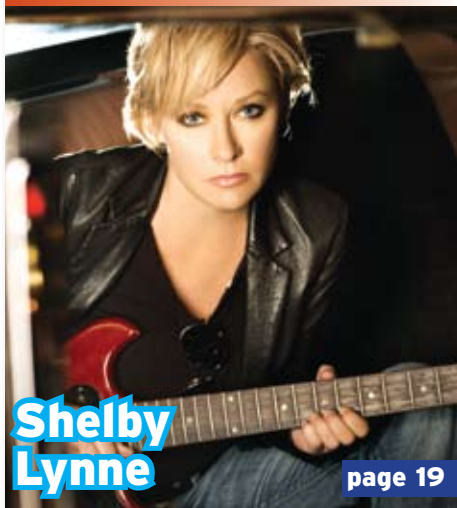




TrueChild Cookoff

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Shelby Lynne

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Louis Van Amstel

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nightspots
pick it up
take it home

GetEQUAL badgers Obama, Congress

BY REX WOCKNER

The LGBT community's new activist pit bulls, GetEQUAL, upped the pressure on President Barack Obama on April 19, 20 and 21 over his failure to keep major campaign promises to LGBT Americans.

Although Obama has taken several smaller steps seen as favorable or helpful to LGBT Americans, he has yet to secure passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, or repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act.

GetEQUAL's latest broadside started April 19 at a fundraiser for U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer in Los Angeles.

Activists David John Fleck, Dan Fotou, Laura Kanter, Zoe Nicholson and Michelle Wright paid their way into the event and then repeatedly shouted at Obama about repealing DADT as he tried to address the gathering.

"We are going to do that. Hey! Hold on a second! Hold on a second! We are going to do that!" Obama responded. "All right. Guys. Guys. All right. I agree. I agree. I agree. ... What the young man was talking about was we need to—we need to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell, which I agree with and which we have begun to do. But let me say this: When you've got an ally like Barbara Boxer and you've got an ally like me who are standing for the same thing, then you don't know exactly why you've got to holler, because

Turn to page 4



Bon Leaders

page 8

Lambda Legal hosted its 17th Annual Bon Foster Civil Rights Celebration April 22 at the Chicago History Museum. Pictured are (from left) Executive Director Kevin Cathcart, Midwest Regional Director Jim Bennett and Tina Tchen, director of the White House Office of Public Engagement, who was the guest speaker. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com); see more on page 8 and online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

Lesbian advocate Renae Ogletree dies

ANALYSIS BY TRACY BAIM

Chicago activist Renae Ogletree, 59, died April 23, after a recurrence of lung cancer that had spread throughout her body.

A public memorial service will be held Saturday, May 1, 11 a.m. at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark, followed by a reception at the same location. Public parking is available one block north in Lincoln Park.

In recent weeks, friends provided Ogletree assistance, as she fought back against the cancer. She was able to live most of her final days at home, thanks to the support of friends and even strangers in the community.

Youth issues were perhaps closest to her heart, and in a bit of fateful timing, the Illinois House of Representatives unanimously passed an anti-



Renae Ogletree.

bullying law the same day Ogletree died.

Ogletree's most recent job was with the Chicago Public Schools, in the post-secondary education and student development office of high schools and high school programs. She had previously been director of youth services for the City of Chicago and was nationally known as a youth professional advocate for Positive Youth Development. Her job experience also included working with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago, the Better Boys Foundation, Chapin Hall Center for Children and the Chicago Youth Agency Partnership.

Ogletree was also known to Michelle and Barack Obama for her work, and she was Michelle's escort for a 2004 Lesbian Community Cancer Proj-

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Artemis Singers are hosting a festival in July. See page 19.

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Photos on left side of cover (from top): Photo of child at TrueChild cookoff by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com); Shelby Lynne photo by Randeë St. Nicholas; Louis Van Amstel PR photo

Photo courtesy of Artemis Singers

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NOTES ON A SCANDAL

As questions swirl around the Howard Brown situation, Morris Floyd (right) discusses the questions he feels should be asked.



Photo from Morris Floyd

THAT'S ITALIAN



Amuse Bouche looks at fish tacos while Sugar & Spice reviews the new Italian restaurant Accanto (left).

PR photo

NERD-VANA

See pictures from "Earth Date for Gay Nerds"—hosted by Bathsbeba and Julia (right)—which took place April 22 at the Holiday Club.



Photo by Andrew Davis

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Civil-rights pioneer Height dies

Civil-rights pioneer Dorothy Height, who was particularly active during the 1960s, died April 20, according to CNN.com. She was 98.

Height was the chair and president emerita of the National Council of Negro Women, and worked during the '60s with other civil-rights leaders, including the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

President Barack Obama called Height a hero and the "godmother" of the movement, stating that she "served as the only woman at the highest level of the civil rights movement—witnessing every march and milestone along the way."

Height was born in Richmond, Va., and grew up in Pennsylvania. Her work in civil rights began in the 1930s, when she crusaded to stop lynchings and segregation. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994 and the Congressional Gold Medal 10 years later.

Gay-rights advocates praised Height and mourned her passing. Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said, "we deeply mourn the loss of Dorothy Height, who staunchly stood for the civil rights of all people. Dr. Height was a hero to many by devoting her life to those struggling for equality. We are in awe of her crusade for racial justice and gender equality that spanned more than six decades. ... To have met her was an honor. To speak with her, a joy. And, to have been inspired by her, a gift."

Black AIDS Institute President/CEO Phill Wilson issued a statement saying, in part, "Dr. Height's lifelong commitment to not only civil rights, but also to human rights as they relate to women, the poor, people with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable populations goes unsurpassed. She was a tremendous humanitarian who, even in the early days, was quick to understand why Black Americans must embrace the fight against HIV/AIDS. We will sorely miss her dignity and leadership." (See the op-ed on page 12.)

GETEQUAL from cover

we already hear you, all right? I mean, it would make more sense to holler that at the people who oppose it."

A few moments later, more shouting ensued.

"I'm sorry, do you want to come up here?" Obama said directly to a protester. "Can I just say once again, Barbara and I are supportive of repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell, so I don't know why you're hollerin'."

Obama then stepped away from the microphone and spoke with Boxer. He returned to the mic and stated: "I just checked with Barbara, so if anybody else is thinking about starting a chant, Barbara didn't even vote for Don't Ask, Don't Tell in the first place, so you know she's going to be in favor of repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

The protesters were eventually removed from the room.

"President Obama has been AWOL on DADT," said Fotou. "We had to remind him of the promises he made to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community during his campaign and several times during his presidency—that DADT will be repealed because, as he's stated, 'it's the right thing to do.'"

Added Wright, "We made it clear our community will hold accountable our president for unkept promises."

In response to Obama's questioning why gays are shouting at him over DADT, blogger Andrew Sullivan explained: "Because, Mr. President, it is not enough to be 'supportive' of ending 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' When you have the presidency and your party controls both houses of Congress, it's a matter of having the political will to end it. Not all gay people are HRC fundraisers. Some are even risking their lives every day for this country, in uniform, only to be treated like second class human beings and citizens by their own government. Their own government? That means you, Mr. President and Senator Boxer."



Lt. Dan Choi.

Photo by John Fenoglio

Chained to the White House fence

The following day, April 20, GetEQUAL protesters returned to the White House for a second round of handcuffing themselves to the fence and getting arrested, a month after the group's initial action there.

This time, six people locked themselves up. They were identified by GetEQUAL as "Lt. Dan Choi (and) LGBT discharged veterans Capt. Jim Pietrangelo II, Petty Officer Larry Whitt, Petty Officer Autumn Sandeen, Cadet Mara Boyd and Cpl. Evelyn Thomas."

"We are handcuffing ourselves to the White House gates once again to demand that President Obama show leadership on repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell," said Choi. "If the president were serious about keeping his promise to repeal this year, he would put the repeal language in his defense authorization budget. The president gave us an order at the Human Rights Campaign dinner (in October) to keep pressure on him and we will continue to return to the White House, in larger numbers, until the president keeps his promise to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell this year."

Thomas said: "A few weeks ago I saw Lt. Dan Choi take dramatic action at the White House and it made me realize that I needed to do something to stand up for all the black female soldiers who have been discharged under DADT. Many people don't know that we black women are discharged disproportionately more than others under DADT."

The six protesters were taken into custody and charged with refusing to obey a police order. Choi and Pietrangelo later pleaded not guilty and face trial July 14. The other four demonstrators each agreed to pay a \$100 fine within 30 days and to stay away from the streets around the White House until they've paid their fines.

"They have served their country again today, and they deserve better than DADT," GetEQUAL said.

Media blocked from covering protest

In an unusual development, media covering the White House protest were pushed far into Lafayette Park and away from the action.

"The park's closed. Back up," a U.S. Park Police officer yelled repeatedly as he herded journalists through the park.

Reporters and camerapeople attempted to resist the eviction, walking backward slowly and arguing with the officer. In a video provided by AMERICAblog (see tinyurl.com/backupclosed), members of the media can be heard saying:

"If you want to kick the public out, that's fine, but let us do our job."

"To where? ... You're backing us up *into* the park. ... All the way back to what?"

One unidentified reporter placed a cell-phone call to Brian Bond, the openly gay deputy director of the White House Office of Public Engagement. The reporter ended up talking to someone named Fred and said: "They're pushing the media back like two blocks ... all the way back across Lafayette Park. It's really pretty outrageous. ... This is just kind of ridiculous. I mean, it's one thing to push the public back, but not to let the media film is just ridiculous. ... They're just saying, 'The park is closed, you've got to push back.' They've got us as far back as the Jackson statue, and they're still pushing us

back. ... This is really ridiculous."

The following day, Park Police spokesman Sgt. David Schlosser told Politico.com that his department "screwed up."

"We had some young officers who, when they were told to move the people back—which we typically do when we're going to make arrests—they moved the people back a lot further than we typically do," Schlosser said. "That was a rookie, amateur error and they screwed up on that. ... It's just embarrassing."

AMERICAblog's John Aravosis, who was among the media people pushed away from the protest, rejected Schlosser's explanation.

"We're to believe that rookies who make mistakes are working the White House beat for the Park Service?" Aravosis asked. "If you watch the video, it sure looks like several different branches of White House security start discussing what to do, then some guys who look much older than rookies start telling everyone the park is closed."

Congressional hearing disrupted

On April 21, GetEQUAL continued its onslaught, disrupting a hearing of the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee to demand that the Employment Non-Discrimination Act be marked up and sent to the House floor for an immediate vote.

During the action (video at tinyurl.com/uwantmarker), GetEQUAL co-founder Robin McGehee tried to give committee Chairman George Miller, D-Calif., a magic marker so he could "mark up" ENDA.

"I'd just like to deliver this marker," McGehee said. "I don't know if because of the recession that you guys can't afford markers or whatever the issue is but in our community there are people being fired because they are lesbian, gay, bi or transgender."

"As you know," Miller replied, "we're working very hard on that legislation. ... I will not accept that marker. We're working on that as expeditiously as we can. Thank you very much."

Someone else on the committee then can be heard off-camera saying: "This is the problem with this. There's no end to it. You're never going to satisfy them all."

The protesters—including Mark Reed, Kelsey Phipps, Natasha Dillon, Alan Bounville, Sergio Llanos and Ali Lozano—were not arrested. Gay U.S. Rep. Jared Polis, D-Colo., escorted them from the hearing room.

"Every day that ENDA is not passed is another day when someone in our community will be fired, especially transgender individuals and those living in states that have struck down employment protections," said Reed. "We are determined to continue fighting for this bill and intend to use non-violent civil disobedience and people-powered actions to bring attention to the injustice."

ENDA has been stuck in Miller's committee since last year, even though gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., said it would be voted on by the end of 2009. More recently, Frank, Polis, Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., have said the bill is a priority and that they have the votes to pass it.

Who's paying for this activism?

GetEQUAL's activities have been funded to date by Jonathan Lewis, the son of one of the founders of the Progressive auto insurance group. McGehee didn't provide a precise dollar figure, but said Lewis' "seed money," given to the group in January, was enough to allow McGehee and GetEQUAL co-founder Kip Williams both to take a six-month sabbatical from their jobs.

The seed money also paid for the 45-person retreat in January at the Highlander Research and Education Center in Tennessee, where GetEQUAL was born, and has covered the group's travel expenses, other expenses and bail amounts to date.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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Prop 8 sideline fight

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

A sidelines skirmish over document production in the Proposition 8 lawsuit rages on this month, forcing the continued delay of closing arguments and, ultimately, a decision on the constitutionality of California's ban on same-sex marriage. And Ted Olson, the well-known conservative attorney leading the litigation against the ban, accused the ACLU and Yes on 8 proponents of "delaying the progress" of the trial.

The conflict involves a refusal by the ACLU and Equality California to turn over internal e-mails and memoranda to defendants in the *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* lawsuit challenging Proposition 8. Last week, the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals dismissed the groups' appeal of an order to turn over the documents. The 9th Circuit said it did not have jurisdiction over the matter and could not review the controversy unless the groups' defy the order, are found in contempt of court, and appeal the contempt order.

U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker, the presiding judge in the Proposition 8 trial, urged the groups, the defendants and the plaintiffs in the lawsuit to try to reach a resolution on their own concerning document production. But in communications filed with the district court April 22, all sides agreed that they had not been able to reach a resolution.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs challenging the California initiative complained to Walker that the ACLU and Yes on 8 supporters "are delaying the progress of this case" and urged him to move quickly to find the ACLU and Equality California in contempt to that their anticipated appeal of the contempt order can proceed.

In his statement to Walker April 22, Olson said that, "[w]hile Plaintiffs cannot stop the ACLU from choosing to go into contempt, the Ninth Circuit's order makes clear that such a tactic and any subsequent appeal would be futile."

The conflict over document production emerged halfway through the three-week-long trial on Prop 8 held in January.

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Hospital memo will take months to implement

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

When President Barack Obama signed a memorandum this month, calling for an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians in hospital visitation policies, many unmarried LGBT people assumed that meant hospitals would no longer be able to bar them from being with their partners during a time of medical crisis.

But not all presidential memoranda are created equal: Some go into effect immediately; some require months of rule-making bureaucracy and are subject to public comment.

The April 15 memorandum requesting the Department of Health and Human Services "to ensure that hospitals that participate in Medicare or Medicaid respect the rights of patients to designate visitors" is among the latter.

And the presidential memo Obama signed last June, asking the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to report back in 90 days with recommendations for "measures that can be taken...to provide benefits to same-sex domestic partners of Federal Government employees"? A spokesman for OPM says those recommendations were submitted to the president but are not available to the public.

Why must some memoranda go through months of public comment and rule-making while others go into effect immediately and why are the re-

sults of others not made public at all?

Randolph D. Moss, assistant attorney general for the Office of Legal Counsel under President Bill Clinton, says "it depends on what the President is doing and on the underlying law."

"A memorandum blocking assets held by terrorist groups, for example, can go into effect without further legal proceedings because the statute gives the President that authority," he explained. "But, at other times, the underlying statutory authority requires that a change in policy go through additional steps, such as notice and comment under the Administrative Procedure Act."

"The president's directive on hospital visitation will affect the rules that govern at hospitals that receive Medicare and Medicaid funding," noted Moss, "so HHS will need to propose a rule change."

"As the presidential directive makes clear, among the questions that HHS will need to consider is how visitation might affect patient care and treatment," said Moss. "Other questions might include how the rule will be enforced."

HHS will also have to answer the question of how to define "hospital" and whether that definition includes assisted living facilities. Luis Rosero, deputy assistant secretary in the Office of Public Affairs at HHS, said that definition will



Barack Obama.

almost certainly come up during the comment period and he encourages anyone with opinions about that to submit a comment then.

First, however, HHS must write a "proposed rule" for implementation of the directive and publish it in the Federal Register. Then, the public and interested stakeholders will have 60 days during which to submit their comments on the proposed rule. After the comment period closes, HHS will write the final rule—a process that takes at least several more months—and then the rule goes into effect.

In the meantime, said Rosero, hospitals are essentially on notice that this is what the Obama administration intends to do. The memo instructs HHS to ensure that hospitals receiving federal funds not deny visitation based on sexual orientation or gender identity, along with the usual categories of non-discrimination.

As for designating the recommendations sought through a presidential memorandum as "privileged" information, said Moss, "that's not unusual."

Last June, Obama's memorandum directed federal agencies to determine what benefits they might be able to make available to the domestic partners of gay federal employees under existing laws. It directed the OPM to prepare a report on the results of their findings, along with recommendations "of any additional measures that can be taken."

John Marble, public-affairs specialist for OPM, headed by openly gay appointee John Berry, said those recommendations are "privileged material" and not available to the public.

Marble did not explain, but Moss said the designation "doesn't strike me as improper."

"If you make [such recommendations] public immediately, before the president and his staff have a chance to look at and consider them," said Moss, "you may undermine the ability of people in the administration to have a complete and candid discussion about them."

"That doesn't mean that the administration will not make its views public, just that there is a need for some confidential internal discussion first."

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SPONSORS AS OF 4/21/10

Department of silence: Bullying of LGBT youth not a priority

Second of two parts

BY DANA RUDOLPH
KEEN NEWS SERVICE



Kevin Jennings. Photo by Patsy Lynch

From the beginning of President Barack Obama's administration, the general attitude of the LGBT community was that things would be better for them than they were under the administration of President George W. Bush.

But even from the beginning, there were signs that protections for LGBT youth might not be better and that "safe schools" might not be a priority for the Department of Education (DoE).

Several federal departments under Obama have made moves to benefit the LGBT community, but the DoE has done little. This is happening despite growing evidence that LGBT youth are among those most at risk and that safe-schools programs benefit all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Many in the LGBT community cheered when President Obama appointed Kevin Jennings, the openly gay founder of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) to head the DoE's Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools. Before he took office in July 2009, however, his department's budget had already been slashed by more than 40 percent—from \$690 million in the last year of the Bush administration to \$393 million under Obama. The budget request for 2011 is only slightly higher, at \$410 million.

The money will be used to fund a new "Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students" program to replace the existing "Safe and Drug Free Schools" program. Schools will compete for grants under the program by completing an assessment of students, staff, and parents. Grants can be used to address problems such as the physical environment, wellness, respect for diversity, and bullying.

But bullying is only one possible component of the program. The DoE has done little else to promote efforts to address the problem of school safety—much less the high incidence of bullying based on real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity—as a priority.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan did meet with GLSEN executive director Eliza Byard and a delegation of students and teachers in March 2009. And in that meeting, he "affirmed a commitment to make schools safe for every stu-

dent, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression," according to a GLSEN press release. But DoE did not issue a press release of its own, even though it regularly does so when the Secretary or other senior officials meet with organizations or community groups.

The DoE also displayed winning entries from GLSEN's "No Name-Calling Week Creative Expression Contest" in the lobby of its headquarters for a month.

However, no DoE officials testified in a July 2009 House committee hearing on "Strengthening School Safety through Prevention of Bullying."

At the hearing, two expert witnesses—Kenneth Trump, president of National School Safety and Security Services, and Scott Poland, coordinator of the Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention at Nova Southeastern University—each called for strong school safety components, including anti-bullying measures, to be included in this year's reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA, better known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), was the major educational policy enacted by Congress under the direction of President George W. Bush.

A bill introduced in May 2009 by Rep. Linda Sánchez, D-Calif., would provide such anti-bullying measures. Known as the Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA), it would require schools that receive federal funds to implement and report on anti-bullying programs. It would define bullying as hostile conduct based on someone's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, among other attributes. The SSIA is structured to be a set of revisions to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, which is part of NCLB.

Sirdeaner Walker—mother of Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, an 11-year-old Massachusetts boy who committed suicide in 2009 after relentless bullying about his perceived gay sexual orientation—testified at the July hearing and called on Congress to move the SSIA forward.

A number of organizations also contributed written testimony in support of the SSIA. They included GLSEN, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the Family Equality Council, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, COLAGE and Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) as well as several non-LGBT organizations such as Girl Scouts of the USA, the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Women.

A spokesperson for GLSEN, Daryl Presgraves, said in an interview that the SSIA is "our biggest priority right now on a federal level."

But when Obama released his "Blueprint for Reform" of NCLB, through a DoE document that details the administration's proposal, it contained no mention of SSIA provisions. It also included no mention of the Student Nondiscrimination Act (SNDA), a bill introduced by Rep. Jared Polis in January 2010. SNDA would prohibit discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in any program or activity receiving federal funds.

The DoE has also been silent about the several high-profile bullying-related student suicides that have happened since Obama took office. And the administration did not issue any remarks of support for Jennings when right-wing groups attacked his appointment, suggesting he supported pedophilia and claiming he would promote a "homosexual agenda" in the nation's classrooms.

Jennings himself has given no interviews to the LGBT media since taking office. A spokesperson for the DoE Office of Communications and Outreach, Jo Ann Webb, declined repeated requests for interviews with Jennings either in person, by phone or e-mail. According to Webb, Jennings has a schedule that is too "hectic" to accommodate an interview.

A comprehensive federal law to promote safe schools for every student, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, would provide a level of uniformity that current state and local laws do not offer. Only 12 states plus the District of Columbia have safe-school laws that specifically cover sexual orientation and gender identity. Other states cover only sexual orientation or do not enumerate specific categories of coverage. Some have only non-discrimination laws that may or may not include schools.

The Massachusetts House and Senate each passed anti-bullying bills in March, having sped up the process after the widely publicized suicide of 15-year-old Phoebe Prince in January. Prince, who had moved to Massachusetts from

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—ABA: DADT
should
be eliminated

—Transwoman is
former in-law
of Va. Gov. Bob
McDonnell (left)

—Trevor Project
receives award



Ireland with her family, was repeatedly bullied by a number of classmates. Six of those students now face felony charges and three others have been charged as youthful offenders.

But neither version of the Massachusetts bill enumerates sexual orientation, gender identity or other attributes on which bullying may be based. The same is true for bills pending in both houses of the Michigan legislature.

A 2007 survey of students conducted by GLSEN found that students were more likely to report harassment problems to staff—and staff were more likely to help—in schools or states with policies that enumerate categories, than in those with policies that do not enumerate the categories.

And in *Romer v. Evans*, a landmark 1996 U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2, the high court noted, "Enumeration is the essential device used to make the duty not to discriminate concrete and to provide guidance for those who must comply."

Both the SSIA and SNDA bills would provide enumerated coverage and federal clout to ensure compliance.

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Read more about anti-bullying developments—including the confrontation between Sen. Al Franken and Thomas E. Perez, assistant attorney general for the Civil Rights Division—online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

www.hesthe1.com

OGLETREE from cover

ect benefit at South Shore Cultural Center, when Barack was running for U.S. Senate. On March 18, 2010, Barack Obama sent the following letter to Ogletree on White House stationery: "Dear Renae: I recently learned about the challenges you face, and I want you to know how much I admire your strength. My thoughts are with you, your family, and friends. In trying times, each of us can draw on the power of hope, determination, perseverance, and faith. I hope you find strength and comfort in these principles, as I have. As you continue your brave battle, please know that you will be in my prayers. Sincerely, Barack Obama."

Inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 1998, Ogletree was involved in dozens of organizations and issues. She was on the board for Gay Games VII, and helped in both of Chicago's bidding efforts to get the Gay Games. She was a co-founder of Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays and also The Color Triangle. She was active in Lesbian Community Cancer (Care) Project, the Belmont Rocks, Yahimba, Horizons, and many more. She also participated in the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum and on the Chicago Police Department's 23d District Gay and Lesbian Advisory Committee.

In 1997 she received the Chicago Commission on Human Relations Award.

In the mid 1990s Ogletree helped negotiate a controversy in the community surrounding the original AIDS Walk. There were concerns the annual event was not funding agencies that reflected the diversity of those impacted by the disease, and Ogletree was not afraid to ruffle feathers by confronting those in charge.

"Renae was quite passionate about any type of injustice and at the same time completely irreverent to the point of being crazy-making," said Mary Morten. Ogletree's last public appearance was at Morten's birthday party Feb. 13, where she mingled and danced with friends.

"She had a fierce commitment to young people and that's what brought her to Chicago," Morten said. "She will always hold a special place in my heart for many reasons, one of them being that she introduced me to my partner of 11 years at a conference. You just never know how relationships will impact your life. There just won't ever be anyone like her."

A native of Passaic, N.J., Ogletree was one of six children. Two of her brothers were gay and died of AIDS complications.

While in New Jersey, Ogletree began her activism, including helping to elect Hackensack's first Black politician, something that she said resulted in her home being set on fire and other harassment.

In a 2007 interview I conducted with Ogletree for www.ChicagoGayHistory.org, she elabo-

rated on her early activism. She said she grew up during the era of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Black Panthers, and she idolized Angela Davis. Her passion was working on youth issues. "Young people keep me thinking, alive and progressive. I also know I wouldn't be sitting here today with a master's in sociology if some adult hadn't helped me," Ogletree said at the time. "Any great change that has happened in this country, it's because of young people."

What brought her to Chicago around age 30 was her work on youth. If she'd stayed in New Jersey, she said she probably would have run for office, maybe even mayor of Hackensack. But she was disillusioned with politics and how it worked. She came to work for the Chicago Boys Clubs, and was in the closet for the first three years, until the late 1980s. She eventually came out so that she would not be outed.

As she became more active in the LGBT community, that work included helping host a large Black LGBT conference in Chicago in the early 1990s, Unity, and co-founding Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays, an incubator organization. Out of that a group formed to march in the African-American Bud Billiken Parade on Chicago's South Side.

About 25 people marched in that 1993 parade. "Personally I need to be honest and say that was a bigger coming out for me than coming out in front of fellow LGBTs," Ogletree said. "I was finally coming home. I had finally come full [circle]. I was not hiding behind my job ... family. ... At that time I was at the University of Chicago as a researcher, so I knew all these people [at the parade]. ... I have a feeling of what it must have felt like for Martin Luther King marching over that bridge ... I just knew after that day I wouldn't be the same anymore, and I wasn't. ... I've had to fight with everybody in this community, but I've also experienced love from everybody."

Ogletree was first diagnosed with lung cancer in 2001. "I lead a very blessed life. ... I can honestly sit here and say this community has played a major role in my being able to sit here. In 2001, I was diagnosed with stage 3 lung cancer. Gave me 3-6 months to live. ... I'm really here because of the community. ... I moved out here without anyone. When I got this diagnosis in 2001, I didn't have a partner at the time ... I was alone ... this community surrounded me with such love," Ogletree said.

"I want people to remember me as a visionary, as a bridge builder," Ogletree said. "As someone who was very honest, who would call it as they see it. As someone who was willing to work on issues, raise them, but willing to work on them as well. As someone who believes in young people, and their future, and their voice. ... Probably most important as someone who knew how to laugh and have a good time, and get some

work done."

"At this time of Renae's passing, much focus will be on her amazing achievements on behalf of LGBT and African-American people," said Toni Armstrong Jr., former member of The Color Triangle coalition and GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network). "I'd like to encourage folks to find out about and remember Renae's commitment to young people as well. And, lesbian Chicago has just lost one of our most fun party animals."

Vernita Gray was among those posting on Facebook the day of Ogletree's death. She thanked her Facebook "family and friends for all your prayers and food and love for my dear friend Renae. Renae passed this morning at 11 a.m. leaving a huge friend void in my life. Please remember her family and friends in your prayers and chants."

Ogletree is survived by her niece, Tanesha Ogletree Clark, and great niece Anaya Renae Clark; brother Oscar Ogletree Jr., sister-in-law Joyce Ogletree and nephew Raheem Ogletree; brother James Ogletree, sister-in-law Frederica Ogletree, nephew Carlton Ogletree and niece Carla Ogletree; sister-in-law Pawnee Ogletree, nephew Edward Ogletree, Jr., niece Cheyenne Gail Ogletree. She was preceded in death by her parents Mary and Oscar Ogletree, her sister Gail, and her brothers Randy and Edward. She is also survived by a large number of friends around the city, country and world.

In lieu of flowers, donations are being accepted for a trust fund for her 3-year-old grandniece, Anaya. Make checks to: Anaya Renae Clark Trust Fund, and send care of Windy City Times, 5315 North Clark St., #192, Chicago, IL 60640. For a video interview with Ogletree, see www.chicagogayhistory.com/video_bio.html?id=577.

Personal reflections

I have written hundreds of obituaries for our community, starting in 1984 in the early years of AIDS. It is never an easy task, but it is always an honor. To summarize the life of anyone is difficult, and it is even harder when you call that person a friend.

I was among the people at Mary Morten's birthday party Feb. 13, where Renae arrived with her oxygen tank and a big smile. She danced a bit, and started to have a difficult time breathing. I asked Sharon Mylrea if she could drive Renae in Renae's car home and I would follow. But as soon as Renae got in the car, she realized the pain was too much, and we went to the hospital. The evening was difficult, as her close friend Vernita Gray and her partner Pat Ewert arrived, and then Renae's niece, Tanesha, came.

Renae went into a coma for many days, and friends came to say their final goodbyes. It was difficult for everyone. But like Lazarus, Renae managed to come out of the coma and was able to go into hospice care, first in the hospital, and then mostly at home.

Her roommate Janet Saltzman was amazing, as were friends Mary Morten, Vernita Gray and Lori Cooper. Dozens more helped out as they could. I started raising money through friends and strangers, through Facebook and Windy City Times. Money came in to help cover her care, given that her Chicago Public School insurance was inadequate.

As with her previous times of illness, I was able to spend more time with Renae than our otherwise busy lives would usually allow. My partner Jean and I did a few of the overnight shifts, knowing those times would be precious moments spent talking life, politics and community. Renae was in pain, and had difficulty breathing, but she wanted to stay connected to the community she so loved.

I have met thousands of activists in our community over the past 26 years. Few have come close to the appeal and accomplishments of Renae on both a personal and professional level. I served on the Gay Games board with her, and covered her at community meetings and events countless times. She could bridge so many parts of our community, and attended a wide range of events to prove we are more the same than



Barack Obama with Renae Ogletree in 2004. Photo by Renee Brown/R Snapshot Photos

different. But she was no token, and she challenged both homophobia in the Black community, and racism in the LGBT community.

My fondest memories of Renae are dancing with her at LCCP events, taking her photo with a wide range of people, and just sitting at her bedside contemplating life. She at first did not want to let go, she was afraid of disappointing her friends and family. But I assured her that she had to make her own decision, and she knew her time was coming. I so wished for her to have a painless ending, but also wanted to have more talks.

The final gift Renae gave our community was coming out of that coma, and allowing us all a few weeks to say hello again, and goodbye. I can't imagine a community without Renae, but through tears, laughter, and dancing, we will pay tribute to her by never forgetting who she was.

Community response

Windy City Times asked community members and her colleagues to make comments about Ogletree. Some of those are below, and more will be posted with the online version of this article.

Mona Noriega: "Each of us can claim a unique and special bond with Renae, but none of us can claim to have known her completely—in that way Renae was forever ephemeral, beyond reach ... and always beyond reproach. ... For any of us who had the privilege, or challenge, of having Renae in a meeting, she could quickly assess a situation, identify the points of contention, and reframe the issue on the table, changing the cleavage lines along which an issue was divided. You always wanted Renae on your side to champion your idea, to find comfort in her laughter and beguiling charm, but you could never assume that friendship would shield you from an intellectual challenge—and she was forever challenging."

Renee Brown: "I know Renae unlike any other. Our friendship began through the doorway of Gay Games. Renae was passionate about education. She LOVED her work with children, she adored the kids. She loved educating adults working with children. She was passionate about gay rights and her years of advocacy work speaks for itself. She loved her family and friends and of course Leo her dog. ... The one thing I learned from Renae is 'LIVE LIFE EVERY DAY' because there is only one time to do so. ... Renae was

Turn to page 9



Renae Ogletree, Mary Morten and Vernita Gray at the White House gay pride reception June 2009. See many more photos online. Photo by Willa Taylor.

Lobianco resigns after alleged DUI

Jim Lobianco, an openly gay man who was deputy commissioner at the Office of Homeless Services for the City of Chicago, has left his post after having an accident while reportedly driving drunk in a city-owned vehicle, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

On April 15, Lobianco was charged with driving under the influence (DUI) and failure to reduce his speed after hitting a car in the Lake View neighborhood. No one was injured.

Lobianco had paid a monthly fee to use the vehicle for personal use.

Lobianco resigned April 16. The Office of Homeless Services is responsible for implementing Chicago's 10-year Plan to End Homelessness; in addition, it provides various support services and aims to prevent homelessness.

The Huffington Post has reported that Illinois Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Brady would like to ban the personal use of state cars after Lobianco and Garrett Cullerton, son of state Senate President John Cullerton, were involved in separate DUI-related incidents.

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office notified Windy City Times that Lobianco's first court date is Tuesday, June 8, at 1 p.m. at the Daley Center, Room 406.



Ald. Tom Tunney.

Tunney mulls mayoral run

Openly gay Chicago Ald. Tom Tunney issued a statement in response to rumors that he may seek the mayor's post some day. His statement was made after Chicago Sun-Times columnist Laura Washington's April 26 column about the topic.

"I am a longtime ally of Mayor Daley," Tunney said, "and encourage him to run for re-election. However, if he chooses not to seek another term, I am interested in ex-

ploring the possibility of running for mayor. I will not consider it until the mayor makes his decision."

Tunney, well known not just as alderman of Chicago's 44th Ward on the North Side but also for the popular Ann Sather restaurants, said that as a "life-long resident of Chicago, a small business owner for 30 years, member of the LGBT community and a two-term member of the City Council, I believe I would bring a unique background and perspective to what our city, residents and businesses need to move forward."

Issues Tunney cares about include public safety, the underfunding of the city's pension plans, the implications of privatization of city services and further leasing of city assets. He also recently issued a request for proposals for an LGBTQ-inclusive senior housing facility at the corner of Halsted and Addison.

Rahm Emanuel, a former U.S. representative from the same area and, now, President Barack Obama's White House chief of staff, has also indicated he may seek the post. Many in the gay community are still upset with Emanuel's orchestration of the military "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" gay ban controversy under President Bill Clinton.

—Tracy Baim

State passes anti-bullying bill

The Illinois House of Representatives passed SB3266, an anti-bullying bill, April 23, according to a press release from the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance.

The House voted by 108-0 to pass SB3266, the state's general assembly website noted. The Prevent School Violence Illinois Act—a modification of current law that comprehensively defines bullying for the first time in Illinois law (including cyber bullying)—explicitly prohibits bullying against vulnerable groups of students and creates the Illinois Bullying Prevention Task Force.

The alliance, along with dozens of organizational partners (including the Illinois State Board of Education), advocated for these statutory changes.

The state Senate passed the measure by a vote of 51-2 on March 24, according to the Illinois General Assembly Web site. J. Bradley Burzynski, R-Sycamore, and Christine Radogno, R-Lemont, were the only ones to vote against the bill.

This measure covers bullying specifically targeted at students because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, among other categories.

The bill will now go to Gov. Pat Quinn for signing.

And the Bon played on



Camilla Taylor (left) and Pat Logue.



Phil Burgess (left) and Doug Ferguson.



Mona Noriega (left) and Evette Cardona.



Art Johnston and Tina Tchen.

The Midwest regional office of Lambda Legal held the 17th annual Bon Foster Civil Rights Celebration—the office's largest fundraising event for the year—April 22 at the Chicago History Museum.

According to Lambda Legal's Midwest regional director, Jim Bennett, this year's event was the most successful in the office's history, with more than 500 people in attendance contributing to the \$375,000 raised for Lambda Legal's general operating expenses in the Midwest.

The keynote speaker for this year's Bon Foster event was Tina Tchen, director of the White House Office of Public Engagement. Tchen focused her speech on the recent presidential memo to address hospital visitation rights for LGBT families—an action inspired by a recent Lambda Legal case in Florida. Tchen stated in her address that "Lambda is an essential part of this recent change," and that they made "a real difference" with this case. She went on to say that, while it might not always seem so, the president and White House are committed to fight for LGBT Americans to become "fully inclusive" citizens in American society.

Lambda Legal Executive Director Kevin Cathcart took the podium following Tchen's speech and stated, "Although it is our job to be impatient and stubborn sometimes with your office, we both seem to be moving in the same direction."

Cathcart added, "We are so happy to have a White House office that is finally willing to really work with us." Text by Chasse Rehwinkel; photos by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com) with many more available at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

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TrueChild gets cooking



Gina Reiss of TrueChild and Ron Huberman.



Polo Cafe's Dave Samber.



TrueChild, a national organization that helps children break through stereotypes so they can be true to themselves and reach their full potential, hosted the annual TrueFlavors Celebrity Cook-Off at The Chopping Block Merchandise Mart April 24. Ron Huberman, CEO of Chicago Public Schools, joined Top Chef season three finalist and fan favorite Casey Thompson, Top Chef alum Dale Levitski and Food Network personality Sunny Anderson. Chicago-based duo Amy Armstrong and Freddy Allen emceed the event. Also, chefs from restaurants such as Polo Cafe, South Water Kitchen and, of course, Chopping Block were on hand—as well as kid assistants. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com); many more are at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

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a tough, stubborn force who would give me and those she loved the shirt off her back. The one thing Renae would always say to me when she knew she was on my last nerve is 'one day you will miss me'. And I do."

Michael Harrington: "I'll always remember the day we met. It was May, 1993, right after the LGBT March on Washington. My friend Steve Wakefield and I had just returned to Chicago from D.C. and we had vowed to bring home the excitement of that national event by organizing a new networking group. It would be dubbed Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays, and Renae Ogletree would be at its core. ... At the very first CBLG meeting, Renae, the charming and witty socialite, revealed another side of her persona -- she was thoughtful, intensely intellectual, and a natural born leader. We served together for five years as co-chairs of CBLG. As we forged ahead with hundreds of large and small successes and achievements, Renae proved to be an inspiring partner in leading our crucial work."

Sharon (Sherri) Jackson: "I remember partying with Renae at her residence at Elaine Place in Chicago long before we began the journey of community activism work together. Renae

gave some of the best parties, drawing a diverse group of people together in laughter, fun, and love. ... We worked on such groups together as Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays, Horizons Community Services, Victory Fund, and many more. ... What I will always recall about Renae was her tenacity, love, hope, and being full of life. She taught me life is to be lived to its fullest and that is what Renae did, she lived a full life."

Kevin Boyer: "Renae was an inspiration to me and everyone in the Chicago 2006 organization. She constantly challenged us to do better and stepped up at every chance to ensure the success of the 2006 Gay Games for all Chicagoans. She contributed more to our city than many people will ever know and I am very sad to lose her."

Amelia Lopez: "While working with the City of Chicago as Director of Youth Services, Renae was instrumental in bringing Program Standards to city-funded youth programs as well as the catalyst behind youth workers becoming a true profession. Renae had a true passion for all youth, she believed in them, had high expectations and gave them voices in funding programs as well as making decisions. Caring adults are key to young people's success and Renae was in fact one of those leaders in Chicago."





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Howard Brown: More questions than answers

BY YASMIN NAIR

It has now been almost a month since Windy City Times first broke the news that Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) had placed its CEO and CFO, Michael Cook and Mark Joslyn, respectively, on paid administrative leave. Since then, HBHC has revealed no details about the reasons for its actions, only issuing a series of increasingly cryptic press releases promising further details.

Subsequently, Cook stepped down and Joslyn was let go. After weeks of silence and much speculation in the community, the agency made two critical announcements in a press release dated April 26 in which it revealed the nature of the issues surrounding the departure of the two men and the name of its new CEO. In the press release, HBHC announced that it is "cooperating with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on an investigation into allegations of mishandling funds involving the Multi-Center AIDS Cohort Study (MACS), one of the center's research grants." It added that, "[t]o protect the integrity of the investigation the Board and its counsel must limit the amount of information released to the public. Once the organization releases its findings to the NIH it hopes to be able to share additional information with the public."

The press release went on to say that HBHC's board of directors is working with the NIH to make "management changes, [implement] internal controls and an independent audit of all federal grants." It stated that there was "no reason to believe that any funds were misappropriated for personal gain or used for purposes other than the center's mission and services. Findings show that the funds were used to support services and programs at Howard Brown."

This release confirmed news reported by Windy City Times two weeks ago that Howard Brown "transferred its lead agency status of the MACS to long-time research partner, Northwestern University." This is supposed to ensure that the MACS study continues without interruption. According to HBHC, "This transfer will not have a significant financial impact on the organization. In its capacity as a subcontractor, Howard Brown will continue to receive nearly the same amount of money for the work it performs under the grant."

Howard Brown has also named Jamal Edwards as the organization's new CEO and president, effective June 1. According to the official bio,

Edwards was, prior to joining HBHC, a partner in the law firm Kirkland & Ellis LLP, "where he represented foreign and domestic corporations in litigation, intellectual property, and corporate transactional matters" and the firm's first openly gay partner in Chicago. The press release indicates that Edwards is no stranger to Howard Brown, having served as the agency's primary outside counsel while at Kirkland & Ellis. It also states that he "lead numerous Kirkland teams representing Howard Brown in countless matters ranging from mergers and acquisitions to litigation to real estate." The release also states that Edwards was a co-chair of HBHC's 2009 gala.

Meanwhile, community leaders are beginning to voice their frustration and concerns about what many describe as a lack of transparency on the part of an important organization. The controversy has raised the specter of old scandals at HBHC, and it is causing some to seriously worry about the impact this issue will have on the most vulnerable population: the clients who need and require the health care services provided by the Center.

Rick Garcia, public policy director of Equality Illinois, summed up Howard Brown's silence, which has spread through all levels of the organization, telling Windy City Times that "[t]he board itself has battened down the hatches and is engaging in a code of silence; there is no transparency." Referring to a previous scandal at



Rick Garcia.

HBHC, he said he was bewildered as to how bad the current issue could be that the board felt compelled to be so silent: "I can't imagine the situation being worse than when the development officer was selling crystal meth. And even then they were more transparent, and cleaned up under the great leadership of Michael Cook. Now, instead of letting us know, they've just been silent. I've been criticized for saying this, but I'll repeat myself: They're acting like our own little Vatican; They are trying to sweep it under the rug. That's exactly how the Vatican operates. If we can criticize the Vatican, we can criticize Howard Brown."

Currently, Winger Associations handles Howard Brown's public relations even though the agency employs a director of communications, Donald Rolfe. Garcia did not think that either the public-relations firm or HBHC's attorneys were doing a good job: "Whoever is advising them should be fired on the spot. You have to get ahead of the story but they've just allowed the rumor mill to have a field day."

Garcia pointed out that the silence could have a detrimental effect on morale and on funders, given that people in these economic times are likely to be even more stringent about where their money goes because, in his words, "Who is going to support an organization that has a cloud over it?" Asked what the agency could do to recover its public image, he responded, "The recovery point was three weeks ago—now we're way past it." He was also concerned about the effect of the scandal and silence on client services, which, he emphasized, provided much-needed health care to those who need an affirming environment: "I know people who drive in from Bolingbrook and Rockford because they don't feel like they can get health care in their communities."

State Rep. Greg Harris expressed similar concerns about the clients of Howard Brown and said he preferred to exercise caution before rushing to judgment, citing the need to "be very protective of the clients who are going to Howard Brown for health care; we need to ensure their needs are taken care of."

Lori Cannon, a community AIDS activist who works for Vital Bridges' GroceryLand, also expressed concern about the clients when she spoke with Windy City Times. Like Garcia, she was struck by the "wall of silence" that has come down on the issue. She was also critical of the hiring of an outside firm to handle public relations, saying that the move "shows arrogance and a sense of entitlement. Donors don't appreciate that kind of attitude." However, she also noted that "Howard Brown has been at the forefront of the AIDS epidemic from day one and

has provided case management, medical services and lab work to clients." Cannon worried that this situation might create "undue stress on a population that's already facing stress on a day-to-day basis." While rumors are flying, Cannon said she took no pleasure in the talk of "skulduggery and machinations."

Questions also continue to revolve around the fact that Cook and board chair Steve Phelps are reportedly ex-partners personally, and some wonder how that conflict of interest was and is being handled.

On a more recent note, this past weekend, reportedly a high-level meeting was held with HBHC donors, but no one is speaking yet about the impact of the scandal on the agency's future.

Windy City Times will continue to pursue this story.

Bernard Cherkasov on Lobby Day, Bill Brady

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Civil Union Lobby Day took place April 22 in Springfield, with several hundred people across Illinois going to the state capital to talk with their legislators. Windy City Times talked with Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov—who was in the midst of all the action—about how it went.

Windy City Times: Just so the readers know, what is Lobby Day?

Bernard Cherkasov: Lobby Day is an opportunity for citizens across the state to meet their representatives face to face about the issues most important to me. Since we deal with LGBT issues, we discuss [related] pieces of legislation that are in Springfield right now. I would describe what happened as a complete success.

WCT: Which legislators did you meet with?

BC: Well—and this is what I mean by a complete success—we had buses leaving from all over the state. We had buses leaving from Chicago and Carbondale, from Belleville, Bolingbrook and Oak Park; people drove in their own cars as well. We had such a geographical diversity [regarding] attendees to talk with their state representatives.

WCT: Do you have some sense about where the civil-unions bill is?

BC: We've been working on the civil-unions bill for a few years now and, every time we meet with new legislators, we make inroads. I am confident that when the civil-unions bill is called, the legislators will make the right decision. They will realize that this is such an important basic human right that they will need to pass it—but, in terms of a vote count, we won't know until the bill is called.

WCT: Also, what's your position regarding the gubernatorial race? I imagine that you'd be behind Pat Quinn and not Bill Brady.

BC: Equality Illinois has not endorsed a candidate yet. However, we sort of disagree with some of the political proposals from Bill Brady. Even before he was confirmed as the Republican nominee, we thought he had some really unfair proposals. After he was confirmed, one of the first things he put forth didn't deal with the economy, hunger or homelessness—it was to change the Illinois Constitution to prevent same-sex relationships. I was just outraged that this was his priority.

Then there was his gas-chamber proposal for puppies. He proposed that homeless puppies be put down. I don't know what his priorities are but I don't think they're the same as those of mainstream Illinoisans.

See www.eqil.org for more about Equality Illinois.

To find out Cherkasov's position regarding the argument that state legislators need to put Illinois' budget at the top of their priority lists instead of the civil-unions bill, see www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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The Bangles.

AFC gala nears

BY JERRY NUNN

"Walk Like an Egyptian" over to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago's (AFC's) event to see The Bangles perform live. This marks the 25th anniversary of the organization, which was founded in 1985 by activists and physicians. Since that time, AFC has given out more than \$18 million in grants to HIV/AIDS organizations in the Chicago area. In November 2009, the group was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame.

The foundation's gala, titled "Not Just Song and Dance," was on hiatus for four years. This is a black-tie occasion that treats guests to a cocktail reception, a four-course dinner and a silent auction.

Susanna Hoffs, the lead singer for The Bangles, was interviewed last year for Windy City Times. She told WCT that her mother is from Hyde Park and how much she feels she is "very connected to Chicago."

With the money raised, AFC hopes to expand

outreach and support communities of color, women and youth as well as men who have sex with men. AFC Vice President of Communications Johnathon Briggs said, "We are going to maximize the use of scarce public resources. There is just not enough money out there when it comes to HIV and AIDS. There are roughly 56,000 new infections every year in the United States." He added that with more people living with HIV there are new problems to tackle, such as housing and medications.

With over a quarter of a century of service, this event promises to not be just another manic Saturday.

The gala takes place Saturday, May 1, 6 p.m.-12 a.m. at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan. Tickets are \$500 per person with corporate tables starting at \$7,500. Call 312-922-2322 or visit www.aidschicago.org.

Amigas Latinas' special 2010 gala

Amigas Latinas will commemorate its 15th anniversary with the *quinceañera*-style gala "*Siempre Latina!*" ("Latina Always"). (A *quinceañera* is a coming-of-age ceremony held on a girl's 15th birthday in many Latin American countries.) Through this tradition and recognition, the organization embraces their Latin American roots as well as their lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LBTQQ) identity and community.

The gala will take place Saturday, May 1, at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. See www.amigaslatinas.org or call 773-661-0940.

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"THE VERY FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT SEA CHANGE IN THIS COMMUNITY started with the passage of Prop. 8. A whole Prop. 8 generation of people under 30 years old who were livid and couldn't understand how that could happen because they had never experienced anything like that—they were radicalized. Then the Harvey Milk movie really inspired them. You can't underestimate the impact of that movie on these people. The third thing that happened was that the leadership of our national organizations didn't embrace them. The fourth thing that happened was they created it themselves. I think out of the (National Equality) march, four or five different organizations have been created. ... What's happening is, with the disappointment in Obama and the passage of Prop. 8 and (of Question 1 in)

Maine, that we are making a transition slowly, but surely, which will change our institutions, which will change our movement." — *Veteran activist David Mixner to the Advocate, April 12.*

"THE WEIRDEST THING ABOUT THE LATEST ROMAN CATHOLIC PEDOPHILIA SCANDAL is that the church condemns healthy, loving gays as sinners who will face the flames of hell if they don't embrace Jesus, whereas a priest who routinely molests young boys is simply given some light therapy, then transferred to another parish! Pisses me off!" — *Village Voice columnist Michael Musto on his blog, March 13.*

"I WAS 30 (WHEN I CAME OUT). I HAD A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN; my parents disowned me for a while; I wasn't home; I lost all my businesspeople who I worked with for 20 years in politics. It was a brutal coming-out. It wasn't one of those, 'Oh, my God, what a pleasant surprise!' (Then) one day I was at a cocktail party and someone who I had helped become powerful politically was there. He didn't know I was behind him. And I heard him say, 'David Mixner is finished. He's washed up. He's a faggot.' And that's all it took. I got angry instead of being a victim and I said, 'I'll show you, you fucker.' And the one thing I knew was that a politician would sell their mother into slavery for money and so that's when we started the PAC (Municipal Elections Committee of Los Angeles). And I was right." — *Veteran activist David Mixner to the Advocate, April 12.*

"LAST WEEK'S (SAME-SEX FAMILIES) HOSPITAL VISITATION DIRECTIVE (from President Obama) is a welcome, but small step. Long gone are the days when we will accept crumbs and politely smile as if we were served the entire meal. We are tired of waiting. We are

tired of seeing our money and our support go to politicians who promise us everything yet give us only small token gestures in return. We will continue confronting our elected officials, including President Obama, with direct action demanding that they fulfill their campaign promises to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell and pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act." — *GetEQUAL.org activist Lt. Dan Choi in an April 18 press release.*



I cried. It knocked me on my ass, really.

—Martina Navratilova, on being diagnosed with breast cancer



"I'LL TELL YOU, THIS LAST ELECTION WAS A BIG LEARNING EXPERIENCE for me and I've come to the very clear realization that the battle is not between Republican and Democrat—and yes, we disagree on many social issues and the government shouldn't legislate morality anyway. ... If we took a moment and just stopped fighting each other and looked around—it doesn't matter if it's Republican or Democrat, there's entities, there are corporations that are making the rules in our society and in our country now. That's what needs to change. Obama still answers to those people, the same as George Bush did. We're silly if we think it's otherwise." — *Out rocker Melissa Etheridge to the Palm Springs gay magazine The BottomLine, March 26.*

"ARE THEY (HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN) HELPING OUR LGBT CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, or are they hurting it? Basically, if we are not yet fully equal citizens of America, does it make sense to have an organization surrounded by those who are so well off that being equal almost doesn't impact them?" — *YouTuber Sean Chapin, known for his gay-politics videos, in a March 30 Facebook posting.*

"I CRIED. IT KNOCKED ME ON MY ASS, REALLY. I feel so in control of my life and my body, and then this comes, and it's completely out of my hands." — *Martina Navratilova to People magazine April 7 on being diagnosed with breast cancer.*

"IF I HADN'T BEEN BORN A WOMAN I would have certainly been gay because I love sparkles and ruffles and color." — *Skater Dorothy Hamill to Fox News, April 13. Dorothy needs to meet more gays.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

Couple marks 25 years



Lisa and Linda Howe-Ebright of west suburban Oak Park wanted to mark their 25th anniversary with a special celebration. Thanks to the state of Iowa, they were able to get legally married to mark the occasion. On April 18, they held a wedding reception and showed off their marriage license to friends and family at the Oak Park Conservatory. Pictured are Lisa (left) and Linda with their 16-year old son, Michael. Chicagoans know Lisa's photography work: She has documented local theater for decades, and covered LGBT and AIDS-community events especially during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Chicago Public Library presents "Capturing Chicago Theater: 35 Years of Theater Photography by Lisa Howe-Ebright (1974-2009)," a new exhibit highlighting her career. This exhibit features 35 years of Lisa's work with the Chicago theater community. It opened to the public April 10 and continues through Oct. 3, 2010, in the Special Collections Exhibit Hall, 9th floor, of the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St. Photo by Tracy Baim

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**REV.
IRENE
MONROE**

Gays lose Black civil-rights ally Dorothy Height

Civil-rights activist Dorothy Irene Height died April 20 at the age of 98. Among prominent African-American civil-rights allies to the LGBTQ community—such as Corretta Scott King, Julian Bond and John Lewis, to name a few—Height wasn't profiled and honored enough.

But this unsung heroine was never concerned about accolades. In an interview with Gwen Ifill—an African-American journalist and television newscaster for PBS—about her memoir, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates*, Height said, "If you worry about who is going to get credit, you don't get much work done."

This grande dame of the civil-rights era, however, got a lot of work done in her lifetime, exhibiting indefatigable energy in championing for gay rights as she did eighty-plus years championing race and gender rights.

As president of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)—an organization with the objective of advancing opportunities and the quality of life for African-American women, their families and communities with programs on issues like voting rights, poverty and, in later years, AIDS—for 40 years (1957-1997), Height understood that Black families and communities could neither be whole nor healthy without championing gay civil rights for its LGBTQ com-

munity.

For example, in 1996 with Elizabeth Birch, then-president of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Height worked the halls of Congress when the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) faced its first vote on the Senate floor. Although the Senate rejected ENDA 50-49, Height continued her efforts.

At the height of when African-American ministers—especially those of the civil-rights era, claiming to have marched and worked with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King—vehemently denied the gay-liberation struggle as a civil-rights issue Height, in her acceptance speech at the 1997 HRC national dinner, said: "Civil rights are civil rights. There are no persons who are not entitled to their civil rights. ... We have to recognize that we have a long way to go, but we have to go that way together."

Height's understanding of LGBTQ rights derived from her in-fighting for gender equity with the stalwarts of civil-rights movement. With only Black heterosexual men in leadership role during the movement, both its women and LGBTQ communities were constantly sidelined, albeit shouldering most of the work. For example, just as Bayard Rustin, the architect of the 1963 March on Washington that catapulted King onto a national stage, didn't have a speaking role at the march because of homophobic sentiments, Height—then-president of the National Council of Negro Women and one of the march's chief organizers and a prizewinning orator herself—didn't have a speaking role because of sexist attitudes.

In an interview with NPR in 2003 Height commented on the sexism at the march, stating that Mahalia Jackson, the queen of gospel music, was the only woman heard from the podium that day.

Height said, "My being seated there had some very special meaning because women had been trying to get a woman to speak on the program,

but we were always met by the planners with the idea that women were represented in all of the different groups, in the churches, in the synagogues, in the unions, organizations and the like. So the only voice we heard of a woman was that of Mahalia Jackson."

Born in 1912—before women had the right to vote in 1920 and when Jim Crow America was still very much alive—Height confronted not only sexism but racism as well. In 1929, at the beginning of the Great Depression, Height was admitted to Barnard College, one of the elite Seven Sister private colleges for women. Not knowing of the school's unwritten racial-quota policy of only allowing two Black students per academic year, Height, upon arriving on campus as the third student, was denied entrance.

Given the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2004, Height was an exemplar of quiet dignity, prophetic witness and public service. And it is her shoulder we all stand on.

In 1947 Height became president of the Delta Theta Sigma Sorority Inc., a Greek-lettered sorority of African-American college-educated women who perform public service in the African-American community. And her life's work upheld its motto: "Lifting as We Climb."

As we say in the African-American community, Height has gone home to Jesus, but we give thanks for her strength as a fighter for social justice on which we have leaned on, and for her grace by which we have grown.

Height was not only a public servant, but she was also one of our moral leaders.

And by example, Height has showed us that our social-justice work is recognized best when we shift the paradigm of looking for moral leadership from outside of ourselves to within ourselves. Thus, we realize that we are not only the agents of change in society, but also the moral leaders we have been seeking.

And for that we give her thanks.



**YASMIN
NAIR**

In memoriam: Georges Kanuma, friend and LGBT activist

Georges Kanuma, the Burundi LGBT activist and beloved friend to many, died April 14 at age 36 after a bout with malaria followed by kidney failure.

Georges was Burundi's premier and out gay activist. He founded the Association for the Respect of the Rights of Homosexuals (ARDHO), the only LGBT advocacy group in Burundi, and worked to provide resources and support for HIV and AIDS patients. I first met Georges last year, almost exactly a year ago, at a workshop I was presenting to a small group of international LGBT activists. We tend to render our dead in saccharine terms, but it is no exaggeration to write that he struck me as one of the sweetest and kindest people I have ever met. I warmed to him instantly, feeling both protective and protected in his presence. Without engaging in the flamboyance and bombast adopted by so many gay leaders, he simply went about his work quietly and effectively. My first inkling of his strength under pressure came when I saw him hastily leaving a session at a Heartland Alliance conference a few weeks later. When I cheerily asked him where he was going, he responded that a law against homosexuality had just been passed in Burundi and that he needed to take action immediately.



Georges Kanuma (second from left) at a Heartland Alliance event in 2009. Photo by Andrew Davis

I only found out the enormity of that law and Georges' work around it much later.

I regret that I never met Georges again. We kept in touch over Facebook and I worried about his safety as he worked and traveled under a repressive government. I never imagined that he would be struck down by something as prosaic, to me, as malaria. While I cannot claim to have been among his close friends, Georges left an impression on me. I feel that it is imperative to let the world know how important his work was and the great loss felt by activists and friends around the world.

By sheer coincidence, some of the same people who attended the LGBT conference last year were here last week for the same event, and I met with a few of them over lunch in Boystown to talk and reminisce about Georges. The group included Rosanna Flamer-Caldera of Sri Lanka's Equal Ground; Georges Azzi of the Lebanese group Helem; and Matthew French and Sean Casey, both of Heartland Alliance. Flamer-Caldera described Georges as a "very sensitive, soft-

spoken and quiet guy who made a point without raising his voice an octave." She said that his death was "a loss for the global south; he died needlessly and his death is a blow to us all."

Casey seconded that emotion when he described Georges' death as "pointless, frustrating and totally unnecessary." Gesturing at everyone around the table, he said, "This would never have happened to any of us here: We would all have been foreigners with insurance. Georges died because he was an activist without insurance." Casey provided details about the circumstances of Georges' death, which came about because he suffered kidney failure. Burundi has no dialysis machine and Casey's Heartland Alliance colleagues in the country tried desperately to get him evacuated to Nigeria for treatment. But they were delayed by bureaucratic excuses—the plane was too small, the doctor wouldn't sign the release, and so on.

Casey spoke admiringly of Georges' bravery,

Turn to page 20

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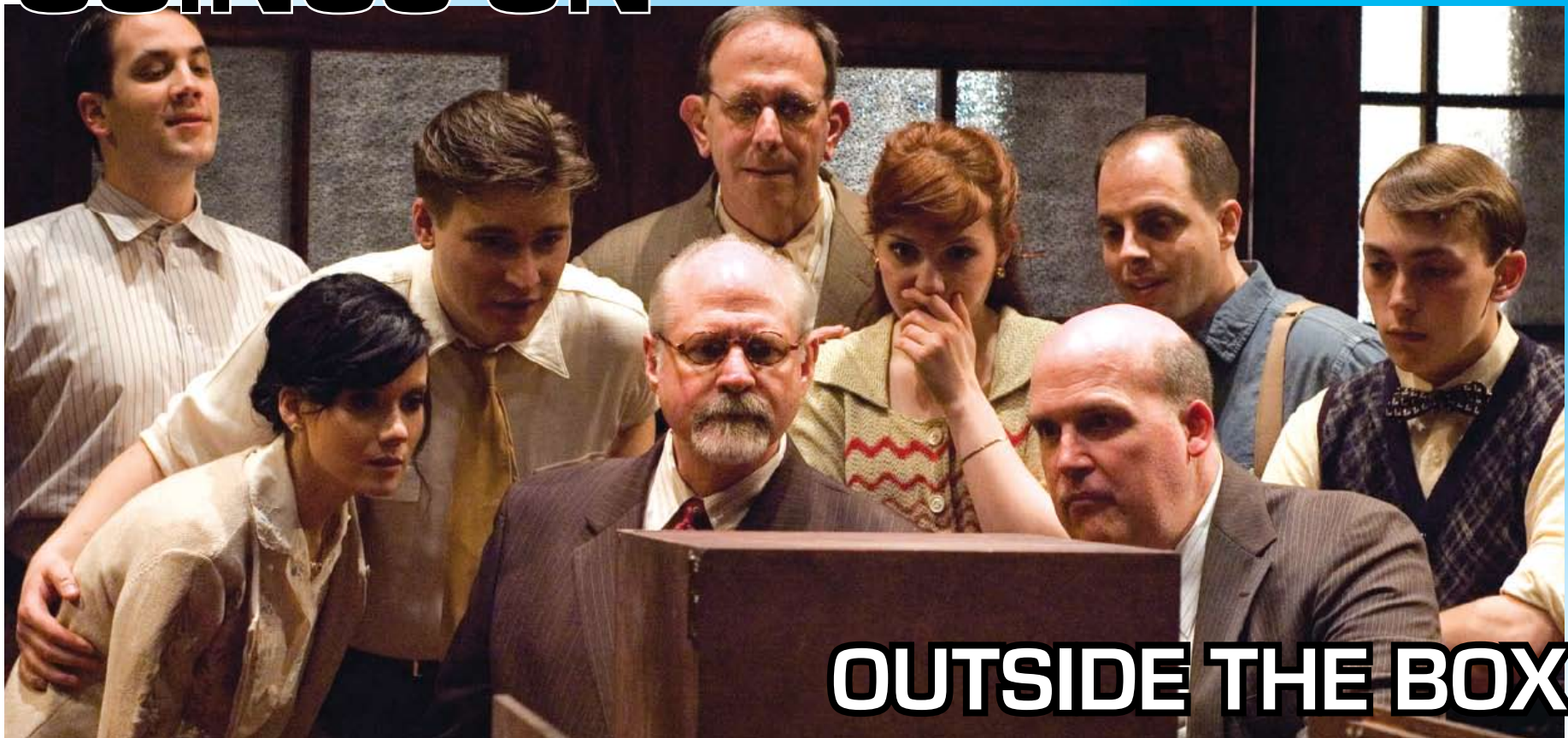
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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by
Lara
Goetsch

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Windy City Times reviews *The Farnsworth Invention*, a production about the creation of television. See page 14.

SPORTS

Kick start.
Page 26.Photo courtesy of
Chicago Red Stars

AUTOS

LaCrosse to bear.
Page 20.Photo courtesy of
Gaywheels.com

MOVIES

A Fey old time.
Page 18.Photo by
Myles Aronowitz

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

London calling

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Timing is everything. And I couldn't have lucked out more with my own timing on a recent trip to Great Britain.

My arrival was on the day before most European airports were shut down due to the Icelandic volcanic ash cloud. My departure also fell on the day after aviation authorities officially reopened British airspace.

Timing also proved to be largely on my side when it came to the six shows I selected to review, which coincidentally all turned out to be by playwrights from the British Isles.

I was lucky to snag a pair of half-price tickets to a revival of Noel Coward's *Private Lives*. It was all the more amazing because it starred *Sex and the City*'s Kim Cattrall and Matthew Macfadyen (best known for playing Mr. Darcy in the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* film).

Unlike many other TV stars who fail to deliver celebrity wattage on stage, Cattrall sparkled throughout. If you didn't know of Cattrall's TV fame as the man-hungry Samantha, you could easily have mistaken her for a British stage pro who knew just how to deliver Coward's arch repartee as the tempestuous divorcee Amanda (By the way, Cattrall technically is a British native, but her family moved to Canada when she was a child).

Cattrall more than meets her match in Macfadyen, who layers on an attractive masculinity on top of Elyot's witty fey dialogue. Director Sir Richard Eyre also turned up trumps with the supporting cast of Lisa Dillon and Simon Paisley Day, who both presented pitch perfect turns as the jilted newlyweds. This stylish and star-studded London revival of *Private Lives* ends May 1 at the Vaudeville Theatre, but there is talk of a Broadway transfer.

One West End production that has already been fast-tracked to New York is Lucy Prebble's drama

Andrew Slater and Gillian Ramm in English Touring Opera's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Photo by Richard Hubert Smith

Enron, which opened on Broadway this week. Still playing in the West End, Enron is a theatrical marvel thanks to director Rupert Goold.

Prebble creatively finds pop culture-tinged ways of explaining away all what we would typically think as dry business terms. For some, the references to *Jurassic Park* and *Star Wars* may be all too simple, but her step-by-step dramatization of the notorious financial meltdown of this Houston energy corporation is easily accessible for any economics neophyte.

It is Goold's cinematic staging complete with songs by Adam Cork, choreography by Scott Ambler and projection designs by Jon Driscoll that all elevate Enron into an epic multimedia spectacle. The fine ensemble also finds pathos in what is essentially a hubris-filled tragedy about former Enron executive Jeffrey Skilling (Samuel West, in a dazzling performance). Anyone skeptical about current financial reform legislation should see this play, and President Barack Obama really should have caught Enron during his recent visit to New York.

Celebrity casting seems to be reason behind the current West End revival of George Bernard Shaw's most controversial play, *Mrs. Warren's*

Profession. Tackling the famed brothel owner of the title was British stage and TV veteran Felicity Kendal (best known for playing Barbara in the British sitcom *Good Neighbors*).

Kendal certainly displayed plenty of sparkle as the worldly wise madam who has funded her proto-feminist daughter's college education without ever revealing what it was that brought in her wealthy allowance. Kendal's confession and later showdown with Lucy Briggs-Owen as her daughter Vivie, was good but not fully satisfying.

Some of that has to do with Shaw's play structure in which he uses characters to spout out lectures on economic inequities (Shaw often referred to his plays as "arguments"). And also for director Michael Rudman's old-fashioned staging (the main curtain was dropped for listless scene changes) and casting choices that didn't wring out all the possible comedy of the play (one exception was David Yelland's superbly slimy take on the aristocratic Crofts).

Most British theater trips aren't complete without a bit of Shakespeare, and mine came in the sung form of Benjamin Britten's 1960 opera version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

During a weekend visit to the magnificent Chatsworth House estate in Derbyshire, I made a point to catch the final night of English Touring Opera's three-night stop at the nearby Buxton Opera House (an exquisitely restored Edwardian gem of a theater).

Don Pasquale and *The Marriage of Figaro* (both performed in English) were the other works on English Touring Opera spring 2010 repertory season, but I wanted to revisit Britten's eerily scored *A Midsummer Night's Dream* since it's an English opera performed by an English company (cue the waiving Union Jack). And it's also by a gay composer (cue the waiving *Pride* flag).

Alas, the quality of singers didn't live up to previous productions of the opera I've seen in Colorado in 2002 and right here in the Windy City (though director James Conway's staging made far more sense than Andrei Serban's dramatically incoherent staging for Chicago Opera Theater in 2005).

Some fine exceptions include Andrew Slater's finely rounded tone and commanding stage presence as the weaver Bottom (who humorously gets transformed into an ass, complete with enormous phallus). Soprano Gillian Ramm also shined as Tytania, Queen of the Fairies (though she shouldn't have overpowered countertenor Jonathan Peter Kenny as Oberon).

Due to the touring nature of the opera, the children's chorus of fairies was vastly scaled back and given largely to a quartet of young women. Because of that, the opera probably didn't have the same sonic edge it usually does, though conductor Michael Roswell mostly kept things together in the pit for Britten's difficult score. Needless to say, seeing this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has whetted my appetite for the Lyric Opera of Chicago's production this upcoming season.

During my trip, I was also able to catch *Love Never Dies*, the long awaited sequel to *The Phantom of the Opera* by composer Andrew Lloyd Webber. Look for a full review of the *Phantoms* (both the original and the sequel) in a subsequent issue.



From left: Lindsay Leopold, Michael Peters and Jessie Fisher in Cabaret. Photo by John W. Sisson, Jr.

THEATER REVIEW

Cabaret

Playwright: Fred Ebb (lyrics) and John Kander (music)

At: The Hypocrites at the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs' Storefront Theater, 66 E. Randolph
Phone: 312-742-8497; \$25, \$15 students and seniors
Runs through: May 23

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Director Matt Hawkins begins his staging of Cabaret with an explosion of flesh. A hothouse profusion of spreading thighs, cantaloupes-on-a-platter cleavage and cheekily exposed half-moon rears create an atmosphere that's palpably carnal. It's an apt start for a musical set during the pansexual revelry of Weimar-era Germany. As the Emcee welcomes the audience to a deliciously seedy Berlin club at the tri-corner intersection of decadence, beauty and denial, Hawkins ensures that the audience is immersed in the hedonism before the first measure is over.

But what works so well in that first number becomes the theatrical equivalent of a sledgehammer by the third. Hawkins applies a heavy directorial hand to a Hypocrites production rooted in the obviousness of tits and ass and endlessly thrusting pelvises. The crotchacular choreography becomes impotent through repetition, edgy raunchiness is blunted by the predictability of an ceaselessly writhing array of Rodarte-for-Target-style fishnets, aggressively lacy underpants and whimsical cod pieces.

Despite casting a female as the Emcee, Hawkins hasn't created a revisionist Cabaret so much as an overly emphatic one. He pounds away at the political aspects of Fred Ebb (lyrics) and John Kander's (music) brilliant musical with the same force that he applies to the debauchery. Here, the Emcee—a character written to be creepily amoral—takes an unmistakable stand against the encroaching evil of the Third Reich. As the omnipresent Master of Ceremonies, Jessie Fisher sounds great, but she's perky and chipper in a role that demands the unsettling menace of moral ambiguity. Moreover, she becomes downright maternal when Hawkins introduces the character of a very young boy into the story and

then makes the child a key figure in the Emcee's stand against the Nazis. Motherliness is surely not what Kander and Ebb had in mind for the show's voraciously omniseual leading wo/man.

As for those Nazis: Costuming them in black face masks (that look to be fashioned from Hefty bags) is overstating the obvious.

A similarly over-the-top decision informs Lindsay Leopold's portrayal of Sally Bowles, the leading lady of enthusiastic oblivion who insists life is a cabaret even as the poison of Hitler's goose-stepping vanguard seeps into the Kit Kat. Leopold is winningly naughty on "Don't Tell Mama" and belts with the requisite vengeance through "Mein Herr." But come the title tune, she goes into a frenzy that evokes the DTs more than the defiant denial the song is all about. Sally might be desperate, but she's not feral.

Michael Peters is far more effective as bisexual aspiring novelist Clifford Bradshaw. With an understated, wide-eyed gaze, he portrays a lost soul foundering in a thousand longings he can't even begin to articulate. Also powerful is Kyle Erkonen as the Boy. The grade-schooler's expressionless eyes and exquisite falsetto are a perfect, eerie fit for "Tomorrow Belongs to Me," a song that's comes with a context as frightening as the looming specter of death camps.

What Cabaret also gets right is the band, a seven-person ensemble that captures the magnificent score with a down-'n-dirty, ragtag gusto worthy of the Kit Kat.

THEATER REVIEW

The Farnsworth Invention

Playwright: Aaron Sorkin

At: TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington

Tickets: 773-281-8463;

www.timelinetheatre.com; \$25-\$35

Runs through: June 13

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Aaron Sorkin has the Right Stuff to create dazzling popular drama for TV (The West Wing) and stage (A Few Good Men), not unlike Peter Shaffer (Amadeus, Equus) or Alan Bennett (The Madness of George III, The History Boys). He's not as intellectual as either but, like them, he astutely blends showmanship, history and ideas. Sorkin succeeds again with The Farnsworth Invention, a crackling-good play served *con brio* by TimeLine (sic) Theatre Company.

Ironically or appropriately, Sorkin uses legitimate theater to chronicle the early history of theater's great enemy, television, invented in the 1920s by Utah-born Philo Farnsworth (1906-1971), an instinctively brilliant engineer with little formal education. Scientific history credits Farnsworth, but business history credits Russian Jewish immigrant David Sarnoff (1891-1971) who, by 1928, was president of RCA and founder of its subsidiary, NBC. Sarnoff invested millions to develop commercial TV (and radio) and contest patents with Farnsworth. The iconic trademarks of RCA and NBC tell you who came out on top.

One can parse Sorkin's play many ways—Easterner (Sarnoff) vs. Westerner, ambitious immigrant vs. American frontiersman, innovation (Farnsworth) vs. exploitation (Sarnoff), even Mormon vs. Jew—but truth be told, both Farnsworth and Sarnoff were among a handful of 1920s visionaries, mostly scientists, who grasped the potential of television (Farnsworth's word, meaning "viewed from afar"). They also were polar opposites in personality, cultural identification and—some would say—integrity. "The ends do justify the means. That's what means are for," Sorkin has Sarnoff say. But Sarnoff is the play's narrator as well as TV's victor, so Sarnoff writes the history.

Directed by masterful Nick Bowling, the TimeLine production is as swift-moving as a theatergoer—or even Sorkin himself—might wish, fluidly flowing over John Culbert's alley scenic design (meaning a long and narrow stage with

CRITICS' PICKS

The Doctor's Dilemma, ShawChicago, through May 10. Spotting medical and personal ethics, Bernard Shaw's 1906 "dramedy" is as pertinent today as 104 years ago, especially in this lucid, well-acted concert staging in the cozy Chicago Cultural Center Studio Theater. JA

A Gulag Mouse, Babes With Blades at Trap Door Theatre, through May 1. The Soviet women's prison as recreated in the already funereal Trap Door space is as bleak and squalid as we expect, but the athletic Babes With Blades troupe never allows the play's action to descend into self-conscious camp. MSB

Our Lady of the Underpass, 16th Street Theater, Berwyn, through May 1. Chris Cantelmi's pitch-perfect performance is but one reason to see Tanya Saracho's docudrama about the Fullerton Avenue shrine. In turns poignant, funny, sacred and profane, the piece is also holy, er, wholly fascinating. CS.

Ragtime, Drury Lane Oak Brook, through May 23. This leading candidate for the mantle of "The Great American Musical" receives a grand and glorious staging filled with strong performances and great stagecraft courtesy of director/choreographer Rachel Rockwell. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

audience along two sides). A balcony level and several opaque doors are skillfully used and dramatically lit (by Keith Parham), and props designer Emilie Guthrie has convincingly recreated early, unwieldy experimental TV equipment. Sorkin's dialogue makes the scientific talk interesting and the play of personalities suspenseful, but his entirely unnecessary use of four-letter words rings false for 1920s diction. Also, a fictional meeting between Farnsworth and Sarnoff is dramatically necessary but preachy.

The 16-person ensemble—most playing multiple roles—meets TimeLine's usual high standards, anchored by Rob Fagin as Farnsworth and Pj Powers as Sarnoff, bravura roles of contrasting temperaments. Farnsworth provides Fagin with a role to put the youthful veteran firmly on Chicago's theater map, that of an idealistic crusader (think Gary Cooper), appealing but idiosyncratic. On the other hand, the forceful and egotistical Sarnoff seems tailor-made for Powers's verbal dexterity and ingratiating charm. Like so many executives, Sarnoff could smile while stabbing you, and Powers puts that across.

Skip TV to see this one.



The Farnsworth Invention. Photo by Lara Goetsch

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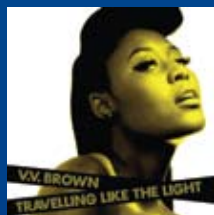
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THEATER REVIEW

Welcome to Arroyo's

Playwright: Kristoffer Diaz
At: American Theater Company,
1909 W. Byron
Phone: 773-409-4125; \$35-\$50
Runs through: May 16

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Kristoffer Diaz's characters talk the way J.D. Salinger's kids would have, if those iconic prep-school rebels had been boricuas from the melting pot of New York's Lower East Side in 2001—words spilling forth in staccato gushes, stumbling over one another, doubling back to retrieve some forgotten detail so *necessary* to articulating the incomprehensibly complex questions swirling around their brains in a hyperspeed cyclone of gestalt. The blessing of rap music and slam poetry was the discipline it imposed on the cosmological labyrinth roamed by adolescents since the beginning of time.

The establishment of the title was once a bo-dega owned by Elizabeth Arroyo, now deceased. Her son Alejandro has converted it to a bar—*perdoneme*, lounge—the operation of which fosters his craving for stability, even as his sister Amalia defiantly tags police station walls in the name of urban guerrilla art. Cupid sneers at orderliness, however, and soon their world is turned topsy-turvy by the introduction of a humorously-named officer and a shy university erudita bearing a possible clue to a hitherto unsuspected—but culturally significant—side to the late Señora Arroyo.

But don't be fooled by the streetsmart idiom spoken by the duo of DJs who serve as our omniscient narrators ("Hey! We're the chorus!" they inform us, "We're in a different theatrical reality!"). Diaz was in his mid-20s when he wrote this thinking dude's romantic comedy (seven

years before *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* became a Pulitzer contender), and still sufficiently imbued with youthful braggadocio to flaunt his education—did I mention the hit-and-run reference to Martin Luther's ninety-five theses?—while never stooping to sophomoric self-indulgence.

In support of the audience "conversation" that Diaz claims as his goal, the production's presentation employs a number of fourth wall-breaking conventions—mostly perpetrated by our prankish guides (who, at one point, "re-wind" the action to add a commentary track), played by charming hip-hoppers Jackson Doran and Gregory "GQ" Qaiyum. And if the question of whether the Arroyo sibs are truly the descendants of prototypical female hip-hop DJ Reina Rey (literally, "Queen King") remains unresolved or the issues of filial and tribal identity fuzzy, the exuberant energy and optimism generated by American Theatre Company director Jaime Castañeda's ensemble (props to graffiti artist Rahmaan "Statik" Barnes and music designer Tawny Newsome) nevertheless delivers a 90-minute South-of-Houston-Street tour both smart *and* mellow.

THEATER REVIEW

Spring Awakening

Playwright: Frank Wedekind
At: Promethean Theatre Ensemble
at the Artistic Home, 3914 N. Clark
Phone: 800-838-3006; \$20
Runs through: May 9

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

No, it's not the fired-up Broadway musical currently touring the big rooms. But director Stephen F. Murray rejuvenates Frank Wedekind's 1891 sociodrama with a number of stylish flourishes to render it every bit as immediate, if less shocking, for audiences in 2010 than when its author first proclaimed the folly of adults denying sex education to children confused and



Sara Gorsky in *Spring Awakening*. Photo by Lara Goetsch

frightened by the hormonal changes associated with puberty.

As incredible as it may seem nowadays, when salacious images bombard our culture from every corner (or so our dirty post-Freudian minds make it appear, anyway), there was once a time when adolescents as old as fourteen still subscribed to the theory that the arrival of little brothers and sisters occurred within wedlock exclusively, relying on the assistance of a friendly stork. For those who doubted this myth, vigorously promoted by prudish parents, there were few alternative sources of information—inquisitive classmates who scoured medical books in search of facts were punished for their "perverse pro-

clivities." Is it any wonder that the young pupils at an unnamed school, based on Wedekind's own alma mater, suffer heartbreaking abuse (some inflicted upon them and some self-generated), leading to untimely destruction.

An appropriately twitchy pre-curtain mood is established by aggressively erratic bass-heavy jazz melodies that later bridge scene changes to create an expressionistic ambience, reinforced by the portrayal of authority figures as grotesquely-masked monsters, in keeping with the comical names ("Sunstroke," "Flykiller," "Bonebreaker," etc.) assigned by Wedekind to the villains in his agitprop universe. And if this device works only sporadically—indeed, verging on ludicrous during the final graveyard scene featuring a mystical man/god in a Zorro-like domino—it allows the double-cast actors to play these roles as shallow caricatures, the better to focus their attentions on mining emotional urgency from the quaint, however heavily colloquialized in Murray's adaptation, 1910 translation by Francis J. Ziegler.

The actors maintain a brisk pace as they deftly switch voices and body language to indicate the ages of their widely disparate personae—notably, Cole Simon as the gay boy doomed to unrequited love, whether of a goddess in a picture or a seminary-bound schoolfellow. Tyler Rich's high-strung Moritz and Sara Gorsky's bohemian Ilse likewise forge empathy from Wedekind's proto-Brechtian aesthetic. The results might not be as steamy as the Duncan Sheik version, but still emerge as more engaging than we'd expect of a Victorian-era after-school special.

Elton: A gay ballet?

BY ROY HEALE

Dinner conversations may vary from smart discussions or gay political debates to just highly entertaining moments around the table. But when "The Queen of Folk Rock" Joni Mitchell dined with "Piano Man" Sir Elton John's long-time personal manager Michael Hewitson, their discussions centered around Mitchell's recent successful ballet, *The Fiddle and the Drum*. In 2007 Mitchell collaborated with Jean Grand-Maitre, artistic director for the Alberta Ballet, to choreograph a ballet—an anti-war show—based on selections from her musical repertoire. The result was a critically acclaimed production which played to sold-out houses and immediately garnered worldwide recognition.

Not surprisingly, John's curiosity was piqued. He is quoted as later saying that he had been approached by many people, including Broadway producers, to use his music biographically. But when John saw the *Fiddler and the Drum* he knew he had found the right artistic director to proceed with such a production.

Imagine the surprise when about one year ago Grand-Maitre received a cold call from Elton John's road manager, inviting him to a Calgary concert—including a backstage pass. Grand-Maitre plus an entourage including six of his ballet troupe proceeded with grand al-legro all the way to the concert venue where they were treated to John's VIP hospitality.

"Elton is a very gracious gentleman," Grand-Maitre is quoted as saying. "He dedicated a song to us at the concert and met all of us backstage. He told us that he had dined with Joni (Mitchell) the week before. She raved about her experience creating *The Fiddle and the Drum* with Alberta Ballet which made him interested in working with us."

The rest—as they say—is about to become history as Grand-Maitre and his ballet company prepare to premiere Elton as part of the Alberta Ballet 2009/2010 season's offerings aimed to delight ballet enthusiasts, dance officianados, and—of course—Elton John fans.

With only 14 songs the dance is always the essence of the story of this legendary man's incredible adventure. The ballet opens to the musical strains of "Bennie and the Jets" with a photograph—discovered by Grand-Maitre—of a very young Elton John in his British school uniform of traditional cap and blazer, standing beside his tricycle. Characters will appear from *A Clockwork Orange*; demons will emerge from John's drug-induced visions; and even appearances by the occasional colorful drag queen will be highlighted as Grand-Maitre interprets John's powerful journey through the diverse stages of his life.

The world premiere of *Love Lies Bleeding* (featuring the music of Sir Elton John and Bernie Taupin) will take place May 6-9 in Calgary and May 11-12 in Edmonton. See www.albertaballet.com.

Read more online at www.WindyCityMedia-Group.com.



Sir Elton John with the Alberta Ballet. Photo courtesy of Roy Heale

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Joffrey Dancers: Jonathan Dumais, Christine Rojas. Photo by Herbert Hoggan

SPOTLIGHT



E. Patrick Johnson's book **Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South** jumps from the page to the stage in a world-premiere adaptation courtesy of About Face Theatre in a co-production with Jane M. Saks and the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media at Columbia College. See Johnson embody many of the folks he interviewed from his book onstage at the Viaduct Theater, 3111 N. Western. Previews begin April 29 with an official opening May 7. Performances then continue at 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays and 3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays until May 29. Tickets are \$15-\$25; call 773-296-6024 or visit www.aboutface theatre.com. Photo of Johnson courtesy of Jane Beachy.

Musco to debut in Chicago

Italian artist Angelo Musco—who, according to his website, is known for “turning reality upside down and creating works that run counter to preconceived ideas”—will exhibit his first solo show in the United States when he holds an opening reception for his show, “Tehom,” Satur-

day, May 1, at the Carrie Secrist Gallery, 835 W. Washington, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Two years in production, the show includes Musco's photo installation “Hadal,” which was shown in the 53rd Venice Biennale last summer. The title piece, “Tehom,” is an underwater world populated with tens of thousands of nude bodies, and will cover the main wall of the gallery, stretching 12 feet by 48 feet. The show will run through Saturday, July 10.

See www.secristgallery.com and www.angelomusco.com.

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Date Night

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

NOTE: Windy City Times originally planned to run a full length review of La Mission, the queer-themed indie starring Benjamin Bratt, written and directed by his brother Peter Bratt, which was scheduled to premiere at the Latino Film Festival on Thursday, April 29. However, festival organizers cancelled the screening, simply stating "scheduling conflicts" as the reason for the cancellation. In its place, here's my review of a film still in theatres: Date Night.

Pair two audience-friendly television stars with stratospheric Q ratings and merging film careers in a familiar, audience-friendly comedy penned by a writer with a reputation for delivering familiar, audience friendly comedies helmed by a director noted for—you got it—none too taxing, familiar, audience-friendly comedies. Add just enough canny laughs, rely on the ability of your stars to deliver enough moments of their familiar though individual, patented comedic schtick and seal the deal with enough offbeat, supporting comic talent to once in awhile throw the audience off kilter for good measure.



From left: Tina Fey, Steve Carell and Mark Wahlberg in Date Night. Photo by Suzanne Tenner

The result, starring Steve Carell and Tina Fey, written by Josh Klausner (Shrek the Third and Shrek Forever After) and directed by Shawn Levy (Night at the Museum 1 and 2) is the biggest surprise of all. All this calculation actually adds up to if not the greatest comedy, at least what might be the new definition of the perfect date movie. There are enough smart cultural observations to go with the familiar situations to keep things percolating along, a minimum of dumbed down frat boy moments and scatological exchanges, and a recurring bit with a shirtless Mark Wahlberg that will keep the ladies and gay men very happy. Naturally the picture is also called **Date Night**, but even saddled with this additional bland calculation on the part of the filmmakers, it offers enough star wattage and laughs to recommend it.

Carell and Fey play a happily married couple going through a blah patch. Hemmed in by career and kid demands as they approach midlife,

they decide to throw caution to the wind during one of their regular "date nights." (This scenario will be very familiar to many long-term gay couples as well.) Instead of having dinner at their usual suburban New Jersey location, they opt for a night at a fancy, trendy restaurant in Manhattan called Claw. In for a penny, in for a pound, they ignore the snippy, gay maitre'd's none too

subtle hints to shove off (a hilarious Nick Kroll) and end up stealing the reservation of another couple—whom they are then mistaken for, ala Cary Grant in North By Northwest.

An increasing series of calamities ensues. As the fish-out-of-water couple drops down the Manhattan rabbit hole *a la* The Out of Towners and After Hours, encountering more and more trouble and eccentric characters (with James Franco and Mila Kunis, the movie's knockout, comedic standouts), they find, like Dorothy, that, indeed, there's no place like home. We are rest assured, naturally, that they'll get their, they mojo reignited, once they've gone through a series of humiliating (and somewhat humorous) trials that, naturally, will include a visit to a strip club offering both stars a chance to work the stripper pole. That the movie doesn't tax the talents of the stars or the patience of the audience turns out to be in its favor.

Date Night's other surprise—and it's a refreshing one—is that it offers a healthy dose of sweetness in place of condescension, satirizes the overwhelming snark and impatience found in today's culture with a modicum of finesse, and actually manages to deliver these insights to a normally attention deficient audience with just the right amount of knowingness to keep them from fidgeting—something I'd thought inconceivable in this day and age.

TV

Louis Van Amstel on Kate Gosselin and his sexuality

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Talk about pressure: Each week, millions of people watch Louis Van Amstel quickstep, waltz and perform other moves with celebrity partner Niecy Nash on television's number-one show, Dancing with the Stars. Windy City Times caught up with Van Amstel last week when he stopped in Chicago (for half a day) to rehearse with Nash, who was filming an episode of her show, Clean House, here. The dancer/choreographer (who was born in the Netherlands but is now a U.S. citizen) was friendly and very candid as he discussed everything from Kate Gosselin to marriage equality.

WCT: How often do people come up to you?

Louis Van Amstel: Well, now, it's [happening] more and more. But what I like is that, unlike some people who have screaming fans, it's different with me; I get into a conversation, whether it's about something I said or something else. I enjoy that.

WCT: Last night [when Kate Gosselin was booted] was very emotional. How rough was it for you, regarding Kate and yourself?

LVA: For Niecy and me, it was actually very nice because we were the second couple being saved. It's nice to know 10 minutes into the show because you can walk around light as a feather. Niecy was so excited; I had to say "Calm down. Some people don't know [their results] yet." She said, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry." You're happy being saved but you're not happy because you grow close to each other and someone has to go home.

WCT: You're like a family, of sorts.

LVA: Yes—this season, more than ever. The ratings are so high, and we all support each other.

In terms of Kate, if you look at dance performance, it was right that she went home—and she probably should have gone home before [April 20]. Having said that, she has shown to us the real Kate, and that's why it became a little more emotional; you saw all of her insecurities—it wasn't arrogance. That's why it's such a beautiful show.

WCT: I have to mention that very intense



Louis Van Amstel.

[slow] waltz you and Niecy did [April 5]. The theme of marriage equality was something you could relate to. Could you talk about what the dance meant to you?

LVA: Originally, I had the idea for interracial marriage because she's Black and I'm white. It's such a love song—and marriage equality became the storyline. That previous Friday, I said I wanted to have some names for our characters and, on Twitter, told me about Mildred and Richard Loving [an interracial couple who couldn't marry under Virginia law, and who took their case to the U.S. Supreme Court]. I got a whole history lesson from hundreds of people. I figured that this was going to have a bigger impact than we both anticipated.

Niecy and I then talked on Saturday. She started crying, saying, "I can't imagine not marrying my boyfriend." Then it got to me, and I said, "I don't have to imagine. I can't, yet, so you have to help me with my fight." I don't know where the words came from, but it became a bigger issue. And, in the end, I realized that it started with interracial marriage but that it also goes to same-sex marriage.

I'm very proud of ABC for not censoring anything; they were so supportive. [The network] can't take a stance; but, to allow me to make that statement and to show how powerful dance can be...

Louis Van Amstel talks about a whole lot more—including last season's partner, Kelly Osbourne, and the first person he came out to—at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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Shelby Lynne. Photo by Rande St. Nicholas

NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Shelby Lynne

BY JERRY NUNN

Grammy Award winner Shelby Lynne brings an acoustic tour to Chicago to support her new album. She spoke Nunn on One about Tears, Lies and Alibis.

Windy City Times: Hey there, Shelby Lynne.

Shelby Lynne: Hey, what's going on?

WCT: I love how, in the South, everyone uses our middle names. You can call me Jerry Don!

SL: [Chuckles] Well, if you are lucky to have a middle name. I guess that was the only thing suitable to call me. [Editor's note: Lynne was born Shelby Lynn Moorer.]

WCT: I grew up in Nashville.

SL: That's cool. It's rare to grow up in Nashville as it is rare to grow up in Los Angeles. You don't meet many real Nashvillians.

WCT: I saw you open for k.d. lang at a concert years ago.

SL: That was a long time ago.

WCT: That probably brought on your gay and lesbian following.

SL: I hope. That's what makes the world go

'round.

WCT: The new album—Tears, Lies and Alibis—continues in the same style as past records.

SL: Yes, it is very laid-back—you know, a good joint-smoking record.

WCT: What made you want to come out with this new album?

SL: I wanted to do something that was opposite of the last time. I did the Dusty Springfield songs. That was a real produced pop record, which I love. So I started writing again and wanted to do my own songs. I wanted to produce again and do more of a laid back thing.

WCT: I like the duets you have done in the past with Sheryl Crow and George Jones.

SL: I have a duet on this new Peter Wolf record that is really good. That is a great album. You should check it out.

WCT: Who are you listening to right now?

SL: I just got [music by] Desmond Dekker [the late Jamaican ska, rocksteady and reggae singer-songwriter and musician], which I love. I love the Broken Bells' record. There is a lot of stuff that is pretty good that's out that I have been digging on. Of course, I can't remember any of it right now.

WCT: What do you think the challenge is now in the music business?

SL: All of it. It is all a challenge. I started my own label this time. I have had it with the big corporate deals. I am going out on my own with this one. I have never felt better about it. I honestly think I have gotten more work done in the last six months than I have in twenty years.

WCT: That's a good thing, though.

SL: Yes, but it's definitely a challenge. But you know what? I would rather be out on my own than ever do that label thing again. It was not working for me.

WCT: When you won the Grammy for Best New Artist was it a lot of pressure?

SL: No, it was a great award to look at every day. I am proud of it.

WCT: Do you want to do more acting? You did Army Wives last year and the movie Walk the Line before that.

SL: Hey if the role is right and I can bring something to the party, I'll do it. Not everything is for me, you know. It has to be the right thing.

WCT: Well, I am looking forward to the show.

SL: I will see you in Chicago!

To see Shelby Lynne's show at Marty's, 3855 N. Lincoln, on Tuesday, May 4, at 8 p.m., visit www.martyrslive.com or www.shelbylynne.com.

Artemis Singers to host festival

BY MICKI LEVENTHAL

Over the July 4 weekend more than 500 women from 23 choruses across the country will gather on Loyola University's lakeshore campus to workshop, network and sing their hearts out at the 10th Sister Singers National Network Festival.

"Our Kind of Sound," is hosted by Chicago's out-and-proud Artemis Singers, the first women's singing ensemble to name itself a "lesbian feminist chorus." The members of Artemis have celebrated music by and about women for over thirty years, and continue to attract new voices and volunteers to their ranks. The chorus first hosted Sister Singers Network (SSN) festival in Chicago in 1986.

While the full range of festival activities are open only to SSN members, there will be limited public admission tickets available to some of the concerts, scheduled for afternoons and evenings, July 1-4 in Loyola's Mundelein Auditorium. Interested fans can stay updated at www.sistersingers.net or by writing info@artemissingers.org or festival@sistersingers.net.

Festival highlights open to the public include:

—Thursday, July 1, 7 pm. Opening ceremony and small ensemble performances featuring The Righteous Mothers from Washington state.

—Friday, July 2, 3:30 pm. Choruses from Alaska, Florida, California and Virginia featuring Tampa Bay's Crescendo performing with Cris Williamson.

—Sunday, July 4, 7 pm. The two main festival choruses, Wind and Water will each perform A Universal Dream, commissioned by SSN for the 2010 festival. The work was composed by Jenni Brandon, with text by Meta Hellman of Artemis. "This provides a rare opportunity for audience members to hear two different interpretations of a world premiere in a single setting," said Midge Stocker, co-chair of the festival and long-time Artemis member. Artemis Singers will also perform at the culminating program on Sunday evening.

The Sister Singers Network is a "cooperative web" of feminist choruses and ensembles as well as composers, arrangers and individual singers who work together to "support and enrich" the women's choral movement. The network began in the Midwest in 1981, holding gatherings as part of Ozark Women's Festivals, expanding their

reach over the years to provide communication, support and performance opportunities for women across the country.

In addition to two yearly membership meetings, the work of SSN is implemented by a national steering committee. Stocker serves on the steering committee. "Artemis Singers is thrilled to be bringing the festival to Chicago, during our own chorus' thirtieth anniversary year," she said. "When Artemis hosted the third SSN festival in 1986, a single three-hour concert of eight performing choruses, plus a mass chorus, was held at Lane Technical High School, and all singers stayed in community housing. For this festival, we have 23 performing choruses registered, with seven two-hour concert blocks planned, including two mass choruses, each of which will have 200+ singers. The strength and passion of Sister Singers Network is in her members: as a true network, we breathe, and listen, one another to life."

Catherine Roma, artistic director and founder of MUSE, Cincinnati's women's choir, has been involved with the women's choral movement since 1975. She is particularly enthused about this summer's gathering. "In Chicago this summer, the SSN will celebrate 35 years of the vibrant, second wave women's choral movement. I look forward to seeing—listening—how women's choral communities create change in their cities and towns," said Roma. "What do women's choirs sing about, where do they sing, and for whom? Our movement is committed to lift up the work of women composers. Women's voices are prominent and our programming shows our way of knowing. Come hear us—we are still singing for our lives."

A mainstay of the city's lesbian feminist cultural life, Artemis Singers began in June, 1979 and came out into the larger LGBT community in a December 1980 performance as part of the Chicago Gay/Lesbian Community Band and Windy City Gay Chorus concert. Over the years, Artemis has performed for such mainstay feminist groups as Kinheart, Mountain Moving Coffee House, Lesbian Community Cancer Project and at events including Illinois NOW's state conference and the historic Judy Chicago Dinner Party installation. In 1982 they performed at the first gathering of gay and lesbian choruses at Lincoln Center, the event that spawned the formation of the international Gay and Lesbian Association (GALA) of Choruses. Also in 1982, Artemis Singers received the Paul R. Goldman Award for outstanding contributions in the field of performing arts in Chicago.



Artemis Singers. Photo courtesy of the group

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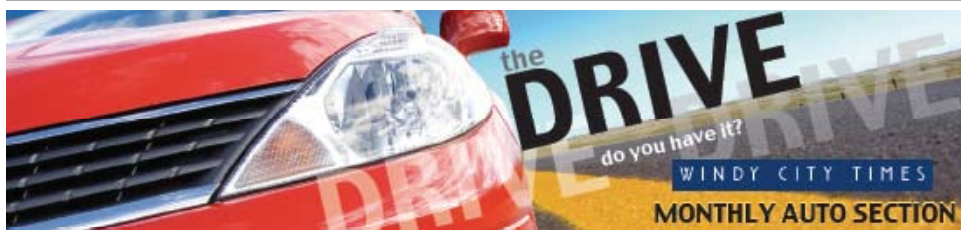
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VEHICLE REVIEW

2010 Buick LaCrosse CX

BY NICK KURCZEWSKI, GAYWHEELS.COM

Either I'm getting old, or Buick is building better cars. Let's stick with the second scenario, because how else can I explain my appreciation for the 2010 Buick LaCrosse? The new LaCrosse is a welcome departure from the stodgy Buicks (and Buick owners) I remember growing up. For many years—with a few notable exceptions—the only time a Buick got my heart racing was when I found myself stuck behind one, its driver stubbornly maintaining a steady 55 miles per hour in the left-hand lane. Owning a Buick was the automotive equivalent of an AARP card. Until now.

The LaCrosse—including the base CX 4-cylinder model I recently tested in northern Virginia—represents a true rival to entry-level luxury sedans from the likes of Lexus, Lincoln and Acura. One obvious reason for this is because, quite simply, the LaCrosse looks good. The exterior features lots of soft edges, strengthened by a side character line that sweeps over the rear door handles before leading your eye to the cutline for the tail-lights. It's a sporty touch, accentuated by a minimum of chrome and the traditional Buick portholes finding a subtle new home on the hood. Optional 19-inch alloys are available, even on the base CX. These wheels look phenomenal, on the car. Too bad the price tag looks much less appealing when viewed on the options sheet.

The LaCrosse is front-wheel drive, with all-wheel drive optional on models equipped with a V6. The previous entry-level motor, a 3.0-liter V6, is set to be phased out for the 2011 model year. A 182-horsepower four-cylinder takes its place, with a 280-HP 3.6-liter V6 remaining as the top engine in the lineup. A six-speed automatic is the only transmission offered. The smooth power and whisper-quiet nature of the 3.6-liter V6-equipped LaCrosse is hard to beat, though the lower cost and higher fuel economy of the new CX four-cylinder is worth looking into.

In many driving situations, I didn't miss the power of the V6 when driving the CX. In city traffic or on an open stretch of highway, the four-cylinder was quiet and provided decent acceleration. A 9.5 second 0-60 mph time is okay—then again, the V6 is more than two seconds quicker. If you live somewhere that puts a premium on horsepower—especially the ability to pass slower traffic safely on two-lane roads—the V6 is the better choice, plain and simple.

The CX four-cylinder does hold an edge in economy, managing 19/30 mpg (city/highway). The V6 in front-wheel drive format averages 17/27, which dips to 16/26 with the combination of V6 and optional all-wheel drive. Also boosting the appeal of the CX is increased steering feel, thanks to the lighter four-cylinder which adds less bulk in the nose of the car. You won't mistake the handling for some German sports sedan, but the CX felt adept at tackling some seriously crazy country roads Buick mapped out for the media drive.

Inside, the cabin remains the same comfortable place you'll find in any LaCrosse—except life in a CX means doing without leather seats, satellite navigation, rear-view camera and panoramic sunroof. None of these options are available on the base CX. The (cloth) seats are wide and supportive, there is plenty of room for two adults in the back and a useful 13.3 cu ft of

luggage space. One major complaint: Visibility sure ain't great! The enormous A-pillars take a huge amount of real estate. On one stretch of twisty road, they completely blocked my view of oncoming traffic when zipping around several sharp corners.

That's a shame because, overall, the LaCrosse was incredibly composed over a wide variety of challenging roads. Driving enjoyment in a Buick? I know, I was pretty shocked, too. Buick showed enormous faith in the LaCrosse by plotting a route that was anything but dull. I even managed a short test-drive in a range-topping LaCrosse CXS, equipped with the Buick's new "HiPer Strut" suspension. Body roll and suspension movement were kept perfectly in check, without any noticeable degradation in ride quality. This is a great suspension and something I'd love to see on more G.M. products—including all LaCrosse trim levels.

With a base price of \$26,245, the four-cylinder LaCrosse CX is a bargain compared to the \$33,015 you'd pay for a 3.6-liter CXS. That price gap should close a bit once the 3.0-liter V6 officially disappears from the lineup later this year. Personally, I love the extra power and smooth performance of the larger engine. And if driving with a reasonable amount of decorum, I wouldn't be surprised if the fuel economy of the bigger V6 could nearly match the four-cylinder's mileage figures. Then again, a difference of several thousand dollars means a lot when shopping for a car. I'm not too young (sadly) or too old (thank goodness) to recognize that fact.

See www.gaywheels.com.

The other star of A Single Man

BY CASEY WILLIAMS, GAYWHEELS.COM

Somewhere between wallowing in memories of past love, brooding in loneliness, lecturing at a university, engaging in midnight trysts, frequenting gay bars, being pursued by a beautiful young man, romping in the ocean, confiding in Julianne Moore, and planning an exit from this earth, A Single Man's Colin Firth drove a Mercedes 220S Coupe. If I were a college prof in 1964 and lost my partner in a tragic accident, I might have been driven to indulge in these diversions. I would also have driven the Mercedes.

Tom Ford, one-time purveyor of all things Gucci, might be the only man capable of creating such a film that blends perfectly honed style, color and lighting. The vintage clothing, fingernail polish that matches cigarette tips, an architectural glass house, a classic Mercedes co-starring in its garage, and various rendezvous were perfectly orchestrated. But buyers of the 220S Coupe were even more rare than those of Ford's exclusive fashions. From 1956 until 1959, a total of 84,645 220S models departed Stuttgart, Germany, and of those, a very chic 3,429 were coupes and convertibles.

Refined motoring came courtesy of a 2.2-litre inline six-cylinder engine that produced 99-105 HP, depending on the model year. A four-speed manual column-shift transmission, power drum brakes, recirculating ball steering, and independent front suspension filled out the technical profile. At full gait, an elegant gentleman could just see 100 mph on the speedometer and massage 20 mpg with a light loafer.

Engineers would undoubtedly profess their love most for the coupe's monocoque "Ponton" body. The 220S was among the first cars in the world to feature an integrated unibody instead of the



Mercedes 220S Coupe. Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

more traditional separate ladder frame designs that were still common in mid-century Cadillacs and Lincolns. This not only foreshadowed modern automobile construction, but also enhanced crush zones in the front and rear for safety. The Ponton was the first true modern Mercedes, putting it fashion-forward of the archaic post-war models.

Firth's co-star was painted in shades of brown and beauty. I'm not talking about the handsome blonde with delicious red lips and too-perfect skin. My mind is still on the Benz with a face to covet and rear forms sexier than the naked boy's trunk. Contemporary Mercedes design placed round headlamps in the front fenders, separated by a tall chrome grille and gleaming star on top. From the driver's seat, a timeless view reflected that of the previous 30 years, and continues to this day. Accentuated rear fender haunches flow into subtle fins and wrap-around taillamps, forming the perfect backdrop for a scene in which the professor and his trick smoke cigarettes over the rear deck. Viewed from the front or rear, the coupe is a thing of desire.

I wanted to snuggle the boy's fuzzy sweater with him naked in it. After a late night swim with his professor, he slipped onto the car's leather seats, probably dripping water on the wood dashboard and thick-pile carpeting. Chrome glistened on the doors and dash. The professor shifted gears with the thin column lever and viewed his speed on a wide, rectangular speedometer. A man could really feel in command of an automobile like this, gazing hood-long at the shadowed star in night.

A later variant of the 220S would have been more period-correct, but we have to assume a college professor probably wouldn't spend movie

GEORGES from page 12

which was, he said with a laugh, almost extreme to the point of lunacy, a thought echoed by French. When the bill criminalizing homosexuality passed in Burundi, Georges had the option of applying for asylum in the United States. Yet, he decided to return, even as his friends worried about him being arrested.

Scott Long, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights Program at Human Rights Watch and a friend of Georges, also remembered that same moment when the activist could have stayed in the U.S. Speaking by phone, he said, "His case for asylum would have been an open-and-shut one. But he felt such a degree of commitment to the cause and the people he was fighting for; I had to respect his decision." Long emphasized Georges' tremendous accomplishments in a country with a huge amount of political repression and social surveillance, "Georges took these tiny networks of MSMs, lesbians and gays and turned it into a community of activists."

Long said Georges' death was "a reflection of the collapse of the African health system... he died from a minor and manageable disease. He was also a health activist. It's a miserable irony that he died of the same thing he was trying to solve." Long wants people to understand that Georges' death shows that, "We must realize that there are strong, indigenous voices of activists who have accomplished a lot in Africa. Georges' death is an immeasurable loss but he left a story and an example for people not just in Africa but the world."

From elsewhere, the comments flowed in,

star coin for a new S-Class Coupe—even in the '60s. So, in that brilliant light, the movie car is perfect as an older generation. Besides, I don't dare question Tom Ford's attention to detail.

Firth's character lets his memories reach across time to happier days, lying in the sun with the someone he loved. Look at the 2010 Mercedes E-Coupe closely and you can see echoes of the 220S in its sculpted bodysides, rear fenders, and bi-color taillamp lenses. One thing you won't see from the driver's seat anymore is a star at the end of the hood. It doesn't exist, having been removed to the grille in tradition of Mercedes' more sporting models.

Compared to the 220S, E Coupes are a quickie. E350s roll with a 268-HP V6, connected to a seven-speed automatic transmission, run 0-60 mph in 6.2 seconds, and achieve 26 mpg on the highway. Its sexier brother, the E550, is plugged with a 382-HP V8 and hauls its bubble from 0-60 mph in a scant 5.0 seconds; fuel economy rates 23 mpg highway. Base prices for the special Es range from \$48,050 to 54,650—considerably more than the \$6,000-7,000 sticker of the 220S when they were fresh young things.

If you hurt for a love that left too soon, put away the gun. As a single man, or with the love of your life, the coupes are visceral delights, designed for the art connoisseur and automotive enthusiast at once. Besides, who could commit suicide knowing such a gorgeous creation was resting in his garage? In the end, Tom Ford saves his star from death's hand with a hot young lad and comforts from Julianne. A gentleman would still light a lady's cigarette and look suave arriving in a brown Mercedes coupe.

speaking to a collective sense of loss experienced by the international LGBT community. From Toronto, the activist Akim Adé Larcher wrote in an e-mail, "For me, George was a friend and inspiration. I hope through his death we remember to continue the fight not just about LGBT human rights, but about advocating that governments take responsibility for providing a social net that could have prevented Georges' death." Jawad Hussain Qureshi, South Asia analyst with the Canadian government, wrote from Ottawa: "I will remember him as a visionary and a pioneer for LGBT rights. He gave me hope. He inspired me." The Nigerian activist Olumide Makanjuola wrote a heartfelt note: "It is too soon for a man like Georges to leave us now but I am sure he still lives in our heart and community. Georges, I did not get to see you again but you live in my heart forever."

For those of us left behind, there are still the memories. I remember Georges' kindness, gentleness and quiet strength and I am struck by the love and respect he engendered in others. Georges Azzi remembers a friend who persevered through adversity and poverty, once stranded at the airport in Paris for two hours because he couldn't afford cab fare. But he also remembers those cold days last March as the two of them huddled together during cigarette breaks, Georges wearing a hat with a giant snowman on it, part of the incongruous winter gear he had scrounged up in Burundi. "What brought us together," said Azzi, "were the cigarettes, but then I realized how much he had done with such limited resources." And then, he said, simply, "I miss him."



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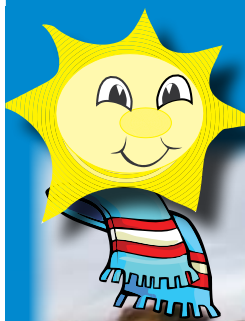
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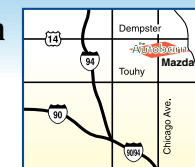
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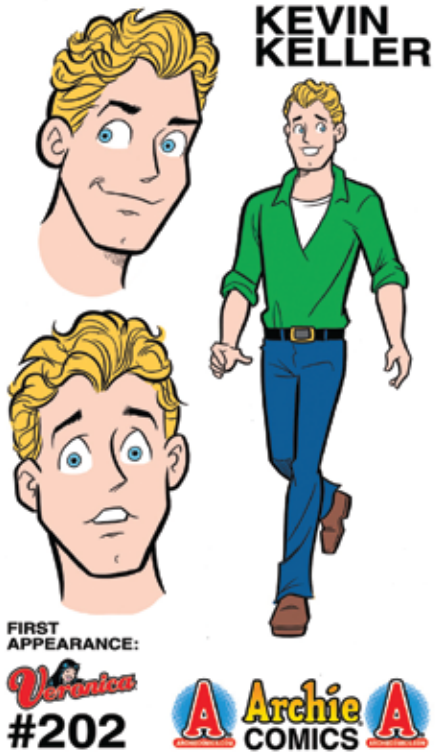
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SPIN Thurs., April 22



More music and mayhem at Windy City Gay Idol at Spin, Thurs., April 22. Finalists Christine and Michael will advance to the semi-finals at Sidetrack on Sat., June 5. Photos by Kirk Williamson





Gay character in Archie comics

Dan Parent, the artist/writer behind the Archie comics, has said that a gay student will enroll at Riverdale High, according to the Washington Post.

Parent said that the comic is aiming to be more diverse and that the new character, a "burgeoning journalist" named Kevin Keller, will possibly appear in Veronica Comics (#202) in September, in an issue entitled "Isn't It Bromantic?" Reportedly, Veronica will become interested in Kevin but doesn't understand why her feelings are not returned.

According to ArchieComics.com, Archie Comics Co-CEO Jon Goldwater said, "The introduction of Kevin is just about keeping the world of Archie Comics current and inclusive. Archie's hometown of Riverdale has always been a safe world for everyone. It just makes sense to have an openly gay character in Archie comic books."

Gay Archie Comics character Kevin Keller. Image courtesy of ArchieComics.com



Gracie. Photo courtesy of Anti-Cruelty Society

Pet for adoption:

Gracie
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Gender: Female
Color: Tan
Altered: Yes

Looking for someone lovable, cuddly and super sweet? And if she's gorgeous, that wouldn't hurt, either? Well, have we got a girl for you! Gracie is a BEAUTIFUL 4-year-old dilute tortie with soft, plush fur with shades of gray, tan and white. She has adorable little white paws and two of the greenest eyes you've ever seen. She is a gentle and calm girl. Gracie would make a perfect addition to almost any family, including one with children and other pets. In fact, Gracie loves just about everyone!

Contact The Anti-Cruelty Society and ask for #9975470. Gracie is ready to go to her new home today!

Call 312-644-8338. www.anticruelty.org

Ellen part of comedy festival

Talk-show host/American Idol judge/comedian Ellen DeGeneres will be one of the comedians featured at "TBS PRESENTS A 'VERY FUNNY' FESTIVAL: JUST FOR LAUGHS," June 15-19 throughout Chicago.

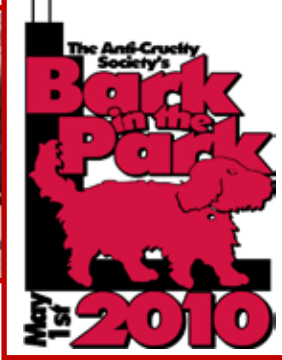
DeGeneres' show is called "Ellen's Somewhat Special," and will be taped Wed., June 16, at the Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State. Other comedians slated for the festival include Cedric The Entertainer, Denis Leary, Aziz Ansari, Bob Odenkirk and Russell Peters.

Tickets are available at all Ticketmaster locations, online at www.ticketmaster.com or by phone at 800-745-3000. The full schedule and festival information is available at www.justforlaughschicago.com.



Saturday, May 1st at 9 a.m.

Join Roz Varon, Hosea Sanders, and Bart Shore to help raise funds and awareness for Chicago's largest private, comprehensive, open-admission humane society.



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calendar

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WINDY CITY TIMES



Wed., April 28

with Terry Angel Mason Writer and civil rights activist, Terry Angel Mason will discuss his Pulitzer Prize-Nominated novel, a collection of writings, short stories, and poems which opens dialogue on sexuality and same-gender-loving relationships within the Black community and Black. Sponsored by Affinity Community Services, Teen Living Programs, UCAN, and the University of Chicago's Office of LGBTQ Life and Office of Multicultural Student Affairs. 6:30pm, OMSA/LGBTQ Student Life, 5710 S. Woodlawn, Chicago

Ladies of the Canyon salutes Melissa Etheridge Chicago-based female singer-songwriter tribute group. 8pm, 708-788-2118, Fitzgerald's, 6615 Roosevelt, Berwyn, <http://www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com>

Hydrag with Hostess Tajma Hall Hostess Tajma Hall will keep you laughing all night long as she shares the stage with countless stars; 10pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, <http://www.hydratechicago.com>

Thursday, April 29

Dining Out For Life! The 17th Anniversary of Dining Out For Life in Chicago! Chicagoland restaurants and will come together and celebrate good food, good friends and a good cause. Joined with cities across the United States and Canada, this is the single largest HIV/AIDS benefit in the country. 5pm, HB: Home Bistro, 3404 N. Halsted, www.edgealliance.org/pages/dol/93.php

Men's Speed Dating at Center on Halsted Arrive between 6:45pm and 7pm. First speed dating round begins at 7:15pm.

THE GOLD STANDARD Thurs. and Sat.- April 29, May 1

Out comedian Judy Gold will perform at Zanies in Chicago and in Vernon Hills.

Photo by Dan Dion



Rounds continue until everyone has had a chance to meet, or until 8:45pm, whichever comes first. \$12 at door; 6:45pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, www.centeronhalsted.org

Windy City Gay Idol Now in its 8th year searches for the best amateur GLBT singers in the Chicago area. 7pm sign up, 8pm start. WCMGpromotions@gmail.com; 7pm, Wild Pug, 4810 N. Broadway

Judy Gold The star of the long-running off Broadway hit "25 Questions for a Jewish Mother", will also perform Vernon Hills May 1. "25 Questions for a Jewish Mother" is a poignant portrait of what makes a Jewish mother, a Jewish mother. 8:30pm, Zanies Comedy Club, 1548 N. Wells, Chicago, <http://www.judygold.com>

Chicago Red Stars play Against Sky Blue FC, \$15; 6pm, 866-WPS-2009, Toyota Park, 7000 S. Harlem, Bridgeview, <http://www.chicagoredstars.com>

Friday, April 30

Jody Watley R&B singer with a gay following will perform as part of GoCity Entertainment's concert series. Doors open at 7 pm; the show is scheduled to begin at 8 pm. Tickets \$30. Info at themusicexp@aol.com. 7pm, 773-493-0154 or 773-552-2500, Harold Washington Cultural Center, 4701 S. King, www.amusicexperience.com

Rape Victim Advocates Annual Standing Silent Witness demonstration Demonstration at Daley Plaza under the Picasso. 12pm, Daley Plaza, Washington & Dearborn Chicago, www.rapevictimadvocates.org

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, May 1

Ride for AIDS Training Program Organizers for the Ride for AIDS Chicago (RFAC) have announced that the beginning of its outdoor training program for the two-day, 200-mile bicycle ride will begin on May 1. Specific training ride schedules can be found online at www.rideforaids.org. 1:30pm, 773-989-9400, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, www.rideforaids.org

Esteem Awards fundraiser Fundraising event to support the 2010 Esteem Awards and announcement of 2010 honorees. The awards honors local and national organizations and individuals for supporting the African-American LGBT community in entertainment, media, civil rights, business and art. The will support growth of the "Celebration of Honor" which takes place during Chicago's Annual Black Gay Pride Celebration. 4pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted

Windy City Rollers Chicago's nationally ranked women's roller derby league. Doors 5 pm, Bout at 6 pm; 5pm, UIC Pavilion, 525 S. Racine Ave, Chicago, www.windy-cityrollers.com

AIDS Foundation's "Not Just Song and Dance" Gala After a four-year hiatus, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago's signature spring gala, "Not Just Song and Dance", returns as one of the city's most exclusive events with a special performance by the iconic music group, The Bangles. 6pm, (312) 922-2322, Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 S Michigan Ave, www.aidschicago.org

Judy Gold Emmy Award-winning actress and comedian, known for writing and producing The Rosie O'Donnell Show and the Off

Broadway hit "25 Questions for a Jewish Mother", for which she was nominated for a 2006 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Solo Performance. Gold was honored in 2007 with the GLAAD award for "Outstanding New York Theater." \$25. 7pm, Zanies, 230 Hawthorn Village Commons, Vernon Hills, IL 60061, <http://www.judygold.com>

"Siempre Latina!" (Latina Always). Amigas Latinas commemorates their 15th anniversary; 8pm, 773-661-0940, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, <http://www.amigaslatinas.org>

Love Crimes: A Hate Story Quixotic is proud to announce the opening of its brand new sketch comedy revue Love Crimes: A Hate Story; 9pm, (312) 804-3681, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted

Sunday, May 2

dot429 Chicago Brunch and Bellinis Please join dot429 for our second brunch in the windy city. New faces and new connections await with well connected luminaries from all over the Chicago area. 11am, 312 519-5896, Luminaire, 301 W. Superior, www.dot429.com

The Spring Brunch & Fashion Show Welcome back the warm weather in the sunny Winter Garden room of the Harold Washington Library for The Spring Brunch & Fashion Show, a benefit for Chicago House. Call 773-248-5200 x303 if you have any questions. 11:30am, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S State, www.chicagohouse.org/event_brunch.html

WACT brunch WACT is a brunch and social support organization or all lesbians and bisexual women, especially interested in meeting across ethnicities, ages, incomes, etc. Bring a dish. Call Cheryl 773-271-2393; 12pm, Location given with RSVP

I Am Sexy Sundays Chicago's Hottest/Sexiest LGBT Night. I Am Sexy Sundays is the Biggest Club The Gay Community has Ever Seen! Free entry; 9pm, 312 262 8761, Vain Night Club 2354 N. Clybourn

Monday, May 3

Dating & Mating Seminar for Singles Dating & Mating...A New Roadmap for Lasting Love is a 6-week interactive group for single men and women of any sexual orientation who want to create a long lasting, loving relationship. The group will meet Mondays from 7:30pm-9:30pm from April 12-May 17. The cost is \$50 per session. Registration is required. 7:30pm, 773-248-1675, 3342 N. Leavitt, www.al-anirng.com

Comedy Cabaret at 3160 Come and celebrate the one month anniversary of the Comedy Cabaret, Chicago's biggest comedy secret! Sign up at 8:30pm/performance at 9pm. 8:30pm, 3160, 3160 N. Clark Street

Tuesday, May 4

HIV/AIDS Treatment Update James F. Sullivan, M.D., specialist in Infectious Disease and Internal Medicine at Saint Joseph Hospital, will discuss the latest in antiretroviral medications and treatment as well as new HIV/AIDS research. Free with RSVP. 6:30pm, 773-472-6469 X 290, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, www.centeronhalsted.org/coh/calendar/newevents-details.cfm?id=932

Bisexual Social/Discussion Night An event for bisexuals, bi-curious, and bi-allies to form community, share ideas and connect with peers. Come out and help build the bi community! We meet for game nights, potlucks, networking, social activism, peer-led discussion groups & more. 7pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, www.centeronhalsted.org

The Windy City Gay Idol 2010 Now in its 8th year searches for the best amateur GLBT singers in the Chicago area. 7pm sign up, 8pm start. 7pm, Scarlet, 3320 N Halsted



FRIENDS FOREVER Saturday, May 1

Amigas Latinas will mark its 15th anniversary at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

Photo from the 2009 gala by Mel Ferrand

Lambda Literary Awards Celebration Local and midwestern finalists for 2010 Lammy Awards will read from their works. Refreshments, books available for purchase. The 22nd annual Lambda Literary Awards ceremony takes place on May 27 in New York. info@gerberhart.org; 7pm, 773-381-8030, 773-381-8030, Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W Granville Ave, www.gerberhart.org

Dylan Rice solo acoustic set As a part of Homolatte, Chicago's premier queer music and spoken word series, a gay community event created to give opportunities for LGBTI writers and musicians to gain exposure and showcase their talents. Performers are from the LGBTI community, but the event is open to everyone! Stop in for our kind of latte!! Homolatte is curated and hosted by Scott Free. 7:30pm, Tweet, 5020 N Sheridan, www.homolatte.com

Avenue Q returns to Chicago Avenue Q is the smash-hit Broadway musical about real life in New York City, as told by a cast of people and puppets through a hilariously irreverent, Tony-winning book and score. Limited one-week engagement. Bank of America Theatre, 18 W. Monroe, www.avenueqontour.com

Wed., May 5

LVMUZIQ in Concert for Four Women Music Series urban folkier LVMUZIQ will be performing. Liz has been compared to folks like Tracy Chapman and David Gray. This is part of the Four Women Music Series. Four Women is an acoustic music series. 7pm, Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark, www.lvmuziq.com

Friday, May 7

Jan Schakowsky's 9th Annual Ultimate Women's Power Lunch This year's speaker is the renowned White House correspondent Helen Thomas. Thomas has covered the presidency for an amazing 50 consecutive years. \$150 or \$250. Table, 10 seats, \$1,500. This is always a sold-out event. Check to Schakowsky for Congress, P.O. Box 5130, Evanston, IL 60204; 12pm, 847-424-1998, Hyatt Hotel-151 E. Wacker, Chicago

Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South Oral history of Black, gay Southern life from the book by E. Patrick Johnson. A co-production with the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media, Columbia College Chicago. Thru May 29. 7:30pm, 773-296-6024, Viaduct Theater, 3111 N. Western Ave., www.viaducttheater.com

Saturday, May 8

Melissa Ferrick, Suzanne Westenhoefer, Ronnie Nyles Women unite for the children's benefit concert in Racine. Tickets on sale with Ticketmaster, \$37/\$32. 7pm, 262-636-9229, Memorial Hall, 72 7th St., Racine, Wis., www.childrenofthefallen.org/cotf/may_8th.html



IN FASHION

Sunday, May 2

Chicago House will hold its annual brunch and fashion show at Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State.

Photo from 2009 event by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)

BILLY MASTERS

"With all due respect to Rupert, you can blame a lack of advancement in your career on all kinds of things, for a myriad of reasons. So I don't think he can specifically pinpoint one reason why something might be stalling for him."—Neil Patrick Harris gives his impressions on Rupert Everett's lack of professional opportunities. And for years you people thought it was just me!

Dying is easy, comedy is hard. Truer words were never uttered, and certainly this resonates with Ryan Seacrest—a man who knows precious little about utters. The diminutive American Idol host had what some might call an "off night." Odd quips with Adam Lambert, questionable dancing with a guy in the audience and all the energy of an inmate with a 24-hour furlough. Still, he opted to go forward with a joke (one of the rare pre-scripted ones) claiming that season one co-host Brian Dunkleman would participate in Idol Gives Back. Seacrest thought it would get a laugh, but what it got was applause—people were happy to hear Dunkleman was returning! When Ryan said it was a joke—silence. First rule of comedy—know your audience.

Remember Idol alum David Archuleta? Apparently, many people out there think he's gay. Those whispers became a full-blown rumor once Archie was spotted at a NYC gay bar. In fact, he was at the club to see his friend Charice perform. The bloggers went crazy, prompting Davey to post on Twitter: "Wasn't my kind of place lol, and I had no clue! I guess you live and learn. The upside was that Charice was awesome." He did take this opportunity to drag out that old chestnut: "I have friends who are gay, and they're great people." Gee, thanks.

On the positive side, Idol did bring us Kris Allen, who was spotted at the Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas last week. That means we got some sexy pics of him shirtless, which we'll happily post on BillyMasters.com.

Between money problems, creative problems and casting problems, I'm not entirely convinced that Spider-Man: The Musical will ever surface. The latest casualty is Alan Cumming, who has left the production to become a series regular on The Good Wife. Last month, the Bono-penned musical lost leading lady Evan Rachel Wood, who cited "scheduling difficulties." When Evan Rachel Wood has better options, it may be time to pull the plug.

You know what Patton Oswalt won't be doing this summer? Working. The funny man, who is rumored to have been the catalyst for Megan Mullally's departure from the now-aborted Broadway production of Lips Together, Teeth Apart, can now add a TV show to his list of aborted gigs. Last week, it was announced that Patton would join Matthew Broderick and Kristen Johnston in a sitcom pilot called Beach Lane. However, after the table reading for the brass, he allegedly "quit" after producers offered him a different role in the show. Sure, he quit—and Brian Dunkleman left Idol of his own accord. Stop the spinning—I'm getting dizzy...

Alas, these splits aren't the only ones we have to report about. Only days after I cavorted with porn's dynamic duo, Aden and Jordan Jaric, at the White Party, the committed and monogamous Falcon couple announced they are kaput. Both changed their Facebook status to single—which is akin to sending out a press release these days.

Melissa Etheridge and the former Tammy Lynn Michaels have also separated. Rumors state that the split occurred when Tammy discovered Etheridge was cheating on her. Intriguingly, Melissa has intimated that her relationship with Julie Cypher ended when Julie had an affair with kd lang. See? It's not just gay men who are horny.



Alan Cumming is no longer on the web.

Then there's the Larry King break-up. If there's anything I love more than a celebrity sex scandal, it's when someone who is dead from the waist down is sleeping with his wife's sister, while the wife is sleeping with the children's baseball coach and saying not to worry about her husband—"He'll be dead soon." It's like an embarrassment of riches—and I don't embarrass easily!

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Chris in Hawaii: "I'm a student at the University of Hawaii and one of my classmates has been posting photos and videos of himself going all over campus (including classrooms) and taking videos jerking off and posting them online. I know the school was considering throwing him out, but I never heard what happened. Now one of my friends tells me the guy got a gay porn deal. Can you find out the details?"

The alleged "Speedo Student" is a 22-year-old senior at the University of Hawaii in Manoa named Tim. He's a history major and has been going into classrooms after hours to take nude photos and jerk-off videos. Now, I will add that he claims to always clean up after himself—although there are some suspect stains in the photos we have. Tim considers this "exhibitionism"—but is it really exhibitionism if no one is there? Show me a video of him jerking off in front of a calculus class, and maybe I'll be impressed.

What the controversy did was get Tim a gay porn deal. Last week, he shot his first DVD for Dink Flamingo. He was flown to San Diego and shot four scenes—two jerk-off scenes and two hardcore scenes. Tim's partners were Kaden Saylor and a newer model named Shawn. Not surprisingly, Tim bottomed for both. During his scene with Shawn, he says, "Now I know what it feels like to have an 8-inch cock stuck into me ... yikes! I'm told it was entertaining to watch though." A star is born! Of Kaden, he says, "I did enjoy him fucking me more, because his smaller cock was better suited to my smaller body." I'm sure he meant that as a compliment! Until the videos are available on ActiveDuty.com, I'll run some choice footage and stills on BillyMasters.com.

When Idol's giving back to everyone except Dunkleman, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Once again, I have more stories than I can fit into the confines of this column—at least in print. The solution? Check out www.BillyMasters.com for all the dish that's not necessarily fit to print. If you've got a question, drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Speedo Student goes for his master's in sex ed! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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SPORTS

Gay sports group sued for discrimination

BY ROSS FORMAN

The annual Gay Softball World Series has been receiving extensive mainstream media of late, from the Seattle Times to WGN Radio, but not the positive press organizers would like.

A lawsuit was filed last week in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington challenging the practices of the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Association (NAGAAA), the governing body for the annual multiday event that was held in Seattle in 2008, moved to Milwaukee in 2009, and is slated for Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 16-21, 2010, and Chicago in 2011.

The lawsuit alleges that NAGAAA violated Washington state's laws governing discrimination in public accommodations and state consumer protections by implementing and enforcing a "two heterosexuals per team" cap during the 2008 series. The suit also claims that the association violated the plaintiffs' rights by subjecting them to a series of invasive questions about their sexual orientation and private lives in front of more than 25 people, most of them strangers.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) filed the suit on behalf of Steven Apilado, LaRon Charles and Jon Russ—each of whom claims to be bisexual.

The NCLR, and plaintiffs, are seeking in excess of \$225,000.

The three played for D2, a team that had been playing together in the San Francisco Gay Softball League for years. D2 made it to the championship game in the 2008 series, when the team learned that another team challenged their eligibility to play based on a tournament rule that each team could have no more than two straight players.

Immediately after the game, according to the lawsuit, five D2 players were summoned to a conference room for a protest hearing, despite NAGAAA's stated mission of promoting "amateur sports competition, particularly softball, for all persons regardless of age, sexual orientation or preference, with special emphasis on the participation of members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community."

Each player was forced to answer intrusive questions about his sexual orientation and his private life in front of a room of more than 25 people, most of whom the players did not know, the lawsuit states. The players were forced to answer whether they were "predominantly attracted to men" or "predominantly attracted to women," without the option of answering that they were attracted to both. After each player was interrogated, a panel voted on whether he was "gay" or "non-gay." NAGAAA's committee refused to entertain the idea that the players could be bisexual, NCLR said.

In response to a player's statement that he was attracted to both men and women, a NAGAAA member reportedly responded, "This is the Gay World Series, not the Bisexual World Series."

Ultimately, the committee voted that Charles, Russ and Apilado were not gay. The committee recommended disciplinary measures against them, their team and the San Francisco Gay Softball League, including forcing their team to retroactively forfeit its second-place World Series finish. NCLR's press release also indicated they believe the decision was influenced by race. The "predominantly-white committee voted that Charles, Russ, and Apilado, all men of color, were not gay. The committee voted multiple times on at least one player. The committee also declared that the other two players, both white—one of whom had given precisely the same answers as Russ—were gay," NCLR said.

NCLR Sports Project Director Helen Carroll said,

"This case shows that bisexual people are an integral part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. The San Francisco team was truly diverse and welcomed bisexual, gay, and straight players, and they saw each other as not just teammates, but family. We all deserve to be treated with respect no matter what part of the 'LGBT' we are. It damages our community to conduct witch hunts and to exclude people from playing in a sports league for not being 'gay enough.' We wouldn't accept this kind of treatment from a non-LGBT sports organization and we shouldn't do it to ourselves."

NAGAAA, which organizes the Gay Softball World Series, has refused to change the discriminatory rule that excludes players based on sexual orientation; apologize to Apilado, Charles and Russ; or disavow the practice of interrogating players about their sexual orientations in protest hearings.

NCLR Staff Attorney Melanie Rowen said, "Washington law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in public accommodations. But conducting an inquisition into someone's sexual orientation to exclude them from playing sports in their community is not just discriminatory—it is outrageous."

"When you play softball, you never expect for anyone to corner you and ask you personal questions about who you are and what you do," Charles said in the press release. "It was emotional for me as a coach to go in there and not only get grilled, but watch my team be put in this situation. This had me angry, had me in tears, contemplating whether I even want to be part of the league anymore after being in it since 1999. The rationale that straight players should be limited on a team because they are better athletes is wrong, and it's insulting to the many strong LGBT athletes of today. A player is a player."

NAGAAA issued a statement from its board of directors in response to the lawsuit, saying: "At its core, NAGAAA is a grass roots organization dedicated to providing a safe environment for gays and lesbians. We have no paid staff; we do not have large sums of money, nor a pool of talented lawyers. It saddens all of us that the NCLR, whom we view as members of our community, have chosen this destructive path."

"NAGAAA represents a diverse population, and as such there are legitimate differences of opinion among us. However, the action by the NCLR has forced these differences into the court system, rather than allowing our members the right to define who and what we are. One thing is clear, if NCLR is successful, the enormous monetary damages they seek will put our very existence in jeopardy. Regardless of the outcome, everyone loses here. There are no winners."

"We are just at the beginning of this difficult saga. The Board is committed to representing our organization to the best of our abilities. We are guided by the framework of our organizational charter, as written by you, our members. We believe that once the facts are discovered a very different story emerges from that which has been reported, and we hope that NCLR will join with us."

Five or six teams representing the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA)—which has already begun fundraising and promoting the 2011 Series—annually participate in the series. A Chicago team won the B Division in 2009. (Note: Men primarily play in this event. The women's tourney is/has been separate; it was in Madison, Wis., in 2009 and will be in Las Vegas, Nev., Nov. 2-6, 2010.)

The 2010 CMSA open-division softball season had its opening day April 25.

Chicago, Cook County and Illinois all have laws against discrimination based on sexual orientation, so this issue may complicate the 2011 events here.

"Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) is not named in and/or privy to the specifics of the said NAGAAA lawsuit and is therefore unable to comment on it," CMSA Vice President Shawn Albritton told Windy City Times. "We are proud that Chicago will serve as host city for the



Christiane (right) plays for the Chicago Red Stars. Photo courtesy of the Red Stars

2011 NAGAAA World Series and are excited to work with NAGAAA as they administer the tournament. This type of arrangement is a common practice as recent as the 2010 Winter Olympics. Vancouver provided logistics support and event planning, but the actual tournament was conducted by the International Olympics Committee (IOC).

"CMSA is a gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered organization. While CMSA does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, CMSA does, however, discourage organizers of teams participating in CMSA from 'stacking' with non-GLBT players with the express intention of 'winning.' CMSA does not support non-GLBT participation at the expense of GLBT players."

Albritton said that CMSA's open-division Sunday softball league does have a rule that restricts teams to no more than three non-LGBT players, "which exists solely because the league generally adheres to NAGAAA regulations. However, this rule is being revisited," he said. "For over 30 years, CMSA has been proud to support Chicagoland's GLBT athletes, as well as be supportive and welcoming to our heterosexual allies."

Red Stars kick into action

BY ROSS FORMAN

Chicago Red Stars head coach Emma Hayes is optimistic that 2010 will be a breakout year for the Chicago Red Stars—or, at least, the women's soccer team will be vastly improved from the 2009 team that finished 5-10-5.

Also in 2009, the Red Stars won no games in May or June, never won back-to-back games and endured three three-game losing streaks.

Hayes called the 2009 campaign "disappointing."

"For whatever reason, it didn't work," she said. "On paper, the team looked very good. But in reality, the team didn't gel and didn't put together the performances that we expected of them."

"But we've moved on and I think this year's team is much more balanced so that we can play an entertaining game. I think we have more steel to us this year, so we're much tougher to break down."

The Red Stars opened the 2010 season April 11 with a 1-0 loss to Sky Blue FC in Piscataway, N.J. In the home opener at Toyota Park on April 18, Chicago battled to a 1-1 tie against the St. Louis Athletica. Chicago's third game, at home April 25, resulted in a 1-0 loss to Sky Blue FC. Their next home game is May 15 at 6 p.m.

"It's going to be a tough start playing against, arguably, the two toughest teams in the league," Hayes said. "We know that it may take a little bit for us to come together. No doubt our character and spirit will be there from day one, though."

"There is a great team dynamic with this team, on and off the field. I think this is a very determined and gritty group; and that's a signifi-

cant difference from last year. And, mentally the team is much stronger."

Chicago's offense is anchored around Christiane, who had a team-leading 11 shots in the team's first two games. Casey Nogueira scored the team's first goal this season, assisted by Katie Chapman.

"This season, we've built on the core returning players, including Ella Masar, Brittany Klein, Marian Dalmy, Christiane and Karen Carney," Hayes said. "We have more experience in the backfield and the more depth in the midfield."

"Overall, I think we're a much better, more balanced team."

Swedish striker Kosovare Asllani should add an interesting, exciting element to the offense. And Nogueira hails from soccer-power University of North Carolina; she is a Women's Professional Soccer Association rookie.

"We're young, but we have a lot of firepower, though I think it's going to take us some time to jell together," Hayes said.

"Defense wins championships, and we really want to be tough defensively. Kate Markgraf coming back is a massive plus for us, if only for her experience. Whitney Engen, our first-round draft pick, has great versatility to play numerous positions; that will help."

Jillian Loyden, acquired from St. Louis during the off-season, is the team's No. 1 goalie. "She has a great personality; I think she'll do very well for us. I'm very excited by her play," Hayes said.

The Red Stars have two home matches in May. The Philadelphia Independence come to town May 15 and FC Gold Pride invades the Windy City on May 29.

"I think our fans knew [last year] that we had entertaining players. I think the thing they will be most surprised with this season is how hard we're working defensively," Hayes said. "That's the foundation from where we'll build our success."

See www.womensprosoccer.com/chicago.

Ovarian cancer walk May 1

The National Ovarian Cancer Coalition (NOCC) Illinois Chapter will hold its 13th Annual "Walk to Break the Silence on Ovarian Cancer" Saturday, May 1, at the Chicago Park District at Diversey Harbor. The walk aims to raise awareness not only of ovarian cancer in general, but also of the very subtle symptoms of the disease.

Symptoms of ovarian cancer include bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, trouble eating or feeling full quickly and/or feeling the need to urinate urgently or often.

Registration for the three-mile walk will open at 8:30 a.m., and opening ceremonies will kick off at 9:30 a.m. The walk will start at 10 a.m. To register, call 708-763-8477 or visit www.nocc.kintera.org/IL.

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