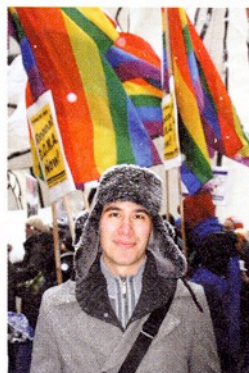


Gay & Lesbian



TRY CURIOSUS
Eler gets sporty
while Fedor
protests DOMA.



Different strokes

A crew of our favorite out writers plunges into uncharted waters.

That's right: It's already February, and you still haven't challenged yourself to try something new. Five LGBT writers did just that in hopes of inspiring *TOC*'s queer readership.

I took same-sex tango lessons. As one of two male couples at ARTango's queer dance class, which also had a single lesbian duo, I had two fears: one, that I wasn't wearing the right shoes, and two, that the instructors would take one look at my six-inches-taller-than-me boyfriend and demand I switch partners. Both fears were well founded. "Is okay this time," my instructor lamented in her charming Argentine accent upon seeing my Nikes. Tango, I found out that night, is all about sliding your feet sexily across the floor and learning to lead and be led. As I discovered when forced to break away from my boyfriend, I was meant to be led. For the first hour, I was hopeless, stepping on everybody's toes. But by the end of the (long) second hour, I was back with my guy, and there were moments when we made our way around the room with semigracefulness. "That's good," the instructor barked encouragingly. "You're dancing." See LGBT Tango Classes on Wednesday 11 in Listings.—*David Tamarkin*

I took a burlesque workshop. I've taken a tap class or two, but making sexy faces at my reflection in a mirror while donning gold-sequined panties over my workout pants was a

little different. At first it felt unnatural learning how to remove my bra coyly before flinging it across the room, and I wanted to laugh at the idea of "teasing" anyone with the removal of my panties. Yet among an equally mixed group of straight and gay women, I felt less like laughing and more like perfecting the choreography. Our instructor, Ms. Bea Haven, a late-thirtysomething queer lady who organizes burlesque shows around town, said if she could do it, we all could. Once my panties shot expertly from the toe of my high heel above a fellow student's head, I started to believe her. See Beginning Burlesque on Saturday 7 in Listings.—*Trish Bendix*

I joined a gay protest. I donate to HRC, follow the gay blogs (not Perez) and vote supportively, but on Saturday mornings, sleep trumps equality, yawns and a bizzard were damned. On January 10, I joined the Gay Liberation Network's modest yet enthusiastic downtown gathering to protest the Defense of Marriage Act and continue the post-Prop 8 momentum. With signs and rainbow flags hoisted, we marched up State Street and down Michigan Avenue. The chants were infectious but banal—of course we want "equal rights now." Regardless, the sense of community among the marchers was equalized by the support of cheering, waving passersby. For more information, visit jointheimpactchgo.com.—*Kris Fedor*

I played women's rugby. I'm probably the only dyke who hasn't tackled a girl outside the bedroom. I'd seen the happy yet battered rugby girls go head-to-head at Oberlin

College, but their motto, "bleed more than once a month," terrified me. When I attended a training session at Cheetah Gym Edgewater for the Chicago Women's Rugby Football Club (cwrfc.org), the 15 women were tough—one sported a heart-shaped rugby-ball tattoo—but kind enough to keep me bruise free. Playing hooker in the eight-woman "scrum," I scrunched up between two strong women before barreling into the opposing team; when I played "jump" in the line-out, two girls lifted me into the air by my shorts. Still, despite the undeniable thrill, I'd rather watch.—*Alicia Eler*

I visited a gay-friendly church. On Inauguration Day, I stood for 11 hours in subfreezing temperatures on the National Mall in D.C. only to hear a crystal-clear prayer from suddenly well-behaved Prop 8 advocate Rick Warren. After that, Pastor Trey Hall's Sunday sermon at Holy Covenant (holycovenantumc.org) in Lincoln Park seemed like a reward for politely enduring the glacial pace of the national gay-rights movement. The morning I visited, the charismatic, 33-year-old Hall brought intelligence and soul to his fine humanist mass about the nature of same-sex attraction in Scripture; this Memphis-raised preacher's rhythmic, witty delivery style makes his pulpit seem as accessible as a two-way turnstile. Yet his church isn't ruled by pro-gay politics, either. Instead, the agenda at this mixed, welcoming North Side fellowship is best summed up by Hall's concluding sentiment: "God loves you. But I believe he also actually likes you." Worship services are Sundays at 9:30 and 11:15am.—*Christopher Platt*

Listings

If you want to be listed

Submit information by mail, e-mail (gay@timeoutchicago.com) or fax (312-924-9350) to **Jason A. Heidemann**. Include details, dates, times, address of venue with cross streets, nearest El station or bus routes, contact information and admission price, if any. **Deadline is 6pm on Thursday, two weeks before publication date.** Incomplete submissions will not be included, and listings information will not be accepted over the phone.

How to use this section

In the following listings, phone numbers in parentheses are contact numbers for specific events.

- ♥ Geared for girls
- ▲ Geared for boys
- ★ Recommended
- ◊ Cheap

Thursday 5

Events & meetings

FREE AVER Monthly Meeting Center on Halsted, 3635 N Halsted St at Addison St (773-472-6469). El: Red to Addison. Bus: 8 Halsted, 152 Addison, 7pm. The American Veterans for Equal Rights meet to discuss upcoming issues at stake for LGBT vets.

Bars & clubs

FREE 80s Megamash Wild Pig, 4810 N Broadway at Lawrence Ave (773-784-4811). El: Red to Lawrence. Bus: 36 Broadway, 84 Lawrence, 9pm. Turntablist Nevin Hersch (a.k.a. Vooxbox) smashes together hours of tunes from the "greed is good" decade for your listening pleasure. **★ FREE Formerly Known As Big Chicks**, 5024 N Sheridan Rd between Argyle St and Carmen Ave (773-728-5511). El: Red to Argyle. Bus: 92 Foster, 151 Sheridan (24hrs), 9pm. Queer girls galore, hottie trans-folk and indie gay boys move, shake and converge at this vibrant Uptown party.

FREE Just For Fun February Crooner Contest The Closet, 3325 N Broadway between Buckingham Pl and Aldine Ave (773-477-8533). Bus: 36 Broadway, 77 Belmont (24hrs), 9:30pm. Belt it out! Dexy's Midnight Runners-style at this monthlong karaoke contest. Each week, one winner will be determined by round of applause to compete in the final competition at the end of the month. The grand-prize winner collects dinner for two at the W Hotel, and starterend Karyn Holden slings drinks.

★ ♣ Lonely Hearts Club Betty's Blue Star Lounge, 1600 W Grand Ave at Ashland Ave (312-243-1699). Bus: 9 Ashland (24hrs), 65 Grand, 9pm, \$10. Queer tassel-shaker Ms. Bea Haven presents this night of gay-lady burlesque starring Cruel Valentine, Miss Holly Wouldn't, Lula Houpp-Garou and many others. An all-gay dating game is part of the fun.

★ ♣ Stardust Berlin, 954 W Belmont Ave between the El tracks and Sheffield Ave (773-348-4975). El: Red, Brown, Purple (rush hrs) to Belmont. Bus: 22 Clark (24hrs), 77 Belmont (24hrs), 10pm, \$5-\$10. After-hours perverts Scott Cramer, Mini Miss