

MAGAZIN



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CNN anchor says he's gay. **D2**

Dance competition kicks off here. **D8**

Sounds are sweet in Princeton. **D2**

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 ★ Section D



ISABELLA VOSMIKOVA / Fox
Zoey Deschanel stars in "New Girl," a Fox addition on Tuesdays.

Fox banks on Cowell, Spielberg for fall

Stuffing a henhouse full of eggs into one big basket, Fox surprised no one Monday by announcing that one-sixth of its entire fall schedule will be filled by another Simon Cowell singing competition show, *The X Factor*.

The network thinks it has a second blockbuster in waiting, Steven Spielberg's *Terra Nova*, about a family that journeys back in time to try to point civilization on a happier course.

Fox adds two sitcoms and a cartoon show for fall and will hold four series for midseason. As expected, it canceled all its "bubble" shows: *The Chicago Code*, *Human Target*, *Lie to Me*, *Breaking In*, and *Trafic Light*.

And it pulled the plug on *America's Most Wanted*—for a second time. A similar move in 1996 backfired amid a huge public protest, and the show, hosted by John Walsh, is currently the longest-running series in prime time, not counting news magazines.

"John Walsh has been a very important guy to the network for See **FOX** on D4



Jonathan Storm
Television Critic

Before becoming a human rights activist, young John Prendergast began an unofficial Big Brother relationship with three black youths. A new memoir tells of the ties that developed.



AKIRA SUWA / Staff Photographer
John Prendergast (left) and Khayree Lane, whom the activist mentored through Big Brothers. Layne holds a copy of "Unlikely Brothers," the memoir Prendergast coauthored.

Bonds of brotherhood

By Amy S. Rosenberg
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Angelina Jolie is nowhere in sight and this is not the banks of the White Nile in Southern Sudan, but John Prendergast is on a humanitarian mission nonetheless.

It's Sixth and Tasker Streets, a place in deep South Philly where Prendergast, 48, the dashing (but once awkward and acned) human rights activist and celebrity pal rented an apartment in a rowhouse one hot summer in 1984.

As Prendergast recalls, the sweet old ladies who sat on folding chairs went as frosty as a

cherry water ice from John's when he walked onto the block with three young African American boys with whom he had begun an unofficial Big Brother relationship.

"They were lovely, loving people who were really into my stories of life, had me over for dinner," Prendergast said one day last week, outside that rowhouse (on a block that he noted with astonishment is now predomi-

philly.com

John Prendergast recalls his South Philly days at www.philly.com/prendergast

See **PRENDERGAST** on D5



A mentor maintains bonds of brotherhood

PRENDERGAST from D1 nantly African American). "As soon as those kids were over, they never talked to me again. They literally turned their chairs around."

One of those kids, Michael Mattocks, now 36 and a reformed drug dealer working for a Washington, D.C., bus company, married with five children, has coauthored a new memoir with Prendergast, *Unlikely Brothers: Our Story of Adventure, Loss and Redemption* (Crown, \$24). He recently toured the Philadelphia sites mentioned in the book with a reporter.

Mattocks and Prendergast met when Prendergast, then 20, went to help out at a homeless shelter. The 8-year-old Mattocks was living out of Hefty bags. Impulsively, Prendergast took Mattocks and his brother to McDonald's and a library. Later, it was fishing, and to Philly for a summer.

The unorthodox memoir veers between Prendergast's and Mattocks' narratives. Prendergast spins a global tale of Africa peace activism, Big Brother-and-then-some urban mentoring, and navigating complicated family dynamics in Berwyn. Mattocks writes of a homeless childhood in Washington, a violent swath of drug dealing, finally getting on a straight path, and the miracle of J.P. being in his life. He says that he now does with his own sons the things J.P. did with him, such as fishing in the Potomac, behind the Watergate Hotel.

Each views the other as indispensable. Prendergast writes of finding the capacity for a meaningful quasi-family bond, even as he felt he repeatedly failed Mattocks by



Social activist John Prendergast (left) and actor **George Clooney**, facing reporters last year after a White House meeting with President Obama to discuss their recent trip to Sudan. In July, Prendergast and Clooney are to visit the African nation again.

CHIP SOMDEVILLA / Getty Images

leaving so frequently to travel to Africa, often losing touch. Mattocks, despite his long detour into a criminal life, is sure his ability at last to straighten himself out was possible because of the interest taken in him by Prendergast — not to mention the entire Prendergast family, on whom J.P. repeatedly "foisted" (his word) the children he had decided to mentor. "Was I hesitant about imposing a

little kid on my parents?" he writes. "Not at all. Michael was one of God's children." His own family's willingness to take on his mission, welcoming these children into their homes, even during times when Prendergast describes their relationship as tense at best, is one of the book's compelling threads. "He's very loyal," said Mattocks, in a phone interview. "I'm very loyal to him. He nev-

er judged me. When I came to him and asked him to help, he was there."

It is six weeks before Prendergast's planned wedding to lawyer Sia Sennah, set for Mia Farrow's backyard in Connecticut. George Clooney has offered his Lake Como house, but the honeymoon will wait for two planned Africa trips, to Sudan with Clooney in July and to Congo with Iman in August.

It's been a crash course in party etiquette for Prendergast — who once showed up at a cousin's wedding in Valley Forge with seven mentally challenged adults and three siblings from inner-city Washington. He now cringes at the "Can I bring a guest?" requests.

"It was so presumptuous, so arrogantly presumptuous," he said, looking back at the person who felt sure that people in his life would want to share the responsibility. But in large part, they did. And on East Price Street in Germantown, the next part of the Prendergast Philly tour, Khayree Lane, 33, whom Prendergast mentored through Big Brothers, is standing in front of his new apartment as proof. He still has weekly dinners with Prendergast's brother

er Luke and family, goes to chess club with Luke's son Dylan. With their help, he found the apartment and is now working toward a GED and barber school. "Ever since I was little, he's been looking after me," said Lane, who lost a leg to cancer as a boy. "I needed him and his brother, and his whole family. I used to go to his mom's house, go swimming. When he went to Africa, I thought I was never going to see him again."

Prendergast, the founder of the Enough Project, an anti-genocide group, has served in the Clinton administration, co-authored two books with Don Cheadle, and championed human rights in Sudan and elsewhere in Africa. Busy with his global mission of building a "coalition of

conscience," he lost touch with Lane for years, until the day after his father's death in 2008, when he impulsively went searching through Germantown. He found Lane, but learned that Khayree's brother had been killed. That night, he had Lane and members of the Prendergast family sign specific pledges committing themselves to Lane's future. That document, Prendergast writes, "says everything about Khayree, about the courage and love in my family, and — for better or worse — about the way I take on challenges and then spread them around to make other people share responsibility for them."

The tour continues, inevitably, to Berwyn, where Prendergast's mom still lives and where Prendergast describes excruciating episodes of tension between him and his frozen-food-salesman father, whom he describes as a "rageaholic" who never understood him. That picture of his dad is at odds with the parent who eagerly welcomed Mattocks, Lane, and their various siblings, taught them to fish, took them shopping for shoes, imprinted himself as a father figure.

On this hot afternoon, Claire Prendergast — Mrs. P. — is out back, sunbathing in polka dots, brushing her long blond hair near the pool, still covered, leaves on top.

In this unguarded moment, she seems nothing if not unconventionally glamorous, at least as far as 84-year-old moms hanging out in suburban Chester County go, and her son's odysseys through Africa, Germantown, D.C., the inner city, and the backyards of the rich and famous begin to make more sense.

Mrs. P. says there was never any question that the family — deeply grounded in Catholicism and Midwestern hospitality — would welcome Mattocks, Lane, and whomever else J.P. showed up with. A social worker, she nearly became a nun; her late husband had almost become a priest.

"Everybody was welcome," she said.

The Prendergasts' generosity is not lost on Mattocks. "Mrs. P. is a wonderful woman," he said. "They showed us nothing but love. It was like the best time in my life. His mom made sandwiches, we had fruit, she gave us a picnic basket. I had never sat down and actually had a picnic."

Mattocks and Prendergast hope the memoir will encourage others to become Big Brothers. "It was so amazing, for John to be white and we black, a lot of people looked at us," said Mattocks. "They didn't know he was the god in our lives."

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Pew to aid nine arts projects

A total of \$874,900 will be awarded to groups located across the Philadelphia area.

By **Stephan Salisbury**

INQUIRER CULTURE WRITER

The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage has awarded \$874,900 to nine exhibition projects throughout the region, including an unusual exhibition planned around removal and preservation of graffiti at abandoned Holmesburg Prison and a 10-year museum retrospective of work by photographer Zoe Strauss, known for her installations beneath I-95.

Philagrafika, which organized an international graphic arts festival in 2010, received \$80,000 in support of "Doing Time," the Holmesburg Prison graffiti show. The project involves a six-week residency by two Spanish artists who will remove graffiti by transferring it to canvas

will be broadcast live on the Internet. The Philadelphia Museum of Art received \$250,000 for its 2012 retrospective of Strauss' street portraits, buildings, and signage, a documentation of struggling urban life. Strauss says that her ambition is to "create an epic narrative that reflects the beauty and struggle of everyday life."

The exhibition will include a lobby kiosk designed by Megawords; the museum will project Strauss-designed slide shows on its facade, mount a banner-size photograph facing west over the Schuylkill, and present Strauss photographs on city billboards. Other grants made as part of the Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative include:

- David Dempewolf/Marginal Utility, \$24,900 for "Chronicles of Dissent," an exploration of the topic of protest.
- Fabric Workshop and Museum, \$105,000 for a two-year
- Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, \$250,000 for an exhibition based on graphic designer Stefan Sagmeister's exploration of happiness.
- Asian Arts Initiative, \$25,000 to plan a new series of guest residencies and installation projects.
- Anthony Smyrski/Dan Murphy (Megawords), a \$5,000 planning grant for a mobile publication studio to produce interviews, zines, and videos documenting neighborhood residents and their environments.
- Sought Foundation, \$25,000 to plan Mixplace Studio, a research and mentoring project bringing together young people from West Philadelphia and architecture and design students from the University of Pennsylvania.
- Vox Populi, \$20,000 for planning "Self-Generated Spaces, on Their Own Terms," a collaborative project exploring the current role of artist-run spaces within the broader artistic community.

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