

WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI AND TRANS COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

OCTOBER 31, 2007 • VOL 23 NO 07



Tori Amos Talks Gays and Gigs

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McKeon Wins Award

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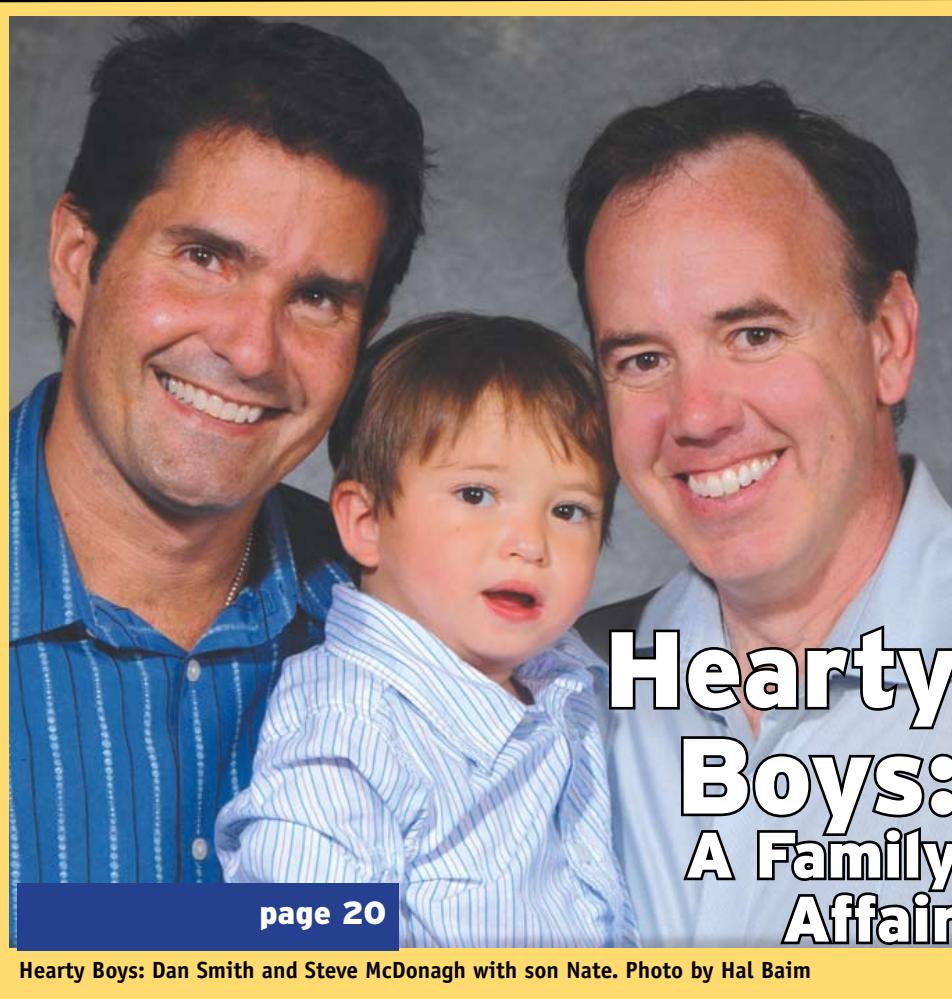


Christine Ebersole Gets 'Intimate'

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www.WindyCityQueercast.com



Hearty Boys: A Family Affair

Hearty Boys: Dan Smith and Steve McDonagh with son Nate. Photo by Hal Baim

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LCCP Now Program of Howard Brown

BY AMY WOOTEN

The Lesbian Community Cancer Project is becoming a program of Howard Brown Health Center with the new name of Lesbian Community Care Project, still with the initials LCCP.

The original LCCP, which has been housed within Howard Brown since 2004, announced Oct. 24 that it will join forces with the agency. The heads of both organizations described the decision as a logical next step toward the continuation of a symbiotic relationship.

"We will serve our community better together than we are doing separately," said LCCP Board Chair Dominique Leonardi, who will now become a Howard Brown board member while the remaining board members form an advisory committee. Leonardi and others feel the merger will help expand lesbian healthcare in the area.

LCCP was founded in 1990 to address the healthcare needs of lesbian and bisexual women. Howard Brown has been serving the needs of the LGBT community since 1974, and is one of the nation's largest agencies.

"This is a good day for Howard Brown, this is a good day for LCCP and this is a good day for the community," Howard Brown President and CEO

Turn to page 5

LGBTs Upset With Obama

BY BOB ROEHR

Sen. Barack Obama's presidential campaign has stirred great discontent within the LGBT community by giving a forum to an award-winning gospel singer and minister known for his antigay rhetoric. The series of gaffes has continued to echo within that community, though the mainstream press has been slow to report or understand its significance.

The growing firestorm kicked off Oct. 20 when Earl Ofari Hutchinson wrote online in The Huffington Post, "Barack Obama ripped a page straight from the Bush campaign playbook with his announced upcoming three date barnstorm tour through South Carolina with notorious gay basher, gospel singer Donnie McClurkin.

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One Vivid Gala



page 6

Howard Brown Health Center held its gala, "La Grande Masquerade," Saturday at the Hilton Chicago—and, as evidenced by the picture above, it was a colorful affair. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald. More photos are on page 5 as well as at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com and www.MysticImagesPhotography.com

**Young, homeless and trans ...
p. 4**

SAGE

Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders

NOVEMBER 2007

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: LAKEVIEW PANTRY

The Lakeview Pantry is accepting SAGE volunteers to help with food distribution. Shifts are Friday afternoons in November. You can do just one shift or more if you have time. Please call Serena at 773.472.6469 ext 160 to get scheduled.

TUESDAY TOPICS

Every Tuesday in November we present a special educational topic. This seminar coincides with the weekly Coffee and Conversation. Come for a free lunch and stay for the seminar or come later just for the seminar.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIVE WISHES SEMINAR

Tuesday NOV 6 — 2:oop – 3:oop FREE

Completing Five Wishes, an advance directive document, is a gift that you can give yourself and your family. Learn more about the Five Wishes in this introductory seminar presented by Venonica M. Baté from Midwest Palliative & Hospice CareCenter. Also, Dr. Robert Noven will drop by to talk about upcoming wellness events.

BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY CHECK-UP

Tuesday NOV 13 — 2:oop – 3:oop FREE

The Chicago Department on Aging will be here to talk about their program linking Chicago residents age 60 and older to more than 70 city, state and federal benefits to which they may be entitled.

Tuesday NOV 20

No seminar scheduled due to Gathering of Friends celebration.

CITIBANK SEMINAR

Tuesday NOV 27 — 2:oop – 3:oop FREE

Are You Really Covered? Find out how to protect your income and assets in this Citibank insurance seminar presented by Jeff Rieck, Financial Education Specialist. *John Baran Senior Center*

SPECIAL EVENTS

FLU SHOTS

Wednesday NOV 7 — 2:oop – 4:oop \$18

Dr. Robert Noven will be here to administer flu shots. Reservation not required but helpful. Call 773.472.6469 ext 160 for a reservation.

GATHERING OF FRIENDS

Tuesday NOV 20 — 4:30p – 7:00p

Thanksgiving celebration with SAGE and Youth Program participants along with COH staff and board members. COH will provide turkey and beverages. Please bring a side dish to share. Sweet treats provided by the Kenwood of Lakeview. RSVP requested but not required. Please call 773.472.6469, ext. 160.

WEEKLY EVENTS

All events are in the *John Baran Senior Center* at Center on Halsted unless otherwise noted.

BEGINNING COMPUTERS

Tuesday NOV 6 | NOV 13 | NOV 20 | NOV 27 — 3:oop – 4:oop FREE

A basic computer class for the real beginner. Registration is required. Please call Brian Minka, Community Technology Center Coordinator at 773.472.6469 ext 267 to register. *Dr. David J. Lochman Cyber Center*

CARD NIGHT

Tuesday NOV 6 | NOV 13 | NOV 20 | NOV 27 — 6:oop – 9:30p

Bridge – 6:oop instruction. Play begins at 6:30p **FREE**

Experienced and novice players are welcome. Miles Roothan, instructor.

Bridge sponsored by SAGE Center on Halsted. *John Baran Senior Center*

Euchre – 6:30p informal game; 7:30p formal game begins **\$3/game**

Organized by the Euchre Club of Chicago

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Tuesday NOV 6 | NOV 13 | NOV 27 — 12:oop – 3:oop FREE

Join us in the *John Baran Senior Center*. This is a safe, confidential place for participants to gather, socialize, and discuss concerns and ideas. Lunch is provided!

COMING OUT, COMING HOME SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday NOV 6 | NOV 13 | NOV 20 | NOV 27 — 2:oop – 3:oop FREE

This group provides a supportive environment for adults 45 years and older who are beginning their coming out process. Because older adults often have well-established careers and families, the struggles of coming out of the closet later in life are often mixed with creating a new family that blends old relationships with a new community and identity. No registration required.

NEEDLEWORK NIGHT

Thursday NOV 1 | NOV 8 | NOV 15 | NOV 29 — 6:30p – 8:30p FREE

Crochet! Knit! Needlepoint! Bring whatever needlework you have and enjoy an evening of crafting and conversation. *Second Floor Living Room Seating Area*

MONTHLY EVENTS

HOT TOPICS FOR LESBIANS

Friday NOV 2 — 6:30p – 9:oop FREE

A social event for older women. Come have some fun and make new friends. This is a casual evening and all women are welcome.

NIGHT AT THE OPERA: OPERA APPRECIATION

Friday NOV 9 — 6:30p – 8:30p FREE

Hosted by Jason McVicker, COH's Director of Mental Health Services, and a writer and lecturer on all aspects of opera. A lifelong fan, he first began attending opera in his native New Orleans at the age of 10. Jason has been published in *Opera News* and is a regular contributor to *Parterre Box*, the "queer opera zine."

CULTURAL OUTING: LINCOLN PARK CONSERVATORY

Saturday NOV 10 — 1:30p – 4:00p FREE

Fall Chrysanthemum Show. Registration required by November 10. Call 773.472.6469, ext. 160 to register.

PLANNING MEETING

Tuesday NOV 13 — 3:00p – 4:45p

Everyone is welcome at this monthly planning session.

FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Friday NOV 16 — 6:30p – 9:30p FREE

Monthly movie night. Look for LGBT and general cinema and documentaries. SAGE participants select the movies, so if there is a film you want to see, let us know.

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

Monday NOV 26 — 2:oop – 4:oop FREE

The November book is *Lucky in the Corner* by Carol Anshaw. In this tender and funny 2002 book, Anshaw looks at life and love in Chicago. Said Anshaw in an *Advocate* interview, "I want my books to be about women who are trying – to figure it out, to be their best version of themselves. My lesbian characters have their flaws, but they're always engaged in the enterprise of trying to live a decent life."

CHICAGO PRIME TIMERS/CENTER ON HALSTED BOOK GROUP

Tuesday NOV 27 — 7:30p – 9:30p FREE

All are welcome to this Prime Timers led, Center on Halsted hosted book group. The November book is *My Lives: An Autobiography* by Edmund White.

www.centeronhalsted.org

Center on Halsted 773.472.6469

SAGE Program Information

773.472.6469, ext. 444

3656 N. Halsted
Chicago, IL 60613

CENTERONHALSTED

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Theatrical productions such as Jersey Boys (above) are under the Windy City Times microscope this week. See page 15.

photo by Joan Marcus

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The Walker (featuring Woody Harrelson, above) is one of the many movies that will be shown at Reeling 2007. See page 17.

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This week's online features include:
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 -Landscaping hints
 -Theater reviews,
 -Pop Making Sense, which includes profiles of Sarah Bettens (right) and Annie Lennox
 -An interview with Queer Eye's Jai Rodriguez



Windy City Queercast
queer and now

www.WindyCityQueercast.com

Nightspots

TOUCHÉ, PUSSYCAT

Strap on your chaps for Touché's 30th anniversary this weekend.
 photo by Kirk Williamson.



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The Struggles of Homeless Trans Youth

BY CHARLIE DEWEY

Homeless LGBT youth face increased difficulties compared to their heterosexual counterparts both on the streets and within the shelter system, according to a study the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force report, "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth: An Epidemic of Homelessness," which was released in January 2007.

According to the report, LGBT homeless youth are more vulnerable to mental health issues, substance abuse, risky sexual behavior and victimization. The report states, "A study of homeless youth in Canada found that those who identify as LGBT were three times as likely to participate in survival sex than their heterosexual peers," and The National Runaway Switchboard reported, "LGBT homeless youth are seven times more likely than their heterosexual peers to be victims of crime."

Shelter systems do not ease many of these risks for LGBT teens. "The majority of existing shelters and other care systems are not providing safe and effective services to LGBT homeless youth," the report states.

For trans youth the barriers increase. "Transgender youth are disproportionately represented in the homeless population. More generally, some reports indicate that one in five transgender individuals need or are at risk of needing homeless shelter assistance. However, most shelters are segregated by birth sex, regardless of the individual's gender identity, and homeless transgender youth are even ostracized by some agencies that serve their LGB peers," according to the document.

Trans youth experience and fear violence, harassment and discrimination within the shelters

and, for many, staying in a shelter can be less safe than spending the night on the street.

Over the past few years, individuals working with homeless youth in Chicago note several positive changes for LGB teens, as more shelters work to understand the complex issues facing these youth; however, trans youth are still experiencing disturbing difficulties.

"I think all of the youth shelter programs are cognizant of the fact that LGBT youth are a huge proportion of this epidemic, and I think they're trying harder than ever, especially in the last 5 to 7 years, to make sure their spaces are affirming and safe for LGBT individuals. I think the trans piece is still the complicated piece," explained Joe Hollendorfer, director of the Howard Brown Broadway Youth Center.

"I feel like they are very committed to making space that is safe to LGBT young people, however, I think again, that the shelter system reflects a larger societal issue, if we have a culture that perpetuates heterosexism, homophobia and transphobia then, clearly our shelter program is going to perpetuate that, compounded with issues of race and class," he said.

Myrl Beam, also of Howard Brown, echoes Hollendorfer's statements, explaining how issues of employment discrimination, violence at school, homophobia, transphobia, and racism as well as police harassment create several more barriers towards healthy development for trans youth.

Employers do not understand transgender individuals and compounding that with homelessness also creates a nearly impossible situation in the workplace. Barbara Bolen, vice president of programs for The Night Ministry, explained what she has seen over her many years serving homeless youth, "I think when you are a young person and you are trying to understand yourself, your identity and who you are, it can be a hard thing to be doing that and also to be homeless and trying to figure out how to support yourself. I certainly saw for some of those young people, it was hard for them to get jobs and keep jobs. Particularly if they were at a period where they



Jen Rude, a youth outreach professional with The Night Ministry, at a recent youth street outreach event in Lakeview.

were just starting to figure out which identity to be and to live as."

Another significant barrier is police harassment. Beam said that the LGBT community could help protect trans youth by holding police accountable. She also said, "As a queer community we need to really take on the work of transforming our minds and our lives in our communities and our businesses and actually make opportunities available for trans people. We need to take on the cause of dismantling transphobia."

Funding for more beds and services is also a vital component to help homeless youth. "The need far outweighs the resources in the crisis moment, when young people need some place to go in the dead of winter, there is nowhere, so it forces young people to make unsafe decisions, which puts them in contact with the criminal justice system through no fault of their own, because there are no other choices. So, increasing the number of beds is critical and then making sure those beds are accessible to trans youth," Beam explained.

At this point, federal and local funding for homeless youth shelters and services does not come close to meeting the projected need, which means that while many individuals working with homeless youth here in Chicago agree that LGBT

specific shelters and services would greatly increase the safety and healthy development of LGBT teens, and trans teens especially, funding just isn't available. Presently in Chicago, there are no LGBT-specific shelters and none planned for the future.

Hollendorfer said, "I think in the current landscape of things it's important that we ensure that the beds that exist now are safe for LGBT individuals and specifically for trans individuals. I think the experiences of trans youth within shelter programs are particularly concerning to me and to my colleagues. I think it is critically important that our existing beds are safe for everyone. I also believe that if resources became available that having a shelter program specifically for LGBT youth would be a wonderful asset to the community ... [but], I think it's really important not just to develop an LGBT homeless youth center and say okay well that's where all the homeless LGBT youth go and not hold other shelter programming accountable to making sure LGBT youth are safe in their shelter."

Another aspect of providing safe housing is transforming the way the shelter systems categorize youth. Hollendorfer said, "I think that so often our shelter programs are based on a binary gender system and I think that throughout the youth community you see that binary gender systems aren't the way in which youth describe their bodies and that there's a fluidity around gender now and I think that the shelter programs are now just beginning to understand that."

Sol Flores, executive director of La Casa Norte, explained how the Solid Ground Supportive Housing Program, a project-based housing unit specifically serving male youth aged 16-21 that is part of La Casa Norte, is approaching housing transitioning youth: "We created eligibility guidelines in the transgender area that say if you identify and are living currently as a male you can come into the program, because it is a male intentional program...we could have someone who is going through the transition as long as he is identifying as and living as a male."

Solid Ground's private room system also provides privacy for its residents, which Flores believes has a positive impact allowing for privacy that many sheltered youth don't receive.

Training and education for staff was also cited as a way to decrease discrimination. "I certainly think that training is a very positive thing. ... It creates a better environment for everybody," Bolen said.

western cities because it has more welcoming agencies. The third largest city in the country, however, is struggling to address the growing problem of LGBT youth on the streets.

Phillips said that her passion for inclusion was "further ignited" after leaving the national meeting, especially because she was surrounded by discussions of the ongoing Employment Non-Discrimination Act controversy.

"It's easy to marginalize those who are already marginalized," she said.

In Phillips' opinion, LGBT agencies shouldn't be the only ones responsible for solving the problem of homelessness among its youth. She agrees that although they play a large role, LGBT organizations shouldn't be the only ones working towards a solution. "They need strong support, and I don't think they can do it alone," she said.

In order for progress to be made in the Chicago area, "partnership has to happen," Phillips stressed, adding that agencies, community members, politicians and others need to work together and create a solution and alleviate the issues LGBT homeless youth face. Most important, Phillips said, is that the community listen to what LGBT youth need and want.

"Our young people's voices need to be heard," she said.

SIDE BAR: Chicago Group at Nat'l Youth Homeless Confab

BY AMY WOOTEN

Local organization Teen Living Programs was the only Chicago agency to attend the recent first national advisory council meeting on LGBTQ youth homelessness.

The event, which took place Oct. 19, was "long overdue," said Dr. Ozella Phillips who attended the conference. She serves as a member of Teen Living Programs' leadership team. At the meeting, agencies discussed the growing problem of LGBT homelessness, the lack of government funding and more.

Teen Living Programs works with homeless youth in the Chicago area, and is an agency committed to inclusion.

Although the East and West coasts appear to be more progressive when it comes to tackling the problem of LGBT youth homelessness, Phillips said she learned that Chicago is definitely ahead of the game compared to other Mid-

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A 'Grande' Time

Elegance and entertainment marked "La Grande Masquerade," Howard Brown Health Center's annual gala that was held Oct. 27 at the Hilton Chicago and Towers, 720 S. Michigan. Dancers and jugglers were among those performing at the event, which also featured a silent auction, dinner and dancing. In addition, Broadway Youth Center mentors, AIDS Foundation of Chicago and Chicago Department of Public Health Assistant Commissioner Chris Brown received "Friends for Life" awards. Photos by Mel Ferrand and Kat Fitzgerald. See www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com and www.MysticImagesPhotography.com for more images.

LCCP from cover

Michael Cook said. Cook said the two agencies decided after a few years of dating to "finally get married," describing the relationship as "love at first sight."

Over the past few years, while housed at Howard Brown, the organization has "achieved more than we thought possible," said LCCP Interim Executive Director Catherine Jefcoat.

Jefcoat will join Howard Brown's senior management team as Director of the Lesbian Community Care Project.

The lesbian healthcare organization has walked hundreds of women through cancer screenings, created a smoking cessation program, conducted studies, trained more than 1,000 healthcare workers and reached out to thousands of women since it moved in to Howard Brown.

Both Jefcoat and Cook are confident the new relationship will expand lesbian healthcare in the area. Since LCCP has moved into the agency, the number of women served at Howard Brown Health Center has doubled, Jefcoat said. The organization also plans to build and expand programs.

Cook believes both organizations will become stronger because of the merger. When asked if the merger speaks to lesbian agencies not being able to stand alone, he replied, "This is and should be one community."

Community leader Art Johnston was in attendance at the announcement, and expressed concern over whether or not the organization will continue its focus on cancer. Jefcoat promised that the focus on cancer would continue, and that the name was changed to reflect LCCP's opportunity to expand its services and programs.

"We aren't abandoning the cancer issue," Cook said, adding that the only change is the expansion of care.

Cook told Windy City Times that as funding



Michael Cook (left, at Saturday's HBHC gala) heads Howard Brown. Photo by Mel Ferrand

sources become tighter, the merger allows both Howard Brown and LCCP to reach out to more women, and only strengthens them both.

Former LCCP Executive Director Jessica Halem was around for the agency's move into Howard Brown's building in 2004, and said the ultimate goal at the time, if all went well, was a merger. She told Windy City Times she has "zero concerns" about the new relationship, and is "thrilled" to hear the news.

"I think it's a great day for people in the community," Halem said, adding that it would be "unethical" for LCCP to not take advantage of the large, holistic healthcare environment Howard Brown has to offer. She hopes that the merger will bring in trans individuals and women by the droves.

Former board member Renae Ogletree also said the news didn't surprise her. "I predicted that [they would merge] three years ago" when LCCP moved into Howard Brown Health Center, she said.

Ogletree expressed some concern over how much LCCP might change as an organization in the long run, and whether or not Howard Brown will include more women on its board in order to account for the merger.



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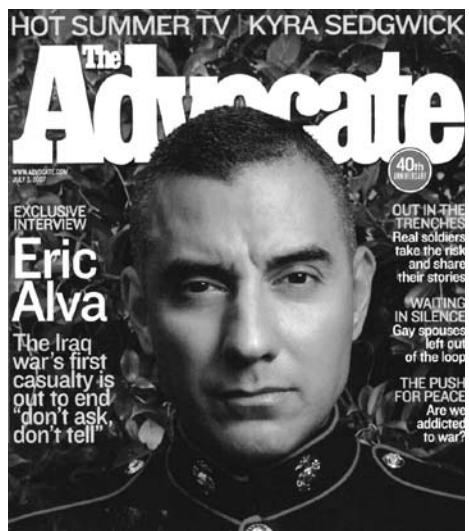
The live charity auction of artworks by prominent Israeli and Palestinian painters, sculptors, photographers, filmmakers and poets offering their interpretations of reconciliation and hope. Proceeds benefit Parents Circle-Families Forum. At SOFA, Friday, November 2, 6:15 pm.



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Eric Alva on the cover of The Advocate.

Eric Alva: Courage Under Fire

BY JEAN ALBRIGHT

Former Marine Staff Sgt. Eric Alva, along with Rochelle Crump, former Assistant Director of Veterans Affairs for the State of Illinois, will speak at the American Veterans for Equal Rights (LGBT Veterans) Veterans Day Dinner, Sun., Nov. 11, 5:30-9 p.m. at the Center on Halsted.

Alva was following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather when he joined the Marines at the age of 19. He had been a Marine for 13 years and was serving in Bagdad when—on March 21, 2003, the first day of Operation Iraqi Freedom—his right foot found a land mine next to his Humvee. One arm was shattered, and one leg was destroyed. Alva became the first casualty of the Iraq War.

On his return to the states and during the early days of his recovery, he was visited by and photographed with Donald Rumsfeld and other dignitaries. He was awarded a Purple Heart by the president. As he adapted to the loss of his leg and returned to health, he began public speaking on both military service and sports participation for the disabled. He appeared in and on everything from the Oprah Winfrey Show to People Magazine to the Runner Triathlete News.

In late 2006, he began to look for opportunities to support another group of which he had been a member—gays in the military. Although he was out and honest with many Marine friends, he said his gay identification had not figured as a primary consideration while he was serving.

"As a Marine, I was all about the work," he said. "If I ever decided to try to meet someone of the same sex for a relationship, I knew that would have to come later in my life."

But, while still in the spotlight as the first injured Marine of the conflict, it bothered him that under the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy an average of two servicemembers a day, many of whom have key skills, were being discharged and that those facts are not widely understood.

In 2006, Alva's partner, Darrell Parsons, was already involved with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and suggested that Alva offer his services to the organization.

"We were interested in the civil rights work and I sent an email asking if there was anything I could do. I assumed that it would be something like running a pride booth. After they'd looked into my credentials, they saw what the opportunity was and asked for a meeting."

He has since traveled widely for speaking engagements and local and national media appearances. He was featured on the Legacy of Service Tour and spoke at the February reintroduction to the House of Representatives of the Military Readiness Enhancement Act.

In March, when Gen. Peter Pace, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), said that he supported Don't Ask, Don't Tell based on his own beliefs that homosexual acts "are immoral," Alva was a prime candidate to respond.

These remarks by the chairman of the JCS, "...were disrespectful and insulting to the thousands of men and women who are serving in the military at this current time under the policy," he told CNN's Paula Zahn.

As he has gone on to educate the public on the ramifications of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Alva said that few questions from the audience surprise him now but some do lead him to spend his time at home on research and getting deeper into related topics.

"You can tell by audience reaction that it is necessary, that it is news to them, by their eyes, their body language," he said. "It has been a blessing to survive the war and now to do this work, helping spread the word about what Don't Ask, Don't Tell really means in the lives of those affected by it."

Some of those questions concern the future of the policy.

"As I watch the debates, and hear support from the Democratic candidates for overturning Don't Ask, Don't Tell—and none from the Republican ones—I'm looking for the next Commander in Chief," he said. "Can they say, 'I support the troops, but, wait, no, if you are not straight, you cannot hope for the same things in life?'

"I've earned their thanks for my service, but how far does that go? This limitation shows that we still accept discrimination. We're attempting to be a model country for the rest of world, and gays serve openly and well in other countries. How much longer are we going to be hypocritical?"

Tickets to the Nov. 11 event are \$40, which covers cocktails and dinner. For info or reservations, call Jim Darby at 773-752-0058.



Larry McKeon. Photo by Hal Bain

McKeon Receives Foundation Grant

Allen A. Schuh, president of The Anderson Prize Foundation, has announced that longtime Illinois activist Larry McKeon is the recipient of the 2007 Stonewall Award, which recognizes his longstanding service to the LGBT community. The \$30,000 unrestricted cash award was presented to McKeon after an anonymous nomination process.

The Anderson Prize Foundation has awarded its Stonewall Awards since 1991 to GLBT and HIV activists. Established by Paul A. Anderson of Chicago before his death of AIDS-related causes in 1992, the Foundation is overseen by Allen A. Schuh, Anderson's companion of 13 years and an attorney residing in San Francisco and Chicago.

"Larry was not only the first openly gay representative in the Illinois legislature," Schuh said. "More courageously, he was one of the first elected representatives in the U.S. who acknowledged being HIV-positive. By his presence and

example as a gay and HIV-positive individual working day-to-day on both [LGBT] and ordinary legislative business, Larry overcame widespread homophobia in government, achieving the largest majority in support of gay and lesbian rights in Illinois history. The Anderson Prize Foundation is pleased to give something back to Larry for his selfless commitment to our community."

"To be honored with The Anderson Prize Foundation's award is especially meaningful, because I knew Paul Anderson and appreciated his important philanthropic work in our communities two decades ago," McKeon said. "The Prize he funded before he died has recognized many activists over the years who might otherwise have gone unacknowledged, and I am honored to be among them."

Among McKeon's legislative achievements is an amendment to the Illinois Human Rights Act, passed in 2005 after 30 years of attempts to achieve state-wide legislation banning discrimination against LGBT citizens. "I am very proud of my success in passing the Human Rights Amendment during my career as a lawmaker," McKeon said.

In addition, McKeon sponsored and achieved passage of revisions to the Illinois organ donor act that allows transplantation of organs between individuals who are co-infected with HIV and viral hepatitis.

McKeon, 63, is an Idaho native who began his public service career more than 40 years ago. He was elected to five consecutive two-year terms in the Illinois House, representing the 13th district on Chicago's North side, "one of the most diverse in the State of Illinois," according to McKeon. He has also served as a director of the City of Chicago's Commission on Human Relations and as Mayor Richard M. Daley's liaison to the Chicago's Gay and Lesbian communities, among other posts.

For a full description of McKeon's career, see www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Gail Morse: On a 'Personal' Mission

BY AMY WOOTEN

Out lesbian co-chair of Personal PAC's upcoming 14th Annual Awards Luncheon, Gail Morse, thinks everyone should be an activist.

After all, she said, issues such as a woman's right to choose impact everyone—even the gay and lesbian community—in some way.

The Annual Awards Luncheon, which takes place Nov. 5, honors pro-choice activists and supporters. The event is the largest fundraiser for Personal PAC, a bipartisan statewide organization that supports pro-choice candidates for office. Marcie Love, who founded Personal PAC at her kitchen table in 1978, will receive the Irving B. Harris Spirit of Choice Award for her activism. (Tracy Fischman and Faith Pennick will receive Pro-Choice Leadership Awards.) This year, the special guest of the event is actress and activist Kathleen Turner.

"She's great because [Turner's] not only a well-known name, but she's also a passionate advocate for women's and children's health," Morse said.

Personal PAC started as an organization that combatted anti-choice legislation. "As it's become more successful, it has been able to become more proactive and supportive legislation and candidates," said Morse, who serves on the organization's board.

Morse is very active in the community, in addition to practicing tax law as a partner at Jenner & Block. She is active in the Women's Bar Association of Illinois and serves on the board of directors for The Women's Treatment Center, Vital Bridges and The Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership. She is also a commissioner on the Cook County Commission on Women's Issues.

As someone who is so active, Morse doesn't understand the complacency so many people have when it comes to political issues.

"We will lose the right to choose if we don't have an organization like Personal PAC out there," she said.

One only needs to look at what happened in Aurora over the opening of a Planned Parenthood clinic, she provided as an example. According to Morse, apathy and the belief that a women's right to choose can't be taken away simply because it's 2007 is a dangerous way to think. The right to choose, she feels, requires "constant vigilance."

"As a lesbian, it's not only that I'm a woman and this is important to me from a health and choice perspective—these are the same people out there who say gay people don't have a right to exist," she said. "Or that we shouldn't be recognized in any formal manner."

Morse, who grew up in the '70s, was inspired by the women's liberation movement. "We thought that was all behind us, but it's not," she said.

As she grew up, Morse was surrounded by activism. Her aunt, who she considers her political mentor, was a union organizer in southern California. She can't remember a time when she wasn't an activist, which is just one more reason why she can't understand widespread apathy.

"Politics affects everything we do from the moment we wake up, to the moment we go to bed," Morse said. "If you think that it doesn't, you're naïve."

"Government is supposed to do what it is supposed to do, which is to provide safety," she said. "It's not supposed to be in my bedroom."

Personal PAC hopes to see a lot of support from the gay and lesbian community at the luncheon. "This issue impacts us not just as gays and lesbian, not just as women, but also as individuals," said Morse.

See www.personalpac.org.

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Dan Majewski. Photo courtesy of Frank Blondale

PASSAGES: Dan Majewski

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Dan Majewski, co-owner of the leather bars Cell Block (Chicago) and the Eagle (Detroit), passed away Oct. 21 in Detroit of a massive heart attack. He was 45.

Majewski was the beloved son of Dorothy and the late Ervin Majewski; the loving brother of David (Gwen) and Kenneth; and the loving partner of Frank Blondale and Thomas Stabnicki. He was also the dear uncle of Tom, Jamie, Kenneth and Marc.

Visitation was held Oct. 24 at Charles R. Step Funeral Home in Redford Township, Mich. There was no funeral because Majewski requested to be cremated.

In a letter that has been posted on several Web sites, including ChicagoDen.com, Blondale said that "[t]he one thing that Dan WAS passionate about was bartending."

Blondale added that "[Majewski] was, at various times, my lover, my best friend, my critic, and my supporter—and he has always been my partner in the unique way that we defined."

When asked what he would miss most about Majewski, Blondale told Windy City Times that it was "being able to go to him with my ideas, and have him temper and guide them."

Blondale—Majewski's business partner as well as a life partner of 26 years—said that a memorial is being planned at the Cell Block in early December, near Majewski's birthday. Details will be made available after they are finalized.

In lieu of flowers, individuals may make contributions to the Chicago HIV/AIDS organization Vital Bridges (www.vitalbridges.org) or Michigan's Triangle Foundation (www.tri.org).

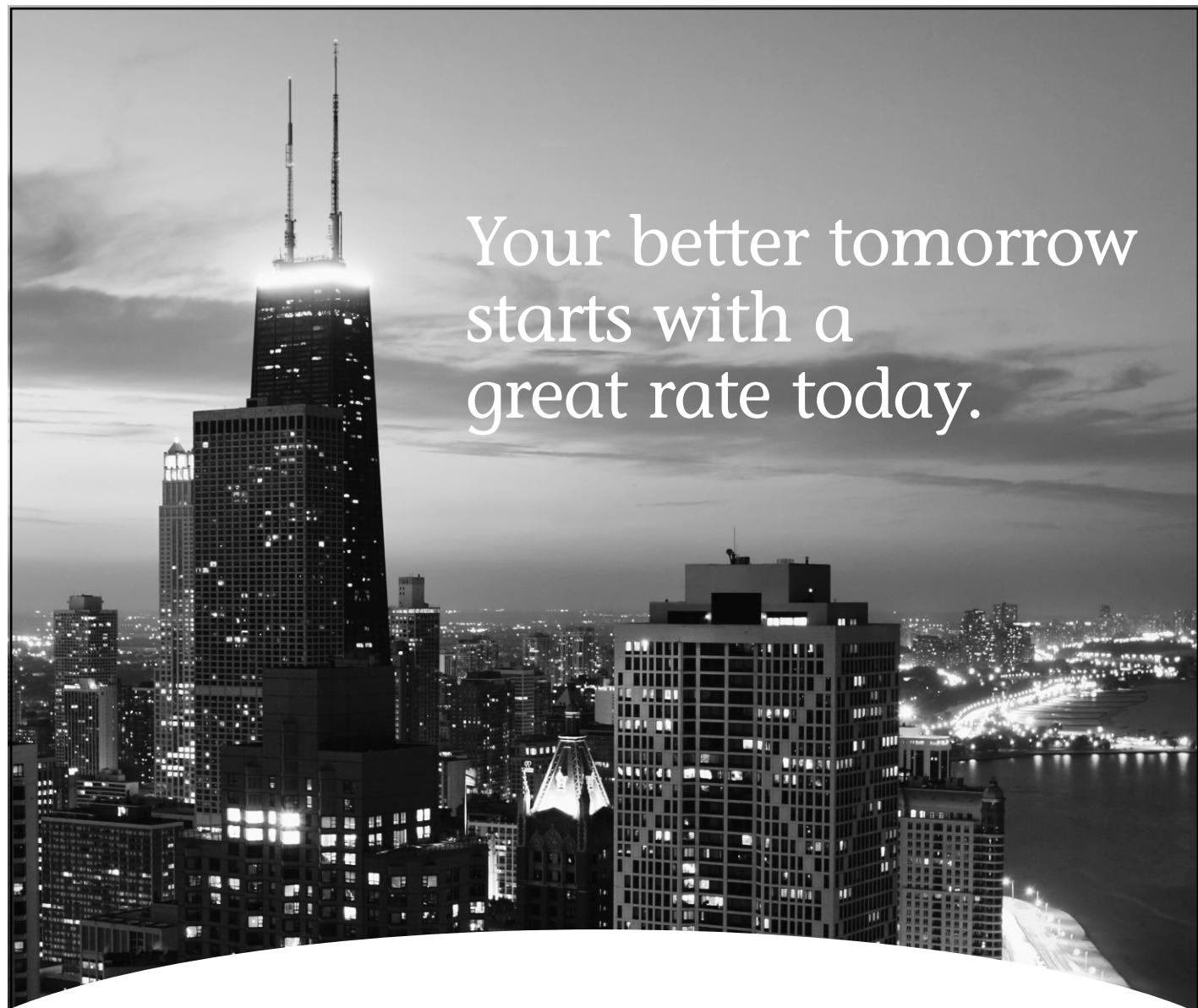
PASSAGES: Roy Hamer

Roy Hamer, a native of Chicago, passed away Oct. 5 from complications arising from prostate cancer. He was 62.

Hamer was born Aug. 19, 1945, in Chicago. He grew up on the South Side of the city, and attended J.N. Thorp and Bowen high schools. He joined the U.S. Army and received an honorable discharge. Hamer then attended Chicago State University and received his degree in nursing. He worked as a registered nurse in various hospitals over 30 years, and retired from Swedish Covenant Hospital in 2006.

Hamer lived most of his adult life on Chicago's North Side in the Lakeview community. For over three decades, he was a faithful and very beloved member of Good Shepherd Parish Metropolitan Community Church.

Hamer is survived by four brothers and two sisters as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins and special friends. Good Shepherd Parish Metropolitan Church will hold a memorial service on Sat., Nov. 10, 4 p.m., in the Wellington Avenue United Church sanctuary, 615 W. Wellington. For more information, call the Metropolitan Community Church InfoLine at 773-262-0099.



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THAT'S NUTS!: The Fight for Our Sanity

BY ERIC MARCUS

Sometimes I think I'm crazy. I'm often anxious, occasionally hypochondriacal. And a deep sense of foreboding flows through my veins as it did through the veins of my great-grandparents, who fled Eastern Europe ahead of pogroms and the Nazis because they knew at a cellular level that bad things were going to happen (there are advantages to expecting the worst when it gets you out of harm's way).

My therapist tells me I'm perfectly normal for a mildly neurotic, middle-aged Jewish gay guy who has just buried his mother, grandmother, and both in-laws over a period of 24 months. But I'm not sure I agree with his benign assessment because I often felt a little crazy long before this current run of bad luck.

If this were 1967 instead of 2007, my suspicions about my sanity (or lack of it) could have easily been confirmed in the pages of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Right there in black and white the American Psychiatric Association (APA) said unequivocally that as a homosexual I was by nature mentally ill.

Kidding aside, I know that the kind of crazy I sometimes feel is no different from what a lot of perfectly normal people experience and it has nothing to do with the fact I'm gay. And by 1973 the APA came around to this idea, voting in that year to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. As one local Philadelphia newspaper archly proclaimed on its front page following the official change of heart: "20 Million Homosexuals Gain Instant Cure."

It's a little hard to imagine today the heavy burden of the "sickness" diagnosis. You could be fired from your job or not hired in the first place. After all, you couldn't possibly employ someone who is mentally ill to teach children, care for the sick, or prepare your taxes. And pity the gay parent trying to hang on to her or his kids in a divorce proceeding.

The sickness diagnosis also meant there was something to cure, which gave rise to a whole industry whose purpose was to help homosexuals recover from their disorder. So in the name of science and the medical and mental health professions, untold numbers of gay men and women were subjected to everything from endless years of fruitless psychoanalysis and devastating electro-convulsive therapy to hormone treatments, aversion therapy ("Now why don't you sit back

GAY HISTORY MONTH

To mark October as Gay and Lesbian History Month, several individuals have written pieces detailing events in history, and their feelings about these happenings. The effort is coordinated by Philadelphia Gay News and syndicated to dozens of gay publications. Windy City Times will run these articles throughout the month of October.

and relax and watch this hot man-on-man porn film while I attach electrodes to your genitals and/or give you this liquid to drink that will induce vomiting..."), and on rare occasion, castration.

The majority of gay women and men were lucky enough to escape the clutches of the mostly well-intentioned professionals, but they were still condemned to the mental torture of living with the knowledge and stigma that they were classified as mentally ill. And for those who tried to cure themselves, the futile pursuit of banishing same-sex attraction was enough to drive even the most grounded gay person over the edge.

While the 1973 de-listing might in retrospect look like a common sense and easy decision, it was in reality a very contentious process and it was years in the making. The seeds of our sanity conversion were, in fact, planted more than six decades ago by a gay, part-time college student, named Sam Fromm. And it was nurtured by a small group of persistent, mostly straight, psychologists and psychiatrists.

Sam Fromm got the ball rolling in 1945 when, after befriending his UCLA psychology professor, Dr. Evelyn Hooker, he urged her to make a study of "people like us." As Dr. Hooker explained to me in a 1989 interview, "This bright young man, somewhere in his early thirties, had obviously been thinking about this for a long time. And by 'people like us' he meant, 'We're homosexual, but we don't need psychiatrists. We don't need psychologists. We're not insane. We're not any of those things they say we are.'"

Realizing that no one had ever thought to question the homosexual sickness label, Dr. Hooker decided to take up Sam's challenge and began her pioneering—and for the time—extremely bold and professionally dangerous research.

For Eric Marcus' full account, please visit www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Eric Marcus is the author of several books on gay issues, including *Is It a Choice?* and his just published book for teens, *What If Someone I Know Is Gay? Answers to Questions About What It Means to be Gay and Lesbian.*

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"SOMETHING CAUGHT MY EYE [AS I SAT ON THE TOILET]. I glanced down. Whether it was foot movement close to my stall, I was spreading my legs and, uh, I saw paper—it looked like it was stuck to the heel of my shoe. Toilet paper. I don't know if you've ever seen anybody walk out of a toilet with toilet paper stuck to their foot. ... I reached down, I pulled it off. My hand went below the divider. Within seconds there was a card underneath saying 'police,' and the motion of the finger to the door. ... [T]his, in my opinion, was an officer who was more interested in an arrest than he was in the facts."

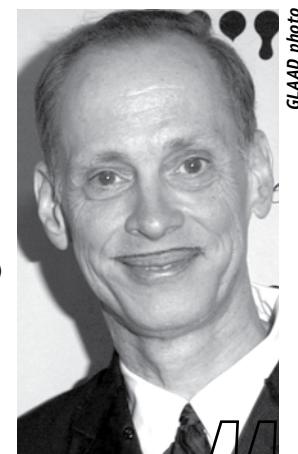
— U.S. Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, to Boise TV station KTVB, Oct. 16. According to the police report, Craig slowly swiped his hand, palm upward, along the bottom of the stall divider with his fingers protruding into the policeman's stall three separate times. To bathroom cruisers, this means, "Come closer to the wall so I can touch you." In a post-arrest interview with the arresting officer on June 11, Craig said, "I remember reaching down once; there was a piece of toilet paper back behind me, and picking it up." This KTVB interview and one the same evening on NBC added the element of the toilet paper being underneath or stuck to Craig's shoe.

"SOMETHING ATTRACTED MY ATTENTION [AS I SAT ON THE TOILET] and I looked down, and as I looked down I saw a piece of toilet paper on the floor and it happened to be under my heel and, uh, I don't know if you've seen it before, but I've seen it—somebody walk out of a booth with a piece of toilet paper stuck to their foot. I reached down to take it off my shoe, or out from under my shoe, and my hand did go below the divider at that moment in time." — U.S. Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, to NBC News, Oct. 16. According to the police report, Craig slowly swiped his hand, palm upward, along the bottom of the stall divider with his fingers protruding into the policeman's stall three separate times. To bathroom cruisers, this means, "Come closer to the wall so I can touch you." In a post-arrest interview with the arresting officer on June 11, Craig said, "I remember reaching down once; there was a piece of toilet paper back behind me, and picking it up." This NBC interview and one the same evening on Boisse's KTVB added the element of the toilet paper being underneath or stuck to Craig's shoe.

"WHILE MANY AMERICANS MAY ONLY BE VAGUELY FAMILIAR WITH THE IDEA OF 'CRUISING' there is a secret world of sex between men that exists in public places across the country. ... Public places like men's restrooms, in airports and train stations, truck stops, university libraries and parks, have long been places where gay and bisexual men, particularly those in the closet, congregate in order to meet for anonymous sex. Over time, people familiar with cruising told ABCNEWS.com, gay men began using a codified system of signals to indicate to others that they were interested in sex." — ABC News covering the Sen. Larry Craig toilet-sex scandal, Aug. 28.

"[REPUBLICAN SAN DIEGO MAYOR JERRY] SANDERS SEEMS TO FOLLOW a wondrous, though not often noticed, law of humanistic

expansion. It goes something like this: When you find your heart, when you look to your own family and your own life and your own soul for the answers and go beyond the limitations of your political handbook and disregard the bitter decrees force-fed to you by some dogmatic religion or belief system, well, chances are just incredibly good you will emerge a tiny bit more progressive or liberal or open-minded than before. Is that not fascinating?" — San Francisco Chronicle columnist Mark Morford Sept. 26 after Sanders abruptly changed his position on gay marriage, announced that his daughter is a les-



I wouldn't call [Pink Flamingos] a gay movie.

—Director John Waters (right)

bian, and added San Diego to a legal brief that urges the California Supreme Court to legalize same-sex marriage.

"THE FUNNY THING ABOUT QUEER EYE with my family, most of which is Southern and conservative and votes very badly: When I told my parents I was doing the show, they were of course completely appalled and terrified. They thought I was going to get killed and they hated the title. And then, about a month after the show started airing and it was such a hit, A, they loved the show against all odds, but B, it was a real gift for my mother because none of my relatives will ever again ask her why I'm not married or don't have a girlfriend." — Queer Eye's Ted Allen to AfterElton.com, Oct. 9.

"I WOULDN'T CALL [PINK FLAMINGOS] A GAY MOVIE AND I ALWAYS AVOIDED that ghetto-isation because when my movies first came out ... the audience wasn't just gay people. And the gay people that did come hated other gay people. They didn't get along in the gay world, they rebelled from that, which I do too. Too many rules. What's gayly correct? I don't want to look like I went to the gym. I've never been to the baths or the gym. I've done way worse, I'm not being high-minded here. I'm probably the only gay man you've ever met that has never been to the baths or the gym. Maybe young ones haven't done it either, but my age, definitely." — Filmmaker John Waters to London's Pink Paper, Sept. 2

"ALL OF MY MOVIES ARE ON TELEVISION. Who would have ever thought that Pink Flamingos would play on regular cable television uncut? I know I'm shocked about it! So that amazes me. Last month, I saw that five of my movies were playing on television and thought, 'Who would have ever imagined that?'" — Gay filmmaker John Waters to San Diego's Gay & Lesbian Times, Oct. 4.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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OBAMA from cover

"McClurkin [is] black, he's popular, and gospel plays big with blacks in South Carolina, especially among evangelical, and many of them openly and even more of the quietly loathe gays."

The candidate and the singer reportedly met at a September fundraiser for Obama hosted by Oprah Winfrey at her California mansion.

H. Alexander Robinson, CEO of the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), said on October 23, "For Sen. Obama to align himself with publicly antigay individuals is both hurtful and disappointing. Rev. Donnie McClurkin once stated that he was at 'war' with the LGBT community, stating, 'The gloves are off and if there's going to be a war, there's going to be a war...I'm not in the mood to play with those who are trying to kill our children.'

The coalition was one of many groups within the gay community who called upon Obama to distance themselves from the antigay rhetoric.

Obama's response

The campaign issued a statement from Obama saying, "I strongly believe that African Americans and the LGBT community must stand together in the fight for equal rights. And so I strongly disagree with Rev. McClurkin's views and will continue to fight for these rights as President of the United States to ensure that America is a country that spreads tolerance instead of division." The singer remained on the program.

The campaign posted the statement on the GLBT segment of the website, but not among the general news releases.

The response prompted blogger John Aravosis to write on Americablog.com, "That's nice Senator. You strongly disagree with the bigot who thinks I need to be cured, and who has declared 'war' on me and my people, but you're going to put the guy on stage with you anyway in order to make a few bucks. Nice. I wonder what Obama would say if Hillary invited [Nazi/racist] David Duke to speak at an event but then said, not to worry, she really loves black people—kisses!"

The Human Rights Campaign was more diplomatic, but not mollified. It expressed appreciation of the gesture by the campaign, but also disappointment that it had not done more. President Joe Solmonese said, "There is no gospel in Donnie McClurkin's message for gay[s]. That's a message that certainly doesn't belong on any presidential candidate's stage."

The Obama campaign belatedly tried to "balance" the situation by adding an openly gay minister to the program. Rev. Andy Sidden is pastor of Garden of Grace United Church of Christ, in Columbia, S.C. It is a former parish of the Metropolitan Community Church. The campaign rejected possible black ministers suggested by the NCBJ.

That created a new set of problems—Sidden is white. Pam Spaulding, writing on her blog pamhouseblend.com, said, "It boggles the mind that the Obama campaign would select a white pastor to deal with a situation that is awash in black homophobia. Politics 101...Barack Obama is clearly showing he doesn't understand the need of the religious black community to see one of their own deliver that message."

"The last thing a crowd of black folks who have a problem with homosexuality needs is: 1) to be 'told' by the Obama campaign that a message about tolerance must be delivered from a white voice of faith, and 2) to have their beliefs confirmed that being gay is 'a white man's perversion.' Coming from a white pastor under these circumstances, can only be seen as paternalistic and patronizing; the shields of defensiveness will go up, the message will be ignored."

The campaign's born-again 25-year-old director of religious affairs, Joshua DuBois, held an Oct. 25 conference call with leaders of the South Carolina Gay and Lesbian Pride Movement to try to defuse the situation. It didn't work; 15-20 members ended up staging a vigil outside the event on Sunday night.

Rather than let the matter die down, McClur-

kin stoked the flames further in the closing segment of the concert. "Don't call me a bigot or antigay when I have suffered the same feelings" he told the audience. "God delivered me from homosexuality. God is the only way."

As John Aravosis wrote the next morning, "In the end, Obama let his 'best' and 'favorite' artist slam gays to thousands of African Americans, in his name, and neither he nor his hand-chosen white gay preacher said anything in response."

Political ineptitude

Chicago political consultant Michael Bauer, who has personal ties to Obama, was appalled by the ineptitude of the campaign staff. He said a principal responsibility of the staff is to make sure that such mistakes do not happen and draw the candidate and media off the message of the day.

But there have been repeated incidents of such gaffes with the gay community and with a broader audience, such as earlier this year in making a weak response to then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Peter Pace's characterization of gays as "immoral."

He blames it on the staff more than the candidate, but acknowledges that Obama must shoulder the ultimate responsibility. Bauer's principal questions are who is going to be held account-

able and who is going to be fired for the political ineptitude.

Bauer made the comparison with George Bush and the President's loyalty to people like Alberto Gonzalez and Donald Rumsfeld who were kept on despite continued screw-ups. "Barack is supposed to be different," said Bauer, "but nobody is getting fired, nobody is being held accountable."

Academician Ken Sherrill said, "Obama may have been caught by surprise with expressions of outrage came from LGBT leaders. The critical point, I fear, is that he didn't know how to handle the dispute. For better or worse, he didn't triangulate and he didn't mediate. He didn't show those qualities of leadership and he didn't show decisiveness."

"Obama's campaign promised to break with the politics of the past, but his behavior in this case is a classic example of the politics of the past," Sherrill said. "I think it's an example of the not-ready-for-prime-time aspect of Obama's candidacy."

The latest Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll shows that Obama "has lost strength in such groups as those with higher education and the affluent, which were the mainstays of his candidacy." This latest misstep is not going to help.

NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY AMY WOOTEN

The dangerous staph germ is killing more people in the U.S. than AIDS, reported the Washington Post. Federal health officials have announced that the germ is also causing more infections than they suspected. The germ causes about 19,000 deaths per year.

New research reveals that gay men, not lesbians, experience labor market discrimination, according to the University of New Hampshire Whittemore School of Business and Economics. The study found gay men working blue-collar, predominately male jobs make less than straight men.

In a forum at BlueNC.com, Jim Neal, North Carolina Democratic challenger to Elizabeth Dole for the Senate, said that he is gay. In response to the statement "I've heard you're gay," from a participant, Neal responded, "I am indeed. No secret and no big deal to me—I wouldn't be running if I didn't think otherwise."

NOTE: For the latest on developments regarding the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), read www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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REV. IRENE MONROE

Obama the vote-whore with 'ex-gay' at his side

It was intended to be an unprecedented example of how Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama's grassroots political campaign could win over just as many religious conservatives as Republicans can. Instead, it has run afoul with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer supporters, as well as others, who bought into Obama's rhetoric as a healer and consensus builder.

At the Values Voter Summit in Washington last weekend, Obama's campaign announced that they, too, could help conservative voters have a voice in the presidential campaign. They then announced they would be hosting the "Embrace the Change! Gospel Series." It's a gospel fest to run in three South Carolina cities—Charleston, Greenwood and Columbia—this coming weekend with gospel mega-star Pastor Donnie McClurkin as part of the concert line-up.

It appeared to be an innocuous announcement showcasing some of gospel music's most successful artists that would mark the final days of Obama's "40 Days of Faith and Family" campaign in South Carolina. But it's actually outing some of the black gospel chitlin' circuit's closeted gays ministers and biggest opponents of queer civil rights.

A reporter at the New York Daily News wrote me in an e-mail asking, "I'm writing a piece ... about Sen. Obama's gospel tour and the fact that one of the performers, Donnie McClurkin, has suggested that gay tendencies can be 'cured' or resisted. ... I'm wondering how you feel specifically about McClurkin acting as an ambassador for Obama to the

African-American Southern Christian community."

Well, let me tell you. McClurkin is the poster boy for African-American ex-gay ministries. "There's a group that says, 'God made us this way,' but then there's another group that knows God didn't make them that way,"

McClurkin has told the media. "Love is pulling you one way and lust is pulling you another, and your relationship with Jesus is tearing you."

In the highly competitive race for black evangelical votes in South Carolina, McClurkin just might give Obama the needed edge. However, that edge will come at a cost far greater than having McClurkin at his side. It comes at revealing how Obama is not only a vote-whore, but a race-card user as well.

The Obama/McClurkin alliance introduces Obama to McClurkin's black and white Southern evangelical base, which thinks Obama is neither Christian nor black enough.

And many observers are starting to realize just how much of a vote-whore Obama is. For example, MSNBC talk-show host Tucker Carlson suggested Obama's faith is "suddenly conspicuous," saying that Obama has only recently begun addressing his religious background as part of "a very calculated plan on the part of the Democratic Party to win" religious voters in the 2008 presidential race.

And though religion came to Obama late in life, and he was reared in a non-religious household, he came to understand "the power of the African-American religious tradition to spur social change." And how much Obama really covets the power of the black church for his own political aggrandizement, rather than for its religion, has raised questions in the minds of many.

When he ran for the U.S. Senate in 2004, Obama campaigned at the Salem Baptist Church on Chicago's South Side. It's the 22,000-member black mega-church of Rev. James Meeks, who has called homosexuality an evil sickness. Outside of the hallowed walls of church the Rev. James Meeks is State Senator James Meeks.

Obama knew to pander to his base.

Obama will continue to speak and write about the special relationship he has with his pastor, the Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, as long as it doesn't run afoul of his ambitions. When news got out about Wright's Afrocentric theology and Sunday sermons that disparagingly speak ill of whites and Israel, Obama immediately distanced himself. Yet these same sermons were not a problem for Obama when they were spiritually nurturing him into becoming a public figure. And when news got out that Wright was to deliver the invocation when Obama formally announced his candidacy in February, Obama canceled his appearance.

Many African Americans also suspect Obama of using the "race card" to win their votes, but his emotional detachment with issues blacks care about is a big turnoff. African-American journalist and CNN contributor Roland Martin stated, "You can't find one major moment where black voters have embraced him and showered him with love. I was highly critical of his performance at the June debate at Howard University because that was his crowd. But he failed to ignite the room. One huge Obama supporter told me that his daughter went to the event backing him, and came out loving [Hillary] Clinton."

According to a recent CNN poll, Clinton leads Obama among black registered Democrats, 57 percent to 33 percent. African-American women overwhelmingly support Clinton 68 percent to 25 percent, whereas African-American men favor Obama 46 percent to 42 percent for Clinton. But it is African-American women who hit the polls in much greater numbers than African-American men.

McClurkin is not the only singer on the gospel tour who has publicly spewed vitriolic statements against LGBTQ people. But he is the biggest one Obama can use to try to win over black evangelical voters.

So once again, Obama is proving that his campaign marketed as "The Audacity of Hope" is really based on the audacity of hypocrisy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

lesbian couples. Indeed, by design, the lobby of Center on Halsted is an intersection between the Center and its neighborhood, between diverse segments of the LGBT community and between LGBT and non-LGBT people. The lobby is a unique space in which straight people will view life through the LGBT prism, which can only lead to greater understanding, awareness and equality.

Although we appreciate and stand on the foundation built by the Stonewall rioters and many activists since, and although we do not judge anyone's desire for a "gay-only" space, we did not create the Center to be exclusionary (as most places once were for us). Our mission is to affirm the LGBT experience, not to be heterophobic. Moreover, while we applaud the author's openness and his commitment to the community, for others whom we serve, acceptance of their own sexual orientation remains a struggle. The community center was purposefully designed so that those wanting anonymity (for example, some participants in our youth program, or a middle-aged married man here to see a therapist) could enter the lobby more comfortably and discreetly through Whole Foods.

We are gratified that we are able to serve so many different LGBT groups and constituents at the Center, from trans art collectives to gay men's and lesbian volleyball leagues, from questioning teenagers to elders seeking social interaction. We welcome ALL people and are proud to do so.

Modesto Tico Valle
Executive Director, Center on Halsted

No to public sex

Dear Editor:

I like to think of myself as middle-of-the-road when it comes to politics. President Eisenhower warned us that taking that position will open you up to the extremes of both sides of an issue. Maybe, because of the fear of being arrested, I never allowed myself to be involved in unlawful activities. In San Francisco during the 1960s, I was invited to a gay-rights group called SIR (Society for Individual Rights) and many of their members advocated having open public sex, wherever and whenever. Needless to say, I did not join the group then, and feel now that public sex, whether gay or straight, is unlawful. Maybe instead of using plainclothes police in stings, they should consider placing uniformed officers near or in places that are used for public sex.

*Jerry Pritikin
Chicago*

NOTE: Letters may be edited for clarity, length or consistency.

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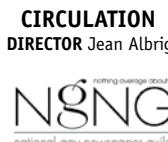
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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



TORI DAYS

Singer Tori Amos, who will be in Chicago next week, talks about her life and music. Read page 22.

PROFILE

Hearty time.
Page 20.



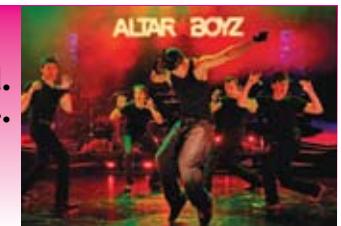
FILM

That lovin' Reeling.
Page 17.



THEATER

Boyz in the band.
Page 14.



Dance Preview: Dance Chicago

BY ERIC EATHERLY

Before we get into the frenzy of holiday madness and Sugar Plum Fairy overload, there is one last dance tradition of the season for us to enjoy. That tradition is Dance Chicago, the month-long dance festival that brings some of Chicago's most vibrant talent together on one stage. What started in 1995 as an audience development project for dance artists has blossomed to an institution unlike anything else in the nation. This year the Dance Chicago season kicks off on Nov. 2 and runs through Dec. 2 at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport. Audiences are offered 13 different programs of predominantly brand-new work, highlighting the richness and diversity of dance art in the Windy City.

The opening weekend (Nov. 2-4) and the grand finale (Dec. 1-2) programs run the gamut on dance genres and include the *crème de la crème* of companies and artists, including River North Chicago, Deeply Rooted Productions, Giordano Jazz Dance, Istanbul Dance Theatre, Lucky Plush Productions, the Joffrey dancers and more. These programs are a great way to get a little sample of everything, ranging from jazz and modern to hip-hop, tap and Irish step-dancing.

New this year to Dance Chicago is the "Anything Goes" program (Nov. 29), a tribute to the late dance critic Ann Barzel. This program includes dance, comedy and cabaret, focusing on the most humorous elements of stage performance. A panel of judges will award the best performance with a \$1,000 prize, so performers will undoubtedly be stepping it up. For audiences hungry for side-splitting physical theater and off-the-charts entertainment value, this program is the one.

Also new this year and certainly not to be missed is the "International Rhythms" program (Nov. 10-11). This unique line-up combines live



Eugene Peabody, Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago. Photo by Marc Hauser

music with a global combination of dance styles. Highlighting the program is Ulele, an independent Chicago band blending ska, salsa and rock-and-roll, led by Winston "Stone" Damon. Also featured are an array of ethnic dance ensembles and live musicians that cover Latin, African, Turkish, Irish, Indian styles and more. The performance is arranged in one continuous flow, creating an evening of multicultural inspiration, high energy and non-stop entertainment.

Returning to the Dance Chicago menu this year is the always popular "Jazz Fusion" program (Nov. 23-25), which exposes audiences to not only the best of the city's jazz dance ensembles—like River North, Giordano Jazz Dance and Jump Rhythm Jazz Project—but also includes artists specializing in tap, hip-hop, urban street dance and every contemporary mixture thereof.

The audiences more intrigued by modern dance will probably enjoy the "New Moves" program (Nov. 8, 9, 15) and the "Best Moves" program (Nov. 17, 30). "New Moves" grants exposure to Chicago's up-and-coming artists, the kind of talent most audiences haven't had the treat of seeing very much before. The "Best Moves" events highlight more established companies or works from more seasoned choreographers. Either way, there will be plenty of enjoyable dancing to be seen.

What would Dance Chicago be without its signature program, "Dance Slam"? "Dance Slam Part 1" (Nov. 13, 20, 27) works like American Idol for dance. This innovative and audience-interactive evening allows dancers, usually large ensembles that focus on precision work, to compete with pieces that are no more than five minutes long for the best audience reaction. "Part 2" (Nov. 28) brings five or six works from each of the three Part 1 programs together for the ultimate dance-off.

Dance Chicago once was a stationary dance festival. But now the organization hits the road with a repertory of only the best Dance Chicago works in "Stars of Dance Chicago." This program, which works like a touring pick-up company, includes choreography by some of the most inventive dance-makers working today, including Laurie Stallings, Eddy Ocampo, Melissa Thodos and more. (Look for a feature on Ocampo in an upcoming issue of Windy City Times.) Chicagoans get to see the program on Nov. 16 and 18 before it dazzles the residents of other cities.

That's hardly where the fun ends. Other programs include the family-friendly "Dance for Kids, Too" (Nov. 3, 10, 17); the "Extended Views" program (Nov. 7 for contemporary, Nov. 14 for hip-hop) that features multiple works by different award-winning choreographers; and the "Holiday Kids Show" (Nov. 24, Dec. 1), which includes excerpts of the most beloved holiday dances.

Dance Chicago is far from a run-of-the-mill dance showcase. Because every single night of its month-long run includes a different collection of artists (including multiple nights of the same program), it's one of the best ways to gain insight into the talent and creativity of established and emerging artists, all in one spot. Dance Chicago has been a building block of our city's choreographers and a launching site for our brightest performers for thirteen years and there's no sign of slowing down.

Please visit www.dancechicago.com.



Christine Ebersole Gets 'Intimate'

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Tony Award-winning musical star Christine Ebersole is in town Fri., Nov. 2, to perform "An Intimate Evening with Christine Ebersole" as a benefit for the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, with legendary pianist Billy Stritch accompanying her. Ebersole grew up in Winnetka and attended New Trier High School before attending the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York.

"I left college when I was 20 and moved to New York City—by myself," she said. "My very first job singing—one of my very first auditions—was at the Continental Baths. And I worked as a jazz singer at this place called Gypsy's. Then after that I worked as a waitress, and it was from there that I got a Broadway show. It wasn't a musical, it was a play called Angel Street with Dina Merrill. And, of course, when the show closed in three weeks I was back begging for my old waitress job."

Individual tickets to "An Intimate Evening with Christine Ebersole" are \$500-\$750. Call 312-922-2110, ext. 368, or amartinez@auditoriumtheatre.org.

For much more about Ebersole, see www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

NOVEMBER 2007

BUILDING TOURS

SATURDAYS: NOV 3 | NOV 10 | NOV 17 | NOV 24
 Meet in the Amy N. Maggio Lobby — 1:00p **FREE**

COMMUNITY, CULTURAL & LEGAL PROGRAMS

WEEKLY EVENTS

MONDAYS: NOV 5 | NOV 12 | NOV 19 | NOV 26

> Co-ed Open Gym: Volleyball —
 6:00p – 9:00p **Donations accepted**

TUESDAYS: NOV 6 | NOV 13 | NOV 20 | NOV 27

> Card Night: Bridge — 6:00p instruction, 6:30 play **FREE**
 > Card Night: Euchre — 6:30p informal; 7:30p formal. **\$3/game**

WEDNESDAYS: NOV 7 | NOV 14 | NOV 21 | NOV 28

> Women on Wednesdays — 5:00p – 8:00p 21 & older.
 > Women's Open Gym-Basketball — 5:00p – 7:00p

> Women's Game Night — 6:00p – 8:00p

THURSDAYS: NOV 1 | NOV 8 | NOV 15 | NOV 29

> Co-ed Open Gym-Basketball —
 6:00p – 9:00p **Donations accepted**

> ALMA: Our Multiple Identities and the Power of Them/
Nuestras Identidades el Desarrollo y Poder de Cada Una —

6:30p – 9:30p Register at info@almachicago.org

THURSDAYS—SATURDAYS: NOV 1 – DEC 8 — 8:00p

\$20 adults; \$15 students/seniors; \$10 Industry Thurs.

> Hubris Productions: *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*
 by Alan Ball. Hoover-Leppen Theatre. For reservations and

tickets: 773.661.0938 or visit www.hubrisproductions.com.

SUNDAYS: NOV 4 | NOV 11 | NOV 18 | NOV 25

> Worship Services by achurch4me MCC — 11:00a **FREE**

> Pillar of Love Fellowship Church Services — 1:00p **FREE**

SPECIAL PUBLIC EVENTS

Sat Saturday, NOV 3

03 > Man Alive Conference — 9:00a – 5:00p.

Register at www.tpan.org.

> *¡Siempre Latina! Amigas Latinas 2007 Gala Dinner* — 7:00p
\$60 advance, \$70 at door. Open bar, silent auction, raffle,
 entertainment, dancing. Garden Manor, 4722 W. Armitage.
 Visit www.amigaslatinas.org for more information.

Thu Thursday, NOV 8 — 6:00p – 8:00p **Donations accepted**

08 Financial Planning for Unmarried Couples.

Fri Friday, NOV 9 — 7:00p **Self pay**

09 Windy City Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf (WCRAD) Coffee Social. Caribou Coffee, 3500 N. Halsted St., Chicago

Sat Saturday, NOV 10

> The Conspicuous Family —
 10:00a – 11:30a **Donations accepted**

> COLAGE — 11:00a – 1:00p **FREE**

Monthly meeting for parents of children age 13–18.

Sat Saturday, NOV 10

> International Mr. Rubber Conference & Workshops —

11:00a – 6:00p **FREE** www.mirubber.com/home.php

> Change: Black Sexuality in the 21st Century —

12:30p – 3:30p **\$15** achurch4me and Sankofa Way cosponsor. Ends with special Sunday worship service. Visit www.change.sankofaway.org or www.achurch4me.org.

Sun Sunday, NOV 11 — 5:30p – 9:00p **\$40**

15th Annual Veterans Day Dinner. For info or reservations, call Jim Darby, 773.752.0058.

Reeling Film Festival at Center on Halsted

For film descriptions & tickets, visit reelingfilmfestival.org.

Mon Monday, NOV 12

12 6:30p Documentary: *Jerusalem is Proud to Present*
 Shorts: *The Last Visit, A Trip to Prague, A Prayer in January*
 8:30p — *Kevin's Room III: Together*

Tue Tuesday, NOV 13

13 6:30p — *On the Down Low*
 8:00p — OUTstanding Lesbian & Gay Shorts: *Pariah, Night Falls*
Fast, For the Love of God, Kali Ma, The Saddest Boy in the World

Wed Wednesday, NOV 14

14 6:00p — *The Gendercator* Panel discussion follows.
 8:30p — *Gender Redesigner*

Wednesday, NOV 14 — 6:00p – 8:00p **Donations accepted**
 Women and Money Matters: What's Your Credit Worth?

Fri Friday, NOV 16 — 6:30p – 9:00p **\$10**

16 Booksigning: Alix Olson and Other Word Warriors perform works from *Word Warriors: 35 Women Leaders in the Spoken Word Revolution*. Reception: 6:30p; Performance: 7:00p;
 Signing: 8:30p.

Sat Saturday, NOV 17 — 7:00p **\$20 donation**

17 "31 Flavors of Sex" Workshop & Tour of Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave. Hosted by International Deaf Leather. RSVP at www.wcrad.org.

Sun Sunday, NOV 18 — 3:30p – 8:00p

18 Day of Remembrance Candlelight Vigil in Memory of Trans Victims of Hate Crime

Mon Monday, NOV 19

19 > First-Time Home Buying —
 6:00p – 8:00p **Donations accepted**
 Citibank at Work and legal experts presents facts on purchasing a home and protecting your property.
 > Film Screening: *Pursuit of Equality* — 7:00p – 9:30p **\$10**
 Sponsored by Equality Illinois, Lambda Legal & Center on Halsted.

Tue Tuesday, NOV 20 — 6:00p – 8:00p **Donations accepted**

20 Saving and Investing (for ages 21–30). Learn the basics.

Sat Saturday, NOV 24 — 11:00a – 4:00p **\$5/person**

24 Co-ed Open Volleyball. RSVP culture@centeronhalsted.org

Sun Sunday, NOV 25 — 11:00a – 4:00p **\$5/person**

25 Co-ed Open Basketball. RSVP culture@centeronhalsted.org

Mon Monday, NOV 26 — 6:30p – 8:30p **\$10**

26 A Conversation with Achy Obejas. Book release party for *This Is What Happened in Our Other Life*.

Wed Wednesday, NOV 28

28 > Women & Money Matters Series: *How Can I Get the Job I Want?* — 6:00p – 8:00p **Donations accepted**
 > Dyke Mic 2.0 — 8:00p – 9:30p **\$10**

Performances by Gwen Mitchell, AquaMoon & Carrie Lydon.

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 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60613 tty: 773.472.1277

YOUTH EVENTS

Tue **06** Tuesday, NOV 6 — 5:30p **FREE**
Yoga

Thu **08** Thursday, NOV 8 — 5:30p
GLOCY (Gay Lesbian Outreach Center for Youth). Explore & talk about spiritual matters.

Sun **18** Sunday, NOV 18 — 7:00p – 9:00p
Night of Fallen Stars Reception & Performance. Celebrating Chicago's transgender community & friends lost to gendered hate crimes. Part of the Trans National Day of Remembrance Vigil.

Wed **21** Wednesday, NOV 21 — 7:00p – 9:00p
\$10; \$5 students; \$3 youth program members
Gender Queer Cabaret. Chicago's most recognized gender benders in a performance developed from the Youth Program's Kings and Divas Trans/formation Workshops.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Mon. – Thurs. Group time: 5:30p
Sat. Programming: Noon – 5:00p

MONDAYS

- > **Meditation/Feelin' Good** — Learn relaxation techniques, the art of meditation & how to care for yourself.
- > **Young Men's Group** — Discussion group.
- > **Zee's Discussion Group** — Youth-guided discussion.

TUESDAYS

- > **Up and OUT** — Sign up at jbrown@centeronhalsted.org.
- > **Teen Talk Group** — Focusing on topics that impact teens.
- > **Above the Belt** — Art and discussion designed to address issues related to dating, relationships & violence.
- > **FREE & Confidential HIV Testing by CHRRPY** — Ask for Luis.

WEDNESDAYS

- > **Youth Gym** — 4:00p – 5:00p, 7:00p – 8:00p
- > **Job Club** — 4:00p – 5:00p Career services for ages 13–24.
- > **Become a Peer Educator** — 5:30p

Sign-up required: Jeremy at jcarter@centeronhalsted.org

GROUPS

- > **Dance Class** — Prepare for a performance.
- > **Women's Group** — Led by & for lesbian & bi women.
- > **BELONG/Peer Education** — Learn the ABCs of HIV.

THURSDAYS

- > **Youth Gym** — 4:00p – 5:00p, 5:30p – 6:30p
- > **Your Future** — Goal-oriented? If yes, this group is for you!
- > **Let's Talk About Sex** — Education about HIV & safer sex.
- > **Art Group** — Express yourself!
- > **Illinois Safer School Alliance Workshop** — 5:30p

Beginning NOV 8. Learn activism & how to create safer schools.

FRIDAYS

- > **Youth Volleyball Games** — 4:00p – 6:00p Ages 13–24. Challenge other youth programs in a volleyball game.

SATURDAYS

- > **Art Expression, Movie Making and Movie Watching**
- > **Drag/Diva Workshops** — Check Web site for times.
- > **About Face Theatre/Youth Workshop** — 12:00p – 2:00p

Contact Paula at paula@aboutfacetheatre.com for info.

Youth programming supported in part by:

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www.polkbrothersfoundation.org

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UBS

Call the **LGBT InfoLine** for general information on Chicagoland LGBT resources & events:
773.929.HELP (4357)

MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

WEEKLY GROUPS

MONDAYS: NOV 12 | NOV 19 | NOV 26

- > **Women's Support Group** — 7:00p – 8:30p **\$15/week**

TUESDAYS: NOV 6 | NOV 13 | NOV 20 | NOV 27

- > **Coming Out, Coming Home Support Group** —

2:00p – 3:00p **FREE**

- > **When You Care: Support for Those Whose LBTQA Loved Ones Are Struggling with Substance Abuse** —

7:00p – 8:30p **Fee based**

WEDNESDAYS: NOV 7 | NOV 14 | NOV 21 | NOV 28

- > **Mental Health Rainbow Group** — 3:00p – 4:00p **FREE**

THURSDAYS: NOV 1 | NOV 8 | NOV 15 | NOV 29

- > **HIV Support Group for LGBT Individuals** —

7:00p – 8:30p **FREE**

SATURDAYS: NOV 3 | NOV 10 | NOV 17 | NOV 24

- > **Men's Support Group** — 1:00p – 2:30p **\$15/week**

MONTHLY EVENTS

Tue **06** Tuesday, NOV 6

- > **Bisexual Women's Support Group** — 6:30p – 8:00p **Fee based**

> **LGBTQ Grief & the Holidays** — 7:00p – 8:30p **\$5**

Mon **12** Monday, NOV 12 — 7:00p – 8:30p **\$5**

- > **Monthly LGBTQ Grief Group.** Partnership with Rainbow Hospice.

Tue **13** Tuesday, NOV 13 — 6:30p – 8:00p **Fee based**

- > **Bisexual Women's Support Group.**

Fri **16** Friday, NOV 16 — 9:00a – 1:00p **\$75; \$40 grad students w/ID**

An Introduction to the Gottman Method of Relationship Therapy: Addressing Gay & Lesbian Couples: Seminar for marital therapists and grad students provides an introduction to the Gottman Method and applies it to same-sex couples.

Sat **17** Saturday NOV 17 — 10:00a – 1:00p **\$15**

- > **Women's Coming Out Workshop**

- > **Men's Coming Out Workshop**

Saturday NOV 17 — 10:30a – 12:00p **Donation**

LGBT New Parent Peer Support Group. Monthly drop-in for new parents with children up to age 5.

Tue **27** Tuesday, NOV 27 — 6:30p – 8:00p **FREE**

- > **Immigrant Support Group/**

Grupo de Apoyo para Inmigrantes.

12-STEP PROGRAMS

FRIDAYS: NOV 2 | NOV 9 | NOV 16 | NOV 30

- > **CMA Beginners Group** — 7:00p – 9:00p

- > **SCA Group** — 7:00p – 9:00p

Call 773.243.2301 or visit www.scachicago.org

SATURDAYS: NOV 3 | NOV 10 | NOV 17 | NOV 24

- > **Gay & Straight Together NA** — 11:30a – 1:00p

SUNDAYS: NOV 4 | NOV 11 | NOV 18 | NOV 25

- > **Sober Horizons** — 9:00a – 11:00a

- > **SCA Group** — 7:00p – 9:00p

Call 773.243.2301 or visit www.scachicago.org

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Altar Boyz. Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW

Altar Boyz

Playwright: Music by Gary Adler and Michael Patrick Walker, book by Kevin Del Aguila
At: Drury Lane, Water Tower Place, 175 E. Chestnut
Phone: 312-642-2000; \$45-\$55
Runs through: Jan. 6

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

With harmonies that are tighter than, oh, a virgin's butt and dance moves as irresistible as a big ol' slab of sirloin on the last Friday of Lent, the Altar Boyz could probably turn the Apostles' Creed into a TRL hit. Both a send-up of the pop-tastic wonders of boy bands and a satire on the genre wherein prettiness is more important than vocal chops, the Altar Boyz roars from start to finish in a blaze of delightfully superficial glory.

Thanks to Stafford Arima's play-it-broad-as-Mount-Sinai direction and Christopher Gatelli's spectacular choreography, Altar Boyz is so stupid it's smart, and it pops with the kind of athleticism that wouldn't be out of place at an elite-level gymnastics meet.

The plot is communion wafer-thin: The Boyz are giving the final concert of a world tour during which they've been saving souls with the help of corporate sponsor Sony and a fancy (Sony) contraption known as the Soul Sensor DX12. At the start of the show, the Soul Sensor indicates (with plenty of drama-inducing stage fog and neon and shiz) that a whopping 500 souls in the house are damned. Through song, dance and bad jokes about Mel Gibson, the Boyz bring that number down to zero.

Musical director Alan Bukowiecki has the boys mixed to sonic-boom levels, which means that Gary Adler and Michael Patrick Walker's hookahlicious score slams into the eardrums and sets them pounding like you're in the front row at an Alice Cooper concert—which is a good thing. And while the Boyz mesh vocally into a single entity during ensemble numbers, each member has a distinct personality.

Matthew (Nick Lachey doppelganger Devin DeSantis) is the blindingly earnest lead singer, an All-American Eagle-Scout-on-white-bread heartthrob. Mark (Brian Crum, prettier than Miss America—and I mean that in a good way) is the fantabulously flaming homo whose soul-baring, coming-out anthem, Epiphany, makes one proud

to be a Catholic. Luke (Tyler McGee, channeling his inner K-Fed) goes for Vanilla Ice-style street cred, rapping about bling for the King and busting one jaw-dropping dance move after another. Abraham (Nick Verina) is the Jew in the group and the lyricist behind such pro-abstinence ballads You Make Me Wanna Wait. And Juan (Adam Zelasko) is the hot-tamale Mexican *señor* whose dance moves are as spicy as his Frito Bandito accent.

If you're offended by any of this, you might want to leave before the Boyz bring out the rosary beads, crucifixes (crucifixii?) and Stars of David for the big dance off/exorcism.

"We are the Altar Boyz/and we're gonna alter your minds," they warble in one wondrously lame lyric. If they don't exactly succeed on that front, they do offer up 85 minutes of the most fun one can have this side of the seven deadly sins.

THEATER REVIEW

Créole

Playwright: M.E.H. Lewis
At: InFusion Theatre Company at the Storefront, 66 E. Randolph
Phone: 312-742-8497; \$20
Runs through: Nov. 18

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

"Créole" technically refers to descendants of foreign-born colonialists in the American South, but soon acquired specific connotations of "mixed-ethnicity" lineage. Forget that Europeans and Africans on the Mediterranean rim had been intermarrying for centuries—the New World racial distinctions were based in the economy of commercial growers requiring a large resident labor force drawing only room and board for their wages. A slave who mothered a child sired by her owner might enjoy favored status among the servants, and the offspring privileged to learn a trade or even pursue an education—but under no circumstances would they be granted the sta-

tus of free citizens while their guardians lived.

It's helpful to know these things going into M.E.H. Lewis' play because her characters, though ostensibly raised within their region's "particular institution," seem as unaware of its intricacies as if they had been dropped in from another planet. Not only do the young slaves, Tom and Cora, want things they are unlikely to get but they want them now, their impatience leading them to reject what practical means of attaining their goals are at their disposal in favor of methods guaranteeing unnecessary risk. Their elders, both Black and white—who ought to be advising them of other options—likewise exhibit a curious ignorance of their own social dynamics.

Lewis' superficial view of her dramatic universe often leads us to entertain suspicions regarding the characters' motives. If quadroon Cora and plantation owner Lucius harbor genuine affection for one another, then his offer to care for her and their illegitimate child is a generous one, given their circumstances. But her decision to abort the baby she carries paints her as an opportunist piqued at the failure of her seduction-and-pregnancy scheme. And if we are to sympathize with Tom's hideous fate, we must turn a blind eye to his own disregard for self-preservation. Yes, young people are often reckless, but what about adults who do nothing to ward off the inevitable suffering?

This InFusion production supplies sufficient spectacle to blur its text's comic-book ambience: choreographer Kimosha P. Murphy and a corps of athletic dancers contribute African-influenced kinetic interludes, an uncredited stagesside percussionist punctuates the action with ticklish rhythms, Eve Breneman's dialects are irreproachable and Don Tieri delivers a mentorly performance as the gentleman plantation-owner no worse than his times. But without a plausible story, we cannot benefit from the facts recounted in this elementary school-level history lesson.

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THEATER REVIEW**Jersey Boys**

Playwright: Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice;
Music: Bob Gaudio; **Lyrics:** Bob Crewe
At: LaSalle Bank Theatre, 18 W. Monroe
Phone: 312-902-1400; \$25-\$95
Runs through: April 18

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Near the end of Jersey Boys, the 2006 Tony Award-winning Broadway musical based upon the lives of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons, one guy says being inducted into Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is the greatest honor you could ever receive. I disagree.

I feel being immortalized in a hit Broadway musical is a greater way of being celebrated than having your hit tunes stored in a Cleveland museum or culled for oldies CD compilations sold on TV. Think about it: Would the jazz great Fats Waller or stripper Gypsy Rose Lee have such a legendary status today if their work wasn't constantly being celebrated and dramatized respectively in stage revivals of Ain't Misbehavin' or Gypsy?

By being transformed into musical theater characters of amazingly talented New Jersey guys who skyrocketed to fame on their unique rock-and-roll sound, Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons will live on and on as Jersey Boys keeps on being staged.

Broadway is littered with jukebox musicals that crashed and burned despite having song catalogues of Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan or The Beach Boys to name a few. What sets Jersey Boys apart is book writers Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice keep the songs sequentially attached to their creators instead of trying to shoehorn them into other contexts like the brainless ABBA campfest of Mamma Mia.

Having a dynamic director like Des McAnuff (The Who's Tommy) who knows how to keep all the great stage pictures and heartfelt emotions moving at a constantly cinematic pace is priceless, especially in Klara Zieglerova's whiz-bang set of moving locales lit to moody perfection by lighting designer Howell Binkley.

It also helps to have a tireless cast who perform marathon singing with strong acting chops showing the difficulties that come with massive fame, fortune and mob ties. Drew Gehling as songwriter Bob Gaudio, Michael Ingersoll as bass Nick Massi, Jeremy Kushnier as wiseguy Tommy DeVito and, especially, Jarrod Spector as Frankie Valli are all great performers, dispelling the slightest notion that you're watching what is essentially a super-talented tribute band.



Jersey Boys. Photo by Joan Marcus

Great character work also comes from Craig Laurie as effete record producer Bob Crewe, Rashad Naylor in a slew of characters alongside the trio of Jenny Lee Ramos, Lauren Marshall and Lyndsey Cole, who dizzyingly play all the women's roles.

Right now what overwhelmingly helps Jersey Boys is the heartfelt nostalgia of aging baby boomer audiences who once danced to, grew up with or fell in love alongside these distinctive tunes. I guess it's a generational thing, but I wasn't moved to instantly applaud as other audience members recognized song hits like Walk Like a Man or Can't Take My Eyes Off You. My first

exposure to The Four Seasons was hearing Sherry on TV commercials for cherry licorice and Big Girls Don't Cry as a Sesame Street educational parody, Big Birds Don't Fly.

Even if Jersey Boys is a by-the-numbers stage bio, it's so slickly produced and entertaining that it's still an energizing night of theater. Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons couldn't have asked for better show-biz immortality than Jersey Boys.

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Eddie Collins in *Twilight of the Golds*.

THEATER REVIEW **Twilight of the Golds**

Playwright: Jonathan Tolins
At: Apple Tree Theater, 1850 Green Bay,
 Highland Park
Phone: 847-432-4335; \$38-\$48
Through Nov. 11

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The scientific community is a long way off from discovering if there is a "gay gene" or a biological cause for homosexuality. But that hasn't stopped us from speculating that such a discovery would bring either greater acceptance—or a final solution-type push to fix or eradicate anyone with same-sex inclinations.

This debate is what spurred Queer as Folk writer Jonathan Tolins to pen his ham-fisted and semi-dated 1993 Broadway drama *Twilight of the Golds*, now being revived by Apple Tree Theatre. If you think the title sounds deliberately close to Richard Wagner's final Ring Cycle opera *Götterdämmerung* (*Twilight of the Gods* in translation), you would unfortunately be correct.

Tolins symbolically apes Wagner's operas of the corrupt Norse gods' destruction and subsequent cleansing of the earth to aggrandize his

own drama, which is actually more like a poorly written what-if TV movie-of-the-week. Oh yeah, *Twilight of the Golds* was, in fact, turned into a cable TV movie with Brendan Fraser and Jennifer Beals in 1997.

The play explores how expectant Jewish New York yuppie couple Rob Stein (Steven Marzof) and his wife, Suzanne Gold-Stein (Elise Kauzlaric), deal with futuristic medical technology that shows all biological and genetic signs suggesting that their son will grow up to be "like David," Suzanne's stereotypical opera-loving gay brother (Eddie Collins).

The news sends the whole family into a tailspin, including Suzanne's parents, Walter (Larry Wiley) and Phyllis Gold (Brigid Duffy), who already had to deal with raising a gay son. Suzanne and Rob weigh whether or not to abort, which causes the close-knit family to rupture.

This issue is certainly an important one to ponder, especially given that Nobel Prize-winning DNA scientist James Watson, the same geneticist who suggested years ago that women should be able to abort gay children, made recent headlines with racist genetic comments toward Africans. But the script of *Twilight of the Golds* is just inconsistent when it comes to its shallow and self-absorbed characters (it's also unclear whether David is HIV-positive, which would explain some of the more insensitive family comments). The script also hasn't aged well, especially with 1980s Wall Street insider trader Ivan Boesky being used as a punch line.

All this could be partially forgiven if director Tim Gregory had assembled a stellar cast at Apple Tree Theatre. Unfortunately, the substandard dramatic material defeats this game and slightly miscast ensemble who can't convincingly plumb the depths of the characters' hidden biases that get blurred out (except for maybe Collins as David).

Twilight of the Golds is clearly a flawed piece of theater. But at least it gets people thinking and talking about what they might do in that situation and urges you to take sides.

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THEATER REVIEW Sweatily Ever After

Playwrights: Dorothy Milne, Clare Nolan, Martie Sanders and Pamela Webster
At: The Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark
Phone: 773-868-4620; \$20
Runs through: Nov. 18

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

"Can I just make up a word here?," Sweat Girl Martie Sanders asks midway through her autobiographical monologue on trying to have a baby. Can she ever: "Flabbergastation." The word is the perfectly simple and completely complex punch line for a situation that's simultaneously hilarious and heart-tugging. It wouldn't do to reveal the context here so, suffice to say, Sanders' tale of a toe infection and an ER room doc reveal both the jaw-dropping depths of "ignoramanicality" physicians are capable of and the need for an addition to the English language.

"Flabbergastation" is one of the many perfectly assembled words that propel *Sweatily Ever After*, the latest offering from the monologists collectively known as The Sweat Girls. The Girls (the name is the result of a long-ago, late-night barroom confab) have been performing for 14 years, spinning the days of their lives if not into gold, then certainly into ingeniously compelling stories threaded through with wisdom, humor and insight. There's an honesty to the Sweat Girls that eludes many another monologist: Let the Spalding Grays (R.I.P.) of the world spin stagecraft from swimming to Cambodia and other such wildly melodramatic stuff; the Sweat Girls lack all pretension as they illuminate the extraordinary within the usual and the profundity in the everyday.

Ever After finds the girls casting pages from their lives into a context of fairy-tale archetypes. Directed by Ann Boyd and written and performed by Sanders, Dorothy Milne, Clare Nolan and Pamela Webster, the collection of interlocking stories twirls around motifs of witches, princesses and universal yearnings.

Ever After doesn't break new ground: Maturity, men and the wonder and vulnerability of childhood are not new themes. But as mined by Sweat Girls, they gleam with bright clarity and brim with fearless authenticity. There's a contagious gusto to the production, a full-hearted rambunctious verve that comes from embracing life in all its exasperating, exhilarating messiness. The Girls pull the audience through raging traffic snarls and weeping, lonesome sorrows, from the roaring catharsis of adolescent howls to the suburban tragedy of the sorceress next door.

The last opens and closes *Ever After*, in Nolan's beguiling two-part tale of Hecate, the pastor's wife who made the irredeemable mistake of celebrating her witchhood during Sycamore's annual Pumpkin Fest Parade. Milne's devilish explications of her magical powers over angry motorists, feral animals and boys who might be vampires is equally enchanting as is Webster's evocation of the gales and gusts that defined key moments of her life. And then there's Sanders, part of the storied couple who longs for a child, but in a world where magic beans are hard to come by. It's a tale that leaves one primed for whatever comes after *Ever After*.

CRITICS' PICS

The Crucible, Steppenwolf, through Nov. 11. Amid the hysteria of the McCarthy era, Arthur Miller invoked an earlier time in U.S. history, notably the events that gave us the term "witch hunt," and now Steppenwolf thinks we need to take another look. MSB

I Do! I Do!, American Theater Company, through Nov. 4. She's a virgin, he's not. That's how it was once, as seen by the authors of *The Fantasticks* in this warm two-character musical that follows a marriage through 50 years. A charming revival in its final days. JA

The Sparrow, The House Theatre of Chicago at Apollo Theatre; through Dec. 31. Bask in the glow of this hot homegrown show that cinematically presents a superhero story with plenty of style and emotion. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

SPOTLIGHT

Phantom of the Opera; Phantom



Double your phantom, double your fun, two masks always are better than one. Complete with mystical lake and crashing chandelier, the Andrew Lloyd Webber version of **The Phantom of the Opera** (left) returns to Chicago (yet again), this time to the Cadillac Palace Theatre, through January 5; 312-902-1400; \$28-\$85. Meanwhile, Porchlight Music Theatre continues its run of a rival musical version, **Phantom**, by American authors Maury Yeston and Arthur Kopit. At Theatre Building Chicago through Nov. 11; 773-327-5252; \$34-\$35. For spectacle go Downtown, although you won't learn the Phantom's name or how he came to be a seductive but murderous musical maniac. For that back story, take in the Yeston/Kopit version. Photo by Carol Rosegg



Reeling 2007 Overview

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Hollywood scorecard's with regard to LGBT movie fare has been poor to non-existent this past year further emphasizing the anomaly of 2005's *Brokeback Mountain*, *Capote*, *et al.* But with Reeling 2007, Chicago's International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, our cup of LGBT-themed movies is about to run over. On Nov. 8-18, Chicago will be gay movie central, with movies and short subjects from 28 countries in virtually every genre.

This is Reeling's 26th year, and a stellar event is planned. Celebrities from RuPaul to Bruce Vilanch will provide star wattage and the festival has added more pre- and post-screening parties. **Shelter**—the tale of Zach (Trevor Wright), a poor young artist and surfer who unexpectedly finds himself in lust and in love with his wealthy best friend's older brother (Brad Rowe of *Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss*), is the opening-night selection. Saddled with the responsibility of helping to raise the son of his party-girl sister, Zach tries to juggle the difficulty of coming out and making a life for himself as an artist and

his newfound love. Not too heavy and not too light, this is perfect opening night fare. The 8 p.m. screening will be preceded by a 6 p.m. surfing-themed party (with *hors d'oeuvres* and open bar), appropriate given Shelter's California beach locale. Both will be held at the Chicago History Museum.

The festival's first week Spotlight Presentation (Nov. 9 at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema) is *A Four Letter Word*, writer-director Casper Andreas' sequel to 2004's *Slutty Summer*. In this installment, sexy party boy Luke finds himself (gasp!) committing the gay mortal sin of falling in love. As the set-up would suggest, this falls right in line with other gay sex comedy romps like *Another Gay Movie* and *Eating Out 2: Sloppy Seconds*. If male eye candy is your thing, *A Four Letter Word* is your movie. An after party with *hors d'oeuvres* and cocktails follows the 7:30 p.m. screening.

Jamie Babbit, director of lesbian favorite *But I'm a Cheerleader* and last year's underappreciated *The Quiet*, returns with the black comedy **Itty Bitty Titty Committee**. Babbit's movie follows a young innocent as she's indoctrinated into an underground feminist group. This special event, on Nov. 16 at 7 p.m., is at Film Row Cinema at Columbia College and will be followed by a 9 p.m. after party at Crimson Lounge, 333 N. Dearborn, that will include food, cocktails, live entertainment and giveaways from "The L Word." Stars of the Showtime series and the film may be on hand as well.

2 Minutes Later is Reeling's second Spotlight Presentation. The film, which is described as a cross between *film noir* and a buddy movie, equally balances gay and lesbian characters. The 9 p.m. screening at Film Row Cinema will be followed by an after party at River East Art Center, 435 E. Illinois, that will also feature an art exhibit.

The festival's gala closing night will again begin with a 6 p.m. reception at the Chicago History Museum followed by the 7:30 p.m. screening of **The Curiosity of Chance**, a charming, off-beat, queer-themed homage to '80s teen comedies. The film stars the adorable Tad Hilgenbrink (an Illi-

nois native), a high school senior and transfer to a new school who is the immediate target of the typical bullying jock. Tad, abetted by a group of other outsiders, fights back with queer panache and ingenuity, all the time nursing a crush on his super-hottie next-door neighbor (*Eating Out 2: Sloppy Seconds*'s star Brett Chukerman, yet another Illinois native). The film percolates along nicely, helped enormously by a hot soundtrack of some atypical '80s tracks. An after party beginning at 9:30 p.m. at Andy's Jazz Club, 11 E. Hubbard, features entertainment by Mercedes Hall who—in a nice bit of serendipity—is the mother of '80s icon Anthony Michael Hall.

The fest has dozens of films and shorts worth checking out. Here are a few notable highlights:

—**Butch Jamie** (screens Nov. 9 at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema) is a cute lesbian variation on *Tootsie* in a winning debut from writer/director/star Michelle Ehlen.

—**Blueprint** (screens Nov. 9 at Film Row Cinema) is a sexy and romantic story of two African-American queers falling in love in one day, from queer filmmaker Kirk Shannon-Butts.

—**Socket** (screens Nov. 11 at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema), a dark sci-fi thriller along the lines of David Cronenberg's *Crash*, is about a group of sexed-up folks addicted to, um, electricity. Local fave Alexandra Billings is featured.

—**Naked Boys Singing!** (screens Nov. 13 at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema), the screen adaptation of the long-running musical-sketch comedy hit features all those hit songs and all those naked boys. Bruce Vilanch, who contributed special material for the film, makes a special appearance.

—**The Gendicator** (screens Nov. 14 at Center on Halsted) is a short gender-bending tale that uses *Rip Van Winkle* as its inspiration. A panel discussion follows this and its companion short, *One in 2000*.

—**Starrbooty** (screens Nov. 14 at Lakeshore Theatre) is the long-awaited full-length version of RuPaul's superagent parody (*Pam Grier meets Russ Meyer*)—the character that first brought Supermodel of the World little Ru Ru renown in

the New York club scene. RuPaul is expected to attend the screening. An after party featuring karaoke will take place at Goose Island Brewery, 3535 N. Clark.

—**Outing Riley** (screens Nov. 15 at Film Row Cinema) is the Chicago-made sophomore effort from Project Greenlight's first winner, writer-director Pete Jones. He also stars in this comedy about an architect from a typical Irish Catholic family who finally gets up the courage to come out to his family, with surprising results.

—**The Walker** (screens Nov. 15 at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema) stars Woody Harrelson as Carter Page III, the impeccably dressed, well-mannered and highly sought society escort of the wives of Washington powerbrokers (played by Lauren Bacall, Lily Tomlin and Kristin Scott Thomas). In between evenings at the opera and the latest benefit, Harrelson—as the gay Carter—enjoys a weekly card game and juicy gossip with his favorite swans. But when Carter gets mixed up in a murder case, his reputation and friendships are suddenly on the line. This interesting curio from writer-director Paul Schrader is a sort of gay variation on his *American Gigolo*—minus the sex. It's slow-moving but a fascinating character study, nevertheless.

—**Queerborn & Perversion: An Early History of Lesbian & Gay Chicago** (screens Nov. 16 at Chicago History Museum) from documentary filmmaker Ron Pajak wasn't available for screening but promises a fascinating look at local queer history during the years 1924-1974.

Screenings for the festival will be held at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark; Landmark's Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark; Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash, Third Floor; Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted; Lakeshore Theater, 3175 N. Broadway; Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview; and at Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N. Clark.

For complete festival information, tickets and times, call 773-293-1447 or see www.reelingfilmfestival.org.

See more Knight at the Movies on page 22.

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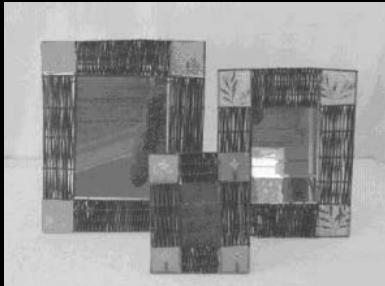
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Very Hearty

BY TRACY BAIM

Chicago-based Hearty Boys Dan Smith and Steve McDonagh have gone from caterers to restaurant owners and then on to stardom once they won *The Next Food Network Star*. They have remained at the top of their game, with HB: A Hearty Boys Spot, the Party Line Cooking Show, and now a new cookbook, *Talk with Your Mouth Full: The Hearty Boys Cookbook*.

We sat down with the longtime couple, both born in Queens, N.Y., as part of a new history project I am working on. For a more complete interview, see www.windycitymediagroup.com.

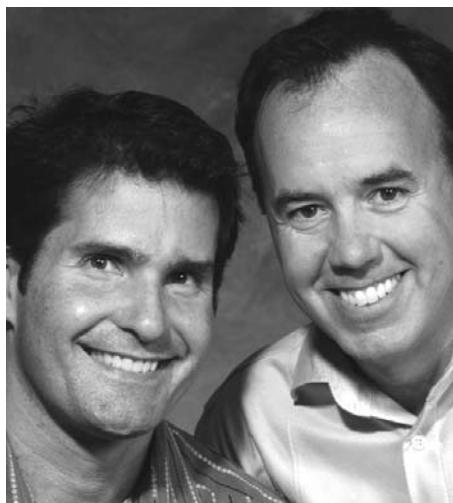
Tracy Baim: You two first met when you were both in theater in New York.

Dan Smith: We met in New York in 1986, and we both auditioned for *The Fantastics*, and it was a road show. So they had the auditions in this really kind of seedy place on the second floor over a hot dog stand or something like that on Eighth or Ninth Avenue. It was kind of a cattle-call thing where everyone was in the room at the same time.

Steve McDonagh: It was a turning point in my life, but for you it was another notch. We were both at this audition, and Dan walked in the room, and I gasped, I literally made a gasping noise.

DS: You were choking on something [laughs].

SM: I was choking on my heart. It was filled with love. But, if you want to put me down as I'm pouring out my heart [whispers] go for it. He walked in and I just gasped, and I was like, please let us both get in this show. He was wearing a wedding ring, so I just assumed he was



The Hearty Boys: Dan Smith (left) and Steve McDonagh. Photo by Hal Baim

straight. ... So we went together, and we both got cast which was really exciting, and then I remember I asked him why he was wearing the ring, and he told me he got it from his boyfriend, [to Dan] you were really ahead of your time, because like we said that was like 1986.

DS: Yeah, well you know I never really dated. I didn't date a lot of guys. ... So, I had a boyfriend out of college, I met him in college, and so we were in a relationship, I think we were together for four years. And it was coming to an end when I met Steve.

SM: We both got cast, and it was a great time in rehearsal. Dan and I have always immediately connected, we just have an internal connection. We both got cast and we went away to ...

DS: ... Delaware.

SM: We dated that whole summer, knowing that Dan was in this relationship, and he's like, well I'm breaking up with him. Of course, he did break up with him, and then subsequently broke up with me, because you just can't go from one to another.

DS: Steve at that point was ready for a rela-

tionship, and I wasn't.

TB: So fast forward, how many years later was it that ...

DS: We lost touch completely for five years, even though we both lived in New York City, we were both non-equity actors, we didn't run into each other at all. Five years later, I ran into him on the street, in front of his apartment.

SM: We very very strongly believe in fate, there is no doubt in my mind that Dan and I were meant to be together, there is no doubt in my mind that I would put our relationship against the most staunchest religious right Republican who would say, you should not be together. After we bumped into each other in front of my apartment, it was just a matter of months before I moved to Florida, never to move back to New York, and Dan moved to Maine; if we hadn't bumped into each other in front of my apartment, we never would have seen each other again. ... We made a real good friendship connection, and another five years after that, we became a couple again, and Dan moved to Chicago.

DS: We spent the second five years writing letters back and forth, from Maine to Florida. Before the Internet.

TB: Being East Coast guys, what brought you to Chicago?

SM: I came to Chicago not for any really interesting reason other than I didn't want to live in New York anymore. You lived in New York, and ... one day it turns and it starts to suck you dry, and you just have to move. I wanted grass, and a place for my dog, and I wanted a healthy relationship and a little more space. I still love New York, I just didn't want to live there anymore. So as a stage actor, my second choice was Chicago.

DS: I lived in Maine, I had a business in Maine, a café and a catering business. I was also in a relationship up there, which was a mess, so, you know I've been in three relationships in my life, and I don't imagine that I'm going to be in another one. ... So when that ended, we again had been in touch for those five years, and I thought to myself, now is the time to make the move, because I always thought that Steve was the one that I shouldn't have pushed away and walked away from, so I wanted it back. So we got back together when we both broke up with our exes, and I moved to Chicago.

SM: I moved to Chicago like '91 probably, maybe '92. I was 29 years old, I was here for just a matter of months before I had my thirtieth birthday party.

TB: So let's talk about the incarnation of the Hearty Boys.

DS: I moved here in '97 and I still owned the café back in Maine, I had leased it out, but I wanted to start the catering business here. I had worked for myself by that point for a good four or five years, I didn't want to work for anybody else. So we started the Hearty Boys here, out of our eight-by-eight apartment kitchen in '97.

SM: We were in Lakeview, on Hudson and Belmont, right by the lake. ... I was doing theater ever since I got here. I also knew that when I was between jobs, I didn't want to work for anybody else anymore, working as a waiter or whatever, so it was easy when Dan got here to just say, let's just start our own catering business. So we printed up little fliers with little tear sheets at the bottom with our number on it.

DS: It happened pretty quickly, and this is the deal with the Hearty Boys. We wanted to do what we know. As a gay couple, I wanted to go to somebody's house, because we'd catered parties for other people, for other gay people. And you come in there, and it would be us and a straight guy, or you know just some random, somebody else. We wanted to say, we'll make you comfortable in your house ...

SM: [With] gay-friendly staff, and we know you, we know your lifestyle, we're going to cater to that. What's really funny is, we weren't going after a niche market ... we're saying this is who we are, this is who you are, we just want to work

with what we know. And it took off really quickly, because it was a niche thing with disposable income, and honest to god, it's funny to see the larger caterers now, all going for that. ... We just wanted to literally serve our community.

TB: How soon did the restaurant come into play?

DS: The restaurant took a while, we took like this, kind of [winding] path. We catered out of the Hotel Florence down in the Pullman district.

SM: Because they just called us one day and said, we've heard about you will you just take this kitchen over for us?

DS: So we saw a good opportunity there as well, because we thought, we can cater out of this kitchen as well ... we worked out of the Pullman kitchen for like six months, but in that time [around the year 2000], we were able to save up enough money, by running that restaurant as well, that we were able to find that space in Lakeview on Halsted. ... In Boystown, which was a godsend. ... It wasn't a ton of money, so we did most everything ourselves. We rehabbed the space ourselves. It was an old coffeehouse. We opened up as a gourmet takeaway at first. We had the catering business out of the back kitchen, and we had the front space.

TB: Let's talk about the big break, I mean, the TV show.

DS: The TV show happened two and a half years ago, somewhere around there. We'd gone from gourmet takeaway to a café in the same space on Halsted. Steve, up until that point had still been acting ...

SM: They say, we're looking for the next Food Network star, send in your tape. You don't really, because who's really going to win that, right?

DS: So we thought oh what the hell, we'll just put a tape together and we'll send it in and see what happens.

SM: [To] get a call and find out that we're one of eight, we were concerned, because it was 10,000 entrants, so to be one of eight was the hard part, then we just had to, you know, knock the rest off systematically.

DS: It was ... really scary the first time, meeting everybody, because you didn't know who you were going to be up against. But we held our own, and I felt good about that because I'm not classically trained, I never went to school to learn how to cook I always thought that we would probably get to the final two, but we would never win because it was an America vote. America votes for the next food network star, and I thought, OK they're not going to vote for the gay guys, it's not going to happen. We'll get to the final two and that will be great.

SM: Because we were also very much "out" on the show. The very first episode, our very first task was to make eggs. I was running through this in my head, and I thought, screw it. Screw it, I'm going to say this. We got up and I looked at the camera and I said, you know we have an unfair advantage because you're asking us to make eggs and as gay boys, we know brunch. I was like, that's either going to fly, or sink.

DS: They kept it in.

SM: And it took off because that's who we are. The other thing was, we had been planning for a long time, we're thinking how can we get a TV show, a cooking show? Because there are no cooking shows with a gay couple. How many gay people of either sex are in the kitchen? Tons, you know. I thought, this is a no-brainer, and if we don't do it, somebody else is going to do it. We managed to do it through this weird sort of backdoor talent search.

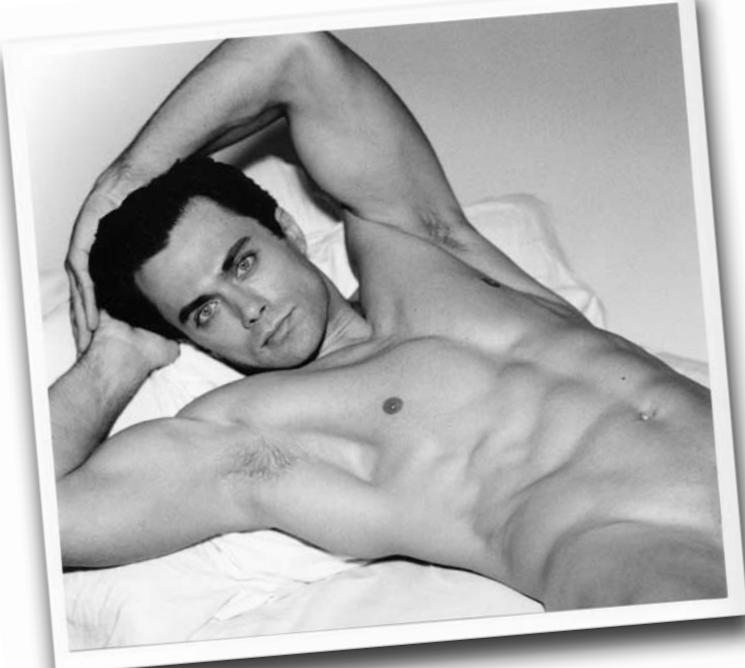
DS: The thing about it though was that, on Food Network's Web site during *Food Network Star*, they had all of these threads of conversations that people could start, and the biggest thread that they had was about us. It was about us being gay, and a lot of people would write in and say, "I couldn't even eat their food because they've touched it."

Turn to page 23

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WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, Oct. 31

@mosphere @mosFEAR Thriller 54. An evening of Tricks and Treats, drag, songs, dance, drink specials. 9:30 p.m., 5355 N. Clark St., www.atmospherebar.com

Berlin Halloween Disco Obsession. 954 W. Belmont, www.berlinchicago.com

Crew '80s Hades with 1980 prizes and best costume contest. 4804 N. Broadway, www.worldsgreatestbar.com

Hunters Nightclub The Creepshow. Costume Contest (Most Scary, Most Sexy, Most Creative), drink specials. Party starts 10 p.m., \$5 cover, 1932 E. Higgins Rd., Elk Grove Village, www.huntersnightclubs.com

Mary's Attic Sing scary songs; costume contest. 5400 N. Clark St., www.hamburgermaryschicago.com

Oak Park Lesbian and Gay Association Red, a weekly drop-in for les-bi women ages 16-26. Meets every Wednesday night. 7:30-9:30 p.m., 947 Garfield, Oak Park, 708-386-3463 or www.opalga.org

Scot's 5th Annual Scaryoke. 8 p.m.-midnight. 1829 W. Montrose, 773-528-3253

Sidetrack Halloween costume contest at 10 p.m. Also, watch the parade from Sidetrack's screens. 3349 N. Halsted St.

Spin Sign up for the North Halsted Halloween Costume Parade for adults, pets, kids and groups. Registration starts 5 p.m., parade at 7 p.m. Followed by Spin's What the F*ck Halloween at 8 p.m. with \$1 drinks. \$5 cover, 800 W. Belmont, www.spinnightclub.com

Touche Tricks & Treats Party. 6412 N. Clark, www.touchechicago.com

Triangle Neighbors Association Annual North Halsted Halloween Costume Parade. Theme: Fire Breathin'. Registration at Spin (800 W. Belmont) starting 5:30 p.m., free, parade kicks off 7 p.m. at Halsted and Belmont. See www.chicagoevents.com for more info.

Women and Children First Halloween Storytime (for children years 2-4 and their parents and guardians). Kids encouraged to come in costume. 10 a.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Thursday, Nov. 1

American Veterans for Equal Rights Chicago Monthly meeting. 7 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., 773-472-6469 or 773-752-0058 for more info, www.aver.us

New Town Writers Literary workshop. 7:30 p.m., Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville Ave., frauman8@yahoo.com or 773-528-3637

Spin Bears On the Run stand-up comedy featuring Elijah Black, Bobaloo, Kendall and more, 900 W. Belmont Ave., www.spinnightclub.com

Touche Cocktail reception to celebrate its 30th anniversary, featuring cabaret legend Sharon McNight (9 and 11 p.m.). Doors open 7 p.m., 6412 N. Clark St., www.touchechicago.com

Friday, Nov. 2

Affinity Young women's drop in for Black les-bi women. 6-9 p.m., first Friday of each month. 5650 S. Woodlawn, www.affinity95.org

Berwyn United Neighborhood Gay and Lesbian Organization Monthly Queer Film Retrospective series begins at member's home. 7:45 p.m., call 708-216-9723

Flesh Hungry Dog Show Queer rock 'n' roll burlesque cabaret featuring Devin and the Straights, The Artist Formerly Known as Vince, Retardos De La Mour, giveaways and more. 9 p.m., Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St., www.fleshhungrydog.com

Hydrate Lube wrestling at 11 p.m., followed by DJ Jeannette, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com

Touche "True Colors Party" to celebrate its 30th anniversary. 10 p.m., 6412 N. Clark St., www.touchechicago.com

Saturday, Nov. 3

2007 Midwest Socialist Conference

Speakers include anti-war activists, health care activists and Sherry Wolf, author of *Gay Liberation and Socialism*. 9 a.m.-10 p.m., University of Illinois-Chicago, 750 S. Halsted

3Girls3 Back to Bacharach—A Tribute; a celebration of Burt Bacharach by Heather Moran, Marymonica Thomas and Gail Becker. And Nov. 3, 8 p.m., \$18 with two-drink minimum, Davenport's Piano Bar, 1383 N. Milwaukee Ave., www.davenportspianobar.com

Amigas Latinas Siempre Latina Gala Dinner. \$60 advance, \$70 at door, Garden Manor, 4722 W. Armitage, tickets at Mestiza (1010 W. 18th St.) and Early to Bed (5232 N. Sheridan Rd.), www.amigaslatinias.org

Crazy 8 Art opening of exhibition featuring eight gay artists working in a variety of media, 1806 W. Cuyler, www.crazy8art.com

Eagle Underwear party, 5015 N. Clark St.

Howard Brown Legal presentations for LGBT community: Immigration and Labor/Employment Law for Business Owners. 12-3 p.m., 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., RSVP at rsvp@howardbrown.org or call Hope at 773-388-8906, www.howardbrown.org

Hydrate DJ Escape, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com

Spin Ear-rotic hip-hop house party, 10 p.m., \$5, 900 W. Belmont Ave., www.spinnightclub.com

Test Positive Aware Network 4th Annual MAN ALIVE gay men's health summit. Register at www.tpan.com before Nov. 1. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Touche "A Very Hairy Bear Night" to celebrate its 30th anniversary, with Great Lakes Bears. Evening also features bear porn star Steve Hurley. 10 p.m., 6412 N. Clark St., www.touchechicago.com

Sunday, Nov. 4

Berlin Madonnarama with VJ Riley York, 954 W. Belmont Ave., 773-348-4975, www.berlinchicago.com

Gerber/Hart Library Panel discussion on the late Mayor Harold Washington's historic initiatives on behalf of the Chicago LGBT community. 4 p.m., 1127 W. Granville Ave., 773-381-8030 for more info

Lakeside Pride Orchestra Concert featuring Harpist Rashida Black. 7 p.m., \$12 advance, \$15 at door, Unity Lutheran Church, 1212 W. Balmoral, www.lakesidepride.org

Touche Beer Bust and Anniversary Raffle to celebrate its 30th anniversary. Free buffet 5-7 p.m. 6412 N. Clark St., www.touchechicago.com

Monday, Nov. 5

Oak Park Lesbian and Gay Association Spectrum, a weekly drop-in for

LGBT young adults 18 and over. Every Monday night. 7:30-9:30 p.m., 947 Garfield, Oak Park, 708-386-3463 or www.opalga.org

Personal PAC 14th Annual Awards Luncheon with guest speaker Kathleen Turner. 12 p.m., Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker Dr., tickets start at \$150, www.personalpac.org

Tuesday, Nov. 6

Gerber/Hart Library The Cutting Edge Lecture Series: Jennie Brier, Ph.D., "Maybe Affection is Our Best Protection: Early AIDS Activism and the Legacy of Gay and Lesbian Liberation." 7 p.m., 1127 W. Granville Ave., 773-381-8030, www.gerberhart.org

Homolatte Sheree Greer/Alia. 7:30 p.m., Big Chicks/Tweet, 5024 N. Sheridan, free admission, www.homolatte.com

Shuba's Lesbian singer Mary Gauthier. And Nov. 7. 9 p.m., \$20, 3159 N. Southport, 773-525-2508, www.shubas.com

Wednesday, Nov. 7

Equality Illinois Fall/Holiday Wine Tasting, 6-9 p.m., \$20 door donation, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., www.eqil.org

Thursday, Nov. 8

Better Existence with HIV Opening reception and fundraiser for an exhibition featuring work created by Art Therapy program clients. Runs through Dec. 12. Dittmar Gallery, Northwestern University, Evanston, call 847-475-2115 for more info, see www.behiv.org

Beyondmedia Black Tie Bingo benefit hosted by Jessica Hale. 6-10 p.m., tickets \$50-\$100, Blackbird Restaurant, 619 W. Randolph St., 773-973-2280 for more info

Reeling 2007 26th Chicago Lesbian & Gay International Film Festival opening night gala. Runs through Nov. 18 at various theaters throughout the city. 6 p.m. reception, 8 p.m. screening (Shelter), Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St., www.reelingfestival.org for info, tickets

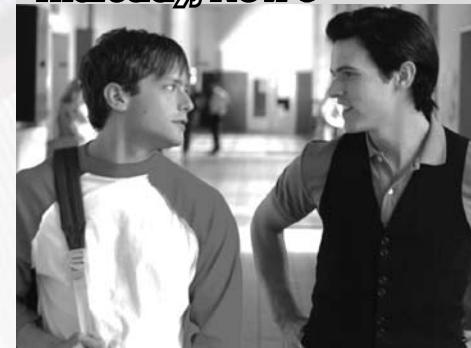
Monday, Nov. 5



PERSONAL BEST

Actress Kathleen Turner (above) will be the guest speaker at Personal PAC's 14th Annual Awards Luncheon at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker.

Thursday, Nov. 8



CHANCE MEETING

The Curiosity of Chance (above) is one of the many movies that will be shown at the 26th Reeling Lesbian & Gay International Film Festival.

LOCAL NEWS: Lambda Legal Attorney Honored

BY AMY WOOTEN

Senior Attorney Camilla Taylor, the architect of Lambda Legal's Iowa marriage victory, was a special guest at the organization's latest Wine, Women and Lambda networking event.

An informal reception was held at Joie de Vine on Oct. 25 for the senior attorney who currently represents several lesbian and gay couples in an Iowa marriage lawsuit, *Varnum v. Brien*. Camilla made headlines in August when same-sex marriage became legal in Iowa's Polk County. However, that development lasted less than a day because the same judge who made the historic ruling later granted a stay. One couple was able to officially get hitched during the short time frame.

Taylor shared her experiences with fellow attorneys, and answered questions regarding her strategies. At the event, Taylor said that even though Iowa isn't the first state that comes to many people's minds when same-sex marriage is discussed, Lambda Legal had been planning it for "quite a while" because they are very confident of the outcome. She added that victory for same-sex marriage in Iowa could have a great "ripple effect" all over the Midwest and across the nation.

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CONTINUED...

Tori Amos: Queen of Quirky

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

She's a beloved gay icon. So, it was only a matter of time 'til the MILF's daughter would start asking, 'Mommy, what's a homo?'

Tori Amos isn't herself lately.

She's Pip, a confrontational warrior. She's Isabel, a political photographer. She's the sensualistic Santa—and the emotionally-wounded idealist Clyde.

But as she gabs from Boston—breaking from the archetypes she's become on her latest album, American Doll Posse—she's that quirky redhead who's still as sweet as the brownie she's indulging in. When we check in toward the interview's end, Amos told us she's stopped chomping on the extra-chocolatey treat: "It's so good that I needed to stop now—or it was going to take over my whole being."

All the while, her daughter, Natasha, is hanging with the musician's 15-year-old niece, who's likely telling Amos' girl more than she needs to know—if that's even possible.

"She is In Touch [Weekly] magazine," Amos asserts—and then backpedaled: "No. In Touch magazine is not accurate. Tash is accurate."

Amos won't call her 7-year-old a sponge; she's a recording device. So when the youngster tossed out a question—"What's a homo?"—to the metaphorical matriarch after hearing the term used by the touring crew (some of whom are gay), Amos knew she couldn't BS an answer to fool her. She'd find out. No matter what.

Amos illustrated it like any other mother with an almost-cult-like gay following would: There are all-male couples, all-female couples and male-female couples. But, like the number pi, Natasha is an infinite cache of questions.

"She wanted to know: 'Can two men have a baby?' I said, 'Well, they can adopt a baby.' [Natasha asked], 'Well, then, who's going to carry the baby in their tummy?' So we talked about that. One answer brings 25,000 questions. So finally, you just have to say: 'Tash, enough for today!'"

No question about it: Amos' daughter would one day learn that mommy's a queer magnet. After all, they practically come to her shows in rainbow-colored buses—like they will for her Chicago gigs (Nov. 5 at Auditorium Theatre and Nov. 6 at the Vic)—and root for queer faves, according to Amos, like the songs Raspberry Swirl, Spark and newbie Teenage Hustling.

Odds are they won't get all of those—at least, not in one night. Amos shakes up her set list,



Tori Amos.

knowing that some of her clique go from one show to another to another. This also allows the just-announced official bootlegs—called Legs & Boots, available on her Web site—to hold their own uniqueness.

"You really try and make it so that people don't feel as if they're getting just a repeat stock performance," she said, adding that her extensive back catalog, including nine albums and a recently-released mammoth collection of rarities, allows her to do so.

"There are those moments where they [gay people] want the songs that'll talk about their personal relationships; but sometimes, though, when they're coming to a show, they're bringing friends. [So] it's a celebration," she said.

Playing piano bars in Washington during her troubled teen years lured a swarm of local queers, who assisted her in the transition from girlhood to womanhood, or at least tried to help her, she said. The raw Amos opus Little Earthquakes, her solo debut released in 1992, recounts her sexual awakening, her struggle to establish her identity and being sexually assaulted—hauntingly chronicled in "Me and a Gun."

Now, 15 years later, American Doll Posse shows a confident Amos shifting between multiple personalities, criticizing President Bush and calling herself a MILF—a "Mother I'd Like to Fuck."

On the sassy tune Big Wheel, the musician uses that naughty acronym, which was inspired by—get this—her then-13-year-old niece while vacationing at Amos' Florida beach house. While waiting for her husband, sound engineer Mark Hawley, to fly in, her niece urged her to slip into a skimpy bikini. "She said, 'Just put this on.' And I said, 'No,'" Amos recalled. "She said, 'Come on! Come on! You're a MILF! Start acting like it!'"

Acting obviously isn't Amos' issue. The posse women, modeled after Greek goddesses, are distinctive facets of her own personality. And she becomes them on her current tour, which be-

gan in May, before her two-hour sets. A duet between Pip and Santa on Body and Soul has been a staple of the shows; but when there's only one Amos on stage, how does she become two people?

That's why Santa—whose humor offers mindless entertainment, Amos notes—has taken over the tune. "Pip's show is just loaded," Amos said, explaining that Pip's set—which includes the songs Waitress and Bliss—just doesn't allow for the honking number.

Clyde's set is all about subtlety, while Isabel's lively show does a number on the mind. "Your brain needs to hurt when she walks off stage," Amos said.

The piano master dons tailored outfits to replicate each guise, which, for instance, made her Halloween show on Oct. 30 in Pittsburgh

so much easier: She doesn't need to buy some flashy get-up. Nor does Natasha, who has her own wig and costume collection.

"[It's about] stepping into other sides of the self that could very well be your life if you let it," Amos said. "That's kind of intriguing, 'cause you cock your head back and you think, 'Yeah, this feels right.' I could run off in my rubber tights and go work for Interpol and fight the sex-slave network as Pip."

Wouldn't she miss Tori, though?
She cooed, "I'll miss all of them."

Chris Azzopardi is the entertainment editor of Between The Lines in Michigan. E-mail chris@pridesource.com.

For tickets to Tori Amos' upcoming Chicago concerts, see www.ticketmaster.com/toria-mos.

Knight at the Movies: Lake of Fire

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Director Tony Kaye—infamous for the creative battles over his first feature, 1998's American History X—is not one to shy away from controversy and with **Lake of Fire**, his self-financed, 2½-hour documentary on the ongoing battle over abortion rights in this country, he reaffirms this. The movie is tough, extremely graphic and never boring. Though it seems biased toward the religious zealots, that's clearly because the much more dramatic pro-lifers are better camera subjects than their cool-headed counterparts and Kaye, who doesn't comment or offer narration throughout the sprawling film, doesn't offer a viewpoint. Indeed, supporters on both sides of the issue will find moments here to shake their beliefs. This tremendous but disturbing film is in the midst of an exclusive run at the Gene Siskel Film Center.

"Lake of fire" refers to that place in hell where the religious fundamentalists profiled in the movie insist will be the eventual home for those involved in the abortion "trade" who does not hew to their narrow belief system. Kaye spent over 16 years working on his film and, during that time period, caught plenty of amazing and ironic footage. In one horrifying moment, Paul Hill is shown decrying the guilty verdict after a fellow pro life fanatic is convicted for murdering a doctor who performed abortions. When a cameraman asks him, "So can we expect to see you on trial for murder soon?" Hill merely cracks a half smile and, indeed, a year and a half later Hill was tried (and later executed) for doing just that.

It is only possible to view the film's graphic sections because of Kaye's decision to shoot in black and white, which offers a distance that color would not afford. However, they're still pretty tough to watch. The toughest to watch is an emotionally wrenching sequence that ends the film in which Kaye follows a young woman through her entire visit to a

clinic to have an abortion. The young woman's unblemished reaction throughout and later as she wipes away the tears with an apologetic, "It's just been a very long day" speaks volumes about the difficulties inherent in such a decision and puts a face on this highly personal issue. www.siskelfilmcenter.com

Film Notes:

Ridley Scott's 1982 sci-fi masterpiece is remade as **Blade Runner: The Final Cut** returns to theaters in an extended director's cut 25 years after its debut. The film, set in the toxic wasteland of Los Angeles of 2019, looked like nothing else when it debuted in 1982. The film, which stars Harrison Ford as a hired gun (called a blade runner) tracking down killer robots (known as replicants), was a flop with the public and had a mixed critical reception in its initial release but Scott's visionary movie has influenced scores of films since. Though a multi-set DVD release is forthcoming, this is a rare chance to see this visual masterpiece in all its glory on the large screen. Opens exclusively at the Music Box Theatre on Nov. 2. www.musicboxtheatre.com

Two DVDs of note are out: **This Filthy World**, from Dokument Films, captures queer writer-director John Waters' hilarious one-man show. **Dear Jesse**, from Sovereign films, is a thoughtful and sobering 1998 first-person documentary that found gay director Tim Kirkman returning to his home state of North Carolina to discern the reason for the state's long-term support of its ultraconservative senator, Jesse Helms, who was then running for office one last time. In an incredible coincidence, Kirkman's film includes a brief interview with Matthew Shepard two years before his unfortunate death. My interviews with both Waters and Kirkman are coming soon to Windy City Times.

Check out my archived reviews at www.windyctytimes.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter website where there is also ordering information on my new book of collected film reviews, **Knight at the Movies 2004-2006**.

SPORTS Volleyball Banquet

The CMSA Summer Volleyball League will have its banquet Sat., Nov. 3, at Charlie's, 3726 N. Broadway, 4-6 p.m. All players are invited to attend.

Finger food and drink tickets will be provided. The first 150 people to arrive will receive special door prizes, and every attendee will be entered into a raffle drawing.

E-mail beachvb@chicagomsa.com.

BOWLING - CMSA Mixed Standings

Division A	W	L	Jury's	29	34	Castaways	35	28
Crew's Ball Busters	46	17	FVB Interiors	25	38	Scot Shotz	35	28
Bowleros	39	24	Gutter Fluffers	20	43	Salon Michael	33	30
Cornelia's	37.5	25.5	Hamburger Mary's	23	40	Windy City Sweets	33	30
Bowlers-A-GO-GO	37	26	Funky Five	17	46	Bobby Love's	31	32
REMAX Edge	35	28				Done More 5 Less	30	33
Marty's	35	28						
GYOF	33	30	Rough Trade	44	19	Extremely Striking	28	35
5 Pins 10 Balls	31	32	Wicked	40	23	Great Scots	21	42
North End	30.5	32.5	Lady & Her Tramps	39	24	Wells Fargo ONYX 5	20	43
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HEARTY from page 20

SM: I think that one of the things that we're proudest of in our lives is that we are the first gay couple to ever have a national TV show. You don't hear that, though. ... I mean television has never had a real-life gay couple. It's not a reality show where somebody is trying to outdo each other or hurt each other or any of that other nonsense; people are invited into our home and are really learning about us. I think that was what was so vital to us during whenever our show is on. It's to try to get America to see a real, normal, God-willing, relationship.

DS: The name of our show is Party Line with The Hearty Boys. It started in 2005, and it's an entertaining show, so it's about cooking. Steve always does some kind of an entertaining tip, and stories because we like to tell stories, any time we do the show or personal appearances, we always weave in stories about our experiences.

TB: Talk about the book that you've done.

SM: Our first book [is out now] and it's called *Talk with Your Mouth Full*, and it also kind of follows the line of our TV show and our life, it's not a collection of recipes, it's stories about how we got here, and it's real-life tips. I always say I don't want to get all Martha Stewart on your ass, it's real-life tips. The most important thing to us as caterers is to make it accessible, and just show people how they can have parties in their own home, and that's kind of our shtick.

TB: So let's talk about your son.

DS: I remember moving here in '97 and I remember this one conversation ... we talked about adopting. It's sometimes been on the back burner. When we bought our house four years ago, in Rogers Park, we bought it because we knew we were going to start a family. It's a big house.

SM: It's a family house. ... I always knew I wanted to be a dad. I used to think, man if I were with somebody like Dan Smith, it would be pretty easy. ... Going through the adoption process, I think one of our favorite parts of it was, you have the meetings all the time. We go there as gay people. We have already mourned that loss of having a natural child. We did that when we were teenagers, right? We figure it out. We know it, it's a given, we move on. So for us, we're in a place of all possibilities, this is great! We can have a kid!

DS: We're giddy.

SM: Yes, exactly. However, the other couples there, the straight couples are still in the mourning phase. They're there because they don't have a choice, and they're doing second best. ...

DS: But, you know, the process took a while. ... [But] once we went into the adoption pool, they said it takes between nine and 12 months. It took us four months, which was amazing because, we had some things that we wanted. We wanted a child who was a similar race to both of us, because Nate's going to have some is-

sues growing up as it is, having two dads. We didn't want to compound that by having a child who's Asian or African American. That's what we wanted.

SM: I just was really uncomfortable with becoming even more of a conspicuous family. That's my own issue.

DS: Plus we were both over 40 when we adopted, and that supposedly works against you. ... So we were prepared to wait, but we didn't have to, and the cool thing about that is that we got a call from Nate's birth grandmothers, because his birth grandmother has a partner, so he has lesbian grandmothers, which is great.

SM: And they found us ... through The Cradle's Web site. At that time we were the only gay couple on the Web site. We were the only gay couple on The Cradle right then, looking to adopt, although other couples have.

DS: So they followed us from The Cradle Web site to the Hearty Boys Web site, to the Food Network Web site. So they knew everything about us.

SM: So I knew, I just knew that we were going to have a son. I could just visualize it, I knew it was going to happen. When I got home, Dan was away, and I got home, was reading this e-mail, and she said, "My partner and I are grandmothers, and my brother is gay, my daughter is about to have a baby boy next month, we want to make sure that, with an open adoption that the family understands my family, et cetera, and you guys seem so warm and everything." I almost started crying, and I literally said out loud, I said "Nate's here." I'm choking up just saying that, but I knew Nate was here. I called up Dan, and he was at his parents' and I'm like, Nate's here. I knew it. And they were talking to other families, but I knew it was Nate.

DS: He read me the letter, and it was the same thing, I had the same reaction. We met with the grandmothers and Michelle, the birth mother on Father's Day, and she was eight months pregnant. They made the decision that night, they called us that night.

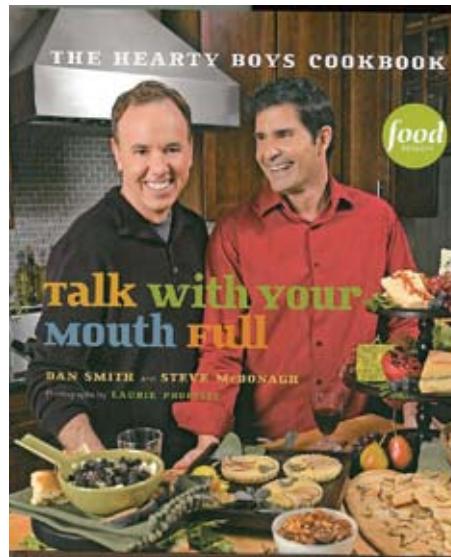
SM: Because they wanted to tell us on Father's Day. Pretty cool.

TB: In your own birth families, what has bringing Nate into the picture meant, to make you as a couple in your families' eyes?

SM: I think what was the coolest thing is that it reconnected me with my dad, and we hadn't been talking for 25 years. With everything that was going on, my dad reached out to me, which was hard, he's an older man. He reached out to me and now we have a relationship again, and it's because, a large part because of Nate.

DS: On my side, my parents have always been great with me being gay, and always accepted Steve. But my dad, you know [an] Army guy, as good as he's been with it, when Nate was born, it solidified the fact that we are a couple.

SM: [In] fact both families came in to meet Nate's birth grandmothers. They've all met. That's a little threatening and odd, but every-



body is great with it. ... Nate's birth grandparents are from Buffalo Grove.

TB: Let's talk business. I think a lot of gay business owners have remained closeted over the years, and you've been a role model, not just in the mainstream scene, you as a gay couple, but also as openly gay business owners and never shying away from that.

DS: We didn't set out to be gay role models, it came naturally out of the fact that we were both in theater, it was OK to be gay. I think for me, anyway, the hardest time I've had in terms of being out, is the fact that we're nationally known now, and that we do get these e-mails from people, and sometimes we're not welcome because of who we are. I always say to myself, this is who I am, and I'm not going to hide it to achieve something. It's who I am, and take it or leave it.

SM: I think that for our legacy, being an out couple on TV is such a blessing, such an opportunity. I am always wanting to reach out, to be a

role model. I want that. We've gotten letters from kids in high school, or younger, saying it's great, it gives me hope. I want to put us out there as an American family. There's nothing threatening, and we have such a great opportunity to be in everybody's household, so that everybody can say, I do know a gay couple and they're dads and their son has been on the show. I think it's a brilliant opportunity, and as far as being business owners, there's another opportunity. We never set out to be role models in that way, we just wanted to be who we are, and to let the LGBT community also be comfortable in who they are.

TB: Is there anything final you want to say about the next stage for HB? Where do you hope to take the business?

SM: Well, the next thing that we're doing right now is going to be very cool, it's called HBTV, and it's kind of the experience that we've had, we're trying to give to other people. We're building a TV studio kitchen, Dan and I will come out and we'll do a demo, talk about what it's like to work on camera. Using a teleprompter, looking up when you're cutting, keeping going if there's something going on.

DS: I'm telling people it's kind of like cooking karaoke.

SM: We haven't had our feet under us for a couple of years, with the book and the TV show and all the rest, raising a baby, it's been crazy. But only now are we able to reach out to [groups] and say OK, I hear you're doing such and such, this is what I want to give. Only now are we able to become a bigger player in the community, and give back to our community more.

Talk with Your Mouth Full: The Hearty Boys Cookbook (Stewart, Tabori & Chang; \$27.50) is now available.

For much more of this interview, see www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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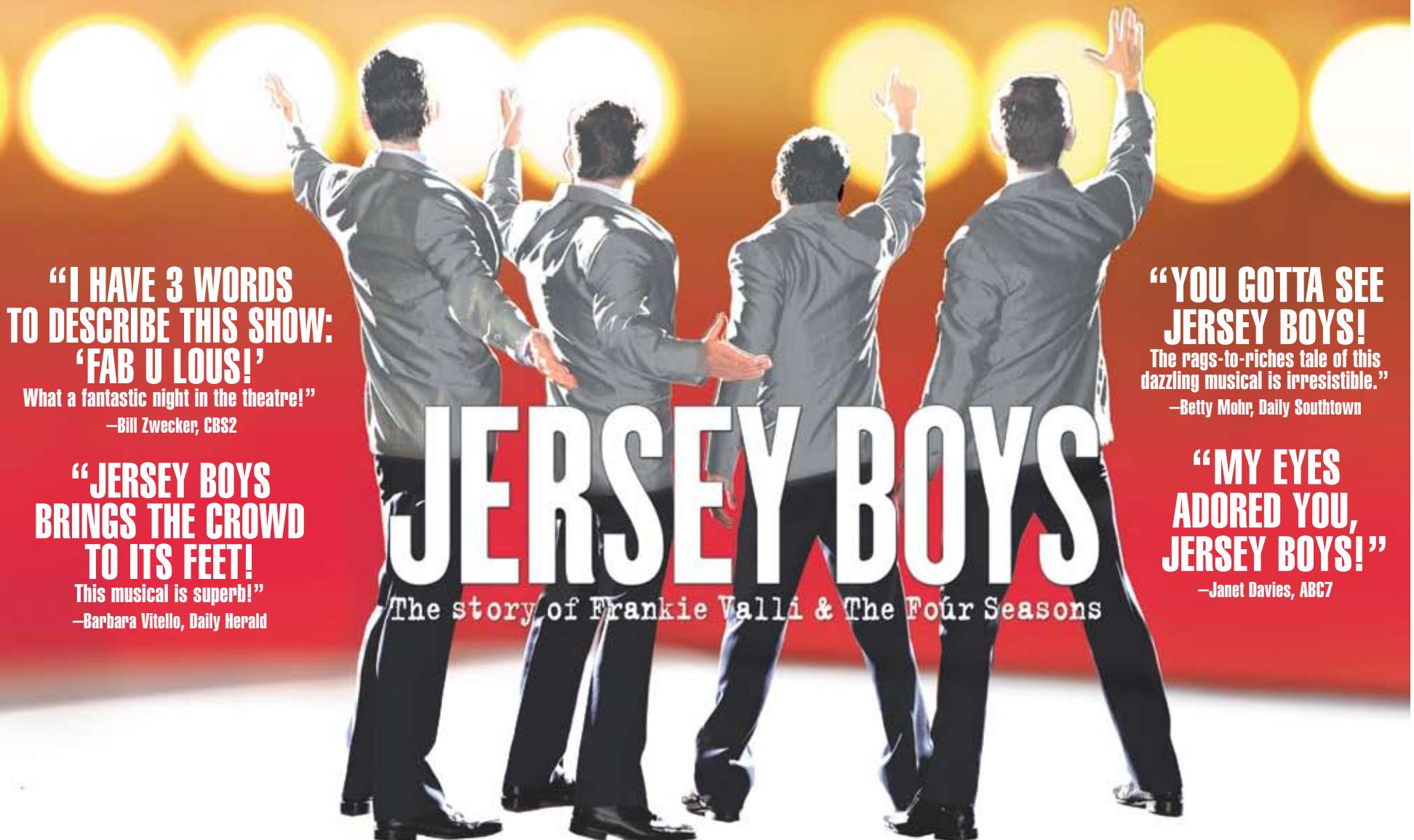
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