

DIVERSIONS

Pioneer Press

February 22, 2007

Managing Editor: Michael Bonesteel | mbonesteel@pioneerlocal.com | (847) 486-6854

Good songs and good deeds

»WEB» DYLAN VS. TV

It ain't TV, babe. At least not at The Village Voice. The Voice's annual Pazz and Jop music critics poll shows Dylan's "Modern Times" narrowly beating TV on the Radio's "Return to Cookie Mountain" for best album of 2006. See www.villagevoice.com. But the Idolator Web site has its own poll, with TV on the Radio coming in at No. 1 and Mr. D at No. 6. See www.idolator.com.

BRUCE'S TAKE

THE FILM REVIEW

"It's hard to imagine what got Jim Carrey and director Joel Schumacher involved in this disaster in the first place. Maybe it was just so tricky and twisted and nuts that it came across like a work of crazed genius. Maybe they thought the average teenage moviegoer won't know the difference."

SEE MOVIE REVIEW, PAGE B9

'A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS'

AOK Cabaret at Elm Place School Auditorium, 2031 Sheridan Rd., Highland Park. 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 3. \$25 adults, \$10 students, \$60 family of four. Reservations (847) 432-8474.

'DUOS & DUETS'

AOK Cabaret at the Levy Center, 300 Dodge Ave., Evanston. Benefits the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life of Evanston. 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24. \$30 advance; \$40 at door; \$20 seniors/students. Reservations (847) 332-2423.

'BAKE YOUR OWN CAKE'

AOK Cabaret at North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Rd., Northfield. Benefits North Suburban United Way. 7 p.m. Saturday, March 10. \$65 per person, \$110 per couple. Reservations (847) 509-8743. AOK Cabaret can be reached at (847) 419-7664.

By JACK BESS | Contributor

"Cabaret" may evoke swank nightclubs and two-drink minimums, but a group of local



Hilary Ann Feldman (from left), Tracy Adams and Hannah Goalstone will perform in AOK Cabaret's "A Little Help From My Friends" in Highland Park.

singers has another way for you to come hear the music play.

Acts Of Kindness Cabaret, or AOK Cabaret, is composed of volunteer professional

singers who perform shows to raise money for non-profit organizations serving those in need. Last year, the group raised \$30,000 and this year promises to be even more successful, said Hilary Ann Feldman, AOK founder, director and performer.

"A Little Help From My Friends," AOK show on March 3, will raise funds for Highland Park's Music Arts School, where Feldman studied piano in the early 1980s and now serves on the voice faculty.

Feldman learned about philanthropy, as well as how to play the piano, from the school's founder Mortimer Scheff, an acclaimed pianist. "He really believed that everyone had a musical gift and that everyone deserved a good musical education, no matter what their talent level," she said.

Musical variety

"A Little Help From My Friends" highlights themes of
SEE SONGS, page B13

SONGS

Continued from page B3

friendship and family with songs from the old masters like Harold Arlen's "Get Happy" and new masters like the Beatles' "When I'm 64." In the intimate cabaret mode, audience members of all ages connect with the dizzyingly fast patter of Stephen Sondheim's "Get-

ting Married Today" or the daffy humor of Cole Porter's "Friendship," which asks "If you ever take a boat and get lost at sea, write to me."

While older folks revel in the great tunes they hear at AOK shows, kids as young as 6 enjoy the music too. "They've been to shows like 'Wicked' and they want to do that but they don't know how, they feel so distant from the big stars. But they see a personal connection

at our shows. It's like having their big brother or sister on stage, says Hannah Goalstone, vice president of the AOK Cabaret board.

Helper network

Feldman founded AOK Cabaret in 2001, inspired by an account of a woman who organized a volunteer network of knitters to make blankets for children in hospitals around the world. "I'd been looking for

ways to do something like that," she said. I was a cabaret singer but no one knew who I was. But once I turned it into being about the organizations I wanted to help and not about me, this organization sort of formed itself."

Feldman named the group after "the idea of a kindness chain, that if you do something good, someone else will feel good and do something good."

Cabaret shows, that make

strong, personal connection between audience and performer, are an ideal way to implement kindnesses, Feldman believes.

"It's an intensely personal evening of songs and stories delivered by singers in a simple, honest way," she said. "At the end of a cabaret show, you should feel like you've just had coffee with the singers and have gotten to know them a bit."