cubs then featured several players who eventually played in the major leagues, such as Scott Fletcher, Mel Hall, Pat Tabler, Craig Lefferts and Dan Rohn.

Eychaner did not have a partner during his baseball run. Today, he said he is, "dating."

"The players [on the Iowa teams] seemed comfortable being around [gay people], just as with straight people," he said.

Ironically, the Chicago Cubs are now splashed into the LGBT spotlight as lesbian Laura Ricketts is part of the new ownership group.

"I was excited" to hear about Laura, Eychaner

said. "In a lot of respects, I had hoped there would be open LGBT involvement with professional sports long before now. It's one of those things that should have happened 20- or 30-years ago. But I'm pleased it's finally happened. I'm pleased she's open. From what I can tell and what I've read, it really hasn't made much of an impact, which is the way it should be.

"Still, she is a ground-breaking person.

"And, [thanks to Ricketts], it would not surprise me if, three- or four-years from now, there are several more out/open LGBT people who have ownership interest or significant roles on major professional teams."

Eychaner, who lives in Des Moines, now runs Eychaner Properties, Inc., a real estate company.

What about an open, active major league player?

"Just the fact that she's there, in such a high-profile job, will make a difference," if an active player wanted to come out, Eychaner said.

Eychaner graduated from DeKalb Senior High School in 1966, and then moved on to Illinois Wesleyan University. He ultimately received his degree Magna Cum Laude from The American University in 1972.

After a brief stint as a seminary student at St. Paul School of Theology, he moved to Iowa to open an Allied Van Lines.

"I thought I was moving to Des Moines for a month or two [in 1975], just to open a branch

[office] for my father. As it turned out, it just made more sense to run Iowa and go my own direction," he said. "After three years [in Iowa], the stress of trying to build a business from scratch, and being in the closet, was so great. It became clear to me that I had to come out and that I needed to be active in gay rights issues, mostly because no one else was speaking up for gay people in Iowa in any substantial way. I also felt I needed to be out for my own mental and emotional health.

"I knew that people may not hire me, or my

company, or quit working for me, because I was gay. But I couldn't survive in the closet."

He came out in November, 1978.

"I did lose some employees and I did have customers who would no longer use my company," he said. "But I was out, proud and prominent in the community, sort of a de-facto spokesman for the city."



April 9, 1987 Windy City Times article and photo by Tracy Baim. In the photo are activists pushing for Illinois gay rights, including Howard and Mildred Eychaner of PFLAG.

The Eychaners' role in Illinois

The name Eychaner is well known in Illinois and Iowa for a variety of reasons. As the story in this issue reports, Rich Eychaner has been a gay activist and businessman in Iowa for many years, but his roots are in DeKalb, Ill., where he is from. His parents were Howard and Mildred Eychaner, and his brother is Fred Eychaner, a large donor to the Democratic Party in Illinois and nationally. Fred is also well known as a large donor to LGBT and AIDS groups, both individually and through his Alphawood Foundation.

This week as part of our Windy City Times year-long celebration of our 25 years in business, we fondly remember Howard and Mildred Eychaner, who obviously raised Rich and Fred well (they had two gay and two straight children). Howard and Mildred were amazing and

passionate parents who were part of the early work of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) in Illinois. I remember covering them in Springfield, lobbying for the state gay-rights bill in the 1980s. They were incredible supporters of gay rights, and when they passed away several years ago, many in the community remembered their important contributions to the movement.

It has been said that the community will not succeed without the help and support of our allies. The Eychaner family has had both: openly gay men who have made an impact, and their parents, who were equally important to the movement for gay rights.

-- Tracy Baim

Want more about Rich Eychaner? Here goes:

- Was a founding chairman for the Gay Coalition of Iowa.
- Was a co-founder for the First Iowa Caucus Project, advocating gay rights in presidential campaigns.
- Was a Board Member for the Iowa Civil Liberties Union.
- Was a Republican candidate for Congress in Iowa's 4th District, and was Iowa's first openly gay candidate and second openly gay Republican candidate for Federal office in the U.S.
- Was the founder/president for KKDM radio station
- A member of the Governor's Equal Opportunity for Employment Task Force.
- President and founder for Iowa's Matthew Shepard Scholarship Program for LGBT students in Iowa.
- Co-founder for GLBT Youth in Iowa Schools Task Force.
- Co-founder Iowa Pride Network.
- Board Member of Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus
- President of Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

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From left: Jay Very, Modesto "Tico" Valle, Congressman Mike Quigley, Serena Worthington and Vernita Gray. Photo by Hal Baim

Quigley presents SAGE grant

BY JOHN FENOGLIO

The historian Arnold Toynbee once said, "A society's quality and durability can best be measured by the respect and care given its elderly citizens." That sentiment was, in part, the object of celebration at the Center on Halsted on Feb. 15 because Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders (SAGE) received \$475,000, the second largest federal grant in history for an LGBT seniors' program.

Congressman Mike Quigley, who spearheaded the request for federal monies for SAGE, attended Monday's announcement at the Center. He noted that Illinois' budget crisis is having a direct effect on organizations that rely on state funding, saying, "We have to make up for it, to the extent possible, at the federal level until our economy recovers. And, for a very vulnerable community, this grant is very important, particularly at this time. Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders at the Center on Halsted addresses the unique challenges of LGBT seniors. This program is vitally important. I'm proud to be able to provide support for critical community programs like SAGE."

Serena Worthington, the center's senior director of public programs, said that within the greater LGBT community, seniors are unique "in that they are more often isolated" especially within assisted living facilities. The SAGE program, she said, improves the quality of life for LGBT seniors.

"LGBT seniors are often forced back in the closet when they seek housing and healthcare. So our program—SAGE at Center on Halsted—is designed to provide access and information around benefits and referrals, but also to provide a safe and affirming environment for LGBT seniors to be themselves. We provide a safe place for them to come out [of the closet], to explore gender identity change, and to feel a sense of community. That's needed because, without a support system like ours, seniors are more likely to face depression and, overall, poor health outcomes," Worthington explained.

As reported earlier by Windy City Times, the grant will be used for programs to train senior service care providers on how to be more culturally aware and sensitive to the unique challenges and circumstances faced by LGBT seniors. Worthington said that other "special programs" include research on cognitive loss in adults with HIV; adaptive computer equipment for seniors, and an HIV-prevention film for individuals over 50.

Gloria Allen, 64, also attended the event. She said she was pleased by the news of the day because, as she puts it, "I'm older—not that

The marrying kind



More than 300 people attended Lambda Legal's 9th annual Freedom to Marry Reception Feb. 18 at the National Museum of Mexican Art. The museum has hosted the event for three consecutive years. The staged wedding ceremony is Lambda Legal's Midwest Regional Office's largest outreach event of the year. Misty De Berry opened the program by describing the venue as "the LGBT-friendliest" museum. A message that was repeated by Jorge Valdivia, director of performing arts at the NMMA, who welcomed attendees on behalf of the museum's president, Carlos Tortolero, who was absent.

Megan Carney and Holly Hughes presented a 30-minute version of *Let Them Eat Cake*; performed by an ensemble cast of actors uniquely placed in the audience. The play produced by About Face Theatre was created by Carney and Hughes. They recently received sponsorship from the University of Michigan to tour the play outside of Chicago.

Jim Bennett, regional director at Lambda Legal, gave a brief update on gay marriage by denouncing the term itself: "In our mind it is [just] marriage." Currently only five states allow same-sex couples to marry, while others grant some protections. For more information on Lambda Legal, visit www.LambdaLegal.org. Photos and text by Emmanuel Garcia; see more online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

old—and I could use some help with my living situation."

Allen identifies herself as a gay woman. Unlike most gay women, however, Gloria used to be a man. She is a post-op transgender individual and she explained that, as she's gotten older, prejudices still run deep, especially within her low income, senior citizens' building.

"I know many people don't understand me; that they think I'm not living the right life. I hear it. I see it in their eyes when they look at me. But, I'm not a bad person; I human just like everybody else. But, that's why I come here. Folks are good to me here. I'm hoping they [COH] can help me find a better living situation," she said.

Alleged Red Line attackers request trial

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

Three men who were arrested in January for allegedly attacking a gay man on a northbound Red Line train requested a jury trial in their first court appearance last week. They were expected to appear back in court Tuesday, Feb. 23. All three have been charged with battery, a Class A misdemeanor.

The defendants in the case are Kevin McAndrews, 23; Sean Little, 22; and Benjamin Eder, 24. The three men, who live in Evanston, are alleged to have attacked Daniel Hauff, 33, after Hauff attempted to intervene in an argument taking place on the train. In an interview last month with Windy City Times, Hauff claimed that the three men beat him and shouted anti-gay slurs until all parties disembarked at the Argyle stop.

The men were arrested at Argyle. Hauff said that the arresting officers told him they considered the case a hate crime.

Andy Conklin, a spokesperson for the Cook County State's Attorney, said that his office was reviewing the case to determine whether hate-crimes charges should be added, but would not speculate on when or if that decision would be made.

Under Illinois criminal code, hate crimes, including those based on sexual orientation, are a Class 4 felony. Hate can be considered an aggravating factor in sentencing and, according to Illinois law, "accorded weight in favor of imposing a term of imprisonment or may be considered by the court as reason to impose a more severe sentence."



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Sober space loses appeal

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

Windy City Times has learned that Living with Pride, the sober living space for LGBT people that was the subject of a contentious zoning hearing last September, lost its appeal to remain in its current spot at 2543 W. Cullom.

A spokesperson for the city's zoning board of appeals confirmed that the board had denied the appeal by Living with Pride. In the September hearing, representatives of the house argued against Zoning Commissioner Patricia Scudiero's decision that the house needed to be re-zoned to stay in the same location. Some of its neighbors, as well as 47th Ward Alderman Eugene Schuller, had said that they would oppose such a move to re-zone.

Though the executive director and founder of Living with Pride, Dr. Claudia Mosier, declined to comment for this article, court records show that Living with Pride has filed an appeal for administrative review of the board's decision in the Cook County Circuit Court.

Pending the appeal, Living with Pride remains at its current location in the North Center neighborhood. On March 1, Mosier and residents will observe the first anniversary of the opening of the house.

Annual Darrow event March 13

CHICAGO—A group led by attorneys, labor leaders and social-justice advocates that has gathered annually for more than 50 years to honor the memory of attorney Clarence Darrow will meet at the Darrow Bridge in Jackson Park Saturday, March 13, at 10 a.m. for its traditional wreath-tossing into the Jackson Park Lagoon. Darrow's ashes were strewn in the Lagoon after his death March 13, 1938 in Chicago.

The annual event is convened by the Clarence Darrow Commemorative Committee. This year's program will feature a special tribute to the late Leon "Len" Depress, who co-founded the committee in 1958 and remained a leader of the group. Depress (1908-2009) attended last year's event, one of his last public appearances. More than 100 Darrow devotees, civil libertarians, and First Amendment buffs are expected to attend the outdoor wreath-throwing ceremonies behind the Museum of Science and Industry and indoor symposium that follows in the Columbian Room of the adjacent Museum of Science & Industry.

This year's symposium will feature a performance by Gary L. Anderson, a renowned and lauded portrayer of Darrow. Anderson tours year-round as America's only full-time Darrow portrayer. This performance, "Search for Justice," portrays Darrow as legal warrior, engaging the justice system in a presentation that trembles with inescapable timeliness. Anderson is the CEO of The Clarence Darrow Foundation. See www.clarencedarrowfoundation.org.

Judy Besser, great granddaughter of Clarence Darrow, will read a letter from Darrow to Judy's grandmother, in 1929. This letter illustrates Darrow's great wit and sense of humor little known by the general public.

Loyola Law Professor Anita Weinberg—daugh-

ter of Arthur and Lila Weinberg, authors of three books on Darrow and founders of the annual Darrow event—will preside over the indoor program. Tracy Baim—publisher of Windy City Times and daughter of Joy Darrow—will preside at the bridge.

Darrow, characterized as the "attorney for the damned," who was born in 1857 in Farmdale, Ohio, practiced in Chicago and represented the underdog and vigorously opposed capital punishment. None of his many clients was sentenced to death.

Darrow's death was memorialized throughout the world. His ashes and, later, the ashes of his wife Ruby and his son Paul, were scattered from the Darrow Bridge, which was dedicated to his memory by the Chicago Park District in 1957.

Morten on Advocate list

Chicago lesbian Mary Morten was among those featured in a March 2010 Advocate magazine piece entitled "The Coolest Jobs."

Morten, 49, is listed as a consultant and filmmaker. She established her consulting firm, Morten Group, almost a decade ago after serving as Mayor Richard M. Daley's LGBT liaison. Subsequently, she was director of the Office of Violence Prevention for the Chicago Department of Public Health. In addition, Morten has made films and videos for different clients, and is currently making Woke Up Black, a documentary that focuses on five Black Chicago youths.

Others mentioned in the Advocate article include fashion designer Andrew Christian; restaurant/chef Susan Feniger; mayor Evan Low; circus artist Eros Biox; executive assistant Jazmin Sutherlin; and sex-shop owners Rachel Venning and Claire Cavanah.

Affinity hosting Black history event

Affinity Community Services—a non-profit organization that serves Chicago's Black lesbian and bisexual women's community—will hold a Black history event at its office, located at 5650 S. Woodlawn, 2-3:30 p.m., on Saturday, Feb. 27.

Speakers include University of Illinois at Chicago professor/historian John D'Emilio, who will talk about the importance of documenting history. Also, Bergis Jules from the Black Metropolis Research Consortium will discuss the group's effort to survey Chicago Black history archives.

See "Queer Black History Event" on Facebook.

Artemis Singers March 4

Local lesbian feminist choral group Artemis Singers will present a free concert at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 4, at Sulzer Public Library, 4455 N. Lincoln.

"Artemis Singers: Winter Concert" will include old favorites plus new selections being developed for the upcoming Sister Singers Network 10th National Women's Choral Festival, to be held June 30-July 4 at Loyola University Chicago, Lakeshore campus, Mundelein Hall.

See www.artemissingers.org, e-mail info@artemissingers.org or call 773-764-4465. The Artemis Singers also are on Facebook.

QUOTE ON

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

"A PERSISTENT MYTH TELLS US THAT TOO MUCH CLOSENESS with our sons can make them gay or feminine. In fact, most boys turn out to be heterosexual, no matter how their mothers raise them. What boys need is their parents' full acceptance, whether they are gay or straight." — From "Mothers and Sons: How Close is Too Close?," a Nov. 12, 2009, column by Peggy Drexler on *The Huffington Post*.

"TO SUGGEST TO SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THEIR FAMILIES THAT a domestic partnership registry somehow resembles marriage is preposterous. The domestic partnership law in Cleveland and the state constitutional amendment barring same-sex couples from marriage are not in conflict with each other." — Christopher Clark, senior staff attorney in Lambda Legal's Midwest Regional Office, commenting in a Feb. 17 Lambda Legal press release about a *Alliance Defense Fund* lawsuit. The fund, a conservative legal group, filed a lawsuit arguing that Cleveland, Ohio's, domestic-partnership registry violates the state's constitutional amendment banning marriage equality.

"IN RESOUNDING VOTES TODAY, NEW HAMPSHIRE LAWMAKERS SENT a clear signal of their continued support for the freedom to marry, rejecting attempts to strip marriage away from committed couples who happen to be gay. The New Hampshire votes followed a similar stand by legislators in Iowa last week. Iowa and New Hampshire's refusal to take the freedom to marry away underscored the lesson learned in Massachusetts, Vermont, and Connecticut: including same-sex committed couples in marriage helps families and harms no one." — Part of a Feb. 17 statement by Evan Wolfson, executive director of *Freedom to Marry* following the *New Hampshire House of Representatives* votes rejecting HR1590-FN, a bill that would repeal the freedom to marry, and CACR 28, a resolution seeking to amend the state constitution to restrict marriage.

"BY THE WAY, WHEN IT COMES TO QUEEN LATIFAH, it's not 'don't ask, don't tell.' It's 'don't ask, it's obvious.'" — Comedian/author Lisa Lampanelli, in the Dec. 2009/Jan. 2010 issue of *OUT* magazine.

"I LOVE RENÉE DEARLY, but it's hard to beat Matthew!" — A *Single Man* star Colin Firth on which co-star he enjoyed kissing more, Renée Zellweger or Matthew Goode, in the Jan. 4 issue of *US* Magazine.

"KICKS GUYS OUT OF BED for not wearing a condom/Kicks a guy out of bed for wearing a condom" — One of the differences between "gay" and "gay douchebag," as cited by *Details* magazine, December 2009.

"HAS TO REMIND HIMSELF to stay away from the hot young boy at the office/Has to remind himself to stay at least 50 yards away from the hot young boy at the office" — One of the differences between "gay" and "gay douchebag," as cited by *Details* magazine, December 2009.

"I'D ALWAYS CHOOSE SOMEONE YOUNGER. I wanted to smother them with love. I'd take them around the world, try to educate them. One after another they got a Cartier watch, a Versace outfit, maybe a sports car. They didn't have jobs. They were reliant on me. I did this repeatedly. In six months they were bored and hated my guts because I'd taken their lives and self-worth away. I hadn't intended to." — Elton John on early mistakes in love, in the Feb. 18 issue of *Parade* magazine.



You're not watching TV, honey. It's a live show.

—Adam Lambert

"I THINK JESUS WAS A COMPASSIONATE, super-intelligent gay man who understood human problems. On the cross, he forgave the people who crucified him. Jesus wanted us to be loving and forgiving. I don't know what makes people so cruel. Try being a gay woman in the Middle East— you're as good as dead." — Elton John on religion, in the Feb. 18 issue of *Parade* magazine.

"I WAS ATTRACTED TO DAVID IMMEDIATELY. He was very well dressed, very shy. The next night we had dinner. After it, we consummated our relationship. We fell in love very quickly." — Elton John on meeting his longtime partner David Furnish, in the Feb. 18 issue of *Parade* magazine.

"EVERY SATURDAY FOR 16 YEARS, WE'VE SENT EACH OTHER A CARD, no matter where we are in the world, to say how much we love each other. We've never been jealous. We talk about the sexual side of things, things that normally would have frightened me before." — Elton John on keeping the love alive, in the Feb. 18 issue of *Parade* magazine.

"YOU'RE NOT WATCHING TV, HONEY. It's a live show." — Adam Lambert, asking a member of the audience to get off her cell phone, as quoted on *People.com*.



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**MARK
ISHAUG**

HIV services face foreclosure: Will Illinois leaders rescue them?

Illinois AIDS advocates had difficult conversations with lawmakers in Springfield this week.

Unless immediate actions are taken to remedy the state's spiraling budget crisis, vital HIV/AIDS services—along with the state's educational, healthcare and human-service systems assisting millions of vulnerable children, families, disabled, elderly and chronically ill individuals—will be put in serious jeopardy.

The welfare of millions of Illinoisans is literally on the line, requiring unprecedented state leadership. Will lawmakers step up and fight for the people of Illinois?

Led by the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), participants of a new statewide advocacy initiative called the Illinois Alliance for Sound AIDS Policy (Illinois ASAP, for short) shared their individual stories with lawmakers to underscore the need for sustained and expanded state assistance for the fight against HIV/AIDS, which remains an ongoing crisis impacting more than 44,000 Illinoisans directly and tens of thousands more who are at high risk of HIV infection.

For example, one downstate advocate told law-

makers he will have to close his business and go on disability if he cannot receive assistance obtaining the HIV medications that keep him healthy enough to continue working. Another advocate shared how substance-abuse treatment services helped him and other HIV-positive people suffering from addiction to rebuild their lives. Nearly everyone spoke of the need for science-based HIV prevention to curb escalating rates of HIV in all communities, particularly among gay and bisexual men and within communities of color.

Lawmakers need to hear from you that HIV/AIDS and other essential services are worth saving. Please sign AFC's budget call-to-action posted at www.aidschicago.org/oab, which urges lawmakers, as part of needed budgetary reforms, to invest an additional \$18 million to save HIV services. Urge your family members, friends, and co-workers to call on state lawmakers to approve sustainable and humane budget solutions needed to save HIV services. Consider joining us for the 2010 HIV/AIDS Lobby Days being held in Springfield March 16-17.

Illinois has the second worst state budget crisis, after California. Maintaining state operations and services costs approximately \$26 billion per year. Next fiscal year, which begins in July, the state is projected to raise just \$13 billion in revenue, leaving a colossal budget deficit to resolve.

The culprit of the state's budget woes isn't waste. The state budget was cut by \$2 billion last year. Over the past decade, state spending grew just 5.4 percent, adjusted for inflation, far lower than the 25-percent growth in consumer prices over the same period. It's not bloated state staffing, either. If all state workers were laid off, it would save just \$4 billion, and Illinois has the lowest ratio of state workers to

citizens in the nation.

State funding cuts have already had a disastrous impact on HIV prevention programs in Chicago, the epicenter of the AIDS epidemic in Illinois and the Midwest. In Chicago this year, 15,000 people at high risk of HIV will not receive HIV prevention services because of a \$795,000 reduction in state funding.

The impact is clear. More people will be infected with HIV, and they will need HIV care and treatment from programs that can barely meet current demand.

In fact, the state's budget collapse is a direct result of the national economic collapse, worsened by a state revenue system that was designed for the 1950s, not the 21st century. This is why AFC and a broad coalition of agencies support fundamental revenue reform that will modernize the state budget and meet the needs of the state's most vulnerable citizens.

In 2009, the Illinois Senate passed responsible and balanced legislation that would increase revenue from income taxes, while protecting low-income families, and tax luxury services like limo rides or chartered airplanes. The Illinois House has not acted on the legislation. The Illinois House must immediately raise revenue to prevent the rug from being pulled out from under hardworking families and individuals when they need state-funded services the most.

Fundamental revenue reform is a tall order for lawmakers in an election year, but there is no other solution to this crisis. We will work tirelessly to urge state lawmakers to muster the courage to do what is needed to safeguard desperately needed health and human services for vulnerable Illinoisans.

Mark Ishaug is president/CEO of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.


**TONI
WEAVER**

Looking at the V-Day protest

My mother, who was a very wise woman, once told me, "You'll catch a lot more flies with honey than with vinegar." Her words rang in my ears as I participated in the Valentine's Day protest at Chicago's Holy Name Cathedral, an event organized by the Gay Liberation Network. The opportunity to publicly voice my dismay at the Roman Catholic Church's attitude toward my son's sexual orientation spurred me to take part and to encourage other members of the Woodstock/McHenry County PFLAG chapter and the Equality Club at McHenry County College to join the protest. However, the tenor of the demonstration caused all of us much discomfort and even embarrassment.

Two very different styles of protest were clearly visible. The first was an "in-your-face," confrontational approach, shouting at people entering the cathedral for worship. This vinegar will sour the very people whose hearts we are trying to change.

The alternate approach minced no words in calling the hierarchy to task for its role in promoting bigotry and homophobia, but it did so in a way that, hopefully, will cause reasonable people to question the Roman Catholic Church's position on homosexuality. We stood quietly, facing the street, holding signs reading "Celibacy is 'disordered,' not our gay kids"; "Oppression of gays is a mortal sin"; "Our Church is the #1 oppressor of our gay children and families"; and "My son is not intrinsically disordered."

Attack the institution, not the people. Use

honey, not vinegar. We need those parishioners of Holy Name to vote with their pocketbooks, but first we have to educate them and win them over.

Good advice, Mom. Thanks!

Toni Weaver leads the Woodstock/McHenry County chapter of PFLAG, serves on the Northern Illinois PFLAG Council, and is one of the faculty advisers of the Equality Club at

McHenry County College. An ardent supporter of gay rights, she was involved with the 2006 Gay Games in Crystal Lake and loves to march with PFLAG in both the Chicago Pride Parade and in the 4th of July Parade in Crystal Lake. She has a Masters Degree in Theology from Marquette University. She and her spouse of 40 years reside in McHenry and have three grown sons.

Letter

Meth madness

To the editor:

We are writing to counter the recurring and disturbing community discussion of crystal-meth use by gay men in Chicago.

The unfortunate and inaccurate message that "Meth = Death" characterizes this discussion.

Fact: Approximately 90 percent to 95 percent of gay men in Chicago *don't* use crystal-methamphetamine.

Fact: Health Department research indicates that crystal use has decreased. Among hundreds of men surveyed, 4 percent said they recently used it (as compared to 10 percent of those surveyed five years ago).

Fact: National and local data indicate that only a minority of people who try a drug, including potent drugs like methamphetamine, go on to become regular users and/or dependent.

Fact: Of the small (but important nonetheless) percentage of Chicago gay men who are addicted to crystal, and are experiencing health and financial crises, relationship problems, and legal difficulties, *most of them won't die.*

Meth does *not* equal death.

Should we continue to challenge the allure of substances and behaviors that keep us as a community from being our best? Yes. Should we promote messaging that seeks to promote health and wellness? Yes. Can we have com-

munity dialogue and get each others, attention without over sensationalizing? We can and we must.

Why not emphasize our community's courage and resilience in spending the past five years tackling this issue and our accomplishments in reducing use?

Misleading and deceptive communications on such an important matter do not serve our collective physical, mental, spiritual or sexual health needs. They don't enlighten. Telling the truth is essential, involves nuance, and our community deserves no less.

For those who use the drug problematically, treatment is available and recovery is possible. Chicago has a wealth of resources to help gay men addicted to crystal, including programs at Howard Brown Health Center, Haymarket Center and Valeo at Lakeshore Hospital. Additionally, there are groups like Crystal Meth Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous that offer important support to people who want to get and stay sober.

Crystal meth is an issue of concern for those who use the drug, for those who love them, and for the community which is their home. Chicago remains committed to helping these people receive the support they need to minimize harms, reduce use or quit altogether.

Signed,
Project CRYSP (Crystal Prevention)
projectcrisp@gmail.com

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER Terri Klinsky
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ACCOUNT MANAGERS: Terri Klinsky, Amy Matheny, Kirk Williamson
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SENIOR WRITERS Bob Roehr, Rex Wockner, Marie J. Kuda, David Byrne, Tony Peregrin, Lisa Keen, Yasmin Nair, Emmanuel Garcia
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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo by Carol Rosegg

THE 'BAND' MARCHES ON

Playwright Mart Crowley and director Jack Cummings III talk about *The Boys in the Band*, revived in NYC for its 40th anniversary. See page 15.

SPORTS

Skate and switch.
Page 22.

Photo courtesy of Megan Matteson



MOVIES

'Writer' wrong?
Page 14.



AUTOS

Chicago hub.
Page 16.

Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com



Measure for Measure

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Opera is an expensive enterprise. And in these treacherous economic times, producing opera for many local companies has become an exercise in finding economical ways to make it work.

Two suburban companies have had to scale back out of economic necessity. For the past few years, Elgin Opera has been doing mostly highlights concerts instead of staging full-fledged productions. And DuPage Opera Theatre's recent production of Puccini's *Turandot* was done as a concert staging *sans* elaborate sets.

Even the mighty Lyric Opera of Chicago has had to make changes for next season. The company is still presenting its usual number of eight operas: Verdi's *Macbeth*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Britten's *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, Verdi's *A Masked Ball*, Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado*, Puccini's *Girl of the Golden West*, Wagner's *Lohengrin* and Handel's *Hercules*. But the Lyric has cut back the number of overall performances from 77 to 68.

Chicago Opera Theater is similarly scaling back in the number of performances for its upcoming spring repertory season of Rossini's *Moses in Egypt* (April 17-25), Cavalli's *Jason* (April 24-May 2) and the Chicago premiere of *Three Decembers* (May 8-16) by out composer Jake Heggie based upon a work by out playwright Terrence McNally (*Three Decembers* is also supposedly the final Chicago opera appearances by the legendary

mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade). Instead of five performances of each opera, there are only four.

But out of economic necessity, creativity can also be spurred. The scrappy new company Chicago Opera Vanguard has increasingly made a name around town by producing local premieres of adventurous (and small-scale) works like Mark Anthony Turnage's *Greek* and Ricky Ian Gordon's *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

After presenting the Chicago premiere of Andy Vores' *No Exit* (based upon the Jean Paul Sartre play), Chicago Opera Vanguard continues its first official season of "off-Loop opera" with a staging of Schubert's classic song cycle *Winterreise* March 3-21 in the Fasseas White Box Theatre of the Menomonee Club Drucker Center, 1535 N. Dayton.

Winterreise has been famously staged before in 2002 by choreographer Trisha Brown with hunky British baritone Simon Keenlyside. But her production never made it to Chicago, so we'll gladly take one by director/producer Eric Reda.

Winterreise is typically presented in a concert setting, so it should be interesting to see how Reda dramatizes it with baritone Brad Jungwirth, music director Myron Silberstein and a company possibly of dancers or actors featuring Brian Barber, Sophie Gatins and Jessica Sheffield.

Hopefully, Chicago Opera Vanguard's *Winterreise* will attract more traditional classical audiences to join with their new music fans. For more information, visit www.chicagovanguard.org.

For its 2009-10 season, Chamber Opera Chicago has also scaled back a bit by reducing its

number of productions down to three. Following a Christmastime revival of Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and preceding the Cuban zarzuela *La O* in June, Chamber Opera Chicago makes news by presenting the Chicago premiere of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice: The New Musical*.



Jane Glover.
Pic by Jerry Bauer

More than just a retelling of the classic novel, this *Pride and Prejudice* musical by Lindsay Warren Baker and Amanda Jacobs also focuses on Austen as a character who wields her creative force throughout by composing the novel.

Pride and Prejudice plays the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport, at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 27 and March 6, and at 3 p.m. March 7. For more information, visit www.chamberoperachicago.org.

More operatic offerings

The coming weeks also feature some notable classical vocal concerts that should be of interest to baroque and new music fans.

Music of the Baroque shines a spotlight on Handel and his creative relationship with Great

Britain's royal family with the concert Handel and the Royals. Music director Jane Glover conducts big choral pieces like the *Funeral Anthem* for Queen Caroline, the *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne* and the *Anthem for the Wedding of Prince Frederick and Princess Augusta of Saxe-Coburg*.

Baroque music enthusiasts and British history buffs won't want to miss Handel and the Royals, which will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, at Evanston's First United Methodist Church, 516 Church, and also in Chicago at 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 1, at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph. For tickets and more information, visit www.baroque.org.

The hip and youthful Grammy Award-winning ensemble Eighth Blackbird teams up with famed music theater performer Rinde Eckert and composer/performer Steve Mackey for the concert-length theater work *Slide*.

Focusing on a psychologist (played by Eckert) who attempts to explain an experiment on people's reactions to in-focus and out-of-focus slides, *Slide* aims to become a metaphor for today's media-saturated world and its hold on the American psyche.

The multimedia-saturated show plays locally only at 7:30 p.m. Wed., March 24, at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance. For more information on *Slide*, visit www.harristheaterchicago.org or www.eighthblackbird.com.

Please send along theater news and other tidbits to scottishplayscott@yahoo.com and to Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com.

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THEATER REVIEW

Mrs. Caliban

Playwright: adapted by Frances Limoncelli from the novella by Rachel Ingalls
At: Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood
Phone: 773-761-4477; \$30
Runs through: March 28

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Rachel Ingalls wrote her novella in 1983, but its universe invokes the Feminine Mystique era, when the duties of an affluent California housewife like our Dorothy were focused almost exclusively on keeping her all-white house spotless, ignoring her husband's frequent absences, and brooding over her own unworthiness at fulfilling these domestic tasks. Add in the self-accusatory pressures arising from her two children dying untimely, and who can blame our heroine for conjuring herself a fantasy consort possessing all the virtues of son, lover, servant and companion? Especially a noble savage physically manifested as an amphibious green-skinned (but oh-so-virile) sea-creature, as unlike any flawed mortal male as a lonely matron could wish?

There's no denying the fairy-tale romance of Ingalls' Beauty-and-the-Beast story: expository information is conveniently blurred by an elliptical narrative minimalism (ironically, enabling us to anticipate the final revelation too soon), while the nuts-and-bolts details of interspecies sex—anatomical descriptions and grooming habits, for example—are largely left to our imaginations. But anthropomorphic erotica does not translate easily to the stage, where flesh-and-blood actors replicating fanciful events in real time demand a degree, however slight, of *literal* representation. Given the fuzziness of the source material, Frances Limoncelli's adaptation can hardly be blamed for emerging likewise enigmatic as regards both internal and external action (as when Dorothy proposes restoring her alien visitor to his birth-home in the Gulf of Mexico by motoring down the Pacific coastline past border checkpoints to the Panama canal—is she unaware that the targeted body of water also abuts the easily accessed south coast of the United States?).

The charismatic Brenda Barrie, in the role of the virginal Dorothy, delivers a performance going a long way toward enlisting our sympathy, as do the always-watchable Peter Greenberg as the primordial paragon and Jennifer Tyler as Dorothy's bitchy sidekick. So does Josh Horvath's original score of cello-heavy mysteries-of-the-deep incidental music and Julia Neary's delicately sensual choreography, under the direction of magic-realism maestra Ann Boyd. Despite the quality and care invested in this effort, however, one cannot help but question Lifeline Theatre's judgment in selecting to augment its repertoire with this soapsudsy yarn recalling "women's fiction" from a less enlightened age.

THEATER REVIEW

Abigail's Party

Playwright: Mike Leigh
At: A Red Orchid Theatre Company, 1531 N. Wells
Phone: 312-943-8722; \$15-\$30
Runs through: March 28

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Mike Leigh is often held up as a critics' darling, but the famed British filmmaker and playwright divides audiences more than winning them over. Leigh isn't afraid to tackle controversial topics, but he's also isn't averse to trying an audience's patience by overemphasizing ugly and mundane aspects of life through his process of building works through improvisation.

Just look at Leigh's seminal 1977 dark comedy *Abigail's Party*, now receiving a bang-up and superlative production at A Red Orchid Theatre Company. It has a shocking ending, but some will find the lead up to it can be grating and



Mrs. Caliban. Photo by Paul Metreyeon

tedious.

Leigh populates *Abigail's Party* a rather unpleasant cast of suburban characters who blather on and on (often unwittingly hurling insults along the way). Some audiences will be appalled, while other will smirk and revel in Leigh's comedy of bad manners.

I found myself to be in the latter camp thanks to director Shade Murray and his super skilled cast who all apply the right amount of pressure to make this suburban house party the uncomfortable living hell it should be.

The play's title is a tad deceptive, since the loud rock-and-roll party thrown by the unseen 15-year-old Abigail Lawson is actually next door. We're stuck for the evening in the shocking 1970s decorated living room of overworked estate agent Lawrence Moss (a brusque Larry Grimm) and his over-pampered wife, Beverly (Kirsten Fitzgerald, who layers on the faux sophistication like her thick cake makeup).

The Mosses have their own party for new-to-the-neighborhood couple Tony (an appropriately laconic turn by Danny McCarthy) and Angela (Mierka Girten, who does a great job of someone oblivious to things that should be self-censored in polite conversation). Being the fifth wheel (and to help differentiate the play from Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*) is Natalie West as Susan. She's hilarious as Abigail's slightly spacey divorced mum.

As Beverly keeps the booze flowing, cracks in each couple's relationship start to show and Susan becomes more and more agitated as the noise from Abigail's party bleeds through the walls.

Beverly fancies herself as a sophisticate thanks to her nouveau riche trappings, but she proves

to be more of a poseur. Lawrence actually does have some educated class, but he comes off as insufferable when he tries to show up Beverly with his knowledge.

A Red Orchid's production enormously benefits from Daniel Stratton's overstuffed 1970s set and and Melissa Torchia's loud costumes. The cast and production team all work together to illuminate Leigh's examination of middle-class pretension.

So consider yourself forewarned: *Abigail's Party* can be lots of fun and games. But remember that Leigh is your host, so expect plenty of insight amid all the insufferably bad behavior.

THEATER REVIEW

A Love Lost Life: The Unauthorized Story of Marlon Brando

Playwright: David Nathie Barnes
At: T.M.R Inc. at Theatre Building Chicago, 1225 W. Belmont
Phone: 773-327-5252; \$25
Runs through: March 21

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

There's the legend, of course: "Make him an offer he can't refuse," "I coulda been a contender!" and "Stelllaaaaaa!" And there's the scandal: his obstructive behavior during filming, his wildly fluctuating weight, his rejection of an Oscar in protest of Hollywood bias against minorities (in this case, Native Americans). And then there's

CRITICS' PICKS

The Cabinet, Redmoon Theatre, through March 14. Remount of 2005 hit based on the 1919 expressionist silent film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Mesmerism, eroticism, somnambulism all are there in Redmoon's triumph of mixed puppetry, miniature theater and grotesque angles. JA

11:11, The New Colony at Victory Gardens Biograph Theater, through March 13. Evan Linder and Tara Sissom could have just mocked their twentysomething Christian camp counselors in their new play. Instead they bring up serious questions and faith even with the drug-induced trip in the center of this comic drama. SCM

Killer Joe, American Theater Company, through April 11. There's not many escape routes for the trailer-dwelling clan in this 1993 play by Pulitzer-winning Tracy Letts, nor for an audience in a storefront not much bigger, so sit back and enjoy the acerbic commentary on grassroots entrepreneurship gone grimly and perversely wrong. MSB

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

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

the tragedy: his three marriages, the sensationalism surrounding the eldest two of his twelve (recorded) children, the homosexual "experiences" he finally acknowledged in a 1976 interview. If ever a public figure mandated a behind-the-music biopic, it was Marlon Brando.

David Nathie Barnes' docudrama may be viewed as a work-in-progress toward that goal. Since 2007, *A Love Lost Life* has evolved from a 45-minute three-character sketch into a 75-minute play, three actors now portraying its hero at different stages of his career, and the addition of a few Hollywood compatriots (the latter likewise heir to idolatry and early death—even River Phoenix gets a belated shout-out—their untimely ends contrasting with Brando's long, if troubled, life). But the show now undergoing its first full run at the Theatre Building, where it clocks in at 90 minutes, is still in need of some reshaping before becoming what it aspires to be.

The chief problem is that its subject refused to engage in self-analysis, stubbornly/cooly maintaining the noble-savage pose that made his fortune. (In one scene, an almost foot-kissing James Dean declares them both "a couple of farm boys making it big.") This reduces the dramatic action to a series of speculative episodes—Brando seduces his future agent with his attitude, Brando flirts with a young Marilyn Monroe, Brando bullies his ex-wife, Brando speaks against U.S. imperialism, and so forth. We also get son Christian and daughter Cheyenne swapping such introspective banter as "People who live the Hollywood lifestyle grow up faster," but offering no new insight into their Papa Dearest's enigma.

Robert Ashkenas and author Barnes have been playing Brandos senior and junior from the play's inception, however, and so easily command our attention and sympathies, while local actors Michael Perez and Jamie Asch replicate the mannerisms that launched a thousand cults over six decades (but watch for Beau Forbes' scene-stealing Dean). *Love Lost Life* needs only some fine-tuning of its narrative theme to lend its hagiography focus as a portrait of the artist who changed the face of the American movie hero to this day.

SPOTLIGHT



The intense friendship that develops between New England boarding school students Gene and Finney in John Knowles' World War II-era novel *A Separate Peace* has always been questioned by LGBT readers. See if there are any overt hints of what has gone unspoken through the years in Nancy Gilsenan's new stage adaptation for Steppenwolf for Young Adults. *A Separate Peace* plays 11 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays until March 14 (no show Feb. 28) in the Steppenwolf Upstairs Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted. Tickets are \$20; \$15 for students/seniors; call 312-335-1650 or visit www.steppenwolf.org. Photo by Saverio Truglia



THEATER REVIEW

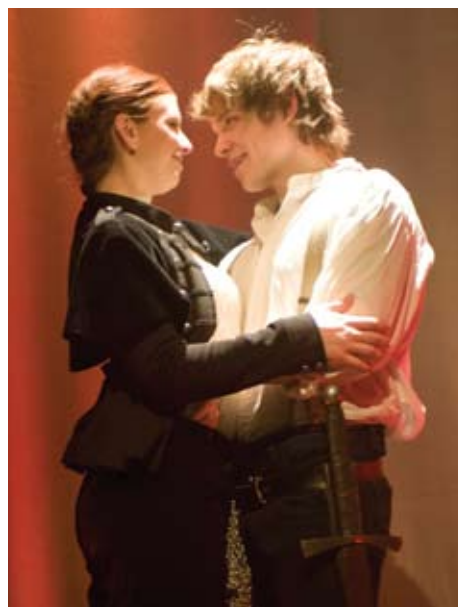
The Ring

Playwright: adapted from Richard Wagner
At: The Building Stage,
 412 N. Carpenter (free parking)
Tickets: 312-491-1369;
www.buildingstage.com; \$40
Runs through: March 14

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Richard Wagner spent 28 years writing *The Ring* Cycle, his quartet of operas running 16 hours-plus in performance. Drawing on Norse and German mythology, Wagner created a fantasy about the passing of magical giants, dwarves and gods from the world in an earth-cleansing action to prepare for the ascendancy of Mankind. Blending metaphysics with romance (in the literary definition), *The Ring* is one of European culture's greatest achievements. But does it work without an orchestra? Could Wagner's text—written for his profound, sumptuous and exquisite music—stand on its own dramatically? This is the ambitious challenge The Building Stage took on, and the mixed result is interesting rather than wonderful. It will be only a curiosity to those who know Wagner's work well but might serve as an apt introduction to those who don't.

Truth: Only Wagner himself thought he was a great poet. His librettos for his operas are long and portentous—although not without humor—and were written in the German equivalent of “thee,” “thou” and “thy” language. His verse, both in German and in modern English translation, relies on alliteration (“You may laugh and lie, yet I yearn for your love” is typical) and is short on nuance. Given the episodic nature of its stories, *The Ring* has many figures that appear in one or two scenes only, which hardly allows for deep dramatic characterization. Opera text is not meant to be detached from its music, because the music is what conveys emotional depth and complexity.



The Ring. Photo by Michael Brosilow

As modernized and edited by The Building Stage, *The Ring's* four parts run 75 minutes each with a meal break half-way through for a six-hour total. It's a rattling-good story of lust, love, lust, greed, lust, envy, lust, revenge and stab-first-think-later stupidities in which even an ugly villainous dwarf gets laid. Quite properly, The Building Stage presents *The Ring* as a meta-theatrical event with Rhinemaidens on Spanish cords (a circus aerial technique), various types of puppetry and a small band underscoring the action to percussion and guitar riffs drawn from Wagner's principal musical themes (Kevin O'Donnell, composer/adaptor). However, this is the wrong show if you're looking for fine acting from the 11-person ensemble. Any dramatic subtlety (say, William Bullion's interpretation of Hagen) is far outweighed by general bombast as primitive as the tales being told. Co-directors Blake Montgomery and Joanie Schultz have chosen—perhaps wisely—to treat the text

as a Classics Illustrated comic book.

The Building Stage rendering makes the story clear, although much of it seems adolescent. Only in parts three and four—Siegfried and Gotterdammerung—do things notch up to echo a Shakespearean romance, anchored by Nick Vidal as Siegfried and Darci Nalepa as Brunhilde (a handsome couple), and with Mime (Bill O'Connor)—another ugly dwarf—treated as a buffoon. In a highly physical production, the design team (Lee Keenan, Meghan Raham and Chantal Calato) also makes important contributions beyond the space limits of this review to discuss.

THEATER REVIEW

The Rant

Playwright: Andrew Cast
At: Mary Arrchie Theatre at
 Angel Island, 735 W. Sheridan
Phone: 773-871-0442, \$18, \$29
Runs through: March 28

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

About midway through *The Rant*, a world-weary reporter uses a pair of real-life rape accusations in a shockingly inarguable demonstration of the way facts can be used to “prove” whatever you want them to prove.

In dialogue referencing a white woman's 2003 rape charges against Kobe Bryant and a Black woman's 2005 rape charges against a group of white Duke University students, playwright Andrew Case depicts a worldview that's tragic and undeniable. Guilty or innocent—it doesn't matter what you believe about Bryant or those Duke boys (both cases were settled out of court): Newsman Alexander Stern (Earl Pastko, spot-on as the hard-bitten, clear-eyed product of countless graveyard shift police blotters) can show you're a racist either way. Truth, Case illustrates in his riveting drama, isn't necessarily about justice. It's about proving your point.

Directed by Sharon Evans, *The Rant* is everything you'd expect from a piece defined by the daily, devastating ambiguities of crime. Mary Arrchie's production is gritty in its uncompromising realism and provocative in its exposure of the the unending, slippery grayness of a criminal justice system we'd all prefer to think of in terms of stark, easily grasped segments of good and bad, black and white.

The story begins as Denise Reeves, a Black woman, arrives at the office of Lila Mahnaz, a light-skinned lawyer who bristles when her minority credentials are questioned. (“I'm Persian,” Lila spits when a Black cop scoffs at her ability to comprehend racism.) Reeves is demanding justice for the murder of her unarmed son by a white police sergeant. Lila is instantly sympathetic, the case seems cut and dried. But Case lets us know from the onset things are not as simple as they seem.

Lila (Lindsey Pearlman, ably portraying a cauldron of barely contained resentment and righteous anger) wants vengeance as much as justice. She believes her motives are pure, but in truth, she's pursuing an agenda she's had since grade school. By getting the white bastard who murdered Reeves' Black son, Lila will even the score against all the playground injustices she suffered at the hands of lazy, fat, stupid, white kids who (she asserts) all grew up to be cops.

Case's tightly structured plot thickens as Lila interviews the accused sergeant's Black partner, Charles (Emanuel Buckley, deftly capturing the hellish internal conflict that comes with a cop's inflexible adherence to the Thin Blue Line and a Black man's anger at the racism of his fellow cops). Charles makes it glaringly apparent that the grief-stricken Mrs. Reeves (Shariba Rivers, a white-hot flame of sorrow and rage) has withheld crucial information that virtually destroys her credibility as a witness.

The result is a complex, meaningful whodunit, with the implications of the mystery's solution becoming as important as its answer.



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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES



Ewan McGregor in *The Ghost Writer*.

The Ghost Writer; Sissyboy

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

With a resume that includes *Repulsion*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *Chinatown*, *The Tenant*, *Bitter Moon*, *Frantic* and *Death and the Maiden*, a case could be made—and a good one—that nobody does paranoid thrillers like director Roman Polanski. So it's no surprise that *The Ghost Writer*, the director's first feature since 2005's *Oliver Twist*, would be another prime example of the genre with its blend of Hitchcockian intrigue and political mystery. But even though the movie clearly shows a master at work—finding ways for the camera to telegraph suspense and dread to the audience—it's also filled with plot holes and long stretches that strain its credibility. For maximum enjoyment—and there's much to be had here—it's best to ignore the plot and character lapses in *The Ghost Writer* and just let Polanski take you for a ride.

The movie is based on the novel by Robert Harris, which he has adapted in collaboration with Polanski. It concerns Ewan McGregor, a successful ghost writer for a series of celebrities, who is hired for a large sum to fix up the troublesome first draft of the memoirs of a former British prime minister, Adam Lang (Pierce Brosnan). McGregor, whose character is not given a name, is wary—the first ghost writer, Lang's longtime assistant, recently committed suicide under mysterious circumstances—but his agent persists, boasting to Lang's attorney (Timothy Hutton), "You name it, he ghosts." *The Ghost* passes muster, and is put on a plane and ferried to gloomy, rainy Martha's Vineyard and Lang's ultramodern/icy fortress getaway. Lang (a stand-in for Tony Blair) is ensconced in the sleek home along with his comely, efficient secretary Amelia

(Kim Cattrall, in a nice variation on her *Sex and the City* character); sullen, snappish wife Ruth (Olivia Williams); and a phalanx of scowling security guards.

Lang and the ghost barely get started on the revisions before the house is in an uproar as Lang is embroiled in an erupting political scandal in which he's accused of approving torture and other political crimes while under the thumb of the United States. *The Ghost* is caught up in the swirl of events and a temporary siege on the property by the media and protesters. Soon, he begins to suspect that his predecessor stumbled upon political and personal secrets in Lang's past and that perhaps the precious first draft of the memoirs contains unwitting clues.

As McGregor falls deeper down the rabbit hole and the stakes are raised, the movie takes on the feel of one of those David Baldacci political potboilers in which the reader is given an entertaining but phony-baloney peek behind the scenes of corrupt political power and dirty money intersecting—and a lot of creepy, murderous characters who will do anything to hang on to it. Tom Wilkinson, Eli Wallach, Jim Belushi, Richard Pugh and other crack character actors are dropped into the mix as McGregor races to figure out what is going on.

Although he's supposed to be a speedy, insightful ghost writer (even though we don't actually see him do much work on the manuscript), McGregor's character isn't apparently the brightest in a lot of other areas and the audience is consistently ahead of him. Still, like the movie itself, McGregor is never less than entertaining and Polanski, working with cinematographer Pawel Edelman, gives this thriller a lot of visual oomph to carry one along. Those items, and a Bernard Herrmannesque score by Alexandre Desplat, help one overlook the gaps in what is essentially a silly, high-falutin' thriller—albeit a diverting one. *The Ghost Writer* lives up to its namesake. It's the kind of enjoyable, junky melodramatic mystery/*roman à clef* that any

script doctor would be proud—after a round of drinks or two, perhaps—to admit having written.

If the Cockettes, the psychedelic drag-queen troupe from the late 1960s, had had grandchildren they might look, talk and act as outlandishly as the 12 troupe members of *Sissyboy* do in their eponymous documentary. This gender-bending shock-drag troupe that hails from Portland, Ore., worked together for about three and a half years, practicing their blend of political glam guerilla theatre. At one point they met nascent filmmaker Katie Turinski, who saw a hot subject in the group and started documenting their performances and off camera observations. The group eventually did a West Coast tour of three cities, traveling aboard the RV of the parents of one of the members, returning to their home base for a final show. Turinski captured all of this in her lively documentary of the group.

The film, which contains elements of several queer-themed movies—Priscilla Queen of the Desert, *Shortbus* and, especially, the documentaries *The Cockettes* and *Trannyshack* (where the group performed and cite as an inspiration) is never less than illuminating and entertaining. The performers—gay men all—like the 6'4" bald Splendor (a latter-day Dean Johnson), Zebra, Kaj-Anne, *et al*, seemingly grabbed from every aspect of culture in creating their looks and their shows. Everything from Bette Davis to the war in Iraq is referenced and offered up for simultaneous adulation and derision. Like many groups of feisty gay men, the insights are often fast and funny. The film is lighter on the performances—and from the look of things, Turinski's decision to limit that footage is to the good as the group's antics are often more entertaining offstage than on.

"Our culture needs to be reminded that we're not all here to fit the cookie-cutter mold" one of the performers comments as the final performance of the troupe nears and *Sissyboy* provides delightful evidence of that admonishment. The film is having its Chicago premiere Saturday, March 6, at St. Paul's Cultural Center, 2215 W. North, as part of the Chicago Movies & Music Festival (CIMM), and members of *Sissyboy* are reuniting for a performance at Berlin, 954 W. Belmont, Friday, March 5. The fascinating transgender documentary *Riot Acts* ("Flaunting Gender Defiance in Music Performance") and *Universallove* are two more LGBT-themed films screening during the March 4-7 CIMM fest. See www.cimmfest.org.

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



Gays Got Talent 2009.

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

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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 \$1,000 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.

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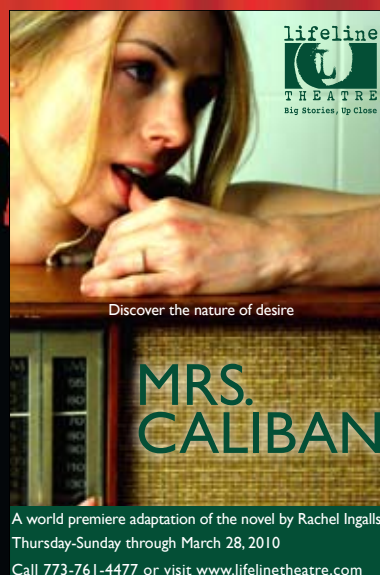
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Boys in the Band: Jack Cummings III and Mart Crowley

BY JAY BLOTCHER



Jack Cummings III (left) and Mart Crowley.

It now seems inevitable that Jack Cummings III would direct the New York City revival of Mart Crowley's *The Boys in the Band*. (The last one, at the WPA Theatre, happened in 1996.) While Cummings, 41, had just moved to the city in 1996 and missed the production, he would eventually find work in 2006 as assistant to Dominick Dunne. At the time, Dunne's third act as a crime writer for *Vanity Fair* had brought him a new wave of fame. In previous career incarnations, he had been an author and a television film producer. In 1970, he was executive producer of the film version of *The Boys in the Band*.

While assisting Dunne, Cummings, a Richmond, Va., native, was quickly developing a name for himself with a fledgling theater company named Transport Group. Mart Crowley had just moved back to New York City and was in touch with his friend and former executive producer of *Boys*. One day, Dunne told his assistant, "You should do the *Boys in the Band*." Dunne went one better and introduced Cummings to Crowley.

"I know that Dominick was incredibly close with Mart and very, very fond of him," said the artistic director, a Drama Desk Award winner. "And he completely believed in the piece and that's why he wanted to produce it. And I think that Mart trusted him and Dominick trusted Mart."

A bit of theatrical magic intervened at this point. Cummings knew Buddy Thomas at ICM, who represents the estate of playwright William Inge. They became friends when Transport staged the late playwright's *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs*. Not soon after Dunne's suggestion, Thomas called. It was 2008 and four decades since the original Theatre Four production of the Crowley classic. Thomas, also Crowley's agent, asked Cummings, "Would you be interested in doing a 40th-anniversary production of *Boys in the Band*?"

Cummings was torn; he had already mapped out his theatrical season. But the ambitious artistic director agreed to stage a celebration of the play to celebrate the milestone. In June of 2008, a reading of the play at the Lucille Lortel Theatre on Christopher Street drew a sell-out house. Among the actors were Malcolm Gets, Jonathan Hammond, Norm Lewis and David Greenspan. It was followed by a panel discussion, moderated by veteran Village Voice theatre critic and author Michael Feingold. On the dais were Mart Crowley and *Boys in the Band* cast members Peter White and Lawrence Luckinbill.

"The night went over really spectacularly," Cummings said. A week later, he decided he would mount a revival of the show for 2010.

As Cummings developed the show, he spent time in discussions with Crowley about how to develop the work for a new generation of theatergoers. Those discussions took a bittersweet tone last August, when Dominick Dunne died at age 83. Cummings and Crowley spent time together, mourning their mutual friend.

"We have definitely been kind of side by side," Cummings said, explaining the growing friendship that has developed between he and Crowley in their combined efforts to restage the show. In fact, the playwright has sat in on several auditions and offered his opinion on various casting choices. Cummings decided that the staging will be complemented by readings of lesser-known

Crowley plays.

"Over the long haul I've come to be very friendly with Jack and his wife," Mart Crowley said. "He's married to an actress named Barbara Walsh. She's a singer. They know everybody; every young [actor]. There's no one in the cast who was born when the thing was written. No; they're not old enough."

The Transport Group's production will feature Jonathan Hammond as Michael, Christopher Innavar as Larry, Kevin Isola as Alan, Jon Levenson as Harold, Kevyn Morrow as Bernard, Graham Rowat as Hank, Aaron Sharff as Cowboy, John Wellmann as Emory and Nick Westrate as Donald.

As a heterosexual man who was an infant the year of the Stonewall Riots, Cummings had to plumb the text for his own meaning; he decided to depict the play as a historic piece as well as a timeless character study.

"It's definitely a piece that is set in 1968, unlike the plays that are not set in times or eras," he said. "Like the play 'Rabbit Hole' you could set in 2004 or you could set it in 1984. That situation is going to remain more or less the same. ... But with Mart's play I think that in the end what's really making it a classic is that it definitely is a time capsule for that particular year, as well as a classic in the sense that the issue of human nature and relationships that it's exploring are, no matter what, timeless in their essence.

"In this play we are going to focus on the minutiae and the layers of the relationships between these men. The cultural and political issues that the play touches on come out naturally. But I plan to just really focus on these friendships because I think that is ultimately what is holding the play up on a very human level."

Having Crowley as a consultant has deepened Cummings' understanding of the work. The most trenchant observation by the playwright, he said, was a description of the lead character Michael, thereby unlocking the play's meaning for Cummings. "Michael is a collection of all the references of movies he has consumed in a lifetime. At the end of the play he realizes that nothing is there, and if nothing is there how do you start to build yourself up again?"

The mission of Transport Group, Cummings said, is to move "actors outside of their comfort zones." Apparently, he wants the same unsettling feeling for his audience. Rather than stage *Boys in the Band* in a conventional proscenium theater, Cummings has sought out a raw space in Midtown for the production. Audience members will be seated in chairs that closely ring the sturm and drang of the central action.

"When you come to see the show as an audience member, you'll be seated all in and around the apartment space," he explained. "It's not like one neat square or circle. The idea is that we're basically trying to create Michael's apartment, albeit theatrically. What we're after is to create an experience where people feel as if they are flies on the wall in Michael's apartment on this one particular night." Cummings calls his conceit an environmentally based stage.

When first told of the configuration of the audience seating, playwright Mart Crowley was

worried, telling Cummings, "This is going to look like an AA meeting." The director had a quick response: "So what? It is!"

Cummings also decided to combine both acts the play, which pleased the playwright.

"We're going to do it in one piece; it's not going to have an intermission," Crowley said. "It's going to go right straight through. I think that's going to solve a lot of the problems of Act I being the laughs and Act II being the dark side. You'll never know when Act I and Act II blend. It will be trimmed, not rewritten—just cut to get rid of a lot of the flab that audiences don't have the attention span to be subjected to any longer."

Casting was not difficult, Cummings said. The number of enthusiastic actors vying for roles for this production was far more than what he received for his previous 12 productions. However, the subsequent auditions indicated that some people had wildly divergent understandings of the play.

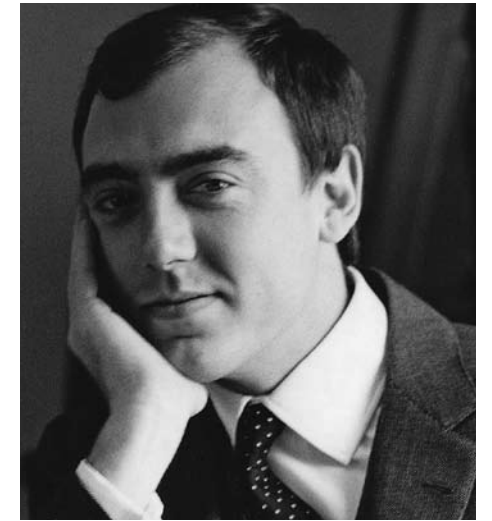
"Usually actors who came in for auditions, I could tell either didn't understand the play, weren't familiar with it or hadn't read it," he said. "[They were acting] from cursory impres-

sions or what they had heard. The uninformed people [think that all the characters] are campy and self-loathing. I've always been bewildered by that because to me that's not true, if one actually reads the play." Not that Cummings dismisses self-loathing as a character trait.

"There were plenty of characters in August: Osage County who were self-loathing."

Some detractors claim *The Boys in the Band* is a black eye for modern gay politics. Cummings dismisses the notion heatedly. "It's theatre. It's drama. You can't have a diorama of presidential saints. These particular nine people, I don't think [Crowley's] saying they stand in for every gay person in the world."

Transport Group presents a revival of *The Boys in the Band* by Mart Crowley, directed by Jack Cummings III. It's at 37 W. 26th, 12th Floor, New York City. The production runs through March 14. Tickets are \$10-\$45; the theatre is not wheelchair-accessible. Tickets are online at www.transportgroup.org; also, call 866-811-4111.



Mart Crowley in 1969. Photo by Dominick Dunne

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Chicago Auto Show's Top Five

BY CASEY WILLIAMS, GAYWHEELS.COM

We survived nearly a foot of snow—and an earthquake—to bring you the latest and greatest from the Chicago Auto Show, held Feb. 12-21 at McCormick Place. The show is usually less a spectacle of glitz and glamor and more of a tribute to America's cornfields and hard-working folk. While we didn't get any photos of corn-fed boys, we did manage to find some good looking vehicles to swoon over.

Here are our picks for the top five new models from the show:

—**2011 Ford Edge:** We saw the majorly face lifted Lincoln MKX at last month's Detroit show, but Ford took the mystery away from the also-impressive 2011 Ford Edge. An updated exterior, stunning interior, next-generation hands-free communications, and a range of power options will keep crossover buyers rolling into Ford showrooms.

New grilles and trim look cool, but its engines are powerfully hot. Returning is a 3.5-litre V6, connected to a six-speed automatic transmission, now producing 285 horsepower and achieving 27-MPG highway.

—**2011 Chevrolet Silverado HD:** Take a look at the new 2011 Chevrolet Silverado heavy-duty pickups. Go ahead. See if you can spot the differences. No, not there. Crawl underneath. Ah, there it is.

Competition in heavy-duty trucks doesn't really happen with freshened grilles and bulging fenders anyway. The Silverado is handsome with its big chrome crossbar grille, enough chrome to occupy a truck stop service shop, large trailing mirrors, and fast windshield. But what matters to buyers is a 20,000-pound towing capacity and a payload capability of 6,335 pounds (properly equipped, of course).

—**2011 Honda Odyssey:** Technically, the Honda Odyssey shown in Chicago was a concept, but then the marketing team began throwing around specifications and features for the all-new mini-van that will roll out for 2011. Take a shot of your favorite inebriation and imagine the concept with smaller wheels and a roof rack. That's what's coming.

A sleeker cab-forward profile is enhanced with a roofline that appears to slope towards the rear window. The D-pillar is rendered in a way

that looks upscale, like an Acura MDX. Easily the most distinguishing feature is the lightning-bolt windowline that is expected on the production model and makes it easier to see out of the rear seats. Honda claims the van has a one-inch lower roofline and will be 1.4-inches wider. Wheelbase dimensions remain unchanged at 118.1 inches, keeping interior space very close to the current model. Odyssey's trademark third-row "Magic Seat" will still fold flat into the floor.

—**2011 Ford Edge:** Toyota's press conference began with a humble commitment to quickly repair all of its vehicles affected by the accelerator and brake recalls. The company is showing renewed vigor in taking care of very loyal customers. Almost sheepishly, Bob Carter, group vice president and general manager, Toyota Division, announced the significantly updated 2011 Avalon.

Designed at Toyota's Caltex Design Research center in Newport Beach, Calif., the 2011 Avalon will be more aggressive than the current sedan, but will also be much more elegant. Toyota's theme is "Traveling Avalon Class," and that about explains the beauty and grace for which the new model will be known. In truth, it is really just a significant facia and interior update on the current model, but the car looks ready for a few more good years.

—**2011 Ford Transit Connect:** Ford's trophy from Detroit, where the Transit Connect was named North American Truck of the Year, is hardly collecting dust as the company is at it again. If you think the little van is as cool as a florist's back room, check out the electric and Taxi versions coming later this year.

Developed in partnership with Azure Dynamics, which has been designing drive systems for over 20 years, the Transit Connect EV runs on a 192-cell, fluid-cooled lithium ion battery pack located under the floor. Ford claims the van will zip emissions-free from 0-60 mph in 12 seconds, continue to a top speed of 75 mph and keep buzzing along for about 80 miles before a re-charge. Weight goes up and payload goes down slightly from gasoline-powered vehicles, but the van is ideal for businesses with defined routes. Owners can charge with 120V or 240V outlets, the latter enabling a full re-energizing in 6-8 hours.

The Transit Connect is becoming Ford's little van that could. It delivers flowers, caters food, hauls band instruments and, soon, will move passengers around cities and run routes without burning a drop of gasoline. It could become the next cultural phenomenon, doing everything while looking good. Move over London, America is getting its own signature taxi.

For more info, see www.gaywheels.com.



2011 Chevrolet Silverado HD. Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

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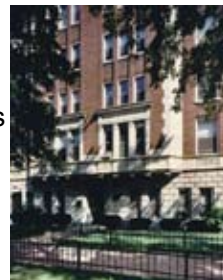


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This charming vintage walkup features completely remodeled apartments with exceptionally large closet, kitchen, and bath areas. Located within walking distance of the Lakefront, shopping, and nightlife, this is a prime residential area. This address provides access to the Broadway and Sheridan express busses, as well as the Belmont "L", which is only a few blocks away.



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Business
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CUBS from page 6

"Second, we want to be good stewards of Wrigley Field, and that means we will make sure to keep the history and beauty of Wrigley, but at the same time do improvements so it can last for another generation or two," she said. "And third, we want to be good neighbors. One of the great things about Wrigley is that it is in this neighborhood, unlike stadiums off in middle of nowhere in a sea of parking lots. It's one of the things that makes Wrigley and the Cubs different. We appreciate that."

Has the community welcomed the family so far? "I think so," Laura said. "There is a sense of relief that there are human faces behind the ownership of the team. And the fact that we're Cubs fans, that we appreciate the history and uniqueness of this franchise and share the same passion as the other fans, is important. I think there's a lot of hope and optimism. We've had a very warm reception from the neighborhood and the rooftop owners. I think people appreciate we are candid and want an open and honest dialogue. People have their concerns and issues ... night games, concerts, the normal things. But overall we feel the reception has been very warm."

Laura explained that changes at Wrigley will include improved bathroom facilities for fans, plus better training facilities and locker rooms for the players. "We want to create the best fan experience in professional sports here at Wrigley," she said. "While Wrigley has this amazing charm and history, everybody knows about the challenges because of how old the stadium is. ... One of the things I was most shocked about was the state of the clubhouse. It was pretty sparse. I think my high school sports facilities were probably better than what the players had. So of course we want to make them more comfortable for the players and their families. ... We're also hiring a hospitality officer and team ambassadors that will be within Wrigley and

around the neighborhood, to improve the fan experience. We're going to try and make it more family friendly, and have more formal planned autograph opportunities for kids."

What about the already-approved triangle building development, a parcel of land just west of the stadium? "We know the people in the community are anxious to get that up. We are too. But we want to be very thoughtful and measured about what we build because we want it to be useful for a long time to come," Laura said. Plans could include training facilities for the players, office space, and upscale dining and retail.

As for helping achieve victory on the field? "The facilities and how we treat the players and the amenities we provide for them are all part of that," Laura said. "We're hiring a team nutritionist so they can eat better, here and away. And a lot of work has been done on the minor league system; that takes an awful long time to develop. We're going to start seeing the fruits of that, it's going to start to pay off for us. It's about being strategic, about the players you sign. It is not necessarily what you're paying, but their skills, their character. There's so much about baseball that's psychological as well. People need to be treated like the winners we expect them to be. There's not one answer to getting to the World Series. I think if you consistently put a team on the field that can compete, every year, then you know it's going to happen. That's our priority."

Being a lesbian owner

Interestingly for Laura, being a lesbian "was one of the things I didn't think too much about before we closed [the sale] last fall. We were working so hard to get the deal done. What did occur to me, and the rest of the family, is what a great honor this is. And how exciting it would be, but also a big responsibility, and how much work it would be. So I thought about it much more in that context than actually being a gay owner, and being a woman. It was really after we

closed that that aspect of it became much more present for me.

"We all feel a great sense of responsibility," Laura continues. "For me personally, I feel like I'm in an even more unique position being a woman who is an owner, who is also a director, and then also being an openly gay owner of a major professional sports team. I'm just beginning to appreciate what a unique position this is. It's humbling. I feel even more responsibility, it makes me want to do even more to work even harder, to really honor that opportunity I've been given."

Laura said that she has seen no backlash from fans, players, other baseball owners or Major League Baseball.

"The league did a background check," she said. "They wanted to know all the organizations we're involved with, where we went to school, where we invested and the jobs we've had. They do a pretty extensive background check. In terms of the LGBT issue, it was never an issue at all."

How would Laura respond if homophobic comments are made in the locker room, or to the media?

"I haven't really had a single incident of any anti-LGBT prejudice or uncomfortable incidents," Laura said. "It really has not been a factor in terms of my involvement with the team, the players, the people working here, the league. Everybody's been respectful. I think that obviously is an issue in professional sports and sports in general. We're just getting started here. Issues may come up. I am not a shrinking violet and I've been an advocate, so I'll do all I can if something does happen."

"I think a lot of those issues that come up are born out of ignorance," she concluded. "The way to dispel that ignorance is to live your life, be who you are, live by example, show people who you are and not hide from it, not back down from it. Most of the time people are very respectful of that. That's been my experience."



Patti and her 'Kids'

Musician/writer/visual artist Patti Smith (above) made an appearance Feb. 21 at the Harold Washington Library's Cindy Pritzker Auditorium to discuss and sign her new book, *Just Kids*, a memoir of her time in New York with Robert Mapplethorpe, as well as perform. According to a press release, "It was the summer Coltrane died, the summer of love and riots, and the summer when a chance encounter in Brooklyn led two young people on a path of art, devotion and initiation. Smith would evolve as a poet and performer and Mapplethorpe would direct his highly provocative style toward photography." Photo by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)

**QUEER LATINOS:
ART AND CHANGE**

Thursday, March 4

5:30 p.m. Cocktail Hour
6:30 p.m. Program

Join us for a fascinating exploration into the intersection of art and political change within Chicago's long-standing and diverse queer Latino community over the last 25 years. Featuring insights by scholars Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes and Lourdes Torres.

Tickets are \$12, \$10 for Museum members and students.
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calendar

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Wed., Feb. 24

Verbatim Verboten Ever-changing revue of staged transcripts created 10 years ago in Chicago by Michael Martin. Word-for-word transcripts of noted people saying things they never meant for the public to hear: surveillance tapes, secretly recorded conversations, forgotten open mics, on-camera diatribes, released emails, private correspondence ... Doors 7 pm, show 7:30; 7pm, Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark

Hawaiian/Hula and Tahitian Dance Class

Join us every Wednesday night at 8:20pm and learn the basics of pacific island dancing. Learn how to dance Hula including Hula Auana (modern Hula) and Hula Kahiko (ancient Hula), Tahitian dances such as the Otea and Aparima, and dances from other pacific islands like Guam and many more. 4057 N. Damen Ave. 8:30pm, <http://www.islapacific.com>

Thursday, Feb. 25

Gays Got Talent The company behind Windy City Gay Idol, now in its 8th year, now expands the search for the most diverse and talented acts in Chicago's GLBT 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 events at Spin (Feb. 25) and Roscoe's (March 3). 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 va-

TWISTER Wed., March 3

Cirque du Soleil is presenting **ALEGRIA** at Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates through March 7.

Photo by Camirand



riety 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. 8 pm sign-up, 9 pm start time. 8pm, 734-834-0491, Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont, www.windycitymediagroup.com

Hot Mess Thursday at @mosphere Hot dancers hit the stage, while Michael & Billy pour \$8 bud lite pitchers, \$5 Absolut cosmos, and \$3 well drinks all night. No cover! 9pm, @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St., <http://www.atmospherebar.com/>

Cyon Flare with DJ Phil DaBeatz at Hydrate Nightspots presents Thursdays at Hydrate hosted by Cyon Flare with ChicagoPride.com's own, DJ Phil DaBeatz and hot strippers. Win cash and other prizes from 10:30pm to 1:30am; 10pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, <http://www.hydratechicago.com>

Friday, Feb. 26

A Shared Evening of African Contemporary Dance The CCBdance Project presents an evening of African based contemporary dance works comprised of cutting edge solos by Celia Weiss Bambara and Sylvestre Akakpo that deftly engage Haitian and West African contemporary dance. Tickets: \$15 general admission, \$12 students. Tickets can be purchased at www.brownpapertickets.com. 7:30pm, 310-562-2435, <http://hhttp://fcmmr.wordpress.com/events-announcements/>

Think Pink at Wang's Gay hipsters invade Boystown as DJ Stinky Pinky delivers the smooth sounds and Wang's features even smoother libations. 10pm, Wang's, 3317 N Broadway St, (Between Aldine & Buckingham)

Saturday, Feb. 27

Miss Ruck and Maul Pageant 2010 Fundraiser for the Chicago Dragons Rugby Team. Back by popular demand: Ms. Iona T aylor. \$20 advance, \$25. 5pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St, <http://www.chicago dragons.org>

Spotlight Humane: Chicago Humane Society of the United States cocktail fundraiser, hosted by Jorja Fox of the hit CBS show "CSI." Dancing, cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction and Humane Chicago Awards. Benefits "End Dogfighting in Chicago," a program of The Humane Society of the United States (www.hsus.org). \$150. 7pm, 847-287-8031, www.spotlighthumane.com

BEHIV Fundraiser with Cleveland Leather Awareness Chicago area members of CLAW (Cleveland Leather Awareness Weekend) and KAOS Kontrol fundraiser for BEHIV's life-saving programs. Sponsor reception from 9-midnight in the Club Room, plus a hot jock contest. Raffle and auction items will be available throughout the evening. 9pm, 773-293-4740, Touche, 6412 N Clark St, <http://www.behiv.org>

Urbano: Hip Hop for All Clubhouse Productions presents URBANO every Saturday at Circuit Night Club. Music by DJ Kenae, DJ Corona and DJ Anton. Urban, House, Hip Hop and Reggaeton. Sexy Urbano Dancers. \$10; 11pm, Circuit Night Club, 3641 N Halsted St, <http://www.urbanochicago.com>

Sunday, Feb. 28

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. 2pm, 800-982-2787, Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E Congress Pkwy, <http://joffrey.org>

An Afternoon of Hip-Hop and Break Dance Hip-hop masters Culture Shock Chicago are joined by Hypnotik dance troupe and student dancers from the Southport Performing Arts Conservatory's (SPACE) hip-hop classes in an afternoon performance of hip-hop and break dancing performances. \$4 suggested donation. All ages. 3pm, 773-463-1200, <http://www.southportarts.com>

Male Call with Miss Foozie Roscoe's and ChicagoPride.com present Male Call with Miss Foozie. Here's your chance to meet the unexpected and end the weekend right. 5pm, Roscoe's Tavern, 3356 N Halsted St, <http://www.missfoozie.com>

Monday, March 1

LGBT Faith Conversation This group will use a variety of resources—articles, guest speakers, personal sharing, short documentaries and more from a variety of disciplines (psychology, religion, theology, science, sociology, etc)—to help LGBTQ people reflect on their spiritual journeys. This group is a joint collaboration of The Center on Halsted and Urban Village Church Chicago and will meet every Monday evening 7-8:30 pm thru March 1. 773-263-9554, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, <http://www.meetup.com/gay-and-christian/calendar/12303293>

Vinyoga Monday Class at Yoga Now Edge Water Vinyoga class focusing on asana, pranayama and meditation. All levels welcome. Adjustments in teaching are made for the physical abilities of the attendees. \$16 class fee. LaGenia Bailey, Certified AVI Instructor; 7:30pm, <http://www.yoganow-chicago.com>

Tuesday, March 2

An Evening with Patti LuPone & Mandy Patinkin Two Tony Award-winning virtuosos and lifelong friends are reunited for the first time since Evita. A concert and a unique musical love story told through the greatest songs written for stage. Through March. 7; 8pm, Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W Randolph, <http://broadwayinchicago.com/tickets.php>

Decade Tuesdays with DJ Heather Doble at Scarlet DJ Heather Doble brings you a new decade each week. Always a good time and some great specials! 9pm, Scarlet, 3320 N Halsted, <http://www.scarlet-barchicago.com>

Wed., March 3

Screening of Dreams Deferred: The Sakia Gunn Film Project You've probably heard of Matthew Shepard, but you may have never heard of Sakia Gunn, a 15-year-old out and proud young woman from New Jersey who identified as an "aggressive" homosexual woman of color. She was stabbed to death in 2003 by one of the two much older men whose sexual advances she rebuffed that night. The documentary follows the reaction of the Newark community where several rallies and vigils were held, galvanizing the community and prompting several LGBT organizations to form, including the Newark Pride Alliance and Sakia Gunn Aggressives & Femmes, as well as a scholarship fund in her name. 6-9 p.m. at Affinity, 5650 S. Woodlawn, <http://www.blackyouthproject.com>

In Her Shoes Chicago Launch Party Get inspired & inspire others. Women helping women. Massages, appetizers, live guitar folk and jazz music by Chris Parsons; 6pm, 847-867-9585

Cirque du Soleil presents ALEGRIA Critically-acclaimed touring production Alegria will perform eight performances through March 7, 2010. International cast of 55 from 15 countries showcase breathtaking acrobatics; 7:30pm, 800-745-3000,



EVEN STEPHEN Thursday, March 4

Stephen Sondheim (above) will participate in a Q&A at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph.

PR photo

<http://www.cirquedusoleil.com>

Thursday, March 4

The 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. 7:30am, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, www.averchicago.org

Artemis Singers free concert Artemis Singers lesbian feminist chorus Winter Concert will include old favorites plus new selections being developed for the upcoming Sister Singers Network 10th National Women's Choral Festival June 30 - July 4 at Loyola University Chicago; 7pm, 773-764-4465, <http://www.artemissingers.org>

Stephen Sondheim 80th Q & A: Harris Theater Presents... Just prior to his 80th Birthday, composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim will offer a personal and engaging view in a live, unscripted conversation. 7:30 p.m., Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph Dr, <http://www.harristheaterchicago.org>

"A Night at the Oscars" starring Shirley Jones The Academy Award-winning star of classics including "Oklahoma!," "Carousel," "The Music Man," "Elmer Gantry" and hundreds of other film, stage and television appearances, will join the 32-piece Hollywood Concert Orchestra for a night saluting the greatest music composed for and used in Hollywood films. "A Night at the Oscars" is a one-night-only event. \$30.50 through Paramount Theatre box office at 630.896.6666 or online through Ticketmaster. 7:30pm, 630-896-6666, Paramount Theatre, 23 East Galena Boulevard, <http://www.paramountarts.com>

Saturday, March 6

2010 Cabin Fever Ball, Women of the Western Suburbs 6-7pm cash bar, 7-8:30 dinner, 8:30-12 dancing/cash bar. \$32. Table of 8, \$256. wowsevents@yahoo.com; 6pm, 630-289-1000, <http://www.wowschicago.com/>

Chicago Takes Off Chicago Takes Off "TV Land: Outside the BOX!" is a Broadway-style musical revue that elevates the "strip-tease" to an art form. There are two show times: 7:30PM and 10:00PM! For tickets/information call, Rhett Lindsey at 773-989-9400 x233; 7:30pm, 773-989-9400 x233, Park West Chicago, 322 W Armitage Ave, <http://www.tpan.com>

Sunday, March 7

"Out & Proud" screening "Out & Proud in Chicago" television documentary by WTTW Chicago tells the history of Chicago's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) citizens. Its timeline spans from the Civil War through present day. This parallel history of the city tells a story of invisibility, oppression, devastation, revolution and triumph. 5:30 p.m., www.wttw.com



STRIP SERVICE

Saturday, March 6

Chicago Takes Off will reveal (almost) all at Park West, 322 W. Armitage.

Photo by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)

BILLY MASTERS

"I really hate vaginas. I'm allergic to vagina."—Robert Pattinson discusses his Details magazine photoshoot where he had to sit for 12 hours with a number of naked women. While I'm sure I would feel the same way, somehow it sounds different coming from him.

Every once in a while, I feel it's necessary to bring you news from various other facets of the world—for instance, science and history. A recent examination of King Tutankhamen's mummy revealed that the boy king was actually more manly than previously thought. As I was reading the report, one line jumped out at me: "The penis of Tutankhamen, which is no longer attached to the body, is well-developed." See? This column is like a frickin' Nova special!

I have a confession for you—I've never watched a single episode of Jersey Shore. I try to limit my trash intake to shows with some meritorious value—like Celebrity Rehab or Cops. However, I don't live under a rock. I know who these people are, and I know they're morons. Hot morons, but morons nonetheless. DJ Pauly D wants to be known for more than just decoupageing his hair—he wants to give "The Situation" a run for his money in the abs department. That would explain why he's sending around a pic where he's only wearing undies. I'm pleased to report that his envious physique certainly caught my attention. And when there's anything envious about the Jersey Shore cast, it should be time to end yet another column...but not quite yet!

I was recently catching up with one of my favorite people—the enormously talented Leslie Jordan. Last April, Leslie was supposed to bring his acclaimed one-man show, "My Trip Down the Pink Carpet," to New York. Then the economy went south and plans were scrapped. But it takes a helluva lot more than a recession to stop this little dynamo. A year and four days after the originally scheduled opening, the show will turn up at off-Broadway's Midtown Theatre. And he's got a couple of starry names signed on as producers—Lily Tomlin and Jane Wagner. Lily worked with Leslie on the abandoned HBO series 12 Miles Of Bad Road and fell in love with him: "I have seldom spent time working with anyone who so engaged me. What a storyteller!" Wagner adds, "Lily and I saw one of the early showcases and knew at once that we were seeing a performance that we wanted to be a part of in any way possible." It opens April 19 for a limited 12-week run—but when it comes to Leslie, the possibilities are limitless.

Over the years, we've spilt much ink (and oth-



Lily Tomlin (here as Ernestine) is strollin' down the carpet.

er fluids) extolling the virtues of model Joseph Sayers. He's one of those rare individuals who looks better the older he gets. The diminutive dude just did a shoot for iSoul Studios without a stitch of clothing. OK, nothing strange about that. He showed off his fantastic physique. Been there, done that, still enjoy seeing it. He even showed a hint of dick. Check. And then—BAM—full frontal, baby! Admittedly, we've seen his penis before. In fact, it looked slightly more impressive in those infamous pics from that Florida motel room prior to his fame (yes, they're still on our Web site). But, I dunno—somehow he looks even hotter now. Maybe it's the professional lighting. Maybe it's the touch of shaving around the base to make it look bigger. (We all know that trick.) Maybe it's being the ripe old age of 26! Whatever the reason, you should definitely check them out at BillyMasters.com.

Since we're in the middle of Olympic fever, I thought it would be fun to tackle a male figure skater. Not literally. But in our "Ask Billy" question, which comes from Paul in Rhode Island: "Everyone always assumes male skaters are gay, but is that true? And what about the hot French guy—someone told me he was outed in a magazine."

You're right—the usual assumption is that male skaters are gay. And yet, for something that is a foregone conclusion, very few skaters are actually out. For every Brian Orser there's a Boitano. For every Rudy Galindo there's a Miss Weir. The spandex-clad Frenchman Paul is asking about is Brian Joubert, who is indeed hot. And who was indeed outed. And who indeed sued for slander. And who indeed won. What's fascinating about this story is that the allegations originated with his ex-girlfriend! *Oui, oui*, there's a twist you didn't see coming! Back in 2005, he began a romantic relationship with Laetitia Bleger, Miss France 2004 (so she still had that new car smell). After they broke up, she said: "I gave everything to Brian, and in return I received nothing. I loved him too quickly. He used my reputation to make people believe that he went out with girls." Well, she said it in French, but it's still a pretty damning statement—especially from a chick wearing a sash! Brian sued Laetitia and the magazines who printed the quote for "breach of privacy"—which doesn't mean he isn't gay ... just that it isn't their place to talk about it. Kinda like a French version of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell". He did win—a paltry 40,000 Euros, which is roughly the price of dinner in Paris. *C'est la vie!*

The upside *pour moi* is that I get to run some very hot pics of Joubert on BillyMasters.com. How hot? If you liked him in Lycra, wait till you see him out of it! Yes, *mes ami*, naked!

When I'm flaunting my *laissez-faire* attitude, it's definitely time to end yet another column. This one was chock full of body parts, something I clearly specialize in. Which leads to my big announcement. I will be appearing at Jeffrey Sanker's White Party in Palm Springs—not once, but twice. On Friday night, I'll be hosting an underwear contest in the lobby of fabulous Renaissance Palm Spring Hotel. (The poor place will *never* be the same.) And the next night, I will be handling white-carpet arrivals with the fabulous Candis Cayne. Hilarity will undoubtedly ensue. You can get more info (and tickets) at www.JeffreySanker.com. But, for the best deal, I recommend going to www.BillyMasters.com, where I never steer you wrong! For your more pressing needs, just drop a note to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I get to the bottom of King Tut's penis! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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Megan Matteson. Photo courtesy of Matteson

Megan Matteson rolls on as Zoe Trocious

BY ROSS FORMAN

Megan Matteson had only been on roller skates a few times in her life—all while in middle school. So she had no interest in joining the Windy City Rollers (WCR), but rather, a local rugby league, the sport she played in college.

"I had a friend already on the [roller derby] league, Ada Hatelace, and after watching her play in every game for over a season, it slowly grew on me," said Matteson, 29, who lives in Chicago's Lincoln Square neighborhood. "The more I watched [roller derby], the more I thought, 'I could do that!'"

"My friend took me to the roller rink and said, 'As long as you're not clinging to the wall the entire time, the rest will come; we can teach you how to skate. You're an athlete and in great shape, so you should give it a try.'"

A month later, Matteson was trying out on borrowed skates. And a few months after that, she was drafted to the Manic Attackers, one of four teams in the WCR.

Matteson blossomed into Zoe Trocious.

"I tried out for the Windy City Rollers in June of 2008, and was drafted to the Manic Attackers that October. I was really lucky and proud to have been drafted so quickly to a home team," she said. "On the Manics, I eventually will be a regular jammer; that's what I've been working towards, and where I'll start to play more this season."

"During my first season [in 2009], it was more about being a body on the track and trying to learn quickly how to be useful and get a good feel for the game. I often got put in as an offensive blocker, though I don't know how successful I have ever been in that role. I think my strengths blocking lend more to defense. As a blocker, I rely more on being agile and annoying—always on someone with my bony hips and shoulders, never letting them get around me, or jumping in front of them last second and forcing a back-blocking penalty."

"I'm too small to deliver the really devastating hits, I think—at least right now. When I learn to use my weight more I'll be able to. Although I can sneak between people myself, when you're little, it can be more difficult to really move a bigger blocker who's in your jammer's way. However, eventually I would like to play on the travel team, and to do that, I need to be able to play any position—which means not only becoming the best jammer I can be, but figuring out how to block effectively, with whatever I've got."

Matteson is a Michigan native who moved to Chicago after graduating from Michigan State University in 2004. She is a programmer for Paylocity.

Matteson is one of several lesbians in the local roller derby league.

"I watched the Manics lose over and over and over again [before joining the team]. But, coming onto that team in 2009, I could feel that something had shifted, things were different," she said. "I was really fortunate to have been part of the championship 2009 season, not just because it's fun to win, but because it taught me a lot as a skater about what it takes to be successful. We didn't just breeze through our season, even if it may have seemed that way because we won most of the games leading up to the championship. I particularly feel lucky that I got to skate with skaters like Ying O'Fire and Helsa Wayten and Malice with Chains, before they either retired or moved on to other things. I learned a lot from having them as teammates. I feel like, with 2009 under my belt, and added to that my participation in the inaugural season of a 'B-string' travel team this summer, I'm ready to be a skater the Manics can count on in 2010."

The 2010 WCR season opened in late January.

"I've always played sports where I could rely on the fact that I'm very fast. But, I am not so fast on skates," Trocious said. "And usually I consider myself to be an agile person, but it is like learning to walk all over again in some ways. Every way I moved my body had to be re-learned to function while rolling along at high speed. It is still something I struggle with. Some skaters come to the league with a lot of skating experience, but no sports experience and/or in terrible fitness. Others like me come in with fitness, but have to learn to be good skaters. It's an interesting mix. It has definitely pushed me to learn a lot of new things, and to approach sports in a new way. As a fellow Manic, Mo Vengeance, has [said] it before: what other sport can you think of where there are two balls in play at once? Roller derby is athletically challenging, but it's also mentally challenging and a true team sport."

WCR holds once-a-month matches at the UIC Pavilion, including Feb. 21, March 27 and April 10.

"This season I hope to be in the main jammer rotation for my home team, and to hopefully defend our title as league champions; I want to feel more a part of that trophy this year," Trocious said. "Personally, I also want to parlay my experience playing more this year into trying out for, and making, the travel team this season, though I've had some [injury] setbacks recently. I was not skating for a few months [late last year] and have felt a little out of shape and behind schedule as this season starts. But I'm not one to ever give up. Ask me again later this



Megan Matteson aka Zoe Trocious. Photo courtesy of Matteson

season how I'm doing, and I'll have something good to tell you."

Matteson is one of many lesbians in the league. Heck, there are several other lesbians on her team.

"We haven't done much of anything to market [WCR] specifically to the LGBT community, but that is something I think we might want to work on in the future," she said. "We have had some gay groups buy tickets as social outings for their organizations and I hope to see more of that. Roller derby has a little more interesting subculture surrounding the sport rather than a typical sports-fan atmosphere; it definitely is welcoming to LGBT fans. We've had The Power of Cheer perform at a lot of our bouts—sometimes I wonder what the more typical (straight) sports fans in the audience will think of them, but actually they are always our most well-received half-time performance during the season. Because of the culture of derby, I think there's a lot of overlap between the derby community and the queer/queer-friendly community."

WCR is a logical stop for the lesbian community, Matteson said.

"There are hot girls on skates, playing a fast-paced and highly physical sport," she said. "But really, lesbians on the whole seem to really get into their women's sports, so it's been a mystery to me why we haven't garnered a larger lesbian fan-base."

Wanna know more about Megan Matteson, aka, Zoe Trocious? Here goes:

—"I moved here after college to work, live in a bigger place, and live somewhere that I could get around in without owning a car," she said. "I've lived in Chicago about five years now and I feel pretty settled here now, which I honestly didn't expect. I thought I would move around more before being in a city where I could feel so at home."

—Matteson attended Hanover-Horton High School in Horton, Mich.: "Yes, it was so small that it required a hyphen; my school combined two neighboring farm towns worth of people, and yet I graduated in a class of about 80; that was in 1998."

—Went to Michigan State University from 1998-2004: "I started out as an art major, then switched to mathematics, then eventually graduated with a general liberal arts degree."

—Status: "I guess I identify as lesbian, in that I haven't dated or thought about dating men since I was in high school. Once I had that realization about myself and was comfortable with it, I never went back. But I don't think about the labels involved with it very much."

—"The [WCR] league is extremely diverse and open minded and queer friendly."

—Favorite TV show(s): "I only ever watch television shows via Netflix, or online. Even before derby began to take up pretty much my

every evening, I've never liked blocking my time around television airing schedules. That being said, I don't watch that much TV at all, really. I like Glee. I was watching Dollhouse because I've always been a big Joss Whedon fan, but I am not caught up. Not many shows are grabbing me right now."

—Favorite Movie(s): "I am a huge fan of foreign cinema, especially French, and horror movies. I also usually see things that were based on books, and try to compare them to the book—I read a lot and it's sort of an amateur field of study for me; adaptations."

—Favorite professional sport: "Strangely, I am not at all a sports fan. I've never even been to a real baseball game or football game. I want to go sometime, though, since I live in Chicago. I do enjoy watching football with my father, but I don't follow it."

—Little-known skills or traits: "I took piano lessons for six years, and I've played drums in two garage bands. Plus, I can juggle."

—Hobbies: She enjoys reading: "I read at least one book a week, mostly fiction, and I follow about 30 comic book titles. I play World of Warcraft when I want to totally escape. I see a lot of French films, usually alone, and although I don't paint that much anymore, I write/draw my own comics."

—Final quote: "I'm single! No, no, just kidding. I'm really proud that I'm a member of one of the top [derby] leagues in the nation. Whenever I travel to watch our travel team play in other cities, it's hard to describe but I really feel a lot of pride in Chicago and WCR. We're hosting nationals this year and not only do I hope we win them, but, I hope that I'm a part of that, even in some small way; that's the goal I'm working towards. If you want to see roller derby at its best, plan on setting aside some time in November for WCR domination! And in the meantime, come see me at a home game! As a new jammer for the Manics this season, I could use some fans cheering my name."

Sundance Channel running Weir show

The Sundance Channel is running the reality-TV show *Be Good, Johnny Weir*—featuring the Olympian figure skater in the title—on Mondays at 9:30 p.m. through March 22.

"*Be Good Johnny Weir*" delivers an absorbing portrait of an athlete whose personality is as big as his talent. Bright, quick-witted and extroverted, Weir is as comfortable walking in a downtown New York fashion show as he is on the ice, and he is known for giving candid, irreverent, responses at press events. *Be Good Johnny Weir* follows Weir as he competes all over the globe, culminating in his appearance at the U.S. Men's Nationals in January.

See www.sundancechannel.com/johnny-weir/.

Weir recently placed sixth in the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Dutch lesbian wins Olympic gold

Lesbian speed skater Ireen Wüst, who hails from the Netherlands, won the gold medal in the women's 1,500-meter event Feb. 22, according to an EDGE Boston article.

She has had her personal life—which includes a relationship with another female skater, Sanne van Kerkhof—covered extensively, which Wüst has resented. "I want to talk about ice skating," Wüst told a reporter, *EurOut.com* reported Feb. 14. "You are not asking [straight male skater] Sven Kramer about how his relationship is going. So why would you ask me? If I would've had a relationship with a guy, you wouldn't have asked me either." Matthew Mitcham, the openly gay Australian diver who won gold during the 2008 Summer Olympics, is one of Wüst's friends.

Wüst won one gold and one bronze medal at the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics. She placed seventh in this year's 3,000-meter event.

2010 WCAA Men's Basketball

Competitive	W	L	Intermediate	W	L	Recreational	W	L
Jackhammer	4	1	T's	5	1	Big Chicks	6	0
3160	4	1	Sidetrack	4	2	T's	5	1
Sidetrack	4	2	Sofo	3	2	Spin	3	3
Roscoe's	2	4	Gotcha Covered Blinds	4	2	Taste of Heaven	2	4
Hamburger Mary's	3	3	Crew	4	3	Triad Entertainment	1	5
Solfire Realty	0	6	Apocalypse	1	5	The Green Team	1	5
			Hamburger Mary's	0	7			

—Teams listed by sponsor



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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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