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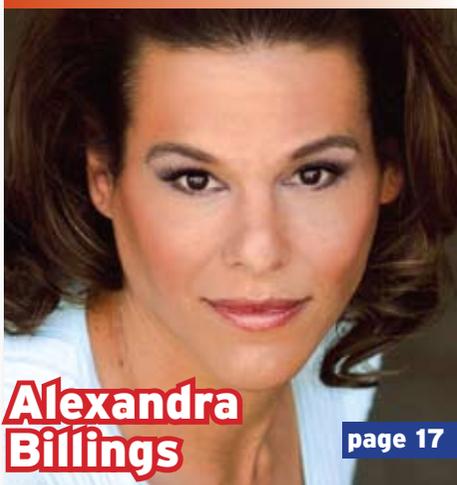


**Talking With Andy Towle**

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**World AIDS Day Activities**



**Alexandra Billings**

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**nightspots**  
pick it up  
take it home

# AIDS Group Has to Return Funds

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

An HIV/AIDS advocacy organization long under suspicion of misusing funds has been ordered to return a \$500,000 grant it received from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Let's Talk, Let's Test Foundation (LTLTF) has also been asked to give back more than \$500,000 it received from the Illinois Department of Public Health, and is under investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The announcement comes after suggestions, first reported in the Chicago Sun-Times, that LTLTF's leadership had mismanaged funds, including paying out large bonuses to staff members, the purchase of skybox tickets to a football game and questionable campaign contributions to Democratic state Rep. Connie Howard.

Suspicion surrounding LTLTF's spending is not new; in September 2008, Windy City Times reported that the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) was withholding funding to the organization while it investigated how the money was spent.

Let's Talk, Let's Test Executive Director Lloyd Kelly denies wrongdoing. Although Kelly had no comment at press time, he said that he planned a press release and hold a possible press conference later in the week.

Calls to Howard's office seeking comment were not returned by press time.

Howard, who has served in the Illinois legislature since 1995, co-founded Let's Talk, Let's Test with Kelly in 2002; Kelly previously had been a volunteer legislative aid in Howard's office. In August 2005, Howard shepherded a bill through the legislature that gave the group a large boost in funding—a financial infusion of which the spending is now under widespread suspicion.

That money came out of the African-American HIV/AIDS Response Act, which was co-authored by Howard and state Sen. Kimberly Lightford. Signed into law by then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich and enacted in 2006, the Response Act was heralded as a pioneering piece of legislation that would address the widespread problem of HIV/AIDS in African-American populations.

Among other provisions, the act called for

the creation of "response officers" in four state agencies: the Office of the Governor, the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Department of Human Services and the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). It provided for the voluntary testing of any Illinois prison inmate who requested it, and mandated steps to control the spread of HIV in prison.

In the wake of the act's passage, Howard was named one of "10 Black AIDS Warriors to Watch" by POZ magazine, which described the legislation as "packed with truly innovative provisions." The magazine Utne Reader counted Howard as one of "50 visionaries who are changing your world."

In addition to changes in public health bureaucracy, the act also created a "response fund," to be administered through the state, that would fund non-profit agencies working to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in the black community. Out of the \$3 million fund—dispersed among 79 organizations—LTLTF was awarded more than \$1 million.

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**Windy City Times'**  
**1000**  
**AND UNDER**  
Holiday Gift Guide  
Pgs. 9-11



**Sweet Treat**

page 22

There were desserts galore at AIDS Foundation's annual World of Chocolate, which marks World AIDS Day. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com); see more on page 22 and online at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com)

**GIVE THE GIFT THEY'LL LOVE...**  
**HARRIS THEATER PRESENTS**

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo January 27, 7:30 pm	Stephen Sondheim: A Life in the Theater March 4, 7:30 pm	Sharon Isbin, Guitar Mark O'Connor, Violin MARCH 6, 7:30 PM	An Evening with Christine Ebersole March 25, 7:30 pm	Lang Lang, Piano Christoph Eschenbach, Conductor Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra April 11, 3:00 pm
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# Windy City Times' 1000 AND UNDER Holiday Gift Guide

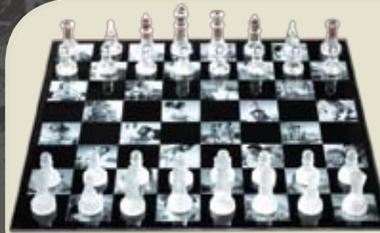
THIS YEAR, WINDY CITY TIMES IS ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS AS THE ANNUAL GIFT GUIDE (THIS IS THE SECOND WEEK; LAST WEEK'S GUIDE CAN BE FOUND AT WINDYCITYTIMES.COM) EXCLUSIVELY FEATURES ITEMS THAT DO NOT EXCEED \$100. LET THE SHOPPING COMMENCE!



## Shirts so good

**American Apparel** is selling a variety of gay-themed T-shirts that will certainly attract attention wherever you go. Among the items that may earn you reactions are the Viva Gay Beach T-shirt as well as the "Legalize Gay: Repeal Prop 8 Now" top. Similarly, Human Rights Campaign is selling "Legalize Gay" T-shirts with their logos, alongside "Love Conquers Hate" tops and ones with the Barack Obama quote, "I Will End Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

**\$17-\$28; [store.americanapparel.net](http://store.americanapparel.net) and [shop.hrc.com](http://shop.hrc.com)**



## Get the picture?

Featuring a unique take on traditional games, the **Melannco Photo Chess and Checker Set** allows you to put up to 32 photos of family members and friends on a board. It provides a new twist on "king me."

**\$28.99; [www.overstock.com](http://www.overstock.com)**



## Gorilla my dreams

**Gorillapod** uses its 30 adjustable joints to grip to trees, fences or posts—anything it can wrap its legs around—to provide a steady and secure platform for your digicam! Now you don't have to hunt for flat surfaces—and you can provide a unique perspective for your next online-dating photo.

**\$32.93; [www.cableorganizer.com](http://www.cableorganizer.com)**

## Give and bake

Who could possibly resist treats from **Corner Bakery**? Among the delicious items the chain offers are Bundt bites, mini-bars (bite-sized fudge brownies, maple pecan bars and raspberry bars), mini-cookies and cinnamon creme cakes—and if you're not sure what someone would like, there are always gift cards.

**various prices; [www.cornerbakerycafe.com](http://www.cornerbakerycafe.com) and local sites**



## Liking it RUF

'Tis the season to give and receive, and with the TAMBO terry cloth sport pant from **RUSKIN**—you can give the gift of comfort combined with style to the one you love. But why does it gotta be all about them? You get the gift of seeing your friend or partner in a "tailored" lounge pant instead of his baggy sweatpants he's been wearing since college. The ample front pockets give enough room to carry everything he may need, and the detail across the back promise to enhance his best, um, assets.

**\$70.50; [www.rufskin.com](http://www.rufskin.com)**



## Stashes to stashes

Your favorite Martha Stewart wannabe will not doubt appreciate **Secret Stash Sea Salts**—which provide different ways to wake up the flavors of various items. For example, the Pineapple Cumin Salt is excellent for pork, chicken and beef as well as barbeque dishes. This is one site that should not remain a secret.

**various prices; [www.secretsalts.com](http://www.secretsalts.com)**



## Buff enough

**Buff's new wool buff** is made from 100-percent natural merino wool, which provides plenty of insulation. It is also water-repellent, odor-resistant, elastic and flameproof. (Don't ask about how that last quality was tested.) Also, the buff can be worn up to 12 different ways.

**\$27; [www.buff.us](http://www.buff.us)**

