



Rentboy Scandal

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Lucie Arnaz

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Martin Gapshis

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nightspots
pick it up
take it home

LGBTs applaud Supreme Ct. choice

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

May 10—Gay legal activists are applauding President Barack Obama's second nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court: Solicitor General Elena Kagan. But it could hardly be described as a standing ovation.

Former Clinton White House aide Richard Socharides called Kagan a "brilliant, pragmatic progressive interested in listening to all sides and building coalitions."

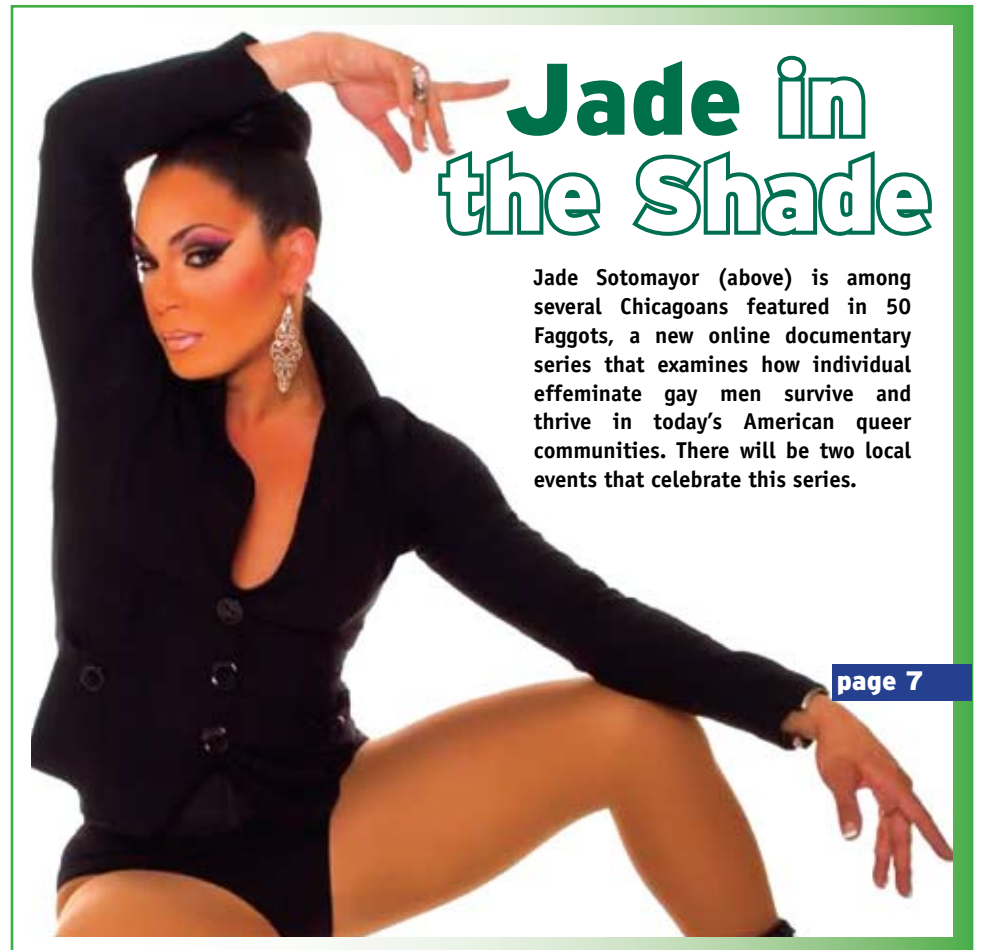
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund Executive Director Kevin Cathcart called Kagan "a strong position" in opposing the military's ban on gays but noted that Obama administration has also "taken legal positions on 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and the so-called 'Defense of Marriage Act' with which we strongly disagree."

Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese applauded her selection as fulfilling Obama's promise to promote "diversity" on the court.

If confirmed, Kagan would become only the fourth woman ever named to the court out of 104 justices in the history of the court.

Kagan is of particular interest to the LGBT community. While serving as dean of Harvard Law School, she took sides with gays against military recruiters because the military would not abide by the school's non-discrimination

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Jade in the Shade

Jade Sotomayor (above) is among several Chicagoans featured in 50 Faggots, a new online documentary series that examines how individual effeminate gay men survive and thrive in today's American queer communities. There will be two local events that celebrate this series.

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May 15 LCCP gala: All about 'Eve'



Garden of Eve organizers (from left) Dalila Fridi, Kat Fitzgerald, Melissa Mansfield and Tamara Allen. Photo courtesy of Fitzgerald

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

The Garden of Eve will be in full bloom for the second straight year. Howard Brown and the Lesbian Community Care Project will present their one-of-a-kind event on May 15, this year at Christy Webber's award-winning eco-industrial home, Rancho Verde, 2900 W. Ferdinand.

Webber donated her entire facility for the area's largest annual LGBT women's event, which raises money for Howard Brown and the LCCP to continue to provide medical services to LGBT women.

This year's event will feature a reception and pre-reception with food tasting from more than 20 local chefs and restaurants, a silent auction

Turn to page 8

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Alexandra Billings (above) spoke at the University of Illinois at Chicago's recent Lavender Graduation. Read more on page 6.

Photo by M. Alejos

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Sultry gay Italian actor Alessandro Calza talks about his movie, Ciao, which is out on DVD. Read more on page 17.

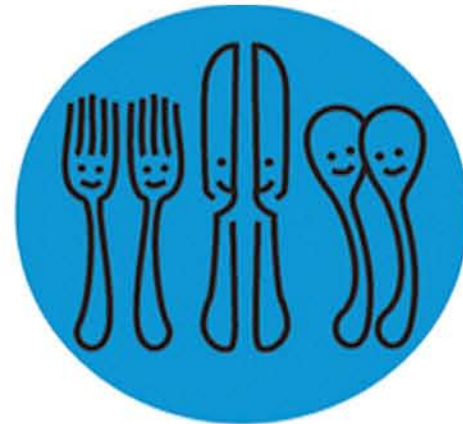
Photo courtesy of Alessandro Calza

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Photos on left side of cover (from top): Photo of rent boy and alleged George Rekers escort "Lucien"; Lucie Arnaz PR photo; Photo of Martin Gapshis by Israel Wright

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ONLINE INDEX

DINE & DANDY

Danielle Aquiline (right), a new addition to the Amuse Bouche team, writes about Chicken Romano. In Sugar & Spice, Meghan Streit reviews the Streeterville restaurant Deca.

Photo courtesy of D. Aquiline



EVENTFUL



A slew of events took place last week, including Chicago State's first LGBT prom (left), Asians & Friends' special gala and the Art Institute's fashion show.

Photo courtesy of Mason Harrison

TOUCH OF GLASS

Read a profile of Forest Park's Two Fish Art Glass shop, which is run by business and life partners Cecilia Hardacker and Tonya Hart (right).

Photo by Micki Leventhal



Behind the scenes at last week's DOMA argument

BY CHUCK COLBERT
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

They filled Courtroom Number 22 to capacity, spilling into overflow space several courtrooms away. Traveling from as far away as San Francisco and Honolulu, lawyers, journalists, and many others seriously interested in the future of marriage equality converged in Boston at the John Joseph Moakley Court U.S. Courthouse May 6. They came for mostly personal reasons, all hoping to see and be a part of LGBT history in the making.

And there was some drama, though not of the usual courtroom variety. A loudly pulsating fire alarm began blaring near the end of the proceeding, requiring the evacuation of the entire nine-floor building.

"Somebody smelled smoke, setting off a fire alarm on the ninth floor," explained a security guard, reassuring everyone heading back inside the building after a 40-minute break.

But before the fire alarm sounded, a gay community legal icon, attorney Mary Bonauto, had already presented her case against the constitutionality of a 1996 federal law that defines marriage, for all federal purposes, as the union of a man and a woman. After 14 years, the offensive against the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was underway.

Before giving Bonauto the green light to proceed, Judge Joseph L. Tauro, a 1972 Nixon appointee, called the proceedings to order, greeting the quieted courtroom with a hearty, "Good morning."

That welcome was not the only greeting dozens of lawyers, journalists, and the general public, received heading upstairs to seventh floor. Before their eyes, a message, etched in stone on a wall facing an ascending stairway, spelled out:

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"Justice is but truth in action," a 1914 quotation from the late U. S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, who, as a lawyer dedicating his career to public service, had earned the moniker the "people's attorney."

Throughout the nearly two-hour long oral arguments, Tauro stood at his podium as Bonauto, civil rights director for Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), argued on behalf of 17 people.

The *Gill et al. v. OPM* plaintiffs are seven gay couples and three widowers, all married in Massachusetts under the 2003 Goodridge decision. While the state affords them all the rights, benefits, protections, and responsibilities of legal wedlock, the federal government, under DOMA, denies them more than 1,000 federal programs, benefits and legal protections afforded to opposite-sex couples, including, among others, health insurance for spouses of federal employees, Social Security Act survivor and retirement benefits, and eligibility to file joint federal tax returns.

Many in the courtroom expressed confidence that Bonauto can once again—as she did seven years before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court—strike a big win for equal marriage rights. In 2003, the state's highest court agreed with Bonauto that the state constitution requires the state issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples the same as it does to straight couples.

"Mary didn't miss a beat," said Holly Gunner afterwards, outside the courtroom. "She and the GLAD legal team had an answer to every itsy-bitsy thing."

"I am not a lawyer," said Gunner, "but I learned in high school about the Constitution. It states that every power not given to the federal government is reserved to the states. And family law is one of those powers reserved to the state."

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SUPREME from cover

policy. That policy prohibited recruiters who discriminated based on sexual orientation.

Kagan clerked for one of the Supreme Court's staunchest liberals, Thurgood Marshall, and was a research assistant for one of the greatest legal defenders of gay civil rights, Laurence Tribe.

Single and 50, she was also the subject of a CBS News website blog report last month which claimed that, if named to the court, Kagan would be the "first openly gay justice." But Kagan has not publicly identified with any sexual orientation, and the White House moved quickly to say the report was "inaccurate."

Socarides called Kagan "one of the smartest people I know" and "someone the country will come to like and respect."

"Her thinking is well within the mainstream," said Socarides, and "very much in keeping with Obama's overall philosophy.... Pretty much a home-run appointment."

Shannon Minter of the National Center for Lesbian Rights called Kagan "well-qualified" and said members of his organization "strongly support increasing the number of women on the court."

Lambda's Cathcart said he did not expect Kagan "to answer questions about how she would rule on specific issues such as these that will come before her." But he said Lambda does "expect that she will respond to questions about her judicial philosophy and her understanding of core constitutional principals of equal protection and privacy that are so crucial to the civil rights of people who face discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or HIV status."

Longtime gay legal activist Paula Ettelbrick, an adjunct professor of law at New York University Law School, said Kagan's nomination is "most historic" and that "it moves women's representation on the Court to a more meaningful plurality."

Mainstream news organizations immediately set about assessing her odds for confirmation. MSNBC speculates both conservatives and liberals could criticize her. Commentator-reporter Chuck Todd said conservatives would fault Kagan over her opposition to military recruiters at Harvard. He said liberals could fault her for defending some policies put in place by the administration of President George W. Bush.

In introducing Kagan to the press conference May 10, Obama praised Kagan for having sought conservative views to balance liberal views at Harvard. During her confirmation process for Solicitor General last year, the Senate Judiciary Committee received letters in support of Kagan from such well-known conservatives as former Solicitors General Charles Fried and Kenneth Starr, and such well-known liberals as Eleanor D. Acheson.

Her confirmation as Solicitor General was opposed, as expected, by some ultra-conservative groups, including Concerned Women for America, who faulted her for opposing military recruiters, as well as Focus on Family and more than a dozen other groups who said she could not be counted on to defend "Don't Ask Don't Tell."

Kagan, an attorney, has never served as a judge but is widely respected as a legal scholar.

Minter said, "Because she has not served previously as a judge, it will be important to hear more about her judicial philosophy and whether she has a strong commitment to enforcing constitutionally protected rights and liberties."

Given that she filled out the Senate Judiciary Committee's lengthy questionnaire just last year, the vetting of her by various senators should go fairly rapidly.

In response to questions from the Judiciary Committee last year, Kagan said she views as "unjust the exclusion of individuals from basic economic, civic, and political opportunities of



Elena Kagan.

our society on the basis of race, nationality, sex, religion, and sexual orientation." But she also said she was "fully convinced" she could defend U.S. laws even when they do not reflect her personal views, including the federal law which penalizes universities which ban military recruiters.

Kagan's questionnaire also indicated that she delivered a welcoming address to introduce panel members at a Harvard University Gay and Lesbian Alumni event in September 2008. And in April 2006, she moderated a panel of the LAMBDA Student Organization concerning the "Relationship between Law Schools and the Military." Such participation is fairly typical of law school deans and her list includes an even greater number of appearances before groups promoting civil rights for black law students.

Sens. Orrin Hatch and Jon Kyl, two Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee who voted for Kagan as solicitor general, issued statements May 10 saying their votes are not guaranteed for the Supreme Court appointment.

If confirmed, Kagan will become the third woman on the current U.S. Supreme Court and the second unmarried justice. Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Obama's first nominee to the Supreme Court, was married briefly but divorced in 1983.

A press release from HRC applauded Kagan's "commitment to fairness and equality."

"Specifically, we applaud Elena Kagan's vocal opposition to the Solomon Amendment and the discriminatory 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' law.

HRC said it would continue examining Kagan's record on issues that affect the LGBT community.

Kagan's nomination is being made to fill the seat of retiring Justice John Paul Stevens, who announced his retirement last month.

The composition of the Supreme Court is increasing critical to the LGBT civil rights movement. Three important cases seeking equality in marriage rights are winding their ways to the high court and it seems nearly inevitable that the high court will choose to weigh in on at least one, if not all three. The court will also hear a case this fall that will determine whether a virulently anti-gay protest group has a First Amendment right to stage their demonstrations in ways that disrupt private funeral services.

While many nominees that the occasion of the press conference in introduce close members of their family, Kagan noted that her parents had already passed away and said she was "thankful for my brothers and other family and friends" for being there with her.

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Christian leader in 'rentboy' scandal

BY REX WOCKNER

George Alan Rekers, who co-founded the anti-gay Family Research Council, was photographed at Miami International Airport on April 13 returning from a European vacation with a male escort who says the two met via rentboy.com, Miami New Times reported May 4.

The escort, who has been called "Lucien," "Geo" and "Jo-vanni" in news reports, also told various media outlets that he gave Rekers daily massages in the nude during the trip, which included genital touching. Lucien showed CNN a travel contract between the two men that mandated daily hourlong massages, and told the network that Rekers "basically got excited" during the massage sessions.

Rekers, 61, has used his professorgeorge.com website and other online resources to fight back against the "slanderous" reports, saying he's not gay and that nothing "illegal or sexual" took place during his trip with Lucien, 20. Rekers told multiple media outlets that he will acquire or has acquired a lawyer and may or will sue for "defamation."

"I have been advised to retain the services of a defamation attorney in this matter, because the fact is that I am not gay and never have been," he told the Washington Post on May 6.

On his website, Rekers wrote: "A recent article in an alternative newspaper cleverly gave false impressions of inappropriate behavior because of its misleading innuendo, incorrectly implying that Professor George Rekers used the Rentboy website to hire a prostitute to accompany him on a recent trip. Contrary to Internet stories based on this slanderous article, following medical advice Professor George Rekers requires an assistant to lift his luggage in his travels because of an ongoing condition following surgery. ... Dr. Rekers found his recent travel assistant by interviewing different people who might be able to help, and did not even find out about his travel assistant's Internet advertisements offering prostitution activity until after the trip was in progress. There was nothing inappropriate with this relationship. Professor Rekers was not involved in any illegal or sexual behavior with his travel assistant."

As the story unfolded, Lucien learned of Rekers' history of anti-gay activism and then decided to tell media outlets about the trip's alleged sexual component.

"It's a situation where he's going against homosexuality when he is a homosexual," Lucien told New Times.

Gay activist Wayne Besen, whose Truth Wins Out group battles the anti-gay movement, told New Times that Rekers' "fingerprints are on almost every anti-gay effort to demean and dehumanize LGBT people."

"His work is ubiquitously cited by lobby groups that work to deny equality to LGBT Americans," Besen said. "Rekers has caused a great deal of harm to gay and lesbian individuals."

Reports said Rekers also is a member of the board of the anti-gay National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality. He also recently was paid tens of thousands of dollars by the state of Florida to be an expert witness against gay adoption. Florida is the only state that bans gay people from adopting across the board.

After Rekers testified in that case, Miami-Dade County Circuit Judge Cindy Lederman wrote: "Dr. Rekers' beliefs are motivated by his strong ideological and theological convictions that are not consistent with the science. Based on his testimony and demeanor at trial, the court cannot consider his testimony to be credible nor worthy of forming the basis of public policy."

Lucien told The Miami Herald he became an escort to pay for college, but that he might have to drop out now. He said Rekers paid him \$75 per day during the trip, which is less than the \$300-\$500 he would have charged for sex. He

told CNN there was no sexual contact other than the massages.

In a message to the Joe.My.God. blog, Rekers said no one should be surprised he was found in the company of a male escort.

"Like Jesus Christ, I deliberately spend time with sinners with the loving goal to try to help them," Rekers wrote. "Like John the Baptist and Jesus, I have a loving Christian ministry to homosexuals and prostitutes in which I share the Good News of Jesus Christ with them. ... If you talk with my travel assistant that the story called 'Lucien,' you will find I spent a great deal of time sharing scientific information on the desirability of abandoning homosexual intercourse, and I shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with him in great detail."

Not everyone in the media bought that explanation.

"Here's the basic idea about cases like this," MSNBC's Rachel Maddow said May 7. "The miserable denial and lying in your own sex lives is your own miserable, in-denial, lying business—unless you make it the whole country's business by crusading against the thing that is true about

yourself that you hate so much. Being gay cannot be cured. Being a contemptible, pathetic hypocrite can be cured. ... Congratulations, you've made the news."

—Assistance: Bill Kelley



"Lucien," who reportedly was an escort for Rev. George Rekers.

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Online dating violence on the rise

BY JOHN FENOGLIO

Men seeking men, beware. Across the nation, a spate of violent crimes against LGBT people, including murder, has been attributed to websites, phone applications, and chat lines that offer members the ability to cruise other men for hook-ups and dates.

On April 29, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) issued a "national alert" warning of the dangers of using pick-up sites to meet strangers.

The statement read, in part, that "[t]he 39 member organizations of NCAVP have also documented an increase in the severity of the crimes committed." It added that "[t]he primary targets appear to be men" who have met online for dating and sex.

The alert follows similar, local advisories is-



Lisa Gilmore (with Center on Halsted Executive Director Tico Valle). Photo by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)

sued by NCAVP-member organizations.

In Washington, D.C., Brian Betts and Anthony Perkins were robbed and murdered last month

after meeting their attackers online. According to the Washington Examiner, both men were killed in separate incidences, "After being lured into robberies when they expected sex."

In Phoenix, Mark Woodland, 54, was beaten and stabbed to death April 24. According to police, Woodland was murdered by a man he met on the iPhone application Grindr.

The New York City Anti-Violence Project (NYC AVP) reported over 25 pick-up crime incidents in 2009, ranging from sexual violence, theft, drugging, and murder. The report cited Internet dating websites, such as, Craigslist and Adam4Adam as catalysts to the violence. Moreover, the report stated, "Some assailants are working in teams."

Windy City Times contacted Craigslist and Adam4Adam for comment; however, they did not respond before deadline.

It begs the question: Are these websites safe?

"It's easy to say that the websites who provide these forums for hooking-up are doing a disservice. It's also true that people have these same types of experiences happening to them when they meet someone in a bar. It's really not the

fault of the website, or the victim, right? It's that there are people in the world who choose to be violent and perpetrate crime. There is always that risk no matter what the hook-up medium is," said Lisa Gilmore, director of education and victim advocacy at the Center On Halsted. She also oversees Chicago's Anti-Violence Project at COH.

Nonetheless, Gilmore said she would like to see a more proactive, community approach by websites to inform and educate the public about the dangers that exist.

"Safer is not just always about sex. There's all sorts of ways to increase your safety during a hook-up situation," Gilmore said. "Some of these websites do host awareness campaigns, but I would like to see that happening more often."

To learn more about Internet safe dating tips go to www.ncavp.org/common/document_files/FeatureAlerts/SafeDating.pdf.

To report an incident or locate an anti-violence program in your area, contact info@ncavp.org, or contact the Center's 24-hour hotline at 773-871-2273.

Billings speaks at UIC's Lavender Graduation

BY YASMIN NAIR

For the third year in a row, the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC's) Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC) hosted a Lavender Graduation. When it first started in 2007, the event was designed to give LGBTQA students a way to celebrate their graduation and academic achievements while recognizing that their sexual and gender identities were integral to their educational experiences and deserving of celebration and recognition. Since then, Lavender Graduation has expanded from 10 students to 30; this year's keynote speaker was trans actor/entertainer Alexandra Billings.

Liz Thomson, interim director of GSC, spoke to Windy City Times as she was putting the final touches on the preparations. She said that the event is meant for undergraduates, graduates and professional students across the campus and is also open to those from UIC who might be visiting or commuting from Chicago. The event began when GSC officers looked at the 2007 Advocate's guide to colleges and realized that they were lacking a lavender graduation ceremony, something that is common at other schools and universities. "Otherwise," said Thomson, "The only formal ways for LGBTQA students to get together are in October, national coming-out month." The event also gives students a school year-end celebration and helps them keep in touch with young alumni.

Lavender Graduation is not as formal as the school's larger graduation ceremony—students do not wear their robes for this occasion—but it is nonetheless packed with meaningful gestures. Students are each given a rainbow tassel and a rainbow diploma. Thomson said that many of them wear the tassels to the formal ceremony. Every student can bring a special guest who might be a mentor/advisor to him or her, and the diploma is first handed to that person, who then hands it to the student. As Thomson put it, "This is more of a cultural ceremony. We are recognizing their academic achievements and that they survived the university system along with the attendant homophobia and heterosexism. As good as UIC is, we still have challenges."

Thomson also pointed out the advantages of this smaller and more intimate event over the larger one: "This is different for them because [at the bigger ceremony] they don't feel they know anybody, and they may not be able to pay for a cap and gown. Here they go to a ceremony with a few people whom they know well. There are students I've known on a day-to-day basis."

One such student is Jorge Mena, who is working on a double major in anthropology and Latin American studies. A senior next year, Mena is being honored this year with a \$500 scholarship from the UIC Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues. Mena is out as queer and as an undocumented student, and his research and activism reflect his multiple identities. He is a member of Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL), a local group that began as part of the movement to successfully halt the deportation of Rigo Padilla, also an undocumented UIC student. His current work, under the mentorship of anthropology adjunct assistant professor Ruth Gomberg-Munoz, looks at post-9/11 immigration labor issues and the rise of youth activist groups like IYJL. Mena,



Alexandra Billings at Lavender Graduation. Photo by M. Alejos

who spoke to the paper on the day of Lavender Graduation, was also involved with the organizing of the first Dream Gala, a fundraiser for undocumented UIC students who cannot access federal financial aid. He plans to use most of his scholarship money to pay for tuition.

Mena said that the GSC had given him a sense of community and amenities like the Rainbow Resource Room, which provides a space for students to meet as well as computers for them to use. Being out as both undocumented and as queer has "taught me to be more open-minded, to deal with all these secrets of being gay and undocumented. That's why it makes sense to talk about 'coming out of the shadows' [a slogan that IYJL has popularized among undocumented students]—it's all so personal for me. It's taught me to be more accepting of people."

John D'Emilio, a scholar of gay history and politics as well as gender and women's studies, spoke of the event's historical significance. He said that, "Just half a century ago, students would get expelled from college for being gay. The idea that a university has a ceremony that recognizes the sexual and gender identity of a student and celebrates it is just wonderful." He went on to add, "UIC is a very queer-friendly place. Between the GSC and the Chancellor's Committee and the many courses available, students have many different spaces where they can come together. But it's very special that this important ceremony exists to recognize their queerness."

State schools still flunk out on LGBTQ equity

The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) has released "Visibility Matters 2010," an update to the first statewide report card on LGBTQ presence in higher education and teacher preparation in Illinois. This report examines the inclusion of sexual orientation (SO) and gender identity (GI) in university policies related to anti-discrimination and in student codes of conduct, and for SO and GI specifically in teacher education and social work preparation programs. Sixty percent, or 36 of the state's sixty teacher education preparation programs, received a failing grade of F. Fifty-two percent, or 11 of the state's 21 social worker preparation programs, received a D or an F.

Professor Erica Meiners, Professor of Education and Women's Studies at Northeastern Illinois University and member of the Pre-Professional Project of the alliance that authored the report, said in a press release that "[w]e evaluated these programs based on the web because prospective teacher education/social work students research potential programs via the internet and want to know how programs include and address LGBTQ communities."

"Three universities received A's in teacher preparation (DePaul, Illinois Wesleyan and University of Illinois at Chicago)—up from just one (UIC) last year," said Shannon Sullivan, executive director of the alliance.

Since the first Visibility Matters report was released in 2009, the group has seen some major changes at some universities. The 2010 report features the success stories of Illinois State University (ISU) and DePaul University. "At ISU," explained associate professor Paula Ressler, "our leadership took the report very seriously. They consulted with professors and students and immediately worked to update our university-wide non-discrimination policy to include gender identity—which had been a glaring lack due to Illinois state law. We still have a lot of work to do to ensure full inclusion, but our leadership has been very motivated by this report."

The full report, "Visibility Matters 2010: Higher Education and Teacher/Social Work Preparation in Illinois: A Web-based Assessment of LGBTQ Presence," is available online at www.illinois-safeschools.org.

Correction

In last week's issue of Windy City Times, it was stated in the Measure for Measure column that Terrence McNally withdrew from writing the libretto of Three Decembers because of illness. In fact, McNally was working on other projects.

Windy City Times regrets the error.

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'50 Faggots' creates dialogue on diversity

BY TONY PEREGRIN

50 Faggots—a new online documentary series produced and directed by Randy Jensen, a young anthropologist and ethnographic documentarian living in Logan Square—takes the concept of “effeminate gay men,” opens the kimono and reveals how 10 artists, activists and educators survive and thrive in a community that values “appropriate” and “straight-acting” expressions of masculinity.

The first season of 50 Faggots documents the stories of a select group of self-identified effeminate gay men living and working in Chicago, New York City and Washington D.C. The Chicago cast includes David Sotomayor (“Jade” from season 1 of RuPaul’s Drag Race); Fausto Fernos and Marc Felion (Feast of Fun podcast); and Robert Mitchell (a.k.a. nightclub host and Billboard-charting singer “Cyon Flare”).

“The series follows and represents the types of gay men who have a strong, independent streak, and express themselves exactly as they see fit—whether they always act effeminate or not,” explained Jensen. “This is about gay men who embrace and create their own definition of being a man, and who view their identities as strength and empowerment. Not every man in this first season is ending his statements with a triple-snap-and-a-twist, although if they did, I would love that too.”

Windy City Times spoke with Jensen about the power of the word “faggot,” why his documentary is unlike anything you’ve seen before (even on YouTube) and how 50 Faggots compares to RuPaul’s Drag Race (short answer: It doesn’t).

Windy City Times: Talk about the name of the web series—why is it called 50 Faggots?

Randy Jensen: You know, the name was first suggested to me by one of the cast members of the series. When I first heard it, I said, ‘No way! That could never go!’ But when I thought about it more I realized it was brilliant. The name is extremely intentional, and it is, I think, critical for the word “faggot” to be included in the title. Because—let’s be real—this is exactly who we are talking about. And we’re still everywhere, we’ve never left, whether some gay men like it or not. But understanding the experiences of effeminate gay men is getting past that surface level—the superficial gaudiness or humor that we are often so criticized for showing because we’re perceived to give other gay men a “bad name.”

WCT: 50 Faggots follows each subject and allows each man to discuss the ways his personal effeminate expressions are negotiated in career, relationships and communities. How is this series different from anything else on YouTube featuring interviews with gay-identified artists?

RJ: The fact that I film these men for two years is critical in providing the types of content, trust and experiences that I am able to show within this series. I am engaged with longitudinal auto-ethnographic filmmaking, something that is emerging in the documentary film world, but hasn’t really peaked yet in reality television. I actually can’t stomach a lot of reality TV; I tuned out shortly after Real World: San Francisco. I think the way a lot of modern reality series are created is with rushed, scripted content. There is very little authenticity in the initial footage—much less when it has been edited down by a third party with a ratings goal. I really believe that the Internet is the way to go with documentaries and the future. Oh, I should add that my roommates and I were intentional not to have a TV in our house. It saves a lot of time and makes me more productive.

WCT: In season one, the Midwest is represented by gay men from Chicago—is the Windy City a fair and accurate representation of this part of the country?

RJ: I think many gay men who arrive in Chicago



Cyon Flare (above) is part of 50 Faggots.

go are leaving from someplace less accepting or open to who they are. And that’s the irony—because in my experience, often our own gay male communities (it’s important to pluralize our communities, because we aren’t just one, and Boystown often is the only type of community accredited) can be very closed off to effeminate gay men. Unless you are performing as a drag queen, where a specific space is created to celebrate femininity, we all seem to want to be a very “butch,” homogenous community. When I started researching and filming two years ago, I was surprised to learn that each man felt the same thing about their own communities as well, in either Chicago, D.C. or New York City. It’s not a city-specific experience, but a larger standard and ideal that’s become embedded into American gay culture all together.

I think Chicago is a city that is very easy to fall in love with. We have amazing summer festivals in our queer neighborhoods. We have a city-supported and sponsored Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame. But the mainstream image of the gay Chicago man looks clean, dresses preppy, is fairly Christian—let’s face it, we have a whole lot of corn-fed white boys that manage to have golden-hue tans and look like outdated Bel-Ami porn stars. I know; I’ve slept with a few of them.

WCT: What is biggest misconception you’ve encountered regarding 50 Faggots?

RJ: One of the most common misconceptions may be that the series is focused a lot on drag queens or men who like to dress up in decorative clothing. There is nothing wrong with this—I do love a great performance and I think there is a certain parallel relationship to creative, effeminate gay men and being more open to trying anything on, whatever the shape, color, or feather. But, even the men who are drag queens or nightlife personalities spend a lot of time not dressed up and working jobs or volunteering for organizations. 50 Faggots is not another “RuPaul’s Drag Race.” I think if someone is going to watch the series with the expectation of getting that same type of content, they will be surprisingly disappointed.

WCT: Talk about the Chicago launch of 50 Faggots. What do you think the energy and vibe will be like to have the entire cast from season 1 assembled in one room?

RJ: The Chicago launch is going to be amazing! Most of the cast haven’t met each other, so it will be exciting to see how everyone connects with each other. I feel connected to each participant—they have shared a lot with me through these past two years. All of my close friends know how important this launch is to me, not only because it’s celebrating the series, but because it’s the first chance for the cast to connect. I’m telling my friends to treat it like it’s my wedding, for real, it’s the most important

thing in my life at this point.

The New York City and Washington, D.C., cast are all flying in from Wednesday, May 12 through Sunday, May 16. We have our launch party at Hydrate on Thursday, May 13, hosted by Cyon Flare and special guest host Acid Betty, featuring the full cast, and performances by many of them, along with Chicago favorites JoJo Baby, Velicity Metropolis, Debbie Fox, Sissy Spastik, Mocha Pronto, and Marquis. There will be more headliners and high energy in that room on this day than we’ve seen in a long time!

The first-episode premiere will be at The Center on Halsted’s Hoover-Leppen Theatre on Friday, May 14, and will featuring a Q&A with the cast, myself and editor Meredith Zielke, moderated by Dr. Melissa Bradshaw, an instructor with DePaul University.



Randy Jensen.

The first episode will go live on the website shortly after the premiere, and future episodes, non-linear and mostly thematic in content, will be released monthly until the following summer.

WCT: What’s on tap for season two?

RJ: 50 Faggots will go for five seasons and will include fifty stories in total. There are already people who have applied to be part of the second season cast—and the first episode isn’t even out yet!

I want season two to spread out across the U.S. more, and include rural, suburban, and urban areas. There are already locations I am looking at and types of gay male experiences that I am hoping to follow. I have been financing the film out of my own pocket so far, so that’s why it is so important for me to start receiving grants, or hope that this article finds me those wealthy HRC sugar daddies who can become fiscal sponsors.

For more information, visit www.50faggots.com.

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Gapshis to be honored at Center's gala

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

On May 22, the Center on Halsted will present its 2010 Human First award to longtime LGBT community activist and philanthropist Martin Gapshis, who, as co-chair of the Center's capital campaign, helped raise \$20 million for the construction of the organization's current Lake View location. Gapshis will receive the award at a Harris Theater ceremony that features Lily Tomlin and is emceed by actor/comedian Hal Sparks.

Other recipients are grantmaking organization Chicago Foundation for Women and Walgreens, which supports the Center and its Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) program.

Gapshis, a lifelong Chicagoan, is president of Progress Printing, a 75-year-old business founded by his father, Stanley. Under the elder Gapshis, work done by Progress Printing was aligned with the two tiers of traditional Chicago politics, organized labor and the Democratic Party: According to a 1993 obituary in the Chicago Tribune, Gapshis printed material for the campaigns of Sens. Carol Moseley-Braun and Paul Simon, as well as for Bill Clinton's Midwest presidential campaign. Progress Printing also published the first issue, in 1942, of Negro Digest. The Gapshis family lived in Bridgeport, the same neighborhood as the family home of Mayor Richard J. Daley, who according to Martin Gapshis was close to his father.

In a recent interview with Windy City Times, Gapshis credited his upbringing as vital to the work he does today. "People need to be taught philanthropy," he said. "My parents were really involved in all aspects. I think a lot of people don't have that."

Though he briefly went elsewhere for college, Gapshis said that it was natural for him to stay in Chicago and inherit his father's business. "I had printing ink running in my blood," he said. As for staying in Chicago, he said, "I love Chicago and I think it's the finest city in the country. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else."

The philanthropic and political activity undertaken by Stanley Gapshis has continued with his son at the helm of the business: a press release announcing the Human First award ceremony credited Martin Gapshis with in-kind printing donations to "virtually every not-for-profit organization in the city." Gapshis has supported Heartland Alliance, the Chicago International



Martin Gapshis. Photo by Israel Wright

Film Festival, and Lakefront Supportive Housing; he also raised funds for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. He was a member of the board of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, is currently on the emeritus board of Cinema/Chicago, and serves on the Costume Council of the Chicago History Museum.

Gapshis has also worked on various city environmental initiatives, including a stint on the Mayor's Executive Committee for Greening Projects that included work on rooftop gardening and the co-chairmanship of the Chicago Flower and Garden Show.

"I consider him a friend," Gapshis said of Chicago Mayor Richard Daley. "We worked very closely with Mayor Daley during the building of the Center ... I think the mayor's done a fine job."

The feeling is apparently mutual. In 1995, Daley declared Feb. 10 "Martin Gapshis Day" in recognition of Gapshis being honored as the "Biggest Heart in Chicago" by the Hearts Foundation, a now-defunct HIV/AIDS fundraising group.

In the earliest days of the AIDS crisis, Gapshis said, Progress Printing helped then-nascent organizations like AIDS Foundation of Chicago and Test Positive Aware Network. Involved as well with the NAMES Project and Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS, Gapshis was inducted in 2007 into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame, which recognized him for "demonstrating a quiet commitment to improving the lives of others."

Gapshis said that he was approached about the construction of the new Center on Halsted by Patrick Sheahan, who invited him to work on the capital campaign. (Sheahan himself was honored with the Center's Human First award in 2008.) "His enthusiasm is so contagious," said Gapshis. "Without Patrick, there would be no Center."

Gapshis said that the project succeeded—

the building opened, to much fanfare, in June 2007—as the result of "incredible focus and planning," as well as generous donations from community members. In addition to his role with the capital campaign, Gapshis served on the Center's Development and Community and Culture Programming committees.

"It's all about leadership," he said. "If you have a plan, and know what you're talking about, and it's solid, people are willing to invest in it."

Regarding his receipt of the Human First Award, Gapshis said, "The people who are working in the building—they're the ones who are making the difference. They're the ones who are deserving of the awards. They are the real heroes."

"I take a small part of the credit. I was a little cog in the wheel. It was a big wheel. There were lots of cogs."

For tickets to Human First 2010, see www.centeronhalsted.org/humanfirst2010.html.

Maine South student urges LGBTQ training

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

A student at Maine South High School in Park Ridge is calling for better LGBTQ sensitivity training for local teachers after peers harassed her for authoring an article about transgender issues for the school paper. Anna Rangos, 17, addressed the District 207 school board May 3, demanding a safer harassment-free environment for all students.

In February, Rangos, a junior, had an article published in the school paper about transgender issues in attempt to broaden other students' horizons. That day in her English class, Rangos said her classmates criticized her and the article, and one student called the transgender lifestyle "disgusting and unnatural." Reduced to tears, Rangos went home early from school. After facing bullying and harassment in the subsequent days, she ended up missing three more days of school.

Rangos said she has always been a victim of verbal bullying in school after coming out as a lesbian in 7th grade, but this harassment was particularly harsh. She had spent a lot of time working on her piece for the paper and the attack was sudden and fierce.

"That day was so hard because people had so much hate toward something they didn't understand," she said.

The teacher was not in the room at the time, but contacted the school deans afterward and expressed her disappointment to the class. However, Rangos said the relaxed way in which the administration handled the situation and failed to impose consequences highlighted a need for the faculty to be better equipped in situations of verbal harassment.

An active member of her school's gay-straight alliance (GSA), Rangos and her GSA sponsor, Jennifer Sarashinsky, brainstormed ways to effectively approach the administration with a solution. As a member of the About Face Youth Theatre troupe, Rangos decided to speak to the principal about bringing in About Face to do LGBTQ sensitivity training with faculty and possibly students. Sarashinsky said she believes this might happen prior to next school year.

But Rangos said she is still bothered by the fact that no punishment was given to the particular students that made the scathing comments.

"I felt isolated and alone and hurt that the administration wouldn't do anything to protect its students," Rangos said.

The lack of immediate action prompted Rangos to approach the school board last week. With help from the Illinois Safe School Alliance (ISSA), an organization that promotes healthy school environments for Illinois LGBTQ youth, Rangos came prepared to deliver a message that the school board has a responsibility to uphold.

"I wanted them to know that the harassment needs to stop because it damaged my self-esteem and it could potentially damage others' self-esteem," she said. "I think it's their job to protect their students and make school a safe place for every student."

David Fischer, program associate for ISSA, said the organization helped to provide Rangos with resources for all school board members and recruited local PFLAG members to show their support, but foremost commends Rangos for standing up and making a statement.

"She's an incredible activist," Fischer said. "She's very well-spoken and not afraid to do what it takes."

Sarashinsky echoed those sentiments.

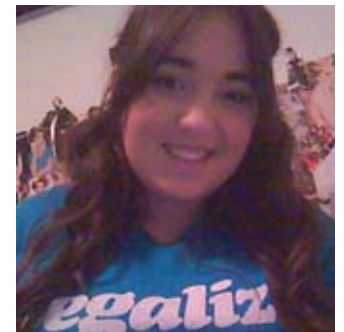
"[Rangos] always wants to be the type of person who gets things done—to make a change or have an impact," she said. "From day one that was what she wanted to do."

Sarashinsky said that arming teachers with the information, resources and skills to handle difficult situations like these is the first step toward improving the school environment.

"I think that a lot of our teachers are not sure of the best way to handle many harassment situations," she said. "They are uncomfortable—it's always difficult to think about what is the best thing to do. The more resources people have and more info people have, the better they're going to be able to respond."

Rangos is waiting for a response from the school board before deciding what her next move might be. She said that she hopes one day that the student who calls another a "faggot" will receive an equal or greater punishment than the student who currently gets a Saturday detention for using a cell phone in school.

Windy City Times left a message for Maine South Principal David Claypool but had not received a response as of the press deadline.



Anna Rangos. Photo courtesy of Rangos

EVE from cover

and live entertainment as well as a DJ, aerialists, flag and fire dancers and last year's big hit: nude body-painted garden pixies.

Kat Fitzgerald, event co-chair and Windy City Times photographer, said that last year's experience gave the even co-chairs, known as "the fab four," an idea of what needed tweaking to make the night even more memorable. She promises this year's festivities will be "bigger, better and more fabulous."

The move to Webber's private location will assure plenty of time for all the festivities. Hayride tours will also be available of the whole ranch, but to spice them up, Fitzgerald said singers will be dressed as gondoliers to serenade and entertain riders. Headlining the live entertainment will be singer/songwriter Marnie Alton of Logo's Exes & Ohs.

"The key to all of this is that it's bigger and better and that we focused more on the entertainment," Fitzgerald said. "Last year was really a learning experience for us and this year we worked out a lot of the kinks."

The pre-reception is 6-7 p.m.; then, the main event begins. Premier tickets, which include access to both the reception and pre-reception, are \$200 each while main garden event tickets are \$100. To purchase tickets or for more information on what's included for either ticket, visit www.gardenofeve-chicago.org.

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Gay man wins school council seat

BY ANDREW DAVIS

David Neubecker, who ran for a seat on the school council of Lake View's Nettehorst Elementary April 21, received the highest number of votes and snagged one of the six available spots.

In a statement to Windy City Times, Neubecker said, "I'm extremely excited and honored to be serving as a Parent Representative on the Nettehorst Local School Council Board. With my involvement in the school over the past two years, I've been very impressed by the commitment of so many parents, teachers, and members of the community.

"Everyone in East Lakeview should feel proud of the hard work and dedication that has made Nettehorst an example of what is right about public education. This year will be a particularly difficult time for our school with state and city budget cuts that will affect every student and every classroom. I would like to thank the community surrounding the school, including the LGBT community, for their dedication and willingness to help our children and benefit their education. Remember, this is your neighborhood school and we need your help now more than ever. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work."

Nowotny kicks off aldermanic campaign

BY ANDREW DAVIS

"I'm Don Nowotny, and I'm here tonight to announce my candidacy for alderman of the 46th Ward." With those words, Nowotny officially kicked off his campaign May 4 at the European and US Auto Service, 4080 N. Broadway.

Nowotny, a landscape architect who is also the superintendent of the ward's streets and sanitation department, is one of at least three openly gay individuals running for the position. "I know this ward from every corner to every corner. I've gotten to know many people; we're a very diverse mixed crowd, and I love it," he said to approximately 100 supporters.

"I know this ward from the alleys to the streets



Don Nowotny at his campaign kick-off. Photo by Andrew Davis

to the walkways. I can honestly say that I know every crook and cranny in this ward," he joked. On a more serious note, he said, "Year after year, I've seen and heard the same comments and concerns about our community. It's clear that all the residents want a cleaner, safer and better environment to which to live, work and play."

Nowotny outlined a platform that focused on three points: safety ("Nothing is more important than the safety of the residents of the 46th Ward."), economic development and low-income housing ("I fully understand the moral obligation to build decent low-income housing, but what I'm suggesting tonight is that the 46th Ward has met, if not exceeded, in this regard. It's time for other Chicago wards to step up to the plate and share responsibility.").

He added that "this is a campaign of first names—and with a name like Nowotny, it has to be. So let's continue calling me Don even after you elect me as alderman."

The elections for Chicago's mayor, clerk, treasurer and aldermen will take place Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2011.

AFC gala raises \$500K

AIDS Foundation of Chicago's (AFC's) "Not Just Song & Dance" gala—which marked the organization's 25th anniversary—raise more than \$500,000 for ongoing prevention, care and advocacy services in the fight against HIV/AIDS nationwide, according to a press release.

In addition to a special performance by The Bangles, the evening was highlighted by words spoken by several individuals, including AFC Board Chair Aaron Baker and Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn, who called attention to the AFC's "mission of a lifetime" and for support of the HIV/AIDS funds in the state budget. Attorney General Lisa Madigan, State Treasurer (and U.S. Senate candidate) Alexi Giannoulis and U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley were among the notable attendees at this event.

For photos of the gala, see www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=26445.

Chorus' auction raises \$20K

The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus' 2nd Annual Big Package Auction, held May 8 at Sidetrack, raised more than \$20,000 to support the general operating budget of the chorus. More than one hundred guests and volunteers bid on live and silent auction packages, and special guest Amy Armstrong stopped by to help auction the grand prize of a cruise through the Hawaiian Islands.

See www.cgmc.org for more information.

Latino HIV confab May 12

"*Infórmate: Breaking the Silence—HIV Update on the Latino Community*," will take place Wed., May 12, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park.

The conference is a one-day event that will explore how HIV/AIDS is affecting the Latino community.

Visit www.aidschicago.org for registration information and more event details.

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"IT'S (GETEQUAL'S SUCCESS) BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS. ... There's so much frustration out there; it's not just me feeling it. Now I feel like our frustration is being materialized and people are saying, 'We can do something about this.' The actions have been over and beyond what I was expecting." — Robin McGehee, co-founder of the new LGBT civil-disobedience group *GetEQUAL*, to this column, April 27.

"ALL OF THE (LGBT) GROUPS THAT ARE SPECIFICALLY IN THE BELT-WAY HAVE GOTTEN USED

TO access and power and they've forgotten the young kid in Mississippi who thinks daily about slitting their wrists or is being beaten up daily ... Our national organizations are much like the DNC in my opinion. It's more about an organization and fitting into what the organization's leadership wants and less about serving the people." — Robin McGehee, co-founder of the new LGBT civil-disobedience group *GetEQUAL*, to this column, April 27.

"(HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN PRESIDENT JOE) SOLMONESE ... AND HIS ORGANIZATION OFTEN SOUND OUT OF TOUCH

with the average LGBT person. There is a palpable and growing anger with President Obama and the Democrats in Congress and HRC would be wise to recognize it and respond appropriately. Solmonese, for example, should have apologized for the (Kathy) Griffin rally—it was a sorry exercise in star-fuckery that had no place in the serious debate over Don't Ask, Don't Tell." — *Washington Blade* Editor Kevin Naff in an April 23 commentary.

"I WANT TO SEND A WARM GREETING TO ALL OUR LATIN AMERICAN friends who live in the state of Arizona. The SB 1070 is a law that doesn't make sense. You are not alone. We are with you. Stop discrimination. Stop hate. Stop racism. Enough already. Long live love. Long live peace." — *Openly gay singer Ricky Martin at the Billboard Latin Music Awards, April 29 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The new, widely criticized Arizona law requires police to check an individual's immigration status whenever an officer suspects an individual may be in the U.S. illegally.*

"WE IN THE LGBT COMMUNITY KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE THE TARGET of discrimination, and we have to stand firmly in support of other groups that are also impacted by discrimination. I think that's the only way all of us collectively are going to have full rights and full equality, if we make a point of standing

together when one group is targeted." — *Gay San Francisco Supervisor David Campos urging LGBTs to actively oppose Arizona's "horrendous" new "Papers, please" law targeting primarily Mexican residents, to the Bay Area Reporter, April 29.*

"SINCE (ELLEN) DEGENERES REPLACED PAULA ABDUL as a judge on *American Idol* in February, millions upon millions of viewers are



Photo by Jerry Nunn

The SB 1070 is a law that doesn't make sense.

—Ricky Martin criticizing Arizona's immigration law at an awards show

getting a double dose of the hugely popular talk show host and 12-time Emmy winner. The *American Express* and *Covergirl* pitchwoman's reach is nearly unparalleled. ... A passionate advocate for marriage equality, an avid opponent of 'don't ask, don't tell,' and staunch defender of animal rights, DeGeneres's enormous platform is many an American's gain." — *Out magazine April 15 naming Ellen DeGeneres the most influential gay man or lesbian in America, in the publication's annual "Power 50" list.*

"IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS, GAYS WOULD HAVE WILD, WANTON SEX upon first meeting and if the connection grew into some kind of relationship, that was probably OK. But new school gays (excluding the Manhunt ones) want to get to know each other first and then get sexual. They want to be like straight people, who for years wined and dined each other and actually conversed in depth before sexplay became a huge factor. Today's gays actually date! But ironically, now that the gays have caught up with the getting-to-know-you routine, the straights want to be like old-school gays and have sex first!" — *Village Voice* columnist Michael Musto on his blog, April 28.

"I WAS AN EXTREMELY CLOSETED ACTRESS FOR THE FIRST FEW YEARS of my career. In fact, when I was on *Ally McBeal*, I wouldn't even drive down Santa Monica Boulevard because I was scared people would see me through the car window and wonder what I was doing in the gay part of town." — *Portia de Rossi, Ellen's wife, at the Human Rights Campaign's Los Angeles Hero Awards Dinner, March 14, as transcribed by lgtpov.com.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley



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**REV.
IRENE
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Chely Wright comes out and joins Faith in America

For months it was rumored that country music singer-songwriter Chely Wright would announce that she's a lesbian and appear on the cover of People Magazine. And this is the week, launching her seventh album, *Lifted Off the Ground*, released on Vanguard Records and her memoir, *Like Me*, published by Random House.

Wright's long and arduous struggle to come out has transformed her also into an activist who'll be joining the board of Faith In America (FIA), founded by furniture mogul Mitchell Gold.

"So what's all this got to do with us?," Gold wrote in an e-mail to us board members. "On this Tuesday [May 4] she will be coming OUT.... and speaking all her truths....how she was so close to suicide, how she now knows she can be gay and a Christian, how God created her and loves her the way she is....all the things a 14 year old kid living in a home of country western fans might need to hear. All the things voting age fans need to hear."

FIA, a national non-profit, is a North Carolina-based 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2005 with a mission to educate the public about the harm caused to LGBTQ Americans when certain church teachings are misused to justify and promote hostile attitudes and actions toward us.

Gold said Wright's life experiences drew her to the work Faith In America is doing, recognizing (LGBTQ) individuals suffer emotional, psychological and physical harm because of a societal

climate that places a religious and moral stamp of approval on prejudice and discrimination toward them.

In a letter to board members Gold wrote us expressing his delight in having Wright come on the board.

"We discussed Chely joining our board and she wants to more than ever. In fact, in her new CD she has a wonderful insert telling people about 4 organizations she cares about. I'm very proud that 3 of them are through my introductions: Faith In America, Interfaith Alliance, and GLSEN. The other is "reading, writing and rhythm", a non-profit she started that is dedicated to improving education in public schools."

In Gold's book, *Crisis: 40 Stories Revealing the Personal, Social, and Religious Pain and Trauma of Growing Up Gay in America*, he exposes the fear, isolation, depression and even suicidal feelings young LGBTQ Americans face from the time they realize they are different until they have a healthy coming out.

Since a child, Wright, who scored a #1 hit with "Single White Female" in 1999, and was named Academy of Country Music new artist of the year, knew she was gay but feared coming out for decades.

Growing up in a conservative Christian and country music environment Wright told Ms. Magazine she thought prayer would fix her.

"Early in my life I went through what I think a lot of gay people go through, thinking that I could change and pray it away." Wright's simply prayer was "Dear God, please don't let me be gay."

In *Like Me*, Wright talks about her depression, dating men in an attempt to live a "normal life," (Wright has been romantically linked to country star Brad Paisley along with a number of other celebrities in the past) and a suicide attempt in the wake of the break-up with a woman she describes as the "love of my life."

Wright has been on the country music scene since 1994, and professionally she worried about her career as an out lesbian, stating, "No one like me in country music has ever admitted his or her homosexuality." While it is true that k.d. lang was an out lesbian in country music, she eventually moved out of the genre into Pop,

leaving many to speculate she did so because of her sexual orientation.

For years, speculations abounded about Wright's sexual orientation and have always dogged her.

"You know, people talk about you...They wonder if you're, you know, gay or something like that....You know, that's not cool, if you've chosen to live that kind of lifestyle. Fans won't have it. This industry won't allow it. This is country music. It's about God and country and family. People don't approve of that kind of deviant behavior. It's a sin," John Rich of country duo Big & Rich stated, advising Wright not to publicly disclose her sexual orientation.

Not only did fans speculate about Wright's sexual orientation, so, too, did many who worked with her. In wanting to obtain a first-hand account on Wright I asked my neighbors who once worked in the industry.

"I don't know much at all about Chely Wright. However, my husband knows a bit! He worked with her at one point. He says that she was always "open" to the people who worked with her—or at least that they knew she was a lesbian—and that he has known for 16 years or so. In his opinion, at that time it hurt her career because many of the people she worked with (musicians playing with her) were "devout" Christians who didn't like her or the way she lived, and only played with her because it was a paycheck. He said she was the butt of many jokes on tour buses."

Wright told People.com, "Nothing in my life has been more magical than the moment I decided to come out," acknowledging her self-acceptance was a hard and lonesome road traveled.

Wright might lose some old friends, but she'll also make new ones, one of whom is Gold.

"Last night [May 3] we had a quiet dinner with her and her sister. She's nervous but ready. It was about the most perfect evening for her.... She left being so much at peace with herself," Gold shared with us board members.

I look forward to meeting her at our May 21 board meeting.



LETTER

Plea to the president

The following letter is part of the "Stories from the Frontlines: Letters to President Barack Obama" campaign, a new media campaign designed to underscore the urgent need for congressional action and presidential leadership in the fight to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

Dear Mr. President,

My name is Tracey Cooper-Harris. I served in the Army for 12 years, reaching the rank of sergeant. As a soldier and a non-commissioned officer (NCO), I performed my duties with honor and distinction. I was lauded by my peers and superiors for going above and beyond the status quo to complete the mission.

And, I am gay.

I lived in constant fear serving under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT)." I was always looking over my shoulder, censoring what I said and keeping as much physical distance as possible between my military life and my personal life.

Even with this vigilance, I was found out by some male "friends" at my first duty assignment. I was just 19 years old. The deal was simple: Perform sexual favors and my secret was safe.

I had a choice: Report these men for "sexual harassment/cohesion" and end my military career or submit to their demands.

Despite the military's "zero tolerance" policy on sexual harassment, it doesn't apply to those forced in the closet under DADT. I was sexually blackmailed and just a teenager.



Tracey Cooper-Harris.

At that time, as well as other times during my military service, I had seen friends discharged under DADT who were in similar situations. My friends were discharged, while their perpetrators were given a slap on the wrist.

The signal from command was clear: being gay was a far more serious offense in the military than sexually harassing a fellow service member. I ultimately chose what I believed was the best decision for me at the time. I let these men have their way with me in exchange for their silence.

I am not proud of what I did, but I loved my job too much to let it destroy my career before

it had even started.

My decision didn't come without consequences. I was eventually diagnosed with an STD which could potentially lead to cervical cancer later in life.

I, frankly, am still ashamed of what I had to do to stay in the Army. I wasn't discharged under DADT, but left because of it. I continue to attend counseling sessions provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for what I went through. The memories still come back to haunt me some 16 years later.

I don't want to see other service members go through what I went through. And unfortunately, this will continue to happen as long as DADT is law.

As long as a recruit or military member meets or exceeds the criteria for military service, let them serve. A bullet doesn't discriminate because of a person's race, gender identity, sex, religion or sexual orientation, so why does the U.S. military continue to do so?

The time to repeal DADT is long overdue. Please, Mr. President, do the right thing.

Respectfully yours,
Former Sgt. Tracey L. Cooper-Harris
United States Army

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

Community Marketing, Inc.

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



HAVING A BALL

WCT talks with Lucie Arnaz, who's producing *An Evening with Lucille Ball* (based on her mother's life). See page 17.

MOVIES

The Wright stuff?
Page 16.



SPORTS

The puck stops here.
Page 22.

Photo by Larry Palm



THEATER

Showing 'Heart.'
Page 15.

Photo by Jeff Pines



Dancin' Feats

BY ALICIA WILSON

The vibrancy and life of the Chicago dance community comes from the deep passion that many artists possess to share their art with the entire community of this city. The artists, companies and venues being showcasing this month certainly contribute to the expansion of awareness about dance to the larger community, and do so with innovation and excellence. The Dance COLEctive, Molly Shannahan/Mad Shak and the Joel Hall Dance Center all have different approaches to this same idea of furthering the access to dance in Chicago. Take a look at what they are up to in the month of May!

In the past 14 years, **The Dance COLEctive** (TDC) has contributed to the support of 17 choreographers, 47 dancers and 54 collaborating artists, many of them Illinois artists. The company continues this support with COLEctive Notions, a concert featuring the work of some of the company members of TDC, allowing new voices to be heard in the dance community. The choreographers are mentored by TDC Artistic Director Margi Cole, who comments on this mentorship process, "I have the opportunity to rehearse with these dancers and reap the benefits of their contributions to my own work on a regular basis. Now they have the opportunity to have the same exchange with each other and a little guidance from me. All they have to do is make the work and the company takes care of the rest of the concert production, allowing them to focus just on developing their work. It is my great pleasure to support them in this way."

The pieces being presented by five of the women in TDC make up a diverse range of topics. Maggie Koller explores the concept of "money" in *The Fabric* (working title), featuring recorded and live improvised music by AM Brother. Mon Confort has Donnette Cannonie exploring the notion that, despite the fact that we all deal with loss, insecurity and vulnerability, none of

The Dance COLEctive.
Photo by
William
Frederking



us is actually alone. Jessica Post is using two paintings by the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky as a starting point for her trio *Harmonies*. In *Instrumental*, Olivia May is creating movement from the interplay between the movement of dancers and the "choreography" a sound score imposes on musicians and their instruments. Molly Grimm-Leasure comments on the starting ideas for *Forgiving My Secrets*, "we've all done something in our lives that we're not proud of, but do these actions truly define whether or not we are bad people? No matter the answer, how do we forgive ourselves in the end?" Also on the bill is a work by Cole from January, *Taking Hold*.

The DanceCOLEctive presents COLEctive Notions will take place at Links Hall, 3435 N. Sheffield, 2nd floor. 8 p.m. May 21-22, 7 p.m. May 23; \$18, \$14 students. To purchase tickets visit www.brownpapertickets.com/event/102739. For more information, call 773-281-0824 or visit www.dancecollective.com.

The Joel Hall Dance Center (JHDC) is a place where the community can come together and experience dance. Founded in 1976, the center currently offers over 150 classes a week for both adults and children, from beginner to profession, in an array of disciplines. Just offering a wide variety of classes is not enough for this center. Part of the JHDC mission is to "Reach out

to the community, targeting those who would not otherwise be exposed to the arts by providing performances, classes both with in-school outreach and after-school dance programs along with local, national, and international performances," according to the company's website, www.JoelHall.org. The programs offered at JHDC support this mission to provide arts access to all, regardless of level, age or income.

One such program is The JHDC Dance Stimulus Program, which allows those currently without income to continue to be involved in dancing. This two part program offers adults Unemployed Workers In Transition, which discounts the single class rate to \$8, and families the Unemployed Families in Transition, which gives participants 25 percent off the normal class term. This is a great program that makes a conscious effort to provide dance to the community.

Joel Hall Dance Center is at 5965 N. Clark. Classes are offered at various times seven days a week. Call 773-293-0900 or visit www.joelhall.org/classes.html.

Molly Shannahan/Mad Shak "supports innovation and collaboration through the development and presentation of dance performances and other programs that engage the public in a deeper understanding and appreciation of the creative process," according to Madshak.com. This company will soon further the presentation

and engagement of dance to the public through a performance at Epiphany church, one of the up and coming "non-traditional" dance venues popping up in Chicago. Molly Shannahan/Mad Shak will present two weekends of two separate works—the solo *My Name Is A Blackbird* and the ensemble piece *Stamina Of Curiosity*.

Shannahan describes *Blackbird* as a negotiation between knowing and not-knowing, planning and spontaneity, curiosity and control. The hour-long solo performance is live composed to the backdrop of original music by three composers, including songwriter Andrew Bird. Shannahan's process for *Blackbird* involved collaboration with seven Chicago-based artists including composers Bird, Mark Booth and Dave Pavkovic, whose scores for *Blackbird* were supported by Meet the Composer's Commissioning Music/USA program. Shannahan provided the composers with identical handmade boxes filled with associative objects, images, video, text and a scent to serve as a common basis of inspiration for the three distinct original compositions that come together for the piece.

Stamina Of Curiosity is not the title of a single dance but a frame for extended movement research in both solo and ensemble work. Stemming from the discoveries of *Blackbird*, Shannahan explores live composition with an ensemble as well as the relationship between observers and the observed. Shannahan asks these questions in the continuing process of developing the work, How can I/we become ever more attuned to the shifts that occur in us when being observed? How can performance inspire an awareness that the potency of both artist and audience goes beyond appearance and cannot be captured by a reductive vocabulary?

Molly Shannahan/Mad Shak presents *Blackbird/Stamina* at Epiphany Church, 201 S. Ashland. Program A (*Blackbird*) is May 13-16 at 6 p.m.; Program B (*Stamina*) is May 20-23 at 6 p.m. The cost is \$50/\$35 students for both programs or \$30/\$20. For more information, call 773-425-2506 or visit www.madshak.com.

"October 25, 2002. It's the day I learned I have HIV. It's also the day I learned I have the most amazing friends and family. I wanted to hide away from the world—but they wouldn't let me. They helped keep me going. Keep me moving. And keep me living.

These days, I'm feeling good. And to make sure it stays that way, I'm always reading up on treatment options. When I learned that LEXIVA could reduce the amount of HIV in my blood, I asked my doctor about it.

LEXIVA has been part of my combination therapy for just over a year. And while I can't speak for everyone who uses it, I know LEXIVA is working great for me. My viral load is down and my T-cell counts are up. My friends, family, and I couldn't be happier with my results."*

*Not actual patient testimonial. Based on compilation of stories. Individual results may vary. By prescription only.

I have HIV.

I am cherished.

Models used for illustrative purposes only.

LEXIVA is indicated in combination with other antiretroviral agents for the treatment of HIV infection.

- The PI-experienced-patient study was not large enough to reach a definitive conclusion that LEXIVA/ritonavir and lopinavir/ritonavir are clinically equivalent
- Once-daily administration of LEXIVA plus ritonavir is not recommended for PI-experienced patients or any pediatric patients

LEXIVA does not cure HIV or prevent passing HIV to others.

Please see Important Patient Information below and on the following page. You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

- You should not take LEXIVA if you have had an allergic reaction to LEXIVA or AGENERASE® (amprenavir).
- High blood sugar, diabetes or worsening of diabetes, and bleeding in hemophiliacs have occurred in some patients taking protease inhibitors.

- When you start taking HIV medicines, your immune system may get stronger and could begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body, such as pneumonia, herpes virus, or tuberculosis. If you have new symptoms after starting your HIV medicines, be sure to tell your doctor.
- Changes in body fat may occur in some patients taking antiretroviral therapy. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.
- Skin rashes can occur in patients taking LEXIVA. Rarely, rashes were severe or life threatening.
- Opportunistic infections can develop when you have HIV and your immune system is weak. It is very important that you see your healthcare provider regularly while you are taking LEXIVA to discuss any side effects or concerns.
- Kidney stones have been reported in patients taking LEXIVA. Tell your healthcare provider if you have pain in your side, blood in your urine, or pain when you urinate.
- Most common side effects in clinical studies were diarrhea, headache, nausea, rash, and vomiting. In most cases, these side effects did not cause people to stop taking their medicine.

Ask your doctor if **LEXIVA** is right for you.
Learn more at www.LexivaNews.com

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700 MG TABLETS

BY YOUR SIDE.

DRUG INTERACTIONS

- LEXIVA should not be taken with: AGENERASE[®] (amprenavir), Halcion[®] (triazolam), ergot medications (Cafergot[®], Migranal[®], D.H.E. 45[®], and others), Propulsid[®] (cisapride), Versed[®] (midazolam), Orap[®] (pimozide), Zocor[®] (simvastatin), Mevacor[®] (lovastatin), Rifadin[®] (rifampin), Rescriptor[®] (delavirdine mesylate), or St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). If you are taking Norvir[®] (ritonavir), you should not take Tambocor[®] (flecainide) or Rythmol[®] (propafenone hydrochloride).
- Serious and/or life-threatening events could occur between LEXIVA and other medications, including Cordarone[®] (amiodarone), lidocaine (intravenous only), Elavil[®] (amitriptyline HCl), and Tofranil[®] (imipramine pamoate), tricyclic antidepressants, and Quinaglute[®] (quinidine).
- Women who use birth control pills should choose a different kind of birth control. The use of LEXIVA with Norvir (ritonavir) in combination with birth control pills may hurt your liver. Also, birth control pills may not work if you take LEXIVA or LEXIVA with Norvir. Talk to your healthcare provider about choosing the right birth control for you.
- Patients taking Viagra[®] (sildenafil citrate) or LEVITRA[®] (vardenafil HCl) with LEXIVA may be at increased risk of side effects.
- This list of drug interactions is not complete. Be sure to tell your healthcare

provider about all medicines you are taking or plan to take, including over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and herbals.

RESISTANCE

- Missing or skipping doses of your medicine may make it easier for the virus to mutate and multiply. Your medicines may not work as well against a mutated virus, and you may become cross-resistant to other HIV medicines. It's important to take your medicine exactly as prescribed.



SAVE ON YOUR MEDICATIONS.

Ask your doctor about the Patient Savings Card or visit www.mysupportcard.com to learn how to save on your out-of-pocket expenses. Subject to eligibility. Restrictions apply.



If you don't have prescription coverage and can't afford your medicines, visit GSKforYou.com or call the ViiV Healthcare Response Center 1-877-844-8872



PATIENT INFORMATION**LEXIVA®**

(lex-EE-vah)

(fosamprenavir calcium)**Tablets and Oral Suspension**

Read the Patient Information that comes with LEXIVA before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment. It is important to remain under a healthcare provider's care while taking LEXIVA. Do not change or stop treatment without first talking with your healthcare provider. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about LEXIVA.

What is the most important information I should know about LEXIVA?

LEXIVA can cause dangerous and life-threatening interactions if taken with certain other medicines. Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

- Some medicines cannot be taken at all with LEXIVA.
- Some medicines will require dose changes if taken with LEXIVA.
- Some medicines will require close monitoring if you take them with LEXIVA.

Know all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Keep a list of the medicines you take. Show this list to all your healthcare providers and pharmacists anytime you get a new medicine or refill. Your healthcare providers and pharmacists must know all the medicines you take. They will tell you if you can take other medicines with LEXIVA. Do not start any new medicines while you are taking LEXIVA without talking with your healthcare provider or pharmacist. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that can interact with LEXIVA.

What is LEXIVA?

LEXIVA is a medicine you take by mouth to treat HIV infection. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). LEXIVA belongs to a class of anti-HIV medicines called protease inhibitors. LEXIVA is always used with other anti-HIV medicines. When used in combination therapy, LEXIVA may help lower the amount of HIV found in your blood, raise CD4+ (T) cell counts, and keep your immune system as healthy as possible, so it can help fight infection. However, LEXIVA does not work in all patients with HIV.

LEXIVA does not:

- cure HIV infection or AIDS. We do not know if LEXIVA will help you live longer or have fewer of the medical problems (opportunistic infections) that people get with HIV or AIDS. Opportunistic infections are infections that develop because the immune system is weak. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections. It is very important that you see your healthcare provider regularly while you are taking LEXIVA. The long-term effects of LEXIVA are not known.
- lower the risk of passing HIV to other people through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood. For your health and the health of others, it is important to always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood. Never use or share dirty needles.

LEXIVA has not been fully studied in children under the age of 2 or in adults over the age of 65.

Who should not take LEXIVA?**Do not take LEXIVA if you:**

- are taking certain other medicines. Read the section "What is the most important information I should know about LEXIVA?" Do not take the following medicines* with LEXIVA. You could develop serious or life-threatening problems.
 - HALCION® (triazolam; used for insomnia)
 - Ergot medicines: dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine, and methylergonovine such as CAFERGOT®, MIGRANAL®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotrate maleate, METHERGINE®, and others (used for migraine headaches)
 - PROPULSID® (cisapride), used for certain stomach problems
 - VERSED® (midazolam), used for sedation
 - ORAP® (pimozide), used for Tourette's disorder
- are allergic to LEXIVA or any of its ingredients. The active ingredient is fosamprenavir calcium. See the end of this leaflet for a list of all the ingredients in LEXIVA.
- are allergic to AGENERASE (amprenavir).

You should not take AGENERASE (amprenavir) and LEXIVA at the same time.

There are other medicines you should not take if you are taking LEXIVA and NORVIR® (ritonavir) together. You could develop serious or life-threatening problems. Tell your healthcare provider about all medicines you are taking before you begin taking LEXIVA and NORVIR (ritonavir) together.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking LEXIVA?

Before taking LEXIVA, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions including if you:

- are pregnant or planning to become pregnant. It is not known if LEXIVA can harm your unborn baby. You and your healthcare provider will need to decide if LEXIVA is right for you. If you use LEXIVA while you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about how you can be on the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry.
- are breastfeeding. You should not breastfeed if you are HIV-positive because of the chance of passing the HIV virus to your baby through your milk. Also, it is not known if LEXIVA can pass into your breast milk and if it can harm your baby. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.
- have liver problems. You may be given a lower dose of LEXIVA or LEXIVA may not be right for you.
- have kidney problems
- have diabetes. You may need dose changes in your insulin or other diabetes medicines.
- have hemophilia
- are allergic to sulfa medicines

Before taking LEXIVA, tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. LEXIVA can cause dangerous and life-threatening interactions if taken with certain other medicines. You may need dose changes in some of your medicines or closer monitoring with some medicines if you also take LEXIVA (see "What is the most important information I should know about LEXIVA."). Know all the medicines that you take and keep a list of them with you to show healthcare providers and pharmacists.

Women who use birth control pills should choose a different kind of contraception. The use of LEXIVA with NORVIR (ritonavir) in combination with birth control pills may be harmful to your liver. The use of LEXIVA with or without NORVIR may decrease the effectiveness of birth control pills. Talk to your healthcare provider about choosing an effective contraceptive.

How should I take LEXIVA?

- Take LEXIVA exactly as your healthcare provider prescribed.
- Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of LEXIVA at any one time. Do not change your dose or stop taking LEXIVA without talking with your healthcare provider.
- You can take LEXIVA Tablets with or without food.
- Adults should take LEXIVA Oral Suspension without food.

- Pediatric patients should take LEXIVA Oral Suspension with food. If vomiting occurs within 30 minutes after dosing, the dose should be repeated.
- Shake LEXIVA Oral Suspension vigorously before each use.
- When your supply of LEXIVA or other anti-HIV medicine starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. The amount of HIV virus in your blood may increase if one or more of the medicines are stopped, even for a short time.
- Stay under the care of a healthcare provider while using LEXIVA.
- It is important that you do not miss any doses. If you miss a dose of LEXIVA by more than 4 hours, wait and take the next dose at the regular time. However, if you miss a dose by fewer than 4 hours, take your missed dose right away. Then take your next dose at the regular time.
- If you take too much LEXIVA, call your healthcare provider or poison control center right away.

What should I avoid while taking LEXIVA?

- Do not use certain medicines while you are taking LEXIVA. See "What is the most important information I should know about LEXIVA" and "Who should not take LEXIVA?"
- Do not breastfeed. See "Before taking LEXIVA, tell your healthcare provider". Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.
- Avoid doing things that can spread HIV infection since LEXIVA doesn't stop you from passing the HIV infection to others.
- Do not share needles or other injection equipment.
- Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes or razor blades.
- Do not have any kind of sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

What are the possible side effects of LEXIVA?

LEXIVA may cause the following side effects:

- skin rash. Skin rashes, some with itching, have happened in patients taking LEXIVA. Swelling of the face, lips, and tongue (angioedema) has also been reported. Tell your healthcare provider if you get a rash or develop facial swelling after starting LEXIVA.
- diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia). Some patients had diabetes before taking LEXIVA while others did not. Some patients may need changes in their diabetes medicine. Others may need a new diabetes medicine.
- increased bleeding problems in some patients with hemophilia.
- worse liver disease. Patients with liver problems, including hepatitis B or C, are more likely to get worse liver disease when they take anti-HIV medicines like LEXIVA.
- changes in blood tests. Some people have changes in blood tests while taking LEXIVA. These include increases seen in liver function tests and blood fat levels, and decreases in white blood cells. Your healthcare provider may do regular blood tests to see if LEXIVA is affecting your body.
- changes in body fat. These changes have happened in patients taking antiretroviral medicines like LEXIVA. The changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.
- kidney stones have been reported in some patients taking LEXIVA. If you develop signs or symptoms of kidney stones (pain in your side, blood in your urine, pain when you urinate) tell your healthcare provider right away.

Common side effects of LEXIVA are nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Tell your healthcare provider about any side effects that bother you or that won't go away.

This list of side effects of LEXIVA is not complete. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store LEXIVA?

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THEATER REVIEW

Jade Heart

Playwright: Will Cooper

At: Chicago Dramatists, 1105 W. Chicago

Phone: 312-633-0630; \$25-\$30

Runs through: May 30

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Will Cooper likes to see women cry. Or maybe just the two women at the center of his latest play, making its world premiere at Chicago Dramatists. To be sure, one of the lachrymose ladies is foreign-born Chinese, and western literature boasts a long tradition of suffering orientals, from Madame Butterfly to Miss Saigon. But the other weeper is a full-blooded Yankee—lineage venerated for its resiliency—whose waterworks nevertheless flow like the mighty Yangtze.

First some historical background: In 1979, the People's Republic of China (aka our enemy, the communist mainland), sought to resolve a Malthusian crisis by imposing legal penalties on families producing too many offspring. Since boys are valued over girls almost universally,



Jade Heart.
Photo by
Jeff Pines

this led to a surplus of unwanted female infants consigned to orphanages or simply left to die of neglect. The baby named "Little Jade" by her American adoptive mother (and don'tcha just love those cute exotic object-based names?) was found, abandoned, in a rural marketplace, the only clue to her progenitors a pendant cut to match its mirror half should the wearers someday reunite.

Real-life Chinese-American citizens might wonder why a young adult, raised in the comfort of a middle-class home in the U.S., should pine for a cultural heritage so ill-disposed toward her welfare, even granting the nature of youngsters blessed with plenty of contemplative time to question their genealogy. But in order for long-lost Jade to continue speculating on the circum-

stances of her birth, her rescuer must persist in withholding that information—in this case, out of a perverted notion of parenthood that rejects the inevitability of children ultimately growing up and leaving home. Cooper did not intend for his play to be about a controlling guardian's attempt to imprison her forlorn charge, however, and so these disturbing themes are softened by flashbacks and fantasy-soliloquies, Peking-opera pageantry, Brechtian masks and the aforementioned floods of tears.

Christine Bunuan and Ginger Lee McDermott march through their 90 minutes of sudsy chronologically-muddled paces with heroic stamina, while Eliza Shin, Gordon Chow and Melissa Canciller lend refreshing individuality to the various—and far more interesting—auxiliary personnel, all displaying pristine Mandarin pronunciation contributed by dialect coach Cleo Ngiam. But while audiences eager to join the playwright in sentimentalizing the (yawn) Mysterious East will find Jade Heart a satisfying three-hankie blubber, ultimately its overwrought emotional tone eclipses whatever discoveries may have once lay in its premise.

THEATER REVIEW

The Drowsy Chaperone

Score: Lisa Lambert and Greg Morrison;

Book: Bob Martin and Don McKellar

At: Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Lincolnshire

Phone: 847-634-0200; \$45

Runs through: June 27

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

There's no denying the brainlessness of most Broadway musicals from the 1920s (excepting the groundbreaking Show Boat, of course). Few shows from that era get revived with any kind of frequency, except perhaps No, No, Nannette or Oh, Kay! (but even these shows' books have been doctored for modern tastes).

Yet the hit 2006 Broadway show The Drowsy Chaperone turns the liabilities of 1920s musi-

cals into winning golden assets. Playwrights Bob Martin and Don McKellar cleverly layer on a running commentary and arch annotation that is both scathing and sentimental toward the fictional "classic" wedding musical The Drowsy Chaperone.

It's the unnamed and very fey "Man in Chair" (a more mature take on the role by James Harms) who does the hilarious dishing while playing the show's 1928 original cast recording by the composing team of Gable and Stein (actually a gloriously pastiche 1920s score by Lisa Lambert and Greg Morrison). And as the show comes vividly to life in the Man's dingy living room, both his spirits (and audience's) are lifted exponentially in the Marriott Theatre's sparkling production.

With The Drowsy Chaperone, director/choreographer Marc Robin shows once again why he is the master of re-conceiving proscenium shows into the Marriott's challenging theater-in-the-round space. So what if Robin drags out the show by shoehorning in an intermission and aggrandizing the tap dance sequences? Musical comedy fans will be in heaven by all the dancing dexterity of Tyler Hanes as the groom Robert Martin and Andrew Lupp as his best man.

As the Broadway star Janet Van de Graph, Tari Kelly might divide some people (especially those who have scrupulously memorized Sutton Foster's performance in The Drowsy Chaperone's 2006 Tony Awards clip repeatedly played at the bar Sidetrack). Kelly brings to mind a Carol Burnett-type spoofing a gorgeous leading lady instead of embodying one, no matter how talented she may be going en pointe and skillfully

switching between her belting and soprano head voice in the song Show Off.

Linda Balgord brings a welcome drunken wooziness (sometimes reminiscent of Liza Minnelli) to the title character, while Adam Pelty indulges in some hilarious Latin lothario stereotypes as Adolpho (just watch how he handles his straying lock of white hair).

Other top-notch elements of the show include the gorgeous production values and the rest of the cast who are all comical and vocal powerhouses (special mention for the acrobatics of real-life brothers Adrian and Alexander Aguilar as the show-biz struck gangsters).

But most importantly, the Marriott's Drowsy Chaperone confirms the show's message of how uplifting musical theater can be for those are feeling down in the dumps. This truly is a show to turn any frown upside down.

Online This Week:

—Love of the Nightingale

—Incognito

www.windycitymediagroup.com

SPOTLIGHT



Find out what secret societies and monsters lurk in subterranean London when Lifeline Theatre presents the world premiere of *Neverwhere*, Robert Kaulzaric's adaptation of Neil Gaiman's best-selling novel. *Neverwhere* plays at Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood. Performances run 7:30 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 4 and 8 p.m. Saturdays and 4 p.m. Sundays until June 20. Tickets are \$30; \$25 for seniors and \$15 for students. Call 773-761-4477 or visit www.lifelinetheatre.com. Photo of injured woman Door (Katie McLean) pulling Richard Mayhew (Robert Kaulzaric) down into a London underworld in Lifeline Theatre's world premiere of "Neverwhere" by Suzanne Plunkett



CRITICS' PICKS

The Brother/Sister Plays, Steppenwolf Theatre, through May 23. Fresh, original voice Tarell Alvin McCraney, who is Black and gay, has created a tale both modern and mythological told in a dazzling display of primal theater: music, movement and community storytelling. Don't miss! JA

The Pigeons, Walkabout Theater at Swim Cafe, through June 7. Joe Zarrow's site-specific farce takes aim at both image-conscious yuppies and self-righteous green hipsters with equal and uproarious zeal. Head out to Chicago's West Town neighborhood for a good laugh at gentrification. SCM

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, Noble Fool Theatricals, St. Charles, through June 13. Director/choreographer Kevin Bellie does justice to this 2005 quirky musical comedy that cleverly incorporates improv to build suspense and inspire a load of laughs. SCM

Welcome To Arroyo's, American Theatre Company, through May 16. It's not an elaborate entrance like Chad Deity's—Kristoffer Diaz was only a college boy when he took audiences on this hip-hop tour of the Lower East Side—but the glow of stardom on the horizon is unmistakable. MSB

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THEATER

Sweet Tea comes to life

BY YASMIN NAIR

Sweet Tea, a new production of E. Patrick Johnson's one-man performance of the stories and lives of Black gay men in the South, began its theatrical run May 7 at the Viaduct Theatre. The piece is based on Johnson's book of the same name, a compendium of interviews with 63 subjects. The May 8 performance was preceded by a panel discussion involving several of the men. Windy City Times spoke with three of them separately by phone the day before the initial performance.

Each of them emphasized how honored they felt about being included first in the book and then in the new production. Their accounts of how they came to be where they are as Black gay men who either still live in the South or lived there for significant parts of their lives differed somewhat, as did their sense of the importance of both the book and the performances.

Duncan Teague, who speaks in a soft-spoken but very measured and authoritative way, was "born sometime in the early '60s," is a member of the Black gay spoken-word group, ADODI Muse, and an AIDS activist based in Atlanta, Ga. A performer like Johnson, he was excited about the book project because, as he put it, "We don't have enough of our histories recorded." Teague had not expected that the project would go beyond the printed word, so when he got a call from Johnson outlining his plans to take it to the stage, he was intrigued. He has since seen Sweet Tea as both a reading and as a performance, was "awestruck to hear [my] voice coming out of someone else's body. Patrick didn't just get my voice, he got me." Laughing, he continued, "There was a little professional jealousy there. But really, it was so honoring, to know that what I said was worth putting on stage, that he gave it that much energy and time." Speaking of the transition from Johnson's original reading to a theatrical production, Teague said, "I'm overjoyed that what was a man on a stool becomes the full production."

"C.C." (who did not use his full name for the interview) was born in Greenville, Miss., in 1961 and now teaches dance at a university in Alabama. "C.C." praised Johnson's work as "quite brilliant—it shows why people like Patrick should continue to push the envelope." He went on to explain that at the time of the interviews, in 2004, the county was "not pleasant" and that "people were very vocal about what they thought about homosexuality, even in liberal places." He saw Sweet Tea as indicative of the ways the conversation around identity in the

US, which he regards as an old and unproductive one, could be re-imagined: "[Sweet Tea] allows someone to see us as whole people. I discovered at 13 that the least of my problems was about being Black and gay. [Life is] about being health and whole, finding how you get to these places where you get your wholeness and power not through race."

The South is also perceived in stereotypes about repression, especially in terms of homosexuality but "C.C." said that it is "quite the opposite. It's about owning who you are no matter who you are. Homosexuality is always there, and people will say, 'that's just who they are.' In a strange way, it allows you to be more so yourself than in Northern places where people get to act out their characters in some sort of dive. Eccentricity always a part of the make-up of the South."

But if the South is about "owning who you are," why would he only use his initials? The question provoked a loud peal of laughter and then the words, "That's part of the drama as a Southerner; that's part of the drama, the tea, honey! [As Johnson explains in his book, "tea" is also another word for gossip.] You don't want to spill the tea, you want to keep the tea!"

Read an interview with yet another book subject—Harold Mays, Jr.—in the expanded version of this article that's online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Sweet Tea runs through May 29 at the Viaduct Theatre, 3111 N. Western.



KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Just Wright; Letters to Juliet; film note

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

The summer blockbuster movie season is upon us with a batch of sequels ready to satiate avid moviegoers but this week Hollywood is also offering up a couple of nice romantic dramas pitched to their newly rediscovered wedge audience—teenage fan girls, their moms, grandmas and, of course, their gay doppelgangers (and we know who we are).

Both **Just Wright** (an urban romance starring lesbian favorite Queen Latifah and rapper Common) and the lush **Letters to Juliet** (with Amanda Seyfried, Gael Garcia Bernal, Vanessa Redgrave and British newcomer Christopher Egan as the resident male eye candy) are about as fresh as a bouquet of wilted spring flowers. However, it's not inventiveness or originality that makes both movies so endearing and welcome in the coming season of movie cacophony. It's the familiarity and old-fashioned-ness of both that is the key to their appeal.

In **Just Wright** Latifah plays Leslie Wright (hence the cutie-poo title), a physical therapist who dates on a regular basis but can't find a man to settle down with. However, her cousin, Morgan (Paula Patton, who played the lesbian teacher in *Precious*), is a gorgeous man-trap determined to snag pro basketball player Scott McKnight (Common) and jump into the good life in one fell swoop.

But it's Leslie who "meets cute" with Scott at a gas station and gets a coveted invitation to his birthday party. Naturally, she brings along Morgan and, before you can say "Ivana Trump," the hunter has captured her prey. When Scott hurts his knee and needs reconditioning he hires a comely physical therapist, making Morgan see red. "Some women have gaydar, I have 'hodar,'"

Morgan tells Leslie, insisting that she come on-board to do the job. Soon Morgan's bored while staying home, and the relationship begins to teeter—just as love vibes and hormones are rising between Scott and Leslie, who has been nursing a secret desire for him all along.

Romantic complications ensue on the bumpy road to love with plenty of action on the basketball court thrown in for sports fans as well. Latifah, as always, brings an enormous amount of goodwill and humor to every scene. She's become adept at making the thinnest movie work (remember *Last Holiday*?) and audiences respond overwhelmingly to her. She has enough good chemistry with Common to make you believe that she's really falling for him and, boy, is he easy on the eyes. Patton does what she can with her two-dimensional part and looks sensational while Pam Grier, Phylicia Rashad and others are on hand to offer support in tissue-thin roles.

Letters to Juliet, the other romantic drama on tap this week, gives us Amanda Seyfried, who tries to fill the void left by Reese Witherspoon. (Where did she go?) Seyfried now returns to the lush romance territory of *Mamma Mia* (sans the Abba songs). She plays Sophie, a Manhattanite who travels to Italy with fiancé Victor (Bad Education's Bernal) for a "pre-honeymoon." But he's distracted by business involving the impending opening of his Italian restaurant back home so Sophie heads to the shrine of Juliet, where lovers have left letters looking for answers to their broken-hearted queries for centuries. A researcher for the *New Yorker* who wants to write for the magazine, Sophie senses a story when she discovers that several Italian Ann Landers are answering the letters.

The group invites Sophie to join them and when Sophie digs out a letter caught behind a stone in the shrine written decades earlier by the lovelorn Claire (Redgrave), she decides to answer it. Soon Claire, now widowed, turns up along with her grandson, Charlie (Egan, who looks like a young Heath Ledger), an uptight crank who excoriates Sophie for kicking up the dust of granny's memories. But Sophie and Claire are determined to track down Claire's old beau, Lorenzo, and the picture becomes a travelogue through Italy's gorgeous countryside. Of course, as the quest continues Charlie slowly begins to thaw and our gorgeous blond heroine is faced with a romantic Sophie's choice.

Though the movie, directed by Gary Winnick (*Bride Wars*), is a bath in schmaltz from beginning to end, it has Redgrave, who brings instant depth to the picture. And when Redgrave, the aging, still-beautiful Juliet, meets up again with her one-time Romeo and we see that it is her real-life love, Franco Nero—the passion between the two is palpable and practically leaps off the screen. This canny bit of casting on the part of the producers is the movie's greatest triumph.

Film note:

—Cinema/Chicago, the folks that bring you the Chicago International Film Festival, are back for the **7th Annual Summer Screening International Program**, a slate of 19 free movies to be shown on a weekly basis through Sept. 8 at the Cultural Arts Center in the Claudia Cassidy Theater, 77 E. Randolph. Films are shown Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m., and this year most will have a 2 p.m. Saturday matinee screening as well. The series offers filmgoers a chance to experience little-known foreign films in a theatrical setting. Highlights include *My Year Without Sex from Australia* and the period noir *The Signal* from Argentina. The 2002 queer-themed biopic *Madame Sata* from Brazil is on the bill for Wed., May 12, at 6:30 p.m. and yours truly will conduct the post-screening discussion. See www.cinemachicago.org.

Check out my archived reviews at www.windy-city-times.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter Web site.

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NUNN ON ONE

We love Lucie

BY JERRY NUNN

Lucie Arnaz, the daughter of Lucille Ball, grew up on television and stage. She is producing a new show, *An Evening with Lucille Ball*, for everyone who loves Lucy!

Windy City Times: Hi, Lucie. Was this a labor of love writing and directing this piece?

Lucie Arnaz: It was. I have great respect for this woman, Suzanne LaRusch—how hard she has worked at this character and this play. She has been working on it for the last 10 years. She has been an amazing performer. To be able to capture the essence of my mother, not only as the Lucie Ricardo character, which she has been doing brilliantly for decades, but to capture her as the person Lucille Ball.

WCT: So how did it come together?

LA: She wrote this piece and it needed work, but it was really rich with a lot of great stuff. She is so good in it that I thought she needed some help. She was struggling to have it put up in a professional way. My husband and I offered to help her do that. I was putting her together with a director friend of mine. He got a play with Jane Fonda on Broadway and I lost him. She wanted me to direct it and I decided it would be fun.

WCT: Do you like directing?

LA: It was great fun and I discovered that I really liked directing. I enjoyed the experience a lot and I think I am a good director. It was kind of weird that the first thing that I am directing is a show about my mother. As Neil Simon once said to me, when I was in *They are Playing Our Song* and talking to him about writing, "Write what you know." When you are starting out in anything to do what you are best at. If you are



Lucie Arnaz.

an artist, draw, if you are a writer, write what you have experienced.

WCT: Well, I am sure you brought something to the table with this show.

LA: I actually had something to tell her about this. It is something that I know a lot about. I could give her insight about things that maybe no one else could. I just approached it like an actress with her. She has not been on stage a lot and she hasn't done as much performing. I taught her to trust the words since we had written a really good script.

WCT: Trust is everything onstage.

LA: She is putting in since a magnificent performance with this. I am so proud of her work. I am hoping it gets around so everyone can see it.

WCT: I heard it really goes behind the scenes concerning Lucy's relationship with Desi.

LA: Absolutely. It is a very clever concept because it takes place live and is a question and answer that took place one night. When someone asks her a question then she would start to answer something and then drift. You can tell by lighting or going to blackout suddenly the setting will be in a different era. Home movie footage can come up in the background that we know is really in her mind. We use theatricalities as she goes back and tells about when she is born in New York and the magic of the fairgrounds. We tried to capture that so she could be at any place at any time in her mind.

WCT: So no big set is used in this production.

LA: No, there is very little to schlep around. There is a small dressing room that can be set up very easily. There is a tall directors chair, a table, a glass of water and a screen. It is all on computer. We have one technician that travels with the show. We call it here "our little show in a box." She can go anywhere with it and she has. She has played small intimate little playhouses and she has played large performing arts centers. I try not to put the show in bigger than 1,500-seat theaters. It all works better when people can see her up close. From far away you can't tell how amazing she really is. I like the audience to be really tight with her.

WCT: Lucy had so many gay fans. Do you know any of her thoughts on them?

LA: I have been asked that a lot but I can't remember her ever specifying between gay versus straight versus old versus young. She used to say, "I babysat four generations and I am darn proud!" She loved that people through the ages no matter who they were, no matter what the business they were in, that all races and colors and types of people would come up to her and say "I have watched you all my life." My mother didn't have an attitude between gay or straight. Everybody was the same to her. She had plenty of gay friends. She was a very savvy, smart lady and she did understand the idea that when you

get to be queen of anything that divas love a diva.

WCT: Yes, they do.

LA: She was very self-secure. She had very good self-esteem. She lived a very simple life when she was not on stage. She never tried to be a celebrity. She didn't care about that at all. She worked very hard and when she came home, she wanted to relax. She wanted to play backgammon with friends. If you could play backgammon, she didn't care if you were gay or straight or a serial killer, she would play with you!

WCT: I love that.

LA: It's the truth.

WCT: Do you want to do more musicals and maybe even direct them now?

LA: Yeah to both. I just got finished yesterday doing a week long workshop for a new version of *Ballroom* that will be called *Queen of the Stardust Ballroom*. If they get lucky this should be brought in next year starring Tyne Daly. I was playing opposite of her in the best friend role. It will be directed by Jerry Mitchell. There is a fabulous dance number in it for me and I have a couple of really fun scenes. To do eight scenes in a week you have to be pretty passionate about the material.

If someone asked me to direct a play tomorrow then I would jump at the chance, because it was great fun and I loved it. I am continuing to study and observe other people do what they do.

WCT: Are you going to be at the performance here?

LA: No. I have been to a couple of them, but now she is launched! She is out there. It is the weekend after Mother's Day so I will be here with my kids.

An Evening With Lucille Ball: Thank You for Asking, is coming to The Venue at Horseshoe Casino, 777 Casino Center, Hammond, Ind., May 16. Tickets are \$25 each; call 219-473-6060 or visit www.thevenue-chicago.com.

And 'Ciao!' Gay actor on movie, Italy

BY ANDREW DAVIS

In the highly acclaimed gay-themed movie *Ciao* (which just recently came out on DVD after premiering in 2008), hunky Italian Alessandro Calza plays, well, hunky Italian Andrea, who comes to the United States to meet up with Jeff, the best friend of a man who Andrea had been dating online—and who is now dead. (Did you get all that?) Calza called *Windy City Times* from Italy and talked about the movie, his home country and a bit more—and said some surprising things.

Windy City Times: I saw *Ciao*, and I discovered it's a very quiet movie.

Alessandro Calza: You have to take the director, Yen Tan, into account. He's been an U.S. citizen for about 12 years but he's still Asian. He was born in Malaysia and speaks Chinese, and his background is in Asian cinema. And being indie, you can be pretty much true to what you want to do; you can have your kicks. If you see people like Ang Lee, they work with studios so even if they have their own style, they still need to conform to be commercial. But that's why the movie is very quiet and the pace is pretty slow, which is probably unusual for an American gay movie.

WCT: Plus I was thinking since you're European—and there is supposedly a more laid-back approach regarding the body—that there would be nudity in the film, and there isn't. The movie is very ... tender.

AC: Let's put it this way: I think there are some similarities between Italian and Chinese culture because we're traditional; we live very close to where we were born; we rarely move;



Alessandro Calza. Photo courtesy of Calza

we're very connected to family; and community; we're traditional in terms of food; and we're reserved about sexuality. So I think that some of those ideas were channeled through the Italian character. If you look closely, Andrea (as a character) is not very Italian at all; maybe there is that "Guido" stereotype, but there is a tenderness. But I, as a persona, am completely different from Andrea; I'm totally energetic and very animated.

To find out more about Calza—including what it was like to grow up gay in Italy—visit www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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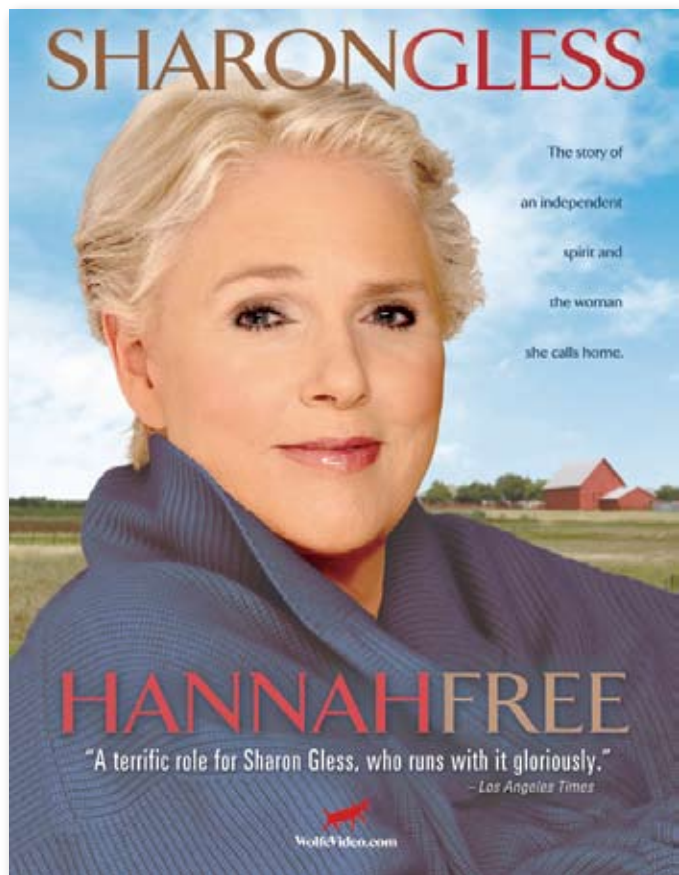
For \$100 you'll receive an A+ ticket (we also have \$50 tickets in section B) to *Three Decembers*, plus admission to the VIP After-Party! The legendary Frederica von Stade makes her last Chicago appearances in the story of a glamorous Broadway actress who reveals a shocking secret of their family's past to her two adult children facing dark challenges of their own. Join us for a private after-party at Phil Stefani's 437 Rush that includes complimentary hors d'oeuvres, wine and Chicago Opera Theater's signature drink the "Operatini".

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Multi-award winning actress Sharon Gless (Burn Notice, Queer As Folk, Cagney & Lacey) will be in Chicago for two events Saturday, June 26, Pride Weekend. She will be honored by international LGBT law enforcement members, and attend a special Chicago DVD release party for Hannah Free.

Hannah Free, an award-winning feature film starring Gless, was produced in Chicago. The story of an independent spirit and the woman she calls home, Hannah Free has played in more than 60 cities around the world and will be released by Wolfe Video in the U.S. and Canada.

Hannah Free was written by Claudia Allen and based on her stage play. It was directed by Wendy Jo Carlton and also stars Maureen Gallagher, Ann Hagemann, Kelli Strickland, Taylor Miller and Jacqui Jackson.



The Lesbian and Gay Police Association-Gay Officers Action League of Chicago will present Gless with their "Bridge to Unity" Award on Saturday, June 26, also at the Palmer House Hilton, as part of the 14th Annual International LGBT Conference for Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice Professionals, hosted this year in Chicago by LGPA/GOAL Chicago. See <http://www.goalchicago.info/2010>

See www.HannahFree.com or email info@hannahfree.com.



Gay Idol adds two new bars; finals in June

CHICAGO -Windy City Gay Idol, now in its 8th year, is halfway through this year's search for the best amateur lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) singers in the Chicago area with four more events before the semi-finals on June 5. Two new bars, North End and Berlin, join the competition in this eighth year of Gay Idol.

Windy City Gay Idol 2010 preliminary competitions are one night only at many different bar locations where as many as 20 participants sing at each venue. All contestants compete for the chance to advance to the semi-finals Saturday, June 5 at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted. Results from every preliminary, semi-final and final event come from audience votes. Votes from friends, family and audience members hopefully land them on the stage at the Finals Saturday, June 19, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted.

Premium sponsors this year are Miller Lite and Bacardi. Other co-sponsors include: American Airlines, Ravinia, Autobarn Limited, Creaoke, and Windy City Media Group.

The event is open to all amateur singers age 21 and above, regardless of sexual orientation. There is a \$10 signup fee for singers, and a \$5 fee for audience members at all preliminary events. There is a \$10 cover at the semi-finals and finals at Sidetrack.

The Windy City Gay Idol 2010 schedule:

—Thursday, May 13: Sofo bar, 4923 N. Clark, 7 p.m. sign up, 8 p.m. start.

—Tuesday, May 18: North End, 3733 N. Halsted, 8 p.m. sign up, 9 p.m. start.

*1st year this bar participates in the competition

—Sun., May 23: Berlin, 5355 N. Clark, 9 p.m. sign up, 10 p.m. start.

*1st year this bar participates in the competition

—Wed., May 26: WILD CARD, Roscoe's, 3356 N. Halsted, 9 p.m. door opens, 10 p.m. start. Invited guests plus open slots for new singers.

—Sat., June 5: SEMIFINALS, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, 1 p.m. door opens, 3 p.m. start.

—Sat., June 19: FINALS, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, 1 p.m. door, 3 p.m. start.

Complete rules and regulations at www.Windy-CityMediaGroup.com.

County honors Barber

Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas presented an award of excellence in her Chicago office to jazz singer/writer/pianist and Andersonville resident Patricia Barber, who has led her own band and released a series of highly acclaimed jazz albums. (Pappas presented the award in honor of Jazz Appreciation Month.) Barber's newest CD, The Cole Porter Mix, is available in stores and on her website, www.patriciabarber.com. She is performing Monday nights in May with her band at the Green Mill Lounge, 4802 N. Broadway. Photo of Barber (left) and Pappas by Teresa J. Potasiak



Gracie. Photo courtesy of Anti-Cruelty Society

Pet for adoption:

Diamond
Age: 6 years
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Color: Black and white
Altered: Yes

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ARTISTS

CALL FOR ARTISTS: SKOKIE ART GUILD'S 49TH ANNUAL ART FAIR. July 10 & 11, 2010. Fine art. Prizes and awards. Held on the Village Green, 5211 W. Oakton St., downtown Skokie, IL. Apply now. For applications or information: skokieart@aol.com or 847-677-8163. www.skokieartguild.org (5/5/10-8)

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INTERPRETER

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

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VIEW OF THE LAKE. Large two bedroom two bath with view of Lake. Huge living room, formal dining room, eat-in kitchen w/dishwasher. Private deck, fireplace, oak floors, remodeled. Locker and laundry in building. Off street parking available. 773-728-3566, WPIER@AOL.COM (5/26/10 -4)

SCARLET Tues., May 4



The talent pool grows as we welcome two new Windy City Gay Idol finalists to the club. Henry and Kate from Scarlet will advance to the semi-finals at Sidetrack on Sat., June 5. Photos by Kirk Williamson



calendar

Brought to you by the combined efforts of

WINDY CITY TIMES



Wed., May 12

Four Women Showcase New musical series focusing on female singer/songwriters in, around and touring thru Chicago. Each Wednesday, "Four" female performers will showcase their talents in a show. For one month, the same four performers will be featured, but will rotate and change their sets. This month Liz Snavelly, AKA LVN-MUZIQ, Diva Kai, Jess Godwin and this only Donna Frost. 7pm, Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark, www.labryschicago.com/4_women_only.htm

Share-A-Story Month Reading Gerber/Hart celebrates Share-A-Story Month with writers reading selections from their favorite stories. Participating writers include Edward Thomas-Herrera, Darwyn Jones, Dana Kay Litoff, Goldie Goldbloom, Gregg Shapiro, and Robert Klein Engler. 7pm, 773-381-8030, Gerber/Hart Library, www.gerberhart.org

Latino HIV confab "Informate: Breaking the Silence—HIV Update on the Latino Community," is a one-day event that will explore how HIV/AIDS is affecting the Latino community. 8:30pm, Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park; www.aidschicago.org

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, www.hydratechicago.com

Thursday, May 13

Windy City Gay Idol 2010 Now in its 8th year, Idol searches for the best amateur gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered

YOU GOTTA BEA Sunday, May 16

A tribute to actress/singer
Bea Arthur will take place at
Skokie Theater.



(GLBT) singers in the Chicago area. 7pm sign up, 8pm start. WCMGpromotions@gmail.com; 7pm, Sofo, 4923 N. Clark

50 Faggots Launch Party at Hydrate Join the full cast of "50 Faggots" at our launch party celebrating this amazing documentary series. Hosted by Cyon Flare with special guest co-host, Acid Betty. Music by DJ Phil DaBeatz. 10pm, (773) 975-9244, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, www.50faggots.com

SWEET TEA Black Gay Men of the South Tonight writer/performer E. Patrick Johnson will join in a discussion with co-producers Jane M. Saks (Executive Director, Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media) and Bonnie Metzgar (Artistic Director, About Face Theatre). Show runs through May 29; 11:15pm, Viaduct Theatre, 3111 N. Western Avenue., www.aboutface-theatre.com

Friday, May 14

50 Faggots Documentary Series Premiere Join us for the premiere of this new, on-line documentary series educating, exploring and celebrating how individual effeminate gay men survive and thrive in today's American queer communities, including Chicago locals Cyon Flare, Jade, Darrell Jones, Roger Goodman and Marc Felion & Fausto Fernós from the "Feast of Fun" podcast. \$7 in advance/ \$10 at door. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., premiere at 7 p.m., reception at 8:45 p.m. See www.50faggots.com or call The Center on Halsted at 773-472-6469 to make advance ticket purchases.

TPAN's Positively Aware Taking place the 2nd Friday of each month at Hydrate Nightclub; each person who makes a minimum \$5 donation to Test Positive Aware Network at the door will receive open bar! 7:15pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, www.tpan.com

Out at the Opera with Chicago Opera Theater's Three Decembers For \$100 you'll receive an A+ ticket to Three Decembers, plus admission to the VIP After-Party. Frederica von Stade makes her last Chicago appearances in the story of a Broadway actress who reveals a shocking secret of their family's past to her two adult children. USE CODE 6816 and link to www.chicagooperatheater.org/events/VIPLGBT.html; 9:15 p.m., Chicago Opera Theater, 70 E. Lake

Scarlet First Ward Ball Featuring DJ dolo Non-Halsted DJ dolo brings his great mash ups and dance tunes to Scarlet's First Ward Ball parties. 10pm, Scarlet, 3320 N. Halsted, www.scarletbarchicago.com

Saturday, May 15

Partner Abuse in LGBTQ Relationships Workshop Developing a Common Language: Howard Brown Health Center's Violence Recovery Project, Broadway Youth Center, & Lesbian Community Care Project will host a four-hour workshop for survivors of intimate partner violence or unfair relationships and partner abuse in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer relationships. This is a FREE event and lunch will be provided. Call 773-388-8882 or see www.howardbrown.org.

Chicago Dragons Bachelor Auction Join the men of the Chicago Dragons Rugby Club for their 2010 Bachelor Auction and Fundraiser. \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. 5pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, www.chicagodragons.org

Garden of Eve fundraiser benefiting LCCP and women's services, a merger of "A Taste for Every Palate" and LCCP's Coming Out

Against Cancer. Last year's event, the first Garden of Eve, was attended by 500 women. Host committee: Tamara Allen, Kat Fitzgerald, Dalila Fridi, and Melissa Mansfield; 6 p.m., 773-388-1600, Christy Webber Landscapes' HQ: Rancho Verde, 2900 W. Ferdinand, www.lccp.org/join.php

Alt Q, 10th anniversary "Best in Show" ALT Q (formerly Queer Is Folk Festival) is celebrating its 10th year as a showcase for LGBT musicians and performers at the Old Town School of Folk Music. This year's performers include Coyote Grace, Wishing Chair, Heat Birds, Namoli Brennet, Actor Slash Model and Scott Free. 7 p.m., 312-218-8123, Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N. Lincoln, www.altqfestival.com; e-mail altqfestival@gmail.com

Chicago Red Stars play Philadelphia Independence. \$15. 7:15pm, 866-WPS-2009, Toyota Park, 7000 S. Harlem, Bridgeview., www.chicagoredstars.com

ILGRA Rodeo Benefit & Show Enjoy a night of fun and laughs as the Illinois Gay Rodeo Association raises money for the 2010 Windy City Rodeo. Special Guest Star will be Michigan International Gay Rodeo Association Mr. Mike Shannon. This event will be hosted by Miss Colleen Stewart Miss Illinois Gay Rodeo 2010. 9pm, Club Krave, 13126 S. Western, www.ilgra.com

Sunday, May 16

Beatrice Arthur Tribute Beatrice Arthur was the larger-than-life actress who delighted Broadway audiences and television audiences. Fellow silver-haired cabaret chanteuse, Chicago-based Carla Gordon along with musical director, Beekie Menzie will be performing the salute. 2 p.m., Skokie Theater, 7924 Lincoln, Skokie

Lucille Ball - Thanks for Asking A celebration of the first lady of television, An Evening with Lucille Ball: "Thank You for Asking," is a touching, funny and uplifting one-woman play performed by actress and renowned impressionist, Suzanne LaRusch, and written by Suzanne LaRusch & Lucie Arnaz. 6 p.m.; 219-473-6060, The Venue at Horseshoe Casino, 777 Casino Center; www.horseshoehammond.com

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 17

Harvey Milk Week of Action The International Day Against Homophobia, May 17, kicks off a week of local actions that ends on May 22, what would have been Harvey Milk's 80th Birthday. www.chicagomilkweek.wordpress.com

Fish Out of Water screening and discussion Join LGBT Change and All Saints Episcopal Church for International Day Against Homophobia and a free screening of Ky Dickens' eye-opening film FISH OUT OF WATER, a spirited documentary exploring the seven Bible passages notoriously used to condemn homosexuality and justify marriage discrimination. 7pm, All Saints Episcopal Church, 4550 N. Hermitage, www.fishoutofwaterfilm.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 18

Windy City Gay Idol 2010 at North End Now in its 8th year, Idol searches for the best amateur gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) singers in the Chicago area. 8pm sign up, 9pm start. WCMGpromotions@gmail.com. Venue is North End, 3733 N. Halsted

Stud Puppy Tuesdays Temptations Night Club features Stud Puppy Tuesdays - Every Tuesday, male dancers, hot drink specials and even hotter guys. 7 p.m., 847-455-0008, Temptations Nightclub,



'SWEET' SURRENDER Through Sat., May 29

Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South—written by E. Patrick Johnson (above)—is at the Viaduct Theatre, 3111 N. Western.

Photo by Stephen J. Lewis

10235 W Grand Ave, <http://temptations-nightclub.net>

Wed., May 19

Dining Out For Equality Equality Illinois will host its inaugural Dining Out For Equality event at restaurants across the city to help raise funds needed for the fight to win equal rights for LGBT people in Illinois. Participating restaurants include Big Jones, Crew Bar & Grill, Francesca's Bryn Mawr, Halsted's, Hamburger Mary's, Hearty Restaurant, In Fine Spirits, Kit Kat Lounge, Las Mañanitas, Minibar Ultra Lounge and Café, Nookies Tree, Wilde, and Yoshi's Café. 5pm, Minibar Ultra Lounge and Café, 3341 N. Halsted, To Be Determined, www.diningoutforequality.com

Love in the Age of Grindr A forum on intimacy and connectivity, in an era of rapidly advancing technologies that are changing the ways gay and bisexual men relate. RSVP www.lifelube.org; 6pm, Rehab Lounge, 3641 N. Halsted, <http://www.lifelube.org>

Honoring Lorraine Hansberry Gerber/Hart Library honors Lorraine Hansberry on what would have been her 80th birthday. Writers read from her work and discuss her influence on their own literary development. Writers are Carmen Abrego, C.C. Carter, Nikki Pattin, and Avery R. Young. 7:30pm, 773-381-8030, Gerber/Hart Library, <http://www.gerberhart.org>

Thursday, May 20

The Future of HIV Research & Sexual Health Rush University Medical Center and the Center on Halsted will present a discussion on the future of HIV research, sexual health and related topics featuring world-class experts Beverly Sha, MD, and Kimberly Smith, MD, MPH. Program is FREE and open to the public. 5:30pm, 312-942-1964, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

I Ain't Crazy!- Gay Black Men, Mental Health, Spirituality and HIV Panelists will address why Black gay men do (or don't) access mental health services and the impact on our behavior and life choices. 6 p.m., 312-566-0285, ext. 12, Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center, 4859 S. Wabash, www.lovelybrotha.com

Saturday, May 22

Human First 2010, Gala Performance benefiting Center on Halsted Starring Lily Tomlin and featuring Oleta Adams. Honorary Chairman Mayor Richard M. Daley, Chair of the Honorary Committee Patrick Sheahan, Gala Co-Chairs Robert Kohl, Gail Morse & Lauren Verdich, and Dori Wilson. 7:30pm, 773-472-6469, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph Dr, <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>



YOU'VE GOT MALE

Saturday, May 15

Members of the local LGBT rugby team the Chicago Dragons will be up for sale at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted.

Photo courtesy of the Chicago Dragons

BILLY MASTERS

The grande dame of Broadway has entered the record books. Angela Lansbury received a Tony nomination for her work in *A Little Night Music*. This marks Angie's seventh nomination. Her five previous Tonys ties her with Julie Harris for most wins—fingers crossed. Let's also give a shout-out to our buddy Levi Kreis who picked up a nomination for his portrayal of Jerry Lee Lewis in *Million Dollar Quartet*. Congrats!

On May 4, Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes debuted as a singing and dancing couple. Yes, the happily married couple took to the stage at "A Fine Romance," a benefit for the Motion Picture and Television Fund, with Katie warbling (I think that's the correct term) "Whatever Lola Wants" to a hapless Tommy, playing the non-singing and, let's be real, non-dancing baseball player "Joe Hardy." Of course, this is a classic seduction scene, and the pair sparked with sexual chemistry not seen since, well, since *Eyes Wide Shut*. Aside from an awfully odd dance break that was most definitely not choreographed by Bob Fosse, there are two brilliant moments. First, Katie sings "little man" to the diminutive Cruise. Then, she hikes up her skirt to show off her thigh and Tom looks like he's never seen it before—as if he couldn't recognize her nether regions in a police lineup. Of course, that's because he's quite a thespian. Yeah, that's why. You can watch the entire number on BillyMasters.com.

All good things must come to an end. The princesses of pop, The Go-Gos, are saying goodbye this summer with a quick jaunt around the country called "Happily Ever After—The Farewell Tour." Admittedly, they have done their fair share of farewells over the past few decades. This one is briefer than most—owing to Belinda Carlisle's busy schedule. Between her solo appearances and promotions for her upcoming autobiography (out June 1), she could only commit to a three-week tour. The philosophical Go-Go Kathy Valentine looked at it this way: "We'll hit all the cities that we miss on our comeback tour in 2040!" Something to look forward to.

The Miami New Times broke a story that George Rekers, a 61-year-old Baptist minister, anti-gay activist and psychologist, had a bit of company on his recent trip to Europe—a rentboy (read: gay hooker). When confronted with the allegations, Rekers laughed them off, saying, "I had surgery and I can't lift luggage—that's why I hired him." Yeah, and I had Jeff Stryker over to help me with some Sudoku! Alas, a photo surfaced of Rekers and his "boy" at Miami Airport, with said boy walking next to Rekers, who was pushing a cart heavily laden with luggage!

Rekers claimed that halfway through the trip he discovered that his companion was a rentboy (who the New Times called "Lucien") and that they had no intimate contact. Then "Lucien" went public and revealed that Rekers found him on RentBoy.com (where he's called "Geo"). Rekers confirmed this detail: "Like Jesus Christ, I deliberately spend time with sinners with the loving goal to try to help them." How pious of



Tom Cruise got, er, romantic with wife Katie Holmes? Uh huh.

him. "Geo" claims he was paid \$75 a day, that he acted as translator when they were in Spain, and that their only physical contact was "body rubs, once a day, in the nude." This Rekers guy is a regular saint! I'm sure Pope Benedict gets the same "service."

Once the story broke, "Geo" was identified as Jo-vanni Roman—a name I daresay you won't find on any birth certificate. While he didn't know who Rekers was when he was hired, he now terms him "a homosexual." In his ad, he describes himself as a 20-year-old, 5'9", 130 pound, blond-haired Puerto Rican (huh?) who has a 28" waist, has an 8-inch penis, nice ass, and "will do anything you say, as long as you ask." And pay—don't forget that part...

This leads perfectly into a quick "Ask Billy" question from Jim in Massachusetts: "Any information on Stephen Colbert's hot shirtless cameraman on May 5th?"

Rekers was named "Alpha Dog of the Week" on *The Colbert Report*. The *Rentboy* site was shown, causing Colbert to quip, "Folks, this is an honest mistake. Rentboy.com looks like a website where you hire bellhops. The men are all shirtless so you can see how big their bag-carrying muscles are. And there are even videos where these Rentboys show how good they are at grabbing and yanking things by the handle. In fact, Rentboy.com is where I got a lot of my crew. Like my new cameraman, Julian." Julian is actually sexy fitness model/actor/dancer Luke Guldán. Since I know you want more details (as well as a plethora of shirtless pics, videos, and other assorted goodies which I'll post on BillyMasters.com), Luke is 23 years old, 5'9" and 185 pounds. As to his sexuality, when he was asked if he was married or single, he wrote: "Hmmm, how do you answer that? Let's just say I'm not married." Under "Children," he wrote "N/A." Read between the lines, people.

When *Rentboy* is offering a clergy discount, it's definitely time to end yet another column. What the hell is happening to religion? We used to have Father Damien ministering to the lepers in Molokai. Now we've got Baptist ministers hiring hookers for trips to Barcelona! However, we did learn four important things from this story: 1) Jesus wasn't the only religious figure to like rub downs from hookers, 2) discretion costs more than \$75 a day, 3) there are blond Puerto Ricans, and 4) some rentboys have passports! For this and other educational stories, check out www.BillyMasters.com, you're one-stop shopping for all sins of the flesh. For your secular questions, drop a note to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I get struck by lightning (or a certain midget's attorneys). Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



Luke Guldán, behind the scenes.

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SPORTS

Red Wings fan takes over local gay hockey

BY ROSS FORMAN

He hails from Hockeytown USA, has been playing hockey for 20 years and knows quite a bit about a Zamboni.

So who better to take over the reigns of the Chicago Gay Hockey Association (CGHA) than Andrew Sobotka, 24, a Detroit native who started skating at age 2.

Sobotka, who has lived in Chicago for three years, works in technical support for an online media company. He was recently named the CGHA's new team president.

"I am really excited to take over as president of the CGHA," said Sobotka, who lives in Lake View. "In the few months I've been with the organization, we have accomplished a lot of work and have a really good support system to keep to momentum moving."

"Our main goal [for the team] at the moment is recruitment. Someday we would like to run our own league, similar to what they have in Madison or New York City. We are also determined to give back to the hockey community and to grow better players in a safe and fun environment."

Despite friendly criticism from his teammates, Sobotka remains loyal to his Detroit roots—specifically, the Red Wings. His favorite National Hockey League players are Henrik Zetterberg, Darren Helm and Buffalo Grove native Brett Lebda.

"Hands down, the Red Wings [are my favorite], and I make no apologies for my allegiance," said Sobotka, who graduated from Michigan State University in 2007 with a degree in digital media arts and technology. "Growing up in Detroit, so much of my life revolved around hockey. The entire city lives and breathes hockey, so it's a really great atmosphere to foster hockey players."



Andrew Sobotka. Photo by Larry Palm

His dad, Al, has worked for the Red Wings for more than 35 years. Al is the building manager of Joe Louis Arena, the Wings' home rink, and the Zamboni driver—plus he's even the namesake for the Wings' mascot, Al the Octopus.

"I spent my life riding around on the Zamboni with my dad, but I have never driven it," the younger Sobotka said.

"I joined the CGHA fairly recently; this is my first season with the team. I joined because I wanted to keep playing, and I had an interest to see what a gay team could offer. I am really happy that I joined and have made a lot of friends with the guys on the team; we all have each other's back. It's a really safe environment to be an openly gay hockey player."

The CGHA plays in a straight league in Northbrook, and the team has not had any anti-gay issues, he said: "All of the other teams are respectful of us, as we are of them."

Sobotka and several CGHA teammates went to Wisconsin May 1-2 for the inaugural Madison

Gay Hockey Classic. Sobotka was a team captain and his team went undefeated on its way to the championship.

Sobotka also has participated with his CGHA teammates this spring in floor hockey at Pottawattamie Park, run by the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association.

"It was a great experience and allowed [the CGHA] to extend our reach from ice hockey to floor hockey," he said.

Sobotka said the CGHA will not be sending a team to Cologne this summer for the Gay Games, "but we'll be putting together a team for the Gay Games in 2014 as well as attending various [other] tournaments across the country."

The CGHA is starting its summer season in May, and will run through August; in addition, the CGHA's Chicago Blackwolves will take on the Illiana Misfits May 14 at North Shore Ice Arena in a playoff game. For more information, visit www.chicagogayhockey.org.

Force crushes Vixen

The women's football team known as the Chicago Force crushed the host Minnesota Vixen 56-0 May 8 to improve its record to 5-0, according to the team's website.

"We took care of business today and walked out of here relatively healthy," said Force head coach John Konecki. "I told my players that we are in the driver's seat and need to stay on the path to control our own destiny. I'm glad that everyone participated in this win."

During the game, players and coaches from both teams wore pink wristbands in support of the Kay Yow/WBCA Cancer Fund, in collaboration with Nike.

The last time Chicago started out 5-0 they went to the IWFL National Championship Game in 2008.

The Force is on the road again May 15, taking on the Wisconsin Wolves at Madison; then it's the team's last home game May 22 against the Pittsburgh Passion. For more information, see www.chicagoforcefootball.com.

Rollers recognized by Chicago

The Windy City Rollers, Chicago's only nationally ranked women's flat-track roller-derby league, was recently recognized by the City of Chicago in a resolution at City Hall.

Mary Ann Smith, alderman of the 48th Ward, sponsored a resolution to honor the Rollers. The league is being recognized for its "enriching the City of Chicago and the nation with their sportsmanship, civic involvement, and empowerment of women," as stated in the resolution. Aldermen Smith presented the resolution at today's Council meeting, which was received with applause in the City chambers. Members Maureen "Ska Face" Bak, Emily "Karmageddon" Cromwell, Lisa "Shocka Conduit" Dadabo, Kimberly "Ruth Enasia" Elsham, Elizabeth "Juanna Rumbel" Gomez, and Ellen "Elenka Spankya" Yun were present at the city council meeting.

See www.WindyCityRollers.com.

GAY GAMES

'Runway' alum Mackenroth focusing on Games

BY ROSS FORMAN

Father Time might be catching up with Jack Mackenroth, but the New York-based former Project Runway star is still swimming mighty fast.

Mackenroth will be 41 when he dives into the pool this summer in Cologne, Germany, at Gay Games VIII—and this will be his fifth Games. He will compete in five sprints.

"I'm really excited for the Gay Games; it's one of my favorite events," said Mackenroth, who has participated in Gay Games in Vancouver, New York City, Amsterdam, Sydney and Chicago. "I don't know how many total medals I have won, but I know I've won at least one gold at every Games."

And he also had an incredible showing last summer in Copenhagen, winning numerous medals at the World Outgames.

"Is it tougher competing as, ugh, you get older?," he asked, laughing. "Swimming definitely is tougher as I get older. My body just won't do the same things it did when I was 21. Also, life gets in the way and it's harder to find time to train. However I'm what they call a 'meet' swimmer, meaning, I always seem to rise to the occasion during competition. I've been training since January, so I should be slammin' by the Games."

So, any thought of retiring from competitive swimming, or switching to another sport?

"Nope. They will be pulling my cold, dead corpse out of the water at Gay Games 2012," he joked. "I heard about curling during the [Winter]



Jack Mackenroth. Photo courtesy of the subject

Olympics ... does that involve hair? Seriously, probably not. I'm really only good at swimming. It's hard to teach an old dog new tricks."

And, boy, has Mackenroth been a good swimmer over the years, with countless medals, awards, trophies, plaques and honors on his swimming resume.

"I just love the Gay Games because the athletes are so excited to come together and compete," Mackenroth said. "It's a real sense of pride and accomplishment. People want to win, but everyone genuinely wants everyone to do their best. I especially love the international Games; they bring amazing people from all over the world that you would normally never have the chance to meet."

Mackenroth said his most memorable Gay Games moment ever came 20 years ago, when he was simply walking into the stadium for the Opening Ceremonies in Vancouver. "I had just come out and the crowd was cheering. I was overwhelmed. I cried," he said.

The Chicago Games in 2006 also rank very high

for Mackenroth. One race in particular: the 4x50-meter mixed medley relay—because they set the National record, and were only .8 second off the world record. And Mackenroth's mom was in the stands for the event.

"Believe it or not, medals are not that important to me," Mackenroth said. "I like getting them, but then I'm on to the next race."

Mackenroth, who is single, said he is in favor of one quadrennial LGBT sporting event, as has been proposed for 2018 when the Gay Games and the World Outgames are tentatively slated to merge.

"I think it's a good idea to merge," he said. "The games are expensive and cost-prohibitive

for a lot of people, so one games every four years would be better and more competitive. Plus, all the resources could funnel into the one competition. I would keep the Gay Games name just because it has such an amazing legacy."

Mackenroth is now writing a book and also producing a reality-TV show *a la* the Real Housewives franchise, but with all the top drag queens in New York, fittingly called, The Queens of Drag: NYC. "I'm a host for FashionNewslive.com. I do a ton of speaking on HIV around the country and I do a radio show called POZIAM every Sunday night," Mackenroth said. "And I still do a little designing, among other things."

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

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