

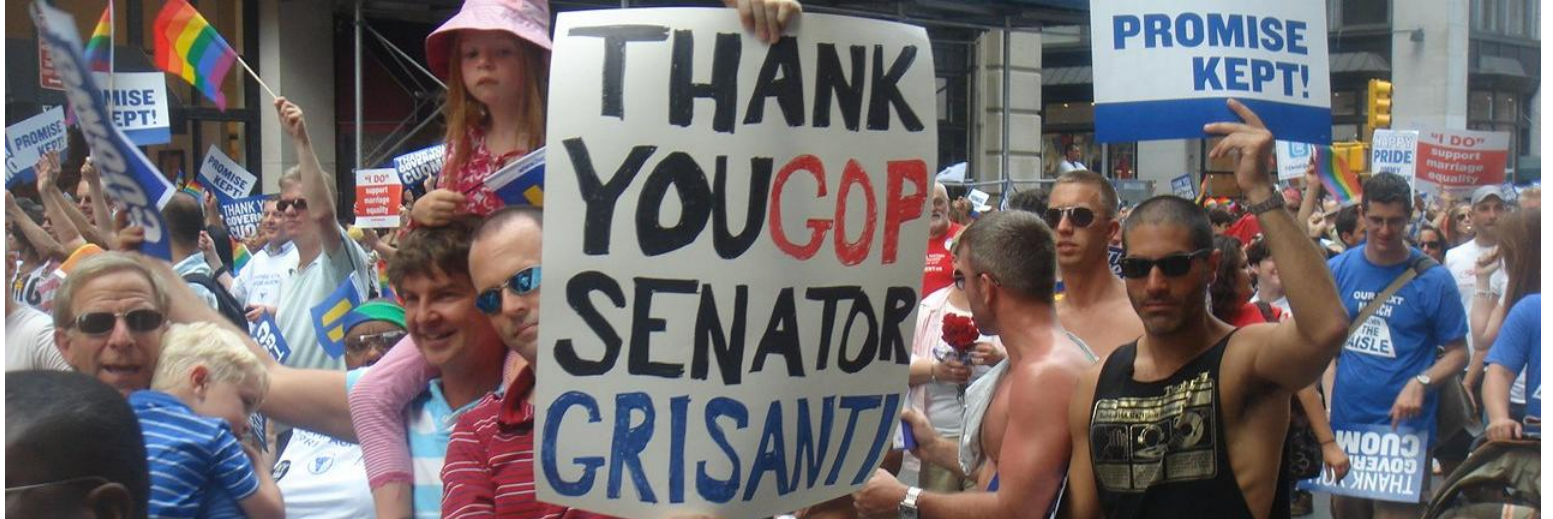
Knickerbocker Ledger

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Top Story > 42 Years After Stonewall Inn Riots, N.Y. Passes Marriage Equality Act; N.J. Next



After N.Y. Win, Marriage Equality Advocates Target Gov. Chris Christie and New Jersey as Next Battleground

BY LEDGER STAFF

With last Friday's vote in the New York State Senate to legalize same-sex marriage, marriage equality advocates are now targeting the Garden State as the next battleground for equal rights.

The victory in the Republican-controlled State Senate, with four Republicans – Sens. James Alesi, Stephen Saland, Roy McDonald, and Mark Grisanti – breaking ranks with their conference to join 29 Democrats in support of the bill, gives supporters hope that New Jersey will follow the Empire State in allowing same sex marriage.

Gov. Chris Christie (R-N.J.), who's been cited as a potential 2012 GOP presidential candidate, said on NBC's Meet the Press, "I believe marriage should be between one man and one woman," Christie said. "That's my view. And – and that'll be the view of our state because I wouldn't sign a bill that – like the one that was in New York," Christie continued.

New Jersey – with its nearly nine million residents – is a natural next-step due to its proximity to New York State, its location between both New York City and Philadelphia (a major reason why media campaigns in New Jersey are among the most expensive in the country). James McGreevey – the former openly gay Governor of New Jersey – remains hopeful in his home state's prospects.

"I think ten years ago what (Governor) Christie said was the norm by Democrats and Republicans and I think that will change," said former Gov. McGreevey on CNN's In the Arena. "I think Gov. Christie, or whoever's governor across this nation, they will catch up with the decency of the American public."

Friday's 33-29 vote of the Senate made the Empire State the sixth and largest state so far. The most significant part of the passage is that New York State has no residency requirement for marriage applicants.

New Jersey has a civil union law in place, a law that Christie endorses. On CNN's Piers Morgan Tonight, Christie stated, "But I am in favor of making sure that homosexual couples have the same type of legal rights that same – that heterosexual couples have." LGBT rights group Lambda Legal plans on holding a press conference in Trenton to address the issue this week.

Similar to California, supporters in New Jersey are looking to the courts instead of the legislature for an answer.

"Last year, the Supreme Court invited our side to file a lawsuit to prove that the civil union law was not providing equality to same-sex couples in New Jersey," Steve Goldstein, the chairman of Garden State Equality said. "That seems like a very wise indication to accept." • KL

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Your Choice 2011 > Presidential Whispers Pataki Considers 2012 Bid



BY DAN LONG
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In an interview with the Fiscal Times on last Wednesday, former New York Governor George E. Pataki (R-N.Y.) finally admitted something many had already speculated: He is considering a run for the GOP's nomination for 2012. After previously all but outright denying any intentions to seek the nomination, the former three-term Governor is modifying his tune.

As the rest of the field has been occupied by securing campaign funds and setting up their campaign operations, Pataki has been raising his profile through a group he helped form called "No American Debt." In the first two states that contribute to the nomination process – Iowa and New Hampshire – Pataki has not so covertly begun asserting himself as strong leader on fiscal issues, airing TV spots in both crucial states with the fiscally oriented group. Previously all attempts to get Pataki to indicate he was mulling a Presidential bid landed flat. But asked whether any candidate comes close to adequately addressing the issue of the national debt on Wednesday, Pataki replied to the fiscal times, "Not at this point."

The former Peekskill Mayor said that he's "not running now" but that he'll be "compelled to take a look" if a candidate does not emerge with a "serious deficit-reduction plan that they can outline and a good chance of defeating President Obama."

Already, before even publicly suggesting he's seriously considering running, Pataki is outlining his two-fold case for the nomination. First, that he's been the Governor of a large state and knows how to bring the economy back to fiscal health. Second, and most importantly, that he has what it takes to defeat President Obama.

If he does run, he'll join both Mitt Romney and Jon Huntsman in the socially moderate ex-Governor's club. These three – all who have records on abortion that fall decidedly short of being pro-life – will all be vying to come off as the most electable in the crowd of potential nominees trying to appease an increasingly ideologically pure Republican base. • KL

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Lifestyle > Beyu Lessons

Feel More, Fear Less



BY KATRINA "KITTY" CHEUNG
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In life, nothing is certain but how you feel. At times, it may not seem like we know things for certain, but the truth is that we just don't always go with how we feel and let our logical side take control instead. We allow our past to control our present emotions. We allow the experiences of others to taint our experiences in return. As humans, our biggest fear is to be hurt and we are constantly building walls. What we fail to understand is that this is what makes us human. Vulnerability is the most human emotion we can feel and we are always trying to be anything but that.

Feeling emotions make us human; suppressing emotions make us empty vessels.

As a result of fear to feel anything less than great, we lose out on so many people and opportunities. We get so caught up in the what if I don't feel great one day that it ends up controlling so much of what we do today. We fear the unknown and try to find answers in places we can't see such as the future. We look for answers in a place that we are not certain exists. It is this mind set that doesn't allow us to see the whole picture of things clearly – we're always trying to over look what is right in front of us.

Once we get used to the idea that what is in front of us right now, right here matters the most, more often than not. We see details for exactly what they are. In turn, this helps us make the choices we feel are best for us regardless of any outstanding circumstance for the future. If we are always afraid, we never even get to see the good things. Life is beautiful when you allow yourself to feel rather than fear. So from this day forward, feel more and fear less – give yourself the freedom to see and experience more of the world! • KL

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Outings > Libations

Libations: City Beer Hall



BY JOE BONILLA

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Fourth of July weekend is next and there's probably no better Downtown Albany bar location with a better view of the fireworks at the Empire State Plaza than the City Beer Hall (42 Howard Street).

A compelling concept – the City Beer Hall occupies what has become a challenging location to open up an establishment. Its Howard Street building has been home to Ballinger's (first incarnation as an upscale nightclub and second as a go-to spot for Latin music) and Ogden's – Kaelin Ballinger and Kenny Schachter are hoping that the location, as a beer garden, provides an Downtown alternative to the North Pearl Street nightlife scene. The two business partners are leasing the space from Ballinger's uncle, Doug Ballinger, who owns and operates Webster Hall in Manhattan.

South Pearl Street area bars such as Savannah's, Pagliacci's, and Broadway Joe's have been generally overlooked compared to their neon cousins Jillian's, Pearl Street Pub, Blue 82, Bayou Cafe, the Assembly, and R Bar. It's one-block-away location from the Times Union Center make it prime to become a pre-show/game gathering point.

The City Beer Hall, however, is making a serious bid to become a "destination bar" (think Wolff's Biergarten) that guests will travel to. With sixteen beers on tap (ranging from recognizable names such as Guinness and Brooklyn to obscurities such as Weihenstephaner, a wheat German beer) ranging from half-pints, pints, quarts, half gallons, and gallons, in addition to thirty kinds of bottled beers and well-priced cocktails (for those non-beer drinkers), the establishment features a mechanical bull upstairs (reportedly named Angus – seems kinda like a cruel joke name) and a free personal pizza per each drink (although when I went about a week ago, no ticket was given but they didn't prohibit the handing of said pizza over).

The picnic table concept works – the only complaint with that is that there seems to be almost too many inside, which isn't a bad thing when business picnics up, but allows some room for congregation would be preferred. Outside, the patio remains the jewel of the location – a huge, open space without restraint. The outdoor wicker chairs – a left-over element from Ballinger's – works for the location.

A bit of personal preference, I always enjoy a location that has a bar per floor – City Beer Hall doesn't disappoint. Part of the evolution to becoming a "destination bar" for the City Beer Hall is the reported speakeasy in the basement (back when it was Ballinger's, it had a more parlor feel). According to reports, the speakeasy is by permission only, no photographs, and no cell phone use (good luck "checking-in" to Facebook there). Seems apt for the hipster crowd, but part of the allure of exclusivity sometimes is not knowing the place, especially for a speakeasy-style floor.

Overall, it was about time that this beautiful building reopened back up, it's huge patio intact, and the owners' better sense of understanding the Albany crowd will work in the location's favor.

The City Beer Hall

Rating: Four out of Five Pints

42 Howard Street, Albany (phone: 518-449-BEER)

Facebook: The City Beer Hall • KL

Ledger Life > Featured Events in Albany

Thursday, June 30, 2011

Thompson Square & Hillbilly Horns

Alive at Five – Corning Preserve – 5:00PM

Free

Thursday, June 30, 2011

3rd Annual Beat*Shot Festival

Red Square – Broadway – 8:00PM

Free

Sunday, July 3, 2011

Stars of Hope: Open Mic & More

Hudson River Coffee House – Quail Street – 2:00PM

Free

Monday, July 4, 2011

Empire State Plaza Fireworks

Empire State Plaza – South Swan Street – 9:00PM

Free

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Arts & Entertainment > Robin Zlotnick

Film Review: Beginners



BY ROBIN ZLOTNICK

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Disclaimer: I just moved to LA from New York, which is objectively the best state in the country, so I have that sense of New Yorker superiority, which is completely justified based on the previously stated objective fact that New York is the best state in the country. Additionally, when I moved to LA about three weeks ago, it was right after I graduated from college, so I'm obviously in the most stable and mature mental and emotional state I can be in and am totally qualified to make judgments about this really weird city that, because of the career I want, I am forced to live in. Sure, build a city so spread out that you have to drive everywhere, but be sure not to leave any room for parking lots. And that's the most superficial of the illogical things about LA. So now, with that, here are my thoughts on Beginners, which takes place in LA and has LA qualities that stood out to me.

Mike Mills's *Beginners* is not only a funny, touching, sad, and poignant autobiographical film, it's also an alarmingly accurate exploration of the strangeness of the city of Los Angeles. It's a portrait of a family that had been so engulfed in the LA-ness of LA that only when Oliver (Ewan McGregor) reflects on his life in the event of his father's death, and only when his life is presented in the humorous way it is in the film, can he realize how the unique LA-ish quality of his family has deeply affected his notion of love.

The story is of Oliver's romance with Anna (Mélanie Laurent) and how it roller coasts on the tracks of memories of his parents. Oliver's father Hal, played by the best of the best, Christopher Plummer, comes out as gay at 75 and, before he dies, begins a three-year movement to make up for his life in the closet. Oliver's mother, who passed years before, was the kind to twist her body in the middle of museums to imitate pieces of art and rest her chin on the shoulder of a stranger, then just walk away. This was Oliver's extremely LA family (these kinds of families aren't just in LA, but I'm calling them LA families); parents as performers and the kid as the adult who has to rein in the often inexcusable public behavior of his "artist" guardians.

It's the "live in the moment" mantra that Oliver's parents live by that he struggles with in his relationship with Anna. Because though his father is happily gay at 75, he also spent 44 years living in the moment with a woman, unfulfilled. And this woman, whose whole life was an obnoxious, postmodern commentary on the boringness of life, let that "art" in the way of allowing herself to find real love and to love her son for real.

Oliver's so elegantly engrained in LA-ness, in trying to believe in the eventual pay-off of life as art. But now he sees his father for the first time releasing himself from the performance, allowing himself to love as he was meant to love. And this teaches Oliver, humorously and meaningfully, to let himself truly fall in love with Anna.

This rich under-story enhances the funny and offbeat qualities of the rest of the film. McGregor is just adorable and great, always is. Laurent is the right amount of mysterious and playful. Cosmo, the Jack Russell, who turns on the waterworks to play Arthur, the dog suffering from separation anxiety and hidden, subtitled intelligence, is cute and plays his significant role with the humility that only a scruffy dog can.

On another level, Oliver's album art career, the ironic costume parties he attends, and the photos of past generations effectively place him and Anna in the world where they know the "sadness our parents didn't have time for." The plight of the hipster, the struggle of the youth to figure out life, is deemed by older generations to be whiny and unfounded. But in *Beginners*, it is not treated with disdain or too much sympathy. Oliver's lost because his parents were just as lost; because no one in LA, or anywhere, really knows what we are doing. We never have. As the title suggests, we are all just *Beginners*. • KL

Ledger Life > Movie Schedule

July 1 – July 6 for Albany Theaters

M – Madison Theater; R – Regal Crossgates; S – Spectrum
Parentheses = Matinee. Madison & Spectrum Open Past 6 p.m. Mon. - Thurs.

X-Men First Class (PG13)

M – 705 935

R – (1110)

Kung Fu Panda 2 (PG13)

M – 1200 215 430

R – (1210 150 220) 420 500

640 710 900 1120

Larry Crowne (PG-13)

R – (1120 1220 150 240) 520

650 750 1020

Monte Carlo (PG)

R – (110 350) 710 950

M – 1200 215 430 710 915

Transformers 3 (PG-13)

R – (1230 130 330 400 500)

700 730 830 1100 1200

Cars 2 (G)

R – (1130 1200 120 210 340)

510 600 640 710 810 850 930

1140 1210

M – 1200 215 430 700 915

Pirates / Caribbean 4 (PG13)

M – 130 400 700 935

R – 1010

Cave / Forgot Dreams (PG13)

S – 1230 400 645 925

Win Win (R)

S – 1245 655

Green Lantern (PG13)

M – 1205 220 435 700 930

R – (140 440) 740 1030

The First Grader (PG13)

S – 355 920

Incendies(R)

S – 330 935

The Hangover Part 2 (R)

S – (115 345) 640 940

R – 1050

Bridesmaids (R)

S – 1235 335 635 940

R – (100) 350 650 950

Midnight in Paris(PG-13)

S – 1225 350 650 925

R – (1140 230) 610 840 1110

Meek's Cutoff(PG)

S – 1250 405 650 935

Super 8 (PG-13)

R – (1210 310) 620 910 1150

M – 1205 220 435 705 925

Mr. Popper's Penguins (PG)

R – (1150 220 450) 720 940

1200

M – 1205 215 435 700 930

Conan O'Brien Can't Stop (R)

S – 105 400 705 945

The Tree of Life (PG-13)

S – 1200 140 325 440 625

745 930

Bad Teacher (R)

M – 1210 220 430 710 935

The Art of Getting By (PG13)

S – 110 710



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Lifestyle > The Hollywood Review

Cars 2



BY CRITIC AT LARGE

info@knickledger.com

What happens if you take the culture of Cars, mix in a few spies, some villains, and a World Grand Prix Race with legs in Tokyo, Japan; Porto Corsa, Italy; and London, England?

Cars 2! The latest G-rated installment to the Pixar franchise.

When a message is received from an American agent before he disappears, it is up to Finn McMissile (Michael Caine) of British intelligence to investigate. Meanwhile, Lightning McQueen (Owen Wilson) and Tow Mater (Larry the Cable Guy) change their summer plans and enter the World Grand Prix. Their paths collide as a series of mishaps lead to Tow Mater being mistaken for another American agent with important information by new agent Holley Shiftwell (Emily Mortimer).

Intrigue and car racing combine as the Pacers and Gremlins of the world meet for nefarious purposes. The villainous lemons seek world domination by discrediting alternative fuels as directed by their leader. But who is their leader? Time will tell.

There is plenty in this film for those who enjoy the action and adventure of a Bond film and the humor of mistaken identity films as "The Man Who Knew Too Little" or "The Man with One Red Shoe".

Car enthusiasts should find the "Carization" of many characters amusing. Sumo wrestling cars and Geisha Girls in Tokyo, The Pope car in a protected Pope mobile in Italy, and the Queen and Prince William in England. There are many inside jokes to be found in the background of many scenes such as the film playing at the Radiator Springs Drive-In – "The Incredmobiles".

Stay for the credits to see more of Mater and McQueen's world travels. While the animation style changes as is typical of Pixar films, the representations of the Sydney Opera House and the Sphinx along with other cultural icons are worth staying in your seat a little bit longer.

Cars 2 is an enjoyable film that should please children of all ages while providing plenty of entertainment for the inner child of the adults in the audience. • KL