

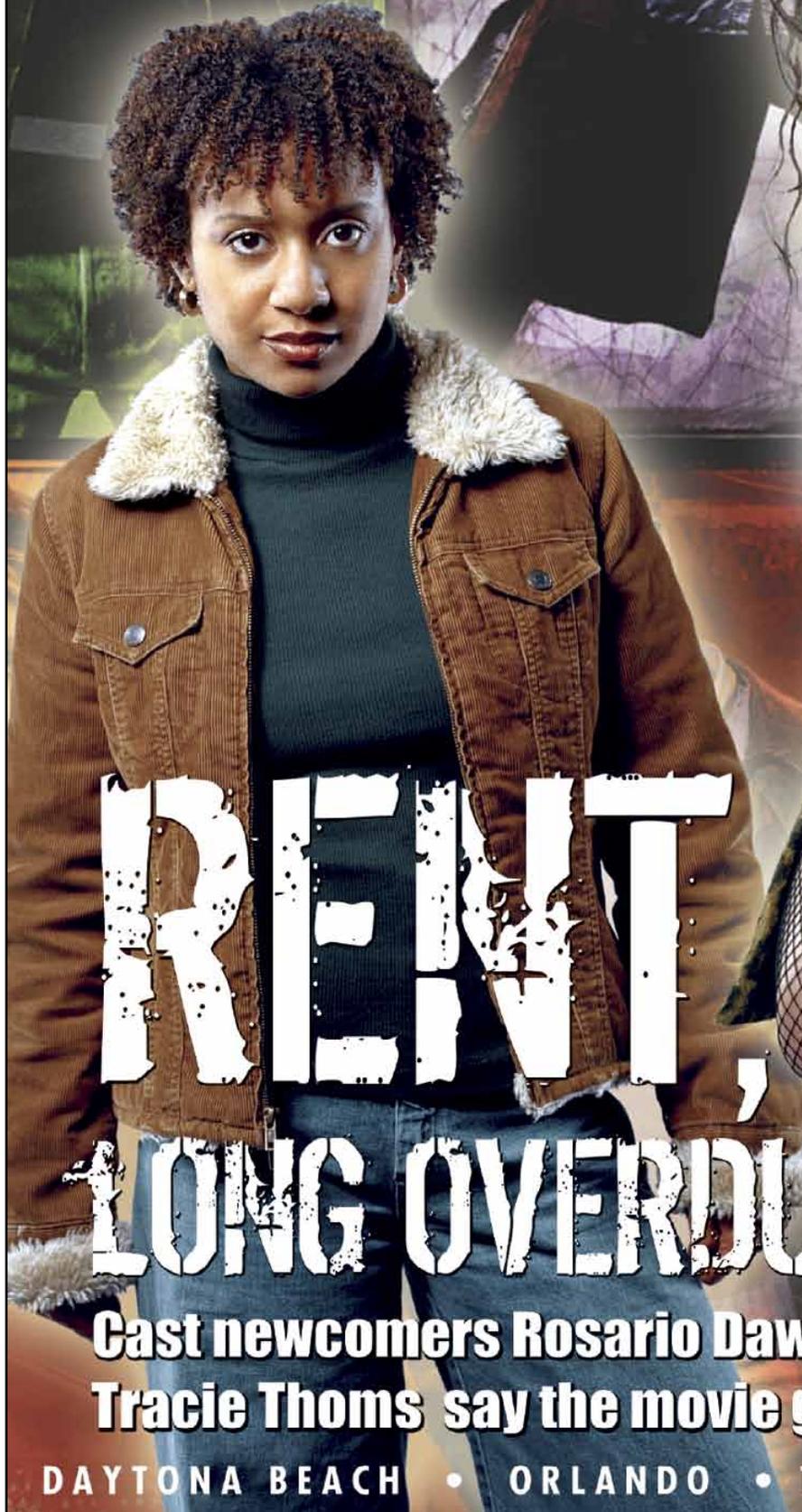
ISSUE 12.23 :: NOVEMBER 17-30, 2005

WATERMARK

Florida's Distinctive Gay and Lesbian Publication
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- Dolly Parton
- Eartha Kitt
- and our holiday **GIFT GUIDE!**



RENT, LONG OVERDUE

Cast newcomers Rosario Dawson and Tracie Thoms say the movie gets it right



[PLUS]
STEVE LORENZO:
GUILTY OF 9 COUNTS
OF DATE RAPE

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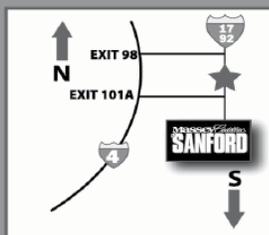
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PREVIEW



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ABOUT THE COVER

TRACIE THOMS (left) and ROSARIO DAWSON in the long-awaited film version of *Rent*.



TRACIE THOMS as Joanne Jefferson and ANTHONY RAPP as Mark Cohen dance the *Tango Maureen* in the film version of *Rent*.



Editor's Desk

By DAVE WIETHOP

There is no question that Orange County needs Chapter 22. Mirroring the same basic rights protections for its GLBT residents that have been in place in Orlando since 2002, the ordinance is logical and necessary. Now, it's a matter of simply introducing it to the county commission.

That's where the difficult part comes in. Members of the dedicated Orlando Anti-Discrimination Ordinance committee, which spearheaded the push for the city ordinance three years ago and maintains the OADO moniker for the county effort, have been working with the Orange County Commission members for months to secure support for the measure.

Now, the OADO apparently feels confident enough that the commission could be receptive to putting human rights protections in place. The next step is simple: Get Chapter 22 on the commission's agenda. At this point, it's in the hands of Orange County Mayor Richard Crotty, who needs to make that happen.

I certainly appreciate Mayor Crotty's thoughtfulness on the issue. Probably more familiar to area residents as one of the "faces of the storm" for his adamant pleas during the recent hurricane seasons for drivers to stay off the roads during bad weather, Crotty is taking a cautious approach with this crucial ordinance.

In fact, the mayor is being so careful that he seems to have come up with several reasons how gays and lesbians can get these needed employment protections without actually involving the county commission. Crotty has suggested that if the GLBT community truly wants human rights protections, we should seek them through the Florida Legislature — not at the county level.

This is, of course, ignoring the efforts made by commissioners in Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Broward and Monroe counties, and the fact that the legislature hasn't exactly been open to GLBT issues in years.

Crotty has correctly stated that most of the area's largest employers already have employment protections in place for its employees. He's right about that. Yet, a lot of gays and lesbians work for smaller companies that may not have such progressive policies in place, leaving them vulnerable to losing their jobs for who they are. As OADO member Michael Slaymaker tells *Watermark* in our story

on page 11, "You shouldn't have to work for one of the larger employers in the area to be free from discrimination."

It's a difficult position for the county mayor. It seems as if he certainly wants to protect the county by being as deliberate as possible, but he's reasonable and insightful enough to know that gay people deserve the same protections as straight people.

If you live in Orange County, make sure that you pick up a yellow postcard from the GLBCC or Joy MCC urging Crotty to put Chapter 22 on the county agenda, and drop that card in the mail soon. Or, write a succinct note to the mayor at: County Mayor Richard Crotty, 201 S. Rosalind Ave., Fifth Floor, Orlando, FL 32801.

Perhaps a mound of cards and letters can be persuasive. The more quickly the commission gets Chapter 22 on the agenda and approved, the better that Orange County will be.

This is yet another intense issue of *Watermark*. Tampa Bay Bureau writer Steve Blanchard reports on stirring testimony that led a jury to quickly find Tampa man Steven Lorenzo guilty of nine counts of date rape. He also covers the new AIDS Memorial Park in Downtown Tampa as well as the strong showing by St. Petersburg city commission candidate Darden Rice, who promises to run for office again. Good for her.

We also take a look at one of the most-anticipated movies of the year, *Rent*, which features many of the original cast members, as well as our cover girls, the lovely Tracie Thoms and Rosario Dawson. Our story also includes listings for eight other GLBT films that are either in limited release — or will come our way in months.

Orlando staff writer Kirk Hartlage looks at dozens of holiday possibilities for the season, and we also chat with a pair of vivacious divas, the sassy Eartha Kitt and the brassy Dolly Parton. (These two should tour together. What a hoot that would be!)

And don't forget to browse through our 2005 Gift Guide, the biggest one yet. Regardless of what you celebrate during this time of year, it's difficult not to get the least bit excited — even for the most hard-hearted among us. We know that you'll find this issue of *Watermark* to be insightful, informative and entertaining. ▼

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PREVIEW

Water Picks

Events You Shouldn't Miss

ORLANDO

SATURDAY, NOV. 26

Winner of the 2005 Swedish Grammy Award for Best Electronic/Dance Record, DJ **ANDREAS TILLIANDER** has a sound that is a cerebral rhythmic template, mixed with low-key funkiness and cut-up "broken" beats. When performing live, it's not just about turntables and CD players, Tilliander uses samplers, sequencers, synths and effect units as well. Tilliander wraps up his 15-city American tour tonight at the Peacock Room at 9 p.m.

NOV. 26 AND 28

Not everyone likes country music, but **DOLLY PARTON** is another matter completely. She visits Orlando's House of Blues on Nov. 26 and Clearwater's Ruth Eckert Hall two days later. Sure, her big boob and bad wig jokes were old 25 years ago, but Parton certainly seems to be one of the few performers who still enjoys herself on stage. Besides, her oddly political new CD, *Those Were the Days*, absolutely kills. Call House of Blues at (407) 934-BLUE for tickets for the 9 p.m. show and Ruth Eckert Hall at (727) 791-7400 for its 8 p.m. show.

TAMPA BAY

THURSDAY, NOV. 17

Providing an opportunity to network for GLBT alums of the University of South Florida, is the **USF GALA ALUMNI NIGHT**. The evening offers an opportunity for those interested to learn more about GALA, UCF's fledgling gay alumni group. The social starts at 7:00 p.m. at the Globe, 532 First Ave. N. in Downtown St. Pete. For more information about GALA, contact Mark Hafen at (813) 974-4777 or at mhafen@cas.usf.edu.

FRIDAY, NOV. 18

Watermark's recent cover subject, **HELLBENT**, opens today in an exclusive engagement at the Sunrise Cinemas at Old Hyde Park Village. The first gay slasher flick has been described as the hottest reason

to scream like a little girl. What a great excuse for your next gay date, guaranteed to get him jumping into your arms – who cares if it's in fear? For showtimes, call (813) 258-4646 or visit SunriseCinemas.com.

SARASOTA

MONDAY, NOV. 21

The annual **LIVING WITH AIDS ... WHAT A DRAG: DIVAS AFTER DARK** fund-raiser for the PWA Emergency Fund takes place at 6:30 p.m. at Michaels on East. Carmella Marcella Garcia, Michelle Liemont and Lindsey Carlton are scheduled to perform. It's always a hoot – and for such a good cause. Tickets are \$75; call (941) 365-6922.

SOUTH FLORIDA

NOV. 23-28

If the bars seem empty this weekend, it's because all the boys – and some of the girls – have traveled to Fort Lauderdale and South Beach for the **21ST ANNUAL WHITE PARTY WEEK**. One of the world's largest HIV/AIDS fundraisers, the week benefits local charities and service organizations. Appearing in addition to nearly every top-name DJ around is pop star **ANASTACIA** in one of her few U.S. appearances. For more information, visit WhiteParty.org. ▼



Those days with Porter Waggoner seem so long ago, don't they? **DOLLY PARTON** brings her coat of many colors to the House of Blues in Orlando Nov. 26 and Ruth Eckert Hall in Clearwater Nov. 28.

Water Cooler

People are Talking

WHO'S RIGHT — AND WHO'S FAR RIGHT?

Is **PRESIDENT BUSH** becoming more and more like **ADOLF HITLER**? That was the premise behind an admittedly provocative graphic on **QUEERTAMPA.COM** that linked to an InfoWars.com story that questioned the president's mental stability.

The image has drawn the wrath of some gays who have threatened to boycott the 5-year-old Web site because they're so offended.

QueerTampa.com operators **BRIAN SPRAGUE** and **J. ALLERS** say that the original purpose of the image was to "provoke interest and thought. Oddly enough, what it did was spark the very behavior that such an image is intended to rail against."

They've posted some of the e-mails about the morphing. One man declared that the graphic is "disrespectful, inappropriate and places you and QueerTampa's Web site in the extreme GayLeft column ... Shame on you. Shame on the GayLeft radical activists who are hijacking gay advocacy in the name of radical Democrat politics."

Another remarked, "Do the serious gay rights movement a favor and either grow up or shut up. You are an embarrassing hindrance."

QueerTampa.com's operators say the image will remain.

NOTHING BUT 'VERY SPECIAL EPISODES'

With the demise of **WILL & GRACE** this season (and the return of **HARRY CONNICK JR.** only reminds fans that it has been over since the whole Grace pregnancy thing), it looked like the gayest thing on TV could be UPN's

GIRLFRIENDS.

But leave it to ABC — the home to the original *Ellen* — to come to the rescue. Fresh off its success with **DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES**, **LOST** and now **COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF** (where **GEENA DAVIS** gets to use her *other* expression), the network has finally committed to pilots for **ELTON JOHN** and **MELISSA ETHERIDGE** that will be considered for the 2006-07 television season.

John's sitcom is currently called **HIM AND US**, after a song on his Peachtree Road album. It will look at the life of an aging rock star called Max Flash, based in part on the lives of Mick Jagger, Rod Stewart, Paul McCartney and quite possibly John himself.

"This is basically about the entourage who have to put up with this bastard," John told the British press.

The newly healthy Etheridge has modestly told *Time* that her unnamed sitcom pilot will look at "what my life might have been like had I not left to find my fame and fortune, and stayed in Kansas to become a teacher and been gay and dealt with life there." Sounds a lot like *The Ellen Show* from CBS in 2001, doesn't it?

It seems as if ABC's "queer" hour could be part of the 2006 fall lineup.

THEN MOMMY FINDS A COPY OF 'ASS MASTERS'

Meanwhile, it looks like the queer-friendly **MARGARET CHO** has finally gotten over the angst of being told to drop some pounds to essentially play herself in a sitcom. She's now working with Fox — and not the weight-conscious ABC (take note, Elton) — for a sitcom based on her "Mommy" character.

Let's face it, "Mommy" has always been the best part of Cho's standup, so this seems like a natural fit. Besides, Fox would hardly create a show based on her experience soiling her drawers on the Santa Monica Freeway, would it? ▼

HEADLINE NEWS

LORENZO: GUILTY ON ALL COUNTS

The prosecutor hopes for a maximum sentence of 200 years for nine date-rapes. By Steve Blanchard

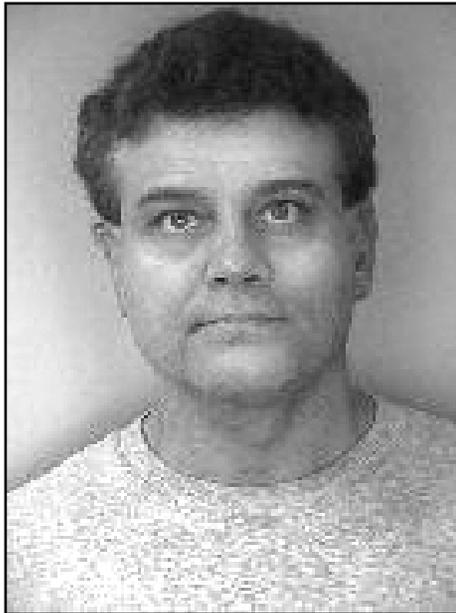
TAMPA - Steven Lorenzo's father and sister cried softly when the 46-year-old offered reassuring smiles to his family before he was led away from the courtroom in handcuffs and shackles.

The jury deliberated for just three hours before finding Lorenzo guilty of nine counts of administering GHB and one count of conspiring with Scott Schweickert to distribute the date-rape drug. Lorenzo could face 20 years on each count on Jan. 27, and the state plans to seek the maximum sentence of 200 years.

Jurors said they had little trouble convicting Lorenzo and had hoped they could find him guilty of murder. However, Lorenzo has not yet been charged with the murders of Jason Galehouse and Michael Wachholtz, although the state is expected to charge Lorenzo in early 2006. Galehouse and Wachholtz were two of the nine victims that he had been accused of date-raping.

"This was a difficult case based on the evidence and the emotions involved," prosecutor Anthony E. Porcelli said. "None of the evidence was easy to look at."

Jurors were faced with disturbing photos of men in various stages of bondage – some appearing lifeless. Porcelli also presented a video depicting torturous acts in



The state is expected to charge STEVEN LORENZO with the murders of two Tampa Bay men in early 2006.

Lorenzo's Seminole Heights bungalow where he had created a dungeon. Jurors often reacted to the evidence with disgust and several clasped their hands over their mouths.

The most telling testimony, however, came from the victims themselves. Six men took the stand and outlined their candid and disturbing encounters with Lorenzo. Many expressed their fear while bound in Lorenzo's home.

Each man said Lorenzo slipped drugs into their drinks and that they later awoke to find themselves naked, injured and bound. Jurors saw photos of bruises and marks indicating restraints had been used and evidence of rape.

Donald Harrison, Lorenzo's attorney, argued the victims knew what they were getting into and that the experiences "are just part of the bondage culture." While the prosecution pointed to explicit Internet chats between Lorenzo and the victims as proof of a crime, Harrison used the evidence to say the victims were eager to be dominated and tortured.

The lines between fantasy and reality became blurred, however, when the "subs," or submissives, were injured, Porcelli argued.

One juror admitted that while the jury was fed a lot of graphic evidence – including the photos and video – their guilty verdicts came down the testimony of the victims.

"The evidence was overwhelming," the juror said. "It was difficult because a lot of us had personal feelings about the activities involved and we saw some horrific things. But we had to set those aside and look at the facts and take the testimony as truthful. It was some disturbing stuff."

TESTIMONY IS KEY

While each victim testified to similar scenarios involving their encounters with Lorenzo, each had his own tale to tell, and it was those stories that deeply affected the jury. Here are three of the scenarios that victims shared:

Metropolis: A bartender from Massachusetts testified that he met Lorenzo at the Metropolis Night Club in Tampa in November 2000. After the two became acquainted, Lorenzo invited him to a party at his home. The bartender agreed and followed Lorenzo to 215 W. Powhatan Ave.

"He offered me some wine," the victim said, scarcely glancing at Lorenzo during the trial. "The wine tasted funny, (and) I became very groggy and felt sedated."

Lorenzo encouraged him to continue drinking, and this made him feel as if he was in a dream state before he eventually

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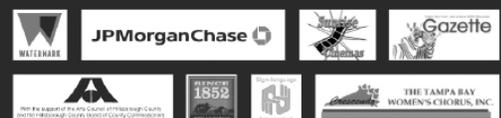
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HEADLINE NEWS

passed out. Later, he awoke naked and tied to Lorenzo's bed. He had duct tape on his mouth and over his eyes, and he felt tourniquets on his neck and his testicles.

When he didn't pass out again, Lorenzo removed the duct tape and began beating him. The victim said that Lorenzo masturbated while he punched him. The more he struggled, the victim recalled, the more it excited Lorenzo.

"That's when I realized I needed to remain calm," the victim told the jury. His tactic worked and Lorenzo eventually

released the bartender.

Suncoast Resort: Another man identified as Victim No. 7 told the jury he was vacationing at the Suncoast Resort in St. Petersburg and attended the popular tea dance. He admitted he had "at least 10" drinks when Lorenzo began harassing him. Eventually, he asked a friend to tell Lorenzo to leave.

The tactic didn't work and Lorenzo reappeared next to the victim, possibly drugging his drink.

Continued on page 26

LOCAL BONDAGE CLUB APPALLED BY LORENZO

TAMPA - The sadomasochistic world of Steven Lorenzo is nothing like the world of the Tampa Bay Bondage Club, members say.

The group, founded in 1992, promotes education for those seeking sexual pleasure away from the mainstream. According to "Frank," who didn't want to reveal his real name, Lorenzo hasn't been a member of the group — at least within the past five years.

"I looked through our rosters, and I don't see him anywhere," Frank said. "I've been with the club six years and don't remember seeing him at any meetings."

With the Lorenzo trial taking center stage in local media outlets for weeks, the world of bondage, domination and S&M has taken a hit. This has disheartened Frank and all members of the club.

What Lorenzo did does not reflect the purpose or the drive of most people involved in BDSM.

"We all think Lorenzo was out of his mind," Frank said. "What we feel can be compared to what most gay people feel when they see a news report lumping us in the same group as pedophiles. What he did totally appalls all of us and gives us a bad name. He was not into it for the fun part of it, and it has really bothered us."

Bondage isn't necessarily about sex and intercourse, but about the exchange of energy, Frank said.

The Tampa Bay Bondage Club focuses on three factors — safety, consent and sanity. Without those three keys, Frank stressed, bondage won't work. But who would find bondage as an appropriate alternative release of sexual energy?

"For those who are HIV positive, it's a way for them to release that energy and not put others at risk," Frank said. "Very rarely does bondage involve intercourse — not even oral sex. Thank back when you were in grade school and somebody would run a feather or their finger down the inside of your arm from your elbow

to your wrist. You'd get that tickle in your throat or the chills. That's what you're trying to get with this type of play."

That tickle, Frank said, is a sensation of power exchange and doesn't require intercourse. Sex may not be a factor, but trust and safety are essential.

"You have to play in a sane way," Frank said. "You have to make sure the person you're playing with — whether they're a dominant or submissive — isn't impaired by alcohol or an illegal substance."

BDSM activities take several forms, Frank said. While binding someone with ropes or ties is common, members of the club have several vices, including electricity.

"I once had a teacher who told the class that if you open up a Sears-Roebuck catalog to a random page, someone somewhere will have a fetish for something on that page," Frank said. "So there isn't a 'norm' when it comes to what our members like. It's a myriad of things."

The Tampa Bay Bondage Club meets the first Friday of every month — except December — and focuses on socialization and education. However, it's not uncommon for fans of bondage to meet over the Internet and to have graphic chats, according to Frank.

During Lorenzo's trial, prosecutors used transcripts of online chats between the defendant and his co-conspirator Scott Schweickert, who talked about BDSM activities and abducting unsuspecting males.

Such chats about BDSM activities often exist between members of the bondage culture, but Frank said it's like anything else on the Internet — dramatized for instant gratification.

"Most people type with one hand. There's no ethical way to put it," Frank said. "But chats involving bondage are common. I haven't seen the evidence in the case so I can't say if what (Lorenzo) wrote is normal." ▼ *Steve Blanchard*

"We all think Lorenzo was out of his mind."



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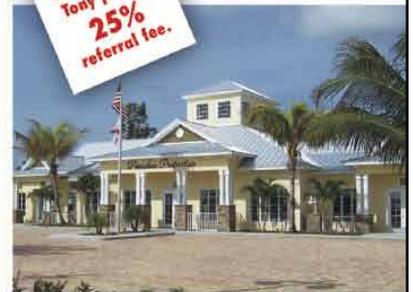
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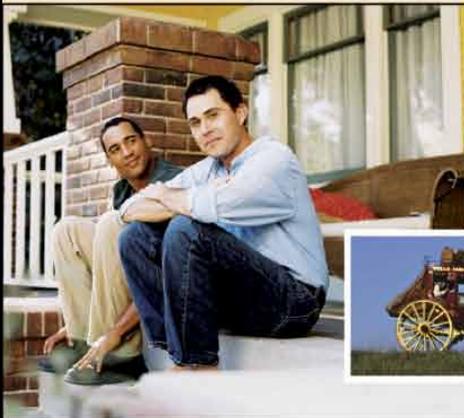
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ORLANDO



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COALITION STRATEGIZES ON LIFTING GAY ADOPTION

ORLANDO - The Orlando Coalition for Fair Adoption has begun to strategize about how they will persuade Florida lawmakers to pass bills to allow gays and lesbians to adopt children.

Florida is the only state that does not allow gays and lesbians to adopt children, but the state does allow them to become permanent guardians or foster parents.

The planning session at Hope Unites United Church of Christ in Orlando looked at ways for concerned groups to stay on course in the certain-to-be rough political waters ahead.

While the ultimate goal of the coalition is to repeal the 28-year-old gay-adoption ban members know that the proposed legislation, sponsored by Rep. Sherry MacInvale, D-Orlando, and Sen. Nan Rich, D-Sunrise, is a step in the right direction.

A similar measure failed in the Legislature last year. MacInvale has said the bill failed because of technicalities and that she feels better prepared for the upcoming legislative session.

Joe Saunders, Equality Florida's Central Florida field organizer, said the training sessions were good for people who had never done any type of political organizing. After learning about the history of the current adoption ban and the fair adoption coalition, participants learned the importance of winning the battle at the grass roots level.

Afternoon sessions focused on upcoming lobby days in Tallahassee this spring.

Of the two dozen attending, Saunders said many were members of larger groups who will return to their own organizations, now prepared to educate and enlist their groups' members on the importance of this issue. Organizers know that much of the work to come is not only in approaching legislators, also appealing to faith-based and child-care groups.

Saunders said locals interested in getting involved are encouraged to write letters to their state legislators, as letters

are often as powerful as in-person visits. Signing petitions also helps provide a voice.

"It's important to let politicians know you really care about this issue," Saunders said, adding that the coalition is also looking for community members who have compelling stories to come forward and share them.

"Personal stories move votes, especially those involving hardship and discrimination," said Saunders. "It helps when people are vocal about the challenges they've faced and are looking to overcome." The Orlando Gay Parents group has already enlisted six couples to serve as spokespersons to share their stories of adoption hardship.

Lifting the ban through the court system has been equally frustrating for supporters.

The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the ban last year, agreeing with state officials that Florida has a right to determine policy for what type of family abused and neglected children in foster care may join. In January, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case, leaving activists few other options.

The Florida Department of Children and Families has said there are about 1,000 children statewide in need of adoptive homes.

The statewide Coalition for Fair Adoption boasts an impressive cross-representation of groups. The Child Welfare League of America, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Council of Jewish Women Public Affairs Network, the ACLU of Florida and others have joined gay mainstays such as Equality Florida, the Human Rights Campaign and various regional PFLAG and gay parents chapters in the fight for gay adoption.

To learn more on getting involved, visit the coalition's Web site at FairAdoption.org or contact Saunders at Joe@eqfl.org. *✶ Kirk Hartlage*



One lesbian's perspective

Read Karen S. Murray Parker's column in every issue of

watermark

ORLANDO

OADO SEEKS COUNTY PROTECTIONS FOR GAYS

ORLANDO - In addition to the typical letters and junk mail on his desk, Orange County Mayor Richard Crotty received 161 yellow postcards on Monday, notes urging him to "get around to" Chapter 22, the proposed anti-discrimination ordinance that's been frozen on the county board's agenda since June.



Orange County MAYOR RICHARD CROTTY says gays should approach the state for protections, not the county.

The postcard campaign is the latest approach by the Orlando Anti-Discrimination Ordinance committee to add protections in Orange County similar to the city of Orlando's 2002 amendment. The OADO was responsible for

successfully lobbying city commissioners to vote for that amendment.

Michael Slaymaker, one of the founders of the OADO, said the group asked the county to add sexual orientation protections be added to the county's policies and procedures. In short, any business that does business with or in Orange County would have to provide anti-discrimination protections — including those for sexual orientation — for its employees.

Orange County's policies only protect county employees. If county's board of commissioners pass the human rights ordinance, Orange would join four other counties in Florida with such policies to their laws: Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe and Palm Beach.

Crotty said that his office had done a lot of research after OADO activists approached him two years ago urging him to look into adding the anti-discrimination clause to the county's policies and procedures.

Slaymaker said his meetings with Crotty have found the official keen on offering compromises.

"We discovered that most major employers in the area already have this kind of protection," Crotty told Watermark.

Slaymaker countered that, "You shouldn't have to work for one of the larger employers in the area to be free from discrimination."

The fight to add protection from discrimination in Orange County has been more than two years in the making.

In June 2004, the Orlando County Charter Review Commission denied an anti-discrimination ordinance be presented to voters, stating that it was a matter best decided by Crotty and the

county board commissioners. (Among the issues that did make it to the ballot was a successful measure to change Crotty's title from "board chairman" to "mayor.")

After several Orlando Sentinel editorials urged Crotty to at least meet with the members of the OADO, the Orange County mayor complied. Slaymaker said that at that time that Crotty had stated that did not want to go through the same type of public hearings that the city endured during the OADO's push for a citywide anti-discrimination ordinance.

Slaymaker also said Crotty did not want to put it on the agenda for discussion unless he knew the group had confirmed yes votes from at least four commissioners, a majority.

"Does the county require a contractor who wants to file a variance for construction find four votes before it's put on the agenda?" asked Slaymaker. "No, the rules are apparently different because we're gay."

Still, Slaymaker said, the group met with all of the commissioners and found some for and some against the idea. But the group did find four commissioners willing to vote for the ordinance and let Crotty know that in June.

Though the ordinance was initially put on the agenda for discussion, Slaymaker discovered that the mayor had taken it off.

"I didn't know the mayor could veto things off the agenda," Slaymaker said. "I talked with the chief of staff who said the topic had been frozen for discussion."

Despite other efforts to have Commissioner Mildred Fernandez rescind putting the matter on the agenda, the OADO has been able to keep the anti-discrimination proposal up for discussion. Slaymaker said Crotty stated in August that he needed a couple of weeks to work on it, and then said the same thing in October when the issue still had not been addressed.

"He's had enough time," Slaymaker said. "Those on the board getting ready to do campaigning don't want to discuss this issue during their campaign."

The postcards, which say "Chapter 22: Get Around to It," are designed to let Crotty know that his stalling tactics have gone on long enough.

Slaymaker said only 500 cards were printed and initially distributed at locations including Joy MCC and the Gay, Lesbian Bisexual Community Center in Orlando.

The OADO may have found an ally in the county's housing and community division, which is currently working to

Slashed

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Continued on page 52

ORLANDO

ORLANDO BRIEFS

FRIENDS RAISE ABOUT \$9,000 FOR HODGKIN'S LYMPHOMA PATIENT

Friends of Kelly Tino raised about \$9,000 during a birthday party fund-raiser for her last weekend at Lava Lounge. Tino has been diagnosed with Stage 2 Hodgkin's Lymphoma. The money will help defray her recently incurred medical costs. Performances by DJ Scream, Melissa Crispo, Raven's Gate, Miss Conception, Baby Blue and Tameesha highlighted the evening of community outreach. To help out, send a tax-deductible donation to the Kelly Tito Fund, in care of Regions Bank, 1425 E. Mitchell Hammock Road, Oviedo, FL 32765.

DIGNITY TO OFFER THANKS-GAY-VING DAY DINNER

Dignity/Orlando, the progressive, inclusive community of GLBT Catholics and friends will offer a community "ThanksGAYving Dinner" on Nov. 24 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the GLBCC, 946 N. Mills Ave. The meal is being provided for those who have no local family with whom to enjoy the day, or for those who simply want to enjoy the holiday with their GLBT family. A donation of \$5 is suggested, although more will be accepted from those that can afford it, and there will be no cost for those that can't. Those wishing to attend are asked to RSVP to (407) 228-8272.

HOPE AND HELP TO PRESENT WORLD AIDS DAY LUNCHEON

Jeanne White-Ginder, mother of Ryan White, likely the most well-known pediatric AIDS patient, will be the featured speaker at an invitations-only World AIDS Day event, sponsored by the Hope and Help Center of Central Florida. The event will honor all individuals who have suffered from and are living with HIV/AIDS. The event will be held at noon on Thursday, Dec. 1, at the Downtown Orlando Marriott and a complimentary lunch will be served. For more information, visit HopeAndHelp.org or call (407) 645-2577, ext. 111.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO RECOGNIZE WORLD AIDS DAY

Joining forces with several community partners including the Center for Drug-Free Living/CENTAUR and Hug Me, the Orange County Health Department will offer a memorial for World AIDS Day, Dec. 1. Local dance/performance group Aftershock will provide live entertainment and AIDS quilt panels will also be on display. This event will take place from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Lake Eola Park Band Shell, located on North Rosalind Avenue between East Robinson Street and Central Boulevard in Downtown Orlando. For more information, contact Debbie Tucci at (407) 858-1400.

OADO from page 11

amend its own charter and insert an ordinance on human rights. Slaymaker said the division's outdated current policies were included years ago to appease federal housing requirements and only addresses issues of race.

He added that while he does not know what amendments were submitted, he hopes that the proposals include a clause concerning sexual orientation.

Years ago, in their fight with the city, officials repeatedly asked the OADO to provide statistics on how widespread sexual orientation discrimination had been. Slaymaker the statistics are difficult to find because claims are not tracked because there are no laws against it.

Still, Slaymaker said that the county should not anticipate a flood of lawsuits once the ordinance is enacted.

"If we can see in our community – people getting beat up, bullet holes, and there's evidence that hate crimes have escalated – you can't tell me that people aren't also being discriminated against in the workplace," Slaymaker said.

"The thing that's challenging is that the county is a political subdivision of the state," Crotty told *Watermark*.

"Cities have human relations committees, but as a county we yield to state law which does not cover this area." Crotty said it would be in the OADO's best interest to go to the state

legislature to have their issues placed into law.

"The county's stalling and delaying tactics are just beyond belief," Slaymaker said. "But right now we're focusing our attention on Mayor Crotty. This is a good time for him to deal with this. He's said that the county doesn't need to be in this business, but apparently, other places like Broward and Miami-Dade counties do. It seems Crotty got the Glenda Hood playbook – just keep stalling and hope the gays will go away."

Former Orlando Mayor Hood, who is now the Florida Secretary of State, sharply opposed the law when the commission passed it by a 4-3 margin in 2002.

Slaymaker said his committee has no intentions of going away. Currently, the group is focused on the postcard campaign, but is also putting together other means for the GLBT community to communicate with commissioners.

"If they only hear from 10 people, they'll say it's not important," Slaymaker said.

Postcards are available at the GLBCC for those wishing to take part immediately; Slaymaker urges the entire community to participate and to watch GayOrlando.com and WatermarkOnline.com for updates on how to get involved.

▼ Kirk Hartlage



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TAMPA BAY

DESPITE SLIM DEFEAT, RICE PLOTS HER NEXT CAMPAIGN

ST. PETERSBURG - There's no need to worry about Darden Rice. The former city council candidate is already looking ahead after losing the Nov. 8 election to incumbent Earnest Williams.

The openly lesbian Sierra Club activist secured 47% of the vote in the District 6 race on Nov. 8.

"We ran the best campaign we knew against some very formidable obstacles," Rice said after the election.

"We're having discussions now on our next steps, and how to hold this wonderful group of people together to win next time. And, there will be a next time."

Rice received a heap of press during her campaign. While she focused on her platform of affordable housing and community policing, the subject of her sexuality came to the forefront at an October town hall meeting. Community activist "Momma T" Lassiter asked Rice if she was gay. When Rice admitted that she was, Lassiter stormed out of the meeting.

Many political experts think this was a stunt to hinder Rice's growing popularity. In actuality, Rice won the primary and received nearly 2% more of the vote than Williams. With the strong primary showing, many believed Rice would become the first openly gay St. Petersburg city councilperson.



St. Pete city council challenger DARDEN RICE says she's already looking ahead to the race in four years.

Rice said this campaign has been a learning experience.

"My chin is up and I stand by feeling good about what we did," Rice said. "We went up against an incumbent who was supported by a popular mayor and the St. Petersburg Times. Voters seemed to think things were going well in St. Petersburg and we went against a strong 'get out the vote' machine - and we still did extremely well."

Mayor Rick Baker defeated challenger Ed Helm with an astounding 70% of the vote. Baker is viewed as a successful leader since taking office four years ago. However, only 17% of the registered voting population turned out at the polls, possibly because there were no state or national issues to draw regional attention.

One victory for the Historic Kenwood Neighborhood and the Grand Central District comes with the election of Jeff Danner, who will fill the District 8 seat vacated by Jay Lasita. Danner has served on the city's planning commission for eight years and started his campaign early. He easily defeated Jamie Mayo for Lasita's seat.

In other districts, Leslie Curran defeated incumbent Virginia Littrell's four-year run at City Hall and John Bryan earned his second term with an easy win over lawyer Eve Joy.

The key to winning a city council seat seems to be starting an early and strong campaign. That's something Rice plans to have in place in four years.

"I'm looking forward to staying involved and keeping up my profile," Rice said. "We turned a lot of heads and we have really changed perceptions."

▼ Steve Blanchard



Double M rocked the Celebration of Diversity Festival in St. Pete Nov. 6. Photo by Steve Blanchard

ST. PETE CELEBRATES DIVERSITY

ST. PETERSBURG - Renee Arin said she knew St. Petersburg was a diverse city, but she didn't realize just how diverse until attending the Celebration of Diversity Festival at the Metro Center Nov. 6.

"When I think of diversity, I usually think about the gay thing," said Arin, a lesbian. "But we can't lose sight of our nationalities. Some of the artwork in these booths are just magnificent."

Arts and crafts booths showcased everything from Native American clothing and displays to Chinese tools in an auction. The inclusion of local and diverse businesses was essential to the success of the festival, according to

Andrew Conte, Metro Center coordinator.

"The event also brought more attention to the Metro Center, which we have to admit was also part of the goal," Conte said.

The Metro Center is part of Metropolitan Community Charities and will soon operate on both sides of Tampa Bay. Its Tampa Metro Diversity Center grand opening is slated for Dec. 16. The new location, the result of the Center of Tampa's merger with the Metro Center, is at 6421 N. Florida Ave. in Tampa.

For more information about Metro Charities, call (727) 321-3854 or (813) 225-1990. ▼ Steve Blanchard

TAMPA BAY BRIEFS

METRO CENTER OFFERS 'CIRCUIT,' 'PRISCILLA' SOON

The Metro Center in St. Pete offers a host of gay- and lesbian-themed movies monthly. Upcoming shows include the 2001 Dirk Shafer-directed drama, *Circuit*, at 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 25; the lesbian love story *Nico and Dani* at 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 2; *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, at 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3, for Pizza, Beer and a Movie Night (with a \$6 cost); and Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, at 2:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 4.

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL EXTENDS 'VAREKAI' AT TROPICANA FIELD

Cirque du Soleil's newest performance, *Varekai*, begins Dec. 1 at Tropicana Field. Due to popular demand, *Varekai* has already been extended by 14 more shows through Dec. 31. Tickets range from \$35 to \$70 for adults. Tickets are already available by calling 1-800-678-5440 or by visiting www.cirquedusoleil.com.

PINELLAS DEMOCRATS CELEBRATE SANTORUM'S 'RETIREMENT'

The newly formed Stonewall Democrats of Pinellas County hosted a mock "retirement party" Nov. 13 to help defeat Rep. Rick Santorum. He has been mentioned as a possible presidential candidate in 2008, and has been vocal in his extremist views about the GLBT community. He once compared legal recognition of same-sex relationships to "the right to bigamy (and) the right to incest" and considers marriage equality on par with terrorism.

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TAMPA BAY

PLANNED B&B'S CLOTHING OPTIONS DRAW ATTENTION

LAKELAND - The Swan Park Inn is unique to other beds and breakfasts in Florida because of its amenities and its accessibility to disabled patrons, not because it will cater to gay men or offer clothing-optional hours, owner Charlie Boyd said.

The B&B is expected to open in early 2006. Recently, it received regional attention when a story about the clothing-optional pool landed on the front page of the Ledger in early November. The story, Boyd said, was just a way for a "conservative" reporter to make something out of nothing. The response to the story, he added, has been overwhelmingly positive.

"When the city approved the B&B variance, the Ledger did a short story on it but named the wrong owner," Boyd said. "I spoke with a reporter then and they ran a correction and I hadn't heard anything from them since. Now, out of nowhere, someone saw my house rules on the Web site and I landed on the front page. Someone doesn't like the thought of people being nude on private property."

Currently, there are no ordinances in Lakeland prohibiting nude sunbathing or clothing-optional activities on private property. To ensure privacy, Boyd has installed an 8-foot fence around the pool area.

"Someone would have to get on a

ladder to see anything going on in here," Boyd said.

But that didn't stop the Ledger from placing a map to the location in the newspaper. Boyd thought it was a way to make him a target in this notably conservative town.

"So far it's been OK," Boyd said. "I've received 137 e-mails since the article was printed and all but one has been positive. I haven't received any negative phone calls yet - even after two television stations did stories on me. But after the story - and the map - I knew I could become a target."

The house at 118 E. Park St. near downtown Lakeland was originally built around 1915, Boyd said. Boyd has done major renovations to the home since he bought it in 2003 and has stayed with a 1930s motif.

"This house has always been a part of the local GLBT community," Boyd said. "From what I hear there were some hellacious parties here back in the 1970s and 1980s. I want to cater to gay male couples, the disabled and business travelers."

Lesbian and straight couples are welcome as well, Boyd pointed out. The clothing-optional hours are from dusk to dawn and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. "so anyone eating doesn't have to see nude



Swan Lake Inn owner CHARLIE BOYD says he's received more than 130 e-mails in support of his efforts to target the clothing-optional bed-and-breakfast to gay men. Photo by Steve Blanchard

sunbathers," Boyd said.

Boyd has worked as a psychologist with the Polk County School District since moving to West-Central Florida in 1986. He specializes in working with the developmentally and physically disabled. Swan Lake Inn has one room completely accessible to the disabled and the pool will have a sling to assist those with limited motor skills with getting in and out of the water.

"I've done that work for 30 years and I decided it was time to do what I loved so I

asked for a leave of absence," Boyd said. "I don't plan on going back."

Boyd said he always stays at bed and breakfasts when he travels and fell in love with the concept. Since he enjoys cooking and has been published in several cookbooks and loves to host friends, the B&B concept worked perfectly for him.

"I feel like I'm in my element," he said.

For more information, visit Swan-Park-Inn.com. ▼ Steve Blanchard

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TAMPA BAY



Participants in the dedication of Tampa's AIDS Memorial Park joined hands to remember those lost to the disease.
Photo by Rex Maniscalco

AIDS MEMORIAL PARK REOPENS IN TAMPA

TAMPA - Everyone in the crowd had at least one name to share during the dedication of the Tampa AIDS Memorial Park Nov. 14.

The park at 102 W. Hyde Park Place has been a project in Tampa for nine years. Finally, the scenic park bordering the Hillsborough River in Downtown Tampa offers the public a place for reflection and relaxation.

"Tonight speaks to how we care about one another," Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio told the crowd. "For too long, AIDS has killed to many people. Here, wedged between the urbanism of Tampa and the water that gives us life we now have a place of solace, hope and love."

The park is an innovative public-private partnership between the city of Tampa and Crescent Resources LLC, the developers of Parkside of One Bayshore Condominiums. The park was closed while Crescent used the site for storage during the construction of the luxury condominium tower. Upon completion of that project, Crescent redesigned, constructed and landscaped the park and will continue to maintain it as well.

"The city can't thank Crescent Resources enough for this beautiful place," said City Councilwoman Rose Ferlita. "We've all mourned the loss of many friends. Tonight is just the beginning and this park will remain in perpetuity."

The park holds a special place in the heart of Alan Wright, a community activist who is credited with the park's inception. Wright has been involved with the planning of the park for years and has been active in the GLBT and AIDS Awareness communities.

"This is a memorial of loss of our loved ones and the pain of the afflicted with HIV and AIDS," Wright said. "AIDS knows no class distinction or color lines. This space offers a place for peace and is a reminder of the work that remains to be done."



Tampa MAYOR PAM IORIO said the AIDS Memorial Park offers a "place of solace and love."
Photo by Rex Maniscalco

According to Councilwoman Linda Saul-Sena, the importance of the park is two-fold. The meaning behind the park and the beauty of its location are reflective of the blossoming city, she said.

The concept of an AIDS Memorial Park began the mid-1990s and ran into several delays because of downtown construction. For the Rev. Phyllis Hunt of the Tampa MCC, the park represents a place of memories and grief and can be compared to many other sacrosanct places.

"We are standing on a holy place dedicated to the people we have lost," Hunt said. "We usher in the names of those we have lost toward the purpose of this beautiful park."

The AIDS Memorial Park is on the southwest corner of Bayshore Boulevard and Hyde Park Place. The circular plaza provides views of the water and a contemplative garden area with custom colored concrete pavers arranged in a pattern similar to the AIDS Quilt. ▽ *Steve Blanchard*

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**MEMORIALS, MUSIC SET
FOR WORLD AIDS DAY**

SARASOTA - Politicians, musicians and other friends of Sarasota and Manatee counties' AIDS communities will turn out in force for several World AIDS Day memorials on Thursday, Dec. 1.

The observance will begin with an invitation-only World AIDS Day Breakfast that will honor Terrell and Carol Hart, who have helped organize the Southwest Florida Community AIDS Quilt panels, as well as Sarasota County Health Department administrator Bill Little, Sarasota County

commissioner David Mills, Sarasota Memorial Hospital board member Robert Strasser and Richard Trifari of the Manatee Rural Health Services.

At 6 p.m. the public can gather at Five Points Park in Downtown Sarasota for the candlelight memorial.

The names of those who died from the symptoms of AIDS will be read aloud. Mayor Mary Anne Servian is expected to take part in the commemoration.

The public is then invited to see the AIDS quilt panels at the Selby Library, where the panels have been in place since Nov. 28. The display will be open throughout December.

At the library reception, participants will have the chance to take part in a raffle of an American flag flown atop the U.S. Capitol on World AIDS Day. Organizers said this was arranged by the office of Rep. Katherine Harris, R-Sarasota.

Proceeds will benefit the Community AIDS Network.

The winners of the Sarasota and Manatee counties public schools writing contest will be announced at the reception. Students ages 12 to 19 have submitted fiction and non-fiction pieces that reflect the impact of AIDS.

The Gulf Coast Men's Chorus and the newly formed women's group, Harmony, will entertain.

At 8 p.m., the Unitarian Universalist Church will host an AIDS candlelight memorial service that carries the theme, "Stop AIDS to Keep the Promise." Mayor Servian is expected to attend, with the men's and women's choruses providing the music. The memorial is open to the public.

The organizers of the AIDS memorial quilt panels, housed at the Community AIDS Network, will use World AIDS Day to launch its research and fund-raising drives for a history of the 103 panels.

The effort, which is expected to cost \$12,000 to \$15,000, will result in a book that may be published as soon as World AIDS Day 2006.

Carol Hart, who is spearheading this effort, said that former panels caretaker Bethesda House offered some documentation when it presented them CAN, there is so much more to be learned.

"I have a notebook with some Polaroids of the panels, but we need to know who some of these individuals are and what each panel means," Hart said.

The book will be dedicated to Sister Frances, who cared for the panels for many years at Bethesda House.

To donate money to the panels' history project or to offer insight about the individual panels, contact CAN at (941) 366-0461. ▼ *Staff reports*

SARASOTA BRIEFS**TRET FURE TO PERFORM AT BRADENTON HOUSE CONCERT**

Tramp Productions will present a house concert featuring women's music pioneer Tret Fure on Friday, Nov. 18. The concert is BYOB and BYOC (bring your own chair), with a limited number of \$12 tickets available. The music will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Patty and Joella's house at 1904 54th St. E., in Bradenton. In addition, Tomboy Girl clothing and cookbooks will be available. For more information, call (941) 747-1789.

ALSO OUT YOUTH SELLS 300 LILY TOMLIN TICKETS

ALSO Out Youth have sold all of its 300 tickets for the Sunday, March 5, Lily Tomlin performance at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Center. Still, tickets are available through the center's box office at (941) 955-7676.

SNAPARTS TO RAISE MONEY FOR HURRICANE SURVIVORS

Paula Schoenwether's SnapArts will host a benefit for hurricane survivors — people and pets — from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Nov. 19-20. The fund-raiser will be held at 2211 79th Court W. in Bradenton. For more information, call (941) 356-7303 or write to snaparts@aol.com.

STATE

PRINCIPAL YANKS STUDENT'S COLUMN ON SEXUALITY

JACKSONVILLE - A high school principal has withheld published copies of a student newspaper to eliminate an opinion column written by a student about homosexuality.



High school principal TONI McCABE said that sexuality issues were too mature for high school readers.

Katie Thompson, a 17-year-old bisexual senior, wrote a column stating that "homosexuality is not a choice" for the Oct. 10 edition of the student newspaper, Panther Prints, at Ridgeview High School. Ridgeview is about 12 miles south of Jacksonville.

Thompson said her teacher approved the 300-word essay, but principal Toni McCabe objected and claimed the subject was "too mature for a high school audience."

Thompson's column reads in part: "Homosexuals do not choose to be the way they are. It is a biological stimulation of the brain. ... Some individuals think that they, with their extreme religious beliefs, can turn homosexuals to a heterosexual status. Those people, along with other homophobes in our country, set up counseling groups for homosexuals to try to change them."

Thompson said she was called to McCabe's office and told the newspaper would not be circulated because of her article.

"I didn't understand why. There's no reason to pull this. It wasn't overtly sexual or obscene or racist," she said. Thompson made copies of the article and began distributing it over lunch. She was again called back to McCabe's office and threatened with suspension.

Karen Doering, an attorney with the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said Clay County Schools have a record of discrimination against GLBT students.

"This administration is so overly hypersensitive to anything related to sexual orientation, that it can't be seen, heard or discussed," she said. "It is an age-appropriate topic for the editorial section of a school newspaper."

This marks the third time the district has been embroiled in controversy over sexual orientation issues.

In February, lesbian Kelli Davis wore a tuxedo instead of a traditional drape for her senior school portrait. Fleming Island High School principal Sam Ward cited a dress code violation and removed her picture from the yearbook. Both the school board and superintendent supported his decision.

After the issue drew national attention and Davis threatened to sue, the school board approved an out-of-court settlement that revised the photo policy and added the term "sexual orientation" to anti-discrimination policies and training.

Still, some media observers say the issue is more about censorship and less about sexuality.

Mark Goodman, executive director of the Student Press Law Center in Arlington, Va., said a 1988 Supreme Court ruling gives school officials the power to censor content if there is a reasonable educational justification.

"But to silence student expression because you disagree with their view, that is virtually never permissible," Goodman said. "This is clearly an issue there is a lot of disagreement about. What school officials have to accept is these issues are a part of life, part of the American debate."

▼ Wire and staff reports

GAY MARRIAGE BAN BACKERS UNDETERRED BY LACK OF SUPPORT

TALLAHASSEE - Will the gay marriage foes in Florida get enough signatures to put a statewide constitutional ban on next November's ballot?

The chairman of the petition drive thinks so, even though the effort has less than one-sixth of the necessary signatures with fewer than three months left before the deadline.

Spearheaded by the Rev. Jay Dennis, the senior pastor of the First Baptist Church at the Mall in Lakeland, the Florida Marriage Protection Amendment was first announced at the Florida Baptist Convention a year ago. The amendment would define marriage as the legal union of "only one man and one woman as husband and wife" and would deny legal recognition of any other definition of marriage.

The coalition of conservative churches and faith-based groups originally wanted to have the signatures collected by the April 15 deadline for state Supreme Court review, but those were not in place until four months later, the Lakeland Ledger reported. The amendment was sent to court Sept. 2, with a ruling still pending.

The Florida4Marriage group needs 611,009 names by Feb. 1 for the ballot to appear on the November ballots. As of early November, the state reported less than 102,000 signatures.

John Stemberger, an Orlando lawyer and chairman of Florida4Marriage.org, said he's confident that enough people will sign on to support the amendment in time. Still, he refused to speculate why the signature drive has been so slow.

▼ Staff reports

STATE BRIEFS

SMART RIDE 3 POSTPONED TO JANUARY

The Southern Most AIDS/HIV Ride 3, or the SMART Ride, has been rescheduled from early November to Jan. 6-7 because of damage along the route from Hurricane Wilma. The annual two-day bicycle ride attracts about 500 riders who will trek from Miami to Key West. Organizers said they event was postponed because of concerns for the riders' safety. The ride expected to raise more than \$400,000 to be split among Orlando's Hug-Me Program, Sarasota's Trinity Charities, AIDS Help in Monroe County, Broward House, South Beach AIDS Project and Compass in West Palm Beach. For more information about joining the ride or supporting the participants, visit TheSmartRide.org or call (866) 696-7701.

POWER WORKER CALLS STRAIGHT GUY A 'FAGGOT'

Tempers ran high for residents of South Florida after Hurricane Wilma, as one man who lives in the gay-friendly Wilton Manors learned. Daniel Levine, who is straight, asked an electrical power worker from West Virginia when electric would be restored to his neighborhood. According to Levine, the worker responded, "You faggots will get your power on when we're damned good and ready to give it to you." According to the *Express Gay News*, Levine then reported the incident to Mayor Scott Newton, although he couldn't provide a name or a truck number. Within hours, a Pennsylvania power crew turned the power on in the neighborhood.

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NATION/WORLD BRIEFS

GAY 'IDOL' REJECT CHARGED IN STABBING TEENAGER

A 21-year-old Philadelphia man who had just been rejected for American Idol was charged with stabbing to death one of four teenagers who allegedly attacked him near his home, a fight his parents said erupted because their son is gay. Lucas Dawson was walking from his home on Oct. 29 to catch a bus downtown, when four teenagers approached him and punched him. Dawson's stepfather said that the young man pulled a pocket knife, and ran off. One of the teens grabbed him and was fatally stabbed in the scuffle.

TEXANS OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVE GAY MARRIAGE BAN

As expected, Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage and any other form of legal recognition for same-sex couples. With about a 76% majority in favor of the ban, Texas became the 18th state to adopt an anti-marriage constitutional amendment in the last seven years. "Like every campaign in the past, the tactics of our opponents have been reprehensible and distinctly un-Christian," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Proposition 2 was supported by numerous conservative groups including the Ku Klux Klan.

BRAZILIANS DISAPPOINTED WHEN TV CHARACTERS DON'T KISS

Brazilian soap opera fans waited breathlessly for a passionate kiss between two male characters — which would have been a first for television there — only to be disappointed. The kiss between rancher's son Junior and the strapping hired hand Zeca was cut from America, despite weeks of speculation that it would occur. Brazilian media observers said that had the show broadcast the kiss, it would have been a significant moment in the country's GLBT movement. Prior to the broadcast on Nov. 4, support for the kiss ran about 80%, according to Brazilian media.

GROUPS SEEK TO UPHOLD CALIF.'S SAME-SEX MARRIAGE RIGHTS

Lambda Legal, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the ACLU have filed a brief in the California Supreme Court explaining why a lower court was correct in ruling that same-sex couples cannot be barred from marrying. A favorable lower court ruling issued last spring by San Francisco Superior Court Judge Richard Kramer said, "Simply put, same-sex marriage cannot be prohibited solely because California has always done so before."

SUPREME COURT WON'T HEAR TRANSGENDER CASE

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Supreme Court refused to consider shielding employers from discrimination lawsuits by transsexuals, dodging a workplace rights fight.

The court's refusal to intervene leaves in place a victory for Cincinnati police officer Philecia Barnes, who was born Phillip Barnes.

A federal appeals court had upheld a jury's finding that Barnes was a victim of discrimination, under a federal civil rights law. The city had been ordered to pay the officer \$320,000, and pay another \$550,000 in attorney fees.

"It's an important victory for Philecia Barnes, and it's an important statement to the city of Cincinnati," said Barnes' attorney, Al Gerhardtstein. "The city waged a long and vigorous fight to win the right to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. They risked a lot and lost."

Barnes, a 24-year veteran of the Cincinnati police force, dressed as a man at work but as a woman during off-hours in 1999 when the officer was demoted. Barnes sometimes wore makeup to work and had manicured nails.

Richard Ganulin, one of the city attorneys, told justices in briefs that employers should be protected from

discrimination lawsuits based on "transsexual and homosexual characteristics." The city maintains the demotion was for professional reasons.

At issue was the scope of the 1964 Civil Rights Acts, which protects people from sex or race discrimination. Sexual orientation is not covered in the law, but justices were asked to deal with a related issue: sex stereotyping of transsexual workers.

The case would have been a follow-up to a 1989 Supreme Court decision that made it more difficult for employers to win lawsuits accusing them of sexual stereotyping and other bias. That case involved a woman who argued she was denied promotion because her supervisors thought she did not act feminine enough.

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati said that Barnes was subjected to an unusual daily evaluation by other sergeants and required to wear a microphone at all times.

Barnes contended that her intention to change her gender was the only reason for her demotion from sergeant to patrol officer during her six-month probationary period. City lawyers had argued that Barnes' grammar, time management and paperwork were not adequate. (AP)

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NATION / WORLD

PROTESTERS BLAST BUSH'S AIDS POLICIES

WASHINGTON - AIDS activists took to Pennsylvania Avenue Nov. 7 with fake tombstones and a puppet of President Bush to demonstrate their fears that the current administration has been manipulated by far-right fundamentalists.

The Campaign to End AIDS culminated its fall offensive with four days of education and lobbying in Washington, D.C., Nov. 5-8, while affinity groups carried out their own set of demonstrations and arrests.

Nine caravans had spent weeks winding their way from the corners of the nation, through every state and major media market to express the need for increased domestic funding to address the rising caseload.

Activists blasted the conservative abstinence-only HIV prevention program and the efforts to undercut the use of condoms in federally funded programs both here and abroad. A small group of people chained themselves to statues of the American nuclear family in the lobby of the Family Research Council soon after the office opened in the morning.

But the main event came at noon as several hundred protesters rallied outside the building on K Street that houses Concerned Women for America. They chanted, "AIDS prevention worldwide, anything less is genocide."

The marchers moved on to the public space outside of the White House.

"Much of the reason for this administration's failure to do better is buried deep in the bowels of a relationship with right wing pressure groups," said Mark McLaurin, director of federal affairs for the New York AIDS Coalition.

"It is an unhealthy codependent relationship with organizations like



AIDS activists brought a President Bush puppet to the Washington headquarters of the Concerned Women for America to demonstrate his manipulation by such far-right groups. Photo by Bob Roehr

Concerned Women for America, the Traditional Values Coalition, and the latest pseudo-intellectual babble spewed forth from the Heritage Foundation that has left this President inexcusably AWOL from the fight against HIV/AIDS in this country," he said.

Chanting, "Two, four, six, eight, AIDS prevention cannot wait," and "Youth need the truth, condoms save lives," members of the group then crossed Pennsylvania Avenue and lay down on the sidewalk in front of the White House, creating a cemetery. Dozens were arrested. ▼ Bob Roehr

MAINE VOTERS REFUSE TO END ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW

AUGUSTA, Maine - Maine voters rejected a conservative-endorsed proposal that would have repealed the state's new GLBT rights law on Nov. 8.

About 56% of the voters agreed to keep the law in place. Maine was the last New England state to pass a ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation, and the latest vote put the measure into place immediately.

"After 28 years, it's over, you guys. We won," Pat Peard, a longtime champion of gay rights, told supporters in Portland on election night. She was referring to the initial introduction of a gay rights bill in the Maine Legislature in the 1970s, launching a struggle that has continued ever since.

The referendum was held because opponents of the law used the so-called

"people's veto" provision in the state Constitution to give voters a chance to repeal the law.

Gay activists were, of course, elated.

"It's a much-needed win for our national communities," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, who was in Portland on election night. "Winning here shows that, through real dogged grassroots work, we can overcome the lies and distortions of our opponents."

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and education. The law says it is not intended to redefine marriage, which a separate state law defines as the union of a man and a woman. ▼ Staff and wire reports

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FDA CONSIDERS HOME TEST FOR HIV, DESPITE BARRIERS

WASHINGTON

The Food and Drug Administration has begun to look at a home test for HIV, but the process may take many years as the test-maker clears the numerous barriers that lie ahead.



AIDS activist TERJE ANDERSON says that home-based testing is unlikely to revolutionize testing.

"Let me be clear, this is a multi-step process — we are not going to evaluate an HIV test for approval today," Elliot P. Cowan told the Blood Products Advisory Committee. He is the FDA official who would be responsible for such a review. He said the meeting was to help establish the criteria by which to evaluate such tests.

The FDA has approved 817 different home tests for everything from pregnancy to glucose monitoring for diabetes. Cowan said none have been approved for infectious diseases; tests for strep and flu have been submitted but rejected. He called counseling "a central issue" in the discussion around HIV testing.

Current interest in the subject was stimulated when OraSure Technologies approached the agency about seeking approval to sell its HIV test over the counter to consumers. The test uses an oral swab to collect secretions from around the gum line and looks for anti-HIV antibodies in those secretions. The 20-minute test was approved for use by clinics and health care workers in March 2004 and has become widely used to screen for HIV. A second confirmatory test is required to validate an HIV diagnosis, as is common practice for all HIV tests.

Cowan said conditions have changed since the FDA last addressed this issue. Perhaps most important is the introduction of HAART, combination therapy that has dramatically changed the course of HIV infection so that for many it has become a chronic, manageable disease.

The technology to detect HIV infection also has improved. Detection no longer

need be based upon drawing blood, reducing the biohazards of residual blood and needles that might transmit infection.

Terje Anderson, executive director of the National Association of People With AIDS, said that the home-based proposal is "unlikely to revolutionize testing." He said he believes the people most likely to use it are already aware of their risk for HIV and are repeat testers, but for a small number of people, "it does increase the likelihood that they will get tested."

He related how he learned his own HIV status by testing with a home collection kit. "If that hadn't been available, I may have waited several more years before I visited a clinic or talked to my physician about getting tested. And I am somebody who has been working in this field for an awfully long time."

Bernard Branson, who heads up HIV diagnostics at the CDC, said roughly 20 million HIV tests are conducted each year in the U.S. But at publicly funded sites in 2000, an average of 31% of those who took a conventional HIV test did not return for the results.

He pointed to survey data that "many people prefer to receive positive test results in their home situation where they are comfortable, rather than in a clinic with a stranger." He suggested that this attitude might also apply to taking the test. The CDC supports wider access to testing and sees a home test as contributing to that end.

Joseph Inungu reviewed psychological and social data associated with HIV testing. He said that while testing positive for HIV can be a life-changing experience, there is no evidence that it leads to an increased risk of suicide. Persons with AIDS who commit suicide are likely to be in the very advanced end of life stage of disease and/or suffer from severe depression or other major psychological problems.

He further noted that virtually all of these studies were conducted during the worst days of the epidemic, prior to the introduction of HAART. One might assume that the prospect of successful therapy would reduce social and psychological pressures associated with testing positive, though additional study is necessary "to see how people really react." ▼ *Bob Roehr*

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HEALTH/HIV BRIEFS

AIDS ACTIVISTS SEEK EQUAL ACCESS TO TRANSPLANTS

Buoyed by a legislative victory in California and a court ruling in Arizona, advocacy groups say they are making significant headway in efforts to ensure that HIV-positive people have the same access as other patients to kidney and liver transplants. In the past, insurers often refused to pay for transplants for HIV-positive patients and many transplant centers also balked at approving such procedures, believing that the always-tight supply of donor organs should be directed toward patients whose survival prospects weren't clouded by the complication of HIV. However, the development of effective anti-retroviral therapy extended the longevity of HIV-positive people and changed the thinking of many experts.

HEALTH

CDC OFFICIALS BLAME GAY MEN FOR HIKE IN SYPHILIS

ATLANTA - Gay men have driven the recent spike in the number of syphilis cases in the U.S., according to the latest data released by the Centers for Disease Control.

The CDC estimates that 19 million STD infections occur every year, almost half of them in young people age 15 to 24, said Dr. Ronald O. Valdiserri, acting director for HIV, STD and TB prevention at that agency.

The number of new syphilis cases reached an all time low in 2000 but has increased every one of the last four years, to 7,980 cases in 2004, "largely due to increases among men," Valdiserri said.

The rate of syphilis increased 11% in men, from 2003 to 2004, said the CDC's Dr. John Douglas.

"There are clear signs that increases have occurred primarily among men who have sex with men," Douglas said. He estimates that gay and bisexual men account for 64% of all primary and secondary syphilis in 2005, up from only 5% in 1999.

Douglas said data from individual US cities indicates that half of the gay men who become infected with syphilis already are HIV positive. It is not clear how the HIV infection affects their vulnerability to becoming infected with syphilis or



Dr. RONALD O. VALDISERRI says that many gay men receive syphilis through oral sex.

transmitting it to others.

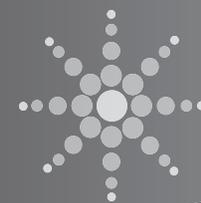
Unsafe sex appears to be increasing among gay men, and that has resulted in increased rates of other STDs.

Two years ago, the CDC feared that the increase in syphilis in gay men would result in increases in HIV infections, but that has not been borne out in the data, at least not yet.

Valdiserri suggested some possible factors contributing to this outcome. One is sero-sorting, where HIV positive and negative men tend to have sex with others of the same HIV status, and/or modify their sexual practices when they have sex with a person of another HIV status.

Some gay men have restricted their repertoire to engaging only in oral sex; based upon the understanding that it is very difficult to transmit HIV through oral sex. However, many of them do not know that one can easily become infected with syphilis through oral sex. ▽ *Bob Roehr*

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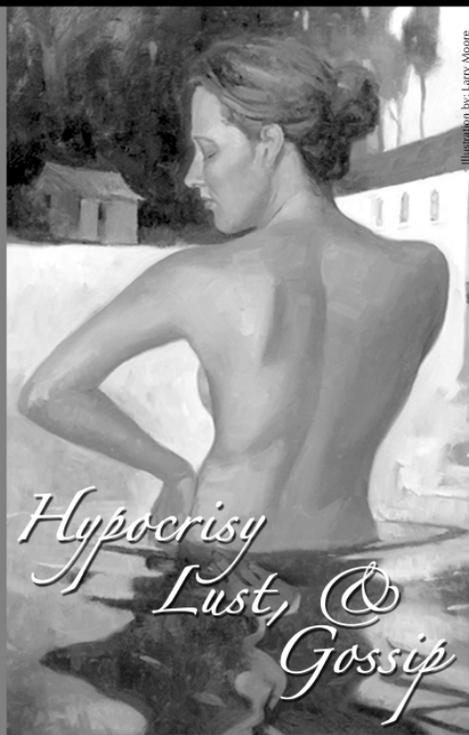
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BUSINESS



Downtown Development Board executive director FRANK BILLINGSLEY (left), Historic Creations developer STEVE KODSI and Orlando City Commissioner PATTY SHEEHAN at the opening of The Sanctuary. Photo by Tom Dyer

DEVELOPER OPENS FIRST DOWNTOWN CONDO

ORLANDO - The atmosphere was "urban festive" at the grand opening of The Sanctuary on Nov. 9. With 173 units, the impressive 18-story condo tower looms over south Thornton Park, just two blocks from Lake Eola.

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer was one of many dignitaries who toured the building, which features floor-to-ceiling windows, spacious patios, and breath-taking views.

One guest, a recent transplant from

Washington D.C., commented that the condo "could compete in any city in the country."

The Sanctuary is the first of several Downtown Orlando projects by Historic Creations Design and Development. Owner Steve Kodsi, who is gay, has lured several friends — happy ones, at that — to take up residence at the elegant tower. Buyers who purchased at pre-construction prices have more than doubled their investment. ▼
Tom Dyer

CHEF OPENS TUSCAN CAFÉ IN METROWEST

ORLANDO - Restaurateur Don Muszalski has converted a coffee shop in Orlando's MetroWest into an urbane dining spot called Bella Café.

He bought the location at 2447 S. Hiawasse Road nearly four months ago and has gradually made changes in the menu and décor, restyling the café into a more modern variation of itself, similar to those found in places like New York and Chicago. The décor has a decidedly Italian feel with Tuscan trattoria colors abound while contemporary jazz plays in the background.

The new menu features gourmet sandwiches, soups, salads, freshly baked pastries, gelatos and other beverages added to the already established coffee shop menu. To offer the highest-quality products available, the coffee drinks are now brewed from beans provided by one of the most well respected suppliers in the business, Illy.

He plans to host wine tastings as well, but the emphasis will be on providing food, beverages and entertainment that most people wouldn't expect to find in the atypical suburban strip mall.

Muszalski has incorporated creative flairs at his café, using seasonal butters and providing fresh pastries baked daily, all done in the concept that "when they're gone for the day, they're gone," he said.

Purchasing an already established business provided an existing clientele, one that consists of everyone from late morning tennis ladies to a lunchtime business crowd. Muszalski is also already seeing an influx of the local gay population, a market he hopes grows exponentially.

"I know that I support gay-owned businesses," Muszalski said, knowing of few other gay-owned businesses in West Orlando.

Muszalski's career in hospitality began as a chef. He ended up at Walt Disney World and worked there for 18 years, first as a chef, then as a conventions manager. While at Disney, he knew that he wanted to open his own small café and catering operation.

While Muszalski brought plenty of experience to the new venture, he found there was still much to be learned.

"At Disney, if you have an issue there's always someone to call, be it electrical issues, manpower, computer issues," Muszalski said. "Here, you have to



Former Walt Disney World chef DON MUSZALSKI pauses for a quiet moment at his new Bella Café on Orlando's South Hiawasse Road. Photo by Kirk Hartlage

wear all the hats, or learn who to trust that you can call for help. You have to learn to be self-sufficient."

He found local business networking groups to be an invaluable resource for making contacts and referrals. He discovered an artist to display photographs on the re-decorated walls, and a gift basket maker to assemble collections of goods available for purchase, all through the business networking associations.

Muszalski says Disney taught him about excellence. He praised the company for showing the necessity of creating an environment where people can escape and forget about what's going on in the world around them. Muszalski took that concept to heart in his own business and removed the televisions that once dotted the original café.

Muszalski also recognizes the importance of providing good customer service, knowing that it doesn't matter if someone is spending \$6 or \$60 in his shop. At the end of the day, the restaurateur said he values having the freedom to make his own decisions.

"I like being independent and being able to do what I want to do," Muszalski said. ▼ *Kirk Hartlage*



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BUSINESS BRIEFS

EQUALITY FLORIDA SEEKS APPLICANTS FOR FIELD ORGANIZER JOBS

Equality Florida plans to hire three new field organizers, one for each of Equality Florida's field operations in South, Central and North Florida. Job descriptions are available at EqFl.org. Applicants should send a resume and cover letter to David Costa, hr@eqfl.org, or mail to P.O. Box 13184, St. Petersburg, FL 33733. Applications are due by Nov. 23.

SPIRITUALITY

LESBIAN PASTOR LOSES METHODIST CREDENTIALS

PHILADELPHIA - In the end, the former United Methodist Church pastor Beth Stroud said that she's relieved that the whole process is behind her.

Standing at a recent news conference outside her Philadelphia church with her partner of five years, Chris Paige, Stroud sighed.



BETH STROUD said she'll remain at her church as a lay staff member, despite losing her clergy credentials.

"We've spent about half of our married life in this judicial process," the openly lesbian lay minister said. "I'm just glad it's over." The United Methodist Church's Judicial Council found recently that Stroud violated the

denomination's ban on "self-avowed, practicing homosexual" clergy and stripped her of any clergy credentials.

She came out in 2003 because she felt that her faith was being held back by failing to disclose her sexuality. While she never revealed that she was a lesbian in documents related to her ordination, Stroud said that she didn't keep it a secret, either. Still, a complaint was filed against her sometime after her ordination.

A little less than a year ago, a church panel decided Stroud engaged in practices that are incompatible with Christian teachings by being in a lesbian relationship. The decision was overturned by an appeals committee, but the Judicial Council has now backed the original ruling.

Stroud argued that the removal of her clergy credentials because of her sexuality amounted to discrimination. The church responded that gays and lesbians can

become Methodist ministers, just as long as they don't have sex. Church officials said that Stroud would be welcomed back as a minister if ever found herself in a non-sexual relationship.

Stroud will continue as a staff member at the First United Methodist Church of Germantown outside of Philadelphia, where she will preach, supervise the children's and youth work, and conduct pastoral visits. She and Paige were applying to become foster parents.

▼ *Staff and wire reports*

SPIRITUALITY LISTINGS

DAYTONA BEACH / SPACECOAST

COMMUNITY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Open and Welcoming congregation is located at 1124-FF Beville Road, Daytona Beach. Contact Chris at (386)441-8431.

HOPE METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

A welcoming Christian community with a special outreach to the GLBT community. Services on Sundays at 10 a.m., (386) 254-0993. www.hopemcc.com

ORLANDO

CONGREGATION OF REFORMED JUDAISM

Shabbat evening services Fridays: 1st Fridays, 7 p.m., preceded by a 6 p.m. dinner; 2nd, 3rd and 4th Fridays, 7 p.m. Rabbi Steven W. Engel. www.crorlando.org.

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

Study and support group for those spiritually inclined. Explores various books on spirituality. Thursday, 7 p.m. at The Center. Call Susan at (407) 327-9061.

DIGNITY/ORLANDO

Meets for Mass and social hour, held at 5 p.m. Sundays at the GLBCC, 946 N. Mills Ave. www.dignityorlando.org.

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF ORLANDO

Worship in a gay-friendly environment every Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m.. Downtown location at 1901 E. Robinson St. (407) 898-3621. Rev. Marni Harmony.

GATEWAY FOR INTEGRATED CONSCIOUSNESS

A spiritually-based transformation-oriented workshop for GLBT and friendly people. www.mensinnerjourney.com or call Dan at (407) 895-1194.

GOOD SHEPHERD HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUP

Nondenominational support group. Meets 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 5900 Oleander Dr. (407) 277-3939.

HOPE UNITES CHURCH

Meets at 9 a.m. Sundays at the Chapel at Rollins College in Winter Park. (407) 247-5294.

INTEGRITY

Monthly meetings for gay Episcopalians. Newcomers always welcome. Call Irv at (407)895-4749.

JOY MCC

Meets Sundays at 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. at 2351 S. Ferncreek Ave. (407) 894-1081 www.joymcc.com

MID-WEEK OASIS FELLOWSHIP

Spirit-filled worship and Bible study. Wed., 7:30 p.m. (407) 869-8308.

NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Meets at 10 a.m. on Sundays at 406 E. Amelia St. (407) 648-8880. www.new-hope.info

ORLANDO CHURCH OF RELIGIOUS SCIENCE

Sundays 10:30 a.m. at the Maitland Civic Center, 641 S. Maitland Ave. (407) 673-3030.

PATHWAYS MINISTRIES & CHURCH

A non-liturgical bible-based church for all, held at the GLBCC Center every Sunday at 6 p.m. (407) 425-4527.

SOUL-UTIONS

Wednesdays from 7-9 p.m. Downtown Orlando. Metaphysical-Meditation group. Discover inner peace and empowerment. (407)492-7405.

UNIVERSITY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY

Religion for open minds. Sunday: religious education 9:30 a.m., service 10:30 a.m.. 11648 McCulloch Road, East Orlando. (407) 737-4018 or www.uuus.orlando.fl.uaa.org.

SPIRITUALITY BRIEFS

KING OF PEACE OFFERS DINNERS, OUTREACH ON NOV. 24

King of Peace MCC will host a Thanksgiving dinner and service at 7:15 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 24, featuring turkey, ham and potluck side dishes. In addition, the church's Human Outreach Team will serve home-cooked Thanksgiving dinners at the Mental Health Drop-In Center that day. Call the church office at (727) 323-5857 to learn about how to help the outreach team or for more information about the dinner and services at the church.

MCC TAMPA HOSTS THANKSGIVING SERVICE, MEAL

MCC Tampa will host a Thanksgiving service and dinner from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 24, in the church's sanctuary and social hall. For details, call the church office at (813) 239-1951 or write to churchoffice@mcctampa.com. The church is located at 408 E. Cayuga St.

UPLIFT MINISTRIES, INC.

Minority-focused ministry meets Sundays at 10:50 a.m. at House of Power, 750 S. Orange Blossom Tr. Discussion Tuesday at 8 p.m. (407) 839-5051 or email upcenter@bellsouth.net.

TAMPA BAY

AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Gay-affirming church meets for Sunday Mass at 10:30 a.m., 7813 N. Nebraska Ave., Tampa. (813) 238-6060.

BETH RACHAMIM SYNAGOGUE

Growing reform congregation with special outreach to the GLBT community. Sabbath services Fridays at 8 p.m., 719 Arlington Ave. N., St. Petersburg. (727) 822-7503 or www.bethrachamim.org.

BREATH OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sundays at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Wednesdays at 7 p.m. 6424 N. Armenia Ave. (813) 873-1888 or www.breathoflifefcc.org

CHRIST THE CORNERSTONE CHURCH

All are welcome at this Christian church. 1025 7th Ave. N., St. Petersburg. (727) 823-1806 or www.christcornerstone.com. Rev. Joyce Stone, Pastor.

CONGREGATION B'NAI EMMUNAH

Reform Judaism synagogue. Shabbat Evening Services are at 8 p.m. every Friday with Rabbi Shimon Moch. 3374 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs. (727) 938-9000 or www.bnaiemmunah.org.

FELLOWSHIP/BIBLE STUDY

For information, call (813) 494-5736.

FRANCISCAN CENTER

Mass for the lesbian/gay community on Sundays at 7 p.m. at the Franciscan Center, 3010 Perry Ave., Tampa. (813)229-2695.

FRANCIS HOUSE

A non-profit, interfaith day respite center for those affected by HIV/AIDS. (813) 237-3066 or www.franchishouse.org.

GOOD SAMARITAN CHURCH

Gay friendly United Church of Christ offering Pinellas County gay youth group, AIDS Memorial Bells and monthly Sunday worship: 10:30 a.m. Center for Spiritual Development: Thursdays 7 p.m. 6085 Park Blvd., Pinellas Park. (727) 544-8558. Goodsam-church.org

HOLY SPIRIT ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Our affirming and inclusive Catholic community welcomes you "home" again. Join us for Sunday Mass, 10:30 a.m. Largo. (727) 709-1542 or www.holyspiritccc.org

INTEGRITY OF TAMPA BAY

Support group for members of the GLBT community within the Episcopal church. Meets the 1st Sunday of each month at 6 p.m. at St. Catherine's Episcopal Church in Temple Terrace. (813) 988-5283.

INTERWEAVE OF CLEARWATER

Giving support to GLBT Unitarian Universalists and their heterosexual allies. (727) 531-7704.

KING OF PEACE MCC

Worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 11:07 a.m. each Sunday at 3150 5th Ave N., St. Pete. Prayer/Communion service is at 6:30 p.m. each Thursday, followed by dinner and bingo. (727) 323-5857.

MCC OF TAMPA

Worship services Sunday at 10:30 a.m.. Mid-week dinner on Wednesday at 6 p.m., with worship at 7 p.m. 408 E. Cayuga St. (813) 239-1951 or UFMCC Tampa@aol.com.

POTTER'S HOUSE FELLOWSHIP

Sunday services at 10 a.m. at 3702 W. Kennedy Blvd. (813) 238-6330. or www.pottershousefellowship.com or PoHoFellow@aol.com.

RAINBOW PROMISE MCC

Meets at 10:30 a.m. at 1145 U.S. 92 East, Auburndale. The Rev. Karen Ducham officiates. Call (863) 802-6769.

SPIRIT OF LIFE MCC

Worship service at 10:30 a.m. each Sunday at 4133 Thys Road, New Port Richey and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. (727) 849-6962 or www.jord1.com/Spirit .

ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Evangelical Anglican Church — a progressive gay-affirming church in the Anglican tradition. (813) 258-0750.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF CLEARWATER

Welcoming congregation worships Sundays at 10:30 a.m. at 2470 Nursery Road, Clearwater. (727) 531-7704.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BROOKSVILLE

Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. at the Pines Conference Center, 7029 Cedar Lane, Brooksville. Call (352) 796-4457 or rbkeim@gte.net. Chaplain Bob Keim.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ST. PETERSBURG

Worship services are at 11 a.m. each Sunday, 719 Arlington Ave. N. (727) 898-3294.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF TAMPA

Services at 11 a.m. Sundays, 11400 Morris Bridge Road.

UNITY CHURCH OF TODAY

Sunday meetings at 9:45 a.m., service at 11 a.m.. 710 Crenshaw Lake Rd, Lutz. (813)909-9590 or visit ctampa.tripod.com.

UU RAINBOW OUTREACH OF TAMPA BAY

Outreach by Unitarian Universalists to the local GLBT community. (727) 531-7704.

SARASOTA

CHURCH OF THE TRINITY MCC

Traditional worship services at 9:15 a.m., and a contemporary service at 11 a.m.. Friday services at 7 p.m. with a 6 p.m. social. 7225 N. Lockwood Ridge Road. (941)355-0847 or Trinity1srq@aol.com.

DIGNITY OF SARASOTA

Mass for GLBT Catholics Sundays at Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota, 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota. (941)359-9504 or www.dignitysarasota.com.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF CHRIST

Open and affirming congregation. 1031 S. Euclid Ave. (941) 953-7044 or (941) 365-4463; uccsarasota@aol.com

SOULFORCE

Meets the first Tuesday at the ALSO drop in center, 1624 Ringling Blvd. Contact Luann Conaty at (941) 493-9036, e-mail Soulforce.swflorida@verizon.net, or visit www.soulforce.org.

SUNCOAST CATHEDRAL MCC

9 a.m. traditional services and 11 a.m. contemporary services on Sundays. 3276 East Venice Avenue, Venice, FL (941)484-7068 or e-mail scmcc@mindspring.com.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SARASOTA

Welcoming congregation with openly gay minister. Services at 10:30 a.m. each Sunday, 3975 Fruitville Road (941) 371-4974. Rev. Don Beaudreault.

▼ *Updates? Email changes to: Kirk@watermarkonline.com*

KING OF PEACE OFFERS GRIEF RECOVERY GROUP

ST. PETERSBURG - If you find the holidays to be particularly difficult because of the loss of a loved one, King of Peace MCC will offer a support group that may be helpful.

Beginning Sunday, Nov. 20, Alan Miller of Hospice will facilitate a grief recovery group geared for dealing with the holidays while you mourn.

The group will meet at 6:30 p.m. that evening as well as Nov. 27, Dec. 11, Dec. 18, Jan. 8 and Jan. 22. It's open to everyone. For more information, call (727) 323-5857. The church is located at 3150 Fifth Ave. N. ▼ *Staff reports*

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Friends of Steven Lorenzo say that they knew little about his love for sexual torture in his West Powhatan Avenue home in Tampa.

Lorenzo from page 7

"All of a sudden, I'm dizzy and ready to fall down," the victim said. "I went back to my room." This wasn't easy, he said, since he was staying on the third floor. When he began emptying his pockets to prepare to lie down, he realized Lorenzo was in his room with him.

"He just pushed me down on the bed," he said, motioning to Lorenzo, "and that's when I couldn't move. I felt him pulling my shorts down ... and I felt like I was starting to be tortured."

The victim said he awoke the next morning disoriented but met his friends to catch a plane home to Indiana. When he discovered purple bruises on his buttocks he consulted a doctor. He said he didn't immediately report the incident to repeat because there were so many people present at the resort that evening.

2606 Lounge: When Victim No. 6 met Lorenzo at the 2606 Lounge in Tampa, he thought the contractor was a nice man. He didn't feel apprehensive about accepting Lorenzo's invitation to return to his home, he told the jurors. But that was definitely a mistake.

As with other victims, Victim No. 6 said Lorenzo offered him some wine before suggesting something else.

"It tasted kind of salty," the victim said. Shortly thereafter the victim said he felt ill and vomited in Lorenzo's bathroom. Lorenzo suggested that he lie down.

"I could barely move my arms and legs," the victim said. "It was such a strange feeling."

The victim became nauseated again and made his way into the restroom. That's where he said Lorenzo came from behind him and tied something around his neck.

"It sounded like a zip tie," the victim said. "I tried to fight back and was being choked out. I ended up blacking out."

When he awoke, the victim found himself naked on the floor next to the bed. He said Lorenzo was "behind my shoulders." The victim also noticed two lines of blood around his neck and found

bruises on his back.

When the victim confronted Lorenzo, he said that "it was rough sex." The victim, who now lives in Gainesville, fled and didn't speak of the incident until he saw Lorenzo's case reported on the television news.

'I HAD NO IDEA'

News of Lorenzo's conviction spread quickly throughout the Tampa Bay GLBT community. Area news stations and Web sites immediately relayed the verdict surprising some while others expected the charges to stick.

"I had no doubt that he would get convicted," Darryl Brenneke said while enjoying a drink at the Suncoast Resort. "It sounds like he was a pretty twisted guy, but I never knew him. What surprised me was the number of people that did know this guy, and they all seemed shocked by what he did."

Brenneke may be right. Many others who spoke only on the condition of anonymity described Lorenzo as "a good guy" and "a sweet person." No one, however, said they knew of Lorenzo's sexual behavior.

"A few years ago, I knew Steven pretty well," said one patron at the Pro Shop Pub in Clearwater. He said he had lost touch with Lorenzo but had been to his home on several occasions.

"I guess everyone has that one locked closet or room in their house that they want no one to see. I've helped him paint his house, he used to help me around my house and the whole time it was just a fun, pleasant exchange. I had no idea he was capable of these things."

One area resident even said Lorenzo would treat neighbors of his Seminole Heights neighborhood to Thanksgiving meals each year.

"I had never heard anyone say anything bad about (Lorenzo) until all of this came up," the neighbor said. "It's surreal." ▽

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VIEWPOINT



KEEPING AT BAY MAKE YOUR HOLIDAY TRADITIONS WORK

By Steve Blanchard

Christmas was all about waking up early, sneaking into my sister's room and waking her up for the big day. Since she's older than I am, it always took some work to get her motivated, but it was worth the effort. My parents wouldn't let us look into the living room until they were awake and perched on their designated couch spaces with cameras ready.

Those were the days when life was so much simpler. I didn't worry about anything except where the next present was coming from and I thought life would stay that way forever. Then, just as my mother always warned me, I grew up.

Maintaining holiday traditions is tough, especially if you're a member of the GLBT community. Some families accept the significant other like any other spouse, and traditions continue with an additional family member. But for most of us, those traditions stop with that new addition because not everyone may not be comfortable with that love of your life.

This is partly why gay men and

lesbians are so damn creative. We have to wholly create our traditions when our families can't foresee including a same-sex relationship in the sacred holiday traditions.

When I convinced my husband, Phil, to move to Florida nearly six years ago, we left the safety net of our families. It was no longer feasible for me to drive to St. Louis for the holidays while my partner traveled to northern Louisiana to be with his parents.

Plus, we view ourselves as a family and didn't want to spend the holidays apart. That first Christmas together was a difficult but enjoyable one.

It was the first Christmas either of us had ever spent wearing just shorts and a light T-shirt. It was also the first Christmas when we had to combine our ideas of what the holidays meant and create a cohesive and festive environment. It wasn't easy.

Neither of us wanted to completely

Neither of us wanted to completely "gay up" Christmas with a rainbow tree, although they are magnificent.

"gay up" Christmas with a rainbow tree, although I have seen those trees and they are magnificent. We also didn't want two Josephs under the Christmas tree holding an adopted Himalayan child.

I wanted to stick with my family's traditional decorations – multicolored lights with ornaments depicting past family vacations. I still laugh at the ornament depicting Ms. Claus driving a speedboat with Santa on the skis behind.

That ornament reminds me of a vacation in the Missouri Ozarks. That's when I first strapped on a pair of water skis.

But despite the significance of this and other ornaments, this décor didn't work with my definition of family. My partner and I had to start all over. As we met more people in Florida and more members of the GLBT community, our traditions took shape.

Every year our favorite tradition concerns our "Pet Lesbian." She is the woman who first introduced us when we lived in Missouri. She has since moved to Florida and is like a kid when it comes to her Christmas present. You see, she has to work for it.

Starting around Dec. 1, we start collecting small boxes and each of those boxes eventually get a clue which is

then wrapped and hidden somewhere in St. Petersburg. The annual Christmas Scavenger Hunt reached an all time high last year with a record 29 clues. The hunt took three hours and covered approximately 10 square miles. This year's hunt could reach 40 clues and cover all of Pinellas County.

What started as a way to annoy a good friend has grown into a monster of a tradition. Throw in the girlfriend and our honorary lesbian and you have double the fun – and double the work.

We've also managed to create other traditions for ourselves including annual feasts, visits to our friends and trips to locations only Florida can provide. Did someone say "the beach"?

Each year our traditions grow, and our location is the main reason for that. With such a diverse community in Tampa Bay, new groups and new friends are added to our address book every month. All it takes is some time and patience to find the group that's right for you.

Regardless of your religion, race or sexual orientation, take time during the holidays to be creative with traditions. Even traditions can use a tune up every once in awhile. ▼

Steve Blanchard is Watermark's Tampa Bay Bureau staff writer. He can be reached at SteveB@watermarkonline.com.



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VIEWPOINT



VOICES IN MY HEAD REMEMBERING NOT TO LET THE DISEASE WIN

By Bryan L. Middour

I think I'm beginning to forget what it is that I'm fighting for. It gets harder everyday to just get out of bed and then make the damned thing, let alone drag my tired ass off to the ever growing list of medical appointments I have.

The pain continues to grow and I find myself absorbed by it, confusing it with who I really am — just as it was when my lungs failed with my first bout of PCP and a breathing tube unceremoniously jammed down my throat like the back end of a large ham bone. I had to remember to hang on no matter how bad the sheer terror and pain got.

And hang on I did, thinking in the darkness in that peculiar coma that I could hold on and wait it out. One day, I awoke and a whole new venue of pain engulfed me, getting better was no better than surviving being run down by a dump truck. But I continued to hold on, I had to keep remembering that I had someone to fight for, my Ben.

After Ben died, I held on for our son,

Christopher, but he's all grown and independent now and doesn't seem to need me anymore. So, what am I fighting for now? I can't seem to fathom the idea that I should fight for only me, the Methodist in me says that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. Let go and let God have me.

Struggling to make it one more day against the damming graft of my existence is wearing me out. I feel like an old clock: over-wound and missing a few

teeth, but still keeping putting out a solid and affirming "tick tock" to keep my friends from guessing the awful truth.

The truth is that I harbor thoughts of just giving up. There's the rub and I don't

feel any better having said something about this ugliness boiling up from deep within me. I can't afford to doubt anymore, I need a firm answer from

I'm still confused about when my time to let go will be, but I'll get there in my own sweet way, unhurried by the will or careless tugging of others.

someone to the question that each and every one of us must ask, when is it my time to let go? When do I stop fighting the poison in my veins?

Ben chose his time in that indomitable way of his. It was time to go and so he went. Other friends that have passed on have allowed their respective diseases to take them in turn, but I still demure. Why for the lack of any reason, do I choose to stay? Is it because I cherish this brief and entrancing performance on this stormy stage of life?

It could be, or maybe something so much simpler and less esoteric, I stay despite the medications, doctors, maladies piled upon woes, pain and increasing government stupidity. I stay for me and the brace of friends that surround me. They keep me sane; they keep after me to remember why it is that I submit myself to all the negatives and to break through, just as the runner breaks through a cloying wall of pain in the home stretch.

I stay because I'm still useful. No matter how broken, cantankerous and tired I've become, to them I am still useful and in being of use, I find my way again back to the path that I have chosen. I'm still confused about when my time to let go will be, but I'll get there in my own sweet way, unhurried by the will or careless tugging of others.

But the darkness in my veins is winning. There is no denying the fact that each week it becomes just a little harder to function, a little more difficult to make it to that ideal I set out there on my path.

I'll step gingerly to avoid the potholes and try to make my stride a little shorter to accommodate my lack of verve. I'll just have to work a little harder this week at staying alive.

In the vast cacophony of our lives, what is it about one more sick and depressed faggot with AIDS challenging his right to exist? In my book of life, it's everything, because in asking the questions — even the very hard ones — it forces me to extend my narrow view and see things from another perspective: a view that may not be entirely my own, but of the one with a blueprint of the why and how I work.

No matter how difficult the pain and dysfunction may become, at the heart of me there is an image of a perfect man created by God and taken care of by happy circumstances that just might be coincidence. God doesn't make garbage and I refuse to believe that He'd abandon me just because I'm feeling a little bent and broken.

So now I've circled back to the beginning, a little less in pain for having given up my fear and a little more aware of my limitations in exploring the ways my psyche works. And far more empowered to keep fighting no matter how bad it gets, 'cause God will come get me when I'm done and not before.

Bryan L. Middour is an Orlando writer who can be reached at bryan@watermarkonline.com. ▼

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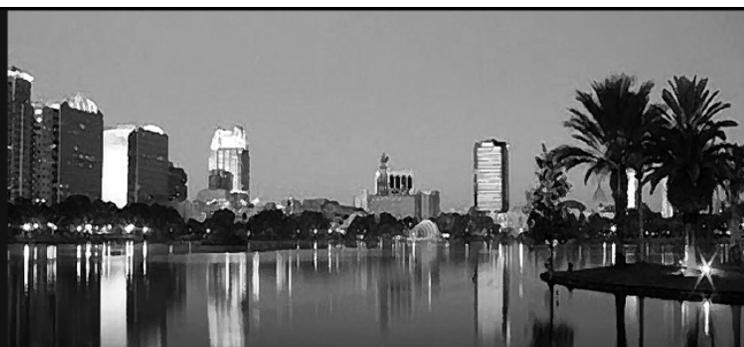
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VIEWPOINT



CURRENTS GIVE GOOD TIMES AS GIFTS THIS YEAR

By Georgia Jenkins

The holidays are soon upon us, along with the annual buying frenzy that drives most of us to feeling quite Grinchy before it's all over.

The trouble with the gift-giving thing is reflected in the vague, desperate stares of holiday shoppers muttering things like, "Omgod, we've still gotta buy something for So-and-So, and what are we gonna get for So-and-So?"

There are those in our inner circles who always pose huge challenges when it comes to gift-giving. My parents, for instance: if they want or need something, they buy it, and if they can't afford it, I can't either. Or my partner's grandmother, who lives in an assisted living facility and has limited space for more stuff.

Most of us, in fact, have too much stuff already, a lot of it stuff we'd never even hang onto except that someone special gave it to us back in 1988 (when it was cool).

But there's a new strategy to consider, one that can bring joy in the giving experience back to the giver and avoid adding to recipients' extensive collections of stuff. It may be hard to think of things to give to those you care about, but it's rarely hard to think of something fun that they'd love to do.

Consider the first rule of the New Shopping: minimal stuff. Focus instead on experience, and you'll discover a whole new world of gift-giving possibilities. Some years ago, I gave my three best friends (and myself) scuba lessons for Christmas. Not only did we

have a great time together during the class and on many dive trips afterward, but for several years we gave each other dive gear and related paraphernalia as gifts, and our memories immortalize those gifts for each of us.

The Internet has opened up endless contact possibilities for anything your imagination can come up with. A Google search for "scuba lessons, Central Florida" puts hundreds of dive shops and instruction centers at your fingertips. So go wild; any experience you can come up with can probably be arranged, many more affordably than you might think.

Florida's diverse resident and tourist populations mean there are tons of interesting diversions to be found locally, and almost any idea you have can be put on a gift certificate.

Consider your intended recipient's lifestyle, physical ability, schedule and interests. What does he or she enjoy doing? Is there anything he or she has expressed interest in doing, but has not had the opportunity to try?

Have a mystery fan or a natural-born detective on your gift list? Send them on a nine-day murder-mystery cruise (about \$1,200). Pockets not that deep? Make reservations instead at one of Florida's many murder-mystery dinner theatres (about \$50 per person).

Got a flyboy or flygirl in your clan?

Put them on cloud nine with a sweet helicopter or gliderplane ride—experienced, FAA-certified pilot included (about \$100).

For a slightly more mellow airborne experience, show your recipient an unparalleled view of the sunrise from a hot-air balloon. You can even arrange a romantic flight for two (\$400-\$500). Flight plans usually include champagne toast and breakfast.

Put your leather on and hit the road with the outlaw on your list with a Harley-Davidson rental (from \$100 a day). Take your favorite ancient mariner

on a party-fishing trip (about \$50). Send a NASCAR nut to Daytona or Disney to ride shotgun in a stock car at speeds more than 150 mph (from \$100).

Or go all out and drop \$500-\$2,000 on a day of instruction culminating in your

recipient taking the driver's seat and running timed laps in a real stock car at one of the world's famous motor speedways.

Experiences don't have to cost a

fortune. Even busy people will make time for a prepaid therapeutic massage or spa treatment (\$50-\$100). Arrange for a house-cleaning service for a harried family (\$35-\$100). Give a gift card asking your recipient/s to leave time open for you on a certain date, then show up with takeout from their favorite restaurant, or bring a pan of your killer lasagna and a DVD.

Rent a johnboat for less than \$25 and spend a day snorkeling with half-ton manatees in Crystal River, or borrow a canoe (this is Florida—somebody you know owns one), pack a picnic and spend a lazy afternoon on one of the gazillion other bodies of water that grace the area.

Gifts of experience are limited only by your finances and imagination. They are sensory gifts of time and enjoyment the recipient will retain for as long as memory serves the mind.

The planning and execution of a gift of experience brings a special spirit of joy to the giver, as well. Isn't that infinitely truer to the holiday spirit than another dust-collecting figurine? ▼

Georgia Jenkins is a Daytona Beach writer who can be reached at georgia@watermarkonline.com.

Mail



GRATEFUL BEARS ARE THANKFUL FOR STORY

I wanted to take a moment to tell you that the Tampa Bay Bears were absolutely thrilled with recent *Watermark* story by Steve Blanchard about our 2005 charity auction.

It's rare that a writer can convey the appropriate sentiment of an event and make the article a lively and interesting read at the same time. Steve's talent really served to pull it all together into a truly quality piece!

We raised \$13,000 for our charities, and we have every reason to believe that *Watermark* played a vital role in the success.

Bill Carrino
St. Petersburg

Letters to the Editor are always welcome, but they may be edited for length and clarity. Send them to editor@watermarkonline.com, or to Watermark, P.O. Box 533655, Orlando, FL 32853. ▼



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RENT PARTY

Rosario Dawson and Tracie Thoms may be the newbies in the *Rent* movie cast, but they bring their own oomph to this bohemian rhapsody.
By John Polly

tracie Thoms is stoked, and with good reason. During the last 525,600 minutes — or the past year, for those unschooled in the *Rent* method of measurements — the New York actress has been braced for the musical's long-overdue film version. It opens nationwide Nov. 23.

Thoms is one of two newbies to the cast, filling in for Fredi Walker as the hard-bitten lesbian Joanne, just as Rosario Dawson takes on the tragic Mimi role from original cast member Daphne Rubin-Vega.

Continued on page 55



The Radio City Music Hall's Rockettes return to Florida for a monthlong Christmas show in Orlando.

DON YOUR gay apparel

There are plenty of reasons to get dressed up for the holiday season, with concerts, parades, and variations on Ebenezer Scrooge and the Nutcracker
By Kirk Hartlage

'Tis the season for making lists and checking them twice — sometimes thrice for those who are sincerely anal-retentive. Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa present a smattering of to-do, to-buy, to-get, to-visit and to-go lists that help make the end of the year festivities more organized.

To help in those endeavors, we've assembled a collection of holiday entertainment offerings available throughout the area. Though there are plenty of church live Nativity presentations and enough grade-school productions of *A Christmas Carol* to make even the jolliest

among us wish that we'd gone the way of Jacob Marley, we've focused on some of the bigger and livelier productions available through the end of the year. Besides, no one sent us a press release about your niece's kindergarten Christmas pageant.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC
Traditional holiday music offerings are in abundance throughout the area. **The Orlando Philharmonic, Orlando Chorale, the Bach Society, the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay** and the **Florida**

Continued on page 52

WATERCOLORS



WATERCRESS

FACE IT: KNITTING CAN BE POINTEDLY HAZARDOUS

Salad by Jim Crescitelli

KNITTING is an activity which, lemmings-like, ran roughshod over the female portion of the population in a big way a short time ago and quickly became the basis of a cult: Women formed knitting clubs and gathered in one another's homes to create articles of clothing, afghans and drapes of every imaginable design. Very nice.

Men, naturally, were afraid: Would they dare enter a room thrumming to the cadence of dozens of pointy needles flashing in jig time, their steely lengths catching the light streaming through the windows? I think not, but that never stops me from trying.

I became intrigued by the intricacy of the stitches and decided to cast myself onto heretofore-unknown wool-covered seas. I have a good pedigree, though. Because I was so often a bedridden, sickly child, my Tuscan grandmother — a proud, opinionated, sarcastic country woman — taught me how to crochet so that I could concentrate on something besides worrying about drawing my next breath.

Soon, every chair in the house was decked out with an antimacassar, every mid-century modern table embarrassingly wore a frilly doily, and visitors began to speak in Victorian rhythms. (Kirk, meanwhile, formed a knitting club in his Minnesota grammar school with another boy when the students — most of them blond — were instructed to form hobby groups.)

No hobby is really safe; you could throw your back out while trying to display your perineum to some online schlep.

Flash forward to the 21st century, and we see that my friend Carol has joined the ranks of the Spinning Griseldas. I wish we lived closer to one another. A recent short visit in which we went and bought pizza from the Albanians was memorable, but still — I'm just saying. I imagine us knitting together on her leather couch, a double jeroboam of Merlot at her elbow. (I never touch the stuff.)

Notwithstanding the punctures ("Turn the cushion over so Matt doesn't notice"), we would no doubt — while watching Wheel of Fortune — accidentally combine

our projects and, by the end of the show, find ourselves inextricably knitted together at the hip. We'd have to call her husband Matt, a tough New York policeman: "Please hurry home with the Jaws of Life!" Come to think of it, no hobby is really safe; you could glue your fingers together while constructing a model of the Titanic, or throw your back out while camming and trying to display your perineum to some online schlep.

Gardening is fraught with any number of bio-hazards, not to mention slime which actually moves. And in the world of sports, well, we all know what can happen while trying to catch a pop fly while squinting up at the sun — I hear the outfield at Yankee Stadium is littered with corneas. In any event, everyone's getting afghans for Christmas and I don't mean the four-legged kind.

DISASTER should have been the title of the recent TV movie called *Category 7*; I sat through the predictable first half and, if the conclusion is as bad as the opener, then definite bar-lowering will have occurred regarding the quality of cheap made-for-TV films. And, apparently, the raw wounds of 9/11 have healed over in Hollywood: The producers of *Category 7* blatantly decided that international icons would look great as they were torn to smithereens thanks to the fury of the storms — and I'm not talking about Sophia Loren.

Within two hours the Eiffel Tower, Mount Rushmore, a trailer park, and the Statue of Liberty were all destroyed, with

more mayhem yet to come as a killer hurricane approaches New York. I didn't recognize any major thespians displaying talent, and actually I can't recall the names of any actors even while writing this.

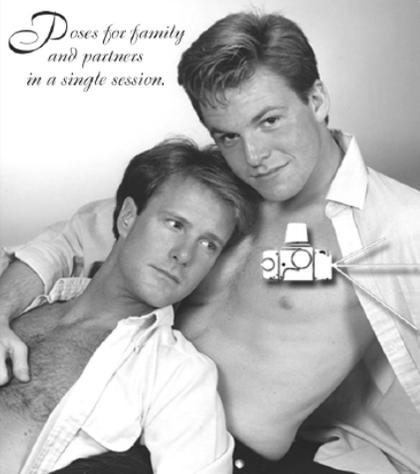
All I know is that Helen Hayes and Helen Reddy were not in it — they both starred in 1970s disaster movies involving airplanes, and we need them back to ratchet things up a bit. Desperate Housewives was on at the same time, and I was forced to click madly between two channels, something I'm not used to doing: Bree, Paris, Lynette, South Dakota, New York Harbor, Gabrielle, Trailerville, Susan. It was all so confusing and I had a headache by late Sunday evening. I don't know how you people can watch so much television, honestly!

THANK YOU to all who voted for me in the recent WAVES; I tied for third with Kirk Hartlage, who also toils for this newspaper, albeit in a more captive state than I. He gets a desk and everything; I have to work at home.

Congratulations, Mr. Hartlage! Although I'm going to Hollywood next week to make a film, do not for a minute think that I'm leaving you all... how could I? My heart is here in Orlando, and 3,000 miles are too far to be from one's heart. I'll be back to claim it — and soon. That is... if you want me back!

Jim Crescitelli is Watermark's oldest living contributor, and he can be reached at watercress@watermarkonline.com. ▼

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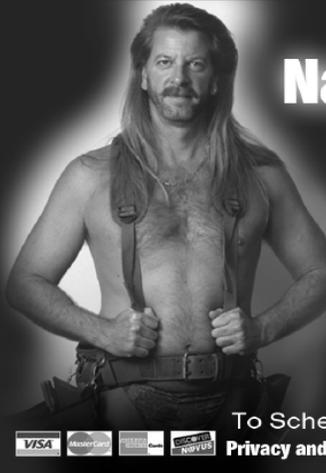
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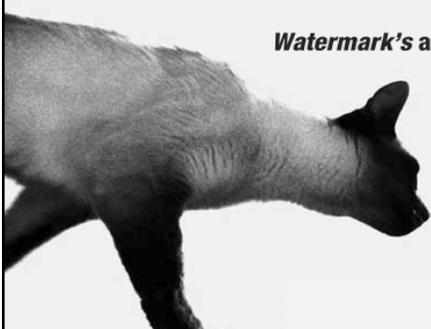
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WATERCOLORS



AMAZONS

FIRST THE GOOD NEWS, THEN MORE GOOD NEWS

By Karen S. Murray-Parker

This last month has been an emotional ride for my partner Alta and me.

It started off with a serious breast cancer scare for myself, after I was told it was highly probable that I had a large tumor in my left breast. Needless to say, that bit of news put my world into a tailspin.

That lasted for the better part of three weeks, while several tests were done on me to determine just how bad the situation was. It turned out to be a false alarm (blame it on cystic breasts) but it put me on my soapbox to my friends regarding the need for regular

mammograms. As a result, about five women I've talked to have taken the cue.

The good news is that everyone received the "all clear." In the end it was a good wakeup call for all of us to take better care of our bodies – so lesson learned.

Around this same time, Alta, who is licensed massage therapist, read about a massage business for sale at a reasonable price and after a couple of days of discussion together, she decided to buy it. Before she moved to Florida four years ago, she had her own massage clinic and she had been searching for an established business in the Sarasota area. This clinic was just what she was seeking.

It seems as if things are looking up for both of us, just as we stand at a crossroad in our lives. Three years ago, I began my journey to become first a registered nurse and then a nurse practitioner, deciding after 25 years in journalism as a newspaper editor and bureau chief, to retrain in a career with more long-term security (I'm not counting on Social Security being around to help support my retirement).

When I began this career change I had no idea it would be so life-altering, not to mention that nursing school was hard. It wasn't just going back to college after 30 years, the science and math courses to become a nurse are far harder than the ones I took in the 1970s when I was a pre-med student. Add in that I'm the same age as most of my instructors and the oldest student in class, and ... you get the picture.

I'll graduate this December, and it's not a moment too soon. Alta has been an angel putting up with my mood swings and late hours working on research papers, not to mention the financial sacrifice. It's hard to go from \$60,000 a

year to nearly nothing.

It was because I feel so guilty about the money issue that I agreed to listen to a door-to-door salesman for a carpet shampooing company at her request. (She was walking out the door when he arrived.)

We plan to host a party in a couple of weeks, and I knew she wanted the carpets shampooed first. She happily traipsed off to work and I settled in on the couch to listen to the sales pitch in order to get the free rug shampoo job. It was a martyr act of true love that I was doing for my sweetie. I felt so ... noble.

I was soon to be knocked off my pedestal. It turned out the shampoo guy was really a Kirby vacuum salesman (so much for deed restricted communities where no solicitors are allowed). I have to give the guy credit: He was good. He tried the soft sell; the get-cozy-to-the-client-make-her-feel-you're-one-of-the-family sell. He tried to

shame me over how badly my (perfectly good) vacuum performed compared to a Kirby. He even told me I must like to live in a filthy house since my disreputable Hoover vacuum couldn't hold a shine to his Kirby product.

Now I should mention along about now, that these Kirby vacuum cleaners aren't cheap. They sell for around \$2,500. To me that's a two-week vacation to Europe, and a trip overseas will win out over a vacuum cleaner anytime.

So the salesman and I began our match of wits to see who could out-stamina the other. Would I fold beneath his onslaught of reasons why I absolutely had to have a \$2,500 vacuum cleaner? Would I get over it and pitch him head first out my front door? Our little stand-off lasted four-and-a-half hours before I pointed out for the final (and third) time that he had achieved entrée to my home on the premise of a free rug shampoo which I had yet to see.

He finally shampooed my rug (and did a so-so job of it) before being shown the door mumbling all the while that thanks to me, "I'll never win that Rolex."

When Alta and I reunited at the end of the day, I was set to throttle her throat, but one look at her happy face over the idea of freshly shampooed rug, and I caved in. I did tell her that she owes me one long massage.

Karen S. Murray-Parker is a Sarasota writer and nursing student who can be reached at amazons@watermarkonline.com. ▼

In the end, the cancer scare was a good wakeup call for all of us to take better care of our bodies.



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Heaven on Eartha

The once-controversial Miss Kitt heads to Sarasota and EPCOT, and shares her opinions on Iraq, men with money and drag

By Dave Wiethop

ORLANDO - Few things can impress a gay man's mama like calling and saying, "I just got off the phone with Eartha Kitt — *again.*" But here she is again, purring my name into the telephone, demanding my full attention to every deliberate pulse of her timbre.

It's almost erotic, that voice; rich yet very much in the upper register, with syllables rolling around her mouth as if she's deciding whether to speak them or growl them. Few people speak in italics like Eartha Kitt.

Oh, and that mouth of hers! Once a pariah in American entertainment for confronting President Johnson during the 1960s about the Vietnam War, she insists that she never meant to incense anyone. She has opinions — actually fairly patriotic ones at that — yet, she insists that

audiences at Sarasota's Van Wezel Performing Arts Center on Nov. 20 or EPCOT's Holidays Around the World Candlelight Processional Dec. 10-12 will hear none of them.

She'll sing in Sarasota and recite the Christmas story in Lake Buena Vista. And if audiences are lucky,

they'll hear her stretch the phrase "the Christ Child" into eight syllables. Recently, the 78-year-old survivor chatted about politics, marriage of all kinds — and Eartha Kitt impersonators.

WATERMARK:

When you performed

in Orlando in Cinderella five years ago, you had a great entrance. I remember you opened the slit in your skirt and got applause for your legs.

EARTHA KITT: I did? That was nice.

EARTHA KITT
SARASOTA: 8 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 20, Van Wezel Performing Arts Center. Call (941) 953-3368 or visit VanWezel.org for details.
EPCOT: 5 p.m., 6:45 p.m., 8:15 p.m., Dec. 10-12, as part of the Candlelight Processional of the Holidays Around the World. Visit disneyworld.disney-go.com for details.

We should all get applause for our bodies when we're ... your age.

Hmmm.

You're appearing at the Van Wezel in *An Evening with Eartha Kitt*. What's that like?

Whatever happens, happens. I've been called the most dangerous woman in show business, so you'll never know what I'll do. I have the best music director in the world, Darryl Waters, who anticipates my next move. Sometimes, he gets it right, sometimes I change my mind. But it's all based on what the audience wants.

What does an audience want from an Eartha Kitt show? I mean, I can't think of an Eartha Kitt song beyond *Santa Baby*, to be honest.

It's very interesting that I make such a living doing this when I've never had what would be considered a hit recording. But I also don't play big arenas (like the best-selling recording artists do). I sing songs that have substance and intelligence to them. They have to mean something.

I imagine that you sing a little Stephen Sondheim.

I do! I feel as if *I'm Still Here* was written for me because it's all about who I am! But some of his songs are *verrrrry* complicated and *verrrrry* complex, and they have a tendency to be hard to sing.

I have to remember that I'm talking with someone who was once on President Nixon's enemies list. Do you get political during your shows?

No. People come to hear me sing, not to espouse my opinions about things. They've come to get away from what hurts, or to share what you're feeling on stage, or to celebrate something, not to hear my opinions, so I don't blurt them out. I believe that there's a time and a place for everything, but my opinions do not belong in my songs.

You're certainly renown as a political animal.

I am, but I only answer direct

questions.

Then I've got to ask: Is that how you got in trouble with President Johnson in 1968?

Lady Bird Johnson asked me how the U.S. could combat juvenile delinquency. I said, "Vietnam is the main reason we are having trouble with the youth of America." I told her that ghetto boys thought that it was better to stay on the streets and be considered "undesirable" and that they wouldn't be sent to war, like the "good" boys.

She asked me a question and I gave her an answer. Not a lot of people know that Mrs. Johnson owned a lot of radio and television stations and the president (took advantage of that when he) said, "Erase that woman!" I was no longer welcome in the media after that. I was gone.

Years later, I saw my CIA dossier — so much gossip! Gossip, *gossip!* None of it was true, except that I exist! And they got all of this information from people talking behind my back! So upsetting!

Can I ask you some direct questions?

Go ahead. Those I'll answer.

Since you were so strongly against the Vietnam War, do you agree with what the U.S. is doing in Iraq?

I believe in my country. Let me say that: I believe in my country. And I believe that our involvement in Iraq was bound to



The years of dancing paid off for performer EARTHA KITT, whose tiny and lithe frame still earns applause.

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happen. For one thing, France could have done something more to help us get Saddam or Bin Laden.

You lived in France for a long time, didn't you?

Yes, but this is the country that I love. They say in France that you can have a little of this and a little of that, but the one thing that you can't get in France is a job! People who complain about America are the ones who haven't been anywhere else.

What do you think about the idea that we're fighting in Iraq over oil?

We've made that choice. If we don't want to drill for oil in Alaska, or off-shore, or anywhere else domestically, then we have no choice but to get it from overseas. So, we have to kill people over there instead of killing bugs or birds over here. It's a difficult decision, but that's the one we've made so we have to back our country.

I guess I'm a little surprised to hear this. I expected to be speaking with an anti-war protester.

I believe in America. We have our problems, but we can do something about it. You can't change a monarch, but you can change a president.

I don't vote for the Democrats. As far as I'm concerned, all they do is fight the other side. What have they done? And



Singer EARTHA KITT may now be more familiar to younger audiences as a voice in Disney's *The Emperor's New Groove*.

Clinton — he was very charming, but he did nothing with his promises.

And when John Kerry got on television and began wagging his finger and saying that he was going to work for me, I thought, "Uh, oh. How about if I work for myself and you just make sure that my taxes aren't wasted? Don't punish me for my achievement."

Do you think Americans will see gay marriage legalized?

We already have it in one state, but

you know that. I think that once you take the connotation of "marriage" out of it, then it will be successful. Find something else, another word because that word bothers too many people to get the concept legalized. It's too tied to the religious world. But I think everyone should be able to be tied legally to their spouse.

I listened to Elton John speak about this, and he said that the moment that he mentioned that he wanted to marry his partner, every relative came out the woodwork ... to object. It's all about who's getting who's money.

Do you see many Eartha Kitt impersonators?

I see them from time to time. It's very flattering. There's one man in New York who does Eartha Kitt so well that when we both show up to parties, I'll begin to think, "Am I over there, or am I over here?"

I was performing a benefit in Manila once — it was to buy buses for school children, but I don't know if those buses ever made it to those children! — and right before I was going to be introduced, I noticed there were 25 Eartha Kitts already up there! I thought it was *sooooo* funny!

When men portray Eartha Kitt, do they get any part of "you" incorrect?

No. They're *aaaaaall* perfect. Every one of them.

Even the eye makeup?

You think it's all about the eyes,

don't you?

What do you always have in your makeup case?

Off-stage? Not very much. A little eye makeup. Lipstick.

Color?

Earth tones. What Eartha Mae wears off-stage is very different than what Eartha Kitt wears on-stage. My makeup man, Carlo, can make Eartha Kitt look good all the way in the back of the theatre.

Who's Eartha Mae?

That's the person who loves Eartha Kitt for all that she's done — all that she's been able to provide for her! I'm so happy to know her and to enjoy how self-sufficient she is. She has made a *verrrrrrry* good living!

I would imagine that with your looks and notoriety that you've had many marriage proposals.

No. Some men have tried to use me as a notch in their belts, but not as a potential wife. The former head of MGM, Arthur Lowe Jr., wanted to marry me, but his mother convinced him that I was a fast woman because of the kinds of songs that I sang.

Charles Revson (of Revlon fame) wanted to marry me, but he was told that I was unfaithful when I was not. So, I don't need to be married. Not at all. ▼

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WATERMARK
SUN Gazette

Parton Glances

Dolly heads to Clearwater and Orlando with a new album — and opinions about gay marriage and those ‘Judy rumors’

By Lawrence Ferber

CLEARWATER - On her latest CD, *Those Were the Days*, Dolly Parton freshly interprets a handful of beloved 1960s-1970s protest/anti-war songs, including *Where Have All The Flowers Gone*, *The Cruel War* and *Imagine*. These ditties certainly strike a fresh nerve today, as we suffer increasing casualties overseas in a war that seems increasingly abstract. Yet for all of *Those Were the Days*' political relevance, the lady insists that she doth not protest too much.

“I wasn’t protesting anything,” Parton says. “Truth is I’m not a political person but I am extremely patriotic and I purposely chose songs that reflected the times. We’re

at war and we can’t just ignore that. Songs like *Imagine* still give you hope there’s a better place and better way. I would love for us all to live happily ever after but the least I can do is sing about and speak of (what’s going on) and that’s what I was doing.”

With a posse of talented guests including Norah Jones, Keith Urban, Alison Krauss, Mary Hopkin and members of the Grand Ole Opry, Parton injects rich bluegrass flavor and some of her finest vocal performances into classics like *Crimson and Clover*, *Blowin’ in the Wind* and *Me and Bobby McGee*.

She’ll also visit Orlando’s House of Blues on Nov. 26 and Clearwater’s Ruth Eckerd Hall on Nov. 28. On a whirlwind tour across the U.S., Parton chatted about her current album, gay marriage and those constant lesbian rumors about her and best friend/assistant Judy Ogle.

WATERMARK: So did you set out to make a political album, Dolly?

DOLLY PARTON: No. In fact, I don’t think a lot of these songs are political. I

recorded 25 songs, including *The Games People Play*, which is about how people won’t tell you the truth and all that sort of stuff. If (this album) does good, I have enough recordings left over for another album.

Let’s talk about your dichotomous fan base for a moment. If I may use a breast analogy, on one teat you have the gays, and on the other teat, the right-wing rednecks.

Yes, and don’t think I don’t pay for that! In fact, sometimes because I love all people I do get a lot of flack from the Bible Belt. So be it. I have many, many gay and lesbian friends, many people I’ve worked with through the years, many people in my own family. So I’m certainly not going to sit in a seat of judgment, nor am I the kind of person who’s not going to say what I think and feel. I’ll pay the consequences.

In 2004, the organizers of Gay Day at Dollywood were asked to remove ‘Dollywood’ from the name of the event. And on the big day the Ku Klux Klan protested outside the park. What are your feelings on Gay Day at Dollywood?

I think it’s fine. We’re a place of business and all people are welcome. But the gays need to help me too, because you have no idea what I put up with by accepting and loving everybody. In fact, I have rounds with my business people as well at the park. I say, “What would you have me do? Am I going to say they’re not welcome here?” Of course not, because they are.

It’s just one of those things, damned if you do and damned if you don’t. Just know that any of those things that happen like that are not my doing. I have to try and balance and do whatever I can because it’s very possible I could even lose the park over things like that. But if that’s the way it should go down. I would give up the park before I would say anybody’s not welcome — certainly not because of sexual orientation or color or any of that. You’ll always be welcome in my heart and home.

So what’s going on with *Nine to Five: The Musical*?

Well, I’m sitting on my bus right now



DOLLY PARTON says that gay people should suffer just like straight people — and have the right to marry.

with a lap full of songs. I’ve written probably 20 songs already, there will probably be 13 to 15 pieces of music in the play.

Who would you like to see play Doralee Rhodes, your part from the movie?

I don’t know yet. She’s going to have big ol’ titties and big hair, though!

What’s the most outrageous rumor you’ve heard about yourself?

Oh, hell, I don’t know. Half of the articles will talk about how many lovers I have, male and female, and all the affairs I’m having. Then in the same article they’ll say I’m crippled-up and my back is broken and I can’t get up. I’m

like, buddy, I sure get around for a woman all crippled-up from them big ol’ boobs!

So, what about those Judy rumors?

Oh, Judy’s my best friend since we were little bitty girls and we’ve never had any kind of sexual relationship. Because Judy’s not married, they’ve got to tag us together. And I’ll joke with her — “They think you’re a lesbian because you’re not married.”

And she says, “Hell, I’d rather they say I’m a lesbian than call me an old maid!” We are very close and together all the time. She takes care of all my wardrobe and scheduling and because she doesn’t have a family she’s free to travel and she loves to travel. It’s not like I’m carrying around this lover to accommodate me. ▼

“I would give up Dollywood before I would say anybody’s not welcome.”

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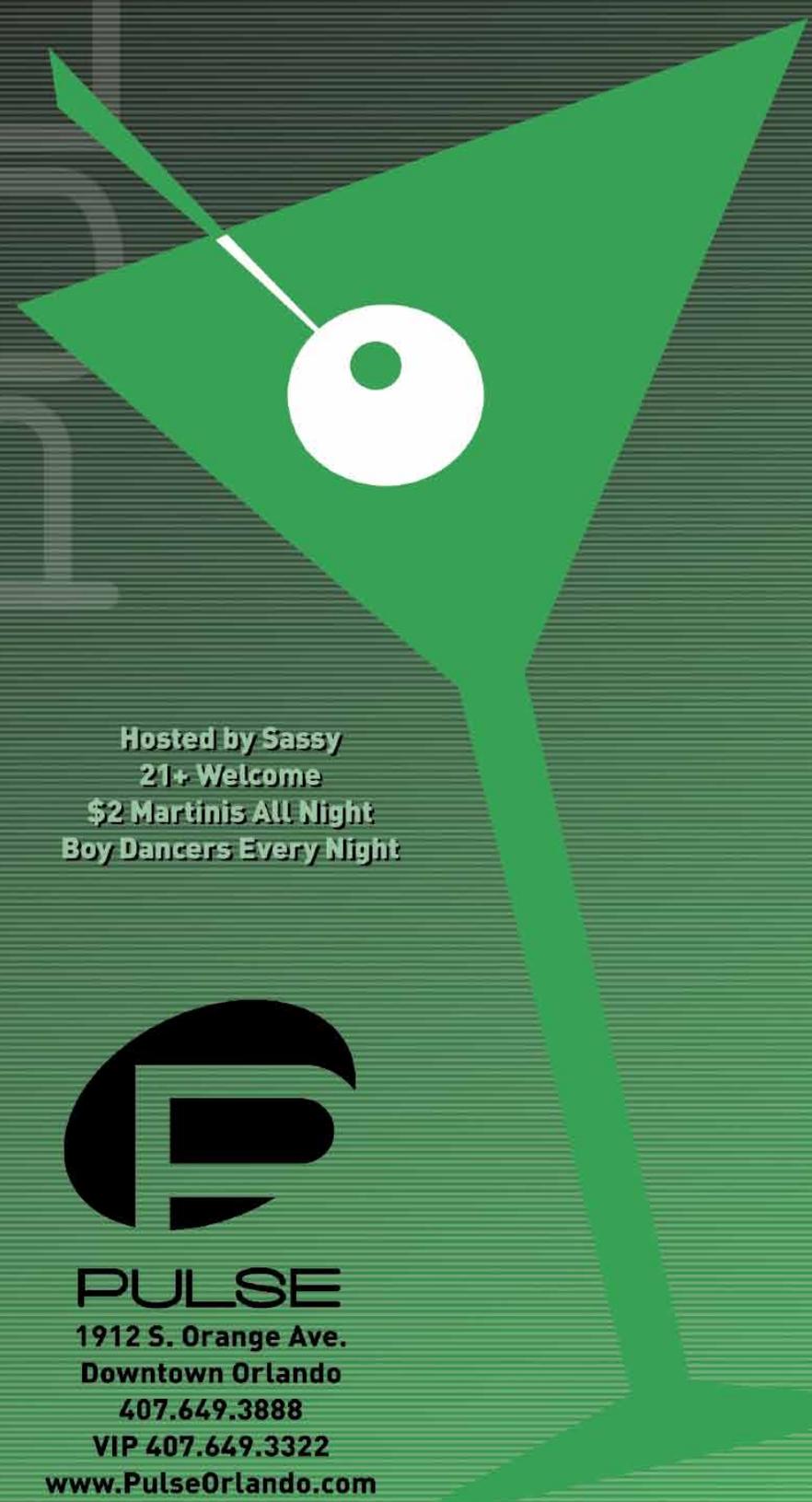


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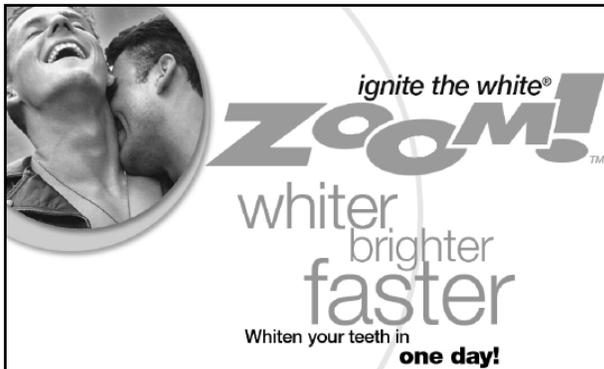


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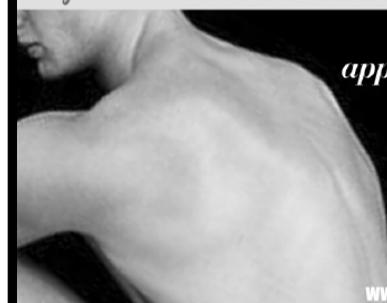
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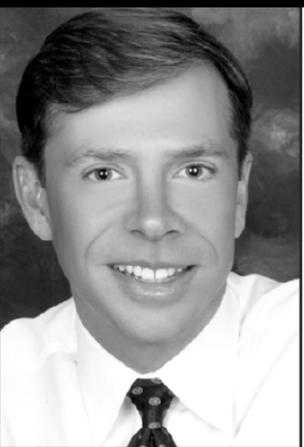
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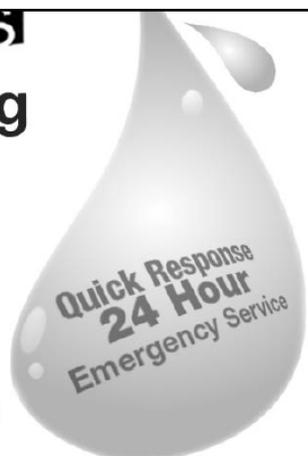


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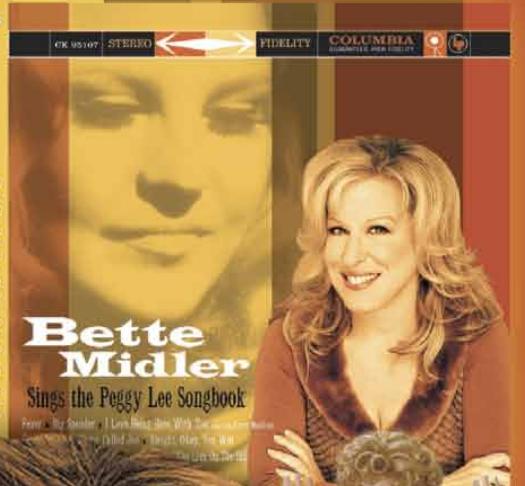
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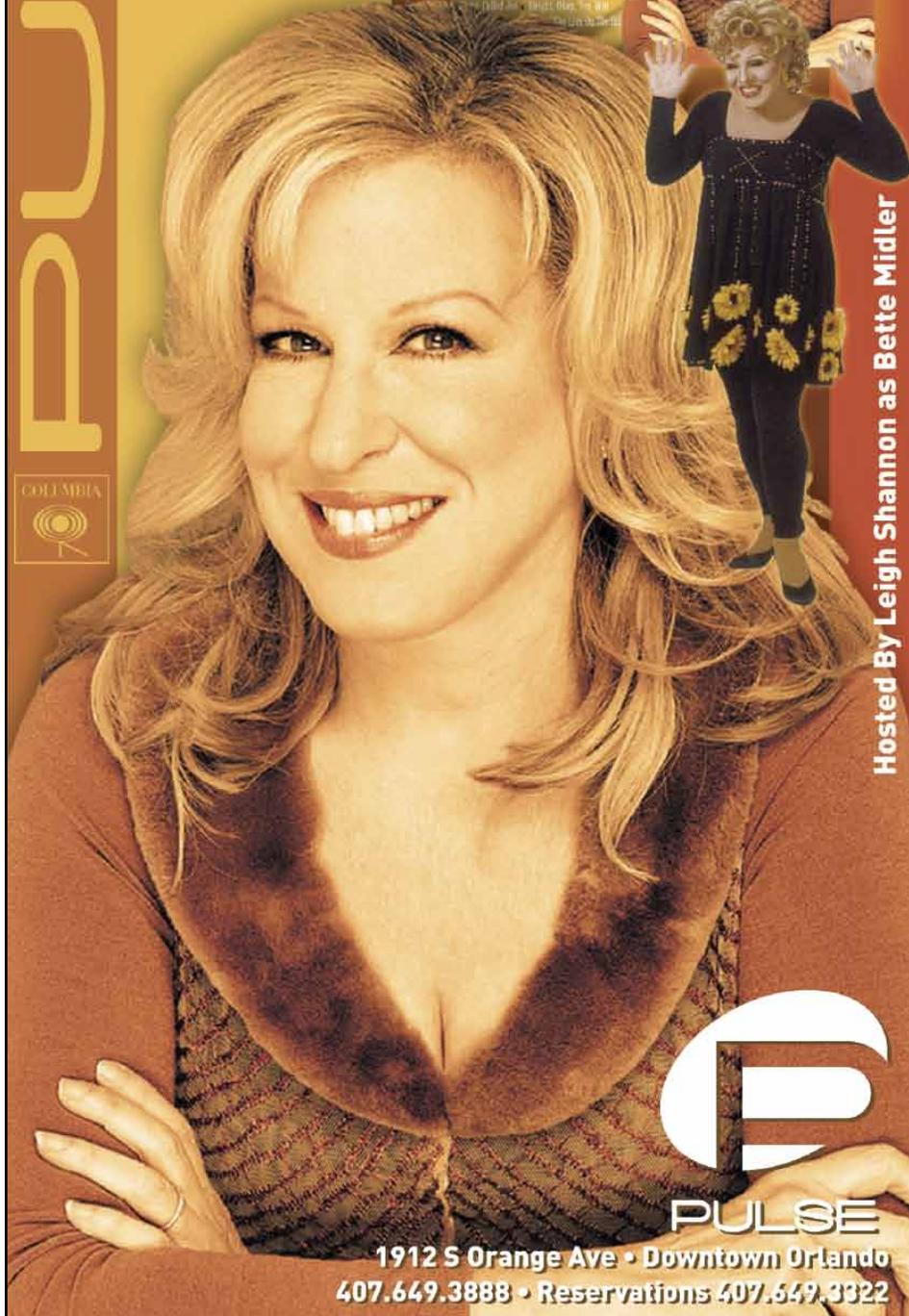
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COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Member of HIV/AIDS Florida Community Planning Group. Meets at Volusia County Health Department. (904) 238-4727.

DAYTONA BEACH REGIONAL BEARS ASSOCIATION

www.gaydaytona.com/DBRBA.htm or e-mail us for more information at gntlbear@comcast.net.

FUN COAST BEARS

Social group that meets the 3rd Suns each month at 3 p.m. at Rumors on Nova Road, Holly Hill. E-mail bears@funcoastbears.org or go to www.funcoastbears.org for more info.

GALBA

GLBT group. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University student group. (904) 226-7222. www.db.erau.edu/campus/student/clubs/galba/index.html.

GAY/BI MARRIED MEN RAP GROUP

Peer counseling and support group. Meets the last Mon. (407) 777-9833.

GREATER DAYTONA BUSINESS GUILD

Guild of gay-friendly businesses. Meets every third Mon.; 7 p.m. (386) 322-8003; www.gaydaytona.com.

OUTREACH, INC.

HIV/AIDS service organization. Offers testing, counseling and support groups. (904) 255-5569; www.outreachinc.org.

OVER THE RIVER

GLBT and supporters social group for those living in Volusia and Seminole counties. Meets second Fri. (407) 400-2879; <http://hometown.aol.com/nolikehypocrites/index.html>.

PFLAG DAYTONA

Parents, Families, Friends of Lesbians & Gays. Meets third Tues.; 7 p.m.; Hope MCC in Daytona, 500 S. Ridgewood

Ave. (US1) . (386) 322-4169; support@pflagdaytona.org; www.pflagdaytona.org.

SPECTRUM

Social group for GLBT and supporters. Meets every other Thurs. (904) 228-8187; rapunzel69@hotmail.com.

ORLANDO

AA WAKE UP CALL-FRIDAY

Twelve-step AA program geared towards diversity and fellowship. Meets Fri.; 7 p.m.; GLBCC. (407) 228-8272; www.glbcc.org.

AA WAKE UP CALL-SATURDAY

12-step AA group. Saturday evenings at 7 p.m.; GLBCC (407) 228-8272; www.glbcc.org.

AA WAKE UP CALL - SUNDAY

Twelve-step program. Meets each Sun.; 10 a.m.; GLBCC. (407) 228-8272; www.glbcc.org.

BEARS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Social group for bears and their admirers. Meets second Sun.; 4 p.m.; Full Moon Saloon. (407) 896-0239; www.bocf.org.

BOOKLOVERS

American Association of University Women social group for those who love to read. Meets first Tues. (407) 677-1186.

CENTAUR

Central Florida AIDS United Resources. Offers counseling, support groups, educational programs and HIV testing. Phone (407) 849-1452. Hotline: (407) 835-4130.

CENTRAL FLORIDA GAY & LESBIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

Networking group for GLBT legal professionals. Meets second Thursday of the month. Contact Larry Smith (407) 838-4052; LSmith@Cabaniss.net

CODA

Twelve-step program dealing with codependency. Meets Tues. at 7 p.m. at the Center. (407) 228-8272.

COLAGE

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere. A youth support group for ages 13-20. (407) 897-2266; BardMerlin@aol.com.

COUNTRY SATURDAY NIGHTS

GLBT country music, dancing, refreshments. For more info: <http://home.earthlink.net/~countrysaturdaynight/>

CRYSTAL CLEAR

Crystal Meth Anonymous provides support, fellowship, and creation of a safe environment in which to stay clean. Saturdays 4-5:30 p.m., GLBCC, 946 N. Mills Ave., Orlando. (407) 228-8272

DIGNITY

Meets every Sunday at 5 p.m. at the Center. Come and celebrate mass and enjoy a social hour afterward.

FLORIDA GREAT OUTDOORS

A social outdoor recreation group for the GLBT community. Check www.floridagreatoutdoors.org for a schedule.

GBT MEN

Meets at the Center every Weds. at 7:30 p.m. We are a support / discussion group for adult gay, bisexual, or transgendered men.

GLBCC-THE CENTER

Hosts various social groups and offers programs assisting the GLBT community. (407) 228-8272; www.glbcc.org.

GLBT DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS OF SEMINOLE COUNTY

Meets at 7 p.m., second Thursday of the month at GLBCC; kenkaz@cfl.rr.com.

GLBT YACHT CLUB

Meet other GLBT boat owners for day trips to Disappearing Island and other destinations. Call John (407) 353-5529.

GNOMES

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GREATER ORLANDO COUPLES

A social group for same-gender couples. Call (407) 246-4726 or visit www.greaterorlandocouples.org.

HARBOR HOUSE

Orange County Center Against Domestic Violence. Crisis Line: (407) 886-2856. Community Outreach: (407) 895-6099. Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 500-1119.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Largest national lobbying group for GLBT rights. Socials fourth Tuesday of the month, location varies. HRC-Orlando@cfl.rr.com.

LAMBDA CAMPING

Gay and lesbian campers. Camping rallies once a month. (407) 831-4926.

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS OF ORLANDO

Inclusive, diverse Republicans. Meets first Tues.; 7 p.m.; Orange County Republican Headquarters, Royal Oak Village Shopping Center, 148 S. Semoran Blvd. (407) 896-7745; www.lcorlando.com.

LONG YANG CLUB ORLANDO

International social group for single men and couples of Asian and various ethnic backgrounds. Visit www.longyangclub.org, email orlando@longyangclub.org or call Billy at (407) 908-1122.

METROPOLITAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

General meeting first Thurs. (407) 420-2182.

NA RAINBOW RECOVERY

Twelve-step narcotics recovery program geared toward gay community. Meets Wed.; 7:30 p.m.; First United Methodist Church, 142 E. Jackson. (407) 228-8272; www.glbcc.org.

OPEX

Pansexual support group. Meets first Saturday of each month at 2 p.m. at the GLBCC. (407) 228-8272; www.glbcc.org.

ORLANDO GAY CHORUS

Community chorus; welcomes everyone. Meets Wed.; John & Rita Lowndes building. (407) 841-SING; www.orlandogaychorus.org.

ORLANDO GAY PARENTS GROUP

Play groups, social events, networking for parents. Meets first Saturday of the month. (407) 420-9955; boyds@earthlink.net.

ORLANDO QUEER ACADEMICS

O-QUAC. Social/resources group for GLBT academics and intellectuals. cschippe@mail.ucf.edu; tpugh@mail.ucf.edu.

ORLANDO SOCIAL CLUB

A gay men's group to network with other professionals meets monthly. Go to <http://hometown.aol.com/flausaguy/myhomepage/club.html>.

ORLANDO YOUTH ALLIANCE

Central Florida's GLBTQ youth group meets each Tuesday night at 6:15 p.m. (321) 279-8041.

PFLAG

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Meets third Wed.; 7:30 p.m.; First United Methodist Church. (407) 236-9177.

POLY-CENTRAL

For the polyamorous, poly-curious, poly-friendly or those interested in the concept of loving more than one person. Meets once a month. www.polycentralfl.com, (321) 984-8463 or polycentral@mail.com.

POSITIVELY SOBER

A twelve-step recovery/support group for people living clean and sober with HIV. Sun. 7 pm at GLBCC. PozSoberOrlando@aol.com.

PRIME TIMERS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Social/support group for gay and bisexual men over 50 and younger men who admire them. Meets last Sat.; 3:30 p.m.; Parliament House Footlight Theatre. (407) 884-9834; PRIMETIMECFL@aol.com.

RAINBOW DEMOCRATIC CLUB

GLBT group of Democrats and Independents. Meets fourth Mon.; 6:30 p.m.; GLBCC. (407) 228-8272; www.glbcc.org.

RAINBOW SPIRIT

Discussion group for gay and bisexual men about lifestyle choice and spiritual development. Meets at Center of Light Church & Spiritual Center. (407) 228-0101.

REFLECTIONS

Social/support group for men and women of any gender or orientation ages 20-30. Meets Wed.; 7:30 p.m.; GLBCC. (407) 228-8272; www.glbcc.org.

S.O.E.L. -- SISTAHOOD OF EBONY LESBIANS

African-American women come together to grow socially and emotionally. Meets first Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Center. <http://lesbianlit.meetup.com/85/>.

TRANS CENTRAL STATION

A transgender, transsexual, transvestite, cross dressers, & gender benders discussion group meets first Tues., 7 p.m., The Center. (407) 228-8272.

TRIDENT INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL FLORIDA

Levi/leather/uniform social group. Meets first Sun.; 1 p.m.; GLBCC. (321) 549-0713; www.tridentcfl.org.

UCF GLBSU

University of Central Florida Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Student Union. Meets Tue.; 8 p.m.; Student Union Building on Main Campus. ucfglbsu@ucf.edu.

THE WOMYN'S EXCHANGE

Social/support group for all womyn of all orientations. Meets Thurs.; 7:30 p.m.; GLBCC. (407) 228-8272; www.glbcc.org.

TRIANGLE TEES

A gay & lesbian golfing group that works with area courses to get special tee times and group rates. www.triangletees.com.

TRIDENT INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL FLORIDA

Levi/leather/uniform social group. Meets first Sunday of the month; 1 p.m.; GLBCC. (321) 549-0713; www.tridentcfl.org.

WILLOW

Social group for Lake County women. Meets 2nd Sunday, 4 pm at Tangerine Improvement Society Bldg, 7101 Wright Ave., Tangerine. Contact Box 1047, Sorrento, FL, 32776 or FloridaWillow1@aol.com.

WOMEN HERE AND THERE

A group of lesbians and gay-friendly women. To learn more about WHAT, visit www.WHATorlando.com

ZEN SITTING GROUP

A place for GLBT Zen Practitioners. Second and fourth Tues. of each month at 7 p.m. at Avalon on Hillcrest. For more info visit www.lonekimono.org/ZenAtTheCenter.

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POLK COUNTY GAY LESBIAN ALLIANCE

Check its Web site, www.pcgla.org, for activities and announcements.

POLK COUNTY GAY AND LESBIAN INFO LINE

For the GLBT community in Polk County, (863) 229-8126.

POLK COUNTY HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUP

Meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at The Mission, 180 E. Central Ave., Winter Haven. Call Gary (863) 401-3204 or Merry at (863) 606-9288.

SARASOTA/BRADENTON AREA

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ALSO OUT YOUTH

GLBTQ group for youth between the ages of 13-21. Drop-In Center. Email: program.coordinator@alsoyouth.org, (941) 951-ALSO (2576). Youth crisis pager (941) 952-ALSO (2576)

GULF COAST MEN'S CHORUS

Meets Mon.; Universalist Unitarian Church, Sarasota. (941) 377-9043; Gulfcoastmenschorus.org.

PFLAG SARASOTA

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Meets third Tue.; 7:30 p.m.; Unitarian Church. (941) 378-3536.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON:
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October 14, 2005 – January 1, 2006

Chosen from the collection of the Audubon Museum, Henderson, Kentucky, the exhibit includes original Audubon letters, rare books, personal items, and sixty of the large hand-colored Double Elephant Folio engravings printed from 1826–1838 for "The Birds of America." The exhibit was organized by artservices 2000.



John James Audubon, (1785-1851)
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Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Meets third Tue.; 7:30 p.m.; Unitarian Church. (941) 378-3536.

PRIMETIMERS SARASOTA

Social group for mature gay and bisexual men and those younger men who admire them. (941) 359-8212; ptimes@tampabay.rr.com; http://home.tampabay.rr.com/ehurley/ehurley/.

READING GROUP

Gay men's reading group; fourth Weds. each month. (941) 359-8212.

SARASOTA PRIDE, INC.

Year-round events culminating in a yearly festival. SarasotaPride.com

SERVICE ACADEMY GAY AND LESBIAN ALUMNI

Local chapter that serves as social organization and advocacy group for GLBT issues relating to military service. midn88@aol.com, AcademyGALA.org

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA BUSINESS GUILD

Meets third Mon.; 6 p.m.; (941) 953-8419; www.SWFBG.com.

SUNSET BEACH WALK

Meet Wednesdays by 6:30 p.m. (Daylight Savings Hours only) at the Siesta Beach Pavilion.

TRINITY CHARITIES, INC.

HIV/AIDS service organization. (941) 355-0847; www.trinitycharities.org.

TAMPA BAY

BOAT AND SCUBA WEST OF TAMPA BAY

A social and recreational club of GLBT outdoor enthusiasts. Meets the first Weds of the month. Visit www.boatandscubawest.com.

BROTHAS SPEAK

Discussion group for same-gender-loving men of color. Meets second Sun., 5 p.m. at the Equality Florida Offices. (813) 236-8809.

CRESCENDO: THE TAMPA BAY WOMEN'S CHORUS

Lesbian, feminist chorus. Meets Sun. 6:15 p.m. MCC Tampa. (813) 679-7585; CrescendoSings@aol.com.

THE CENTER OF TAMPA BAY

Located next to Equality Florida, 3708 Swann Ave. (813) 875-8116; www.tampacenter.org.

EQUALITY FLORIDA-HILLSBOROUGH

Meets third Thurs. 6:30 p.m. 3708 W. Swann Ave. (813) 870-3735.

EQUALITY FLORIDA-PINELLAS

Meets last Thurs. 7 p.m. at Positive Expressions. (727) 527-3197.

EZRA GROUP

S.A.G.E. sponsored support group for GLBT persons who have experienced a recent death or loss. Meets second Sat. (813) 932-4359.

FACT HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUP

Meets 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Tues. from 6:30-8 p.m. at 136 4th St. N., St. Petersburg. (727) 895-4439.

FACT SPANISH-SPEAKING HIV/AIDS GROUP

Meets 1st and 3rd Friday at 136 4th St., N., St. Petersburg. (727) 895-4439.

FACE TO FACE YOUTH GROUP

Youth group for GLBT and their supporters ages 14-21. Meets Sun. 7 p.m. (813) 935-4101; Fce2FceYouth2aol.com.

FAMILY BRIDGE CLUB

Playing card variety. (813) 832-2999.

FLAMINGO AUTO GROUP

Central Florida Region Lambda Car Club International. www.hometown.aol.com/flamingoautogr/.

FLORIDA GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT

An education and advocacy organization for the trans/gender community and our allies. Meets 2nd Sat. at Equality Florida. (813) 870-3735 or www.forge.8m.com.

FLORIDA GREAT OUTDOORS

A social outdoor recreation group for the GLBT community. Check www.floridagreatoutdoors.org for a schedule.

FLORIDA GULF COAST COUPLES

Social group for same gender couples. P. O. Box 7925 Tampa, FL 33679-7925 email: chaircouple@fgcc.com web: www.fgccouples.com

FREEDOM RINGS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Pasco County's only AA meeting for GLBT individuals. Meets Sun. 7 p.m. Spirit of Life MCC. (727) 849-6962.

FRIENDS CLUB FOR GAY MEN

Gay men's social club. A wholesome, healthy atmosphere to make new friends. (813) 960-1664.

FRONT RUNNERS OF TAMPA BAY

Not-for-runners only GLBT club. Meets Sat. 9 a.m. Old Hyde Park Village and Wed. 6:45 p.m. Fred Ball Park. (813) 891-7098.

GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Meets Wed. 7 p.m. at The Center, 3708 W. Swann Ave.

GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Third Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. Tampa Hillsborough Action Inc., 712 West Ross Avenue, Tampa. For more information contact Ken (813) 623-6661.

GAY & BISEXUAL SENIOR MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Meets Fri. 10 a.m. at The Center, 3708 W. Swann Ave. (813) 875-8116.

GAY AND LESBIAN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Meets every evening; 8:15 p.m.; 3644-A Henderson Blvd. (813) 273-8933.

GAY FUN CLUB

Movies, amusement parks, dining out, water parks, beaches, picnics, etc. 18 and up. Contact Steve at (727) 344-0512.

GAY MEN'S OUTDOOR GROUP

Biking, hiking, canoeing, diving. (813) 961-6871

GAY SKATE

Tue. 9 p.m. United Skates of America. (813) 876-5826; members.aol.com/tampagayskate.

GIRL TALK

Tuesdays at The Center, 3708 W. Swann Ave. (813) 645-2213; Girltalkers@aol.com.

GLBT PARENTS OF TAMPA BAY

Social group for GLBT parents (custodial and non) and their children. Meets monthly. Cathy_James@yahoo.com.

GLSEN TAMPA BAY

Organization working to end anti-gay bias in Hillsborough County schools. Meets third Fri. (813) 258-8817; GLSENTB@aol.com.

HIV TAMPA BAY

A Web site devoted to helped those living with HIV and AIDS in the Pinellas and Hillsborough counties area. www.hivtampabya.net.

INTERWEAVE/ST. PETERSBURG

Meets at UU Church of St. Petersburg. (727) 898-3294.

KAPPA XI OMEGA SORORITY

Nationwide community-based sorority for professional adult lesbians headquartered in Tampa. Meets every other Monday 9 p.m. online. membership@kappaxiomega.org or www.kappaxiomega.org.

L.I.G.H.T./FACT

Free dinner on the first Tues. of the month. 140 4th St. N at the St. Petersburg Cathedral Parish Hall. (727) 895-4439.

THE LINE

Gay & Lesbian Crisis/Service of Tampa Bay, Inc. Phone volunteers 7-11 p.m.; computerized system 11-7 p.m. (727) 586-4297.

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS OF TAMPA BAY

Meets 3rd Weds of each month. 7 p.m. at HoHo's Chinese, 9 p.m. at Different Grind. (727) 455-9866, lrtampabay.com

L.O.L.A.

Lesbians On the Lookout Association. Social club for womyn. pianolez@aol.com.

METROPOLITAN CHARITIES

A community services organization offering HIV/AIDS case management, counseling services, referrals and thrift store. In Pinellas and Hillsborough counties. (727) 321-3854. metrocharities.org.

THE METRO CENTER

Pinellas County's GLBT center. Metrocharities.org/ or call (727) 321-3854.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Open meeting for gays and lesbians. Meets Thurs.; 8:15 p.m.; GALAA Club. ecg@tampabay.rr.com.

OUT OF THE CLOSET THRIFT STORES

All proceeds benefit AIDS and breast cancer patients in St. Petersburg and Tampa Bay areas. 631 4th St. North, St. Pete. (866) 250-1959.

PFLAG TAMPA

Meets second Tues.; 7 p.m.; The Center in the Equality Florida Building, 3708 Swann Ave. (813) 239-2070; PFLAGW@aol.com.

OPERATION H.O.P.E. OF PINELLAS, INC.

St. Petersburg AIDS organization dedicated to the needs of the minority community. (727) 822-2437; POCAS@aol.com.

PFLAG PINELLAS

Meets fourth Sat at 10 a.m. at Saffron's Restaurant, 1700 Park St. N. St. Pete. (727) 345-7688 or email Pflag@tampabay.rr.com.

POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

Social group for HIV positive community. (727) 458-1249, Romeo8Juliette@aol.com

POSITIVE EXPRESSIONS

Empowering HIV+ individuals by supporting their self-expression. www.positiveexpressions.org.

PRIDE AL ANON FAMILY GROUP

Meets Wed. and Fri.; 6:30 p.m.; King of Peace Church. (727) 323-5857.

PRIDE ALLIANCE

Meets second and fourth Thurs. during the summer; every Thurs. in fall; 8 p.m.; USF Marchall Center. (813) 974-4297.

PRIME TIMERS OF TAMPA BAY

Social group for mature gay and bisexual men and those younger men who admire them. (813) 231-8817; http://www.primetimersww.org/tampabay/PTTB_c.html.

PWA COALITION OF TAMPA BAY

AIDS service organization. (813) 238-2887; www.pwactampa.homestead.com.

RAINBOW FILM SERIES

GLBT films. 7 p.m., 2nd Sat. of each month except Oct., in the social hall of the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater, FMI (727) 531-7704.

RAINBOW READERS

Discusses a new book each month. Meets second Mon.; 7:30 p.m. (813) 221-1423.

RAINBOW TRAVEL CLUB

Florida's largest gay and lesbian travel organization. (813) 414-9933; (800) 881-3600.

ROTC - RIGHTEOUSLY OUTRAGEOUS TWIRLING CORP

St. Pete's high-energy performance group composed of flags, rifles and batons that performs to classic dance music. Rehearses Sun. 2-5 pm at Suncoast Resort. Frank at (727) 822-6982 or rotcstpete@verizon.net.

SEX AND LOVE ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (SLAA)

(727) 896-SLAA or www.tampabayslaa.com.

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Gay male non-sexual nudist group. Meets monthly. (813) 237-2436.

ST. PETE PRIDE

For updates on upcoming events, visit www.stpetepride.com.

STARBURST OF PINELLAS PARK

Support group for cross-dressing and transgendered persons. Meets at 7 p.m. on the third Sat. of each month. Call Georgia (727) 523-8760.

SUNCOAST SQUARES

Tampa Bay GLBT square-dancing. Classes Tuesday evenings at the Suncoast Resort, Room C-104. Call John and Leo at (727) 343-8466; suncoastsquares@yahoo.com

TAMPA BAY BEARS

Bears social club. Meets second Fr.; 7:30 p.m.; Suncoast Eagle Bar. TampaBayBears.com.

TAMPA BAY BUSINESS GUILD

Meets second Tue. (813) 237-3751; www.tbgb.org.

TAMPA BAY GAY MEN'S CHORUS

Meets Mon.; 7 p.m.; Suncoast Resort. (727) 865-9004.

TAMPA BAY LESBIANS

Social, sporting, cultural activities. http://escape.to/TBL

TAMPA INTERNATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL

Committees include planning, finance, marketing/PR, programming and development. Information on volunteering or events and screenings at (813) 879-4220 or www.tigfff.com.

TROPICAL RAINBOW ALLIANCE FOR THE DEAF

Socials for both hearing & non-hearing gays. (813) 236-3123.

TRUE EXPRESSIONS

Tues. 2 to 6 p.m., Thurs. and Fri. 6 to 9 p.m., Sun. from 4 to 9 p.m. (727) 898-TRUE or visit www.true-expressions.org.

UNA-VOCE: THE FLORIDA MEN'S CHORALE

Meets Thursdays from 7 to 10 p.m. at MCC Tampa, 408 Cayuga Street. Anyone is welcome to join. Una-Voce.com.

WESTCARE TRANSGENDER SELF-AWARENESS

Educational group. Meets Wed. at 7 p.m. at 1735 MLK St. S. in St. Pete. For information call (727) 502-0188.

WEST FLORIDA GROWLERS

Bear club. Meets first Sun.; DTs. (727) 824-7810 info@westfloridagrowlers.com; Westfloridagrowlers.com.

WOMYN'S EXCHANGE TAMPA BAY

A womyn's mix. Sundays, 3p.m. at Gulfport Beach. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WomynsExchangeTampabay.

YES (YOUTH EDUCATION SERVICES)

Provides free HIV testing. In Pinellas, at WestCare Florida, 1735 Martin Luther King Jr. S., #125, St. Pete. (727) 502-0188. In Hillsborough, at THAP, at 712 W. Ross Ave., Tampa. (813) 226-2141.

Updates? Email changes to: Kirk@watermarkonline.com

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 House of Adonis
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25 cent draft on
 the Patio with
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NIGHTS

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WATERCOLORS

Apparel from page 33

Orchestra are presenting variations on holiday pops concerts or presentations of **Handel's Messiah**. *A Salute to Vienna* rings in the New Year in both Clearwater (Ruth Eckerd Hall, Dec. 31), and Sarasota (Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, Jan. 1), while **Orlando's Ballet** and **Chorale** again combine forces for their *Holiday Triple Treat*, presented Dec. 9 and 10 with a rock-and-roll edge at Hard Rock Live.

Hundreds of performers unite from throughout Orlando for *Soulful Noel*, a multi-cultural celebration of season told in dance, drama and song, ranging from classical to contemporary gospel, rhythm and blues to salsa. The show is being presented at the TD Waterhouse Center on Dec. 2 and 3.

Maybe you prefer your White Christmas be a bit more pink. Local gay choruses are presenting their annual holiday concerts of children's favorites, holiday standards and classical masterpieces throughout December. **Una Voce: The Florida Men's Chorale** performs *Our Holiday Journey* at the University of South Florida in Tampa and the King of Peace MCC in St. Pete on Dec. 3 and 4, respectively.

The **Orlando Gay Chorus** sings *A Credit Card Christmas* at Rollins College on Dec. 10 and 11, while the **Gulf Coast Men's Chorus** presents *The Power of Music* on Dec. 11 at the Sarasota Opera House. That show also marks the debut of the GCMC's women's ensemble Harmony.

PLAYS

There are also a variety of Christmas-themed plays being presented across the Sunshine State.

Sister's Christmas Catechism 'The Mystery of the Magi's Gold' plays in Melbourne, the Southern premiere of *Every Christmas Story Ever Told* takes the stage at Orlando's UCF Shakespeare Fest, and *Grandpa Hangs The Holly* performs at Sanford's Helen Stairs Theater.

The end of the year guarantees a plethora of productions of *A Christmas Carol*, including Sarasota's Asolo Theatre Festival (Nov. 25-Dec. 29), the **Orlando Theatre Project** (Dec. 1-18) and Orlando's **Theatre Downtown** (Nov. 25-Dec. 18). St. Pete's American Stage presents its own variation, *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol*, which presents the story from Scrooge's assistant's point of view (Nov. 16-Dec. 8).

But one of the more interesting takes on the beloved holiday tale is **Gypsy Productions' A Queer Carol**. The "homo for the holidays" play resets Dickens' classic among a group of modern-day gay New Yorkers.

Ebenezer "Ben" Scrooge is a wealthy and prominent interior designer famed for decorating the Upper East Side homes of the rich and famous. Assisting Scrooge is overworked Bob Cratchit who must contend with both his employer's abuses



The Gulf Coast Men's Chorus will be joined by the new women's group, Harmony, for a Dec. 11 holiday show at the Sarasota Opera House.

and the care of his partner, Tim, an East Village office temp struggling with HIV. When Scrooge dismisses a Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS fundraiser, it sets a chain of ghostly visitations into motion. *A Queer Carol* plays from Nov. 25 to Dec. 18 at the Suncoast Theater at the Suncoast Resort.

Nutcracker, the wickedly irreverent *Nut/Cracked* (Dec. 2-4). Tap, disco, swing, toe-tap and hip-hop swirl together with offbeat classical ballet, modern and contemporary dance to form a humorous, smart and "nutty" holiday treat.

BROADWAY

Many have said that the best holiday evenings are celebrated in New York. .

Broadway on Ice captures the glistening chill of the holiday season and puts it on stage in Sarasota. *Broadway's Spirit of Christmas* features dancing girls in glittering costumes and travels through Lakeland (The Lakeland Center, Dec. 14), Sarasota (Van Wezel, Dec. 16-17) and Melbourne (King Center, Dec. 18).

But the granddaddy Broadway holiday show of them all is the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* which all but takes over Orlando's **Bob Carr Performing Arts Center** Dec. 10-31. Though the show features the world-famous Rockettes, not all of the performers are two-legged wonders. The cast also includes three sheep, two camels, and one donkey that appear as part of the Living Nativity and the *Parade of Wooden Soldiers* scenes have been part of Radio City's holiday tradition since 1933.

DANCE

For many young girls – and face it, a few boys too – it just wasn't the holidays without catching a ballet performance of *The Nutcracker*. The traditional tale of a nut opener that comes to life is a holiday favorite and is being performed by numerous companies in the area, the **Space Coast Ballet** appears in Melbourne (King Center for the Performing Arts, Dec. 10), the **Moscow Ballet** presents its version in Tampa (Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, Dec. 6-7), the **Miami Ballet** takes to Clearwater (Ruth Eckerd, Dec. 22-24) and the **Orlando Ballet** presents the show in both its home city (Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, Dec. 1-4) and in Tampa (TBPAC, Dec. 21-23). The **Sarasota Ballet** offers its own unique holiday spectacle, *La Boutique Fantasque* or *The Fantastic Toyshop* (Van Wezel, Dec. 22-23).

The **Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center** presents its own variation of *The*

Let's make

OUR Story

Join with me as I craft the story of our lives. Share what it was like to be gay in Orlando back in the day and now.

Where did you go with friends? Did you work for a gay-friendly business or own one? What was the cultural climate like? Were you a performer, bartender, server, DJ, or club goer? Did you form an organization to benefit gay people? Do you have pictures?

If you have an engaging, outrageous or compelling story for consideration in a book, please call **Charlene Bell** at **407 884-7149**.

◆ You may remain anonymous ◆



Check out the
sports page
in every issue of Watermark



WATERCOLORS

CELEBRITY SONG

It's a good time of year to see the stars ... and not just the ones in the sky. Music celebrities often hit the road in the latter months of the year, performing their most well known hits along with several holiday favorites.

Interestingly enough, they tend to hit more intimate venues, such as those in Clearwater, Sarasota and Melbourne, as opposed to larger ones in Orlando and Tampa. And no matter what genre of music you prefer, there's a performer to match how you like your holiday music seasoned.

A down-home country Christmas is guaranteed with a performance by **Kenny Rogers** (Ruth Eckerd, Nov. 29), **Glen Campbell** (King Center, Dec. 2; Ruth Eckerd, Dec. 4), or the team of **Lee Greenwood** and **Crystal Gayle** (Van Wezel, Dec. 15; Ruth Eckerd, Dec. 18). Latin flavors are provided by **Otmar Liebert** (Van Wezel, Dec. 4; King Center, Dec. 5; Ruth Eckerd, Dec. 6), while the green colors of the season are emphasized by the **Irish Rovers** (Van Wezel, Dec. 11; Ruth Eckerd, Dec. 15). Jazz stylings can be found in shows with newly-out **Dave Koz** (Ruth Eckerd, Dec. 5; Van Wezel, Dec. 7). Musical trips back in time are provided by **The Beach Boys** (Van Wezel, Dec. 18) and **Jay Black and The Americans** (King Center, Dec. 1).

One of the more modern-day musical influences is also touting a holiday tour, Kathy Griffin-nemesis **Clay Aiken**. His *Joyful Noise Tour* travels throughout the U.S., including a stop in Melbourne (King Center, Dec. 28), but there are only three cities lucky enough to host the *American Idol* grad for more than one night: New York, Hollywood, Calif., and Clearwater (Ruth Eckerd, Dec. 29-30). Who knew the "Gay-ken" had such an appeal to Scientologists?

UNIQUE EVENTS

EPCOT's Candlelight Processional is a heart-warming annual event that combines singers with a full orchestra, capped off with a celebrity reading of the Christmas story. This year's crop of narrators includes **Rita Moreno** (Nov. 25-27), **Phil Donahue** (Nov. 28-30), **Marlee Matlin** (Dec. 19-21), **John Stamos** (Dec. 25-27), and – our personal fave – **Eartha Kitt** (Dec. 10-12). We can't wait to hear the ex-Catwoman purr her way through scripture lines like "gold, frankincense and

myrrrrhhhh ..."

Busch Gardens Tampa Bay offers singing and dancing snowmen, carolers and toy soldiers in their annual *Christmas Celebration* show which opens later this month. A mini version of the **Macy's Holiday Parade** steps off at **Universal Studios**, while **Dr. Seuss' Grinchmas** celebration takes over **Islands of Adventure**. Both celebrations run from Dec. 9 – Jan. 1.

The **Gaylord Palms Resort** turns the temperature in its convention center down to 9 degrees and ships in nearly 2 million pounds of frozen water to create **Ice!** Nearly 5,000 blocks of ice are hand carved and transformed into a winter wonderland, including ice slides and an ice bridge. Cocktails available in the resort's restaurants, however, are only available straight up. Ice! is open from Nov. 19 to Jan. 2.

As if seeing Christmas decorations in Walgreen's before Halloween wasn't enough, then the **Orlando Museum of Art's Annual Festival of Trees** may be your answer this year. Presented by the Council of 101 to benefit the OMA, the festival displays 50 large trees, full-scale vignettes and tablescapes, all decorated by local designers. The glittering holiday wonderland is on display through Nov. 20. Holiday themed art will be displayed when Florida's **Queer Art Collective** presents *Season of Lights: An Enlightening Art Exhibit* at Gallery Q at the Center in Orlando from Dec. 3 to Jan. 2.

The **Morse Museum** in continues a Winter Park holiday tradition on Dec. 1, when it will light up its turn-of-the-century Tiffany windows in Central Park and sponsor the 150-voice Bach Festival Choir in concert at the 27th Annual Christmas in the Park celebration. ❖



Islands of Adventure brings the Green One back for Dr. Seuss' Grinchmas.

[Holiday Happenings]

Orlando/Melbourne

KING CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS,
MELBOURNE
(321) 242-2219
KingCenter.com

BACH FESTIVAL SOCIETY
(407) 646-2182
BachFestivalFlorida.org

GALLERY Q AT THE CENTER
(407) 228-8272
GLBCC.org

HELEN STAIRS THEATRE
(407) 321-8111
HelenStairsTheatre.com

ORLANDO BALLET
(407) 426-1733
OrlandoBallet.org

ORLANDO BROADWAY SERIES
(407) 423-9999
BroadwayAcrossAmerica.com

ORLANDO CHORALE
(407) 896-8624
TheOrlandoChorale.org

ORLANDO MUSEUM OF ART
(407) 896-4231
OMART.org

ORLANDO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
(407) 896-6700
OrlandoPhil.org

ORLANDO THEATRE PROJECT
(407) 328-2040
OTP.cc

ORLANDO-UCF SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
(407) 447-1700
ShakespeareFest.org

THEATRE DOWNTOWN
(407) 841-0083
TheatreDowntown.net
WINTER PARK PLAYHOUSE
(407) 645-0145
WinterParkPlayhouse.org

Tampa Bay
AMERICAN STAGE
(727) 823-PLAY
AmericanStage.org

FLORIDA ORCHESTRA
(813) 286-2403
FloridaOrchestra.org

SUNCOAST THEATRE
(727) 456-0500
GypsyProductions.org

TAMPA BAY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
(813) 229-STAR
TBPAC.org

RUTH ECKERD HALL
(727) 791-7400
www.rutheckerdhall.com

Sarasota
VAN WEZEL PERFORMING ARTS HALL
(941) 953-3368
www.vanwezel.org

ASOLO THEATRE FESTIVAL
(941) 351-8000
Asolo.org

SARASOTA BALLET
(941) 351-8000
SarasotaBallet.org

VENICE LITTLE THEATRE
(941) 488-1115
VeniceStage.com ❖

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WATERCOLORS

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ART & EXHIBITS

ORLANDO

MINUS COLOR ... OBJECTS OF ART

The Orlando Marriott Downtown Art Gallery presents a multi-dimensional exhibition including photography, painting, mixed media and sculpture, all created primarily in black and white. The collection represents a reflection into each artist's passion for living and experiencing life as it exists around him or her. This body of work offers a glimpse of these experiences and the desire of the artist to share them with the viewer. The pieces are creations of true emotional expression and personal life experiences. Featured artists include Homer Hartage, Douglas J. Nesbitt, Julia West, Marla E, Donna Dowless, Rose Marie Prins, Brenda Heim and Frank Gady. The exhibition runs through Jan. 7. For more information, call (407) 843-6664.

TAMPA

WHO AM I? (EXPLORING IDENTITY)

Here's an exhibition where even maybe Ronda Storms could learn something. As most people know, an individual's identity is based upon many components: nationality, gender, interests, culture, race, values, associations, and specific experiences. Exploring Identity will address the question "How do you see and describe yourself?" as well as explore how artists express ideas about themselves, others, and the world around them through their choice of subject matter and the way in which they represent it. The show runs from through Jan. 9 at the Tampa Museum of Art, located at 600 N. Ashley Drive. For information, call (813) 274-8130 or visit TampaMuseum.com.

AUDITIONS

THE OOPS GUYS' COUCH POTATO THEATER

Preparing for their 2006 antics, the Oops Guys are hosting auditions for two of their most popular, riotously sex-charged comedy hits, *The Naked Guy* and *Do I Make You Horny*. *Naked* seeks a handsome, good-looking, hunky, muscular cute male to play "Josh," an innocent, out-going boy-next-door type. The selected actor must have comic timing and the role requires nudity. Abercrombie/Fitch-types, frat boys and gym dudes are encouraged to audition. *Horny* is an outrageous reality game show spoof and seeks fun, out-going, extroverted, high-energy "real" contestants of any age. Auditions will be held by appointment only from 7 to 11 p.m., on Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 21 and 22, at Mad Cow Theatre, 105 S. Magnolia Ave. Call (407) 827-0691 or visit CouchPotatoTheater.com/-auditions.html.

FILM

TAMPA BAY

FILM NOIR FILM FEST

St. Pete's newest creative venue, the Studio@620, focuses on multi-cultural events that explore history, visual arts, crafts, music, poetry, theater, film, dance, and dialogue. This month, the venue features an international slate of over 20 films culled from the golden age of film noir. Included in the lineup are classics such as *Double Indemnity* and *The Big Sleep* as well as several films from France and Japan. Most films and lectures in the series are \$6 but full schedule can be found at the StudioAt620.com. The Studio @620 is located at 620 First Ave. South in downtown St. Pete.

MUSIC

SARASOTA/ORLANDO

CYNDI LAUPER

It's hard to imagine that the girl who just wanted to have fun emerged on the scene some 25 years ago. Touring behind her ninth album, *The Body Acoustic*, Lauper revisits her past hits and gives them a modern day extreme makeover. The album and tour are all about emotion, raw and deep, making a strong connection to the roots of modern music. Lauper performs Tuesday, Nov. 29, at Sarasota's Van Wezel Performing Arts Center and Wednesday, Nov. 30, at Orlando's House of Blues. Tickets are available at the box offices, by calling (941) 953-3368 in Sarasota or (407) 934-BLUE in Orlando, or by visiting VanWezel.org or HouseOfBlues.com.

THEATER

ORLANDO

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

One of the area's up-and-coming theater troupes, Impact Theatricals, is the latest company to produce this Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice classic. We could go on and on about the show's title character, but we have reason to believe you're quite familiar with his work. JCS – the show, not the religious figure – appears through Sunday, Nov. 20, at Orlando Repertory Theatre in Loch Haven Park. Call (407) 896-7365.

PACK OF LIES

Would you put loyalty to your country before loyalty to your friends? In this day and age of denied rights and don't ask-don't tell-don't bother, gays and lesbians may be quick to answer that question. The story takes place in a peaceful 1960 London suburb where a government investigator thrusts a quiet respectable family into the middle of an espionage inquiry when they learn that their neighbors are Russian spies. Rollins College mounts *Pack of Lies* through Nov. 19 at the Annie Russell Theatre. For more information, call the box office at (407) 646-2145 or visit Rollins.edu/theatre.



Winning a Grammy for Best New Artist in 1984 was only the start of CYNDI LAUPER's amazing career — and she's sure to perform those hits and others when she performs in Sarasota and Orlando.

EQUALITY FLORIDA EXPANDS STAFF FOR GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

Equality Florida is seeking excellent candidates for three new field organizing positions located in Jacksonville, Tampa/St. Pete and Miami.

Additional staff is needed to support and expand the growing network of local volunteers across the state working on Equality Florida's top priorities:

- Ending the ban on gay and lesbian adoption,
- Passing a statewide safe schools bill, and
- Defeating the proposed anti-marriage amendment

In addition, field organizers will work closely with area leaders on local policy campaigns, including efforts to pass human rights ordinances and safe schools and domestic partnership policies.

Job Descriptions are available at www.eqfl.org.

Interested applicants should send a resume and cover letter to David Costa, hr@eqfl.org, or mail to P.O. Box 13184, St. Petersburg, FL 33733



WATERCOLORS

Rent from page 33

Thoms counts herself as one of the legions of fans who've been flocking religiously to catch the rock opera that chronicles a year in the life of a group of bohemians struggling to live, love and pay their rent in New York's gritty East Village. The musical takes a multi-layered look at the AIDS communities and those who are on the verge of greatness or sorrow.

"When I first saw the show," Thoms explained, "I couldn't get enough of it. The story, the relationships, and the music fit into it all so perfectly — I was hooked."

Created by Jonathan Larson, *Rent*, the stage musical, has sucked in audiences ever since it debuted Off-Broadway in early 1996.

Telling a story (based upon the classic Puccini opera *La Boheme*) of gay and straight starving artists, musicians, their

lovers and exes as they face life in New York during the onslaught of AIDS, *Rent* was an immediate hit thanks to its blistering, rock-infused score and its unflinching portrait of downtown urban life in the 1990s.

JOINING THE FAMILY

Director Chris Columbus' long-in-the-works film version boasts six of the original Broadway cast members among its eight leading characters: Taye Diggs, Wilson Jermaine Heredia, Jesse L. Martin, Idina Menzel, Adam Pascal and Anthony Rapp are all back, a rarity in the process of a stage-to-film translation.

Don't think that joining an already close-knit cast who created their roles onstage and have worked together for years wasn't daunting for the two newbies.

"I was freaked out in the beginning," Thoms laughed. "But everyone involved was supportive and wonderful and beautiful. There was no sizing-up period or hazing. Of course, Rosario and I bonded —

being the new cast members — but we could always ask anybody questions, and they were completely open to answering them.

"All of them already had a built in family," explained Dawson from the Toronto set of her upcoming film, *Killshot*. "Tracie and I are just like very excited, added extended family members. We wanted to be part of that family and we've been welcomed and it's nice."

Of course, both Thoms and Dawson bring their own credentials to their *Rent* roles. The Juilliard-trained Thoms has a history of musical theater, indie film and

TV credits (catch her on Logo in the reruns of the short-lived *Wonderfalls*, and in new episodes of *Cold Case*), as well as years spent as an avid *Rent*-head. She'd auditioned for the Broadway show, but never got hired. This time around, Columbus cast Thoms solely on the strength of her audition tape, before ever meeting with her.

"Whatever Chris was looking for, I guess I had that," said Thoms, laughing. "Which makes sense to me because, like Joanne, I am a little anal. And I do feel like Chris made an educated decision, because once we were all together it just fell into place and I felt like I really belonged. This happened even after a week (when I was) thinking, 'I'm going to get fired! They've hired the wrong person. How did I get here?'"

THE BOHEMIAN PARTY

Dawson's personal background would seem to have pre-destined her for *Rent*.

"I grew up with my mom and brother in a squat on New York's Lower East Side," she said. "It was very bohemian. And my mom's circle was this close-knit kind of family made up of people who were all tattooed and pierced—these misfits who came together from all over. Having food and electricity and all of those things weren't necessarily a given. Everyone would show up for these potlucks and parties — people would come and offer what they could, bringing their guitar or

their poetry or painting or food.

And it being the late 1980s/early 1990s, AIDS was definitely prevalent, just as in *Rent*.

"We lost a lot of friends to AIDS," Dawson said. "Everyone had different ways of dealing with it. Some people would hide away; some were out and looking for medications and fighting for their lives; others were like, 'Well, everybody's dying so I'm just going to burn out' — and they'd go out with a party."

And given recent developments regarding gay issues and HIV-infection, both Thoms and Dawson feel that now is the best possible time for the film version.

"People like to think that the AIDS epidemic has gone away," says Thoms, "but it hasn't. People are still contracting the disease like crazy, especially women. This film isn't dated at all." Dawson strongly concurs: "It's important to bring up

all of these issues again, because they're still so prominent. Look at our last election and the discussions about abortion and gay marriage, things you'd look at and think, 'Aren't we getting past these issues?'" Thoms and Dawson both have their own favorite moments from the film.

"I loved the night we shot the New Year's Eve scene," recalled Thoms warmly. "We were literally all out on the street in San Francisco, and it's like we were all just having a party, with fireworks and extras galore. I didn't want to leave. We had a lot of days like that — emotional, but it was a thrill to work every day."

For Thoms, the point is "all about measuring your life in love. It's a story about unconventional family members who know that it's their love for each other that matters. You have to measure your life in love. That's the only thing that makes sense." ▼

"You have to measure your life in love. That's the only thing that makes sense."

8 OTHER GLBT-THEMED films TO WATCH FOR

Rent may be the highest-profile mainstream film to prominently feature GLBT characters so far this season, but several others will hit theatres by Christmas. And, some of them are generating some serious talk about Oscar nominations.

Here's a sampling of what could be the queerest year for mainstream films.

CAPOTE: Character actor Phillip Seymour Hoffman manages to impersonate 1960s-1970s bon vivant Truman Capote without actually looking like him. Still, the film offers a quiet, almost thoughtful reflection on the writer's research for his book, *In Cold Blood*. The fact that Capote is gay is almost incidental. Now in limited release.

THE DYING GAUL: Peter Sarsgaard (the naked *Kinsey* guy) plays a gay screenwriter who vexes studio executive Campbell Scott, who hides this turn of events from his wife, Patricia Clarkson. Written and directed by Craig Lucas, who wrote the seminal AIDS drama, *Longtime Companion*, 16 years ago, the film has earned high praise since its initial limited release Nov. 4.

HELLBENT: Two guys making out in a park are interrupted by a serial killer. Later, the party moves to the scene of the crime in the first-ever gay slasher film. Now in limited, regional release.

KISS KISS BANG BANG: Val Kilmer plays Gay Perry, a gay detective who's investigating a murder involving a petty thief portrayed by Robert Downey Jr. Action-film writer Shane Black evokes a trashy, pulp fiction feel while keeping an eye on characters. Now in limited release.



FELICITY HUFFMAN stars in the comedy-drama, *Transamerica*, which will open in December.

BREAKFAST ON PLUTO: Cillian Murphy (from *Red Eye*) plays an Irish foster child who leaves his small town behind to become a popular drag performer in London. Stars Stephen Rea and directed by Neil Jordan — two men involved in the memorable *The Crying Game* 13 years ago. Opens in limited release Nov. 18.

THE PRODUCERS: One of two big musicals this year to feature many members of their original Broadway casts. Openly gay Nathan Lane stars, with support from Gary Beach and Roger Bart as Roger DeBris and Carmen Ghia as the keeping-it-gay director and "his friend." Opens in limited release Dec. 16.

TRANSAMERICA: *Desperate Housewives* Emmy winner Felicity Huffman stars as a pre-operative male-to-female transsexual who learns that she fathered a son, now a teenage runaway hustling on the streets of New York. Buzz on Huffman's performance is especially strong for this off-beat film. Opens in limited release Dec. 23.

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN: Hollywood buzz puts this cowboys-with-a-secret as the leading contender for a Best Picture Oscar nomination — and plenty of good word for stars Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger. Ang Lee, who helmed the queer comedy *The Wedding Banquet*, directs. Opens in limited release Dec. 30.

▼ Dave Karger



TRACIE THOMS and INDINA MENZEL as *Rent*'s on-and-off again girlfriends Joanne and Maureen.

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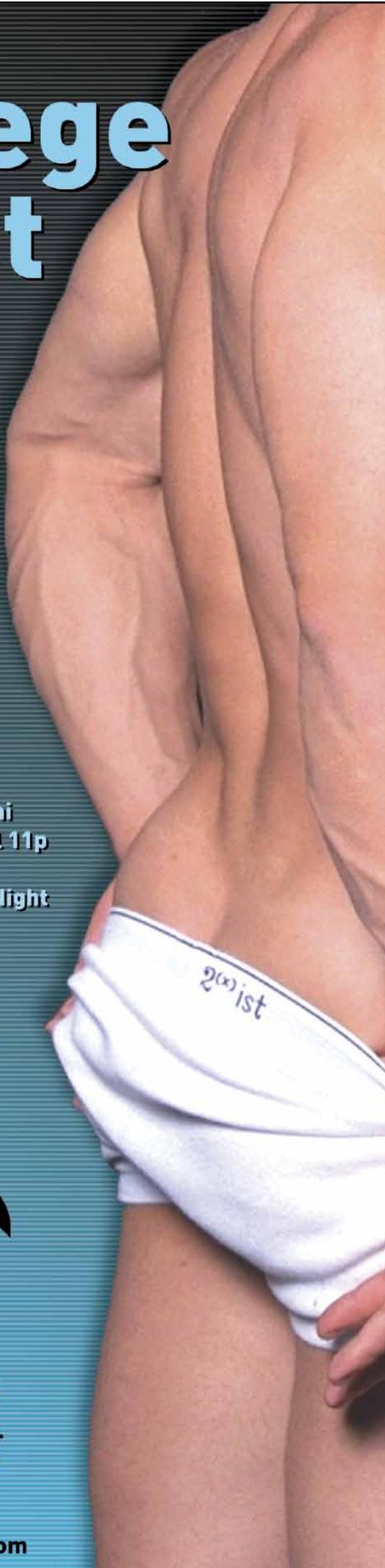
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SPORTS BRIEFS

CITRUS COUNTY COACH ACCUSED OF HAVING SEX WITH STUDENTS

Lecanto High School teacher Amy Gail Lilley is facing serious charges after a female student said she had a sexual relationship with the former coach. The 15-year-old student said she and the teacher were in love and have had sex several times since September. Lilley, who was released from Citrus County Jail after posting \$5,000 bail, denies the allegations. The student claims the encounters happened at Lilley's home in Beverly Hills and on a trip to Orlando. The claim against Lilley came shortly after another student at Wharton High School said she had sex with math teacher and girls basketball coach Jaymee Wallace. Wallace denies the allegations.

BALLPLAYER PRAISED FOR STANDING UP TO COACH

Penn State women's basketball star Jennifer Harris has earned praise from gay rights groups including the National Center for Lesbian Rights for taking a stand against Lady Lions coach Rene Portland. Harris filed a complaint against Portland after the coach told her to behave "more feminine" and booted her from the team. The Lady Lions guard also said that Portland repeatedly inquired about her sexual orientation during her 2003-05 tenure on the team. Harris has since transferred to another school to continue playing basketball.

PFLAG HONORS NFL COMMISSIONER, WIFE

The New York chapter of PFLAG has honored NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue and his wife, Chandler, for their commitment to gay rights. The Tagliabues, who have given a sizeable donation to PFLAG for campaigns to fight homophobia, were presented with the Stay Close Individual Leadership Award. The Tagliabue's son, Drew, is openly gay. During the dinner in their honor, Paul Tagliabue spoke about his love for Drew and Drew's partner, Mark Jones, as well as the positive impact of the Stay Close campaign.

ELTON JOHN NAMED AS GAY GAMES AMBASSADOR

Elton John has joined the ranks of the Gay Games ambassadors. "Thousands of musicians have participated in the cultural festivals of the Gay Games," John said. "I'm proud of them and what they have accomplished at the Games and in their home communities. Along with the athletic participants, they challenge the stereotypes from which oppression grows and consequently bring the world closer together." The games take place in Chicago July 15-22.

WILMA BLOWS AWAY HURRICANE SHOWDOWN

FORT LAUDERDALE - Call it irony, a coincidence or just bad luck, but the 11th Annual Hurricane Showdown has been canceled thanks to, well, a hurricane.

When Hurricane Wilma crossed south Florida in October, residents on the west coast prepared for minimum damage, but as news outlets covered the storm, it was evident that no one could expect the storm to remain so well organized.

Now, for the first time in its history, the popular annual Hurricane Showdown statewide softball tournament has had to tell teams to make other plans during the Thanksgiving weekend.

The Tampa and Orlando leagues had planned to send players and Strong received reservations from teams from as far west as Texas and Los Angeles and from as far north as Boston and even New York. More than 600 rooms had been booked at the tournament's host hotel, the Embassy Suites.

"I couldn't secure a contract for any fields after Wilma," said Ric Strong, tournament director. "We had planned to play on a six-field lighted complex, but the parks department cancelled that contract (Nov. 7).

Strong said the fields themselves are still intact but some safety netting was blown away from the backstops and other fencing has some damage. With only half of Broward County's traffic lights working at the time of the cancellation, government officials have been focusing resources in other areas.

"I've been trying to relocate the

tournament and have looked all the way up to Jupiter and down to Homestead for fields, but no one is offering contracts on the coast," Strong said. "A lot of people are disappointed. We had teams coming from throughout the state and several from other states."

"We're telling teams that they can just cancel their reservations, but if they do come to Lauderdale the hotel will still honor our discounted \$99 rate," Strong said. "Most of the Florida teams I think expected the cancellation. It's the teams from other states who haven't experienced a hurricane who may have difficulty understanding why an October hurricane can cancel a late November tournament."

All teams will receive a full refund of their registration, Strong said.

There is a slight chance that some softball could be played during the Thanksgiving Weekend, Strong said. He is trying to reserve a Broward County complex for a free pick-up softball tournament the Sunday after Thanksgiving. The tournament wouldn't have any official standings and would just be for fun, "but it will give people a chance to play some ball, which is the reason they were coming here anyway."

Strong said the parks department is unable to confirm the field until the Monday before Thanksgiving. Once he knows, he'll notify league commissioners about the field's availability.

For more information on the tournament, visit Hurricane-Showdown.com. ▼ *Steve Blanchard*

CHEERLEADERS BUSTED AFTER ALLEGED SEX IN A RESTROOM

TAMPA - An arrest stemming from an alleged encounter in Channelside District bar's rest room titillated straight male sportscasters — and possibly some lesbian Bucs fans — on Sunday, Nov. 6.

Two Carolina Panthers' TopCats cheerleaders have been fired after the incident at Banana Joe's for embarrassing the team. The Panthers require cheerleaders to sign a code of conduct when they join the TopCats.

Witnesses said that Renee Thomas, 20, of Pittsboro, N.C., and Angela Keathley, 26, of Belmont, N.C., were having sex in a bathroom stall while angry bar patrons waited in line to use the facilities.

Thomas has since apologized for her actions and flatly denied any sexual conduct. At least one other witness told police that the two weren't having sex.

The pair had crashed a Robinson High School Class of 1985 reunion at Jackson's Bistro hours earlier before heading to Banana Joe's. Thomas was



RENEE THOMAS (left) and ANGELA KEATHLEY insist they did not have sex in the bar's restroom.

charged with battery after allegedly slugging another woman in the face when she left the ladies' room.

She landed in even more trouble when she gave police officers a driver's license that belonged to another Panthers cheerleader who was not in Tampa at the time. Keathley was charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

Both women were in Tampa for the game between the Panthers and the Bucs — but not to perform at it. ▼ *Staff and wire reports*

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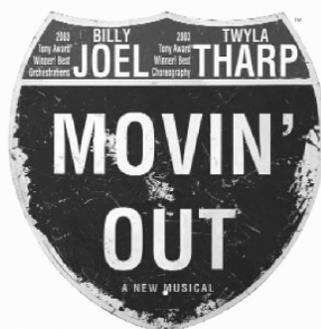


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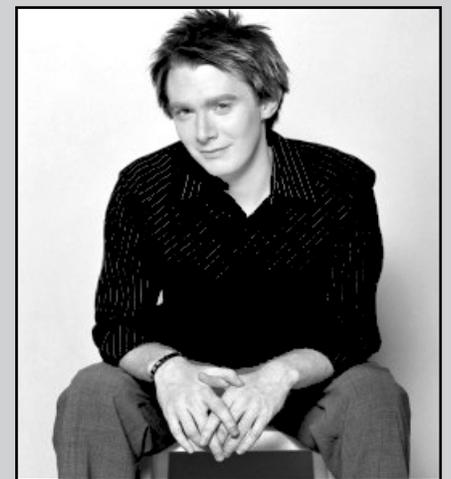
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TRANSITIONS

CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS: So out there **RUPAUL** and not out there at all **ROCK HUDSON** (11/17); *Dynasty* heiress **LINDA EVANS** (11/18); possibly still developing a *Flightplan* for coming out of the closet **JODIE FOSTER** (11/19); kissing bandit **RICHARD DAWSON** (11/20); fashion victim **BJÖRK** (11/21); named in triumvirate scream queen **JAMIE LEE CURTIS** and tennis legend **BILLIE JEAN KING** (11/22); monster man **BORIS KARLOFF** (11/23); headline-making twins **BARBARA AND JENNA BUSH** (11/25); made many a drag queen a *Proud Mary* **TINA TURNER** (11/26); famed guitarist **JIMI HENDRIX** (11/27); lords of late night **JON STEWART** and **PAUL SHAFFER** (11/28); first Hollywood musical director **BUSBY BERKELEY** (11/29); and Barry Manilow clone **CLAY AIKEN** (11/30).



CLAY AIKEN may be turning 27 on Nov. 30, but his act is as old as the hills.

Send news about birthdays, anniversaries, civil unions — and whatever else you celebrate to *Transitions*, Watermark, P.O. Box 533655, Orlando, FL 32853 or editor@watermarkonline.com.

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



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FILTH MADONNA REALLY HOPES GAY MEN STILL LIKE HER

By Billy Masters

"I hope I'm still a gay icon. I like to think we've been mutually inspired by one another." – **MADONNA** expresses herself in an interview with *Attitude* magazine – her first in-depth chat with a gay magazine in eons. Gee, she must have something to promote ...

Madonna is launching a full-scale attack in support of her upcoming CD *Confessions on a Dancefloor*. Aside from hitting the talk-show circuit, Maddy is openly courting her most loyal fan base – the gays. First stop, the Roxy in New York. In October, Madonna "surprised" the predominately gay audience with a personal appearance. But she wasn't there to sing – she was there to DJ.

After spending a half hour spinning some of her favorite songs, she thanked the crowd, spoke about her long history with the club and took to the stage. She danced and "kinda lip-synched" (according to our spies) to her single *Hung Up*. She also brought a guy onstage to dance with her – just like Bruce Springsteen and Courtney Cox.

Often you hear people say that they lost an arm and a leg. I guess

HEATHER MCCARTNEY is ahead – she still has her arm, but she's lost her leg ... for the second time. A couple of weeks ago, Paul McCartney's wife stormed **JENNIFER LOPEZ's** office to give her a DVD showing how animals are killed for their skins (something tells me the lovely Latina had better things to do). Now, I'm not exactly sure how this happened, but in the ensuing scuffle with J-Lo's goons, Heather became separated from her prosthetic leg. When she called Jenny's office to inquire if anyone found her leg, the person on the other end asked, "Can you describe it?" Yeah – it looks like a leg!

2005 will go down as a banner year for our very own **CHEYENNE JACKSON**. The hunky (and openly gay) song-and-dance man just finished headlining *All Shook Up* on Broadway – after helping launch the hit off-Broadway musical *Altar Boyz*. Now Jackson has

been cast in Universal Pictures film about the World Trade Center tragedy. *Flight 93* just started shooting in London and should be released sometime next year (if this perpetuates that myth about the gay guy taking down the terrorist, I'm gonna hurl).

Our first e-mail comes from Roger in Coral Gables who writes: "I loved your Emmy report – particularly the stuff about **PAULA ABDUL**. I'm glad she's happy, and the photos of the guy she was with were so hot. What do you know about this guy? He looks like he should

be doing porn – not Paula!"

My readers certainly have an eye for talent! **DANTE SPENCER** is definitely hot – which isn't surprising for someone who's modeled for *International Male* and *Undergear*.

Spencer is also a fervent Scientologist and is allegedly high up in the hierarchy. In 2000, he was the second runner-up in the Mr. World pageant. He's also tried his hand at acting. Last year, he appeared in LA in a play called *Blade to the Heat*, playing a boxer who finds himself attracted to another man!

Although Dante is a proud

heterosexual, he had no problem posing for the cover of LA's top gay publication, *IN Los Angeles*. Of course, since this column is in *IN*, I begged the publisher for copies of those shirtless photos from a year ago and he happily complied. Look for them on *Filth2Go.com*.

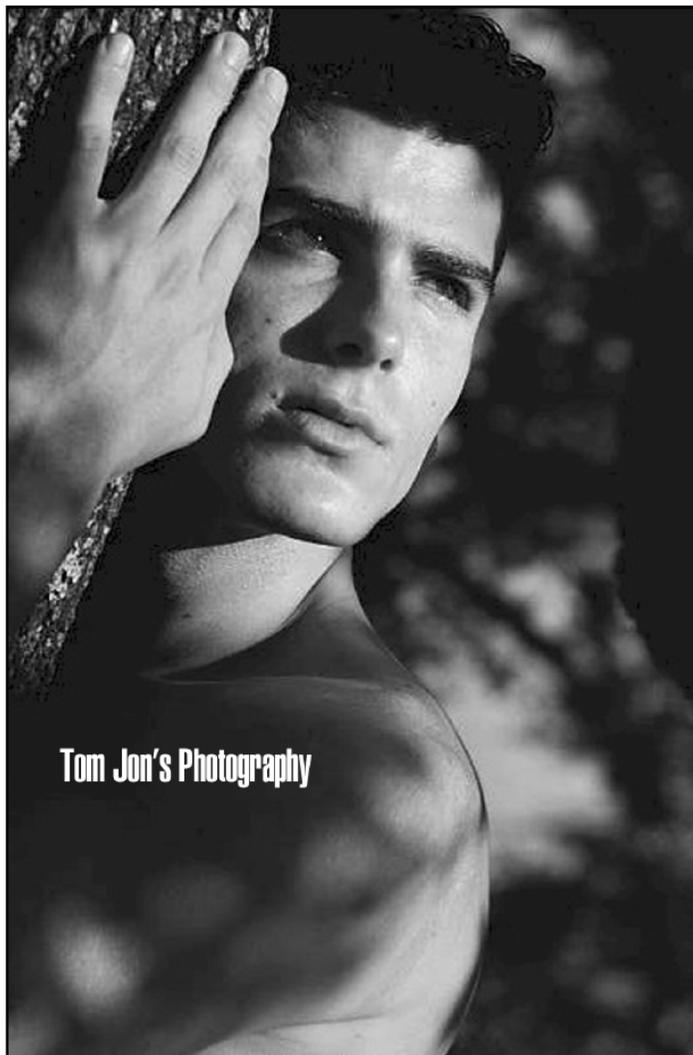
Lisa in Baltimore asks: "What do you know about **DANIEL CRAIG**, the hottie who will be the next James Bond? Is he gay? Married? And do you have any nude photos?"

I think Craig will be good as Bond. He's a decent actor, attractive, and not so well known that he can't disappear into the role (he's bigger in England, but who isn't?). He has a daughter with his ex-wife and currently lives with German actress **HEIKE MAKATSCH**. Daniel has a hunky body and a good-sized uncut penis, which we will proudly display on *Filth2Go.com*. Much has been made of him being the first blond to play Bond, but seriously, does anyone know what color **SEAN CONNERY's** hair really was ... I mean, back when he had hair?

When I can tackle such diverse topics as *American Idol*, Daniel Craig's penis and Heather McCartney's leg, it's definitely time to end yet another column.

Just e-mail me at Billy@filth2go.com and I promise to get back to you before I figure out if I can send Heather her leg back via FedEx! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible. ▼

When Heather McCartney called J-Lo's office to inquire if anyone found her leg, the person on the other end asked, "Can you describe it?"



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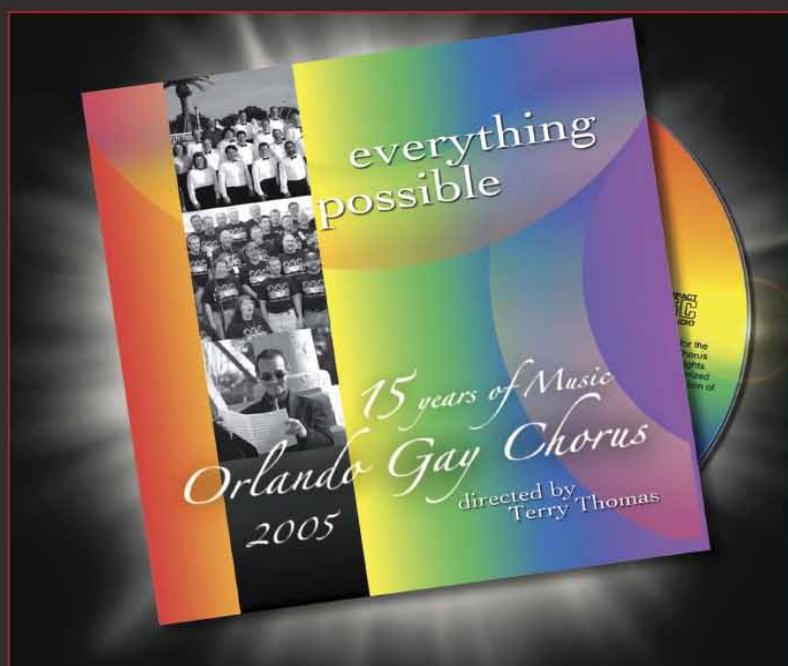


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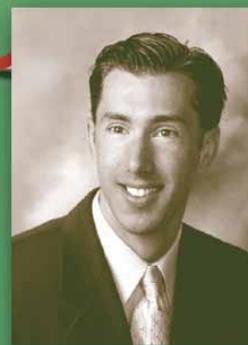
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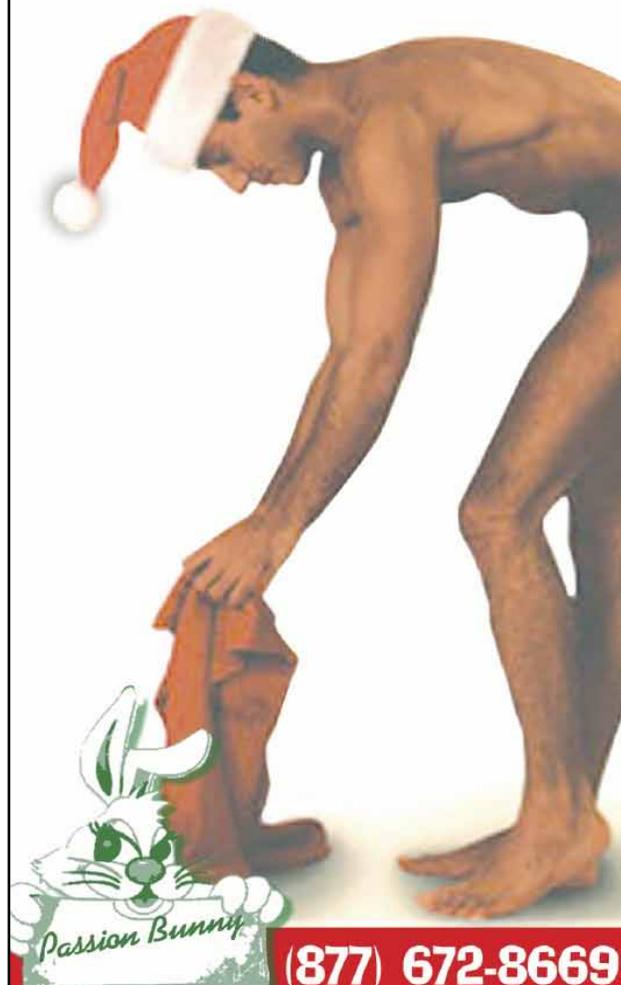


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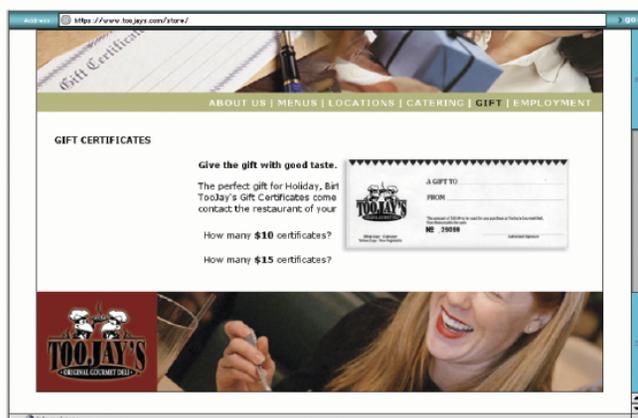
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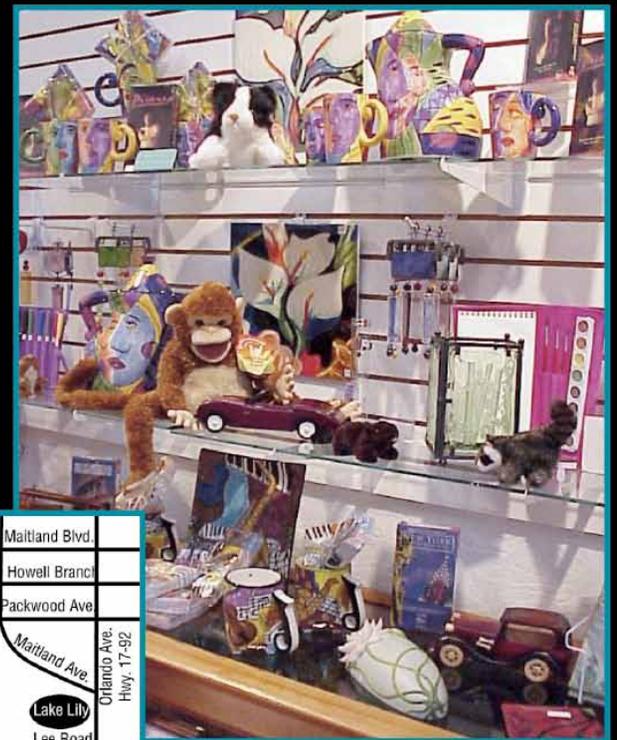
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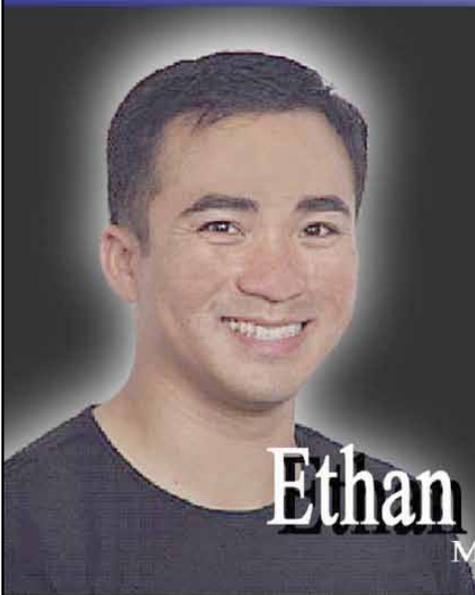


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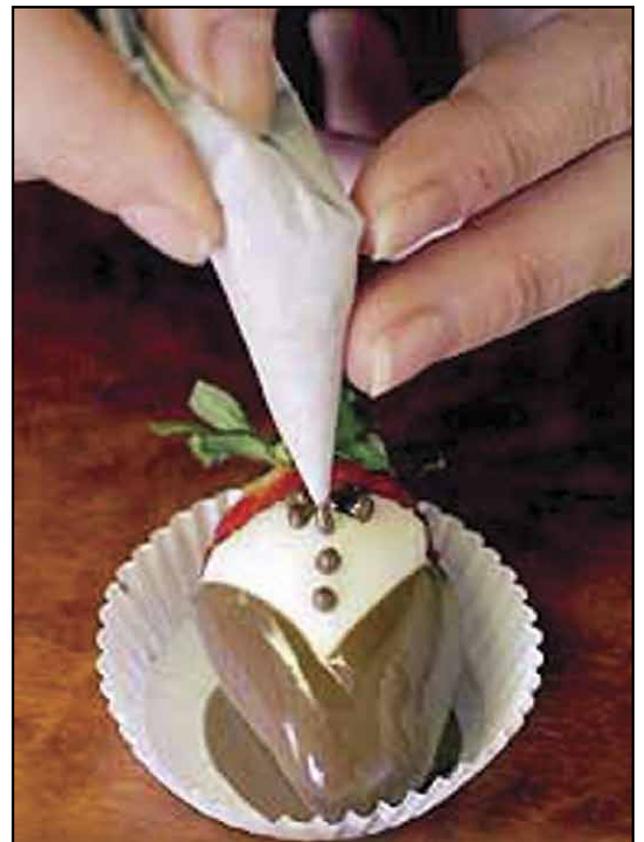
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