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## DP, Immigration Bills in Congress

BY BOB ROEHR

Gay and lesbian relationships of federal employees would be treated similarly to marriage under legislation introduced Dec. 19 by Senators Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., Gordon Smith, R-Ore. and 19 co-sponsors. The bill is called the Domestic Partner Benefits and Obligations Act of 2007.

"It's time for the federal government to catch up with the private sector, not to just set an example, but so that it can compete for the most qualified employees and ensure that all of our public servants receive fair and equitable treatment," said Lieberman. "It makes good economic and policy sense, and it is the right thing to do."

"The federal government should be leading the way rather than following when it comes to providing benefits," said Smith. "Rights and benefits must be afforded to all employees equally. This bill corrects the current inequity."

The legislation allows same-sex domestic partners to take advantage of health, retirement, and other benefits associated with federal employment. It also extends restrictions such as

anti-nepotism and financial disclosure rules, which now apply only to legal spouses.

A companion bill was introduced in the House under the lead sponsorship of Democrats Tammy Baldwin (Wisconsin) and Henry Waxman (California), and Republicans Tom Davis (Virginia) and Chris Shays (Connecticut). It has 35 additional co-sponsors. Similar legislation previously has been introduced in both chambers.

The Human Rights Campaign has pressed for the legislation. It noted that a majority of the Fortune 500 companies, the largest in the nation, provide domestic partner benefits to their employees.

### Immigration reform

Repeal of legal provisions barring persons who are HIV-positive from entering the country was introduced in the Senate on December 14 by John Kerry, D-Mass., and Gordon Smith, R-Ore. It would reform the Immigration and Nationalities Act.

"It's incredible that the federal government still tolerates a ban that not only restricts AIDS experts with the disease [from attending confer-

ences] but also refugees who are seeking asylum in our country," said Kerry. "My legislation would end this draconian law."

Only a dozen other countries have similar restrictions, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya, and Sudan. China recently changed its policy.

On World AIDS Day 2006, President George W. Bush said he would modify administration of the law to make it easier for persons to get an exemption to enter the country. However government lawyers concluded that the law gave them little flexibility. Some advocates have argued that recent modifications proposed by the Department of Homeland Security are even worse than what currently exists.

Much of the processing of visas at US consulates is handled by local employees and an applicant disclosing their HIV status when seeking a visa waiver opens up the possibility that the information may spread and put them at risk for discrimination in their own country. Persons with AIDS are not allowed to apply for a work permit or asylum either.

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## Black Gay Activists Fear Violence Pattern

BY AMY WOOTEN

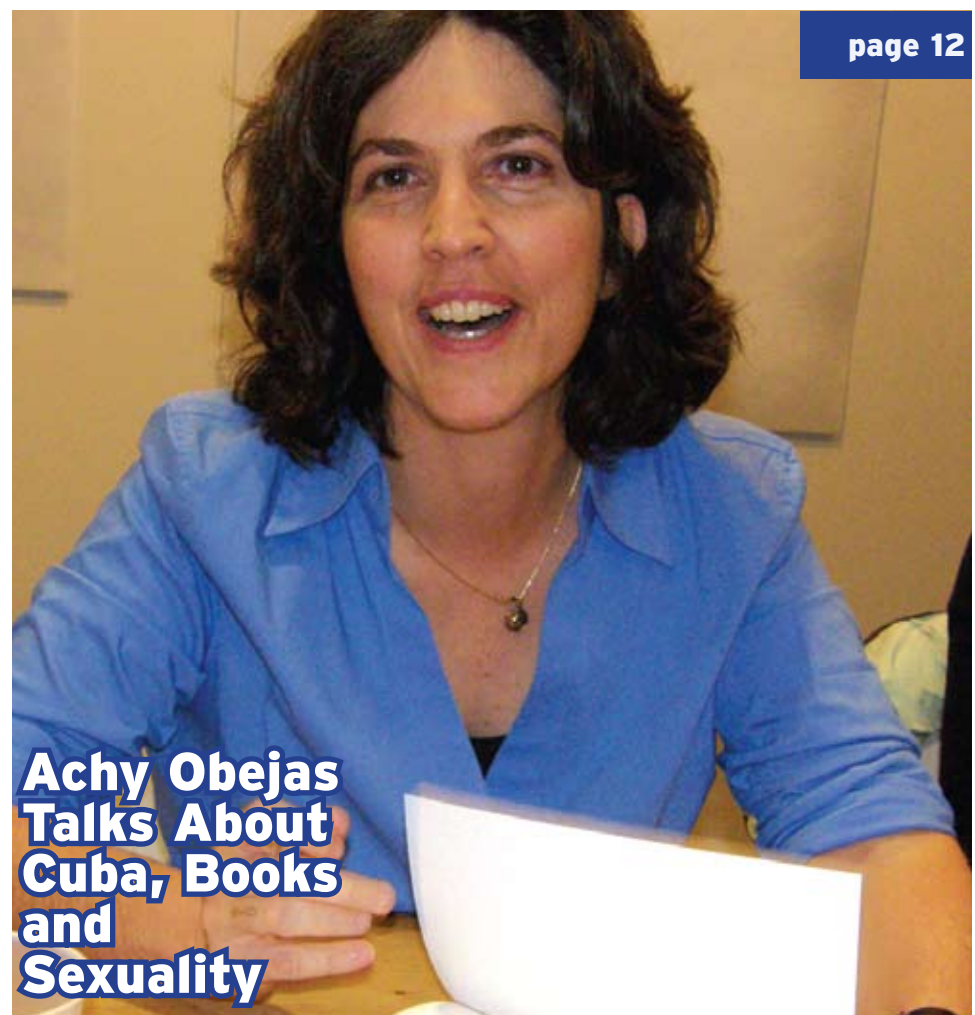
Local Black LGBT activists are concerned about the recent murders of two openly gay Black men on the South Side, and in light of the passing of the anniversary of last year's New Year's Eve South Side shooting, they are calling for the city to step up on combating what they fear is a pattern of violence against the community.

"We are calling on the police department to let the community know what's going on," said the Coalition for Justice and Respect's Mark Loveless. He and others feel that the city and police haven't adequately responded to the killings.

Critical Caucus—a coalition of LGBT organizations such as the Coalition for Justice and Respect—as well as event planners and businesses, held a press conference at City Hall Dec. 27 to issue a community alert in response to the news of the murder of an openly gay choir director as well as the mid-November killing of a Black gay man. Loveless feels that the killings show a continued pattern of violence against Black gay men on the city's South Side.

Since the press conference, the Chicago Police

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**Achy Obejas Talks About Cuba, Books and Sexuality**

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Before I Forget (above) is one of Richard Knight, Jr.'s top LGBT movie picks for 2007. See what else made his list on page 15.

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Ross Forman chats with Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association head Marcia Hill (above) about the year in sports and her organization's own milestone. See page 22.

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This week's online-only features include:  
 -Interior Motives; and  
 -A tour of Buenos Aires and Montevideo (right)

There are also extended online specials of:  
 -Deep Inside Hollywood; and  
 -a review of the DVD ShowBusiness



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Mike Huckabee. Campaign photo

## Republicans and Gay Issues

BY LISA KEEN

One of the interesting surprises of the current presidential campaign has been the degree to which gay-related issues have been used to beat up on Republican candidates, not Democratic ones.

All the Democrats are generally supportive of equal rights for gays and all the Republicans—with one arguable exception—are generally hostile.

All the Democrats have been asked about gay marriage or some gay-related issue on the campaign trail, and all formulated pat responses early on which have seemed to satisfy their early questioners.

But Republicans, who have at times seemed to be in competition to see who can be most antagonistic towards the LGBT community, are repeatedly being put on the spot—both by media and right-wing conservatives.

Case in point: Mike Huckabee. As soon as the long-shot former governor of Arkansas began rising to the top of the heap in Iowa polling, reporters began digging up old comments of his from the 1990s in which he said such things as “I feel homosexuality is an aberrant, unnatural and sinful lifestyle.”

That digging continued Sun., Dec. 30, on NBC’s Meet the Press. Host Tim Russert read a passage from a book, *Kids Who Kill*, which Huckabee co-wrote. Russert read this, from page 28 in the book: “It is now difficult to keep track of the vast array of publicly endorsed and institutionally supported aberrations—from homosexuality and pedophilia to sadomasochism and necrophilia.”

“Why would you link homosexuality with sadomasochism, pedophilia and necrophilia?” Russert asked Huckabee.

Huckabee said that he was pointing out that “all of these are deviations from what has been the traditional concept of sexual behavior and men and women having children, raising those children in the context of a traditional marriage and family.” Taken in the context of the book, he said, it was a discussion of “how so many of our social institutions have broken down.”

“But do you think homosexuality is equivalent to pedophilia, sadomasochism.....”

“No, of course, not,” said Huckabee, interrupting.

“But this is what you did say about homosexuality,” continued Russert, reading the “aberrant, unnatural and sinful lifestyle” quote that had received considerable attention during the past few weeks.

“That’s millions of Americans,” said Russert. Huckabee started in on a brief and familiar sermon about how “a Christian says all of us are sinners. I’m a sinner....” This time Russert interrupted him.

“But when you say someone is aberrant or unnatural, do you believe you’re born gay or you choose to be gay?”

“I don’t know whether people are born that way. People who are gay say they are born that way,” said Huckabee. “But what I know is the behavior one practices is a choice....” The important thing for voters to understand, said Huckabee, is that he’s “never tried to come out with some way of imposing a doctrinaire Christian perspective in a way that is really against the constitution.”

Russert moved on, so the obvious follow-up question—about the religious doctrinaire that has been driving right-wing opposition to same-sex marriage—did not get asked on NBC.

But Ann Coulter, the *femme fatale* of conservative commentary, had already been lashing out at Huckabee over the tricky line he’s now trying to walk between his past comments and his current bid to appeal to a wider electorate. In two recent columns, she has tried to paint Huckabee as being soft on gays.

In a Dec. 20 column, she wrote, “Huckabee insults gays by pointlessly citing the Bible’s rather pointed remarks about sodomy -- fitting the MSM’s image of evangelicals sitting around all day denouncing gays.... And yet, Huckabee has said he agrees with the Supreme Court’s lunatic opinion that sodomy is a constitutional right.”

On his own radio show as governor in Arkansas, just days after the decision was issued, Huckabee had said state sodomy laws were essentially unenforceable.

The following week, she said Huckabee responded to her criticism of his position on the 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas* decision by saying that his comment in 2003 had relied heavily on the word of a caller to his radio show and hadn’t known the details of the case.

Given the enormous amount of publicity surrounding the decision, wrote Coulter, “this little stretch-marked cornpone is either lying, has a closed head injury, is a complete ignoramus—or

all of the above.”

Republican hopeful Mitt Romney was grilled on Meet the Press, too. On Dec. 16, he said that, while he still supports laws to prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in employment at the state level, he no longer supports a federal bill, such as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Moderator Tim Russert had noted to Romney that, in his 1994 race for the U.S. Senate, he had indicated a willingness to co-sponsor ENDA and asked him if he still supports it.

“I would not support it at the federal level and I changed in that regard,” said Romney, “because I think that policy makes more sense to be implemented at the state level.”

That prompted anti-gay activist Peter LaBarbera, of Republicans for Family Values, to call on “pro-family leaders who have endorsed Mitt Romney to withdraw their support for his candidacy in light of his recent comments on NBC’s ‘Meet the Press’ supporting pro-homosexual ‘sexual orientation’ state laws.”

“Laws that treat homosexuality as a civil right are being used to promote homosexual ‘marriage,’ same-sex adoption and pro-homosexuality indoctrination of schoolchildren,” wrote LaBarbera, on his Web site [republicansforfamilyvalues.com](http://republicansforfamilyvalues.com). “These same laws pose a direct threat to the freedom of faith-minded citizens and organizations to act on their religious belief that homosexual behavior is wrong....”

Republican Ron Paul surprised many when, in an interview with ABC News Dec. 20, said he thinks gays should be able to marry.

“Sure they can do whatever they want and they can call it whatever they want,” said Paul, “just so they don’t expect to impose their relationship on somebody else. They can’t make me, personally, accept what they do, but the gay couples can do whatever they want.”

The comment stands in contrast to his co-sponsorship of HR 724, which seeks to amend the federal Code to prevent federal courts from ruling on the constitutionality of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). That act, of course, bans any federal recognition of same-sex marriages.

In an op-ed piece in the Oct. 2 New York Times, Focus on the Family founder James Dobson explained that a group of about 50 “pro-family” groups met in Salt Lake City in late September and decided that “if neither of the two major political parties nominates an individual who pledges himself or herself to oppose abortion, ‘we will join others in voting for a minor-party candidate.’”

But for himself, said Dobson, he will insist on a candidate who also promises to oppose same-sex marriage. And Dobson has stood by his announcement in May that he “cannot and will not” support former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani for the Republican presidential nomination. In a May 17 commentary posted on [worldnetdaily.com](http://worldnetdaily.com), Dobson said his decision was based in part on Giuliani’s support for domestic partnerships for gay couples and the fact that Giuliani has publicly dressed in drag three times.

The following month, Tony Perkins, head of the right-wing Family Research Council, joined Dobson, saying, if Giuliani wins the Republican nomination, Perkins will back a third-party can-

didate.

In short order, Giuliani began leaning heavily to the right. He revised his position against a federal constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, saying, “If a lot of states start to [approve same-sex marriage]—three, four, five, six states, where we have that kind of judicial activism, and the kind of situation the governor is talking about actually occurs, if we’re dealing with a real problem—then we should have a constitutional amendment.” He revised his position in favor of civil unions, saying now that they “go too far.” And he trotted out the endorsement of right-wing anti-gay televangelist Pat Robertson.

Given his pro-choice position on abortion, there seems little likelihood that right-wing conservative leaders will take a second look at Giuliani, no matter how far he swings their way on gay issues. But it’s still unclear how strong a factor gay issues will be for conservative voters. A Pew Foundation poll earlier this year found that many conservative voters were very much split on the abortion issue and that many didn’t know what Giuliani was the lone pro-choice Republican candidate.

Perhaps that’s why so much time has been spent slugging away at the Republican candidates over their positions on gay issues. But whatever the reason, the bottom line seems almost certainly one that can benefit the Democrats.

## Appropriations Process Completed

BY BOB ROEHR

Congress staggered home Dec. 19 after the House wrapped up a \$555 billion omnibus appropriations bill that included an additional \$70 billion for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Only 78 Democrats voted for it, while 141 said no.

The measure rolled 11 appropriations bills into a single bill. It was the second try, as President George W. Bush had vetoed an earlier omnibus measure that was \$11 more than he had proposed. The Democratic majority, lacking the votes to override that veto, grudgingly agreed to the spending total but did some minor tinkering on how it would be spent.

Congressional earmarks for pet projects were trimmed back by about 25 percent but still approached 9,000, totaling nearly \$8 billion, according to Taxpayers for Common Sense. Funding for research at NIH also went up, but not enough to cover inflation.

Funding for global health programs, primarily for HIV, increased a substantial \$1.2 billion, to \$6.5 billion. Domestically, Ryan White AIDS services programs received a modest \$29 million increase. That is a bit more than 1 percent in the \$2.167 billion program. It is less than the cost of inflation for the year, and not enough to address the growing case-load.

San Francisco will not suffer quite so great a loss as under the proposed Bush budget thanks to the efforts of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to assure inclusion of a “stop-loss” provision in the final bill. Instead of the \$8.5 million in reduced spending under the Bush budget, just over half, \$4.8 million, will be restored.

The HIV prevention budget at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was actually cut by \$3.6 million, to \$692 million. This is after no increases over the last five years. It is no wonder that the number of new HIV infections in the US is believed to be increasing. The CDC is likely to make those numbers public early in 2008.

Read the entire article at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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# Veterans and PTSD

BY BOB ROEHR

Gays and lesbians serve in the military despite the policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). And they suffer the same physical and psychological wounds as their straight colleagues.

About 25 percent of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans received mental health diagnoses, according to a study of the first 100,000 veterans seen at facilities operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA is likely to see the more severe cases, so one should be careful in extrapolating its findings.

This was just one of many pieces of information that is helping to bring the veterans' situation into sharp focus. It was presented at the 135th annual meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA) in Washington, D.C., just prior to Veterans' Day.

Evan Kanter, M.D., Ph.D., staff psychiatrist in the PTSD Outpatient Clinic of the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, said, "The most common [of mental disorders] were post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and depression. The younger the veterans are, the more likely they are to have mental health conditions."

Estimates of the occurrence of PTSD range from 12 to 20 percent. With the number of troops deployed to combat zones passing 1.5 million last summer, and the VA having treated only 52,000 persons, it is clear that many vets are not receiving the help they could use.

Kanter said there is "a dose response" with PTSD to the intensity and duration of the trauma experienced. In Vietnam, soldiers served a single one-year rotation in the country unless they volunteered for further duty. But soldiers today face "unprecedented multiple deployments to Iraq," which further increase the risk of the disorder.

More than a half million persons have been deployed two or more times.

Gay and lesbian veterans face the added burden of dealing with sexual orientation in a military context that often can be hostile to them. Sometimes that means hiding their sexual orientation and, in the process, depriving themselves of the comfort and support of a partner or extended community that might help them through their recovery.

The VA in Washington State and Montana surveyed 445 gay and lesbian veterans from all times of service and for all types of medical and psychological services. It found that 36.2 percent had been investigated for their sexual orientation. Some 14.8 percent were isolated from their unit for that reason, and 2 percent were incarcerated, while 11.7 percent were forced into a psychiatric evaluation of their sexual orientation. Overall, 16 percent "said they were forced to leave the military due to their sexual orientation."

## Evaluation and recovery

Evaluation immediately upon return from deployment suggested that 5 percent of active-duty and 6 percent of reserve personnel had a significant mental health problem. When reassessed 3-6 months later, 27 percent of active duty and 42 percent of reserve personnel received that evaluation.

Kanter said there are two reasons for the difference in outcomes. "At the time of return, people want to get home and get to their families. They perceive that if they answer yes to the question, it is going to take time [and delay their return home]. So, there is tremendous underreporting. The other is that PTSD and other mental health conditions have an insidious and delayed onset."

He is guardedly hopeful that a greater understanding of PTSD and earlier intervention will result in better outcomes than those seen from the Vietnam era. But significant barriers to accessing care remain.

Perhaps the most difficult to overcome is the attitude of the typical twentysomething soldier returning to civilian life. "It is hard to get a 22-year-old to come in to see the doctor for any reason. The stigma of PTSD and mental illness in general runs very high. There also is a lot of distrust, avoidance, and denial that are inherent in the disorder. People are worried about their military careers and that if they get a mental health diagnosis, they will be drummed out."

Sexual orientation can add another barrier for those who are still on active duty. But it should not be a deterrent to seeking help for those who have been discharged. The VA has a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and many consider it welcoming environment, particularly in non-urban settings where local practitioners and institutions may not be as enlightened or as knowledgeable.

Kanter stressed that recovery from PTSD is a process that takes time. Successful coping strategies include limiting exposure to triggers such as news coverage of war; restoring balance in one's life; attending to physical and emotional needs; and limiting use of alcohol and stimulants.

Learning about trauma and its effects is "critical" for the vets and their families, as is repeated, gently urging them to get help. It is important not to frame the discussion in threatening terms of psychiatry but rather as "post-deployment stress, readjustment, reintegration," as a part of total care.

The literature on PTSD shows "that when they are exposed to the same trauma, women are twice as likely as men to get PTSD," he said. Iraq is the first conflict where women are serving in large numbers. However, when pressed as to whether he has seen differences in PTSD between male and female veterans, Dr. Kanter said he has not yet seen enough women in his own practice to know for sure.

It is possible that women who volunteer for military service are not representative of the general female population. They may be more

naturally resistant or their training may have made them more resilient to the psychological traumas that lead to PTSD.

## What is PTSD?

The official 17 symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be placed into three broad groups. Reexperiencing: intrusive memories, nightmares, flashbacks, triggered distress. Avoidance: isolation, withdrawal, emotional numbing, detachment, memory gaps. Hyperarousal: insomnia, irritability, anger outbursts.

Beyond the official diagnosis, Kanter said there are associated features that result in poor occupational and social function. They include depression; suicidal ideation; and alcohol and drug abuse.

Read more about PTSD at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

## BILLS from cover

"What's more, it is all left to the discretion of the consular officers who likely do not have the medical knowledge to make these decisions [of granting a waiver]. No guidelines are given on how to make these determinations and there is no appeal process whatsoever," said Kerry.

"Three cheers for Senators Gordon Smith and John Kerry. They have introduced a bill that will finally drag the US out of the Jesse Helms era," pundit Andrew Sullivan wrote on his blog. "The trouble has always been the lack of an active constituency in the US to get rid of this law." The law has barred the British Sullivan from becoming an American citizen.

"This is also a great legacy for the Bush administration—and its AIDS commission, Mark Dybul—as a sign for the way the mainstream right has gone from paranoia to reason and compassion on HIV and AIDS," he wrote.

# THERE'S SO MUCH HAPPENING IN JANUARY AT CENTER ON HALSTED



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## Choir Director Killed

Donald Young, 47, a choir conductor at the Trinity United Church of Christ, 400 W. 95th, was found dead in his South Side apartment Dec. 23. He suffered several gunshot wounds and police are investigating his death as a homicide.

It was the second major loss at the church in the past two months. Anthony Hollins, a Hazel Crest resident who helped lead the HIV/AIDS support ministry at Trinity, passed away Nov. 25 in Stroger Hospital of complications from AIDS.

For the past two decades, Young, who was gay, led the choir at Trinity, which is the home church of Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama, his wife Michelle and their family.

Young was also a teacher, guiding fourth-graders at Guggenheim Elementary School, 7141 S. Morgan, The Chicago Tribune reported. He was planning to become a Chicago Public Schools principal.

According to The Chicago Sun-Times, Michelle Obama called the passing "sad," adding "[h]e was very well-known in the church family."

A wake and funeral for Young were held Sat., Dec. 29, at the church. Over 3,000 people attended.

Chicago police have released a Crime Stoppers poster offering a \$1,000 reward for information in Young's slaying. Anyone with information should call 311 or 800-535-STOP.

For a related story, read "Black Gay Activists Fear Violence Pattern" on page 1.

## Drug Task Force Member Appears on Nat'l Shows

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Jim Pickett, a member of the Chicago Task Force on LGBT Substance Use and Abuse (formerly known as the Chicago Crystal Meth Task Force) appeared on a segment of the Dec. 13 airing of The Mike and Juliet Show, a nationally syndicated program, to discuss the controversial drug treatment PROMETA.

Hythiam, Inc.—the company behind PROMETA, which is being used to combat meth, cocaine and alcohol dependence—has pointed to addicts who claim the treatment has turned their lives around and a recent 30-day randomized study that allegedly showed a "statistically significant reduction of cravings over placebo in treatment-seeking subjects." However, critics point to the fact that the program has not yet been approved by the Food and Drug Administration and say that the numbers of said study were skewed.

When asked about what he thought of his appearance on the show, Pickett told Windy City Times that he felt that he got his message across. "Would I have liked more time? Absolutely," he said. "Do I think I got my point across? I do."

Others who appeared during the segment were Dr. Matthew Torrington of the PROMETA Center of Los Angeles, Hythiam Vice-President Chris Hassan and Dr. Lori Karan, a researcher at the Drug Dependence Research Laboratory at the University of California San Francisco; Karan, along with Pickett, talked about waiting for established proof before championing PROMETA.

At one point, Pickett said that the situation with the treatment seemed to be one of "profits before proof."

"The thing is that we care about treating patients correctly," Pickett continued saying to Windy City Times. "We're not against having people feel better; we just don't want people buying snake oil. If we didn't have science and procedures in place, we'd have diabetics sniffing a flower or AIDS patients taking special multivitamins. ... All the anecdotes and testimonials in the world don't prove the point."

Pickett also talked about the name change of the organization, which also reflects a shift in the group's mission. "We're actually going back to our roots," he said. "Before the Chicago Crystal Meth Task Force, we had the Chicago Task Force on LGBT Substance Use and Abuse. We spent several years laying out a framework, but [then] crystal became the number-one concern for people, and we felt like we needed to focus there. But all along, we said that the majority of gay men in Chicago are not using crystal; it's a special issue and it deserves concern, but it doesn't address most of our lives."

"We have a complicated relationship with substances in our community. Alcohol is one of those complicated substances. We also know that, through our research, that 40 percent-plus of gay men use illicit substances. There are also kinds of other letters in the alphabet that we're playing around it—and we can't ignore it. ... As Simone [KoeHLinger, another task force member] said, ... 'We need to address our health more holistically.'"

Pickett added that the public will start to see changes. For example, the Crystal Breaks Web site will be dismantled, "but the information will be integrated into Lifelube.org, our gay men's health portal. ... We hope to have everything incorporated into Lifelube in the first quarter of 2008."

The meth initiative known as Project CRYSP will still be intact, but Pickett said even that has taken a broader aspect. "The tag line is 'More than crystal prevention—promoting healthy communities,'" he said.

When asked if the expansion of the group's mission would result in tackling all of PROMETA's treatment protocols (regarding alcohol and cocaine as well as meth), Pickett responded, "While our talking points have focused on crystal, the issue is that it is untested for what it is saying it works for. It hasn't proven the point for crystal, alcohol or cocaine. ... We'll be following PROMETA very closely."

Pickett also appeared on The Live Desk with Martha McCallum, a FOX cable show. Torrington's satellite feed disconnected, giving Pickett a lot more time than he had expected. "It was [originally] set up for the curmudgeon [referring to himself] to be on for 10 seconds," he joked.

To see the PROMETA segment on The Mike & Juliet show, see [www.mandjshow.com/videos/medical-cure-miracles](http://www.mandjshow.com/videos/medical-cure-miracles).

## VIOLENCE from cover

Department has contacted Critical Caucus and requested a meeting. Loveless said that the meeting will take place early January.

"We are here because we are scared," Loveless said. Black gay activists are calling on the Chicago Police Department to provide the community with more information. They also want city officials to help stop what they consider a pattern of violence, although police have no information linking the cases, which are still under investigation. Police also have no information as to whether or not the killings were motivated by hate.

On Nov. 17, 24-year-old Larry Bland was shot to death in his Englewood home. His family has voiced concern that he was possibly targeted because he was openly gay. Donald Young,



Activists at the press conference. Photo by Amy Wooten

47, was found shot to death in his South Side apartment Dec. 23, and several items from his home were stolen. He was the choir director for Trinity United Church of Christ, which recently confirmed his sexual orientation to a local news station.

Last year, six men were shot at a New Year's Eve party attended primarily by Black gay men on the South Side. The case remains unsolved.

Loveless said since the news of the killings broke, his organization has received phone calls and messages from South Side Black gays and lesbians who said they have been recently attacked. Critical Caucus encourages the community to speak out and report attacks to the police.

Local activist Wil Lockett believes it is time for the community to take action. "Black gay and lesbian people are being attacked and murdered," Lockett said. "It's time to get out on the streets and take it on publicly without embarrassment."

Regardless of whether or not the recent murders will be investigated as hate crimes, Loveless said he is most concerned over the lack of information provided to the community.

"There is a growing concern of the killing of Black gay men," Loveless said.

Critical Caucus held a march in remembrance of the one-year anniversary of the South Side shooting Dec. 31. Visit [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com) to get the latest on what transpired.

## PASSAGES Dorothy Hansen

Dorothy Ann Hansen, known as a waitress who had an over-the-top style that entertained gay and straight clientele alike, passed away Dec. 11, in Milwaukee. She was 82.

Hansen—whose parents were John Charles Hansen and Beulah Lois Hansen—retired to Wisconsin in 1996 after waitressing in Chicago for over 25 years, mainly at the Melrose and Medinah restaurants. She was well-known for her flamboyant serving technique, unique no-nonsense personality, 1940s hairdo and extravagant costume jewelry. Hansen also worked at the Slenderella women's fitness chain in the 1950s and at the Remington-Rand Corporation in the 1960s.

No service is planned—"Just coffee with cremation, if you please."



Dorothy Hansen.



Pudgy!.

## PASSAGES Beverly 'Pudgy!' Wines

Female comedy icon Beverly 'Pudgy!' Wines died at her home in Las Vegas of a heart attack on Christmas Day, Dec. 25, according to CabaretHotlineOnline.com.

She had been appearing as part of a revue at The Flamingo Hotel and was relaxing following two performances. She had also suffered a previous heart attack several years ago.

Wines grew up on Chicago's West Side and

worked from coast to coast as well as headlining in Las Vegas; Atlantic City, N.J.; and Reno, Nev., the Las Vegas Review-Journal stated.

When Wines began her career as an entertainer, a career that would eventually evolve into "Pudgy! The Queen of Tease," female comics were quite rare. She was frequently compared to fellow female comedians Phyllis Diller and the late Totie Fields. Diller said, "Pudgy was amazingly funny—an original—the perfect person to carry the torch of female comics into the future. There was no one like her. She never used writers. All her material was her own. Unlike most of her 'competitors,' Pudgy! made her mark without relying on four-letter words or vulgarity. Also unlike other funny ladies, Pudgy! could and sing. In fact, songs were an integral part of her comedy."

Chicago resident and Pudgy! fan Gary Chichester stated to Windy City Times that "Pudgy has always been a friend of Chicago's gay community. From her start as a waitress at the late-night showbiz hangout Punchinello's on Rush to her performance at the first International Mr. Leather, she was always involved with the community both in Chicago and her new found home in Las Vegas. She will be greatly missed; she was a one-of-a-kind talent."

Wines is survived by her husband, Michael Cardella, and her children, Michael, Jr., Melissa and Anthony. She is slated to be buried in Chicago.

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## No-Smoking Ban Kicks In

BY KERA SOKO

"When did smoking become a part of us?" This catch slogan is traveling cross-country alongside an image of a cigarette as a stripe on the rainbow flag.

On Jan. 1, when Illinois statewide no-smoking ban went into effect, was it a direct hit against the gay community or just against smokers? After all, numbers from the Women's Health Initiative show that gay females smoke at twice the rate of heterosexual female smokers.

Howard Brown Health Center reports that 17 percent of the overall male population smokes while 27 percent of gay men smoke do. The combined death toll of smokers and secondhand inhalers totals 438,000 annually.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), cigarette companies need to find replacements for the 1,200 dead consumers and 3,500 who quit each year. As a result, tobacco companies have focused their advertising efforts on minority groups—including, most notably, the gay community. Kristen Torres of the Bitch to Quit lesbian cessation program (of the Lesbian Community Care Project) finds it hard not to notice issues behind gays smoking. The correlation is hard to miss, Torres points out, with data stating that the LGBT community smokes at a rate of 40 percent, as compared to the general population's 20 percent. And for Illinois, the gay population of smokers goes up, since a 2004 CDC survey on smoking prevalence revealed 22.2 percent of men and women in Illinois smoke, as compared to California's rate of 14.8 percent.

Not only do 80 to 90 percent of smokers take their first drag before age 20, but the National Lesbian Survey points out that lesbians smoke more as they age, whereas the general populace of women smoke less as it becomes older. And with tobacco's new stratagem of selective advertising techniques that promote gay-friendly events and venues, underage smoking is occurring in greater numbers.

Bob Gordon of San Francisco's Last Drag program cannot help but notice the correlation between smoking and the problems gays face self-identifying. The largest percentage problem, and possibly the problem itself, involves self-identifying 18-24-year-olds perpetuating their outcast image. Torres hypothesized, "... when you're a gay youth, you already feel like an outsider. ... Smoking makes you look and feel tough, but also reaffirms the idea of being an outsider—different." In comparison, their peers only smoke at a rate of 18 percent.

Initially, local bars and nightclubs had until July 1 to adhere to the new law. But now, most public establishments statewide will be smoke-free. A 73-42 House vote and the signature of Gov. Rod Blagojevich ensured that Illinois is part of a country-wide non-smoking movement.

Actually, American Medical Association President Ron Davis, M.D., told the Heartland Institute that Illinois has gone further than other participating states, since it has passed one of the "strongest clean indoor air law[s] in the country."

In 1989, under the original Clean Indoor Air Act, Illinois segregated smoking into sections within buildings. And Illinois has fought for a long time to become smoke-free. But, because of preemption, a legal control device used by tobacco and implanted into legislation, state anti-smoking laws were weaker than local ones. Only recently, Illinois made the effort to partially reverse preemption, putting regulation back in the hands of the state. With the same crew responsible for Illinois being one of the first states to begin reversing preemption on Jan. 1, 2006, Rep. Karen A. Yarbrough, D-Maywood, and Gov. Rod Blagojevich were also responsible for the tight wording in the most recent bill—now law.

Smoking will not be allowed in places such as nursing homes, police cars, cigar bars, places of

employment and even within 15 feet of public entrances.

## Rogers Park Man's Death May Have Been Accidental

BY AMY WOOTEN

A gay man was found dead in his Rogers Park home the morning of Fri., Dec. 21.

Domenic Heltz, 44, was found dead with trauma to the head on the floor of his home at 6441 N. Bell. An unnamed source told Windy City Times that the investigation is leaning towards determining the cause of death as an accident, but the Chicago Police Department said that it has no new information regarding the investigation, which is still under way.

According to a close friend, Heltz was a woodworker and expert carpenter who loved to bowl. He was born and raised in Hawaii.

Heltz was involved in the gay bowling leagues at Marigold Bowl before it closed, and was also in several Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association and Windy City Athletic Association leagues. He participated in several bowling tournaments, including at the 2006 Gay Games in Chicago.

## Gay Man Attacked, Raped in Cicero

A man has been charged with sexual assault and a hate crime in Cicero after attacking a gay man, according to 365Gay.com.

Felipe Rivera, 43, allegedly confessed on video to beating the victim and then raping him with a metal broom handle. (They had reportedly gotten into an argument at a party earlier in the evening.) Allegedly, Rivera said that he raped said victim "because he hates faggots, and this is what they get."

According to the Chicago Sun-Times, Cicero Police spokesman Dan Proft said, "Mr. Rivera got upset apparently because he believed the victim, No. 1, didn't respond to a female and then, No. 2, somehow winked at him—made what he perceived as a sexual advance."

Rivera's bond was set at \$400,000, including \$50,000 for violating parole.

If found guilty, he could receive up to 30 years in jail, and an additional 5 years on the hate-crime charge.

## Local Events

**Muy caliente:** GLBT bar Club Krave recently announced its new Latin Night, which will take place every Thursday. There is no cover. Club Krave is located at 13126 S. Western Ave. in Blue Island, and is open from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

**Raising hell:** Gay artist and writer Clive Barker, most known for the horror film Hellraiser, will have an opening reception for his exhibit, Apocalypses: Paintings and Works on Paper, Jan. 11 from 5-9 p.m. The exhibit runs through Feb. 16 at Packer Schopf Gallery, 942 W. Lake. See [www.packergallery.com](http://www.packergallery.com).

**Liz be friends:** Chemically Imbalanced Comedy brings back "The Book of Liz" by Amy and David Sedaris Jan. 11 through March 2. Shows take place Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 5 p.m. at 1420 W. Irving Park Rd. Tickets are \$12-\$18. See [www.cicomedy.com](http://www.cicomedy.com) or call 800-838-3006.

**Lavender scare:** Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St., presents "Sexual Politics: From the Lavender Scare to Larry Craig," on Jan. 31 at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15/\$12 for members and students. See [www.chicagohistory.org](http://www.chicagohistory.org).

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# NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY AMY WOOTEN

The first openly gay president of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), **Thomas Morgan III**, died of AIDS complications, according to The New York Times. Morgan, 56, was former reporter and editor for The New York Times. He was president of the NABJ from 1989 to 1991. Morgan was also an AIDS activist.

Following the news that a Pennsylvania high school student dropped out of school due to anti-gay harassment, **300 of his fellow classmates have signed a petition demanding changes be made**, according to EDGE Boston. The students want the school district to change how it handles anti-gay harassment and abuse. Since the petition, the school district's superintendent has started a review of the school and how it handles such situations.

A recent national survey says that **gays love their pets**. In a press release, Witeck-Combs Communications, which conducted the survey online in conjunction with Harris Interactive, said the survey found that 71 percent of LGBT adults own pets, compared to 63 percent of heterosexual adults. The survey also found that 90 percent of LGBT pet owners consider their furry friends a member of their family.

Two gay groups are working together to fight **a lawsuit filed by anti-gay organizations that would prevent enforcement of a California statute** that protects students from discrimination and harassment in public schools, reported GayWired.com. Equality California and Gay-Straight Alliance Network are trying to intervene in the suit that challenges the newly-enacted Student Civil Rights Act. The suit was filed in federal court by Advocates for Faith and Freedom and the Alliance Defense Fund.

After a nine-year ban, **a federal bill has passed that will allow the nation's capital to provide funding for needle exchange programs in Washington, D.C.**, reported The Advocate. City officials say that the lifting of the ban will help combat increasing rates of HIV/AIDS in the city. A federal spending bill recently signed by President Bush allows the city to spend its own money on needle exchange programs.

On Jan. 1, **gay and lesbian residents of New Hampshire were able to engage in legal civil unions**. A mass ceremony was set to take place at the Statehouse as the clock struck midnight on New Year's Eve, according to 365gay.com. In addition, couples in Oregon were able to take

advantage of a domestic partner registry that began Jan. 1.

In Oregon, **a domestic-partnership statute that would have gone into effect Jan. 1 has been put on hold**, according to the International Herald Tribune. Opponents of the law—which would have endowed same-sex couples with some spousal rights and privileges, includ-

## TRANSNATION Roller-Coaster Ride: 2007 Trans Year In Review

BY JACOB ANDERSON-MINSHALL

From a transgender perspective, 2007 was a year with a lot of peaks and valleys. The entertainment field, in particular, witnessed many accomplishments but the community as a whole was tested with some significant blows.

### Achievements

A number of trans folk received recognition for their notable achievements, including Just Add Hormones author Matt Kailey, who became the first trans managing editor of a LGBT publication (Colorado's Out Front). Performer Scott Turner Schofield received a special award from the Princess Grace Foundation. Trans actor and screenwriter M.C. Brennan won an Outfest Screenwriting Lab award for her transgender teen comedy script, *Dramatis Personae*. Filmmaker scholar Joelle Ruby Ryan became the first MTF-spectrum trans person to receive a prestigious Point Foundation Scholarship. Transgender consultant Debra Davis clocked her 1,000th presentation while your friendly TransNation columnist passed the 100th column mark. After 20 years as a sports writer for the Los Angeles Times, Mike Penner came out and transitioned in the predominately male field to become Christine Daniels.

### Books

The genre of transgender books continued to expand beyond simple memoirs. A few of this year's best included: Julia Serano's *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity and Transgender*, in which lesbian author Cris Beam offers unique insight into the lives of trans teenagers living on the streets of Los Angeles. Helen Boyd followed up *My Husband Betty with She's Not the Man I Married*, further examination of gender and relationships with a trans partner. Disability activist Eli Clare's collection of poetry and prose *The Marrow's Telling: Words In Motion* explored how bodies carry history and identity over time. The memoir *What Becomes You* distinguished itself

by including both trans man Aaron Raz Link's perspective and that of his mother and co-author, feminist scholar Hilda Raz. Link's scientific background also provides unique insight into the trans experience.

In Pennsylvania, attorneys for Joseph Kerekes—one of the two men charged with murdering gay-porn businessman Bryan Kocis—say that **they will argue against the death pen-**

alty if their client is convicted, according to 365Gay.com. Attorney Mark Bufalino said that the death penalty is warranted only if Kerekes is seen as the main killer, as opposed to being an accomplice or co-conspirator. Kerekes and Harlow Cuadra are accused of killing Kocis.

### Films

This year the film that garnered the most attention in the trans community may have been Catherine Crouch's short *The Genderator*, which was pulled from the San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival after activists accused Crouch of transphobia. But the festivals were privy to a number of great trans films, including Martin Rawlings-Fein's documentary, *Clocked: An Oral History*, which provided an intimate portrait of transgender communities through personal reflections; *Godspeed* the film, based on Lynn Breedlove's novel about a bike messenger who passes as a boy fighting for the love of a stripper; *The Believers*, a doc about the all-trans Transcendence Gospel Choir; and *Trannymals Go To Court*. The latter is a sequel to the award winning short, *Trannymal*, which captured the adventures of dressed up tranny genitalia.

### Music

Rock band The Cliks had quite a year, releasing a major-label debut, *Snakehouse*; joining Cyndi Lauper on the True Colors Tour; hitting Europe; and then opening for The Cult. With singles on constant rotation, trans front man Lucas Silveira rocketed to fame. Although they didn't receive the same attention, the trans band Actor Slash Model released its 2007 album, *Cheap Date*, and made its own mark in the industry by filming a documentary about other trans musicians. Spoken word artist Katz, the one-trans-band known as Athens Boys Choir, released his latest album, *Jockstraps and Unicorns*. Trans rapper Foxxjazzell, who appeared in Beam's *Transparent* and on *The Tyra Banks Show*, joined the *HomoRevolution* Tour while another Tyra alum, hip-hop stud Joshua Klipp, went on his own tour and experienced the Margaret Cho effect when the trans-loving comedian directed and appeared in the music video for his single, *Rescue Me*.

### Television

Increased portrayals of transgender characters on television this season represent a marked

improvement from the past. The highest profile character was Rebecca Romijn's Alexis Meade on *Ugly Betty*. While it's a huge step to have a trans woman portrayed by a former supermodel, ABC's show *Dirty Sexy Money* went a step further, featuring transgender actress Candis Cayne in a well-received recurring role as a trans character. On FX's *The Riches*, a young boy with a penchant for cross-dressing is embraced by his family. And *The L Word*'s once reprehensible characterization of FTMs, Max, improved significantly.

### Other performances

Comedian Ian Harvie, the man most likely responsible for Margaret Cho's blooming obsession with trans guys, continued to expand his *Ian Harvie Show*, which has developed into a live revue featuring queer icons Jane Lynch, Jenny Shimizu, Garrison Star and Cho herself. L.A. also saw the premiere of queer pop-rock musical *Twist*, starring trans actress Alexandra Billings as Fagin, the male dominatrix with a nasty temper.

Performing artist Scott Turner Schofield premiered his most ambitious work to date, *Becoming a Man in 127 Easy Steps*, the final installment in an autobiographical performance trilogy. Trans dancer Sean Dorsey's highly-anticipated new concert of dance, *Lost/Found*—performed by a cast of transgender, gay and straight men—dives into life on the margins of masculinity.

To read the entire column—including political gains and losses—see [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

Tune in next week for the preview of 2008.

Trans author Jacob Anderson-Minshall writes the nationally syndicated column "TransNation," and co-authors the *Blind Eye* mystery series with his wife, Diane. Learn more at [anderson-minshall.com](http://anderson-minshall.com) or reach him at [jake@trans-nation.org](mailto:jake@trans-nation.org).

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# WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

## Aussie PM chooses lesbian minister

New Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has selected lesbian lawyer Penny Wong, 39, as minister for climate change and water.

Wong, 39, was born in Malaysia and is one of only a handful of openly gay Australian politicians.

She will help lead the government's effort to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on global warming.

## Hungary OKs civil partnerships

Hungary's Parliament passed a civil-partnership law Dec. 17.

Registered gay or straight couples will receive spousal rights in areas that include finances, taxes and inheritance. Adoption rights were withheld.

The vote was 185-154 with 9 abstentions. The law takes effect at the beginning of 2009.

## Spanish gay leader weds

Veteran Spanish gay leader Jordi Petit and his French partner of seven years, Yves Bohic, were married in Barcelona on Dec. 15 by Mayor Jordi Hereu.

The wedding took place in City Hall's Saló de Cent, the medieval city council chambers, before 200 friends and family members.

Well-known folk singer Maria del Mar Bonet performed "L'Àguila negra" ("The Black Eagle").

"This ceremony by which today I am going to live with my partner was a dream for 30 years because then we homosexuals were [seen as] 'social dangers,'" Petit told reporters.

Spain is one of six nations where same-sex couples have access to full marriage. The others are Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, South Africa and the United States (Massachusetts only). Numerous nations (and nine U.S. states and the District of Columbia) offer civil unions or registered partnerships that grant same-sex couples some, most or all of the rights and obligations of matrimony.

## Spain recognizes UK civil partnerships

Spain's government has decided to recognize same-sex civil partnerships from the United Kingdom.

Spain allows same-sex couples to marry but the UK limits them to civil partnerships, which nonetheless carry the same rights as marriage within the UK.

"This is a big breakthrough in securing overseas recognition and rights for British lesbian



Veteran Spanish gay leader Jordi Petit (left) and his French partner of seven years, Yves Bohic, were married in Barcelona on Dec. 15 by Mayor Jordi Hereu; openly gay Swedish pop star Andreas Lundstedt. Left photo courtesy of the couple; right photo from [AndreasLundstedt.com](http://AndreasLundstedt.com)



and gay civil partners," said leading British gay activist Peter Tatchell. "Up to now, civil partnerships are mostly unrecognized abroad. Up to now, the Spanish government has dismissed civil partnerships as a uniquely British institution, with no international validity."

The change in policy followed a prolonged fight by Paul and Martin Ward, British civil partners who now live in Spain.

"We have had long, protracted battle with Denise Holt, the UK ambassador to Spain; Michael Holloway, the UK consul general in Madrid; the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; and the foreign secretary, David Miliband MP," the couple said in a statement. "We have made a little bit of history by becoming the first UK same-sex couple resident in Spain to have their civil partnership acknowledged in law and in the observations section of our passports."

## Rudd supports gay relationship register

New Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd supports creation of a national relationships register for same-sex and nonsexual couples, he said Dec. 16.

"We believe that's an appropriate way to go," Rudd said. "Our position has always been that marriage is between a man and a woman, and therefore that always will form the cornerstone of our view on these matters. A relationships register ... we believe is a positive and productive way forward."

Rudd said the register should extend rights in areas such as taxes, inheritance and social security.

Australia has had a national law banning same-sex marriage since 2004, courtesy of former Prime Minister John Howard.

## Bishops banned from gathering

A gay bishop and an anti-gay bishop have been banned from attending the Anglican Communion's global Lambeth Conference next July in Canterbury, England. The meeting occurs only

once every 10 years.

Anglican Communion spiritual leader Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury, has disinvited both New Hampshire Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson, who is gay and partnered, and anti-gay U.S. Bishop Martyn Minns, who was consecrated a U.S. bishop by the anti-gay Church of Nigeria.

The U.S. Episcopal Church and the Church of Nigeria are the local arms of Anglicanism in those nations.

The Anglican Communion has been tumbling toward schism for two years because of strong disagreements over whether to treat gays the same as straight people.

The U.S. Episcopal Church has caused particular problems because it allows blessings of same-sex partnerships and, in 2004, elected Robinson with full knowledge he was gay and partnered.

Dozens of conservative parishes and one diocese have left the U.S. church in protest against its gay-friendly positions, aligning themselves instead with Anglican provinces in Africa or South America.

The defections have created numerous problems for the Episcopal Church, including expected legal battles over property ownership.

## Swedish pop star comes out as HIV-positive

Openly gay Swedish pop star Andreas Lundstedt came out as HIV-positive in the January issue of the local gay magazine QX.

Lundstedt, who became famous as a member of the group Alcazar, said he has carried the virus for several years and now is "at the right stage in my life" to talk about it.

"I feel great. This is nothing that affects my daily life," he said. "I'm lucky in that I don't need to swallow masses of tablets."

Lundstedt hopes the acknowledgment of his infection will "show people a face of someone with HIV."

"I know that there are more people in my industry who have it, and it's just a shame that it's a taboo issue," he said.

## Syphilis on the rise in Europe

Promiscuous gay men engaging in unprotected sex are fueling a resurgence of syphilis in Europe, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control said Dec. 20.

Outbreaks have been documented in Amsterdam, Berlin, London and Paris.

France has seen a 1,600 percent increase in recent years, Britain a 1,000 percent increase, Germany a 300 percent increase and the Netherlands a 200 percent increase.

Symptoms of the infection include a distinctive ulcer and a rash.

Officials said that HIV-positive men having unsafe sex with each other may be particularly to blame, and that Web hookup sites have made arranging such trysts easier.

Half of Britain's recent syphilis cases have been in HIV-positive gay men.

## Irish gays protest for partnership rights

More than 200 people protested outside Ireland's Parliament Nov. 8 demanding legal equality for same-sex couples.

Parliament recently narrowly rejected a civil-union bill introduced by the Labor Party, but will consider a government-sponsored measure next year that would create civil partnerships for same-sex, opposite-sex and nonsexual couples.

The newer legislation "represents a recognition by government of the many forms of relationships in modern society, and an important step very particularly for homosexual couples," said Justice Minister Brian Lenihan.

## No charges over Swiss political ad

The Swiss People's Party will not face charges over an anti-gay advertisement because there is no law protecting homosexuals from insults, Geneva canton Attorney General Daniel Zappelli said Nov. 9.

The case involved posters against a voter referendum to grant inheritance rights to same-sex couples, whom the ad campaign called "infertile and well-off." The referendum passed.

Zappelli said existing law protects Swiss residents from offensive remarks based only on race, ethnicity and religion.

Gay groups said they will mobilize to add sexual orientation to the list.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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VOL. 23, No. 16, Jan. 2, 2008

The combined forces of Windy City Times,  
founded Sept. 1985, and Outlines newspaper,  
founded May 1987.

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CHAT DADDY

## When Trade Turns Deadly...

Welcome to 2008! This an open letter to all of my same-gender-loving brothers.

As we begin the New Year we should all take an honest look at the various ways in which we meet each other. Let's start with being truthful with ourselves.

First, who hasn't wanted to have a wild and passionate love affair with some type of trade you've met on the streets? Over the years I, too, have had my own personal experiences that went wrong, and have heard endless stories from men of every race who have spent a great deal of their time, energy and efforts in search of finding trade—cruising

clubs, parks and even the Internet in search of finding the right one.

So I hope that my editorial will server as an official wake-up call to all our readers that the risqué phenomenon of men wanting trade as their "desired" choice has placed gay relationships in an extremely compromising position because picking up trade has become deadly! Gone are the days of meeting trade who you thought would be converted into an instant relationship while you both took care of your sexual healing needs in the process. It's unfortunate the "one" just might end up killing you.

I must warn you that there's a new crop of trade working out here. The new trade are guys who are not necessarily gay in their sexuality but are modern-day hustlers who are oftentimes young; extremely masculine; built with muscles; and are usually broke and just trying to survive day to day. They don't believe in loyalty to anyone but themselves and they aren't really trying to be honest with you. They tend to seek men who look prosperous and are in search of a genuine relationship.

I hope I'm not offending anyone or stepping on any toes here with my bold statements, but

I can't stand by any longer in silence watching so many of my same-gender-loving brothers lose their lives over some worthless trade. Picking up trade is dangerous, people—point blank! Most of these guys are irresponsible and often display disrespectful behavior and actions towards you from the very beginning of your relationship, but you continue to ignore all of the warning signs because he's some hot trade.

From one brother to another I'm just telling you all to please be careful in the company you keep, because you never know what kind of person you are letting into your world and just how the story will unfold. Here's wishing all of my GBLT family members a happy new year that will be filled with purpose, integrity and a love for self and your fellow man.

Chat Daddy is a nationally syndicated relationship advice columnist. You can reach him at talk2chatdaddy@comcast.net.



LEE LYNCH

## The Land of the Free

I've read that the Castro in San Francisco is undergoing a re-gentrification —by young nuclear families with children. I'm all for the idea of kids growing up in diverse communities, but the Castro? Gay people don't have a lot of sacred ground in this world; how can this be happening? My non-gay acupuncturist just returned from Maui. He told me that many gay men left San Francisco for Maui and are now in great evidence there. For years there has been an influx of gay people to cities like, for example, Seattle, but they don't rate the gay mecca title.

It's partly because of these population shifts that I was thrilled to return to Cape Cod after 19 years to find that Provincetown's essence is intact. I loved being there again in the rain, in the wind, under the sun and in the sometimes raucous nights out on Commercial Street.

Of course, it didn't hurt that my happy return to the vacation land of my younger years was preceded by a visit to my family. This was the first time I'd ever brought a partner home to meet them. They literally welcomed my Sweetheart with open arms. It took over six decades, but I finally, feel part of my birth family.

Then my Sweetheart and I went to visit some of her friends and we met up with my best friend of 43 years. I look at the pictures of our few hours at lunch in Rhode Island and my heart swells at the sight of this expanding gay family of ours.

It's no exaggeration to say that I sailed into Ptown on—if not cloud 9, then at least cloud 8.5. I reached the nine level when we spotted my publisher and sister author, Radclyffe of Bold Strokes Books, zip by, waving, as we walked to the natural food market. This was yet another new family for me—a family of writers, editors and readers I could not have imagined when I came out. Better still, there was a whole town filled with us—it was Ptown's annual women's week.

As the week went by I kept thinking of my character, Frenchy Tonneau from *The Swashbuckler*, and how alone and out of it she felt when she paid her first visit to Provincetown. She knew no one, she had to beg rides to the gay beach, her cheap room wasn't up to her fantasy of where she could take some girl she imagined picking up. Frenchy had a bad sunburn, cramps and the gay men she'd traveled up with had priorities that didn't include a lonesome dyke. I'd felt similarly alienated in my twenties, walking up and down the main drag, looking, as Suzanne Westenhoefer joked in her performances that week, at the lesbians looking and me and my partner. I felt most comfortable in the bookstore, but then I felt comfortable in bookstores everywhere.

This trip was very different: decades after my first visit, I actually knew people as I walked along the street. Knew them, stopped and talked with them—had what Frenchy most wanted, a beautiful and devoted woman I adored on my arm.

There are certain turning points in life which we may not recognize as they happen. This October,

during Women's Week in Provincetown, was clearly one of those for me. I was gay and I belonged. The words once had been mutually exclusive; now they could not be separated. I'd grown into the lesbian writer I'd dreamed of being, I'd found the love of my life, I was out to my family and I even had friends in P'town whose shower we shared when the boiler in the old house where we were staying gave up the ghost. Could life get any better?

Provincetown has not lost its cachet as a gay mecca. The restaurants, stores and streets were stuffed with us: Gabriel Goldsby, Karin Kallmaker, J.D. Glass, Val McDermid, Marianne Martin, Lynn Ames, Kim Baldwin, Kelly Smith, Austin and Andrews, Jane Fletcher, JLee Meyer, KI Thompson, VK Powell, KG McGregor, SX Meagher, Kate Sweeney and others—an amazing gathering of talent. Editors, press lawyers, computer support, publishers, bookstore owners, the uber-supportive readers and the friendly headliners like Kate Clinton, Westenhoefer, Tret Fure and Chris Williamson.

Most of all, though, it was fun. There was laughter and entertainment, a bonfire, walks on the beach with my Sweetheart. We celebrated the second anniversary of the marriage of editor Shelley Thrasher and publicist Connie Ward with ice cream at Spiritus, a perennial town hangout, crowded into a booth with cross-dressers in town for their convention.

Maui may be nice, the Castro may be dwindling, but we still have zany P'town—its streets of dreams, crowded with loners and the celebrated, the seekers, the doers, the revelers, all mingling in the land of the free.

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## Proceed with caution

To the editor:

As the trend toward private equity buyouts escalates across the country, it is vital that public officials scrutinize such transfers of ownership and the consequences that routinely follow them, such as cost-cutting steps taken to erase massive debt loads. A careful and thorough review of such transfers is especially important when those buyouts begin to affect critical industries such as health-care and long-term senior care. In addition to the possibilities for lost jobs as well as reductions in benefits and economic development, these leveraged buyouts deserve extra scrutiny because they

impact our most frail citizens, including disabled and elderly patients.

That is precisely the scenario that we are now facing in Illinois as a result of the Carlyle Group's proposed \$6.6 billion buyout of the HCR Manor Care chain of nursing homes, which operates 31 facilities in Illinois serving nearly 4,000 elderly and disabled patients. This would mark the first time in Illinois that a private equity firm has sought entry into the nursing home business. Nonetheless, the Carlyle Group—which has vast experience in fields such as aerospace and defense—has urged state regulators to place this deal on a "fast track" for approval.

The Carlyle Group's proposed buyout may, indeed, make sense for company executives and

shareholders. The more important question is whether it makes sense for the thousands of elderly and disabled patients in Manor Care homes across Illinois.

I urge the Illinois Department of Public Health to take as much time as they deem necessary to review these applications, to guarantee that this transaction is in the public interest and will not adversely impact care in nursing homes or long term care facilities. We owe to these patients and their family members nothing less than a guarantee that they can expect to receive quality care in safe and dignified surroundings.

Gregory S. Harris  
 Representative, 13th District  
 Member, Illinois House Committee on Aging

## LETTER

# BUSINESS



Rodger Wade Piolet.

## Rodger Wade Piolet: On the Cutting Edge

BY ROSS FORMAN

Dr. Rodger Wade Piolet, a gay cosmetic surgeon who grew up in Aurora and now lives in Chicago's River North neighborhood, is reportedly the first Chicago plastic surgeon to introduce the Portrait PSR (plasma skin regeneration) procedure.

Portrait is the first non-laser technology clinically proven to perform skin resurfacing and regeneration using the power of activated nitrogen plasma. Portrait, a trademarked skin regeneration procedure developed by Rhytec in Waltham, Mass., is based on nitrogen plasma energy—the same technology used for high-definition televisions. The procedure is designed to treat facial wrinkles, skin lesions and sun damage.

"The results have been incredible, and I'm very reluctant to jump on the bandwagon of new technology unless I am convinced that it's safe and that it works," said Piolet, who graduated from West Aurora High School in 1979 and New Orleans' Tulane University in 1983.

"I really think it makes a difference," he added. "The proof is in the results and the patient satisfaction."

The goals of Portrait PSR are to treat sun-damaged skin; reduce wrinkles; and improve skin tone and texture. The technology works below the skin's surface to initiate skin regeneration while preserving the skin's outer layer, using it as a natural, protective bandage during the healing process. The action transfers heat energy to the skin without direct contact.

Piolet, who has had a private practice in Chicago since 1997, said the Portrait procedure makes up about 10 percent of his overall work, which he expects to steadily increase in the coming years.

Portrait, he said, "picks up where laser [technology] leaves off," and he was a strong proponent of laser technology for years. "[Lasers are] great tools, but have limited applications. Problem is, each laser is very specific for a certain color or a certain thing, such as pigmentation issue, wrinkles, lines and sun damage. Thus, you need multiple lasers. The beauty of Portrait is [that] it will address multiple things with one machine."

Piolet has been doing the Portrait procedure for about two years.

Portrait is more common in the South than Chicago, primarily because of its ability to reduce and eliminate sun damage, he said. Still, it has been, "received very well in Chicago."

There are different levels of Portrait treatment:

high-energy, low-energy and ultra-low treatment. Low-energy, which is the most common, is done in his office with topical anesthetic, a numbing cream. The procedure usually takes under an hour, he said.

"The nice thing about these treatments is, there's a cumulative effect. So what we're recommending is three treatments, spread out by four to six weeks," Piolet said of the procedure that he said is "not really" painful, especially when a topical anesthetic is used.

"With the topical, it's certainly tolerable. It's like a warm sensation, like a light rubber band snapping on your skin," he said.

For high-energy treatment, sedation is often needed and it's often done in the operating room.

"There aren't that many people in this area who require high-energy treatments," Piolet said.

Portrait is FDA-approved for the entire body, and it's most commonly requested by women for their necks, upper chests, hands and feet. For men, it's most often used to reduce the effects from liposuction around the middle.

Piolet has treated about 100 people in Chicago; about 20 percent of them have from the LGBT community.

Piolet's office is located at 1 E. Erie, and he can be reached at 312-440-3100. See [www.drpiolet.com](http://www.drpiolet.com).

## The Colorful New Spot on Halsted

BY ROSS FORMAN

Upon further review, the Gentry on Halsted bar will not be renamed The Levee. Instead, it now is Scarlet.

When Paul Cannella bought the Lakeview bar earlier this year, he planned to remodel and rename the bar The Levee, to pay tribute to Chicago's LGBT past. But, through market research, he soon discovered that the new name, The Levee, was going to take too much time to explain.

"No one really seemed to know what [The Levee district] was at first, though, when we told them, they thought it was cool. But of course we knew we weren't gonna be able to tell everyone why it was called that," Cannella said.

Plus, Cannella realized The Levee carried negative connotations, based on the flooding woes in and around New Orleans. "So we just didn't think The Levee was going to be a good fit," he said.

Scarlet, meanwhile, stems from the old-time era too, when people would wear something red or scarlet to signify that they were gay, Cannella said.

Scarlet, located in the heart of Boystown, has been re-designed, with the interior gutted, new hardwood flooring added, plus a new glass garage door, a new bar, better and brighter lighting and flat-screen TVs, among other updates.

It was a \$200,000 remodeling, Cannella said.

He added that the bar still is planning to apply for an outdoor patio license.

Scarlet no longer is a piano or cabaret bar, as Cannella mandated.

"Our ultimate goal is to be a true neighborhood bar," he said.

And he wants Scarlet to cater to everyone in the LGBT—from bears and twinks to jocks and lesbians.

"I want Scarlet to be a place where everyone feels welcome with a completely friendly atmosphere, no attitude," he said.

# QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"YEARS AGO, THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE [GAY-PRIDE] PARADE were the outrageous parade floats, featuring drag queens and go-go boys, sponsored by gay bars. Now those delightfully pointless displays are outnumbered by contingents of waving employees from banks and utility companies in matching T-shirts. It's a positive development that so many people are out at work, to be sure, but the parade has become a lot less fun for gay and straight spectators alike." — *Robert David Sullivan writing in the Boston Globe, Dec. 2.*

"I THINK IT'S [SAME-SEX MARRIAGE] A GREAT DEAL OF SELF-INDULGENT CRAP. I mean, people around the world are being tortured for being homosexual, and people here carry on as if not being allowed to marry was a huge abuse of civil rights. I wish there was a bit more internationalism in the Australian gay world. I mean, it's not too much to ask that we remember, sometimes, we are not the most persecuted and oppressed group in the world." — *Veteran Australian gay activist Dennis Altman to the Sydney Star Observer, Dec. 6.*

"[T]HE ONLY REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RADICAL ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY'S own bloody, murderous past is, well, a bit of time, with a splash of geography. Ah yes, the bloody crusades, the sadistic assaults on conflicting belief systems, the gay popes and murderous priests and boundless hypocrisy, the book burnings and witch burnings and pagan slaughters and a billion sexual oppressions, the mountains of guilt and shame and sin sin sin.

Been there, done that, still doing a great deal of it but not quite as, you know, explicitly as before. Note to righteous Christians: That violent Sudanese march [against the teddy bear named Muhammad]? Different branch, same family tree." — *San Francisco Chronicle columnist Mark Morford, Dec. 5.*

"I HAVE LITTLE SYMPATHY FOR PEOPLE WHO WHINE ABOUT BUSH. You know those watches that say 'Only so many days until Bush leaves office'? Oh, gee, that's real effective. Why don't you cause a riot? Why don't you shut down a university? Stop whining! All people do is whine! He won! Do something!" — *Gay filmmaker John Waters to the Montreal weekly newspaper Hour, Dec. 13.*

"I THINK A GOOD DEAL OF IT [MY HUGE GAY FOLLOWING] has to do with the heartache and pain and misery that this community had to suffer so long. I think things have changed a great deal since the 26 years that I have been with this community, but I think that prior to that, the reason they fell in love with me was because I was a misfit, meaning that I was a big figure, a big woman, maybe not as attractive, and you have this big, painful voice and it's a thing like being connected with Judy Garland or other people who had that sadness that they could kind of latch on to. So I think that's how it started with 'And I'm Telling You' being such a song of rejection and need and pleading to be recognized. ... I'm glad though that when I lost the weight and I did change and my life got happier ... they followed, you know, because the gay community's life has also gotten better as well, and I think we've all grown together and evolved and are finally coming to fulfill our own destiny." — *Singer Jennifer Holliday of Dreamgirls fame to the Palm Springs gay magazine The BottomLine, Nov. 9.*



I think it's [same-sex marriage] a great deal of self-indulgent crap.

—Veteran Australian gay activist Dennis Altman.



Photo by Rex Wockner



"OH, MY GOD, BEFORE I PLAYED THIS CHARACTER, I never realized how important gay rights issues are; I never paid much attention. And then when I started playing this character, it was a personal affront to me. It seems outrageous that the things I and many others take for granted, gay people cannot. I think the marriage issue that gays face is outrageous as well." — *The L Word star Jennifer Beals to QVegas magazine, November issue.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley



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# FIGHT CLUB

The unique visual presentation *Hey Girl!* will be performed at the Museum of Contemporary Art. See page 13.

## TV

Dynamic duo.  
Page 20.



## MOVIES

'Blood' sport.  
Page 15.



## SPORTS

On the ball.  
Page 22.



## Achy Obejas: 'Havana' Nights

BY TRACY BAIM

Chicago-based lesbian writer Achy Obejas is an award-winning journalist, author and poet, and her talents are showcased in two new books.

The first, *Havana Noir*, is a collection of essays edited by Obejas, part of the noir series by Akashic Books. She has her own essay in the book, which features a wide range of Cuban writers examining "the dark side of a city characterized by ironic and wrenching contradictions."

The second book is a small chapbook, *This is What Happened in Our Other Life*, a collection of poems of love and passion, providing a glimpse into the more lyrical side of this Cuban-born writer. It is published by A Midsummer Night's Press, a specialized company; see [www.amidsummer-nightspress.com](http://www.amidsummer-nightspress.com).

Obejas will be joined by writers Cris Mazza and Richard Fox for a reading and book-signing Wed., Jan. 9, at 7 p.m. at Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark.

As part of a new history project, *Windy City Times* Publisher Tracy Baim interviewed Obejas to discuss the latter's writing activism and Cuban roots. (She was born in Havana June 28, 1956.) Following are excerpts from that interview.

**Tracy Baim: What it was like for you during the first 10 years of your life?**

Achy Obejas: Both my parents were Cuban. ... Both of them were the first in their families to go beyond sixth grade, and they were obscenely overachieving sorts. My mom had a doctorate in pedagogy, my dad had a law degree and when they came to the United States, they each got a Ph.D. I'm the oldest child in my family, and I have a younger brother, his name is Mario and he was born, I'm not making this up, on Jan. 1, 1959 exactly as the bullets were whizzing by and the revolution was coming into play. ... At one



Achy Obejas. Photo by Tracy Baim

point, from all of the evidence that I can muster, [my mother] supported the revolution in some form. My father never did. ...

**TB: Let's talk about your years getting here, when that happened.**

AO: I was six and a half; that happened in February 1963. My mom had been in a literacy campaign; my dad was actually working actively against the revolution. They had separated for a couple of years, by all accounts for political reasons, although now that's blurry in the family history. At some point my father was under a lot of pressure. He was wanted—he had been getting a lot of people out of the country—and so we were sort of forced to step up and make that decision. He never intended to come to the

United States permanently, he thought this was a temporary thing until the U.S. went in there and knocked Fidel [Castro] out, as the U.S. had been wont to do with every other Latin American dictator, and my mom actually was delighted to come to the United States, the very notion of whiteness, capitalism, economics and easy street was really appealing to her. We left Cuba by boat on Feb. 10, 1963—there were 44 of us, it was a 28-foot boat; 17 of us were kids. We lost a lot of our fuel during the course of our trip, we ran into terrible weather; it was a terribly, terribly frightening event. We were left adrift in the ocean for at least a couple hours, and then we were spotted by an American oil tanker, and we were picked up by that oil tanker and we were taken to Miami. They actually went out of their way to drop us off. They didn't turn us over to the Coast Guard ... they actually took us straight to Miami.

... We went to Miami, as that was the port of entry for most Cubans back then; we were put on public assistance, which was a tremendous blow to my dad's dignity. We were there for a year and a half while he and my mom were trying to figure out what was going on; they kept waiting for something to happen in Cuba and nothing was happening. My dad didn't want us to be Americans; he didn't want us to grow up here, so he started concocting a scheme to take us to the Dominican Republic. My mother, always very concerned about race, was terrified that if we wound up in the Dominican Republic, we would end up marrying people of color. Much more of color than us. So she actually came up with her own scheme, which was to sign us up for a program which was sponsored by the Department of Health Education and Welfare, and that was a mainstreaming program that would take my parents to Terre Haute, Ind. My dad's scheme fell through, my mom's scheme came through, and so we wound up in Terre Haute and that was a big shockarooey. ... I grew up in Michigan City; my dad eventually got a job very close to Michigan City in a place called Chester-

ton. A town that was essentially constructed as the whites fled out of Gary. They both became Spanish teachers, high school Spanish teachers.

**TB: When do you think your sexual orientation started mixing with your coming into the country, your identity as a Cuban, as an American?**

AO: I knew I liked girls from like the first grade; it's just that I also liked boys, so the whole thing was sort of open and fluid for me. There's a terrible stereotype about Latin Americans because of Catholicism primarily, being sort of prim, *et cetera*, and that's true of certain places; it's not true of Cuba. Cuba is not very Catholic, and never has been. Even during the time of the colonies, this is one of the great mistakes in judging Cubans, and the Caribbean as a whole, but Cuba in particular. So there's a very sort of lax sense of sexual play and sexuality and, like I said, in Cuba in particular. Remember, Cuba was known as the brothel of the Caribbean prior to the revolution. People went to Cuba to do the things they couldn't do in their home countries, but were free to do there. So Cubans have a sort of thick skin to most sexual stuff, which is not to say that my parents did, but as a general rule in the environment and the culture, there's a lot more possibility. I never had any sense of shame or anything like that.

... [I was] curious about all of these things that were being attached to me by the rest of the world, you know the rest of the world reflected me back. The rest of the world being Michigan City, Ind. It reflected me back as Cuban, not Latino, not Hispanic. There was not this sense of pan-Latinness like there is now. This was in the '60s, early '70s, and there was no other Latino population in town to sort of suggest what one could be if one were Latino. In fact there was one other Cuban family in town. They were pre-revolution immigrants to the United States and, therefore, to the left of Mao.

Turn to page 16



Part of the *Girls on the Verge* exhibition.

## Stage Door Jonny

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Jonny's good friend Sylvia Ewing leapt out of the frying pan and into the fire when she left Chicago Public Radio to produce the multi-disciplinary Traffic Series at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. But being a multi-tasker and into discipline, she took to it like a duck to water. The 2008 Traffic Series begins with a kick, *An Intimate Evening* with David Sedaris, Jan. 8-13 in Steppenwolf's intimate Upstairs Theatre. Alas, Jonny must tell you that all eight Sedaris performances are SOLD OUT! Sedaris no sooner checks out than WVON's Sharon McGhee checks in, headlining **The PocketBook Monologues** for one performance, Jan. 14. It's a collection of stories—it was a book first, then adapted for the stage—from women of color that reveals their heartfelt emotions about intimacy, performed in the style of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, but with the Black female perspective front and center. McGhee is the constant in a rotating ensemble of performers. 312-335-1650; \$35.

Yes, yes, Jonny knows: There's the real you and then there's the you that comes out after dark. Or perhaps it's the other way 'round. Well, if there's a touch of duality hanging on you, and you can sing and move, there may be a role for you at the Bohemian Theatre Ensemble. As of press time, BoHo still was taking audition appointments for its upcoming production of the Broadway musical, **Jekyll & Hyde**. Auditions are 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Jan. 12-13 (callbacks Jan. 19 and 26). Call for an appointment at 773-791-2393; there are no walk-ins. You're asked to prepare 24 bars that show your range, in the style of the show (operatic pop-rock). BoHo promises that "the concept of duality will be explored in all aspects of the design and direction."

Ah, Jonny fondly recalls the time long ago when Jonny auditioned for a national tour of *Godspell* by singing a Rodgers and Hart song! They gave Jonny a callback anyway, based on Jonny's mime and improv skills (true!), but Jonny's ship was sunk when they found out Jonny couldn't sing even soft rock. But Jonny became the great star he is, anyway.

Victory Gardens Theater once again is presenting its gracefully-named alternative series, **Crip Slam Sundays**, presented by the Victory Gardens Access Project for folks who can't see, hear, move or think like most of us do. And Jonny hears some of them like weird sex, too. In any case, Jonny's attention was caught by the upcoming Jan. 27, 7:30 p.m., program, *Chicken and Striptease*, featuring solo performances by Matthew Kerns and (one of Jonny's favorites) Tekki Lomnicki. The *Chicken* of the title is Kerns, who details his one-man quest for life, liberty and the pursuit of healthiness in the shadow of HIV. Can the cure really be peanut butter, pop culture and a chain-smoking mother? In *Striptease*, Little Person Lomnicki sheds her denial about having a disability only to find herself at a Little People of America Conference with the Mayor of Munchkinland. At Victory Gardens Greenhouse;

773-871-3000; \$10; discussion with performers follows.

As if Crip Slam Sundays isn't odd enough, Jonny has received intel about a Jan. 18-19 performance event at the Museum of Contemporary Art that really sounds like a freak-out. **Hey Girl!**, presented by the radical Italian theater troupe Societa Raffaello Sanzio, is described as an intense, darkly poetic dreamscape with "breath-taking" visual effects both beautiful and horrific. Sounds a bit Jekyll and Hyde-ish to Jonny, but it's really a deeply serious, symbolic work that follows a girl's evolution from birth through the brutality of adolescence to the sexual independence and power of womanhood. The production utilizes architectural sets, large-scale paintings and sculpture, video projections and exploding glass. Perhaps you should bring your safety goggles. Seriously, the MCA performance series brings high-quality, cutting-edge international theater, dance, music and performance art to Chicago, most of which hasn't been seen here previously—allowing you to judge for yourself without any predisposition from the critics. 312-397-4010; \$19-\$24.

Yet another girlie show is a featured exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago. **Girls on the Verge: Portraits of Adolescence** features more than 40 photographs and one video by 11 contemporary artists that showcase perceptive, subtle images focusing on the subject of female adolescence. These pictures reveal the complexity, power, and common humanity of the transitional moments between girlhood and womanhood. Increasingly, the dividing line between innocence and adulthood seems more and more blurred. Not surprisingly, then, this simultaneously beautiful and awkward stage has provided photographers with a wealth of material. *Girls on the Verge* continues in Gallery 1 through Feb. 24 and is included with the voluntary admission donation to the Art Institute.

Jonny lifts a glass of champagne to wish all readers a happy and—especially—a healthy New Year.



WVON's Sharon McGhee of *The PocketBook Monologues*.

## SPOTLIGHT



For the first time in its 18-year history, Redmoon Theatre has remounted a show, **Hunchback**, first staged in 2000. *Hunchback* boils Victor Hugo's monumental novel, *Notre Dame de Paris*, down to 90 nearly wordless minutes, with only a smattering of narration from a character representing Hugo himself. Redmoon distills the complex story into cinematic images and emotional high points using various techniques of puppetry, masks, music, mechanical devices, pop-up scenery and so-called "crankie" scrolling dioramas to create an intense and elaborate yet intimate spectacle—one that WCT critic Scott Morgan calls "amazing theatrical magic that tickles the imagination." *Hunchback* continues at Redmoon Central, 1463 W. Hubbard, through Jan. 20; 312-850-8440; \$15-\$35. Photo by Sean Williams



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## 'PocketBook Monologues' Jan. 14

Steppenwolf Theatre Company continues its 2008 Traffic Series with The PocketBook Monologues, which will run Jan. 14 in Steppenwolf's Downstairs Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted.

The PocketBook Monologues is a collection of stories from women of color that reveals their heartfelt emotions about intimacy, performed in the style of Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues, but from the Black female perspective. "We talk about everything and have a lot of fun, but the underlying message is about the health of women and girls with an emphasis on HIV and AIDS awareness," says WVON Radio personality Sharon K. McGhee, author and star of The PocketBook Monologues. The one-night engagement also features La Donna Tittle, Deborah Crable and Ramsey Cary, plus some surprise "celebrity" guests.

Tickets are \$35. See [www.steppenwolf.org](http://www.steppenwolf.org).

## HSDC and CSO Celebrate

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago (HSDC) will celebrate their fifth season of collaboration with a special one-night-only performance on Fri., Jan. 11 at 8 p.m. at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan.

The program for this celebration revisits past collaborations and introduces several new works, including a preview of a new dance piece that will have its official world premiere by HSDC in March 2008. Returning works include the first-ever collaboration between HSDC and CSO, *counter/part*.

Tickets are \$17-\$110 and are available by calling 312-294-3000 or visiting [www.cso.org](http://www.cso.org).

## Lyric Opera's Foldi Dies

Andrew Foldi, a leading member of Chicago's music community in opera and education who was the retired director of the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists at Lyric Opera of Chicago (1991-95) and renowned opera singer, died Nov. 21, in Federal Way, Wash., following complications of a stroke. He was 81.

Foldi began his career in the 1950s singing a wide variety of bass and bass-baritone roles at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He eventually became a celebrated interpreter of the most important comic roles of Mozart and Rossini. In more than 40 years onstage, however, he scored his greatest successes in a 20th-century work, Alban Berg's *Lulu*.

Andrew Foldi is survived by, among others, his wife, Marta Justus Foldi of Federal Way, Wash.; his children David Foldi, of Geneva, Switzerland, and Nancy Foldi of New York City.

## About Face to Present 'Little Dog'

About Face Theatre will present the Chicago premiere of *The Little Dog Laughed*, by Douglas Carter Beane. The production, directed by Eric Rosen, will run Jan. 9-Feb. 17 in the Hoover/Leppen Theatre at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

*The Little Dog Laughed* tells the story of a hot Hollywood actor who may be about to win the role of the century—if he can keep his sexuality under wraps. Add to the equation a rent boy looking for love, his "girlfriend" looking for a home and a scheming talent agent out to make the deal of a lifetime.

Tickets start at \$20. Call 866-811-4111 or see [www.aboutface theatre.com](http://www.aboutface theatre.com).

## 'Cloud'-y Forecast for Halcyon

Halcyon Theatre continues its second season with *Cloud Tectonics* by José Rivera.

On a cataclysmically rainy night in L.A., Aníbal, struggling with his cultural identity, picks up Celestina, a mysteriously cryptic pregnant hitchhiker who literally seems to stop time.

*Cloud Tectonics* will run Thursdays through Sundays Jan. 12-Feb. 17 at the Peter Jones Gallery, 1806 W. Cuyler, 2nd floor. Tickets are \$10-\$15. Call 312-458-9170 or see [www.halcyontheatre.org](http://www.halcyontheatre.org).

## CRITICS' PICS

**Ella**, Northlight Theatre, through Jan. 6. There are just a few more days to see the astonishing E. Faye Butler channel the great Ella Fitzgerald. As drama goes, there ain't much here, but the music is glorious, with Butler backed by a tasty, cookin' four-piece band. JA

**Forbidden Broadway: Special Victims Unit**, Royal George Theatre, through Jan. 27. The costume changes come fast and furious in this hilarious musical revue that takes potshots at all things Broadway. See it soon: Its 10-month run finally is ending. SCM

**The Snow Queen**, Victory Gardens Biograph, now through Jan. 6. A rare Victory Gardens extension as Michael Smith's songs, Jim Corti's dances and performers who shine like the aurora borealis make this musical fantasy something special. MSB

**White People**, Gift Theatre, through March 1. An erudite academic, a long-fallen prom queen and a corporate shark reveal the damning, damned side of human nature in blazing monologues directed by Michael Patrick Thornton; an intense, troubling drama. CS

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

## Entertainment News

**David Beckham loves being a gay icon**, he recently told BBC Radio 2. "I'm very honored to have the tag of gay icon," Beckham said. "Maybe it's things like I like to look after myself, I like to look smart and presentable most of the time." Beckham added that his wife, Victoria, plays a large role in his fashion sense.

**Jamie-Lynn Spears and her mother are now \$1 million richer**, thanks to OK! Magazine. The magazine already got the exclusive on Britney's little sister's pregnancy, but reportedly agreed to a \$1 million deal for exclusive pictures of the baby once it is born, according to eFluxMedia.com.

In Touch magazine reports that MTV's **The Hills** star **Spencer Pratt has received an offer from gay porn mogul Michael Lucas**. Pratt plans on declining the offer to star in a gay porno.

## 'L Word' Showing at The Vic

The Human Rights Campaign and Showtime will present the fifth-season premiere of *The L Word* at The Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield, on Sun., Jan. 6. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the screening will begin at 6 p.m.

Admission is \$15, and will be collected at the door. (Attendees must be 18 years old to attend.) In addition to the premiere, there will be the venue's regularly scheduled Brew & View. Also, all party guests will receive an advance copy of *The L Word's* second episode of the fifth season—and there will be drawings for various prizes, including posters and other giveaways.

## Movies: 2007 in Review—Gay is Not the New Black

BY STEVE WARREN

Two years ago, when *Brokeback Mountain* was winning awards and, more importantly, turning a sweet profit, we thought Hollywood, which never saw a hit it couldn't clone, would start cranking out queer films by the dozens, filling those multiplex screens with A-list stars in same-sex liplocks. Gay was going to be the new black.

So what has 2007 brought? Jude Law and Michael Caine in an ill-conceived reimagining of *Sleuth*; Heather Graham discovering she loves her brother's wife in *Gray Matters*; and Woody Harrelson as an anachronistic gay stereotype in *The Walker*. Total combined North American box office? Less than a million.

John Travolta appeared in drag in *Hairspray* but also starred in the year's most homophobic movie, *Wild Hogs*. Secret lover Peter Dinklage outed the deceased in *Death at a Funeral*. There was eye candy galore in *300*, thanks to the soldiers' ridiculous battle garb, but we never saw them do what we know Greeks did, thanks in part to the mess Oliver Stone made of Alexander.

There were the traditional (i.e., pre-*Brokeback*) movies with token gay friends (*Bug*, *You Kill Me*), gay relatives (*The Jane Austen Book Club*) and trendy gay chatter (*P.S. I Love You*). Ray McKinnon played twins—one of them gay—in *Randy and the Mob*. A male-male rape in *The Kite Runner* is so obliquely presented the movie got a PG-13 rating, yet the young actors had to flee Afghanistan because of death threats.

The year's gayest mainstream movies were *Reno 911!*: Miami, with Lt. Jim Dangle (Thomas Lennon) leading the campy fun; and *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry*, with Adam Sandler and Kevin James as straight men pretending to be gay.

There were gay pretenders in queer films, too. Sam Huntington was straight-playing-gay in *Freshman Orientation* (with lesbian actress Heather Matarazzo in a straight role) and gay Jim Verraros was gay-playing-straight in *Eating*

*Out 2: Sloppy Seconds*.

As usual, the best queer films came from abroad, but even they were in short supply this year. Israel gave us Eytan Fox's *The Bubble*, with gay and straight romances but the Romeo and Romeo story taking precedence. Gus Van Sant's gay love story was one of the 18 shorts in *Paris Je t'Aime*, and a couple of others had some gay content.

With Here! and Logo TV offering increased distribution opportunities on cable and DVD for queer independent films you'd expect to see an increase in quality as well as quantity. Sadly, that's not true. The numbers may be rising but most of the narrative films (e.g., *Boy Culture*, *Itty Bitty Titty Committee*, *Colma—The Musical*, *Puccini for Beginners*) are still pretty mediocre. They may be OK for movie nights at home or in the communal context of a festival, but when you consider the superiority of many straight indies on the market you have to wonder what happened to our famous creativity.

This year's festivals didn't offer much hope for the future. One of the best queer dramas I saw, *The Houseboy*, should have been released to theaters for the holidays, as it's a gay variation on *It's a Wonderful Life*. Maybe next year.

As usual, documentaries outshone narrative films. Among the year's best were *For the Bible Tells Me So*, practically a remake of Arthur Dong's *Family Fundamentals*; *The Life of Reilly*, an autobiographical performance piece by Charles Nelson Reilly, who passed away this year; and Jessica Yu's *Protagonist*, in which one of the four personal journeys we follow is that of a gay man turned "ex-gay" turned gay again.

As for movies in general, ticket buyers proved to be a bunch of idiots in 2007!

I don't mean you personally, of course. If you have enough taste to read this column you're not one of the people who started the year by making huge hits of horrible movies (*Norbit*, *Ghost Rider*, *Wild Hogs*), then stayed away when the "serious" pictures started arriving in the fall.

Everything came in batches all year: great actresses (Julie Christie and Marion Cotillard) and failed "torture-porn" sequels in the spring, threequels in late spring/early summer, vigilante thrillers and Jane Austen-related romances in late summer, anti-Iraq War movies in early fall, African-American holiday movies in late fall.

Turn to page 18

## CULTURE CLUB

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## Best LGBT Movies of 2007, There Will Be Blood

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

This was not a good year for LGBT movies, an easy deduction to make when one glances over the list of 2007's mainstream releases. There was no *Brokeback Mountain*, *Shortbus*, *Capote* or *D.E.B.S.* Instead, we got *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry* and a slew of movies that used gay sexuality as the subtext for their comedy or drama: *Blades of Glory*, *Reno 911: Miami, Evening*, *Eastern Promises* and *Sleuth* among them. Many of these movies were terrific but didn't really focus on our lives.

The Walker—Paul Schrader's film about a Washington, D.C., gay social *bon vivant* mixed up in a murder case—did feature Woody Harrelson playing gay in the title role, but the film's justifiably lukewarm critical reception found it relegated to so few theatres it wasn't easy to find. (Though it's not great, it's worth a look—especially the first half hour.) For overt visibility, we again turned to indie and queer cinema, where the results were often spotty at best. *Boy Culture*, *Cut Sleeve Boys* and *Gray Matters* were just three of the okay-but-not-great highlights of the year in queer cinema, though *Color Me Kubrick* (with its pixilated lead performance by John Malkovich) and *The Bubble* (from gay Israeli filmmaker Eytan Fox) were definitely a step up.

Musicals—the queer-in-all-but-name genre—did boast three stellar additions to the canon: Dori Berinstein's informative and entertaining backstage documentary *ShowBusiness: The Road to Broadway*, *Hairspray* and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* are a trio of must-see movies for any self-respecting show-tune queen. For the adventurous, queer director Todd Haynes returned with his lyrical, contemplative homage to Bob Dylan, *I'm Not There*, with a gender-bending performance by Cate Blanch-



Paul Dano (left) and Daniel Day-Lewis in *There Will Be Blood*.

ett that's sure to end up in the Oscar circle. I was also a huge fan of the offbeat documentary *Zoo*, a visually hypnotic film that offered insight into the world of fringe sexual practices, and *For the Bible Tells Me So* won points for tracing the longstanding abhorrence evangelicals hold for Our People and trying to make sense of it through individual coming-out stories. Turner Classics Movies' excellent series, *Screened Out*, presented a month-long film festival during *Pride* that illuminated much of our gay history on film in a mainstream setting while *Queerborn & Perversion*, a fascinating documentary by filmmaker Ron Pajak, did the same for Chicago history. The latter was the highlight of this year's gay and lesbian film fest, *Reeling*. Other highlights of the festival (perhaps coming to a theatre or to DVD in 2008) also included *Itty Bitty Titty Committee*, *Outing Riley* and *Starrbooty*.

The best LGBT film of 2007 for me was *Before I Forget*, which played at the Chicago Film Festival. The third in a trilogy, the French film was written by its director, Jacques Nolot, who also stars as Pierre, a 58-year-old ex-hustler entering the autumn of his life with no regrets and not a trace of sentimentality. The movie beautifully illuminates the "gay lifestyle" and issues specific to our community as Pierre goes about his everyday life in Paris. The film is tough, flinty, emotionally honest and, I think, a masterpiece. My runner-up would be another French film, *The Man of My Life* (which you can still catch at the Siskel Film Center through Jan. 3). The elliptical film centers on the life-changing events that occur when a happily married French couple make a casual acquaintance with their gay neighbor and the husband finds himself subconsciously attracted to the man. I would also like to point readers toward yet a third French film: *The Page Turner*, a thrilling yet extremely subtle movie in which a complex revenge plan is enacted by a young woman whose artistic ambitions had been thwarted as a child by a celebrated classical pianist. A heavy lesbian undertone is present in the relationship between the young woman and her intended victim, the now-anxiety-ridden pianist.

While not a good year for LGBT-themed movies, the same can't be said for the year as a whole. It's been a month and a half of one terrific movie-going experience after another and the new year begins with one more. *Boogie Nights-Magnolia* writer-director Paul Thomas Anderson has now written and directed ***There Will Be Blood***, based on the Upton Sinclair novel *Oil*. It's the story of Daniel Plainview, a fictitious oil wildcatter who is portrayed by a sensational Daniel Day-Lewis. Day-Lewis' performance as Plainview—who is at once seductive, charming, mesmerizing and supremely evil—is surely one of the greatest ever captured on film.

Day-Lewis channels the voice and mannerisms John Huston brought to his portrait of supreme evil as Noah Cross in *Chinatown* and develops them even further. *There Will Be Blood* follows the character from prospector to magnate—who, in all that time, seems only to love oil itself. Nothing else—money, sex, power, or any kind of human interaction—truly seems to interest Plainview or distract him in his quest to draw more and more oil from the earth. Certainly not Paul Dano, as a religious zealot, who it appears might be Plainview's one true nemesis. Anderson's canvas—the sweep of the harsh western plains (with Ireland filling in for the frontier)—is as large as that captured by Terrence Malick in *Days of Heaven*. But in Anderson's movie, the vast panorama doesn't dwarf Plainview or deter him for a second. It's a thrilling, entertaining movie aided greatly by Jonny Greenwood's dissonant, symphonic score (also the year's best), which underscores the contrast between the surface beauty of the characters and the land with the ugliness and rot ready to bubble up just underneath.

Check out archived reviews at [www.windycitytimes.com](http://www.windycitytimes.com) or [www.knightatthemovies.com](http://www.knightatthemovies.com).

## DVD REVIEW SHOW BUSINESS: The Road to Broadway

BY STEVE WARREN

If you were to re-watch an old Tony Awards telecast it would be for the musical numbers. *Show Business: The Road to Broadway* examines the 2003-2004 Broadway season, which was unusually gay even for New York theater, up to and including the Tonys. It focuses on four of the season's five biggest new musicals (*The Boy from Oz* is the elephant that's missing from the room) but has no complete musical numbers, only excerpts, mostly from rehearsals and showcases.

Considering the incredible access Dori Berinstein had to *Avenue Q*, *Wicked*, *Taboo* and *Caroline, or Change*, the documentary she's assembled is unremarkable. There may be a few revelations of interest but mostly it's what you'd expect to hear about how hard the work is, how great the financial risk and how exciting it is to be involved with a show on Broadway.

The four musicals are all gay to some extent. *Avenue Q* mixes gays and straights, puppets and humans, in a *Sesame Street*-for-adults tolerance lesson. *Caroline, or Change* is gay playwright Tony Kushner's (*Angels in America*) memoir of his childhood in Louisiana. *Taboo*, produced by Rosie O'Donnell with songs by Boy George, is a fictionalized tale of George's rise to fame in the London club scene of the early '80s. *Wicked* is a prequel to *The Wizard of Oz*, and you can't ask for gayer than that.

If you watch the Tonys you know gays are far more open in the New York theater than they

are in Hollywood, so nobody's butching it up for Berinstein's camera.

The film is divided into four seasons, beginning in the summer of 2003, and follows the four shows from rehearsal through opening night and beyond. The focus with *Avenue Q* is on creators/songwriters Jeff Marx and Bobby Lopez, who held their first workshop in 1999 with a TV show in mind; and bookwriter Jeff Whitty, who reportedly clashed with Marx during the creative process. They're not the only ones who can't believe their little show is going to Broadway.

Periodically, the film checks in with a round table of theater critics and columnists who are surprisingly candid about their expectations of shows they haven't seen yet, as well as their opinions after they've seen them.

Alan Cumming, who has a co-producer credit on the film but didn't work on Broadway that season, makes a few general comments. Cynthia Nixon and Billie Jean King are among the first-nighters glimpsed at premieres.

In a too-little, too-late effort to earn cred with the young crowd, Idina Menzel sings a hip-hop version of *Lullaby of Broadway* during the closing credits, following a punk-rock *Cockeyed Optimist*.

There are some creative camera angles and a couple of clever montages of shows other than those highlighted. In a few years *Show Business* will be required viewing for theater classes but right now, being too late for reportage and too early for nostalgia, it isn't ready for the big time.

(This review doesn't include the commentary and hour of deleted scenes included as extras on the DVD.)

Read the entire review at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).



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## ACHY from page 12

**TB: When and where did you go to college that might have taken you away from that?**

AO: We used to go to Miami every summer. Also I had a relationship with Chicago, from the time I was in the tenth grade. We came to Chicago a lot as a family, because there was no Hispanic presence in Michigan City. ... I think my real radicalizing moment came inadvertently thanks to my father. ... He set up for me to go to Mexico for a summer when I was 15, just me, living with a Mexican family. At that point, all I knew about Cuba and about being Latino was from my parents, Miami and Michigan City. I had a very specific sense of what all of that meant, and I remember getting off the plane in Mexico City and while in customs, seeing a woman with a Che [Guevara] T-shirt, which was really shocking, it was really really early, because this was like 1973 or '72 or something. It was shortly after he died actually [in 1967], and it wasn't the iconic image we all know now, but it was nonetheless a Che thing. ... The following summer, I had behaved so well, my dad sent me again, and this time one of my cousins came with me. We were in that school, for I don't know, 24 hours, then we packed our little bags, and traveled through Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama. We got all the way to the Columbian border where they wouldn't let us in because we were minors. The whole time we were driving, our parents would say, because we were reporting in, we would call collect, and then we would just kind of hold the phone out while our parents screamed bloody murder at us about how we were going to be grounded for the rest of our natural lives, *et cetera*. We wanted to let them know we were OK, but we also were sort of on this journey of discovery for ourselves. ... So to me that was really very important, and coming to Chicago was also very important. I used to come to Chicago all the time when I was in high school ... . You came to concerts in Chicago, there were tons and tons of all-ages concerts in Chicago, and a lot of them were on the South Side.

In terms of my own sexuality, I don't know what it was, but I just never blinked. I was always amazed when other people did; I was always sort of flabbergasted when people would suffer angst about it. I understood that it was taboo and all of that, but I chalked it up as a kind of a generational problem. ... Then I went off to college and I went to a very unfortunate place called Franklin College in Franklin, Ind. Franklin College is associated with a Baptist convention. The reason I went to Franklin was very straightforward: I dropped out of high school, and the only way my parents were going to sign that damn slip is if I went straight to college. So I had a total of two weeks between the first semester of my senior year, and my first semester of college. ... Then I went to Indiana University, which to this day remains a time that I think of; as much as I look back in horror at Franklin, I look back with immense pleasure at my time in Bloomington, it was a great town, it was a real radicalizing experience for me because it was my first contact with a lesbian community.

**TB: Let's fast forward to the 1980s in Chicago, your being a journalist, but also politically active in helping with the human-rights ordinance.**

AO: In the 1980s I worked for Windy City Times, and Windy City Times was very political at that time, and had a publisher and an editor who was very engaged with the whole notion of the Human Rights Ordinance, so for us it was not a conflict of interest, but rather an ethical commitment to do that. I had a weekly column of a political nature, so it all extended into that. Eventually I became involved in a sort of secondary way with the Gang of Four [activists working on the ordinance], because there was a kind of a confluence of interests, one was that it was imperative to move aldermen of color to get votes. ... It was a tremendously exciting

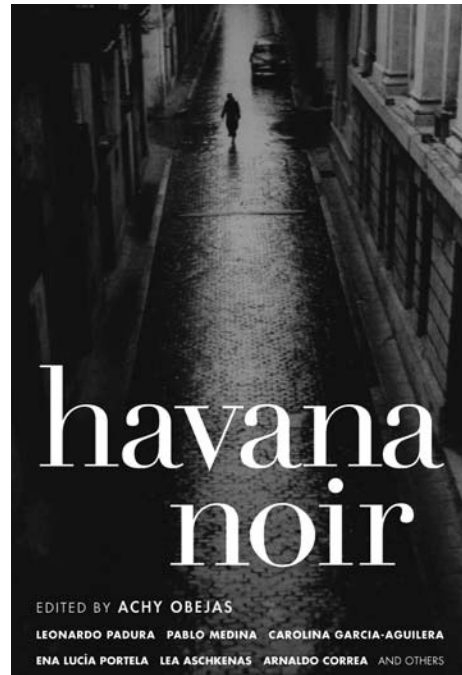
time, I don't regret any of it. It was also a very strident time; I think that a lot of us played out some roles, some very terrible roles, and a lot of us played out some very good roles. I'm pretty proud of a lot of the stuff that I did, I actually wrote Mayor [Eugene] Sawyer's speech that he gave, that accepted the ordinance, and I did a lot of lobbying that I know made a huge difference. I will happily take credit for [then-Alderman] Luiz Gutierrez's position on gays. ...

Actually, all the Latino aldermen, who were all crucial to the vote, not one was a sure bet. ... I actually think that Mayor Sawyer ended up being more genuinely committed in his heart to it than [Mayor] Harold [Washington]. I worked for Harold in '87; I had a relationship with Harold, I wrote speeches for him, I was on his media team. I think Harold was committed in principle, but he was not going to sacrifice a lot for that, and I think that was clear the first time that the ordinance got voted down. ... He actually said, "It wasn't my ordinance." Which was shocking to a lot of people. I also think that he was tagged with a lot of gay rumors, and so he needed to get some distance from that, but even after you get through all of that, it just wasn't one of his top 10 issues; he had a lot on his plate, and he had an insane situation in City Council where it was maddening to get even the simplest thing passed. ... I think for Mayor Sawyer, it turned out to be a really crucial and transformative issue.

**TB: Can you talk about your official capacity with the mayor's committee and your work with Jon Simmons [who was mayor's liaison to the gay community; he was later murdered while visiting Los Angeles]?**

AO: The mayor's committee was an advisory committee on gay and lesbian issues that was put together after a number of other committees on various other interest groups like Latinos and Asians had been put together. Jon Simmons was one of the original members of the committee, we came in together to the committee. We became instant best friends and conspirators, and we ended up forming kind of a crucial block in that committee. Jon was white, and extremely sensitive to racial issues; he worked for Joseph Holmes Dance Company, which was a Black dance company, and he had an amazing discourse on race and ethnicity. ... He was also absurdly, ridiculously, savagely funny, and we worked very well on that committee. ... We proposed him [to become the director of the committee], and he got the job. And he was great. ...

The gay and lesbian, transsexual, transgender, bisexual queer community is one that is very, very diverse in every single sense. In terms of class, in terms of race, in terms of sex, in terms of marital status, in terms of children. ... But a lot of the iconography of our community doesn't reflect that, and back in the '80s and early '90s, even less so. I think that one of the things that really changed that was AIDS. AIDS really made us have to deal with other communities in ways



Achy Obejas. Photo by Hal Baim

that we probably wouldn't have. And radicalized us in ways I think we wouldn't have. There was this whole business of, we're just like everybody else, we just stick it in a different hole. Then AIDS came along, and actually we're not like everyone else, we have a completely different lifestyle, we do things in a different way, we think about things differently, and we challenged the way people relate. As much as this particular arrangement is interesting, so is this one, and so is this one. Jon was just perfect for doing a lot of that outreach. People remember him for his work in the Mayor's Committee, and his position as the Mayor's liaison in terms of gay issues. I think where his legacy really lies is in AIDS work and AIDS outreach. He just did so much quiet work around that, and he managed to bring in so many people from the South Side, the West Side.

**TB: Can you speak to your work in journalism, and the books you have done?**

AO: Journalism, to me, was always a practical thing; it was less anything that I was actually ambitious about, than just something that, you know I had to pay rent, and limited talents, so this seemed a way to take care of that. So I worked for Windy City Times, I've written for Outlines, I've written for The Advocate, Out, and—at the national level in terms of non-gay stuff—Vanity Fair, Playboy, Ms., The Village Voice. I've also written for a lot of Spanish-language stuff both here in the United States and abroad. In terms of regular relationships, I was a staff writer for many years for the Chicago Tribune, I continue to have a warm relationship with them and sort of contribute whenever I want. I'm also a contributor to the Washington Post on a regular basis.

I've written three books. We Came All The Way From Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?, which is a collection of short stories, and is published by Cleis Press, whom I love. They're all stories that take place in Chicago, they're all but one stories that engage the queer community in Chicago in some way. My second book is Memory Mumbo; it was a novel and it's about the tensions that exist between public and private identities, and sort of the way that families create myths. My third book is called Days Of Awe, and it had the misfortune of coming out August of 2001, so that it got fabulous publicity and criticism, and then was completely blown away, literally, by some little incident in New York. It mostly takes place between Chicago and Havana, and again it sort of expands more on the idea of tensions between public and private identity.

I [now] have an anthology called Havana Noir; it's part of the Akashic series of noirs, and it's crime stories that take place in Havana, and I translated 13 of the 18 stories, so I am extremely excited about it as a showcase for that particular skill. It features some amazing writers. I [also] have a chapbook of poetry called This Is What Happened In Our Other Life, which is out with Midsummer Night's Press, a little enterprise by Lawrence Schimmel, who I've known for many many years, who I actually met through

Cleis. Cleis is still this great thing, they keep the books in print, they're just amazingly supportive. Days Of Awe came out with Random House, it was a very good and interesting experience. I had an amazing six-figure advance, and it allowed me to enter adulthood finally, buy a place, get rid of debts, pay the IRS. But I feel like my heart has always been in these alternative presses like Cleis. And now, working with Akashic I'm just delighted, they're just an amazing group of people and really committed to a lot of things that I'm committed to, so I'm looking forward to future projects with them as well.

## Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

**Keri Russell Ready for Bedtime**

After her winning turn in this past summer's indie sleeper hit *Waitress*, it was inevitable that Keri Russell would finally make the jump from TV stardom (*Felicity*) to a solid film career. Now she's been cast opposite Adam Sandler in *Bedtime Stories*, the latest film from gay director Adam Shankman (*Hairspray*). The high-concept movie takes *Night at the Museum's* mojo and runs with it, as Sandler, telling his niece and nephew bedtime stories, finds those fairy tales coming to life. Russell will play, naturally, Sandler's love interest. But here's hoping the role won't be reduced during editing to anonymous, personality-free "girlfriend," a trap many actresses find themselves in as they rise up Hollywood's male-oriented ladder. After proving she could carry a film on her own, Russell's too interesting for that kind of treatment. *Bedtime* goes before the cameras in February.

**Jim Verraros and Peter Paige Visit Copacabana**

Say what you will about the raunchy gay sex comedy *Eating Out 2: Sloppy Seconds* (the sequel to, yes, *Eating Out*), it had the nerve and energy to be as lowbrow as the subject matter demanded. And part of that energy came in the form of a go-for-broke performance by American Idol's only openly gay runner-up, Jim Verraros. The singer is proving himself a likably funny screen presence, so it's good to see him signed on with former Queer as Folk star Peter Paige for the new feature *Copacabana*, *Of Love and Shadows*. The story revolves around a British artist's relationship with a Brazilian street kid, and the drag queen that complicates things for both of them. Paige stars as "Miranda," while Verraros takes on both male and female roles for the film. Shooting in Rio de Janeiro, look for this *Copa* eventually to shake its way onto the gay film-festival circuit.

**Wilson Cruz Is Into You**

With the freshly released complete series of *My So-Called Life* still in the DVD players of fans like Romeo, nostalgic for brilliant-but-cancelled TV shows, it's easy to remember how gay actor Wilson Cruz broke new television ground as the outcast queer high school student during that series' brief life. Since then, Cruz has appeared in independent projects and keeps working for queer causes, but a triple scoop of new films looks very likely to raise the still-young star's profile. He'll appear in the gay indie drama *The Ode*, about a young Indian man who runs off to Hollywood; the basketball drama *Green Flash*; and - speaking of flash - in the all-star comedy *He's Just Not That into You*, alongside Jennifer Connelly, Scarlett Johansson, Ben Affleck, and Jennifer Aniston. Nothing "so-called" about that gig at all. All three movies should be out in the coming year.

Read the entire column at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

## HISTORY

# 'The Boys in the Band' Play On

BY MARIE J. KUDA

In December 1969, Mart Crowley's play, *The Boys in the Band* opened at the then-Studebaker Theatre in the Fine Arts Building on Michigan Avenue. On the eve of *The Hooker Report*, just months after Stonewall and weeks after *Time Magazine's* cover feature on "The Homosexual in America," *Mattachine Midwest* ran a benefit at the opening night performance. *Mattachine*, Chicago's first modern gay-rights organization, not five years old, sold 300 "choice orchestra seats" to the show's opening, Dec. 2. Next morning, columnists and reviewers had a field day commenting as much on the audience as on the play.

Jon and Abra in the *Chicago Daily News*, while acknowledging the "homosexual liberty lobby is raising funds to fight the blue meanies (police harassment)," noted that the theatre was "jammed with the limp set, lads in fur, open-necked flounce shirts, leather maxicoats, plus several would-be ladies who walked funny."

Doyenne of reviewers, Glenna Syse, writing in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, said that the opening night audience reminded her of the disadvantages of being a critic. "I don't mind telling you there were times ... when I wished it were 1953 and that the play I was watching was *Tea and*

"INDEED THE BEST AMERICAN PLAY FOR SOME FEW SEASONS. SCREAMINGLY FUNNY!"

—Clive Barnes, *New York Times*

"COMIC BRILLIANCE!" "LANCING WIT!"

—*Newsweek* —*Time Magazine*

Flyer for a 1969 *Boys in the Band* Mattachine benefit.

Sympathy..." The crowd "hooted, hollered and applauded its way through the evening and almost managed to turn what is a compassionate, devastating and brilliant piece of writing into a circus." She further noted that she planned to see the play again at a later date "on some quiet night—say when the performance is a benefit for Field and Stream or Family Circle."

Roger Dettmer of *Chicago Today* either saw the previews or wore blinders. His generic commentary only mentions the Chicago cast in the last paragraph of his four-column review. But,

Nothing Left) sprinkled with a few up-tempo numbers (*Can't Fight the Feeling*). But the vocal powerhouse also branches out into the turf claimed by younger chanteuses Shakira (*Eyes on Me*) and Carrie Underwood (*Surprise Surprise*). Just try giving *Taking Chances* a spin without envisioning Saturday Night Live veteran Ana Gasteyer aping La Celine. As a keepsake of Dion's run in *Sin City*, she just issued the DVD Live in Las Vegas: A New Day. But Chicago fans will have to wait all the way

until Nov. 4 to see her perform at the United Center.

Revisiting the progressive electronic sounds of his eponymous debut, *Seal's* fifth studio album, *System*, is produced by Stuart Price, the mastermind behind Madonna's *Confessions on the Dancefloor*. Not everything here is intended to be accompanied by a strobe light. Seal's mid-tempo duet with wife Heidi Klum, *Wedding Day*, easily could become the next sappy wedding ceremony staple, like Atlantic Starr's *Always*. Rolling and Immaculate are also sparse on the beats, allowing that unmistakable voice to take center stage. Even the video for the set's feature single, *Amazing*, possesses the futuristic traits of Seal's breakthrough clips *Crazy* and *Killer*.

The third time's the charm for *Ultra Nate*. The video for *Give It All You Got*, the third single from *Grime Silk Thunder*, finds the Free singer in a post-apocalyptic nightclub intended for Mad Max. Nate already morphed into over-the-top characters in her recent videos. She was Lady Chatterley for the clip to *Love Is the Only Drug* and then a sadomasochistic nurse in *Automatic*. Available as a digital single on iTunes, *Give It All You Got* has been remixed by some of the top names out there, such as Bimbo Jones, Soulcast, *Risque* and *Redtop*.

As a teaser to his forthcoming album *Tug Off*

Sidney J. Harris, in a creditable review (like the others he lauds the performance of Paul Rudd as Donald), warns the readers of his "family newspaper" of the "raw and raunchy" language of the play noting that his "coarser fiber" sustained him. He concluded that the play was a hit: "in this bleak season, the theatre has come alive with a play that involves, that deepens our insight as much as it entertains our sadly malnourished sense of humor."

Concurrent with the Chicago opening the Dec. 2, 1969 issue of *Look Magazine* ran two features, one on the impending film version "The Faces of the Boys in the Band" and the other "A Changing View of Homosexuality." In subsequent issues, *Look's* letters column reflected the dichotomy of response. Rodney Kings of Ohio wrote that the "whimpering, bitching, sadomasochistic psychopaths portrayed" were a dying breed but the "new homosexual looks and feels no different from the rest of American youth". Today, "The Boys in the Band" is alternately described by gay historians as either a landmark event (largely because of its frank, crackling dialogue), or a play that (because of its stereotypes) set gay theatre back a couple of decades.

In Chicago, those reviews and commentary by columnists (from the legendary Irv Kupcinet to Ron Powers) continued a popcorn explosion begun by major features in *Newsweek* (Oct. 27), *Time* (Oct. 31), *Look* (Dec. 2), and articles in *The Washington Post*, and dozens of smaller venues. Letters to the editors and opinion page articles continued well into the New Year. Parade (Dec. 14) responded to a query from a reader asking about rumored government plans to legalize homosexuality by referencing the positive recommendations of the *Hooker Report*.

Panorama (the Sun., Jan. 10, 1970 magazine section of the *Chicago Daily News*) asked "Does 'The Boys' tell it straight? There's a certain 'generation gap' in drama of homosexuals." The feature by Jerome Landfield, then a teacher at Roosevelt University and reporter on cultural affairs for WBBM radio, questioned the veracity of the play compared to the experience of Chicago gays and found it echoed only the experience of "aging unhappy fags ... obsessed with gayness and guilt." What he called "female homosexuals" and the younger generation ("the far-out fringe" the "hard-hip movement" and the "new militants") rejected the play's image. The first to tag *Mattachine* as representative of the past, Landfield asserted that *Mattachine* leaders had "about as much influence over these people as the Rev. Ralph Abernathy has over a group of Black Panthers whose leader has just been slain by police."

The Sunday magazine section of *Chicago Today* (Feb. 22, 1970) ran "The 'gay' life in Chicago: Homosexuals today refuse to remain submerged and oppressed by the 'straight' world" by Paul Sampson. Still citing *Boys in the Band*, Sampson ran a two-page interview with *Mattachine Midwest* members, attorney Renee Hanover and gay students at the University of Chicago. Sampson also compared the situations of gays and Blacks: "Both are minorities with legitimate grievances against the majority culture." No names of gays or lesbians interviewed were used in these early articles, and the only illustrations were stills from the play. For the 1970 Chicago mainstream media, "Boys" had just turned the key in the closet door.

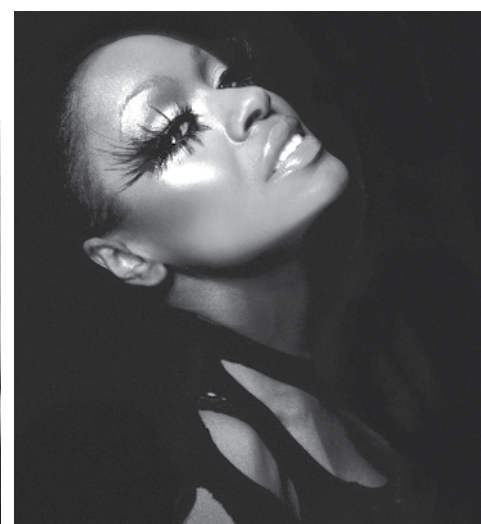
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BY DAVID BYRNE AND TONY PEREGRIN

Once again, *Annie Lennox* gives her fans something to 'sing' about. Her latest single, *Sing*, not only features a choir of 23 divas strong, but it benefits the AIDS charity Treatment Action Campaign and has been reworked by today's hottest mixers, including Moto Blanco, Dean Coleman and Harry "Choo Choo" Romero. *Sing* is already storming up the club airplay charts, as fans and DJs alike have been waiting patiently for another dance hit from the Eurythmics front-woman. *Dark Road*—the first single from Lennox's opus, *Songs of Mass Destruction*—was not commissioned for mixes. Material from her 2003 set, *Bare*, fared significantly better in nightclubs than on the radio. Per her MySpace page, Lennox hints that her next album will have her returning to her electronic roots with mostly upbeat dance music. Sweet dreams indeed.

As one of the many singing back-up on *Sing*, *Celine Dion* very well may have the greatest voice in pop music. Dion is back with *Taking Chances*—her first outing in five years, now that she has fulfilled her concert obligations in Las Vegas. On *Taking Chances*, the Canadian diva does not stray too far from her formula. Here, she makes a solid pop album; doing a cover (*Heart's Alone*) alongside power ballads (*I Got*



Colton Ford (left) and Ultra Nate. Respective photos by Joe Oppedisano and Karl Giant

War, *Colton Ford* is releasing a remake of Alicia Keys' single, *No One*. The video, directed by Bart Everly, takes a jab at Senator Craig's now-infamous bathroom scene as Ford belts out *No One a cappella*. Produced by Matthias Heilbronn (Chaka Khan, Angie Stone, Ledisi), Ford's cover and its remixes are available now on iTunes. The former adult film star scored a dance hit with Pepper MaShay redoing Stevie Wonder's *Signed, Sealed, Delivered*.

Windy City siren *Susan Werner* is scheduled to take to the stage at Schuba's, 3159 N. Southport, on Sat.-Sun., Jan. 5-6. Ever the folk artist, Werner's knack for songwriting is in top form on the thought-provoking album *The Gospel Truth*. Here, she recounts childhood memories (*Sunday Mornings*), ponders spiritual woes (*Heaven So Small, Our Father*) and modernizes the golden rule (*Help Somebody, I Will Have My Portion*). She even treads more into the gospel sound on *Forgiveness*. This ever-evolving folk-jazz-soul musician tours regularly, with a live show that is not to be missed.

Two of my all-time favorite compilations are *Pride 1998* and *Winter Party 1998*, both mixed by *Julian Marsh*. His feel-good dance music has been missed since his self-imposed retirement. With some persuasion, Marsh has returned with

the warmth from the Sunshine State on *T\*Dance*. Out now on Red Wallet Records, *T\*Dance* is loaded with Marsh's signature sound and feel-good vibe. After listening to this mix—which is highlighted by the latin-flavored opening track *Come Along* by Kim Kuzma, *My Life Again* by Lauren Hildebrandt and *Forever* by Alyson—maybe Marsh should push back his retirement even further.

Every year I seem to be disappointed by the Grammys. Leave it to the new seven-disc series, *Ultimate Grammy Collection*, to restore my faith in the industry's prestigious award show. The contemporary R&B disc comprises gems from the last two decades, including Sade's seductive *No Ordinary Love*, R. Kelly's remake of *I Believe I Can Fly* and Soul II Soul's classic *Back to Life*, featuring Caron Wheeler. The contemporary pop compilation boasts 16 hits, including kd lang's pining *Constant Craving*, Shawn Colvin's cross-over *Sunny Came Home* and Kelly Clarkson's anthem, *Since U Been Gone*. These collections deliver, with no tracks to be skipped. Sales proceeds go to the MusiCares Foundation and the Grammy Foundation.

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## MOVIES from page 15

Whatever you liked, there would surely be at least one more just like it opening soon.

The studios continue making a self-fulfilling prophecy of the idea that awards go to late-year releases by saving their potential contenders at least until September, then flooding the market with them. It's worth noting that most of my Ten Worst opened in the first half of the year, so I don't forget.

After eight months of crap, can the public really be blamed for not flocking to Eastern Promises, Reservation Road, Things We Lost in the Fire, Before the Devil Knows You're Dead, Lions for Lambs and Martian Child, some of which weren't very good anyway; or for confusing Dedication and Delirious, Rendition and Redacted, The Hoax and The Host, In the Valley of Elah and In the Shadow of the Moon, September Dawn and Rescue Dawn or We Own the Night and 30 Days of Night?

As disappointing as many of the films themselves were, more disappointing was when one the masses should have enjoyed (e.g., Shoot 'em Up) got lost in the shuffle. At this writing the box-office jury is still out on those year-end releases that are supposed to make the wait worthwhile. You'll see several of their titles in the "Best" list below and on many other lists of nominations and awards. But will you go to see them when they're up against sequels to Alien vs. Predator and National Treasure?

Oh, you will, but what about all those other idiots?

As usual, some of the films listed are platforming and haven't arrived here yet, or were test-marketed and sent directly to DVD.

### Top Ten:

1. Atonement
2. The Kite Runner



Jodie Foster in *The Brave One*.

3. There Will Be Blood
4. The Diving Bell and the Butterfly
5. Juno
6. No Country for Old Men
7. The Lookout
8. Michael Clayton
9. Lars and the Real Girl
10. Golden Door

### Honorable Mention (listed alphabetically):

Away from Her  
The Bourne Ultimatum  
Charlie Wilson's War  
Death at a Funeral  
Hairspray  
The Host  
In the Valley of Elah  
Knocked Up  
Rocket Science  
Shoot 'em Up

—**Best Foreign-Language Film:** *The Kite Runner*; **Runners-up:** *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, *Golden Door*

—**Best Documentary Feature:** Protagonist; **Runners-up:** *The Life of Reilly*, *The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters*

—**Best Animated Film:** *Ratatouille*; **Runners-up:** *The Simpsons Movie*, *Paprika*

—**Best Director:** Joe Wright, *Atonement*; **Runners-up:** Joel Coen & Ethan Coen, *No Country for Old Men*; Sean Penn, *Into the Wild*

—**Best Actress:** Marion Cotillard, *La Vie en Rose*; **Runners-up:** Julie Christie, *Away from Her*; Jodie Foster, *The Brave One*

—**Best Actor:** Daniel Day-Lewis, *There Will Be Blood*; **Runners-up:** Tommy Lee Jones, *In the Valley of Elah*; Joseph Gordon-Levitt, *The Lookout*

—**Best Supporting Actress:** Amy Ryan, *Gone Baby Gone*; **Runners-up:** Cate Blanchett, *I'm Not There*; Tilda Swinton, *Michael Clayton*

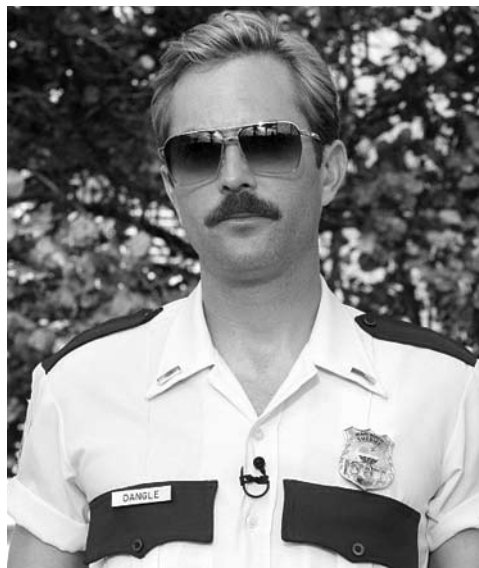
—**Best Supporting Actor:** Javier Bardem, *No Country for Old Men*; **Runners-up:** Tom Wilkinson, *Michael Clayton*; Alan Tudyk, *Death at a Funeral*

—**Best Original Screenplay:** Judd Apatow, *Knocked Up*; **Runners-up:** Diablo Cody, *Juno*; Nancy Oliver, *Lars and the Real Girl*

—**Best Adapted Screenplay:** Christopher Hampton, *Atonement*; **Runners-up:** Aaron Sorkin, *Charlie Wilson's War*; Sarah Polley, *Away from Her*

—**Titles I Hated to Leave Out but They Wouldn't Quite Fit:** *Across the Universe*, *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*, *Black Book*, *The Bubble*, *For the Bible Tells Me So*, *The Namesake*, *No End in Sight*, *Rescue Dawn*, *Rendition*, *Sicko*, *Superbad*

—**People I Hated to Leave Out but They Wouldn't Quite Fit:** George Clooney, *Michael Clayton*; Angelina Jolie, *A Mighty Heart*; Ben Kingsley, *You Kill Me*; Sidney Lumet (director), *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*; Laura Lin-



Thomas Lennon in *Reno 911: Miami* (left); Ellen Page and Michael Cera in *Juno*. Left photo by Glenn Watson; right photo courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

ney, *The Nanny Diaries*; James McAvoy, *Atonement*

—**Movie that Made Me Feel Best about Being a Human Being:** *Lars and the Real Girl*

—**ROFLMAO:** *Death at a Funeral*, *Knocked Up*, *Superbad*, *Blades of Glory*, *Reno 911: Miami*

—**Best Creature Feature:** *The Host*; **Runner-up:** *The Mist*

—**Breakout Actor:** Justin Timberlake (*Alpha Dog*, *Black Snake Moan*, *Southland Tales*, *Shrek the Third*); **Runners-up:** Homayoun Ershadi (*The Kite Runner*), Michael Cera (*Superbad*, *Juno*)

—**Breakout Actress:** Amy Ryan (*Gone Baby Gone*, *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*, *Dan in Real Life*); **Runners-up:** Dana Fuchs (*Across the Universe*), Saoirse Ronan (*Atonement*)

—**Rediscovered Geezer:** Hal Holbrook, *Into the Wild*; **Runner-up:** Andy Griffith, *Waitress*

—**Unstoppable Geezer:** Vanessa Redgrave (*Atonement*, *Evening*); **Runner-up:** Max von Sydow (*The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, *Rush Hour 3*)

—**Return to Form:** Joel Coen & Ethan Coen, *No Country for Old Men*; **Runners-up:** Sidney Lumet, *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*; Brian DePalma, *Redacted*

—**Top & Bottom:** Philip Seymour Hoffman (lead in *The Savages* and *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*; supporting in *Charlie Wilson's War*)

—**Runner-up:** Tommy Lee Jones, (lead in *In the Valley of Elah*; supporting in *No Country for Old Men*)

—**She's Everywhere!:** Margo Martindale (*The Savages*, *Rails & Ties*, *Paris Je t'Aime*, *Rocket Science*, *Feast of Love*, *TV's The Riches*)

—**He's Everywhere!:** Terrence Howard (*Pride*, *The Hunting Party*, *The Brave One*, *August Rush*, *Awake*, *The Perfect Holiday*)

—**Best History Lesson:** *The Great Debaters*

—**Worst History Lesson:** 300

—**A Nine-Year Break Can Be Healthy:** Tamara



Jenkins, *The Savages*

—**A Ten-Year Break Can Be Deadly:** Francis Ford Coppola, *Youth Without Youth*

—**Worst Daypart (Tie):** *Night (We Own the Night*, *30 Days of Night*); *Evening (Evening*, *Starting Out in the Evening*)

—**If I Go Down I'm Taking the Picture with Me!:** Robin Williams, *August Rush*; **Runner-up:** Nicolas Cage, *Ghost Rider*

—**If One Line Could End a Career... (a.k.a., the No Wire Hangers Award):**

"I am the super mother bug!"—Ashley Judd, *Bug*

### Bottom Ten:

1. *Wild Hogs*
2. *Romance & Cigarettes*
3. *Norbit*
4. *Daddy Day Care*
5. *The Brothers Solomon*
6. *September Dawn*
7. *Georgia Rule*
8. *King of California*
9. *In the Land of Women*
10. *The Number 23*

### Dishonorable Mention (listed alphabetically):

*Arthur and the Invisibles*  
*Bella*  
*Bug*  
*Ghost Rider*  
*Happily N'Ever After*  
*Kickin' It Old Skool*  
*License to Wed*  
*Rails & Ties*  
*Sleuth*  
*We Own the Night*

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## STARRLIGHT:

### Fantasia at the Alhambra Palace

BY STEVE STARR



Fantasia Barrino was born June 30, 1984, in High Point, N.C., and began singing in church at just five years old. Simon Cowell told the 2004 American Idol winner that he felt she was the very best singer of all the 70 performers that

had been crowned in every one of the worldwide competitions. In 2005, her biography, *Life Is Not A Fairy Tale*, was published and in 2006 the book was made into a film directed by Debbie Allen. Fantasia made music history when she became the very first artist to ever debut at number one with her first single, *I Believe*, written by former American Idol contestant Tamyra Gray. In 2007, she joined the cast of Oprah Winfrey's *The Color Purple*, playing Celie to the acclaimed delight of critics and audiences.

On Dec. 18, 2007, the very amiable, sweet and talented Fantasia wowed the dazzling crowd at Chicago's Alhambra Palace, 1240 W. Randolph, where she performed for dozens of luminaries that included television anchors Robin Robinson and Art Norman; members of the Los Ange-



Fantasia (right) with guest Dr. Amer Rustom.

les Lakers basketball team; models; producers; photographers; and social arbiters who mingled for hours while celebrating George Reynolds' birthday amid the opulence of the gorgeous enclave. Reynolds, the always friendly and smartly dressed owner of the venerable George's Music Room, has helped launch the careers of various hip-hop and R&B performers, and everyone, including Fantasia, showered him with attention and admiration.

Photo by Steve Starr

Steve Starr is the author of *Picture Perfect-Art Deco Photo Frames 1926-1946*, published by Rizzoli International Publications. A photographer, writer, designer and artist, he is the owner of

Steve Starr Studios. His new book, *STARRLIGHT-Glamorous Latin Movie Stars of Early Hollywood* is to be published in 2008.

Starr's column, *STARRLIGHT*, appears regularly in various publications including *IMAGE Chicago Magazine*, *Entertainment Magazine Online-EMOL.org/reporters/Starr*, *the Windy City Times*, *Extra!* and *the Chicago Art Deco Society Magazine*. Visit

[www.SteveStarrStudios.com](http://www.SteveStarrStudios.com) where you can enter *The Starrlight Room*.

*STARRGAZERS-Radiant Photography* by Steve Starr is available for portraits and events. Phone 773-252-5171. E-mail [ssschicago@amertech.net](mailto:ssschicago@amertech.net). Photo of Steve Starr in Chicago, Sept. 2, 2006, by Patrick Hipskind

## Dayne's 'Satisfied' to Hit Feb. 5

*Satisfied*, the album from recording artist Taylor Dayne, is set for release on Feb. 5. Dayne's fifth studio album and first effort in ten years, *Satisfied* will contain 13 songs from acclaimed writers and producers including Rick Nowels, Billy Steinberg and Mike Mangini.

Dayne is no stranger to success. She has sold over 75 million albums and singles worldwide and has had 10 Top 10 hits—including *Tell It To My Heart*, *I'll Be Your Shelter* and *Love Will Lead You Back*—three Grammy nominations and two sold-out world tours. On *Satisfied*, Dayne has opted to leave the major labels behind and make her own way by releasing her newest offering on her own label, *Intention Music*, distributed by *Adrenaline/ADA*, Warner Music.

Beautiful is the first single from the disc.

## Blige Has 'Growing Pains'

Geffen Records superstar and hit-making songwriter Mary J. Blige has followed up the most successful album of her career, the triple-platinum *The Breakthrough*, with her eighth studio CD, *Growing Pains*, which came out Dec. 18. According to Reuters, the CD debuted at number two, selling 629,000 copies—right behind Josh Groban's *Noel*, which moved over 750,000 copies.

*Growing Pains* includes her top 10 uptempo single, *Just Fine*, which has become an instant favorite on radio enjoyed by over 20 million listeners. *Just Fine* is in heavy rotation on MTV, BET and VH-1, and Mary recently shot the video for her second single, *Work That*, which is currently featured in an Apple iPod commercial.

# The Amazing Kate & Pat

BY ROSS FORMAN

It truly was an amazing race for married ministers Kate Lewis and Pat Hendrickson, the California couple from the current version of CBS-TV's *The Amazing Race* (Sundays, 7 p.m.).

It just didn't last long enough.

Kate & Pat, as they were known throughout the show, were the second team eliminated on this 11-team race around the world.

"Just as [the show's name] says, it was amazing. It was fun and the little bit of sting from being [eliminated] so soon is now gone. And we'd do it again in a heartbeat," said Hendrickson, 65. "I think the best part of the experience was just the fact that we took the chance [to participate] and did it. And the event really changed both of our lives because it showed both of us that we could do a lot more than we first were giving ourselves credit for physically."

Lewis, 49, said the best part was the first day when they had to climb to the top of a mountain in Ireland. "OK, it really was just a hill, but it felt like a mountain. We thought we might be last at that point, but we weren't, and that made it even better," she said.

Lewis is an Episcopal priest and has one grown son: Russell, 25. She is more reserved than Hendrickson, who can be described as persistent.

Hendrickson is a vocational deacon in the Episcopal Church and her ministry in the community is to people with disabilities. She is also the mother of two sons (Robert, 36; Richard, 29) and grandmother of three (Cyrus, 14; Cayden, 5; Max, 2).

"It definitely was a demographic coup," for CBS," Lewis said, laughing. "We were so glad they took us because they easily could have backed away from us."

And neither their sexual orientation nor pro-



Kate Lewis (left) and Pat Hendrickson. Image courtesy of CBS

fession had an impact or effect on their time on the Race.

"Of course, we're aware that [our sexuality] challenges a lot of people's mindsets. For some people, it expands the notion of who lesbians are, because we're pretty normal-looking; we're cute and sweet and not really a threat to anyone," Lewis said. "We really just wanted to get on the show—and, thus, into people's living rooms—so we can show them that we're just a loving couple and not a threat to anyone's marriage, and that we were giving a fairly normal look to two people who are Christian."

The two dated for seven years before tying the knot three years ago. They first met about 10 years ago at a Christian retreat, "and we just connected right off the bat," Hendrickson said.

Each was the other's first same-sex partner.

"We wanted to give a context and a vision to any and all lesbians watching the show, and others," in the LGBT community, Hendrickson said.

Lewis said their kids were "totally fine" with their coming out. Nor did they lose any friends over their sexuality.

They were ordained in 2002, and became priests in 2003.

"My parish is in the community," Hendrickson said. "My role is to discern the needs of the community, bring those needs to the church and help the church find ways to meet the needs of the community." She has been working at length with the disabled community.

Hendrickson works at St. Patrick's in Thousand Oaks, while Lewis is out of St. Cross in Hermosa Beach.

So what was the church's reaction to their *Amazing Race* expedition?

Lewis said they could not reveal they were on the show. "But once they found out, they were thrilled [for us]," Lewis said. "There was no fall-out [from being on the show]."

Said Hendrickson: "We really do want to get a message out to the LGBT community that God is an inclusive God, that God loves everybody and there really is a place for everyone in the Christian community."

Lewis added, "Diversity is not God's problem."

The two said they plan to work with the Human Rights Campaign and other charities in the future. The two wore "Erase Hate" bracelets during the Race.

"We're just like everyone else; we have our strengths and our weaknesses, good days and bad days," Hendrickson said.

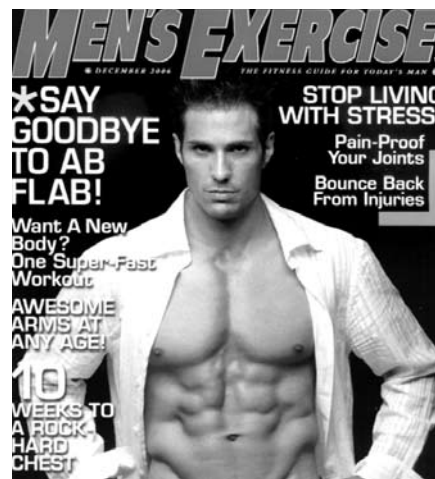
## GETTING TO KNOW ... Kate & Pat

—**Favorite actresses:** Meryl Streep (Pat) and Jodie Foster (Kate).

—**Hobbies:** Bowling (Pat) and gardening (Kate)

—**Favorite TV shows other than *Amazing Race*:** *CSI* (Pat) and *Survivor* (Kate)

—**Who they want to win this season of *The Amazing Race*:** Kynt & Vyxxin (both). "We love them," Hendrickson said. "They're great. They work together the way we do—and they're a statement that, again, people can be different."



Julian Fantechi on the cover of *Men's Exercise*.

## Julian Fantechi: Therapist—and Playgirl Model

BY ROSS FORMAN

Julian Fantechi splits time between two New York City public schools as an occupational therapist, a post he's held for seven years. He spends time at an elementary school and a kindergarten.

"I love working with children, interacting with them. They're so full of life. They really keep you young," said Fantechi. "You need a balance in life—you need to do something for yourself that you enjoy, but also something where you give back, helping others."

And, boy, does Fantechi do that for the young New Yorkers, many who few him as a real-life superhero.

"The kids really look up to me, especially since many of their teachers are females," Fantechi said. "I always tell the students that I just eat my vegetables, that I don't drink or smoke, and that's the reason I look the way I do."

"I think I'm a good role model, and I'm happy about that."

Some of the students don't know what to make of the muscle-laden Fantechi. "They're just amazed," at my size, he said. "I just try to conduct myself in a professional manner: dress professional, act professional, etc."

"I interact with all of the students; I talk to all of them. I treat them with respect and they see that I'm just a regular guy."

Ironically, Fantechi admits he first didn't want to work with kids. But, because of his

scholarship to New York University, he had to give back three years of working time. And ultimately, he got hooked on helping kids.

"It's a great job. The hours are great; the environment is great. The kids are just great to work with; they're so much fun," he said. "To kids, I think every adult is a role model, myself included; it just comes with the territory. Whether you're a parent, an uncle, an aunt or cousin, or whatever, every adult is a role model, thus, we have to act and behave a certain way. I think that's very important."

Fantechi has been a fitness workhorse for almost 15 years, dating back to his high school days, when he played football and basketball, and swam.

Fitness, he said, "just becomes a part of your life, part of your lifestyle, kind of like brushing your teeth in the morning. And if I don't do it, I miss it."

"Lifting and leading a healthy lifestyle is something you can do forever. Sure, when I'm 50, I may not be able to lift the same weight I did when I was 20, but that's OK. I can still lift some."

Fantechi's lifting tips are simple: Work out within your means. "You're not competing against anyone else; you're doing it for yourself. Don't get discouraged and don't expect everything in one day," he said. "Working out in the gym is like being a sculptor, and your body is your clay."

Fantechi's rock-hard body has landed him on numerous magazine covers, such as *Men's Exercise*, *Advocate Men*, *Odyssey Hawaii* ... and also *Playgirl*, multiple times.

And this past January, he was named *Playgirl's* 2007 Man of the Year, an honor voted by the reader's from the 12 centerfolds of 2006.

"It's an honor, a great honor, a lot of fun. It's been a good thing," said Fantechi, who appeared on the June, 2007 issue. "This honor is something I can look back fondly on when I'm, oh, 75 years old. It's totally cool."

Fantechi admitted he wasn't too sure he wanted to pose for *Playgirl* because of his day-job, but the gig was pre-approved by his employers as long as he didn't advertise that he works for the school system.

Ultimately, the New York media learned of the centerfold's day job, leading to a media frenzy.

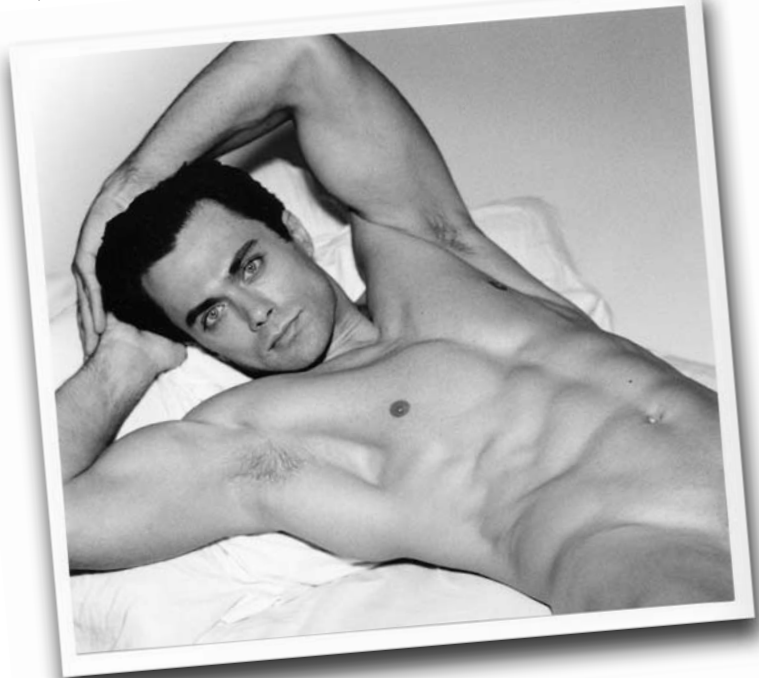
Fantechi is single and straight, but definitely gay-friendly. He appeared in late July at Hula's, a popular Waikiki gay bar, where he signed copies of the *Playgirl* and other publications he has appeared on.

Read more about Julian Fantechi at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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# WHAT TO DO?

## Wednesday, Jan. 2

**Windy City Performing Arts** Windy City Gay Chorus rehearsal. Also Wednesdays Jan. 9 through Jan. 30. 7:30-10 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., RSVP in advance to join@windycitysings.org

## Thursday, Jan. 3

**Club Krave** New Latin Night Thursdays. 9 p.m.-2 a.m., no cover, 13126 S. Western Ave., Blue Island  
**Rush University Medical Center** and Center on Halsted's LGBTQ Caregiver Support Group. 6-7 p.m., free, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

## Friday, Jan. 4

**Equality Illinois** First Fridays fundraiser. 6-8 p.m., Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., info@eqil.org  
**Windy City Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf** Coffee Social. 7 p.m., Self-pay, Caribou Coffee, 3500 N. Halsted St.

## Saturday, Jan. 5

**Girlie-Q** Live show starring Cherish the Burlesque Goddess, Miss Bea Haven and more. Hosted by Tamale. 10 p.m., Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western Ave.

## Sunday, Jan. 6

**Chicago Lesbian Brunch Group** Brunch and speed networking. 10:30 a.m., Heartland Cafe, 7000 N. Glenwood Ave., gaypros.meetup.com/283 or contact Kelly at pphd1226@yahoo.com or 312-218-1502 for more info  
**WACT** Brunch. Noon, email cherylchicago@earthlink.net for info.

## Monday, Jan. 7

**Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders** Cultural Outing: Auditorium Theater Tour. 12:15-1 p.m., \$8, RSVP no later than Jan. 3 to 773-472-6469, ext. 160.

**Windy City Performing Arts** Windy City Women's Ensemble rehearsal. Also Jan. 14 and Jan. 28. 7:30-10 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., RSVP in advance to join@windycitysings.org

**Women and Children First** Sara Paretsky, Bleeding Kansas. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

## Tuesday, Jan. 8

**Center on Halsted** Investment OUTlook for 2008. Presented by Henry Gorecki for UBS. 6-8 p.m., \$10 donation, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

**Center on Halsted** Immigrant Support Group/Grupo de Apoyo para Inmigrantes. Tuesdays through Jan. 29 6:30-8 p.m., free, pre-registration required, call 773-472-6469, ext. 158

**Steppenwolf** An Intimate Evening with David Sedaris (author of Me Talk Pretty One Day, Naked). Through Jan. 13. 7:30 p.m. Tues.-Sun., 3 p.m. Sat. and Sun, \$35, Upstairs Theatre, tickets at 1650 N. Halsted St., www.steppenwolf.org or 312-335-1650

**Stonewall Democrats Illinois** New Hampshire Primary event. Watch the New Hampshire Democratic Primary with local candidates. Open to the public. 7-9 p.m., \$25 advance/\$35 at door, Halsted's Bar & Grill, 3441 N. Halsted St., advance tickets at www.illinoisstonewall.org until Jan. 4

## Wednesday, Jan. 9

**About Face Theatre** Chicago premiere of The Little Dog Laughed, about the fast-paced world of celebrity. Runs through Feb 17. Hoover/Leppen Theatre at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., 866-811-4111, www.aboutface theatre.com

**Center on Halsted** Know the Tax Basics. Presented by Citibank and part of the Women and Money Series. 6-8 p.m.,

\$5 donation, 3656 N. Halsted, www.centeronhalsted.org

**Women and Children First** Cris Mazza, Water Baby; Achy Obejas, This is What Happened in Our Other Life; Richard Fox, Swagger and Remorse. 7 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

## Thursday, Jan. 10

**Club Krave** Latin Night Thursdays. 9 p.m.-2 a.m., no cover, 13126 S. Western Ave., Blue Island

## Friday, Jan. 11

**Packer Schopf Gallery** Opening reception of Clive Barker: Apocalypses: Paintings and Works on Paper. Shows through Feb. 16. 5-9 p.m., 942 W. Lake St., www.packergallery.com

## Saturday, Jan. 12

**Chicago Women's Health Center** and Center on Halsted's LGBTQ New Parent Peer Support Group for new parents with children up to age 5. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m., donation requested, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

## Sunday, Jan. 13

**Chicago Prime Timers** Open social. 6 p.m., Ann Sather's Restaurant, 909 W. Belmont, \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members, www.primetimersww.org/chicago

## Monday, Jan. 14

**Center on Halsted** Housing Rehabilitation/Real Estate as an Investment. 6-8 p.m., \$5 donation, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org  
**Rainbow Hospice** Monthly LGBTQ Grief Group. 7-8:30 p.m., \$5, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.  
**Steppenwolf** The Pocketbook Monologues, a collection of stories from women of color performed in the style of Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues. 7 p.m., \$35, Steppenwolf's Downstairs

Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted, 312-335-1650, www.steppenwolf.org

**WTTW** Special cocktail reception highlighting excerpts from its new documentary project, Out & Proud in Chicago. 5:30 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.wttw.com/outandproud

## Tuesday, Jan. 15

**Center on Halsted** Immigrant Support Group/Grupo de Apoyo para Inmigrantes. Tuesdays through Jan. 29 6:30-8 p.m., free, pre-registration required, call 773-472-6469, ext. 158

## Wednesday, Jan. 16

**Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on LGBT Issues** Meeting. 6:30 p.m., City Hall, Room 201A, 121 N. LaSalle St.

**Howard Brown** Legal presentations for LGBT community: Gay and Gray: Buying Your First Home. 6:30 p.m., 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., RSVP at rsvp@howardbrown.org or call Hope at 773-388-8906, www.howardbrown.org

**POW-WOW** Sixth Annual Kings of Poetry: In Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Features Talaam Acey, Triple Black, Avery r young and Kevin Coval. 6-9 p.m., \$10, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

**Windy City Performing Arts** "Making Music from the Ground Up!" musician-ship classes. Also Jan. 23 and 30. 6:30-7:15 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, free and open to public, call 773-404-9242 for more info

## Thursday, Jan. 17

**AIDS Foundation of Chicago** Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo exclusive one-night engagement. All proceeds benefit AFC. 7:30 p.m., \$40-\$75, Harris Theater, call 312-334-0935 for more info, www.aidschicago.org

## Fri., Jan. 11



### CLIVE TALKIN'

Writer and artist Clive Barker will be at some events, including a reception at the Packer Schopf Gallery, 942 W. Lake.

## Mon., Jan. 14



### 'LOGUE GABBIN'

Sharon McGhee will be one of the featured performers in The PocketBook Monologues, to be held at Steppenwolf, 1650 N. Halsted.

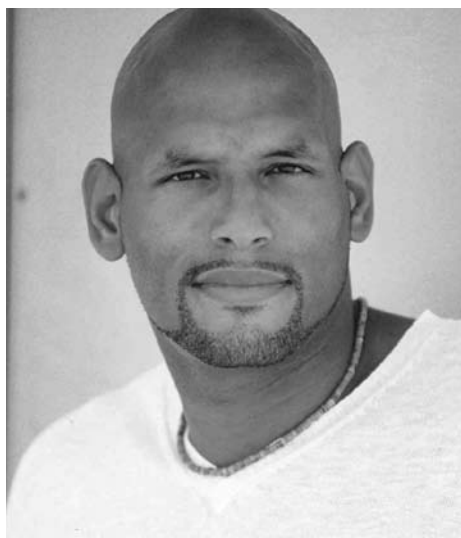
See our online calendar: [www.windycitymediagroup.com/calendar](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/calendar)

## Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



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John Amaechi.

## John Amaechi— The LGBT Sports Story of 2007

BY ROSS FORMAN

John Amaechi was greeted with an amazing round of cheers from the near-450,000 attendees of the 2007 Chicago Gay Pride Parade, far greater than any ovation he ever received during his five-year career in the National Basketball Association (NBA) that included stints with three teams, culminating with the Utah Jazz after the 2002-03 season.

Amaechi was the grand marshal for the Chicago Gay Pride Parade, and for similar 2007 parades in Salt Lake City and Los Angeles.

Amaechi was, without question, the biggest—and, at 6-foot-10, also the tallest—LGBT sports story in 2007.

"It feels like the attitude toward athletes coming out is really changing, and I think this really was the first year we saw that," said Cyd Zeigler,

Jr., of the gay Web site OutSports.com. "I think 2007 was the most important year ever for gay sports because of the incredibly positive reaction from straight athletes and the [mainstream] media to the gay sports stories that happened this year. In 2007, homophobia in sports became a bad thing."

Amaechi came out last February, leading to a media flood of exposure for the first NBA player, current or retired, to announce he was gay. The media exposure hit worldwide when former Chicago native Tim Hardaway, a former All-Star player, went on an anti-gay, hatred-filled radio interview.

Hardaway was immediately blasted and, simultaneously, sports superstars threw their support behind Amaechi and gay and lesbian athletes as a whole.

"There was an overwhelming support for John Amaechi, from stars such as [Glenn] 'Doc' Rivers, Shaquille O'Neal, Scottie Pippen and so many others," Zeigler said. "Over and over again, major names in sports said, 'I don't have a problem with gay people and you shouldn't either.'"

"The [positive] reaction to John Amaechi and the [negative] response to Tim Hardaway were so incredibly important."

The support Amaechi received also, according to Zeigler, was influential in a wave of current college athletes coming out.

And no doubt more athletes will come out of the closet in 2008, whether it be former professional or current collegiate athletes. "That's a hard question to predict," Zeigler said.

Zeigler would not speculate, or even guess, when a current athlete from one of the big four pro sports (baseball, basketball, football and hockey) would come out. But it's only one person away from happening, he said.

"And that one person can be an athlete taking a stand, or someone outing their former lover. When will that happen? I have no idea," Zeigler said.

But, Zeigler speculated that "the first" likely would be a National Hockey League (NHL) player.

"Sports Illustrated did a survey a couple of years ago and found that hockey players were

form. Individuals can also register to be placed on a team by visiting [www.ngba.us](http://www.ngba.us).

## Skiing "Gay-La" Jan. 23-27 in Tahoe

Disco band KC & The Sunshine Band will be one of the entertainment headliners during the action-packed second annual Blue Gay-La gay and lesbian ski week in South Shore Lake Tahoe, Jan. 23-27.

Blue Gay-La combines skiing and riding with 24-hour gaming and nightlife, headliner entertainment, renowned comedians, top-rated DJs, *après-ski* parties, hot nightclubs and on-mountain activities.

Comedians Paula Poundstone and Anthony "ANT" Kalloniatis are also scheduled to appear.

Other highlights include the Chocolate and Martini Party as well as the Blue World Pub Crawl. The notorious "Queen of the Mountain Drag Races" will take place Jan. 26.

See [www.BlueLakeTahoe.com/glski](http://www.BlueLakeTahoe.com/glski).

## SkiBudz Outing Jan. 25-27

SkiBudz, Chicago's gay ski and snowboard club, has announced plans for their 2007-2008 Midwest Ski Weekend.

SkiBudz will be heading to Granite Peak Ski Area in Wausau, Wis., on Jan. 25-27. The weekend trip will include downhill skiing/snowboarding, dinners, a bar night and Sunday brunch. Skiers and snowboarders of all levels are welcome.

See [www.skibudz.org](http://www.skibudz.org) or e-mail information@skibudz.org.

## Pole Vaulter to Change Genders

German track-and-field athlete Yvonne Buschbaum, 27, who won sixth place in the women's pole vault in the 2000 Summer Olympics, has announced that she is retiring from the sport and will become a man, according to AOL Sports.

She also finished third at the European Championships in 1998 and 2002, the International Herald Tribune reported.

On her Web site, Buschbaum said, "I feel as if I am a man and have to live my life in the body of a woman. I am aware of the fact that transsexuality is a fringe issue, and I do not want to be responsible for it remaining on the fringe." (The statement was translated from German to English.)

## Gay Basketball Tourney in L.A.

The National Gay Basketball Association has announced that the West Coast Classic III will be held over the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday weekend, Jan. 19-20, in Los Angeles, according to GayWired.com.

Twenty teams from across the United States and Europe will compete in three men's divisions; there will also be a women's division.

The Memphis River City Champions, Spin-Freeze "A" and DC Sentinels "B", and the host of last summer's European tournament, the London Cruisers, insure that this tournament will single out the leading contenders for the Coady Classic NGBA Championships, to be held in Chicago in April 2008.

Teams can reserve slots by visiting [www.ngba.us](http://www.ngba.us) and filling out the team registration

the most gay-friendly, particularly, NHL players in comparison to athletes from all of the big four sports," he said.

## The Top 5 LGBT Sports Stories of 2007:

1. John Amaechi comes out.



Marcia Hill. Photo by Ross Forman

## Local Sports in 2007

BY ROSS FORMAN

The 2006 Gay Games had a major impact on Chicago's LGBT sporting community in 2007.

Take, for instance, the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA), which is the nation's largest LGBT sport organization. The group's membership in 2007 soared to more than 3,500, an increase of about 350 from a year earlier. While the majority of CMSA's male participants live in Chicago, particularly the Lakeview and Andersonville neighborhoods, the females have been flocking to CMSA sports from a variety of Chicago-area suburbs, not to mention Union Pier, Mich.; Kenosha, Wisc.; and Rockford, Ill.

"There were a bunch of people who were not aware that CMSA existed until they read about it during the [2006] Gay Games," held in Chicago, said CMSA president Marcia Hill. "Most of our sports are at capacity. We really cannot have more teams in many sports, unless we find other facilities."

Clearly, 2007 was the best, most important, most influential year in LGBT sporting history—locally and nationally.

"It was a great year," Hill said.

CMSA runs nine sports: badminton, bowling, dodgeball, flag football, golf, soccer, softball, tennis and volleyball. The Windy City Athletic Association (WCAA), meanwhile, offers basketball, bowling, darts and volleyball.

And there also are numerous other LGBT teams, sports, groups and individuals who had successful 2007 seasons, such as the Chicago Blackwolves hockey team—and none is even associated with CMSA or WCAA.

Here's a look at some of the 2007 sporting moments to remember:

—**The 25th anniversary of CMSA women's softball**

—**The 20th year for CMSA women's flag football:** "Women's flag football really went well in 2007," said Hill, who noted that there were three new competitive teams. "The skill level across the board was up." Ironically, the four teams that won their league's regular-season title did not win in the playoffs.

—**Golf:** Golf made its CMSA debut in 2007, with several weeks of play. "Playing right after work did not work, so we're going to try to move it to the weekends [in 2008]," Hill said. "There definitely is an interest in golf."

The league likely will play on Saturdays, she said, probably with co-ed foursomes once again playing at different area courses.

—**Dodgeball:** Set to make its CMSA debut in January, the CMSA league will launch 24 teams, with open and women's divisions.

2. Gay Games VII, held in Chicago in 2006, breaks even financially.

3. Transgender sportswriter Christine Daniels of the Los Angeles Times.

4. The wave of college athletes coming out.

5. Tony Dungy raises money for an anti-gay organization.

—**Beach volleyball:** The CMSA league soared to 115 teams, playing on almost 30 courts, and maintaining its status as the largest LGBT beach volleyball league in the nation.

"I'm happy that so many people stepped up and volunteered their time, to help make sure the fields got set up, make sure scores got recorded, etc.," Hill said. "We're so happy that CMSA allows so many people the opportunity to play gay sports, because that's what they're looking for"

Hill said that CMSA officials are looking into forming an indoor or outdoor kickball league in 2008. She confirmed that no sports are going to be dropped in 2008.

## Recognizing greatness

The 2007 Male LGBT Sports Person of the Year for the Chicagoland area was Chad DePauw. (The determinations for the Sportpersons of the Year was made after consulting individuals associated with the CMSA and WCAA.) DePauw was the commissioner for Thursday softball's Open Division and, in 2008, he will be the commissioner for the Sunday softball league. He also is on the CMSA board of directors.

The 2007 Female LGBT Sports Person of the Year for the Chicagoland area was Kristen Polich. She runs the women's volleyball league and also is a CMSA board member.

"Both really stepped up big time for CMSA, and each does a great job running their leagues," Hill said. "People respect them and their leagues run pretty smooth."

## CMSA: Celebrating Three Decades

BY ROSS FORMAN

Chicago's 2008 LGBT sports scene kicks off with a tribute to its past.

A 30-year tribute to the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA), the nation's largest LGBT sports organization.

The 30th anniversary party will be held 4-8 p.m. on Sun., Jan. 6, at the Hard Rock Café, 63 W. Ontario. Advance-purchase tickets are \$10 for members, \$30 for guests, and include an open bar.

"I always hoped CMSA would last this long," said CMSA president Marcia Hill, who joined the organization in 1982. "The key has been that there are so many people who have the passion and dedication to promote gay sports."

Those people would include Sam Molinaro, and certainly also Dick Uyviri, Peg Grey, Art Johnston and thousands of others.

"If it wasn't for Sam running things early on, I don't think we'd be at 30 years. Sam did a tremendous amount of work, especially those early years," Hill said.

CMSA started as a four-team 16-inch softball league, played in Lincoln Park. It now has more than 3,500 members playing so many different sports.

Just consider some of the CMSA numbers from 2007:

- \* 115 beach volleyball teams
- \* 46 women's softball teams
- \* 43 men's softball teams
- \* 80 men's indoor volleyball teams
- \* 24 women's volleyball team
- \* 200 badminton players
- \* 96 indoor tennis teams

"Things really took off big time for CMSA in 1986," Hill said, noting the benefit of the switch from men's softball changing from 16- to 12-inch balls.

And the CMSA just continues to expand.

See [chicagomsa.d4sportsclub.com](http://chicagomsa.d4sportsclub.com).

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