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Stella's Column

March 29, 2007

BY **STELLA FOSTER** Sun-Times Columnist

I TALKED WITH comic/actor/writer/producer **Bernie** ("Guess Who," "Pride") **Mac** about our dear friend **Carolyn Adams**, the brilliant and popular 44-year-old Illinois Lottery superintendent who succumbed to breast cancer early Monday. Bernie said, "She was instrumental in initiating the entire deal for my successful and popular lottery commercial spots that are still running."

"I was deeply saddened to hear about the loss of my girl Carolyn," said Bernie. "She never once said to me that she was ill. We always laughed, joked and took care of lottery business as usual. I gave her my word and will fulfill my commitment to continue doing those spots for the lottery."

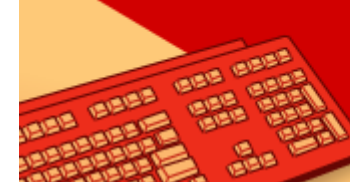
"I plan to donate \$10,000 to the educational fund for her son, Tre."

"Her death reminded me of my mom when she was diagnosed in her late 40s and had a double mastectomy and passed away at the tender age of 47. She didn't tell anyone."

And Bernie jokingly said about Carolyn: "I had no idea she was ill because she was 'fine all the time.'"



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"My heart goes out to Carolyn and her entire family. Rest well, Carolyn."

Carolyn Adams' "Home Going" service takes place April 5 at Rev. **Henry Hardy's** Cosmopolitan Community Church, 5249 S. Wabash. The wake is 10 to 11 a.m., with the service to follow.

The educational fund set up for her wonderful 10-year-old son, **Tre Adams**, is at the following address: Tre's Fund, c/o Seaway National Bank, P.O. Box 19522, Chicago, IL 60616.

ACTOR AND NATIVE Chicagoan **Dennis ("Law & Order") Farina**, who will be in town for the National Italian American Foundation dinner at the Hilton Chicago April 12, has four movies coming out this year, three of which will debut at the Tribeca Film Festival next month. The flicks are "Purple Violets," co-starring **Ed Burns, Debra Messing, Selma Blair** and **David Arquette**; "You Kill Me" with **Ben Kingsley, Tea Leoni** and **Luke Wilson**; "The Grand" with **Woody Harrelson, Ray Romano, Jason Alexander** (Chicago's **Bobby Schwartz** is a producer), and an independent film, "Bag Boy," set for a fall release. Whew!

A MUST SEE: The show "My Brother Marvin (The Marvin Gaye story)" by his sis **Zeola Gaye** at the Arie Crown Theatre now through Sunday. The cast of talented actors/singers include **Havier Hill-Roller; Clifton Powell; Anthony Grant** and **Keith Washington**. **Alyson Williams** and **John Canada Terrell** round out the cast.

PERVIS SPANN, aka "The Blues Man," will be honored at the Loretto Hospital Foundation's 4th annual "Spirit of Achievement" gala dinner April 25 at the Hilton Chicago. **Koko Taylor**, "The Queen of the Blues" who has a new CD coming out called "Old School," will provide the down-home entertainment. Spann's good pal, actor **Carl ("Soul Food") Wright**, is the emcee. (So plan to laugh your head off!)

Spann, the founder of the all-talk radio station WVON ("The talk of Chicago"), is celebrating 40-plus years in the business. Proceeds from this affair will go toward establishing the Pervis Spann Senior Fitness Program.

Spann is now a young 75-year-old "Blues Brother" and is taking it easy these days. And since the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, lovely daughter Melody Spann-Cooper keeps the station moving forever forward.

THE SOUTH CENTRAL Community Services' 6th annual "Women Empowering Women" conference/retreat kicks off Friday at the Northbrook Hilton Hotel. Speakers and panel participants include Ald. **Sandi Jackson** (7th), the Sun-Times' **Mary Mitchell**, City Colleges of Chicago's Dr. **Wayne Watson** and The Chicago Defender's **Art Sims**.

CONGRATS TO Western Illinois University grad **Christine Boll** on winning the Miss Chicago 2007 Scholarship Pageant, which was held recently at Northwestern University.

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DON GARNER, president of Rotary One, will be hopping on a bus with a group of Rotarians to head to a meeting of the Indianapolis Rotary Club April 3 to make good on a Super Bowl bet -- which we all know they lost. So, it is safe to say they will be eating crow. ... **Showbiz Shelly**, the entertainment reporter on B96 radio with **Eddie, Jobo** and **Erica**, is among the celebs participating in the "MixMaster Celebrity Buy-A-Date" charity auction Saturday at Ontourage. The evening will benefit star cyclist and cancer survivor **Lance Armstrong's** Live Strong foundation.

WMAQ-Channel 5 anchor **Warner Saunders** puts the spotlight on a unique school, Chicago Hope Academy on the Near West Side, where teachers and students both signed a personal conduct pact which will blow your mind. So, watch the 10 p.m. news tonight.

THE BIRTHDAY BEAT: Richard Phelan, and belated to World World Entertainment's **Charlie Chase**. Friday: Broadcaster **John Drummond**. Saturday: **John Rogers Jr., Joe DiLeonardi** and WGN's **Dean Richards**. Sunday: **Sandy Whiteley, Penny Lane** and WBBM-Channel 2's **Rob Johnson**. Monday: **Aurelia Pucinski**.

Well, that's Stella in the City!

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