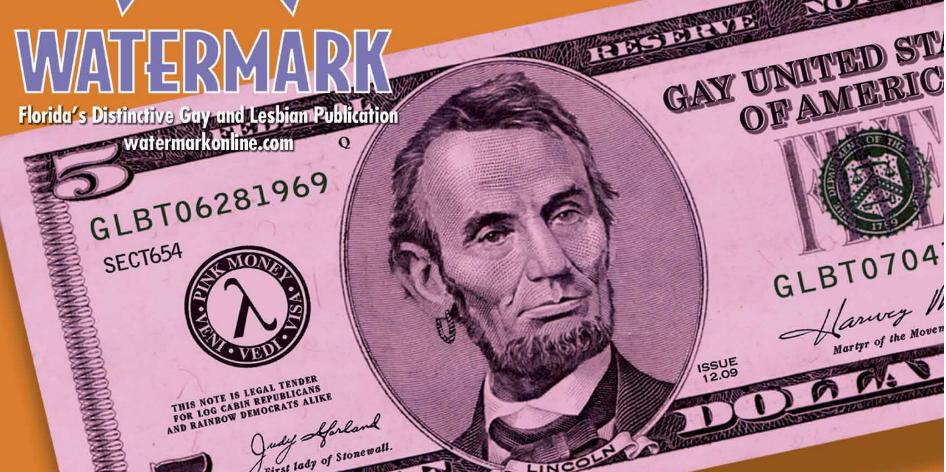
ISSUE 12.09 MAY 5 - 18, 2005



ALSO INSIDE:

- Sarasota Pridefest 2005
- HRC in Tampa Bay and Orlando
- Nancy Wilson's New Post
- Baker Sells Gay Days Events



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ABOUT THE COVER

The possibly gay Abraham Lincoln graces some "pink" money to show the power of queer finances. Design by Lisa Buck and Kirk Hartlage



named as the moderator of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.



ORLANDO OFFICE

P. O. Box 533655 • Orlando, FL 32853-3655 TEL 407.481.2243 • FAX 407.481.2246

TAMPA BAY OFFICE

TEL 813.655.9890 • FAX 813.849.2986 www.watermarkonline.com

PUBLISHER
Tom DyerExt. 40
EDITOR
Dave WiethopExt.13
STAFF WRITER
Kirk HartlageExt. 20
ART DIRECTOR
Adele SiyufyExt. 15
GRAPHIC ARTIST
Lisa BuckExt. 12
BUSINESS MANAGER
Rick ClaggettExt. 11
ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER
Don Williams
ADVERTISING SALES
Kevin Thornton (Orlando)
(Tampa Bay/Gulf Coast)(813) 655-9890, Ext. 25
SALES AND DISTRIBUTION SPECIALIST
Trina Gregory
SARASOTA LIAISON
Misty Smeltzer(941) 284-8006
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NATIONAL ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Keith Baber, Steven Blanchard, Jim Crescitelli, Dr. Edwin DeJesus, Georgia Jenkins, Ken Kundis, Billy Masters, Bryan L. Middour, Karen S. Murray-Parker, Margaret Nolan, Bob Roehr, Greg Triggs, Rick Walen, Jayelle Wiggins, Diane Wilde

PHOTOGRAPHERS & ILLUSTRATORS

Alison Bechdel, Rex Maniscalco. Travis Moore, Tom Eckert, Brian Nutt

PROOFREADING

Larry Herrman, Drew Westveer

DISTRIBUTION

Daniel Almaguer, John Granstrand, Geoff Maul, Jonathan Sexauer, John Walldorf

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Editor's Desk

BY DAVE WIETHOP

So there we were, about a halfdozen of us from almost as many gay and gay-friendly groups, standing in the parking lot of a Denny's Diner and looking for a meeting that would never happen.

We had been promised a bombastic discussion about the "homosexual agenda" and its impact on public health, the cost of health insurance and our local and global economy. The flyer from the Federated Republican Women of Central Florida made it sound as if swarms of locusts or Martians were headed to Florida, not a sweet old lesbian couple moving in from Pennsylvania.

Few things aggravate a selfrespecting gay, lesbian or PFLAG mother like the term "homosexual agenda," and that was enough to draw representatives of both the Rainbow Democrats and the Log Cabin Republicans, PFLAG and groups like the anarchist-oriented Orlando Action Network.

Frankly, I like the term because it makes us sound much more organized than we really are.

We milled about the parking lot after hearing that the Republican women cancelled (or moved, as some of us grumbled) the meeting. Jim Bomford, the vice chairman of the Seminole County Republican Executive Committee, had been scheduled to speak to this group — and he received considerable attention during the week from the gay-friendly Philips Phile on Orlando's Real Radio 104.1.

Let's just say that Bomford doesn't care for the GLBT community whatsoever. But we simply wanted to hear what he had to say in person and that's why this group was at a Denny's on a Thursday evening. I've always believed it's important to understand what others believe, particularly those with dramatically different view-

While I had hoped to report on the meeting in this issue, I do want to clarify a few points that continue to be discussed by the Radical Right:

- 1. We really *don't* have an "agenda" insomuch as straight people have an "agenda." We simply want the same rights as anyone else. For the record, I received no discounts on my federal tax returns because I don't have the right to legally recognize my spouse. (I should receive a state sales tax exemption since I'm denied the right to adopt children in Florida.)
 - 2. Gay people aren't the only ones

driving up the costs of health care. Yes, HIV and AIDS have taken its toll on our community — and the straight community here and overseas. Yet heart disease and cancer are also very costly to treat and more people suffer from those ailments than AIDS. If you want to cut the costs of health care, then consider the explosive costs of malpractice

- 3. Straight people abuse kids too. Some children are, in fact, harmed by same-sex abusers and some studies report that about a third of all cases involve men abusing boys. Yet, the Radical Right ignores the other twothirds of sexual abuse involving mixedsex situations. The tragic deaths of Jessica Lunsford and Sarah Lunde in Tampa Bay were caused by male and presumably heterosexual offenders, not lesbians.
- 4. We don't recruit. We don't recruit because we don't have to. Heterosexuals are producing homosexual babies every day. Eventually, between 4% to 10% of them will mature into young adults who will acknowledge their sexuality on their own. If the Radical Right wants to halt the increasing GLBT population, then wage a better birth control campaign.
- 5. Gay people don't "flaunt a lifestyle." We don't have a "lifestyle" because the gay and lesbian population is so incredibly diverse. In fact, the only two things that binds the many segments of the community is that we are not heterosexual — and that some people really hate us for it.

I take that back. We have something else in common: Many of us are damned tired of hearing the same, misguided rhetoric from the Radical Right. We also have the money, the contacts, the history and the drive to make change for ourselves and for one

As you page through this hefty edition of *Watermark*, pay attention to the stories about the focus of the powerful Human Rights Campaign on Sarasota, Tampa Bay and Orlando, the new moderator of the largest GLBTfriendly church, the breadth of gay buying power and the 18th anniversary of Sarasota Pridefest. We've been presented with some remarkable opportunities and it's up to each of us to take advantage of them.

I can guarantee that you'll find this issue to be insightful, informative and entertaining.

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PREVIEW

Water Picks

EVENTS YOU SHOULDN'T MISS

SARASOTA

SAT., MAY 14

The area's first pride event of the season, SARASOTA PRIDEFEST steps **INTO THE FUTURE** at the Robarts Arena on the Sarasota Fairgrounds from noon to 6 p.m. Visit a myriad of booths sponsored by local businesses and organizations — as well as performers Vernessa Mitchell and Kim English. For more information on the weekend's events, visit Sarasotapride.com.

SAT., MAY 7

Broadway, pop, inspirational and Mother's Day selections will be featured in the Gulf Coast Men's Chorus spring concert and cabaret. NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST SIDE **STORY** takes place at the Players Theatre, 838 N. Tamiami Trail, at 8 p.m. Admission is \$20 and tickets may be purchased online at Gulfcoastmens chorus.org. For more info, contact Phillip Alexander at (941) 957-0404.

TAMPA BAY

FRI., MAY 13

After four years of fun and friend-ship, the **TAMPA BAY BEARS** are celebrating their anniversary May 13. The celebration is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. at the Suncoast Eagle. All are invited for an evening of drink specials, a 50/50 raffle and other giveaways at the Suncoast Resort.

SAT., MAY 14

If you love auctions, MCC TAMPA is the place to be! Voice, silent, raffle and dinner auctions take place at the AUCTION IN PARADISE at 7 p.m. Admission is free and proceeds will benefit the mission and ministries of the church located at 408 E. Cayuga St. A fund-raiser dinner kicks off the evening at 5:30 p.m. For more information, call (813) 239-1951.

THROUGH MAY 15

The increasingly reliable **GYPSY** PRODUCTIONS presents Harvey
Fierstein's seminal drag romance,
TORCH SONG TRILOGY, through Sunday, May 15. The Dave Thomasdirected production at the Suncoast Theatre stars Larry Buzzeo, Joseph Alan Johnson, Chuck McTague. Call (727) 456-0500 to buy tickets.

ORLANDO

SAT., MAY 7

Celebrate the art of H.A. and Margret Rey with the opening of **CURI-OUS GEORGE AND FRIENDS** at the Orlando Museum of Art. The exhibition runs through August 28. Art and stories, from early drawings and sketches to fullcolor illustrations and dummy pages from the books, will be on display. Among the highlights are full-color drawings from the seven original Curious George titles. The museum is located at 2416 N. Mills Ave. For information, visit OMArt.org

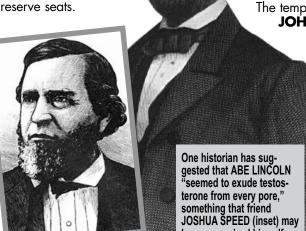
THROUGH MAY 8

Jean Valjean snatches a loaf of bread and he's tormented for his crime for the rest of his life. (Think about that the next time you're tempted to steal cable.) But he lives to tell about it through LES MISERABLES, which returns to the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center. Tickets are available at the box office or by calling (407) 839-3900.

THROUGH JUNE 18

Still haven't seen Michael Wanzie's hilarious — and, get this, poignant -new show, **THE LADIES OF**

EOLA HÉIGHTS? You're not alone because shows continue to sell out at the Parliament House's Footlight Theatre. The show has been extended again, but tickets are still at a premium. Visit WANZIEandDOUG.com or call (407) 540-0317 to reserve seats.



have recognized himself.

Water Cooler

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

GAY SEX AND THE CITY - ON TOUR!

Poor Pittsburgh. As if being attacked by flying insects in last month's TV-movie Locusts wasn't bad enough, now the boys of Liberty Avenue are about to pack their bags for the final season of Queer As Folk. (There's room here for Biblical jokes, but we shan't. It would only make us all look bad.) In salute of Showtime's version

of Gay Sex And The City, the MIDÓRI PRESENTS QUEER AS **FOLK ANCIENT BABYLON**

TOUR hits several U.S. and Canadian cities, bringing in topname circuit DJs, the artistic production team of RKM and – sometimes stars from the show. Sadly, Orlando doesn't rate enough to bring in any of the celebs, but we do get the mixing talents of **ROLAND BELMARES**.

An ode to the real Babylon, the tour takes on a Mesopotamian theme at The Club at Firestone 10 p.m. Saturday, May 14. Tickets are \$20 at the door. For more information visit ancientbabylontour.com.

FREEDOM AND BEAUTY

Hey, everybody! One of our favorite divas, **MISS STEPHANIE** SHIPPAE, has signed on as a hostess at the Freedom Resort and Spa just west of Orlando. Tell her how much you love her at — what else? — Heyeverybody1 @aol.com.

GOODBYE, YELLOW BRICK ROAD; HELLO, BRIDEZILLA

British cater-waiters beware: The temperamental **SIR ELTON JOHN** says he plans to marry his longtime love, **DAVID FURNISH**, sometime

in December — quite possibly at Windsor, the site of the

PRINCE CHARLES/ CAMILLA **BOWLES-**PARKER union.

> We're so sure. The pair may be among the first British homosexuals to take advantage of

new laws recognizing gay civil partnerships, which come into effect in Britain on Dec. 5. The law is only applicable to gays and lesbians, and grants the couples the same tax, pension and inheritance status as married couples.

SHOWS WE FORGOT WERE STILL ON TV

NBC has renewed WILL & **GRACE** for an eighth season, giving all four of the sitcom's Emmywinning stars sizeable salary hikes. That's the good news, and here is the bad: The 2005-06 season may well be the comedy's last.

The show took a sizeable dip in the ratings over the past year being sandwiched between the unwatchable JOEY and the increasingly grating **THE APPRENTICE** on Thursdays hasn't helped.

Interestingly, the show still ranks as one of the favorites among affluent viewers. Go figure.

ABE, DO THESE BREECHES MAKE ME LOOK FAT?

Even more historians have begun to suggest that ABE LIN-COLN'S axe wasn't the only swinging thing that earned other men's attention. At a recent conference on Lincoln scholarship, historian Jean Baker called the Great Emancipator

"a terrifically sexual guy."

Responding to C.A. Tripp's book, The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln, Baker and Michael Chesson reiterated what has long been speculated about the 16th president's relationship with friend Joshua Speed. He often shared a bed with Speed, as well as soldier David Derickson in an effort to save money and stay warm.

"He seems to exude testosterone from every pore," Baker told the group in Springfield, Ill., Lincoln's old stomping grounds. "(Lincoln) loved men, and they loved him, at whatever level," Baker said.

Some of the other historians called the research "very, very shabby," but Chesson insisted that he "could build a Lincoln log cabin of homophobic denial."

Still, if these theories are true, Lincoln may become known as the only gay man to hate theatre. **▼**

HEADLINE NEWS



HRC executive director JOE SOLMONESE wants to reintroduce the organization to America; Orlando and Tampa Bay are among his first stops. Photo courtesy

TAMPA BAY, ORLANDO READY FOR HRC CLOSEUP

The biggest GLBT political organization sends in its new executive director to strengthen its roots By Tom Dyer

TAMPA – Terry Knight and Rick Woods are readying their beautiful Hyde Park home for a visit of some import next week. Over in Orlando, John Ruffier is doing the same at his impressive College Park residence. The occasion? Newly appointed Human Rights Campaign president Joe Solmonese

is coming to inspect the troops — and to sell his vision for a newly energized HRC.

With 80 employees working out of impressive headquarters in the heart of Washington, D.C., the HRC is the nation's largest, and some say most influential, GLBT political organization. Most of the

\$40 million annual budget is generated through 34 different "Steering Committees" based in cities throughout the country, including Miami/Fort Lauderdale and Sarasota. But until just recently, Tampa Bay and Orlando – the nation's 13th and 20th largest media markets - were absent from HRC's radar.

That has changed in the last year, fueled by friendly rivalry between the metro areas. Both communities have signed up more than 60 new Federal Club Members (\$1,200-per-year minimum) and hundreds of General Members (\$35-peryear minimum). Tampa Bay has joined an expanded and resurgent West Coast Steering Committee, now with more than 100 Federal Club supporters from Naples north to Sarasota and the Bay Area.

Orlando has been labeled a "Pre-Emerging Community," with a small budget and official support from national headquarters. If progress continues, Central Florida will compete with the West Coast as a full Steering Committee by

INDIGNANT OVER THE 2004 ELECTIONS

"HRC headquarters puts you to the test for some good reasons," said Jennifer Foster, community co-chair for Orlando along with Ruffier. "It's a busy organization with ambitious goals and limited staffing and money. They want to make sure you're not a one-hit wonder, that you won't die off before they come in and invest their time and resources."

Why the sudden local interest in HRC? Foremost, growing numbers of gays and lesbians are indignant about recent election results and are looking for ways to effect change, either by volunteering, by writing checks, or both.

"I'm not really an activist," Foster said. "But there are a lot of people like me out there – people who shy away from structured political activities - who have a profound understanding that if we're unwilling to do something the cause will be

Foster moved to Central Florida from Detroit, where the local HRC Steering Committee played an important role in uniting the GLBT community both politically and socially.

"The annual HRC Dinner in Detroit was an event you didn't want to miss," Foster said. "They were the people you wanted to hang out with, (people) supporting a cause that is clearly important.

She and other recent transplants from

Continued on page 23

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GAY DAYS

CHISHOLM BUYS BAKER'S GAY DAYS EVENTS

ORLANDO - With just a month before the start of Gay Days Weekend, Winter Parkbased party promoter Mark Baker has sold his company – including all of his



Promoter JOHNNY CHISHOLM now owns the Reunion events, Beach Ball, One Mighty Party and Colosseum.

Gay Days Weekend events - to promoter Johnny Chisholm. The sale is the latest in a string of twists to the power play for attendees and dollars during the annual pilgrimage of gays to Orlando each first weekend of June.

With this purchase, Chisholm decided to cancel the Stars party scheduled for Saturday, June 4 at Universal Studios and focus his energies on his original event, the One Mighty Party at the Disney/MGM Studios scheduled for that same evening.

As part of the purchase of Baker's company, Chisholm informed the 1,000 Stars ticket buyers that he will honor their

tickets if they choose to attend the MGM event. Additionally, on the day Chisholm purchased Baker's holdings, the Pensacola-based promoter refunded \$10 to each of the Stars ticketholders – the difference between the two events' prices.

This marks Chisholm's second major purchase of Gay Days Weekend-related events this year. This March, he bought the rights to Brian Bottorff's Reunion Events Inc., one of the largest group hotel bookings of the weekend, based at the Wyndham Palace Resort and Spa. Reunion also hosts several pool parties primarily open to hotel guests but with limited ticket sales available to non-hotel guests. Chisholm also owns major gay clubs in New Orleans and Pensacola.

Chisholm originated One Mighty Party in 1997 with California-based promoter Jeffrey Sanker. Last year, Sanker teamed with Baker to organize the event when Chisholm decided to focus on his Memorial Day Weekend events in Pensacola.

But this year, Chisholm opted to produce One Mighty Party on Saturday, June 4, once Baker decided to move his Saturday night party to Universal Studios. When Baker announced his decision, Disney officials informed Chisholm that the Saturday night slot was open.

"We didn't jump on it – hosting the Saturday night MGM event – right away," Chisholm said. "We almost didn't jump on it at all. We didn't want to do a competing event, but we had people calling us to do the party. But that was my baby."

Chisholm decided that buying Reunion, with access to guests staying at the Wyndham, along with bringing back the MGM event was a good way to return to the Orlando market. Bottorff has said the hotel is the largest group hotel block of gays in one place in

Chisholm

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the world.

"We missed out last year, but we've been looking to come back and expand more into the Orlando market," Chisholm said.
"Orlando has some excellent venues – the weekend really provides us with some fabulous venues for events."

Chisholm is now labeling the first weekend in June as "One Mighty Weekend" and will organize Beach Ball (sponsored by

Watermark), the Colosseum party and the three Magic Journeys after-hours parties in addition to the Reunion events and One Mighty Party.

While tickets for Beach Ball, Colosseum and other Baker events had been sold online through GayDay.com and the now-defunct

MarkBakerPresents.com, tickets for the events are now handled through both GayDay.com and GayDayS.com, the Orlando-based organization.

Baker said the sale "wasn't even on the radar" a month ago. Chisholm agreed, adding that a third party approached him just 30 days ago to say that Baker would sell his events if offered the opportunity. Baker has said the sale came at the right time and will allow him to focus on moving to Atlanta to be with his boyfriend.

In order to see a smooth transition, Baker and many of his staff will stay on board to run the parties. As he puts it, "Only the name at the top will change." Chisholm said the deal was only solidified once he was assured Baker and his key people would remain in place for this year's schedule.

"We were offered a very attractive deal," said Baker, who would not disclose what he was paid. "Personally, you can only do something so many times. From a creative standpoint, I feel I've done all I can do."

Other promoters were surprised by the quick sale.

"It's not very often that people in our business get offers to sell," said Alison Burgos, organizer of Girlz in Wonderland, one of the major groups providing women's events and parties during Gay Days Weekend.

"As much as it saddens me to see Mark step aside – he's been a mentor and a friend – I am excited for someone like Johnny Chisholm to come in and be able to encompass what we do on the girls side. I'm happy for Mark personally and I think Johnny will do a good job preserving what Mark has built," Burgos said.

This year's Gay Days Weekend has

seen a marked division of factions, with one side promoting visiting Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom en masse on Saturday of Gay Days Weekend - as tradition dictates. But another group has promoted celebrating the 15th anniversary of the day at Universal Studios' Islands of Adventure. That group has formed an alliance of sorts, calling themselves the Gay Day Partners, and consists of several local bar and club owners and party promoters,

including Burgos. Bottorff and Baker, who have sold their events, were among the early – and most prominent – supporters.

But Chisholm has said he's not choosing sides.

"We do not have alliances. We don't look at it in those ways," said Chisholm. "We're going with tradition."

He pointed out the fact that in the celebration's early years, the day was commonly referred to as "Gay Disney." Since purchasing Bottorff's and Baker's productions, and eliminating the Stars party, the majority of Chisholm's parties are now on Disney property, which made it easier to stick with the traditional attending of the Magic Kingdom.

"This is a 15-year tradition," Chisholm said. "Things get a little messy when you start messing with tradition. (The Magic Kingdom) is where I'd want to go if I wasn't working all weekend."

Chisholm said he is unaware if
Reunion guests at the Wyndham will go
along with his line of thinking, particularly if they signed on board knowing that
Bottorff was a member of the group supporting the Saturday switch to Islands of
Adventure.

"Hopefully, this hasn't caused a problem," Chisholm said. "If it has, it's too early to tell. We hope that people will respect a lot of what we've done."

Overall, Chisholm believes that he'll see more unification among the groups that compete their shares of the estimated \$150 million that Gay Days Weekend brings into the economy each year.

• Kirk Hartlage



ORLANDO

JEANNE WHITE-GINDER TO SPEAK AT AIDS MEMORIAL

ORLANDO - Joy MCC will host the Orlando Candlelight AIDS Memorial at 7 p.m., Sunday, May 15. The evening of



JEANNE WHITE-GINDER will speak about her experiences on the early front-lines of the AIDS battle during a memorial at Joy MCC on May 15.

remembrances and activism will feature Jeanne White-Ginder, the mother of the late AIDS patient Ryan White.

White-Ginder will talk about her experiences when her son contracted AIDS through blood products in the mid-1980s to treat his hemophilia. Once she notified Ryan's school in

Kokomo, Ind., that he had AIDS, he was barred from returning. White-Ginder moved from Indiana to Leesburg about six years ago.

In addition to her remarks, participants will hear from representatives of the African-American and Hispanic communities, as well as other political and religious leaders. Other participants will include representatives of the AIDS service organizations Hope and Help of Central Florida, Centaur and Hug-Me.

After the remarks have been made in the Joy MCC sanctuary, the group will adjourn to the church's memorial gardens adjacent to the Page House fellowship hall nearby. Candles will be lit, with a few brief remarks and prayers to remember those who have died from the effects of the dis-

The church is now collecting money to defray White-Ginder's speaking fee. To help out, send checks to Joy MCC, 2351 S. Ferncreek Ave., Orlando, FL 32806, and note that it is for her speaking fee. For more information about the memorial service, contact the church at (407) 894-1081. **W** Staff reports

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GROUP CANCELS WAKEUP CALL ABOUT 'HOMOSEXUAL AGENDA'

ORLANDO - What may have been one of the more enlightening meetings of the year was somehow canceled on Thursday, April 28. Notices of a meeting sponsored by the Federated Republican Women of Central Florida began circulating in GOP — as well as liberal — circles earlier in the week, promising "a wake-up call" and a "frank and objective discussion of 'The Homosexual Agenda' and its impact on public health, our local and global economy, the health care system, the cost of health insurance, treatment with antibiotics and our children's future.'

The evening's featured speaker was to have been Jim Bomford, who serves as vice chairman of the Seminole County Republican Executive Committee — and a long-time and outspoken foe of the gay rights movement.

In the meeting announcement, Bomford explained that "This month's discussion of homosexual behavior attempts to examine it in the context of the damaged caused to our society in a more empirical and hopefully objective manner."

Jim Philips of Real Radio 104.1 FM's afternoon talk show, The Philips Phile, blasted Bomford's opinions throughout the week leading up to the meeting.

Yet when a handful of people showed up to attend and/or protest the meeting at an Orlando area Denny's Diner on April 28, the restaurant's hostess said that the meeting had been canceled.

Among those on hand from the GLBT and gay-friendly community: Pat Padilla of PFLAG, Patrick Howell of the Log Cabin Republicans, Mike Ames of the Rainbow Democrats and Ben Marcus of the Orlando Action Network.

Members of the group then began looking for other venues where the meeting could have been held, including a nearby library and a motel conference room. If anyone has information about when this meeting will be rescheduled, contact editor@watermarkonline.com.

▼ Staff reports



ORLANDO BRIEFS

GAY MAYORAL CANDIDATES NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO COLLECT VOTES

Orlando voters missed their first opportunity to choose between two openly gay candidates for mayor. On April 27 — the press date for the issue of *Watermark* that feadidates for mayor. On April 27— the press date for the issue of Watermark that teatured interviews with the openly gay Ed Lopes and Billy Manes— charges were dropped against Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, who had been accused of violating a new state election law. The Democrat had been suspended by Gov. Jeb Bush on March 11, with a special election set for May 3 to find a temporary replacement for Dyer. Manes, whose blue-and-white yard signs dotted downtown neighborhood streets, called his brief campaign, "one of the most experiences of my life," adding that the efforts made a huge difference in the perception of the importance of local government. Other mayoral candidates included Sam Ings, Bill Frederick and Ken Mulvaney. Mulvaney.

SARASOTA

WILSON TO LEAD UFMCC WORLDWIDE

The pastor sees Sarasota as one of several 'strategic centers' for the increasingly activist denomination By Karen S. Murray-Parker

SARASOTA - The worst-kept secret is finally out: the Rev. Nancy Wilson, the senior pastor of Sarasota's ambitious Church of the Trinity MCC has been chosen to head the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

No stranger to the UFMCC, Wilson has served the church in numerous positions for 33 years, criss-crossing the country in the process.

At 54, she will assume the title of church moderator from UFMCC's founder and Auburndale native, the Rev. Troy Perry, who will retire. While delegates from throughout the denomination will meet this summer for its biennial general conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, to vote on Wilson's selection, she is almost assured to win: The pastor was the only nominee for the position.

On Oct. 29, she will be installed during a ceremony at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. The event clearly demonstrates the national impact the change in leadership will have both the GLBT and straight communities.

COMPLETE INTERVIEW

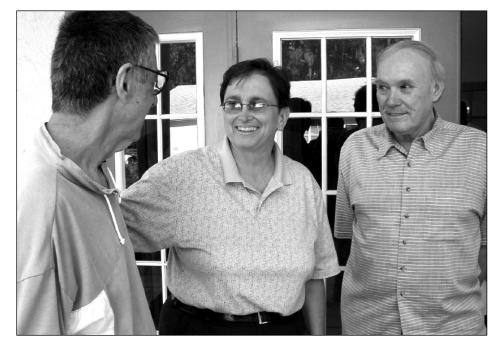
For more of this interview, visit WatermarkOnline.com.

A long-time GLBT activist, in 1979 Wilson participated in the first-ever meeting of GLBT religious leaders at the U.S. White House during the Carter Administration. More recently, she was one of several plaintiffs in an unsuccessful court case against the State of Florida, to have her Massachusetts marriage to Dr. Paula Schoenwether, her partner of 27 years, acknowledged by the state of Florida.

Wilson will assume her new position Oct. 1. She recently took a break from her busy schedule to discuss how her future appointment as head of UFMCC will affect both her personal life and that of the

Congratulations on your nomination to head the UFMCC. Were you surprised at the nomination?

No, actually (she laughs). I was sur-



The REV. NANCY WILSON (center) greets two members of the Church of the Trinity MCC in Sarasota during a break in her busy schedule. Photo by Karen S. Murray-Parker

prised I was the *only* nominee. It was the first time the church has done a nominee search. We can have up to five nominees. I knew this was coming for while, even before I came to Sarasota four years ago. I knew I would be applying for the position and that I would be one of the nominees.

There are eight regions and all eight regions have to approve a nominee and all eight nominated me. I needed at least three regions to be accepted for the position. Troy Perry was the founder of MCC in 1968 and since then has been its only director, but he's chosen to retire now.

Why do you think you were the only nomination? Also why do you think you are the best person for the job?

I probably am uniquely qualified in some ways. For 10 years, I was the church's vice moderator. I've had a lot of experience with MCC churches around the world. I was told by the moderator's nomi-

nating committee – which is international – that I had more experience than any of the other applicants.

I also think I have a long track record with MCC. I've been with the church for 33 years – all my adult life, really. I've had a long relationship with Troy Perry. I think my style of leadership is different though.

I have a very relationship-oriented style of leadership. I'm a team worker. I build coalitions, relationships and partnerships. I have some charisma, but it is not as powerful as Troy's. I am a good negotiator and strategist.

What changes lie ahead for UFMCC?

We live in an increasingly shrinking globe that with technology has created a worldwide network for MCC. We live in a world where fundamentalism and rightwing religion is clearly on the rise. This

Continued on page 11

Sarasota

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SARASOTA BRIEFS

KEN SHELIN WINS SEAT ON SARASOTA COMMISSION

Long-time activist in the Democratic and GLBT communities Ken Shelin defeated four-term Sarasota City Commissioner Lou Ann Palmer April 13, giving Democrats its first majority in four years. Although the commission is a nonpartisan board, Shelin supporters said the Democratic majority will shape some issues such as affordable housing and Newtown redevelopment. The openly gay Shelin took a popular stand on many issues, advocating new zoning policies to encourage affordable housing and revising downtown development rules. "The city is changing," Shelin told *The Herald-Tribune*. "The city is morphing into a complex city. The voters have recognized that. This is a call for change."

PRIDEFEST VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION SET FOR MAY 7

Sarasota Pridefest 2005 volunteers, mark your calendar for Saturday, May 7: Organizers have set aside an orientation session from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. at the Church of the Trinity MCC, 7225 N. Lockwood Ridge Road. For more information, email Dennie at CaptainDen@aol.com or Jim at jimferri@earthlink.net. Sarasota Pridefest will be held May 13-14. For details, see page 29 of this issue of *Watermark* and visit sarasotapride.com.

SARASOTA



The REV. NANCY WILSON said she hopes that the UFMCC will take an increasingly active role in the GLBT rights movement. Photo by Karen S. Murray-Parker

WILSON from page 11

presents a real challenge for us to use our voice

MCC is very much a grassroots movement – we are all over the world now. In some parts of the globe, MCC churches are the only place to gather in the community. That's going to be increasingly needed. We have two markets: the first is the people who have been wounded by mainstream Christianity. I think there are a lot of people who feel alienated from religion and Christianity and that's really wounded them. MCC provides a place for them to feel safe and connected to God.

Our second market is younger GLBT people, especially younger people who did not grow up in a church or with religion. That's an increasing group and they are looking for some kind of spiritual path and spiritual community. They know they are not going to find it or go to the Lutheran church down the street because they don't have a trust there.

You've taken a very activist role with the church. How will this appointment affect your positions and activism?

That's going to be continued to be expected of me in my new position. I will be expected to help MCC sharpen its activist edge. One of the core values of MCC is to be an activist in the community for justice. We want to try and connect to issues of justice for *all* people, not just GLBT.

There are huge issues in our world today – economic, war, human rights, to name a few. The same issues that oppress other people oppress us too. I'm going to be looking at ways to build partnerships to address these issues. Certainly gay marriage is going to continue to be one of these major issues, but in other parts of the world the issues are much more basic.

There are places in the world where you can be put to death for being gay. We'll also be continuing to address HIV/AIDS as an issue.

You've told me before that you plan to stay in Sarasota and lead the church from here. Will you be commuting back and forth to church headquarters in Los Angeles?

We are thinking that we want to have a number of strategic centers for MCC around the world. Up until now we've only had one – in Los Angeles. We hope Florida will be our second, with several more planned within the next decade. Florida is important to MCC for a number of reasons. MCC is very strong here, also there are a lot of retired GLBT people in the state who have helped build the church. We have a lot of human resources here and strong financial support here as well.

And I love it in Sarasota. When Paula and I moved here, we had no intention of moving back to Los Angeles. The whole headquarters is not going to move here though. Sarasota will become our first satellite office.

In LA, we have a new executive director, Cindi Love, who is now in charge of MCC operations. I will not commute back and forth. I will be traveling around the world. I'll be in Brazil in February 2006 for the World Council of Churches and we'll have five regional conferences around the world next year. I'll be at all of those.

Following that line of thought, how will your being named head of the church affect Sarasota's Church of the Trinity MCC? Will it focus more attention on the church here?

I hope that in some ways there will be a sense of synergism. I expect there will be national and international conferences here. I think our church in Sarasota has gotten very excited about MCC worldwide.

On a more personal level, how has your partner reacted to your nomination? This will place both of your lives in a fishbowl type of existence. Are you prepared for that? How is this appointment going to affect you personally?

We've been together almost 28 years and have been through a lot of changes together. I hope Paula will be able to travel with me at least a part of the time. She's a realtor and photographer and we both enjoy travel. We've been preparing for this a long time. I think she feels proud. I know she's glad we're staying in Sarasota. She likes it here.

The change is huge and there are times when it is overwhelming. But we need good leadership worldwide. I know this is going to be demanding but I've always been a person who works hard. I think it will really stretch me and make me learn new skills as well as more about the world.

On another note, I understand that you have met the former Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. What is your opinion of him and the Catholic Church's position toward the GLBT community?

The Catholic Church's position on

WILSON'S POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT TO VISIT TRINITY MAY 8-15

SARASOTA - The Rev. Mona West, likely the new pastor for Church of the Trinity MCC when the Rev. Nancy Wilson assumes the title of UFMCC moderator, will candidate at the church May 8-15 with an election possible on May 15.

West and her partner, Deb Elder, will be available throughout the week, with the pastor preaching on May 8 and May 15. West now serves as minister of spiritual formation at the Midway Hills Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, in Dallas, Texas, and served as a pastor with the Cathedral of Hope from 1997 to 2004. ▼



The REV. MONA WEST will candidate at Church of the Trinity MCC.

GLBT people is abysmal. The Pope is certainly the most recent architect of that. He is a brilliant man, though. He has said this week that he wants to open dialogue with Muslims. I think if he is going to do that, he could certainly open dialogue with gay Christians.

His attitude toward women is very medieval and out of touch. When I met him, he was cordial but not warm. I'd been invited to be an observer of a bilateral dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church and he was an architect of that dialogue.

He's not a one-dimensional person, but I don't think he's going to do anything about gay issues, women's issues or about priests marrying.

Many churches are now addressing the GLBT issue head-on. What impact if any can UFMCC have on their policymaking?

I think we have had an impact for all these years. I think MCC has given hope to many people of other religions and denominations. We've always been allies of other denominations campaigning for change. I think the bigger question is whether if other churches opened their door to gay Christians, would there still be a place for MCC. I don't think that will be an issue.

Many churches are losing members of their congregations, but MCC is growing. I think we will always be a bridge to those churches. ▼





TAMPA BAY

TAMPA BAY BRIEFS

MAY DAY GAY DAY MAKES A SPLASH AT ADVENTURE ISLAND

College finals were over – and it was the perfect time for a late Spring Break party. So went the thinking for a group of Tampa Bay residents promoting May Day Gay Day at Adventure Island on Sunday, May 1. Participants were encouraged to wear red swimsuits or trunks and to bring rainbow-colored gear. "It's a day when people can share a great water park with friends and family in a relaxed atmosphere, without the usual fear of holding hands and hugging," said organizer Carl Schulz, who noted that the event had the support of, but was not sponsored by, Adventure Island.

FILM FEST MOVES INTO NEW OFFICES

The Tampa International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival has moved offices across town – and has kicked into high gear in preparation for its 16th annual event Oct. 6-16. The new offices are in a building owned by MCC Tampa and are located from the physical of the property of the physical property across the street from the church on Cayuga Street in Seminole Heights. Previous offices were in South Tampa. TIGLFF president Mariruth Kennedy said, "Working with MCC Tampa has been wonderful." Board member John Thomas noted the practical advantages of the new, larger space. "The permanent office location will help us center our work and provide space for our many different committees," he said.

AIDS MEMORIAL FEATURES TOLLING OF BELLS

The AIDS pandemic has been with us for 25 years. To commemorate that sobering fact, an AIDS Candlelight Memorial will take place at 7 p.m. Sunday, May 15, at Good Samarlian Church, 6085 Park Blvd., Pinellas Park. At that time, the AIDS Memorial Bells will toll for 25 consecutive hours, names of those lost to HIV/AIDS will be read, and AIDS Partnership Inc. will offer 25 hours of free confidential HIV testing. Volunteers are needed. For more information, contact (727) 541-6638.

GAY MEN'S SINGLE MINGLE PLANNED FOR CLEARWATER

A fun-filled night of meeting singles is planned in the Gay Men's Single Mingle, organized by Suzanne Noe of G&L Fab-Events. The evening – a variation on speed dating – will provide a great opportunity to meet new friends. In addition, all attendees will also receive a \$100 certificate towards a treatment at Laser Lovers hair removal. The event takes place at Storman's Palace in Clearwater from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday, May 11. Storman's Palace is located at 2675 Ulmerton Road. To register, visit Gayandlesbian4minutedating.com.



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A GALA FOR USF'S GLBT ALUMNI

National Center for Lesbian Rights attorney KAREN DOERING (left), USF's chairperson of the Committee on Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity JENNIFER N. BAG-GERLY and USF Alumni Association's director of chapters and constituent societies MER-RILL DICKEY were among the more than 80 who attended the kickoff for the University of South Florida's new GLBT alumni group April 21. The group has been formed to inspire opportunities for networking and mentoring among the GLBT alumni and students. Doering, the kickoff's keynote speaker, urged the community reach out to non-gay friends and allies to let them know that gays and lesbians exist. For more about GALA, write to Dickey at mdickey@admin.usf.edu. Photo by Steve Allen

TENSIONS OVER DAY OF SILENCE LINGER AT BLOOMINGDALE HIGH

VALRICO - The idea behind the National Day of Silence, a protest about discrimination against GLBT youth, triggered a protest in itself at Valrico's Bloomingdale High School in mid-April.

According to The St. Pete Times, a handful of students arrived at school on April 13 with messages pinned to their shirts explaining why they were not speaking that day. In response, some of their classmates responded with anti-gay slurs and returned to school with similar messages on T-shirts.

The two sides confronted one another throughout the day, alarming administrators who said that they hadn't heard about the National Day of Silence.

In Hillsborough County, students are not required to seek a principal's permission to take part in the Day of Silence, just as they are free to pray in front of flagpoles when they arrive for school, the Times said.

The school's dress code — the source of a 2002 lawsuit filed by the ACLU over what senior girls could wear beneath their graduation robes — will not permit students to wear clothing that causes any sort of disruption.

"Anything that's confrontational is not permitted," Bloomingdale principal B.J. Stelter said. "No matter how small that disruption was, they (were) asked not to wear

Students were asked to remove their signs and when a few resisted, administrators called the offenders' parents. The signs came off without disciplinary action, but the consternation didn't end there. The next day, a handful of students arrived for school with anti-gay signs and T-shirts and they too were asked to remove them.

The debate waged for another day: GLBT rights supporters returned to school in T-shirts with gay-positive messages on the front and a simple demand on the back: "Deal with it." School administrators followed the dress code and banned those shirts as well.

Now, students involved in both sides of the protests say that they're still unhappy that they couldn't express them-

selves about gay rights — pro or con. Still, principal Stelter downplayed the tension over the Day of Silence.

"I have a lot of alternative students. I have a lot of Gothic students. I have a lot of high-performing students," Stelter told the Times. "It's called "I won't bug you, if you won't bug me." "

Bloomingdale students have formed a Gay-Straight Alliance for the community, currently meeting after school on odd Wednesdays at a library next to Bloomingdale High. Twenty students came to a hastily organized first meeting. Nearly 40 students showed up at the second, and the group is expected to grow.

Newly elected president Ali Haag, a 15-year-old sophomore who is straight and supports gay friends, wants students at Bloomingdale and other schools to keep talking. The Day of Silence comes once a year, but the issues that it brought to the surface are present every day.

"I believe in what I'm fighting for," Haag said. "It's just something that feels right." **W** Dave Wiethop

TAMPA BAY

POLICE SEEK CLUES AT SUSPECT'S HOME

TAMPA - The case against date-rape suspect Steve Lorenzo intensified recently as police spent more than 12 hours searching his home for clues. Lorenzo, 46, was arrested in November and has been charged with drugging and raping seven men from 2000 to 2003.

Dogs sniffed at his Powhatan Avenue house and surroundings while police officers scoured the Seminole Heights neighborhood just north of Hillsborough Avenue near the Henry and Ola Playground. They arrived at 9 a.m.



STEVE LORENZO has been charged with drugging and raping seven men from 2000 to 2003, possibly in his Seminole Heights home.

on Thursday, April 21, and used searchlights to work until after 10 p.m. The search warrant was sealed and police were tightlipped, but afterward at least one neighbor said that police were looking for clues tying Lorenzo to the unsolved disappearances of two

gay men on the same day in December 2003.

Michael Wachholtz, 26, was later found dead, wrapped in a blanket in his jeep outside a Town and Country apartment complex. Jason Galehouse, 26, remains missing. The dual disappearances ignited safety concerns within Tampa's GLBT community. Lorenzo's arrest could be the only known break in either case.

After the home search police asked Galehouse's mother, Pam Williams of Sarasota, to provide a DNA sample to use while analyzing items removed from Lorenzo's home.

'They said they had to get DNA from me just in case they should find something," Williams told the Herald-Tribune. "Obviously they got something."

Lorenzo's attorney denied that his client has anything to do with the highprofile disappearances.

"He never met them. He doesn't know them," Harrison told the Tampa Tribune. "They're not going to find any DNA in Mr. Lorenzo's house. They can go search the house all day long.'

Police removed boxes filled with Lorenzo's belongings, carpeting from his bedroom and office, wood flooring from the living and dining rooms, shower curtains, and two computers owned by a friend of Lorenzo's currently living in the home. Lorenzo is being held at the



Police have searched Steve Lorenzo's Powhatan Avenue home in Seminole Heights in an investigation that could link him to the disappearance of Jason Galehouse and Michael Wachholtz. Photo by Tom Dyer

Orient Road Jail without bail. He is expected to go to trial this summer.

Several neighbors told police that they occasionally heard screams coming from Lorenzo's home. Angelica Diaz told the St. Petersburg Times that she heard screaming one night and the next day noticed that Lorenzo had bruises on his face. More recently, her dog got loose, and when her daughter went to fetch it she noticed strange smells emanating from Lorenzo's home.

John Ames, who lives across from Lorenzo, told the Tampa Tribune that police detectives questioned him and shared that their search had uncovered pictures of men in bondage situations, and at least one picture of one of the missing men.

Ames and others described Lorenzo as a great neighbor who often helped with home improvement projects. One of the beneficiaries was Jack Luper.

'He was a hell of a neighbor," Luper said. "I hope everything works out for him."

As for Williams, even though her son has been missing for close to 18 months, she remains hopeful while at the same time dreading bad news from police, who continue to state that they have no direct evidence linking Lorenzo to Galehouse's disappearance.

"I still hold out hope," she said. "Maybe he's got a brain injury or he's scared for some reason."

▼ Tom Dyer, with wire and other reports



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AUDIT BLAMES AIDS AGENCY **WOES ON LAX FISCAL POLICIES**

FORT LAUDERDALE - An audit of AIDS Project Florida's books points to loose fiscal policies that led to an embezzlement scandal that has caused county funds to be frozen.

According to The Sun-Sentinel, the lax oversight allowed the agency's former chief financial officer, William Diamond, to write checks totaling about \$59,000 to himself for about 1 1/2 years without acknowledgement.

Diamond's checks to himself ranged from \$325 to \$650 and were entered as payments to vendors in the agency's

ledger, the audit stated. A policy requiring two signatures for checks over \$500 was often ignored.

The weakened policies coincided with the tenure of Norm Kent, who served as AIDS Project Florida's executive director from January 2003 to September 2004. Kent was succeeded by Will Spencer, who was suspended with pay for mismanaging the agency's response to the scandal, according to members of the agency's board of direc-

Diamond didn't show up for work on March 29, the day state monitors planned to go over records relating to a grant from the Centers for Disease Control. Several days later, Kent wrote letters to AIDS Project Florida and two Broward County commissioners to notify them that Diamond had admitted to embezzling thousands of dollars, the Sun-Sentinel reported.

The county froze \$1.5 million in funding, pending its own review of the audit and the agency's records, management and leadership. The agency has more than 70 employees and provides medical, therapeutic and mental health services for 3,500 people with HIV and AIDS.**₩** Staff reports

FERRICK HEADLINES AT CALLIOPEFEST IV

FORT LAUDERDALE - Several big-name musicians will headline Fort Lauderdale's CalliopeFest IV May 20-22 at Fort Lauderdale Stadium, including Melissa Ferrick, Rasputina, Halcyon, Linda Nuñez, Redboy, the Teri Caitlin Band, and the Diane Ward Band.

The three-day outdoor concert and art show features 22 best female musicians and female-led bands.

Ferrick, a prolific independent rocker with 11 albums to her name, is returning to CalliopeFest after her headline appearance in 2003 was rained out.

CalliopeFest has undergone several changes this year, most notably a new venue and an emphasis on nurturing and mentoring youth through the arts. This year's beneficiary will be MPower: Musicians for Mental Health, a national awareness campaign aimed at teens and young adults.

A complete roster of CalliopeFest reports

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NATION/WORLD

NATION/WORLD BRIEFS

PROTESTERS DENOUNCE CONNECTICUT'S CIVIL UNION LAW

About 3,000 protesters gathered at the state capitol in Hartford to denounce lawmakers who voted in favor of legislation that made the second state to offer civil unions to gay couples. Opponents of the bill were urged to vote against lawmakers who supported it in next year's elections. Republican Gov. M. Jodi Rell signed the bill last week after it overwhelmingly passed the House and Senate. The law takes effect in October.

DRIVER COUNTERACTS GAY FOES WITH PASSIONATE KISS

Stunned that protesters were flashing hateful anti-gay messages to traffic along a busy street in Albuquerque, N.M., recently, motorist Chris Lucas pulled over to join a counterprotest. Then, just as spontaneously, Lucas found a way to stun the crowd: The 31-year-old massage therapist and a man he just met locked in a passionate kiss just feet from the protesters. The kiss was one of several creative responses to a demonstration by 20 members of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan.

SPAIN MOVES CLOSER TO LEGALIZING GAY NUPTIALS

The lower house of the Spanish Parliament approved the Socialist government's gay marriage bill, a major step toward making traditionally Roman Catholic Spain the third European country to legalize same-sex marriages. Belgium and the Netherlands are the only two other European countries that have legalized gay marriages. While 80% of Spaniards consider themselves Catholic, half ignore church teachings.

LESBIAN'S KILLER SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN PRISON

Richard McCullough, who admitted fatally stabbing 15-year-old lesbian Sakia Gunn during a confrontation on a downtown street was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Gunn and four other girls were waiting for a bus in downtown Newark when the 30-year-old man and a friend asked if they wanted to go to a party. Officials said the girls responded that they were lesbians and were not interested. The men began spewing homophobic insults and a fight began. Gunn was stabbed as she came to the defense of a friend.

NAVAJOS PROHIBIT SAME-SEX, PLURAL MARRIAGES

The Navajo Nation has outlawed same-sex marriages on its sprawling Indian reservation near Window Rock, Ariz. The Tribal Council voted unanimously in favor of the Dine Marriage Act of 2005. Dine is the Navajos' name for themselves. The act restricts a recognized union to a relationship between a man and a woman and prohibits plural marriages as well as any marriage between parents and children, grandparents and grand-children, brothers and sisters and other close relatives.

PENTAGON CONSIDERS DECRIMINALIZING SODOMY

WASHINGTON - Pentagon lawyers are proposing to change the military's sodomy statutes to bring them more in line with current civilian laws and the Supreme Court's 2003 decision that threw out state sodomy laws, according to the New York Times.

But the ink had barely dried on the newsprint before the military backtracked. Responding to a question at a regular Pentagon briefing, spokesman Lawrence DiRita said that consensual sodomy will "continue to be a crime" as it is a threat to "good order and discipline" within the armed forces.

Lawyers in the office of the general counsel were proposing changes in Article 125 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice that would decriminalize consensual sex. Acts with minors and those involving force would remain illegal. Those modifications mirror changes in society, civil law, and the Supreme Court's decision in Lawrence v. Texas.

The changes would have to be implemented by act of Congress, which generally adopts changes in regulations that the



SHARRA E. GREER of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network remarks that even Pentagon is not exempt from the U.S. Constitution.

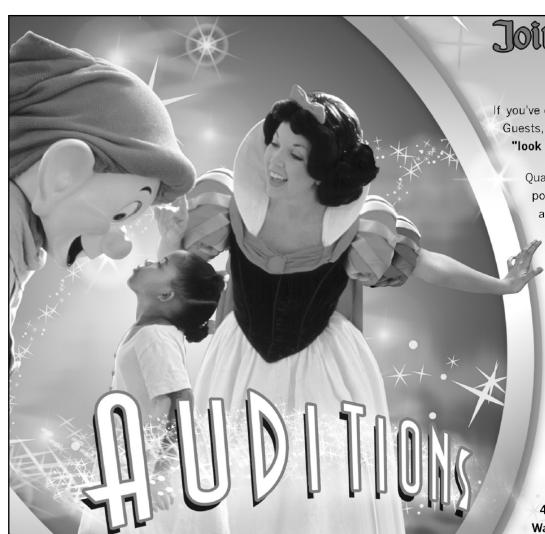
Pentagon puts forward.

Most have seen those provisions of the UCMJ as a serious impediment to gays serving in the military as they maintain the presumption of engaging in illegal acts. While Article 125 applies to both heterosexuals and homosexuals, it has been applied selectively and generally in a discretionary manner against gays.

Sharra E. Greer, director of law and policy for the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, said the recommended changes came after two years of study by

military lawyers. They also reflect the fact that military courts of appeal have overturned two consensual sodomy convictions in light of the Lawrence ruling.

"Pentagon leaders cannot run and hide from the Constitution," Greer said. "If they truly believe that they can ignore the Lawrence decision and that the prohibition on consensual sodomy remains valid, they must be asked: Why did they recommend that Congress repeal that prohibition if they remain confident that it is legal and constitutional?" $\nabla Bob Roehr$



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TEXANS CONSIDER BANS ON GAY MARRIAGE, ADOPTIONS

AUSTIN, Texas - Suddenly, Texas isn't as friendly to its queer cowboys as it used to be. The state legislature has worked feverishly in recent weeks to ban same-sex marriages and prohibit gays and lesbians from adopting children.

The Texas House approved the constitutional same-sex marriage ban, aims to stem possible court challenges to an existing Texas law making such nuptials illegal. It passed with a vote of 101-29, more than the 100 needed for approval of a constitutional amendment in the House.

"I think marriage is important enough to the people of this state that it deserves the highest level of protection," said Republican Rep. Warren Chisum, who sponsored the bill.

The measure still must win approval in the Senate and from Texas voters to become part of the state constitution. Chisum said no senator has agreed to sponsor the bill in the upper chamber. The few Democrats who opposed the measure said it would constitutionalize discrimina-

"This amendment is blowing smoke to fuel the hell fire flames of bigotry," said Rep. Senfronia Thompson.

The debate comes less than a week after House members approved a measure that would ban same-sex couples from becoming foster parents.

Gay and lesbian rights advocates criticized both measures, saying the Legislature needs to prioritize building up Texas families with public education and social services, rather than discriminating against the state's 43,000 gay couples.

"What they're doing really flies in face of family values," said Heath Riddles, Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas spokesman.

The marriage ban, Riddles said, would also hurt unmarried heterosexual couples, making it difficult for them to enter into

BUSH CURIOUS ABOUT NOW-GAY 'SPLASH DAY'

GALVESTON, Texas - President Bush drew laughs from his audience April 26 when he asked whether the Galveston area still hosts "Splash Day.'

The annual beach party that dates to the 1950s does live on — but now as an unofficial GLBT event.

In town to speak about Social Security, Bush told the crowd:"I want to thank the mayor for being here — Lyda Ann Thomas greeted me coming in. I said, 'Do you still have Splash Day?'

The crowd laughed.

"You have to be a Baby Boomer to know what I'm talking about," Bush said. The crowd laughed again.

Splash Day once marked the end of school and the beginning of summertime fun. The city backed off from it many years ago when it turned a little too wild. It later became a party day for gays and lesbians.

Drawing another round of laughter, Bush said: "I'm not saying whether I came or not on Splash Day. I'm just saying, 'Do you have Splash Day?''' (*AP*)

end-of-life contractual agreements or give a partner power of attorney.

Chisum added a measure he said is meant to give gay and straight Texans the same contractual rights they currently have. It allows private contracts for guardianship, hospital visitation rights, insurance benefits and property ownership. (AP)

SCHOOL PLANS TO CHANGE ITS POLICY ON QUEER-THEMED SHIRTS

WEBB CITY, Mo. - A southwest Missouri school district that banned T-shirts with gay-friendly messages says it is prepared to change its policy.

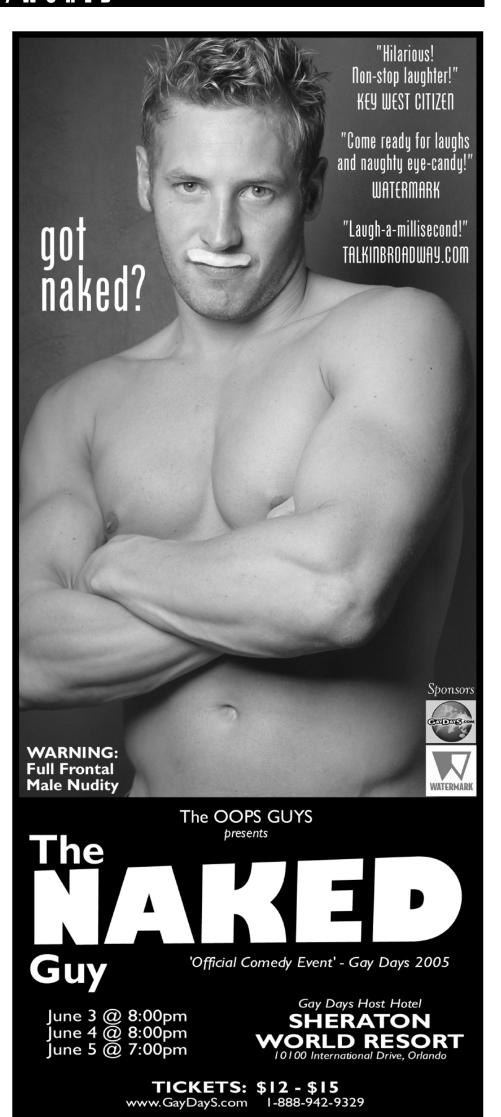
The Webb City R-7 School District explained its intentions in a motion its lawyers filed in U.S. District Court in Kansas City. The district asked a judge to dismiss a lawsuit filed by high school student Lastaysha Myers against the school's principal and assistant principal and the district's superintendent.

"Barring any further disruptions, the district intends to allow the tempers to calm, and the controversy to self-dissolve, thereby ending the restrictions on T-shirts such as plaintiff's with the close of the 2004-2005 school year," the motion said.

Myers, 16, filed the lawsuit after being told that homemade T-shirts she wore to school nearly five months ago were disruptive and thus breached the dress code. Citing her constitutional rights to selfexpression, the ACLU backed Myers.

Myers, who is heterosexual, is seeking an injunction that would let her wear shirts such as one that read: "I have a gay friend and I'm proud of him."

Myers and nearly a dozen other students wore shirts with gay-friendly messages in November to salute Brad Mathewson, a former classmate who also sued the district for barring his clothing that included phrases such as "I'm gay and I'm proud." Mathewson withdrew his lawsuit after dropping out of school in December. (AP)





SPIRITUALITY

SPIRITUALITY BRIEFS

VARIETY SHOW, YARD SALE ON TAP AT ORLANDO'S JOY MCC

Joy MCC will host a variety show at 7 p.m., May 7, in the church sanctuary. Advance tickets are \$12 each, or \$15 at the door. Joy will host a yard sale Friday and Saturday, May 13-14, on the sanctuary grounds. For details, call the church at (407) 894-1081.

SECOND SUNDAY SERVICE STARTS MAY 8 AT KING OF PEACE

King of Peace MCC in St. Petersburg will launch its new second Sunday service on May 8. The new 6:30 p.m. service will be casual, contemporary and praise-centered. For more information about the service, call the church office at (727) 323-5857.

MCC TAMPA HOSTS FOUR AUCTIONS AT MAY 14 EVENT

MCC Tampa will hold its second annual "Auction in Paradise" on Saturday, May 14, at 7 p.m. at the church, located at 408 E. Cayuga St. The event will include four different auctions throughout the evening: a voice auction, a silent auction, a raffle auction and a dinner auction. The fund-raiser will begin with a pre-auction dinner at 5:30 p.m. For more information, call (813) 239-1951.

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

All faiths welcome at 500 S. Ridgewood Ave. Services are Sundays at 11 a.m., Wednesdays at 7 p.m. (386) 254-0993.

ORLANDO

CONGREGATION OF LIBERAL 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. Wwww.cljorlando.org

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. Call (407) 247-5294 for more information.

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. Call (407) 894-1081 or visit www.joymcc.com for more information.

NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Meets at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays at 406 E. Amelia St. Call (407) 648-8880 or visit www.new-hope.info for info.

ORLANDO CHURCH OF RELIGIOUS SCIENCE

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

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. Disand 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.uua.org

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. HIV counseling/testing

Wednesday at 6 p.m. (407) 839-5051 or email upcenter@bellsouth.net.

TAMPA BAY

A.M.ERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

BETH RACHA.M.IM 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 Wednesda 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.christ-cornerstone.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.

FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF DUNEDIN

Part of the "More Light Presbyterians" seeking full participation of GLBT people of faith. Services are Sundays at 10:30 a.m. at 5 Patricia Ave., Dunedin. (727) 733-2956 or www.faith-pc.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.

FRANCIS HOUSE

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

HOLY SPIRIT ECUMENICAL CHURCH

A fully affirming and inclusive Catholic community for all people of faith. Sundays at 10am at the Quality Inn at 20162 US Hwy 19 N (Druid Rd-south of SR 60) in Clearwater. Call (727) 709-1542 or visit www.holyspiritecc.org

IHOLY SPIRIT ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC CHURCH Sunday Mass, 10:30 a.m. 10623 106th Avenue North, Largo. (727) 709-1542 or www.holyspiritecc.org

NTEGRITY OFTAMPA BAY

All are welcome at this 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)

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.

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 UFMCCTampa@aol.com.

UCC WILL CONSIDER GAY MARRIAGE RESOLUTIONS

CLEVELAND - The United Church of Christ will consider differing resolutions on same-sex marriage at its biennial meeting in July in Atlanta.

The UCC's General Synod previously has affirmed the ordination of GLBT people and holy unions for non-married cou-

Last year, the UCC caused a stir when it created a television advertising campaign that featured a gay couple, among others, being excluded from a church. CBS and NBC rejected the 30-second ads.

Rev. Phyllis F. Hunt. Pastor.

POTTER'S HOUSE FELLOWSHIP

Spirit-filled ministry offering hope and the love of Christ for all people. 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 gayaffirming church in the Anglican tradition. Call (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. PETERBURG Worship services are at 11 a.m. each Sunday, 719 Arlington Ave. N. (727) 898-3294.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OFTAMPA

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

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 cttampa.tripod.com.

UU RAINBOW OUTREACH OFTAMPA BAY

Outreach by Unitarian Universalists to the local GLBT community. For more information call (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. Dr. John Syster, Senior Minister, and Rev. Donna Papenhausen, Minister for Education (941) 953-7044 or (941) 365-4463; uccsarasota@aol.com

SOULFORCE

Meets the first Tuesday of each month 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 with Rev. Dr. Sherry L. Kennedy. 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.

first time the same-sex marriage issue will be debated at the church's General Synod meeting.

"We take our democratic form of church governance seriously." said the Rev. J. Bennett Guess, spokesman for the Clevelandbased UCC.



UCC's REV. J. BENNETT **GUESS** says he expects some fireworks at the denomination's July meeting.

"This will ensure some heated conversation for our church

when we meet in Atlanta." Guess said that if the delegates support a resolution approving same-sex marriage, it would be the first time a large Christian denomination has done so.

The General Synod considers resolutions, but it does not create policy for its nearly 6,000 congregations: UCC churches are autonomous. In Massachusetts, where same-sex marriages have been legal for almost a year, UCC clergy have had the option whether to conduct gay wedding services. (AP)

PERRY UPSET BY NEW POPE'S APPOINTMENT

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. - The Rev. Troy Perry, the moderator of the United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, said he shares a "deep sadness" that Cardinal Ratzinger has been named as Pope Benedict XVI.

Perry and the Rev. Nancy Wilson, senior pastor at Sarasota's Church of the Trinity MCC and then vice moderator of the denomination, met Ratzinger in 1987 during Pope John Paul II's visit to Columbia, S.C.

"We held out hope that the selection of a new pope would bring greater openness and acceptance to the Roman Catholic Church," Perry said recently. "That did not happen. In fact, over the past three decades, Cardinal Ratzinger has served as the author of many of the Roman Catholic Church's policies that embody overt hostility to GLBT people and preclude women from full participation in the life of the church."

Perry said he believes that Ratzinger's policies will continue to devalue the rich, spiritual gifts of GLBT people and women

My prayers are with my brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic Church and those whose lives will be harmed by church policies that treat GLBT people with less than unconditional acceptance and dignity," Perry added. **▼** Dave Wiethop



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INDICATION: Reyataz (atazanavir sulfate) is a prescription medicine used in combination with other medicines to treat people who are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Reyataz has been studied in 48-week trials in both patients who have taken or have never taken anti-HIV medicines.

Reyataz does not cure HIV or help prevent passing HIV to others.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

Do not take Reyataz if you are taking the following medicines: ergot medicines, Versed*, Halcion*, Orap*, Propulsid*, Camptosar*, Crixivan*, Mevacor*, Zocor*, rifampin, St. John's wort, AcipHex*, Nexium*, Prevacid*, Prilosec* or Protonix*. Do not use Viagra*, Levitra*, Cialis*, or Vfend* while you are taking Reyataz without first speaking with your healthcare provider. This list of medicines is not complete. Discuss all prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamin and herbal

supplements, or other health preparations you are taking or plan to take with your healthcare provider.

Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any side effects or conditions, including the following:

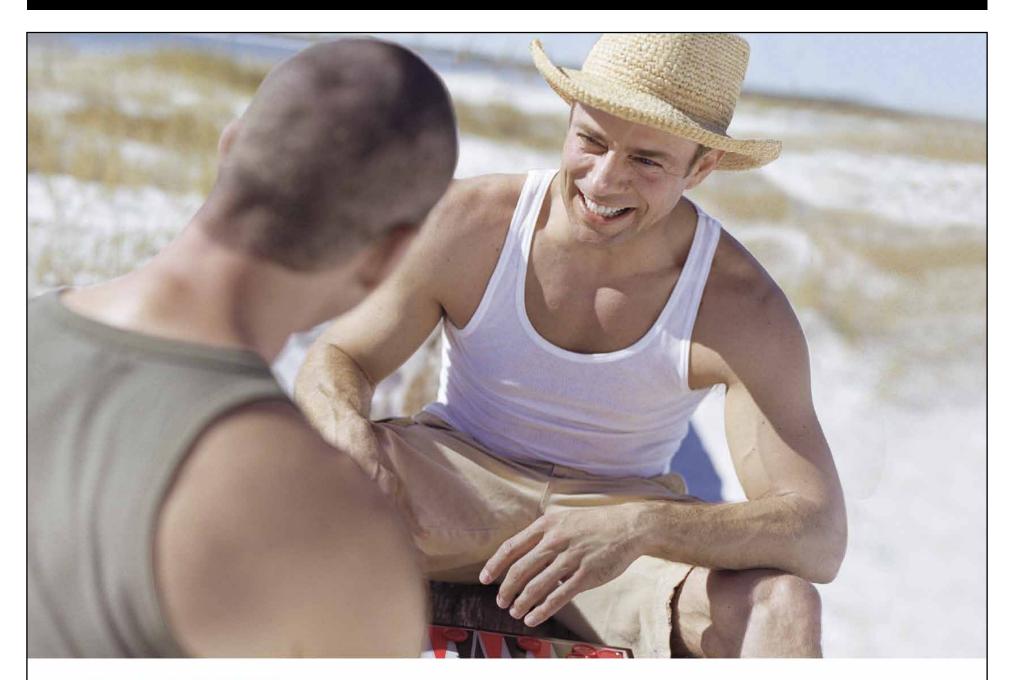
- A change in the way your heart beats may occur and could be a symptom of a heart problem.
- Diabetes and high blood sugar may occur in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like Reyataz.
- Yellowing of the skin and/or eyes may occur due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver).
- Rash (redness and itching) sometimes occurs in patients taking Reyataz, most often in the first few weeks after the medicine is started, and usually goes away within two weeks with no change in treatment.

- If you have liver disease, including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like Reyataz.
- Some patients with hemophilia have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitor medicines like Reyataz.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking anti-HIV medicines. The cause and long-term effects are not known at this time.

Common side effects of Reyataz taken with other anti-HIV medicines include: nausea, headache, stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, fever, dizziness, trouble sleeping, numbness, and tingling or burning of hands or feet.

You should take Reyataz once daily with food (a meal or snack). You should take Reyataz and your other anti-HIV medicines exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider.



Once Daily REYATAZ is a protease inhibitor (PI)

that is taken in HIV combination therapy.

- Can help raise your T-cells
- Can help lower your viral load to undetectable*
- Low chance of diarrhea (shown in clinical trials)[†]
- Two pills taken once-a-day (with a snack or meal)[‡]
- * Undetectable is defined as a viral load of less than 400 or 50 copies/mL (depending on the test used).
- REYATAZ in combination therapy had a 1-3% rate of moderate-to-severe diarrhea.
 People who have taken anti-HIV medicines before usually take REYATAZ with ritonavir once daily as part of their HIV combination therapy.

WWW.REYATAZ.COM

Please see important information about REYATAZ on the next page.

You and your doctor can fight HIV your way.





PATIENT INFORMATION **REYATAZ®** (RAY-ah-taz)

R.ONLY

(generic name = atazanavir sulfate) Capsules

ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with REYATAZ. Read the section "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other

Read the Patient Information that comes with REYATAZ before you start using it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet provides a summary about REYATAZ and does not include everything there is to know about your medicine. This information does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate)?

REYATAZ is a prescription medicine used with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people who are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV is the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). REYATAZ is a type of anti-HIV medicine called a protease inhibitor. HIV infection destroys CD4+ (T) cells, which are important to the immune system. The immune system helps fight infection. After a large number of T cells are destroyed, AIDS develops. REYATAZ helps to block HIV protease, an enzyme that is needed for the HIV virus to multiply. REYATAZ may lower the amount of HIV in your blood, help your body keep its supply of CD4+ (T) cells, and reduce the risk of death and illness associated with HIV.

(f) cells, and reduce the risk of death and illness associated with HIV.

Does REYATAZ cure HIV or AIDS?

REYATAZ does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. At present there is no cure for HIV infection. People taking REYATAZ does not cure HIV infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection. Opportunistic infections are infections are infections and infections, and infections, and infections, and infections are infections, and infections. It is very important that you see your healthcare provider regularly while taking REYATAZ.

REYATAZ does not lower your chance of passing HIV to other people through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood. For your health and the health of others, it is important to always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood. Never use or share dirty needles.

- Who should not take REYATAZ?

 Do not take REYATAZ if you:

 are taking certain medicines. (See "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?") Serious life-threatening side effects or death may happen. Before you take REYATAZ, tell your healthcare provider about all medicines you are taking or planning to take. These include other prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
- are allergic to REYATAZ or to any of its ingredients. The active ingredient is atazanavir sulfate. See the end
 of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients in REYATAZ. Tell your healthcare provider if you think you have
 had an allergic reaction to any of these ingredients.

- nad an allergic reaction to any or these ingredients.

 What should I tell my healthcare provider before I take REYATAZ?

 Tell your healthcare provider:

 If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant. It is not known if REYATAZ can harm your unborn baby. Pregnant women have experienced serious side effects when taking REYATAZ with other HIV medicines called nucleoside analogues. You and your healthcare provider will need to decide if REYATAZ is right for you. If you use REYATAZ while you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry.
- Registry.

 If you are breast-feeding. You should not breast-feed if you are HIV-positive because of the chance of passing HIV to your baby. Also, it is not known if REYATAZ can pass into your breast milk and if it can harm your baby. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

 If you have liver problems or are infected with the hepatitis B or C virus. See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"

- effects of REYATA2?"

 If you have diabeles. See "What are the possible side effects of REYATA2?"

 If you have hemophilia. See "What are the possible side effects of REYATA2?"

 About all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Keep a list of your medicines with you to show your healthcare provider. For more information, see "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?" and "Who should not take REYATAZ?" Some medicines can cause serious side effects if taken with REYATAZ.

How should I take REYATAZ?

- Take REYATAZ once every day exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will prescribe the amount of REYATAZ that is right for you.
 For adults who have never taken anti-HIV medicines before, the usual dose is 400 mg (two 200-mg capsules)
- once daily taken with food.

once daily taken with food.

For adults who have taken anti-HIV medicines in the past, the usual dose is 300 mg (two 150-mg capsules) plus 100 mg of NORWIP® (ritonavir) once daily taken with food.

Your dose will depend on your liver function and on the other anti-HIV medicines that you are taking, REYATAZ is always used with other anti-HIV medicines. If you are taking REYATAZ with SUSTIVA® (efavirenz) or with VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil furmarate), you should also be taking NORVIR® (ritonavir).

Always take REYATAZ with food (a meal or snack) to help it work better. Swallow the capsules whole. Do not one the capsules. Take REYATAZ at the same time each day.

- open the capsules. Take REYATAZ at the same time each day.
 If you are taking antacids or VIDEX° (didanosine) Chewable/Dispersible Buffered Tablets, take REYATAZ
- If you are taking allactus or VIDEX* (unablished prevalue/orspersione buriever habits), take RETATAZ 2 hours before or 1 hour after these medicines.
 Do not change your dose or stop taking REYATAZ without first talking with your healthcare provider. It is important to stay under a healthcare provider's care while taking REYATAZ.
 When your supply of REYATAZ starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. It is important not to run out of REYATAZ. The amount of HIV in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped
- for even a short time.
- for even a short time.

 If you miss a dose of REYATAZ, take it as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose at its regular time. If, however, it is within 6 hours of your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not double the next dose. It is important that you do not miss any doses of REYATAZ or your other anti-HIV medicines.

 If you take more than the prescribed dose of REYATAZ, call your healthcare provider or poison control only the document of the prescribed dose.
- center right away.

Can children take REYATAZ?

REYATAZ has not been fully studied in children under 16 years of age. REYATAZ should not be used in babies under the age of 3 months.

What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?

The following list of side effects is **not** complete. Report any new or continuing symptoms to your healthcare provider. If you have questions about side effects, ask your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider may be able to help you manage these side effects.

- The following side effects have been reported with REYATAZ:

 rash (redness and itching) sometimes occurs in patients taking REYATAZ, most often in the first few weeks after the medicine is started. Rashes usually go away within 2 weeks with no change in treatment. Tell your healthcare provider if rash occurs.
- yellowing of the skin or eyes. These effects may be due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver). Call your healthcare provider if your skin or the white part of your eyes turn yellow. Although these effects may not be damaging to your liver, skin, or eyes, it is important to tell your healthcare provider promptly if they occur
- neatheate in other prompty in they occur, as change in the way your heart beats (heart rhythm change). Call your healthcare provider right away if you get dizzy or lightheaded. These could be symptoms of a heart problem.
- diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) sometimes happen in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ. Some patients had diabetes before taking protease inhibitors while others did not. Some patients may need changes in their diabetes medicine.
- if you have liver disease including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ.
- some patients with hemophilia have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitors like REYATAZ.

. changes in body fat. These changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Other common side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include nausea; headache; stomach pain; vomiting; diarrhea; depression; fever; dizziness; trouble sleeping; numbness, tingling, or burning of hands or feet; and muscle pain.

What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines*?

Do not take REYATAZ if you take the following medicines (not all brands may be listed; tell your health-care provider about all the medicines you take). REYATAZ may cause serious, life-threatening side effects or death when used with these medicines.

- Ergot medicines dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine, and methylergonovine such as CAFERGOT®, MIGRANAL®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotrate maleate, METHERGINE®, and others (used for migraine headaches).
- HALCION® (triazolam, used for insomnia).
- VERSED® (midazolam, used for sedation).
- ORAP® (pimozide, used for Tourette's disorder).
- PROPULSID® (cisapride, used for certain stomach problems).

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate) because of possible serious side effects:

- CAMPTOSAR® (irinotecan, used for cancer).
- CRIXIVAN® (indinavir, used for HIV infection). Both REYATAZ and CRIXIVAN sometimes cause increased levels of bilirubin in the blood.
- Cholesterol-lowering medicines MEVACOR® (lovastatin) or ZOCOR® (simvastatin).

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ because they may lower the amount of REYATAZ in your blood. This may lead to an increased HIV viral load. Resistance to REYATAZ or cross-resistance to other HIV medicin

- Rifampin (also known as RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®, RIFATER®, or RIFAMATE®, used for tuberculosis).
- St. John's wort (Hypericum perforatum), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort.
- "Proton-pump inhibitors" used for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AcipHex® (rabeprazole), NEXIUM® (esomeprazole), PREVACID® (lansoprazole), PRILOSEC® (omeprazole), or PROTONIX® (pantoprazole).

Do not take the following medicine if you are taking REYATAZ and NORVIR $\!\!\!^{\circ}$ together.

VFEND® (voriconazole).

- The following medicines may require your healthcare provider to monitor your therapy more closely:
 CIALIS® (tadalafil), LEVITRA® (vardenafil), or VIAGRA® (sildenafil). REYATAZ may increase the chances of serious side effects that can happen with CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA. Do not use CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA while you are taking REYATAZ unless your healthcare provider tells you it is okay.
- LIPTOR® (atorvastatin). There is an increased chance of serious side effects if you take REYATAZ with this cholesterol-lowering medicine.
- Medicines for abnormal heart rhythm: CORDARONE® (amiodarone), lidocaine, quinidine (also known as CARDIOQUIN®, QUINIDEX®, and others).
- VASCOR[®] (bepridil, used for chest pain).
- COUMADIN® (warfarin).
- Tricyclic antidepressants such as ELAVIL® (amitriptyline), NORPRAMIN® (desipramine), SINEQUAN® (doxepin), SURMONTIL® (trimpramine), TOFRAMIL® (imipramine), or VMACTIL® (protriptyline).
 Medicines to prevent organ transplant rejection: SANDIMMUNE® or NEORAL® (cyclosporine), RAPAMUNE® (sirolimus), or PROGRAF® (tacrolimus).

The following medicines may require a change in the dose or dose schedule of either REYATAZ or the other medicine:

- FORTOVASE®, INVIRASE® (saquinavir).
- NORVIR® (ritonavir).
 SUSTIVA® (efavirenz).
- . VIDEX® (didanosine) or antacids.
- VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate).
- MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin).
- Calcium channel blockers such as CARDIZEM® or TIAZAC® (diltiazem), COVERA-HS® or ISOPTIN SR® (verapamil) and others
- BIAXIN® (clarithromycin).
- Medicines for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AXID® (nizatidine), PEPCID AC® (famotidine), TAGAMET® (cimetidine), or ZANTAC® (rantidine).

Women who use birth control pills or "the patch" should choose a different kind of contraception. REYATAZ may affect the safety and effectiveness of birth control pills or the patch. Talk to your healthcare provider about choosing an

- Know all the medicines you take.
- 2. Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take.
- 3. Do not start a new m dicine without talking to your healthcare provider.

How should I store REYATAZ?

- Store REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate) Capsules at room temperature, 59° to 86° F (15° to 30° C). Do not store
 this medicine in a damp place such as a bathroom medicine cabinet or near the kitchen sink.
- Keep your medicine in a tightly closed container.
- Throw away REYATAZ when it is outdated or no longer needed by flushing it down the toilet or pouring it down the sink.

General information about REYATAZ

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use REYATAZ for another condition. Do not give REYATAZ to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them. **Keep REYATAZ and all medicines out of the reach of children and pets**.

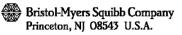
This summary does not include everything there is to know about REYATAZ. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Remember, no written summary can replace careful discussion with your healthcare provider. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider or you can call 1-800-426-7644.

What are the ingredients in REYATAZ?

Active Ingredient: atazanavir sulfate

Inactive Ingredients: Crospovidone, lactose monohydrate (milk sugar), magnesium stearate, gelatin, FD&C Blue #2, and titanium dioxide.

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Revised October 2004

LATE-BREAKING

larger cities bring a working model for HRC involvement to the area. It's something many locals have been waiting for.

"In Tampa, people have wanted something to rally around for years," said Mark Lundy, Federal Club membership co-chair for Tampa Bay along with Tami Harris of St. Petersburg. "The people we've approached have been very receptive to getting involved with HRC as a way to effect change, but also to socialize and create a sense of community."

During his whirlwind May 8-10 tour of the area, Solmonese will attend meet-and-greet functions in Orlando, Tampa and St. Petersburg. He will also visit with the UFMCC's in-coming moderator, the Rev. Nancy Wilson in Sarasota (see story p. 11) and GLBT retirees in Bradenton.

Solmonese, 40, is the former executive director of EMILY's List, a national organization whose mission is to elect pro-choice women to political office. While he is new to the HRC leadership position, both Democrats and Republicans have lauded his connections, political savvy and commitment to fairness.

"HRC has always displayed a commitment to bipartisanship," Republican U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons of Connecticut told *The Advocate*. "Joe will aggressively maintain this tradition, and I look forward to working with him."

UNDERSTANDING GLBT AMERICA

Solmonese succeeds Cheryl Jacques, whose tumultuous term at the top of HRC lasted less than a year. Before that, Elizabeth Birch ran the organization for almost a decade. She is widely credited with expanding HRC's funding, mission and profile in Washington.

Yet HRC has also been criticized for pouring millions into the new headquarters, and for being elitist, insular and ineffective in stemming the anti-gay political tide. Many believe the organization must shift focus now that key battles for equality are being fought mostly at the state and local level

Solmonese apparently agrees, because he has just begun a yearlong tour across America to meet with GLBT activists and to cultivate straight allies.

"What I want to do is really reintroduce ourselves to America," Solmonese said. "I want to meet with religious leaders, corporate leaders and community leaders to create a dialogue and to help them understand the real face of GLBT America. Ultimately, I think changing the mindset of people state-by-state will have the most profound impact on what happens with members of Congress in Washington."

His first stop was in Kansas two weeks ago, when the state's GLBT community was still reeling from passage of an antigay marriage amendment to the state constitution

"HRC supported the effort against the amendment with staff and financial support, but ultimately fear and misunderstanding won over fairness and compassion," Solmonese said.

A similar amendment is brewing in Florida, but Solmonese's trip is more about patting backs than pending legislation. Local membership drives give HRC a strong foothold in key metropolitan areas within a pivotal state. As if to highlight this significance, and the hard work of local organizers, HRC recently voted to hold their December 2005 board of directors and board of governors meetings in Orlando.

"There should be 150 or more people here," Foster noted. "We consider it a huge honor."

Supporters in both Tampa Bay and Orlando have received guidance from one important member of the board of governors – Sarasota's David White. HRC has also sent in Frank November, director of steering committees, emerging communities and volunteer relations programs, to conduct workshops and presentations on HRC involvement. And a half dozen locals recently attended steering committee training sessions at HRC headquarters.

In Tampa Bay, Federal Club memberships have been generated at a series of house parties. Lundy and partner, Marion Ridley, invited 35 to the first such event last May, and 60 showed up. "People are always looking for an excuse to get together, but there's tremendous support for HRC's mission in Tampa," Lundy said.

The organization will also have two booths at the upcoming St. Pete Pride celebration June 28.

Orlando has no major pride event scheduled, but already this year HRC has been a high-profile presence at several smaller activities. This past weekend, the Unity Party - sponsored by Phish Phest Entertainment and featuring Halcyon - raised more than \$2,000 for HRC.

Membership has been stoked at rotating socials on the fourth Tuesday of each month. On April 26, HRC signed up 14 new recruits among 75 gathered at the Lava Lounge.

But will success in attracting members and money translate to success at the polls, and within Florida's Republican-dominated legislature? Detractors say the recent results in Kansas are all too typical. But Solmonese observes that there is a "natural ebb and flow of social change," and points to recent successes in Maryland and especially Connecticut, where same-sex civil unions were just authorized by both houses of the legislature.

Last November, HRC sent senior field organizer Bo Shuff to Orlando to energize the GLBT vote for John Kerry. Although cause and effect are difficult to trace, Orange was one of just three Florida counties to turn Democrat after going Republican in the 2000 presidential election.

Foster worked closely with Shuff and saw the difference HRC is capable of making. "We're being patient about what they're calling us at HRC," she said. "But in terms of what we want to accomplish and the kinds of help we want from them ... not so patient." ∇

JOE SOLMONESE VISITS OUR AREA

SUNDAY, MAY 8

7-9 p.m. Lake Eola Yacht Club, Orlando. Meeting with HRC Federal Club members, followed by reception for all HRC members.

MONDAY, MAY 9

9:30-11 a.m. Palms of Manasota, Bradenton. Meeting with residents of nation's first GLBT retirement community.

Noon-1 p.m. Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota. Meeting with the Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, who will soon fill the Rev. Troy Perry's shoes as moderator of the denomination.

1:15-2:30 p.m. Sarasota. Lunch with West Coast Florida HRC Steering Committee.

4:30-6 p.m. St. Petersburg. Afterschool activity with GLBT parents and prospective adoptive parents. (Tentative.) 7-9 p.m. Home of Terry Knight and Rick Woods, Tampa. Meeting with HRC Federal Club members, with introduction by U.S. Senate candidate Betty Castor.

TUESDAY, MAY 10

9:30-11:30 a.m. St. Petersburg. Breakfast with state GLBT political leaders, including representatives of Equality Florida and the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

The future will take care of itself.But who will be taking care of me?

Some 60% of Americans who reach the age of 65 are expected to need

long term care services at some point, while 40% of those receiving LTC services now age 18 to 64, says the Office of



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HEALTH

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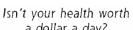
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YOUR HEALTH **NEWER HIV REGIMENS CAN** IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

By Edwin DeJesus, M.D.

We have a much

standing of the

factors that may

contribute to an

HIV treatment

failure.

better under-

There is no doubt that contemporary treatment for HIV is simpler to take and has fewer toxicities than ever before. However, it helps to keep in mind that many people who started treatment for HIV years ago are still taking older regimens, many of which have significant toxicities.

In the mid-1990s, most anti-HIV cocktails consisted of at least 10 to 20 pills that were mostly taken in three doses daily. Today, some patients take only two pills once a day! Obviously, for patients starting treatment today, this is the best option. But patients who do very well on older regimens may find themselves following complicated procedures just to keep their infection controlled.

If you are one of the many thousands of patients currently taking a complex old anti-HIV medication regimen, you may be a candidate for something newer and simpler. On the other hand, your physician may feel that moving from an older anti-HIV regimen that is working well may be too

risky. This fear has been historically supported by our poor understanding of the factors that can lead to HIV treatment failure. Hence, we have grown comfortable with the old concept of "If it's not broken, don't fix it."

The good news is that now we know better. We have a much better understanding of the factors that may contribute to an HIV treatment failure, so we may be able to avoid those factors when you move to a simpler regimen.

There are many reasons to switch a patient from an anti-HIV treatment that is currently doing well. It could be an effort to simplify the patient's medications and accomplish the same good response with fewer or less frequent pills. Studies have shown that patients who are treated with simpler regimens are more likely to take their meds with much better adherence. This will result in a much better and prolonged control of their infection.

Physicians may seek to correct some subtle side effects that patients may experience as a result of their therapy. In many cases, patients learn to accept those side effects, such as intermittent nausea, diarrhea and fatigue. The fact that patients have learned to accept and live with those subtle side effects doesn't mean that their doctors should ignore them. It's a matter of quality of life — and this should not be taken lightly.

The typical patient who may be a good candidate for a switch would ideally be a

patient that has an HIV infection that is very well-controlled (what we call "undetectable") or if the patient has never failed an HIV treatment. However, some patients on older medications may have developed some resistance that may then compromise the effectiveness of a new regimen.

I cannot tell you how many times I have changed patients from a regimen that was causing some mild but tolerable side effects only to hear later how their lives have improved.

Unfortunately, some of the side effects patients experience are not that subtle, and we frequently encounter patients that are not happy not only about the way they feel, but also about the way they look. Over the past decade we have learned to recognize the lipodystrophy syndrome as one of the most stigmatizing adverse events encountered with the treatment of any medical condition. With this complication the patient may develop fat-wasting on the face and extremities, mainly in the subcutaneous

> tissues, giving the appearance of sunken cheeks and veiny appearance in the arms and legs.

> Several recent studies have helped us to identify which medications are more likely to cause this type of complication. Stavudine (d4T, Zerit) was the first to be singled out as the major culprit. Most recently, zidovudine (AZT, Retrovir) has also been implicated.

Several studies have taught us how to safely switch patients treated

with one of these drugs using other benign drugs such as abacavir (Ziagen) or tenofovir (Viread). In fact, even if the patient is not experiencing any signs of lipodystrophy, he may want to consider a pre-emptive switch to one of these drugs in order to prevent this complication. Once developed, this is very difficult to reverse.

On the other hand, not everyone taking stavudine or zidovudine can be safely switched to another regimen. It may be that the treatment is complex enough that the patient may require one of these medications to keep the infection controlled. Physicians should recognize if the patient is a candidate to switch off one of those regimens more associated with lipodystrophy.

As HIV treatments become simpler, we should pay attention to newer regimens that may offer an advantage over the older treatments. It's not just a matter of preventing future complications, but improving patients' quality of life.

Edwin DeJesus, M.D., is an Orlando physician who specializes in HIV care.

HEALTH

AIDS PATIENTS CONTINUE TO LINGER ON FUNDING LISTS

WASHINGTON - Eleven states continue to have lengthy waiting lists for lowincome HIV and AIDS patients, according to a report from the Kaiser Family Foundation and the National Alliance of State AIDS Directors.

States with waiting lists include Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, West Virginia and Wyoming.

These are life-saving medications," said Lisejean Freed with the North Idaho AIDS Coalition in Coeur d'Alene. "On my caseload I have 37 clients in the five northern counties, and probably eight of those people are on a waiting list.'

The drugs that slow the advance of HIV and AIDS can cost patients thousands of dollars a month. AIDS Drug Assistance Programs nationwide help low-income patients afford the medications, but federal funding is slim. Some states have been forced to leave patients on a waiting list as health care costs rise.

To qualify, a person must have AIDS or be HIV-positive and be living at less than 200% of the federal poverty level. That means a person living alone

would have to make less than about \$19,000 a year, though most of the people on Idaho's drug assistance program make far less. That makes it impossible for them to afford the average \$1,300 a month that many AIDS and HIV patients pay for medications alone.

"ADAPs serve as a critical safety net for people with HIV/AIDS in the U.S., filling the gaps in prescription drug coverage," Kaiser Family Foundation Vice President Jennifer Kates said. "The growing number of people who need HIV medications and rising drug costs continue to exceed available resources.'

Nationally, ADAP underfunding could overburden the patient pharmaceutical assistance program and force them to stop adding new clients, medical observers say.

In 2003, national ADAP funding totaled \$961.5 million. That rose by 11% in 2004, allowing 38 programs to provide medication to more people, according to the Kaiser study. But nearly two-thirds of that increase came from increased state spending and drug rebates, and 5% came from federal appropriations. (AP)

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REPARATIVE-THERAPY ADVOCATE JOINS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM PANEL

FARMINGTON, Conn. - GLBT activists are outraged that Magellan Health Services, one of the largest behavioral health care



WARREN THROCKMORTON will serve as an adviser to one of the nation's largest behavior health care systems.

systems in the

changed course under pressure from the Radical Right and named a reparative therapy advocate to its new advisory board.

U.S., has

The concession is being touted by conservatives who suggest that Magellan's

reversal on Warren Throckmorton has added legitimacy to their belief that homosexuality can be cured through therapy. The American Psychiatric Association has twice rejected this belief.

In September 2004, Magellan invited Throckmorton to serve on the company's National Professional Advisory Council. But in February, the company rescinded their invitation, citing Throckmorton's controversial views that some gays and lesbians can change their sexual orientation and that others can bring their sexual behavior in line with their religious or moral beliefs, according to published reports.

"Professional mental and behavioral health associations such as the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association have consistently discredited 'reparative therapy,' the kind of therapy promoted by Throckmorton," said Kathleen DeBold, the executive director of the Mautner Project, a

of psychology at Pennsylvania's Grove City College. **W** Staff reports

national lesbian health care organization. Throckmorton is an associate professor

HEALTH BRIEFS

AIDS WALK MIAMI COLLECTS \$300,000

More than 1,500 people joined April 17's AIDS Walk Miami, raising about \$300,000 for Care Resource, Florida's largest AIDS service agency. This represents a 25% increase over 2004, which was a 25% hike over the prior year's collection. Corporate sponsorships also increased in 2005, from 44 to 72. Among the new major sponsors: the Florida Marlins, Ritz-Carlton South Beach and People en Español magazine. The Miami Heat have committed to sponsoring the event in 2006.



VIEWPOINT

Every day I notice

encroaching just

on my energy,

robbing me of

valuable time.

a little bit further

the fatique



ANGRY ABOUT MISTAKES MADE AT OUR EXPENSE

By Bryan Middour

I am angry and I'm not letting it out. This isn't healthy; we all know that anger turned inward becomes illness or depression. With me, it's depression, my saddle sore companion that only the harshest of medications now controls. Because of the psychotropic drugs I know exactly what the butterfly in the bell jar feels like. I'm trapped in a body that doesn't respond emotionally — it's as if I'm behind a thick layer of glass and only allowed to experience a limited range of feelings.

Steve, my pharmacist, is also angry. His anger stems from a Medicaid system run by idiots that think people with AIDS somehow have enough money to pay exorbitant "share of cost" expenses for their monthly HIV medications. They blunder client paperwork and make patients wait 30 to 60 days for life-saving treatment — all with the attitude that it's not their fault that these people are HIV-positive. As always in such situations, the blame is placed squarely on the affected because the system cannot empathize with them.

I empathize. I have to, I'm one of

the infected and as such I understand what these souls are being subjected to. It should fall under the title of "cruel and unusual punishment." But I'm not an activist, I'm not that brave or energized,

but my wavering voice does sing out in protest, after all. Just as one man standing in front of a tank caused a world to think, maybe protest can make a government re-evaluate their policies.

Thinking of reevaluating policies, I
took part in the recent
Watermark interview
with the mother of
Ryan White. Jeanne White-Ginder,

through her determination, spunk and sheer ingenuousness, caused our federal government to see fit to offer help and aid to those of us infected with HIV. In that short while I listened to her, I found a kindred soul that truly knew what I was experiencing. Somehow she kept

some of her innocence and all of her humility despite the ugliness and the hatred that her son and her family had to endure.

She'll be speaking on the anniversary of the International AIDS
Candlelight Memorial on Sunday, May
15, in the auditorium of Joy MCC. I'll be there to hear her words — words that strike me as true and sure as any I've read or heard on the subject of what it means to survive in this increasingly nearsighted world. People like her

should be experienced and enjoyed; she has many fond memories of her son and the times they struggled through. And, yes, even I have good times, though they may seem tainted to the uninfected they carry me through the moments of which I'm not too proud.

Yet the anger that I'm feeling just won't

let me lie still. I'm restless and listless, if such a condition exists at all it's akin to feeling like mowing the yard without the energy to do so.

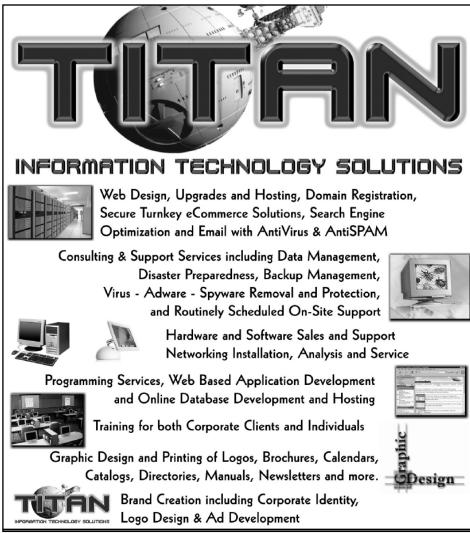
I'm angry that I've buried another brother in arms to this disease, a loss that I'm not feeling at my core quite yet. I know that I miss him and I've picked up the phone a dozen times to call him, only to put it down when I realize that he's not there. Just a ring tone down the line, no gruff voice telling me to get a life and let him get on with his. I'll always miss his gentle rebukes and twisted wit that I'll look for in others, but may not find ever again. Does God give such personalities to more than one human at a time? I hope so.

I'm angry that this disease is taking from me what I see as my vitality. Every day I notice the fatigue encroaching just a little bit further on my energy, robbing me of valuable time that I volunteer or taking me away from the moments that I have with my son and daughter-in-law. If I push it, I'm punished with being unable to move from the couch for days. I hate feeling as if I'm an invalid when my mind is still able to do mental gymnastics, plotting and planning what I'd do if I could only have a little more stamina, a little more time to enjoy this life.

But I'm learning to deal with my anger and my depression, just as I'm learning to deal with having AIDS. It's never easy and it gets harder every day, but I keep slogging away, to stop now would be certain death. I'll embrace that certainty one day, but today isn't that day, today I deal with my own realities and get on with my life.

Bryan L. Middour is an Orlando writer who can be reached at BLMiddour@aol.com.





VIEWPOINT



THE GLBT COMMUNITY CAN BE JUST AS BIGOTED

By Jayelle Wiggins

"If we stand tall, it is because we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors." — Santeria proverb

First off, I was not among the millions of people who mourned the death of Pope John Paul II. I'm not Catholic, and I've never been Catholic. I disagreed with his stances on many issues, and often thought it was rather arrogant of him to think that he could try to dictate policy for multi-religious secular republics such as the U.S.

Then again, my own Pentecostal great-grandmother thought she could get the pope to convert to "true Christianity" by writing him a long letter. And people who know much more about foreign politics than I do have pointed out that he played an instrumental role in Poland's gaining freedom from communism. Oops.

I knew that my all-time favorite singer, Sinead O'Connor, nearly destroyed her career by expressing her anger at him, and years later, when all those priest scandals broke out in my own nation, I finally understood why she and other Europeans who grew up Catholic were so angry. I didn't care much about women's ordination; I figured that the people who had to live by the rules could work them out for them-

selves or join some other religion that was kinder to women.

I did care when he said that gays were born that way, but "morally disordered" unless they remained celibate. He certainly proved my belief that even if a biological link is found, some people will be bound and determined to hate sexual minorities regardless. I resented having to care about

the statements of a religious leader whose religion I never believed in, simply because he has so much influence over so many people, including some whom I genuinely like and respect.

I also resent that when Pope Benedict XVI was elected, I had to give a damn about him too and not blithely ignore his church's politics as I so

often do with other sects. At the same time, I also resent having to give a damn about Jerry Falwell.

It's been more than 10 years since I left conservative Evangelical Christianity, and I still can't completely wipe its influ-

ence off my boots. But again, Falwell has lots of followers, including some whom I like and respect. Still, he spouts lots of homophobic, misogynist and religiously intolerant nonsense where influential people can hear him.

While the world was watching the Big Papal Die-a-Thon on all the major news networks, Falwell was hospitalized for viral pneumonia — again. He even had to be hooked up to a respirator. His condition improved enough that he could go back to preaching, but a sense of his mortality has definitely been imparted to his various organizations lately.

Now, Falwell is 71. The Pope was 84. This has led to some comments shared with

me via e-mail and in conversation that were, I'm sure, meant to be optimistic. The essential point of them all was, "The future's bound to be better. All those old homophobes are dying and getting sick." One thirtysomething bisexual friend, whom I normally agree with, even went so far as to say, "The

sooner that whole generation goes, the better off we'll all be."

When a younger cousin of mine asked me what prejudice was, I accidentally hit upon what became my working definition.

"You know just one small thing about another person, like what color they are or what religion they follow, and you think that's all you need to know," I told him. Ageism is another kind of prejudice. It astonishes me whenever GLBT people, who have experienced the pain of prejudice, can so casually inflict it onto members of another group.

Members of "that whole generation" caused tremendous pain for gay and bisex-

ual people, it's true. It is also true that members of the World War II generation are among the reasons that we enjoy the freedoms we have today. Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, the founders of the lesbian organization Daughters of Bilitis and the first same-sex couple to get legally married in San Francisco, are in their early 80s.

Harry Hay (who was 90 when he died in 2002) and seven other gay men founded the Mattachine Society, one of America's first "homophile" organizations, in 1950. Another member of "that whole generation," Lisa Ben, a secretary who loved anagrams, founded the nation's first known gay newsletter from her boss' typewriter, using carbon paper, in 1945.

And consider the queer-friendly Pauline Phillips, the original writer of the *Dear Abby* column, and her twin sister, Esther Lederer (better known as Ann Landers) who brought the first positive mentions of homosexuality to many mainstream newspapers. I could go on.

Furthermore, homophobia is alive and well in younger generations. The new pope promises to carry on the conservative teachings of Pope John Paul II. And Falwell's influence lies beyond the retiree set: he founded Liberty University to train a new generation of "pro-family" activists.

We also encounter homophobia from younger people on the Internet and in song lyrics. To focus on one generation is to let prejudice blind us to real threats, much in the way that certain priests and Boy Scout leaders have been ignored while gay people who genuinely loved children and teaching are libeled as potential molesters.

Prejudice will not solve the problems caused by prejudice. A bit of hardcore self-examination every now and then won't, either, but at least it just might bring us a bit closer to a real solution.

Jayelle Wiggins is a long-time Watermark contributor who can be reached at jayelle3@yahoo.com.





FDA'S RULES ON BLOOD DONATIONS ARE ARCHAIC

I was discriminated against today. After a visit to my doctor for my annual exam, I was feeling fine, because I was told that I was in perfect health. I encountered the Bloodmobile from Florida Blood Services directly outside of his office.

I thought that in appreciation for my good health, I would give blood to be used for someone in need — a little karmic "pay it forward," if you will. The literature in the bloodmobile advised not to give blood if you are a man who engages in sex with men, or are someone who has had sex with a man who engages in sex with men.

I thought this was a poorly worded document to infer that persons with HIV should not donate blood. After all, this is 2005 and we have been dealing with HIV for 25 years. Blood banks test their supplies so as not to accidentally infect the recipients.

I waited to be seen by someone who reviews the questionnaires with all donors. I explained that their informa-

tion made it seem that even an HIV-negative gay men could not donate blood. Sure that she would agree with me, that this could turn away potential donors and notify someone who could change this most obvious error.

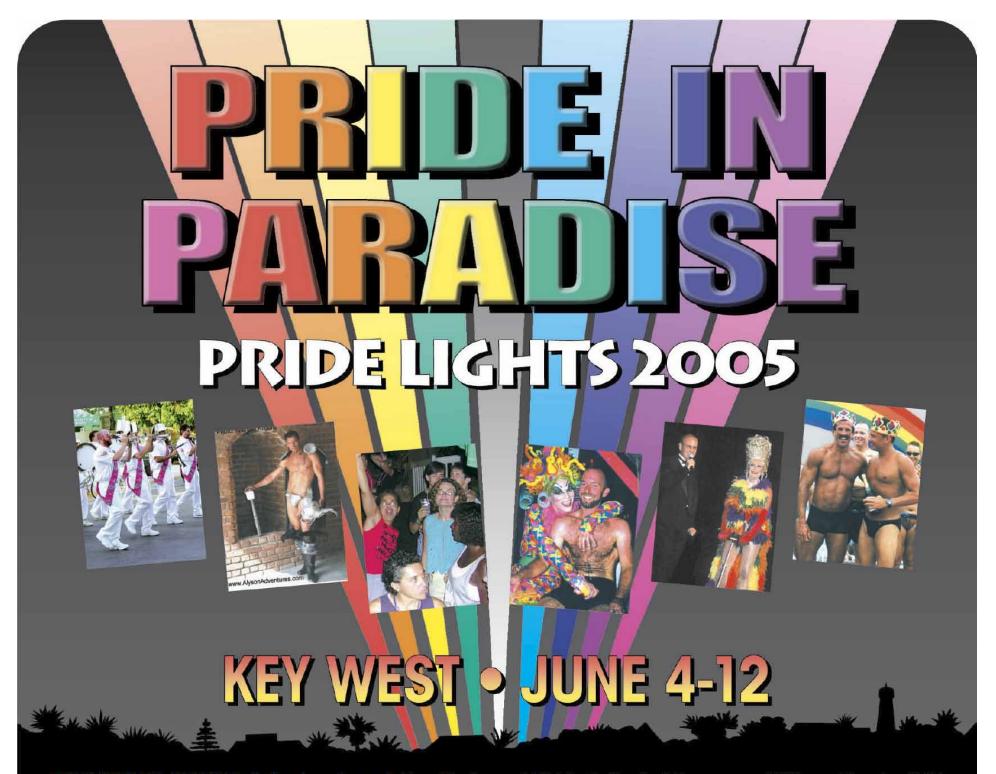
Instead she informed me that sadly I was not permitted to donate blood, having identified myself as a gay man. I was told that this was an FDA rule and there was nothing to be done about it. I left quietly, noticing the questioning looks of the other waiting donors. It has been a very long time since I was so blatantly discriminated against and I was simply at a loss for words.

I had forgotten that no good deed goes unpunished.

Matt LaMariana Via e-mail

Letters to the Editor are always welcomed. Send them to editor@watermarkonline.com or write to Letters, Watermark, P.O. Box 533655, Orlando, FL 32853





FESTIVITIES TO INCLUDE: Saturday, June 4 The 6th Annual "Pride Follies" at Tennessee Williams Theater 8PM

• Sunday, June 5 "Pride in Paradise House & Garden Tour" • Monday, June 6 CAP Awards 6PM at Tropic

Cinema, followed by a New-Release Gay Film • June 6-10 The 2005 GLBT Film Fest at Tropic Cinema

• Friday, June 10 PrideFest Street Fair Noon-5PM • Friday, June 10 Island Party at East Martello 8PM

• Saturday, June 11 PrideFest Street Fair Noon-5PM • Saturday, June 11 PrideFest 2005 Parade with Grand

Marshal Rev. Troy Perry 8:30PM • Sunday, June 12 Jason & DeMarco In Concert at San Carlos Theater 7:30PM and much more! Visit www.pridefestkeywest.com or e-mail us at info@pridefestkeywest.com

for more details.



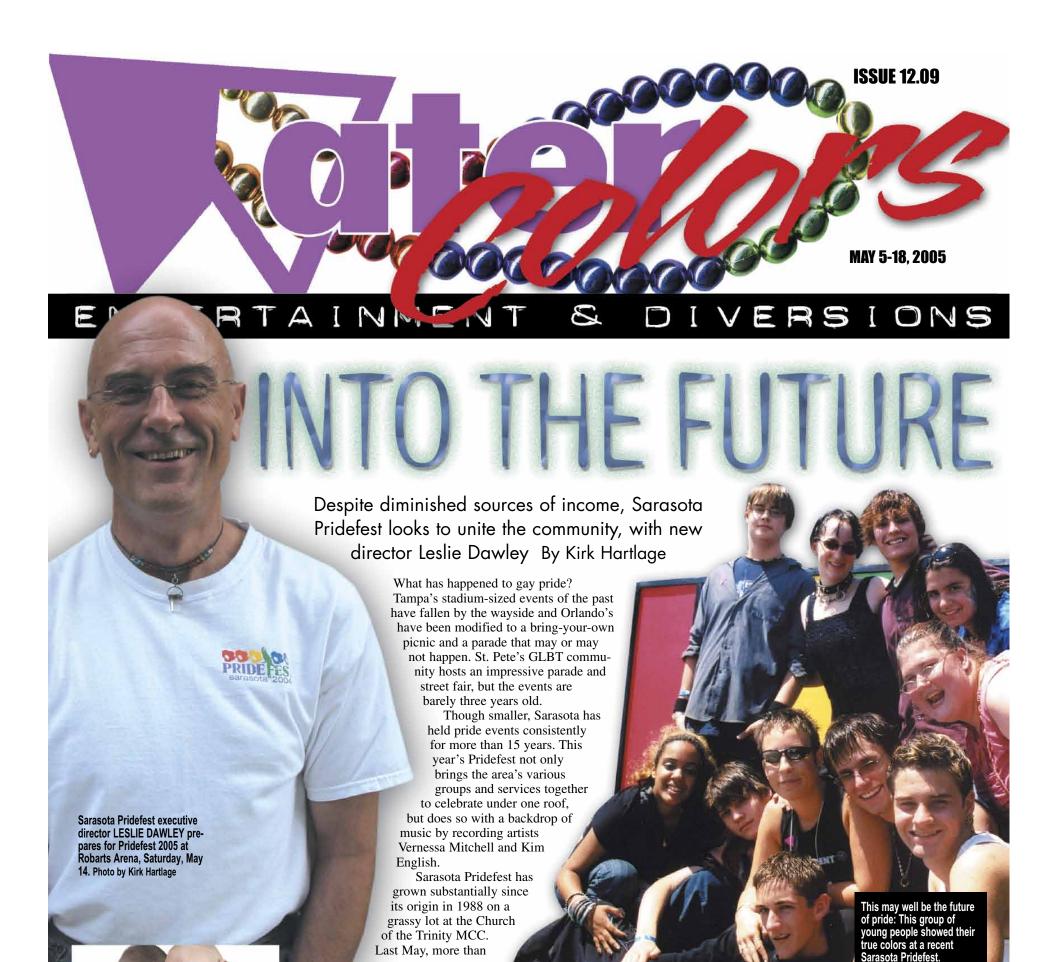


Join the PRIDE FUN in KEY WEST!









TECHNO-TRASH AND LOUING IT

Erasure returns with a new album and a tour dipping into Central Florida By Gregg Shapiro

ERASURE, WITH ELKLAND

WHEN: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 7.
WHERE: House of Blues, Downtown

Continued on page 34

WHENE: House of Dides, Downlowin

Disney, Lake Buena Vista.

TICKETS: \$25. Visit Hob.com or

call (407) 934-BLUE.

ANDY BELL (left) and VINCE CLARK reteam

Erasure heads into its

for a new album as

LAKE BUENA VISTA - Talk about chemistry: Andy Bell and Vince Clark of Erasure may still be one of the oddest duos in music.

The openly gay — and HIV-positive — Bell brings a joyful sensibility to Clark's staid positioning, something that may or may not have something to do with his heterosexuality.

Erasure has released its first new

studio album of all original material in five years, *Nightbird*, which commemorates the duo's 20th anniversary.

Thankfully, Bell and Clark don't alter the recipe that makes their brand of ear candy so tasty and addictive.

You can dance to it with abandon or with tears in your eyes. The pairing of Bell's powerful and distinguished vocals

Continued on page 41

ATERCOLORS



WATERCRESS LONGING FOR THE HAPPIER DAYS OF POPE JOHN XIII

Salad by Jim Crescitelli

WOW! SO IT'S POPE BENEDICT

XVI, a German guy with a papal name that sounds so Middle Ages; I hope he allows himself to be called Benny when he's not running around pontificating. He's certainly a hard-liner, clearly elected to continue the policies of John Paul II, who (as all Church leaders do) was merely promulgating official dogma. It raised my hackles when I heard during the election that the possibility of women becoming Catholic priests was a "non-issue."

They said the same thing back in the 1950s when they said that the Latin Mass would never change in favor of Mass in the local language, never ever — but it did. And then there's the scandal, and the birth control issue.

Don't expect any surprises this time around: maybe next time. But you never know. They elected gentle, humorous John XIII in the 1950s, during the high flowering of American Catholicism because they figured he would keep the status quo. The Holy Spirit had other ideas, because we all know that he shocked the Hierarchy by throwing open the windows and convening Vatican II, which we're still talking about 40 years later.

I anticipate change in all matters, eventually, because the Church has the potential to do so much good. I've

never felt personally attacked; I get more grief from gay people for being Catholic than I ever did from Catholics for being gay. The Church has a lot of problems, but you don't see fundamentalist women living in the jungles of Africa providing health care; they'd rather stand outside the funerals of AIDS sufferers telling the mourners they're all going to

Ah, well ... someday every faith will be forced to examine itself and publicly apologize for wrongs like the Catholics have started to do; and I'm there because of my faith and because I like being part of history.

WELL! OUR INCISIVE and factfinding journey throughout the U.S. has paused in Tennessee this edition of WaterCress, and still the wire services haven't picked me up for wider distribution. If you know the glossies, gay readers

I get more people for

grief from gay being Catholic than I ever did from Catholics for being gay.

have to suffer through the demented ravings of hairless 23-year-olds rather than the demented ravings of me, somebody who's actually lived a little. And at least my column doesn't always sound like it's declaimed from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Thinking about Tennessee always makes me crazy; being the heavy metal buckle on the Bible Belt is not such a bad thing, but it

tends to get swung around a lot like a lariat, hitting rational people like you and me in the head all too frequently.

It's the state where the theory of evolution was challenged — a place where a lot of knuckledragging lynch-mobbers tried to disprove the supposition that we are descended from ape-like ancestors — and for 42 years, it was a crime to teach evolution in the

Volunteer State's schools. I try to imagine what Tennessee must be like for gay people, and then I check the Web and see that Nashville has a vibrant and busy gay community, so what do I know? (My goal is not to educate my readers; it is to confuse

There are lots of support groups, I find, including one called Reconciliation for those gay people who have a loved one in prison, and even a chapter of Workaholics

Anonymous.

Suddenly, my mind is scrolling the titles of a thousand gay-themed country songs: "I met you behind bars... and now you work behind one. It's time you came on home, the clock is tickin' / I'm setting here by myself, the food's done grown all cold. You better git home or it's your ass I'm kickin ...'

Remember the movie Nashville, with Karen Black playing the loony country singer Connie White? She's every Tennessee gay boy's drag dream come true! And it stands to figure: With the dramatic and angst-ridden lives so many gay men live before even turning 21, what better state to nurture all this than Tennessee: "Sometimes it's hard to be a gay guy / givin' all your looove to just one man ..." See?

WHEN ARE JIM AND MATT moving to North Carolina? Too soon! We shall certainly miss seeing them, and so will all their friends, who showed up at Greg and Bruce's for a nice going-away fest a couple of weeks ago.

That's the house with the wall of mirrors in the dining room, which makes everyone standing around the table look 15 pounds heavier than they really are as we're shoveling shrimp into our cherubic faces. Everyone said lots of clever things, but I forgot them all because I was having such a fun time discussing the last 10 years with Larry. Ah, well. It's a life lived even nebulously.

Jim Crescitelli can be reached at WaterCressGuy@aol.com.





AMAZONS COME DANCE BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

By Karen S. Murray-Parker

Women have

allowed men to

define - based

on their gender

roles in society

- what their

should be.

It seems to me the more things change the more things stay the same.

The other night Alta and I were watching Buffalo Girls, a movie about Calamity Jane Canary and her extraordinary life.

The movie begins with a prologue by Iane in which she notes that women in the Pioneer West could choose one of two roles - that of wife and mother or that of a whore. Then there were a few women like herself who defined their own roles, sometimes passing as a man and other times "something like a woman and a man," unsure of their place in the world but bold enough to seek it out.

There were some suggestive lesbian moments between Jane and her long-time best friend, the gold-hearted madam Dora Dufra. Still, there was never any real doubt that, although the two women deeply loved one another, they were each heterosexuals who simply defied the normal definitions of what a woman of their

times should be.

Jane was a pioneer dyke in every sense of the world. She was a mountain woman who could shoot, hunt, ride and crack a whip better than most men. She. never felt comfortable with dresses or a typical woman's role, preferring instead wide open spaces and blue skies. Dora was just the oppo-

site, a woman's woman who was feminine right down to her fingertips. But she was also a savvy business woman who fought hard to keep her independence and refused to marry for fear of losing her freedom.

Of course the movie whitewashes the prudish discrimination and lack of respect that these two women suffered for their life choices. This suggested (to me, at least) how modern-day America treats women.

As more and more feminists age and pass on, there a huge gap in who will pick up the fight for women's equal rights in their place. It was just a few generations ago that women were fighting for the right to control their individual reproductive rights. The landmark Roe vs. Wade decision freed a lot of women to take control of their sexual lives and choose how they would live them.

When I came of age in the early 1970s, there was no birth control available other than condoms, abstinence and the rhythm method. Young women who chose to become sexually active were playing Russian Roulette with their lives when they had sex. I had several young women friends in high school who became pregnant and were forced to either give up their babies for adoption or drop out of high school to

become mothers. I knew of women who paid for back-alley abortions with their

Lesbians make love to other women and not men, and it's usually by choice that we artificially inseminate ourselves to have children. Yet women - gay and straight have struggled to define their roles in society for centuries. The struggle is by no means over despite all the progress we've

Despite all the advances we've seen over the years, the more things change, the more things stay the same. There are still fewer than 10% women in top managerial positions in major corporations. That glass ceiling is still very present.

Women now make almost 75 cents to every dollar a man earns for the same job and responsibilities. While that's better than the 50 cents to the dollar it used to be, it's still a long way from being equitable.

Women were finally allowed to fly combat missions – the one sure track for advancement in the military – only after a shortage of men for those positions made using qualified females more practical, despite the fact that in many cultures women have had a long and proud history as warriors

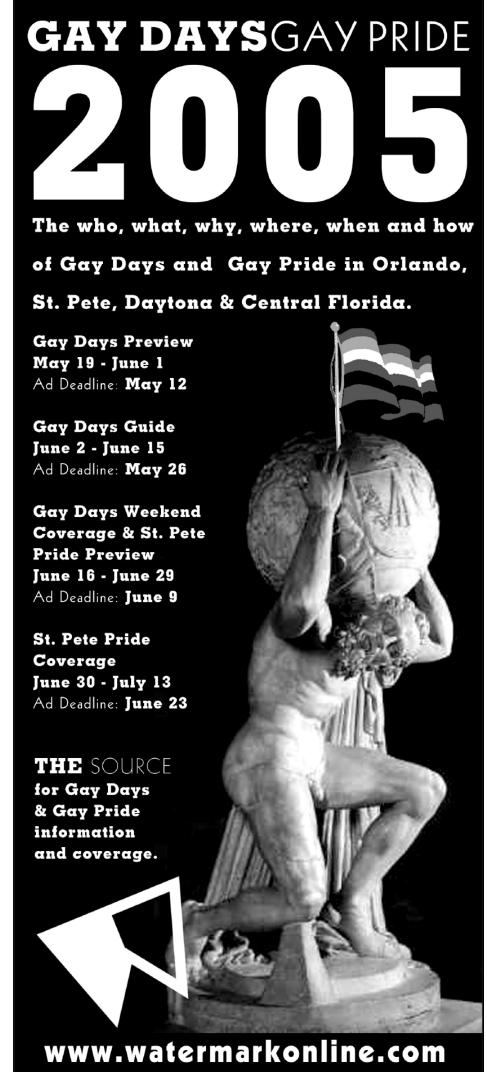
The real problem now is that more recent generations of women are taking

these advances for granted. Few women step up to the plate to fight to preserve and win further civil rights and that has me worried. The Bush Administration is doing its best to stack the judicial system with ultra-conservative pro-lifers with an agenda to overturn Roe vs. Wade. Women are still treated as second-class citizens by many men with patronizing attitudes.

There has been talk in the Bush Administration about cutting funding for Title IX programs. And despite 30 years of proposals, there has still been no successful equal rights legislation mandating equal pay for equal work for women among other

Somehow in this modern word with all the progress that been made in women's rights, the fact that there are still many major issues to still be addressed is being

That's why a new generation of Buffalo Girls must take up the fight and crack that whip. That's the message I bring to my own daughter and the one I offer to women like her. I only hope they listen. Karen S. Murray-Parker is a nursing student and writer who lives in Sarasota. She can be reached at dolphinwahini@aol.com.





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THE MIZ QUIZ: GAY-FRIENDLY EDITION

That Cosette girl sure does get around By Kirk Hartlage

Each time *Les Miz* opens in a new city around the world, a new Cosette has appeared. How many of these Cosettes from gay-friendly cities can you identify? Answers on page 52.

Les Miserable is currently running at Orlando's Bob Carr through Sunday, May 8 and at Sarasota's Van Wezel Hall May 10-15. Tickets are available through the box offices at (407) 839-3900 in Orlando and (941) 953-3368 in Sarasota. ▼







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FUTURE from page 29

3,000 people attended three days of activities, which included an extensive roster of entertainment with a business expo and vendor fair. But this *is* a pride event and things don't always go as smoothly as they should.

A FEW OBSTACLES

Pridefest executive director Leslie Dawley remains optimistic about his team of volunteers.

Dawley started working with Sarasota's gay pride group last year, chairing the inaugural Lite Party, an afterpride party held without alcohol. The response was overwhelmingly positive and it's no surprise that the Lite Party returns this year.

The organizer moved to Sarasota in 1981 and owns Optimum Massage Inc., a mobile massage service. His work with the human muscular system carries over to his work with the pride organization – at times there are inflammations that must be soothed while working overall to strengthen the core group.

Pridefest's biggest challenge this year has been financial. Three hurricanes blew past Sarasota last summer and early fall, wiping out many businesses' ability to donate to community causes. Also, Dawley says, the economy has been tight, pulling everyone's purse strings tighter than usual – natural disasters notwithstanding.

Additionally, some planned fundraisers either didn't happen or had their funds diverted. A casino night was cancelled and proceeds from this year's Seventh Annual Bowling in Boxers event, sponsored by A League of Our Own that's headed by the hard-working Jim Jablonski, were given to ALSO Out Youth and the Gulf Coast Men's Chorus instead of Sarasota Pridefest.

The event may have been affected by the change in leadership. Long-time community activist and expert arm-twister Misty Smeltzer stepped down from Pridefest leadership this past year after receiving Mayor Richard Martin's 2004 surprise proclamation in her honor.

Despite these cash reductions and changes in leadership, much of Pridefest 2005 will feel familiar to previous pride celebrations. The Sarasota AIDS Theatre Project will hold its annual benefit, though it will be the Monday before pride as opposed to after, as in years past.

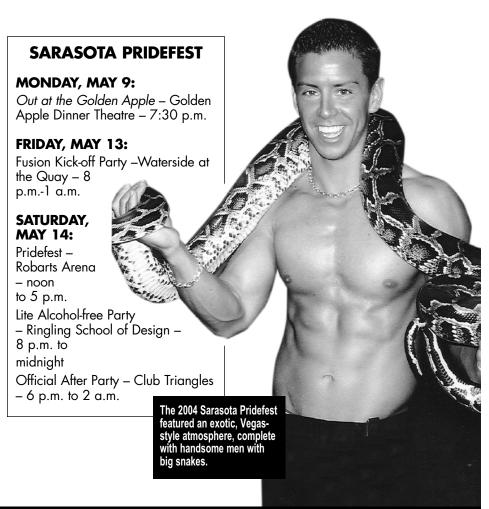
And while organizers say that the expo itself will remain as large as ever with nearly 70 booths, some of the events surrounding Pridefest will be consolidated. Pridefest itself will feature the Sarasota AIDS quilt, with more than 100 panels on display. Singers Kim English and Vernessa Mitchel will serve as the headline entertainment.

Club Tri-Angles hosts the official post-pride party, and the Lite (alcoholfree) Party will be held at the Ringling School of Design.

Kickoff parties that were once separate men's and women's events have been consolidated into one event sponsored by the Southwest Florida Business Guild and Abode Reality.

The theme, Fusion, speaks not only

Continued on page 35



WATERCOLORS

FUTURE from page 34

to the combining of the parties but to the overall pride theme submitted by Kaysie McAlister, "Into the Future."

STILL SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

For Dawley, the theme is appropriate.

"We've made a lot of progress here," Dawley said. "We passed an amendment to the city charter that won with 72% of the vote. That's a landslide as far as I'm concerned."

He knows there have been some setbacks, but Dawley doesn't like to see them as detriments to furthering gay rights, but instead as incentive to continue.

Pridefest is not Dawley's first foray into championing gay causes with hopes of getting others to realize the similarities between the GLBT and straight communities. He started working for gay rights in the mid-1970s while attending the University of Georgia-Athens.

During his three-year tenure as executive director for the Committee on Gay Education he was active organizing conferences for gay campus organizations throughout the South East Conference as well as protests and marches, including one of the first gay pride marches in Atlanta.

Dawley believes there's an important concept behind the idea of "equal rights: no more, no less," a theme that the Sarasota Pridefest board has also adopted. Though the group is not trying to make the festival a political event, even they admit it is hard to escape the potential ramifications of any large-scale gay event in today's ever-challenging fight for equal representation.

"Overall, what's important is to have the community come together to celebrate our diversity and our unity," Dawley said. He's also trying to develop and foster the attitude that they're not competing with previous year's pride events.

"It's not always about a bigger or better event," Dawley said. "We're working within our means."

Dawley laughs at the notion that the skill of not spending beyond one's capacities is one that many gay men are not necessarily good at. However, gay men and lesbians do know how to mix and mingle — and Pridefest offers those opportunities in abundance.

Though Dawley said he finds Pridefest to be a great reunion for those like himself who've lived in the area for years (25 in his case), he believes that it is an even greater event for those who may be new to the community. Pridefest, he says, gives new residents an opportunity to get involved and to learn about the community first-hand.

"What's important is that people come out and have a good time. As simple as that sounds, if that happens, then Pridefest will be a success," he said. W

A WHOLE LOTTA 'JOY'

Pridefest headliners bring multiple doses of goodness to Sarasota By Kirk Hartlage



Record producers quickly recognized that vocalist KIM ENGLISH was not one of those "screaming divas."

There's gonna be a whole lotta joy at Sarasota's Pridefest.

Both of the day's headline entertainers have brought their own versions of "joy" to dance music fans and clubgoers alike. Kim English topped the charts with *Unspeakable Joy* while Vernessa Mitchell did the same with *This Joy*. There's sure to plenty of joy in Sarasota's Robarts Arena Saturday, May 14, when each singer performs those hits and others.

These two powerful vocalists have moved club dancers for several years and no doubt will have Pridefest crowds grooving to their sultry vocals laid atop surging drumbeats.

English is a native Chicagoan and still lives there today. She's a singer/songwriter who cites Aretha Franklin, Marvin Gaye, Minnie Riperton (the mother of **Saturday** *Night Live's* Maya Rudolph), Phyllis Hyman and Sarah Vaughn as her musical

KIM ENGLISH CLASSICS

Unspeakable Joy Everyday Treat Me Right Jumpin' and Bumpin'

VERNESSA MITCHELL CLASSICS

Issues This Joy Serious Took My Life influences. Her sound today is one of classic soul and gospel touches.

Oddly, English never intended to be a recording artist. It was a chance meeting with dance music legends Byron Stingily and Byron Burke in 1994 that provided her an opportunity to explore her soon-to-be-burgeoning career. The trio penned *Nitelife* and the song became English's first dance single and subsequently an underground club smash.

English's record label realized they had a special gift in the singer – her evocative dulcet tones possessed a unique spiritual quality that set her apart from the more traditional "screaming diva" vocalists. Her sound was a lush serenade, sometimes contemplative and spiritual, yet always passionate.

Other successful singles followed, but it was the release of *Unspeakable Joy* that shot her to the top of the charts. The gospel-inflected gem pulled from her inspirational full-length debut *Higher Things* catapulted the singer from underground house vocalist to international dance diva when it hit number one on the *Billboard* dance music chart.

Mitchell was born in Pasadena, Calif., and got her start in the recording industry with Motown records in the late 1970s. Her rhythm and blues stylings led to a gold album, but Mitchell decided to leave secular entertainment to heed the call of God.

She made a rewarding transition to gospel music and has received multiple Dove and Grammy nominations for her work. Her calling, High Ground Ministries,



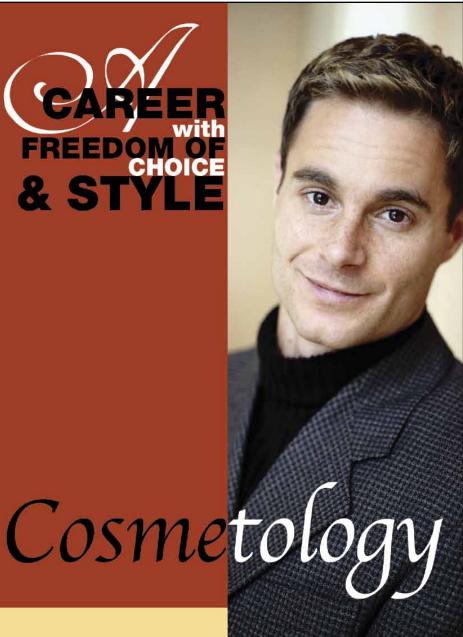
VERNESSA MITCHELL has worked extensively with DJ Junior Vasquez, who has remixed several of her gospel tunes for the dance crowd.

has taken her from urban streets to major cities of Japan, Africa and the United Kingdom.

Producer and DJ Junior Vasquez became a big fan, and has remixed several of the singer's gospel tunes for dance floors. The gospel song as dance remix is an increasingly popular concept, particularly in the gay clubs of New York.

Vasquez's signature thunderous tribal beats well compliment Mitchell's soaring vocals — many of their combined works have climbed the dance charts in the past few years. Mitchell has since become part of a select roster of artists on Vasquez' record label, JVM. ▼







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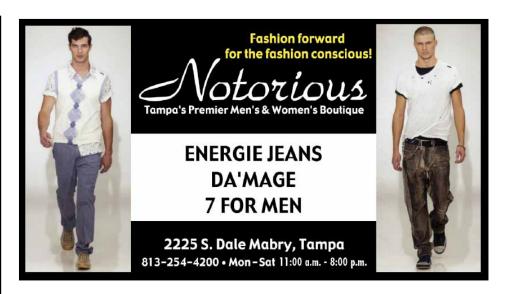
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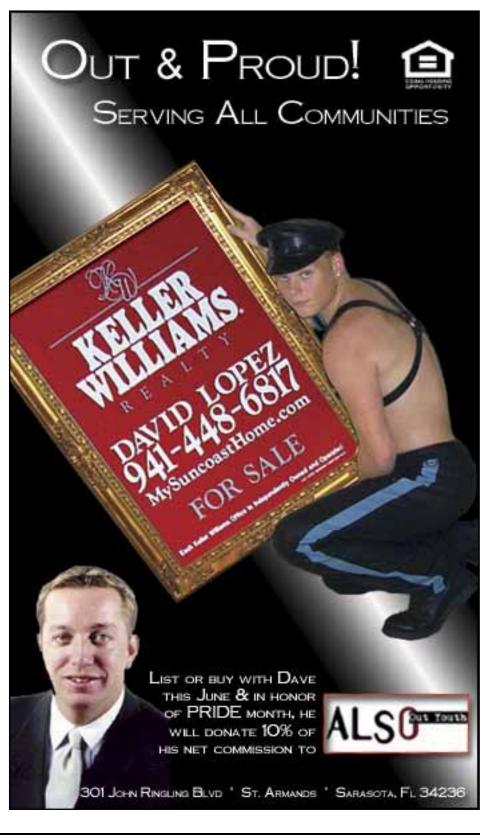
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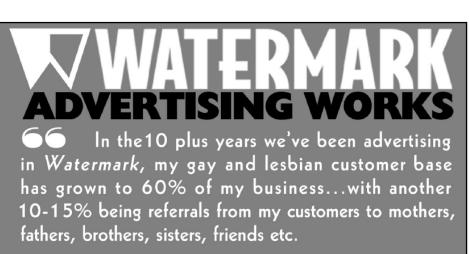
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ORGANIZATIONS



ORGANIZATIONS & MEETINGS

DAYTONA BEACH/SPACE COAST

BREAKTHROUGH

Networking organization for gays and lesbians in Seminole and Volusia counties. (407) 668-6112.

BREVARD LESBIANS

Lesbian social group. E-mail penny@digital.net or visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BrevardLesbians.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

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

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@funcoast bears.org or go to www.funcoastbears.org> for more info.

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 .

PFI AG NAVTONA

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.

Big Mens Club of Orlando. Social club for big men and their admirers. Visit communities.msn.com/BIGMANSCLUBO-FORLANDO/_whatsnew.msnw or call Ricky at (407) 422-6040 or (407) 310-7612.

BOOKLOVERS

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

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

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

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/

CRYSTAI CIFAR

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

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.

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

GIRCC-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.

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

GNOMES

Gay Naturist Orlando Males Evolving Socially. For information visit www. naturalmales.org/gnomes or call (407) 540-9391.

GREATER ORLANDO COUPLES

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

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Meets fourth Tues of the month at The Center at 7 p.m. www.uniteHRCFL.org

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.lcrorlando.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 .

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

ORLANDO GAY CHORUS

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

ORLANDO GAY PARENTS GROUP

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

ORLANDO OUEER 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. For meeting location, call (407) 599-7453.

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

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; PRIMETIMECEL @action. PRIMETIMECFL@aol.com.

RAINBOW DEMOCRATIC CLUB

GLBT group of Democrats and Independents. Meest 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 develop.m.ent. 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 emotinally. Meets first Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Center. http\\lesbianlit.meetup.com\85\.

TRANS CENTRAL STATION

A transpender, transexual, 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 http://groups.yahoo.com/group/W-H-A-T.

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.

POLK COUNTY

FOUR CORNERS RAINBOW FAMILY SOCIAL

Dining out, meditation, movies and more. For more info, visit: www.geocities.com/caulhunter_98/BNAS.html

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

ALSO OUT YOUTH

GLBTIQ 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) 951-ALSO (2576)

CHICK HAPPY HOUR

Women get together monthly for cocktails and socializing. Call (941) 544-0945 or write to ChickHappyHour@aol.com

DYKE NIGHT LESBIAN DISCUSSION GROUP

Lesbians ages 21-35 and friends gathering. Meets first Sun. of each month. program.coordinator@alsoyouth.org or call (941) 951-2576

GAY & LESBIAN INFOLINE

Provides information about local faith, social, support organizations and events to the GLBT community. (941) 923-INFO. A Manatee Community College social and support group. http://hometown.aol.com/mccglad/myhomepage/gayles-

hian html

GULF COAST LOG CABIN CLUB "Inclusive, diverse Republicans." GulfCoastLogCabin@iname.com

GULF COAST MEN'S CHORUS

or iimbofla@vahoo.com.

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

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; fouth Weds. each month.(941) 359-8212.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA BUSINESS GUILD

Meets third Mon.; 6 p.m.; Quay. (941) 953-8419; www.swfbg.org . 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 AREA

AIDS AWARENESS

An HIV education group. (727) 502-0188 for more information.

BA.M.ACT

Local chapter of the National Organization of Black and White Men Together. Call (727) 461-2617 or visit www.geocities.com/bamact_fl.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Meets second and fourth Thurs.; 7 p.m.; The Center of Tampa Bay. (813) 871-2232.

ORGANIZATIONS

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.boatand-

RROTHAS SPEAK

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

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.

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/flamingoautogrp/.

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 GULF COAST COUPLES

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

GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

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

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) 273-8741.

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. GISEN TAMPA RAY

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

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

INTERWEAVE/ST. PETERSBURG

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

KAPPA XI OMEGA SORORITY

Natiowide 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.

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

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS OFTAMPA BAY

Meets 3rd Weds of each month. 7 p.m. at HoHo's chinese, 9 p.m. at Different Grind. (727) 455-9866, Icrtampabay.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 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 Swan Ave. (813) 239-2070; PFLAGW@aol.com .

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

St. Petersburg AIDS organization dedicated to the needs o 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@tam-

POSITIVE EXPRESSIONS

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

PRIDE AL ANON FA.M.ILY 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 CHIPS INVESTMENT CLUB

Investment club for the GLBT community. Meets monthly. (813) 962-8459.

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 SURF 'N' SAFARI CLUB

Monthly gay days in Tampa. Busch Gardens: fourth Sun.; Adventure Island: second Sat.; Brandon restaurant tour: second Sat. at 5:30 p.m. carl813@hotmail.com; www.geocities.com/southbeach/wharf/6587.

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)

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

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

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

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.tbbg.org.

TAMPA BAY GAY MEN'S CHORUS

eets 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.tiglff.com.

Tampa Area Naturists Gay and Lesbians Outdoors. Gay and Lesbian and bisexual naturists outdoor activity club.

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**

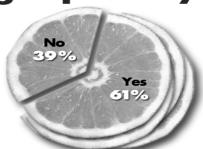
Bear club. Meets first Sun.; DTs. (727) 824-7810 info@west-florida growlers.com; Westfloridagrowlers.com.

WOMYN'S EXCHANGETAMPABAYA womyn's mix. Sundays, 3p.m. at Gulfport Beach. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WomynsExchangeTa

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.





Have we got your group's information correct?

Watermark lists organizations, clubs and other non-profit groups that primarily serve the gay and lesbian community as space allows.

Send an email to Kirk@WatermarkOnline.com with any changes, corrections or additions.

according to Watermark's 2005 Annual Sex Survey

DINNER & A MOVIE

Sunday May 15th @ 7pm \$8 donation at the door Fun - Food- Friends





407.228.8272







CALENDAR of events

ART & EXHIBITS

TAMPA BAY

DIANA: A CELEBRATION

This is your last chance to see this extraordinary exhibit that celebrates the life and work of Diana, the Princess of Wales, and makes a limited appearance at the Florida International Museum. Described as the essence of beauty, the exhibit features her clothes and jewelry, but is also devoted to her charitable works around the world. A special section highlights her wedding to Prince Charles, the wedding seen 'round the world. The exhibit had its U.S. debut in Fort Lauderdale but is extending its run in the Sunshine State with a stop in St. Pete through May 15. The museum is located at 100 South St. N. in Downtown St. Pete. For more details visit Floridamuseum.org.

JAIME AVILA: LIFE IS A CATWALK

The Museum of Fine Arts presents 16 compelling photographs by this gifted young Colombian artist in his first museum exhibition in Florida. In this series, Ávila explores the world of the radioactivos, marginalized youth essentially living on the streets of Bogotá, and their relationship with the larger urban environment, especially the architecture around them. The show, which runs through June 12, is also the MFA's contribution to Arte 2005, Tampa Bay's Festival of the Americas. The museum is located at 255 Beach Dr. N.E., St. Petersburg. For details call (727) 896-2667 or visit www.fine-arts.org.

CONCERTS

ORLANDO

ERASURE

It's been a long road for Vince Clark and Andy Bell. The boys have been together 20 (!!!) years and were one of the first out-there gay acts to go mainstream. Sure, Boy George wore a dress and makeup, but lead singer Andy Bell performed in high heels, red garter belt and panties on his tour. Their latest release Nightbird commemorates the duo's 20th anniversary with a return to the groups' signature synthesized pop sound. The group performs with opening act Elkland at Downtown Disney's House of Blues 8 p.m., Saturday, May 7. Tickets available at the box office or by calling (407) 934-BLUE.

ORLANDO/TAMPA

SARAH MCLACHLAN

A Canadian singer who doesn't make our ears bleed (Anne Murray, we're talking about you), McLachlan is adored by lesbians and gay men alike – lesbians for her multi-layered rich harmonies, gays for her soaring vocals laid across throbbing dance club beats. Her latest, Afterglow, signaled a benchmark in her career. For the first time, not one song was written on a guitar. Instead, all were created on piano. Chances are strong she'll play both instruments during the shows at Orlando's TD Waterhouse Centre 8 p.m. Friday, May 6, and at Tampa's St. Pete Times Forum 7:30 p.m. Monday May 9. Tickets are available at the box offices or by calling (407) 849-2020 in Orlando or (813) 301-2500 in Tampa.

SARASOTA

OUT AT THE GOLDEN APPLE

Admit it. You're fond of pulling out your Carousel soundtrack and singing If I Loved You along with that queer one Julie Jordan — but to your own special queer one instead. For one night only, you can watch others sing your favorite Broadway ballads, but to their same-sex stage partners at Out at the Golden Apple. Presented by the Sarasota AIDS Theatre Project, the show celebrates Sarasota Pridefest with this special show featuring Broadway show tunes originally performed on stage in heterosexual relationships but now sung by same-sex couples. Out at the Golden Apple will be presented at the Golden Apple Dinner Theatre 7:30 p.m. Monday, May 9. Tickets are \$15. For further information call (941) 365-6348 or email garallan@msn.com.

THEATRE

ORLANDO

AUNTIE AND ME (AKA "VIGIL")

The tale of an old woman who refuses to do the decent thing and die. No, it's not the Phyllis Schlafly story; it's the tale of an eccentric bachelor with a comically miserable life who is summoned to the deathbed of an aunt he hasn't seen in many years. "I'm worried about your health," the man tells his relative at one point, "It seems to be improving." A comedy both outrageous and poignant, the Orlando Theatre Project



Singer SARAH McLACHLAN unconvincingly pretends to contemplate her May 6 show in Orlando and her May 9 show in Tampa.

production takes the stage at Seminole Community College's Fine Arts Theatre May 5-22. For reservations and information, call (407) 328-2040 or visit Otp.cc.

THE LADIES OF EOLA HEIGHTS

Is it just us or has this show been extended as many times as Cher's alleged farewell four? Actually, the play's been so successful, so well received and sold out each week they appear, Miss Sammy, Michael Wanzie, Doug Ba'aser and Tommy Wooten keep the shelf-life running on their hit so that all can get a chance to enjoy the bittersweet tale. It's the latest saga of Wanzie's Orlando anthologies where comedy, drama, lip-sync and bitchiness culminate at 8 p.m. at the Parliament House Footlight Theater. The show has now been extended through June 18, though a special Friday, June 3, Gay Days Weekend show has been added as well. Tickets are \$15 and can be reserved at (407) 540-0317 on online at Wanzieanddoug.com.

TAMPA BAY

TORCH SONG TRILOGY

The show that helped make Harvey

Fierstein at least a gay household name, Torch Song Trilogy is the funny and poignant story of an aging drag queen's hilarious attempts to find domestic bliss with everyone from a schoolteacher to a tolerant young male model. But the greatest relationship challenge for the lead characters complicated relationship with his mother. The show is the 2005 gay classic presentation from Gypsy Productions, one of the Bay Area's best up-and-coming theatre troupes. Performances are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. with Sunday matinees at 1:30 p.m. at the Suncoast Theatre, 3400 34th Street S. through May 15. Tickets may be ordered by calling the box office at (727) 456-0500.

ON THE RECORD

A unique musical revue featuring more than 50 of the most beloved Disney songs, the tour bypasses its theme park home for an engagement in Tampa, which runs through May 8 at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. The show presents a "behind-thescenes" look at a very magical recording studio session, where every song you see performed ends up on the record. Tickets are available at the box office, by calling (813) 229-STAR or at www.tbpac.org.

WATERCOLORS

ERASURE from page 29

and Clark's keyboard carnival allows the songs on *Nightbird* to take wing.

Billed by some as the godfathers of glossy 1980s techno-trash, Erasure will visit the House of Blues at Downtown Disney on Saturday, May 7, with special guest Elkland.

WATERMARK: After all the years and nearly a dozen albums, how would you say your collaboration with Vince Clarke has evolved over time?

ANDY BELL: I would say that it's a match made in heaven, really. We're a great songwriting team. When we first met, Vince was a cult hero of mine. I was thinking, of all the people that I'd like to work with, in the music industry, he was probably first. I was a Yaz(00) fan. I thought his stuff was really cool and he always had great reviews in *NME* (*New Musical Express*) and always did very left-field stuff.

I went to one audition when I first moved down to London at 19. It was for a spinoff band of a group called Bow Wow Wow. I didn't even know how to hold the microphone or anything, so I just kind of pretended. I remember seeing Vince at the studio, Blackwing, which he used to half-own. He had split from Depeche Mode then. I remember seeing him there on the Space Invaders machine with big fringe hanging down, and I thought, "Wow! That's Vince Clark!"

He'd always been in my mind's eye and after he split with Alison Moyet, I thought, maybe I should write him a letter and see if he needs a new singer. In that same period, I was living in a cooperative house in London with some people who worked for Gay Switchboard and Shelter. We would listen to Alison Moyet, and one of my flat-mates said to me, "This is going to be you in a year's time"

I was like, "What's he talking about?" And so I answered this advert one on this one weekend - because I was in a band already, but I got fed up because we weren't doing live gigs - which said, "Established songwriter looking for versatile singer." I phoned it up and it was Vince Clark. I just couldn't believe it.

Slowly but surely I got to know him and we started collaborating with the writing. He's the most fair and diplomatic person that I know. When we were writing for *Oh, L'Amour*, he'd written the whole song and had the chorus, and I said, Let's put in 'Oh, l'amour' for the chorus line" and he gave me 50% of the writing credit. I thought, "How generous!

That's very generous.

He's fantastic. He's really brilliant. We're both quite down-to-earth. I just like to go out, do my own thing with my

Continued on page 43

HAM BUP ANDY BELL (left) and VINCE CLARKE have been performing as Erasure for an astonishing 20 years.

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WATERCOLORS

ERASURE from page 41

friends. None of this star "Let me in/Don't you know who I am?" kind of thing. That's what he's like as well.

Other than releasing the new album, *Nightbird*, are there any other special plans to commemorate Erasure's anniversary?

We didn't have any commemoration plans really. We thought maybe we'd wait until we were 21.

Then you'll be legal.

Right (laughs). We've got this acoustic album, which we've already recorded with violins and slide guitars and stuff. It's Erasure ballads from past albums. It sounds so nice. It's a bit bluesy, kind of an Ella Fitzgerald style, which was recorded in the same studio as *Nightbird*. Also, were doing a nursery rhyme album because we've got lots of little godchildren. The record company's been talking about re-releasing some of the old stuff as the year comes round.

I understand that the album's title *Nightbird* refers to your bouts with insomnia. Can you say something about that?

It's one of those things where the more you fight against it, the worse it gets. I've had it since I was a kid. I've always had big bags under my eyes. When I was a kid, I'd never go to bed until about 10 in the evening, and then do my homework at midnight.

I found it very hard waking up at 7 in the morning to go to school. I was usually late for school, but it came to be kind of a running joke at school because I was fine with my homework and my exams and stuff like that.

It's one of those natural things with being a performer. You don't really warm up until supper time. That's why I love doing gigs because they are always in the evening.

The worse thing is having to go off and do these drive-time morning shows and sing first thing in the morning. It's better if I stayed up all night because it's already warmed up; otherwise, it's a bit croaky. The same with photos. They always want to photograph you first thing in the morning and I look like two years older.

Did songs on Nightbird such as I'll Be There, All This Time Still Falling Out Of Love and Sweet Surrender start out as fully realized dance numbers or did they evolve into them?

I think the tempo's usually up there, around the 120 BPM (beats per minute) mark. Sometimes we just whip it up a bit. Usually what can happen, with a song like *Oh*, *L'Amour*, you know when you get these songs that are anthems, they're almost like hymns, you sing them in halftime, but then you put a dance beat behind it and it makes it even more uplifting. **▼**



May 5-18, 2005

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

The Spanish gay film, 'Bear Cub,' opens May 11 inTampa Bay — and sheds some light on parenting, promiscuity and commitment issues By Lawrence Ferber

"A bear has this

father figure much

himself than the usual

gay type you get in

more directly in

After months of an admittedly very slow national release, the Spanish-language film, Bear Cub, will emerge before Florida audiences after a lengthy hiberna-

Available on DVD on Tuesday, May 12, the film will premier locally Tampa Bay's Sunrise Cinemas at Old Hyde Park Village as part of its Café Cinematheque International discussion series on Wednesday, May 13.

The second film in the past year to look at the world of the gay bear subculture — John Waters' A Dirty Shame viewed these men with the same distaff as nymphomaniacs and midget-lovers -Bear Cub is a little more serious and

much more provocative.

The sexy Spanish import examines the life of a promiscuous dentist who must balance his fleeting ways with an array of hairy tricks when his 9-year-old nephew ends up in his care.

Billed as a sort-of gay Spanish mix of Baby Boom and Kramer vs. Kramer, the film focuses on frisky Pedro (José Luis García-Pérez) who feels put-upon when his irresponsible sister leaves Bernardo (David Castillo) in his care while she gallivants to India. But following a shocking turn of events, this disrupting temporary visit becomes a full-time

living situation.

Frustrated, Pedro adjusts his life accordingly and grows to love the kid, as do his circle of friends and neighbors. Things are looking up until Bernardo's estranged grandmother, Dona Teresa (Empar Ferrer), who wants to take the boy away for a more "moral" upbringing, arrives. And she'll play dirty to get what

> Openly gay director Miguel Albaladejo said that he actually the bear subculture before he began work on the Spanish title parents use

kindly towards their children).

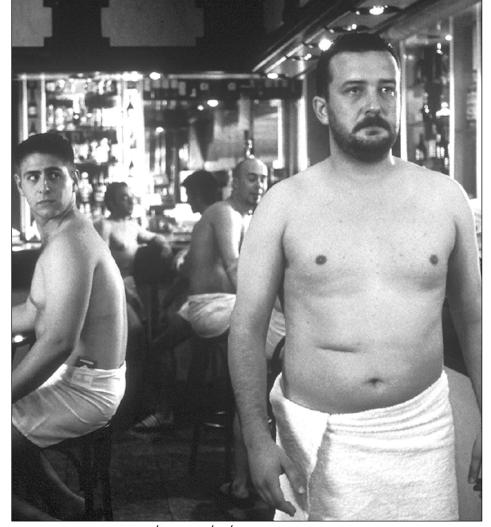
To get familiar with the scene, he met a group of bears who took him out to Madrid's Hot bar, which eventually served as a shooting location.

"They're warm people, which you don't expect when you see someone so big," he said.

Albaladejo and Garcia-Perez chatted about their experience in the bear community — and the ages-old adage of not performing with children.

WATERMARK: Did anyone ever call you a bear, or "woofy," before

had no idea about Bear Cub (which is translated from Cachorro, a term



DANIEL MARTIN (left) cruises JOSÉ LUIS GARCÍA-PÉREZ in Bear Cub.

making this film, José Luis? JOSÉ LUIS GARCÍA-PÉREZ:

No. When I saw these people, I ate more to be more heavy. But the problem is not to gain more weight, it is to be more thin

MIGUEL ALBADEJO: He's not a bear. And his character likes bears but is more an admirer or chaser. He's not fat or full of hair. I look more like a bear. I am more fat and have more hair.

Did you learn anything surprising about bears?

GARCÍA-PÉREZ: What I learned was a lot of things about homosexual people in general. And now when I go to Madrid, I usually go to bear bars.

Did the bears on set find Jose Luis sexy?

ALBADEJO: Many of them of course found him very attractive but there was no beginning of anything. That was

GARCÍA-PÉREZ: They would have a problem with my girlfriend!

Are there benefits to growing up with a gay bear father?

ALBADEJO: Well, I don't think its good or bad if you compare it with any other sort of father. I think a child needs a responsible guardian to take care of him - a bear or heterosexual sportsman, a

CAFÉ CINEMATHEQUE **INTERNATIONAL: 'BEAR CUB'**

WHAT: An evening with the gay Spanish film, Bear Cub, with refreshments and a discussion afterwards.

WHEN: 7 p.m., Wednesday, May 11.

WHERE: Sunrise Cinemas in Old Hyde Park Village, 1609 W. Swann Ave. in Tampa.

WHO: George Meyer, film reviewer for the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, will lead the post-screen-

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lesbian writer or whatever. There is no good, bad, better or worse. But visually, it was important for me to make this father

A bear, psychoanalytically speaking, has this father figure much more directly in himself than the usual gay type you get in films, which is young or removes his body hair off or makes muscles. That kind of homosexual doesn't immediately represent that feeling of paternity and this was important to me. A bear can much more easily give you the impression of a

Continued on page 45



WATERCOLORS



JOSÉ LUIS GARCÍA-PÉREZ and DAVID CASTILLO share a domestic moment in Bear Cub.

BEAR CUB from page 44

Can you discuss Pedro's commitment issues?

GARCÍA-PÉREZ: This is a thread that takes him to the end of the film. He has an obligation to take care of the nephew and at the same time keeps his own life. It's the mixture everyone has. The lighter and deeper part. The commitment is both about his own life and also

with his nephew. He's a very real character to me. I myself am very irresponsible sometimes, yet regarding other things I can be very responsible.

During the bathhouse scene, did the guy who goes down on you actually make you feel good? It sounded rather

GARCÍA-PÉREZ: (Laughs) He made a very nice noise with his own hand.

One scene, in which you get it on with someone, was shot under a bridge, a real-life cruising area. Did you guys interrupt anyone?

GARCÍA-PÉREZ: No – the night before, there was a lot of people saying the next day we will be here making a movie! (Shooting that scene) was one of the funniest moments in making the whole film

I was like, 'What do I have to do?' Gay or not gay, when you have 40 people around you it's so uncomfortable. To feel good, the only way to feel nice about what you are doing is to laugh and be relaxed.

Did any of the kids' parents have issues with the subject matter?

ALBADEJO: No. In the case of David, he's from a middle-class family in Madrid. They have two children and I explained to the parents as well as the child what the film is about, that there would be explicit sex, that there would be many gay people on set and the conversations among them would be natural.

They had no problem with it whatsoever, and David had no problem with it. The parents thought the film was wonderful and liked it a lot. David also saw the film with the exception of three scenes – the opening credits, the dark room and the sauna. But the scene with Pedro and his lover in bed, he has seen that.

GARCÍA-PÉREZ: David will be a lovely actor. If my performance is quite

good, it is thanks to him.

Did he say he wants to be a bear when he grows up?

ALBADEJO: No, he knows he is heterosexual.

He could still be a bear!

ALBADEJO: He is very small, thin and petit. He will be a very attractive man but a completely different kind.

Every bear, cub, and chaser I know is excited to see this film.

ALBADEJO: They are crying! They love to see themselves in the film. Drama queens! **▼**





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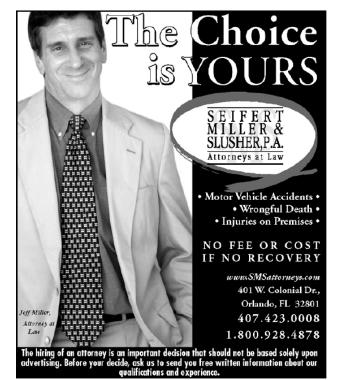
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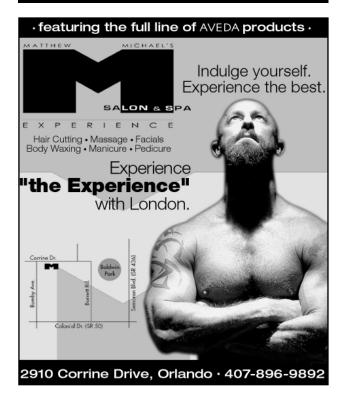
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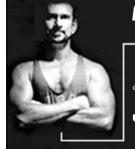
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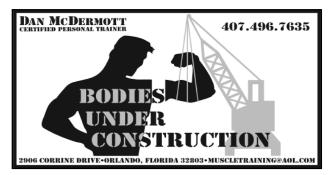
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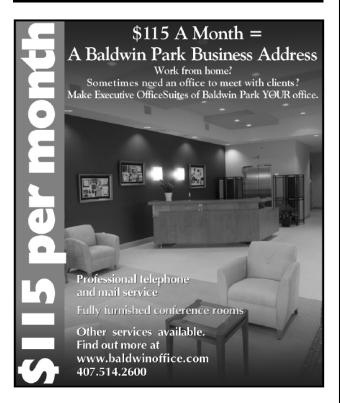
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ADVICE



HOROSCOPES

DON'T LET YOUR EMOTIONS STAND IN YOUR WAY, TAURUS

By Diane Wilde

ARIES — **MARCH 21-APRIL 20:** If you've been feeling stuck and frustrated, hold on tight, because you now have the rocket power to blast out of any situation. Yet you still aren't exactly clear what direction to take as you re-evaluate your situations, so when you aren't sure, just stop for a moment to be sure.

TAURUS — **APRIL 21-MAY 21:** There will be a lot of time and energy spent both defending the status quo on one hand and wanting total change on the other. Emotional reactions to practical discussions are possible now and probably won't serve you well. Instead, remain focused on understanding the situation from many different perspectives and try dialoguing to a better understanding and perhaps a compromise.

GEMINI — **MAY 22-JUNE 21:** Please work very hard to keep your darker, pessimistic twin from over-shadowing all that is going "right" in your world. Instead, stay focused on all that's not yet as you'd like it to be, and figure out how to achieve it. Rest assured that these mental and emotional challenges are here for a reason, which is the final re-evaluation of the past and fine-tuning for your future.

CANCER — **JUNE 22-JULY 22:** At last the planets have not only given you permission, they're actually pushing you to go out and be more social, make new contacts, thereby increasing the opportunity to do more business with more people. That fits in perfectly with your need to increase your earning power, yet still enjoy quality of life, because all work and no play doesn't make for a happy crab.

LEO — JULY 23-AUG. 22: You've got to pay close attention to all the projects and people who are counting on you, and you'll have lots of get-up-and-go to get up and do. However, all that energy can turn impatient and angry if you let it, so be aware of it, and stop it before it takes control. The key here is not to take on more than you can do and then resent it.

VIRGO — AUG. 23-SEPT. 23: Other people, their opinions, and their needs will vie for attention as you try to make plans and changes in your own life. It will be good for you to listen and consider before making final decisions on potentially life-altering courses of action. It's important to speak your mind, but don't forget to allow your heart its

LIBRA — **SEPT. 24-OCT. 23:** You're anxious to continue purging the old, no-longer-useful habits, thoughts and projects that are no longer useful in your life. It's important to clean up any past mess, including paperwork you've been avoiding, or conveniently forgetting. Relationship ideals are examined, as is your ideas around security and change.

SCORPIO — **OCT. 24-NOV. 22:** How you feel drives your decisions. Once a goal is stated, your focus shifts to how to achieve it. Expect to want to shift gears mid-month, however, when your sense of security and reality get put to the test by retrograding planets shaking up the home-front. Everything and everybody will come back into sync if you compromise and cooperate.

SAGITTARIUS — **NOV. 23-DEC. 21:** You're determined to work on your home and yourself, as well as to change things that aren't working for you. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater though. Instead try doing things differently, especially in business. This is a time to keep the status quo and not do anything rash.

CAPRICORN — **DEC. 22-JAN. 20:** Hoorah! You finally get to go out and play. Don't worry though, even as you allow your creative self to run free, your practical self still has one eye on the budget and the chores. You have the opportunity to break free of past negative patterns, yet part of you feels insecure at the thought of what that might actually mean and what you might have to give up, or do without.

AQUARIUS — **JAN 21.-FEB. 19:** Your creative juices are flowing and good ideas and inspired problem-solving come to you effortlessly. Just be careful you don't trip and fall rushing off to try them out. Accidents are lurking, waiting for an opportunity to pull the chair out from under you, so take extra care, and don't daydream at the red light.

PISCES — **FEB. 20-MARCH 20:** Emotional, physical and financial challenges — past and present — will push you towards re-evaluating your goals, your career and your relationships with an eye towards improving your current situation. Security versus freedom is a universal theme this month, and more information and knowledge is needed, as well as more dialogue with all involved. **▼**

Answer Key for THE MIZ QUIZ (from Page 33)

- 1. San Francisco, Calif. 2. Philadelphia, Pa. (Cosette is the "Liberty Belle.")
- 3. Paris, France. 4. Miami Beach. (with the slogan "Catch the Waif.") 5. Vienna, Austria. 6. Madrid, Spain. 7. Chicago, Ill. (This is the first time Cosette's facial features changed; her eyes look left.) 8. Boston, Mass. 9. Hollywood, Calif.
- 10. New York City, N.Y. (The opening on Broadway.) 11. Honolulu, Hawaii.



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TRANSITIONS

CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS: No longer standing by her man **TAMMY WYNETTE** (5/5);; gay composer PETER ILICH TCHAIKOVSKY and Madonna mentor EVA PERON (5/7); muskrat lover **TONI TENNILLE** (5/8); **KIM** "Please stop calling me 'Tootie'" **FIELDS** (5/12); Alwaysdependable for a punch line BEA ARTHUR (5/13); original Disney Nemo (and likely upset his ride is still closed) JAMES MASON (5/15); über-homosexual LIBERACE (5/16); Nine Inch Nail-er TRENT REZNOR (5/17); and SNL's "ignorant slut" protégé TINA FEY (5/18).

LOCAL MEMORIALS: J. WESLEY

WILDER, 55, of Fern Park was honored at a memorial service at Joy MCC on April 23. He passed away April 10. A lifelong renaissance man and constant learner, Wilder will be remembered for his commitment to Joy MCC and for his work as an AIDS activist. He is survived by his family and many friends.

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The openly gay PETER ILICH TCHAIKOVSKY shared a birthday with Evita Peron.



Don't act so surprised, BEA ARTHUR, because you're turning 81 on May 13.

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Friday, May 13, 8pm - 1am, FUSION, The PrideFest kick-off party at the Waterside at the Quay, 216 Sarasota Quay. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. FMI call 941-928-9890. Sponsored by The Southwest Florida Business Guild & ABODE Real Estate Company.





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Saturday, May 14, 8pm - Midnight, The Lite Party, the Official Pridefest Non-alcohol After Party at the Ringling School of Art and Design, 2700 N.Tamiami Trail. Cover is \$5. FMI call 941-351-2518.







Saturday, May 14, 6pm until......, The Official PrideFest After Party at Club Triangles, 1130 M.L. King, Jr. Way. Cover is \$5.

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Americans wish they could change to an entirely new career. And as many fields, particularly those in big industry, continue to see workforces slashed, while areas such as health care can't seem find enough employees. Suddenly, the thought

of changing jobs to something entirely different isn't as foreign or as shocking as it once was.

The motivations to find something else are plentiful. Job dissatisfaction, a discovery of hidden talents, a desire for a raise in pay that's more than the occasional "bump" - all of

Continued on page 8



Local GLBT consumers earn \$21.9 billion income annually By Dave Wiethop

I spoke at a luncheon sponsored by the local public relations society a few months ago as one of several "alternative" press people invited to talk about our individual markets. In addition to the Hispanic-American and the African-American media, the luncheon also included editors from newspapers for the Catholic and Jewish communities.

Fidgeting with my notes as each one of the edi-

tors or associate publishers spoke, it dawned on me that our publications were geared toward a specific, higher-income slice of our communities. And except for our ethnic and religious backgrounds, our readers seemed to be very much the same. I pondered aloud that I was certain that there was at least one household that regularly read all five of our publications.

That was a few months ago. Now that Watermark's 2004-05 Readership Survey has been completed, the dollar figures that I quoted on that rainy March afternoon are substantially higher. Five years ago, the average household income of

Continued on page 11







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GOING FOR BROKE

Filing for bankruptcy may be an extreme option — but it's becoming more and more difficult when you owe money By Michael T. Sheridan, Esq.

Most of us have probably considered filing bankruptcy as debts have begun to pile up and overwhelm us.

In 2004, 1.1 million people filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy and another half-million people filed for Chapter 13 bankruptcy. Job loss, layoffs, salary cuts, medical bills from serious illness, economic downturns, poor credit card management and any combination of these issues can cause serious financial trouble - and ultimately lead to bankruptcy.

Yet it's imperative to know more about what lies ahead before you make the decision to file. It helps considerably to have a basic understanding of the origin of the laws surrounding this decision, what this means, what types of bankruptcy protection are available, recent changes to current bankruptcy law and things to consider if bankruptcy may be in your future.

NOT A NEW CONCEPT

The word "bankruptcy" traces back to Italy during the Middle Ages. At that time, when a businessman was unable to pay his debts, his trading bench was destroyed. From the Italian for "broken bench" or

"banca rotta," comes the word "bank-

Modern bankruptcy law originated in England in 1542 during the reign of King

Henry VIII. With additional changes during the 1700s. English bankruptcy law evolved into the model upon which current American bankruptcy law is based. Congress enacted the first bankruptcy law on April 4, 1800, virtually copying the English bankruptcy law at the time.

Since then, American bankruptcy law has been revised numerous

times. Most recently, on April 20, President Bush signed the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005 and contains the most sweeping changes to bankruptcy law in decades.

Bankruptcy is a legal proceeding under federal law where a debtor is granted partial or complete relief from having to pay his or her debts. The relief provided by the

> bankruptcy court is an "automatic stay" that stops all creditor collection activities immediately upon filing a bankruptcy petition.

At the end of the case, the judge enters a "discharge" order relieving the debtor of the obligation to pay all or some of his or her debts, depending on the type of bankruptcy protection sought.

The court may require the debtor to file Chapter 13 instead if it is perceived that the debtor is "abusing" the bankruptcy system to get out of paying their bills.

• Am I 90 days or more behind in my bills? • Are creditors calling me for pay-

Have I been sued by a creditor?

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE FILING FOR BANKRUPTCY

• Is my income insufficient to pay

both my routine living expenses

• Am I paying credit card bills with other credit cards?

and my debts?

- Are collection agencies chasing
- Have I had a recent serious illness and incurred substantial medical bills?

file Chapter 7 bankruptcy).

MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT

The Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005, which takes effect on Oct. 17, contains sweeping changes to current law and likely will make obtaining relief substantially more Under the new law, the difficult. court will determine whether a case qualifies for Chapter 7 or Chapter 13 by applying a two-part "qualifying test." If the debtor has enough income (after reasonable living expenses, as determined by the IRS) to pay at least 25% of "nonpriority unsecured debt" - such as credit cards and the debtor's income is more than the Florida median income, the court will not allow the debtor to file Chapter 7 bank-

The debtor, however, may file for Chapter 13 bankruptcy. If the income is below the state's median income and the debtor can still afford to pay 25% of unsecured debt, the debtor may be able to file Chapter 7.

Beginning in October, the federal government will grant few exceptions to the qualifying test. In addition, debtors may now reasonably estimate his or her current living expenses — but the new law will derive the living standards and expenses from much more stringent IRS regulations. The law will also force all debtors will be required to meet with (and pay for) a credit and money management counselor within the six months before filing bankruptcy.

However, bankruptcy remains on a credit report for at least 10 years and, for credit obtained after filing, increase the

If you believe you are a candidate for bankruptcy, consult with an attorney. If the attorney advises, you should consider filing for bankruptcy as soon as possible before the new law takes effect. Bankruptcy is a serious matter that can have far-reaching effects on your financial

Michael T. Sheridan, Esq. is an Orlando attorney who specializes in civil law.

TWO MAIN OPTIONS

Individual debtors may proceed under Chapter 7, seeking complete discharge of all their debts. Another option is Chapter 13, where the debtor pays at least some of the debts over time.

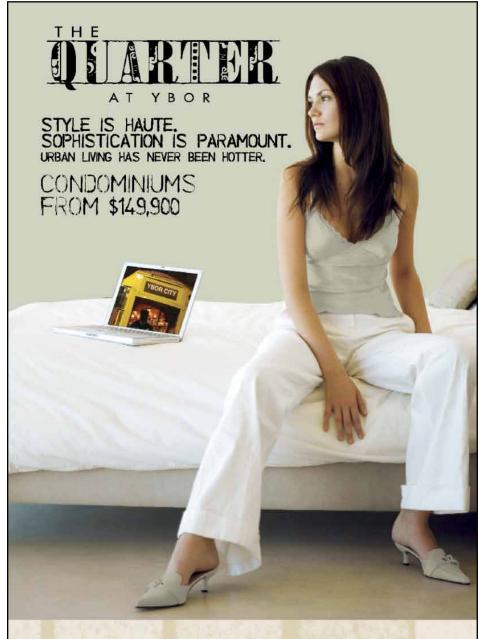
Under the current law, Chapter 7 bankruptcy is available to a debtor who has more debts than income to pay them. Under Chapter 7, the debtor is completely relieved from the responsibility to pay with certain exceptions. Also, if nonexempt assets exceed the debts, the assets must be turned over to the bankruptcy trustee, who may sell the nonexempt assets to pay debts.

In Florida, assets which are generally exempt from bankruptcy include homestead real estate, including mobile homes; \$1,000 equity in a motor vehicle; \$1,000 in household goods; life insurance; health aids; worker's compensation; retirement accounts, including IRAs and 401(k) accounts; government benefits (including Social Security and aid for dependent children); and wages earned within 60 days before filing bankruptcy.

Chapter 13 bankruptcy protects a debtor with at least some income to pay creditors after all reasonable normal living expenses (as estimated by the debtor) are paid. They must also submit a payment plan to the court, including a budget showing take-home pay and living expenses.

Then, the excess income is paid to the trustee who pays that income to creditors based on a 36-month schedule. At the end of the payment plan, any money still owed to the creditors is forgiven and does not have to be repaid. Chapter 13 bankruptcy also allows a debtor to "catch up" on payments on secured loans like mortgages and car loans (this is not available when you





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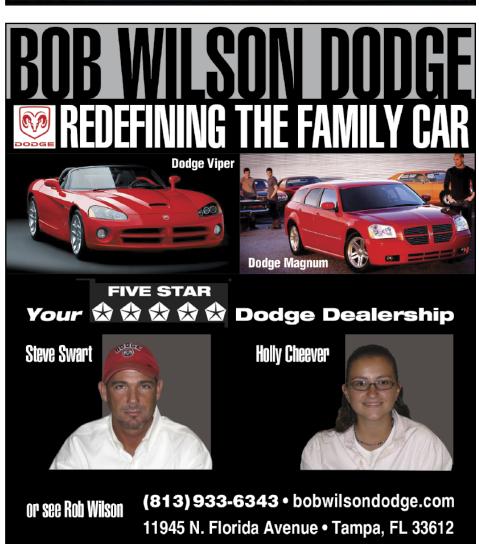


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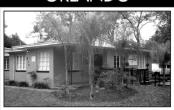
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GOING GLOBAL

Online retailing keeps GLBT-friendly stores going strong By Steve Blanchard

Where would today's GLBT culture be today without the Internet? How else are you going to meet up with that special someone for a quick, friendly visit or buy that video you're not completely comfortable carrying through a store?

The world of online shopping gets larger every year and Florida stores catering to the GLBT community are growing with it.

Two locally owned clothing boutiques aimed at gay men have launched successful Web-based retailing operations that allow shoppers to browse from the comforts of

The popular Urban Body, with physical locations in Tampa's South Howard District and Orlando's Thornton Park, launched UrbanBody.com, while the Suncoast Resort-based What2Wear operates What2wearonline.com.

It only makes sense. Survey after survey find that gays and lesbians have been among the first to embrace the Internet, particularly younger members of the community. With billions of disposable income at stake, industry observers say that retailers are folly to ignore the GLBT Internet marketplace.

Robert Geller, the owner of What2Wear, took his store online last September and the response so far has been incredible.

"They say that Polo is a lifestyle," Geller said. "We're doing the same thing for a gay clientele and now we're world-

The 10-year-old retail store now has customers across the ocean in Great Britain, Germany and even Israel. The Web site for the store has also helped promote sales domestically.

"We sell quite a bit locally, even across the bay in Tampa," Geller said. "But we have customers in places you wouldn't associate with gay fashion - like Kansas and Illinois."

But what is it that drives a customer to purchase from a Florida-based store?

"It's convenient and customers really like the service we provide and the quality of the products we offer," Geller said. "Our top sellers are jock straps, believe it or

In fact, those jocks sold so well that Geller took the initiative to add What2Wear's own personal touch to the not-so-comfortable but sexy undergarment. The store offers an exclusive line of jocks with bold words on the front declaring "Top," "Bottom" and of course, "Daddy."

Geller knows his fashion trends and products. He did his undergraduate study at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and recently completed an MBA at the University of South Florida. That education, coupled with an extensive career in

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The St. Petersburg-based What2Wear has customers for its tops, swimwear, underwear and slacks from across the globe through its Web site.

retail, make for some pretty great ideas.

"We also design some tank tops and beach towels, which sell really well, especially since we're here at the resort," Geller

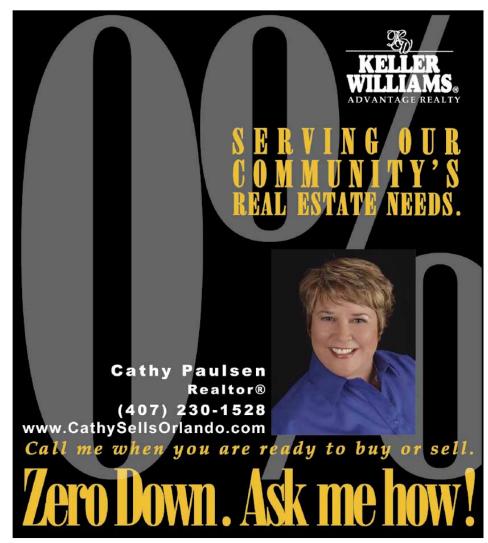
With the Internet on his side, Geller can only see positive things for What2Wear. The store saw its best year on record in 2004 and at last count, more than 7,600 customers are on the store's newsletter e-mailing list. That number grows daily.

"I anticipate we're going to clear \$100,000 just online this year," Geller said. "We've had two days when the Web site out-sold our physical store. Granted, those were rainy days, but it's great that we have that opportunity.'

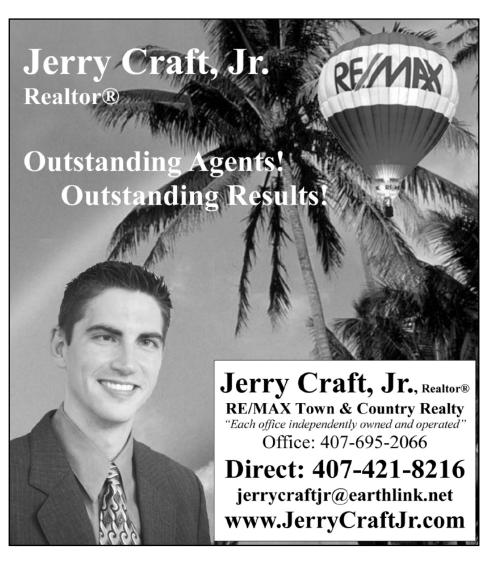
The store's four employees stay busiest on Sundays thanks to the weekly T-Dance at Suncoast, according to Geller. That event, coupled with vacationing members of the GLBT community fuels sales daily.

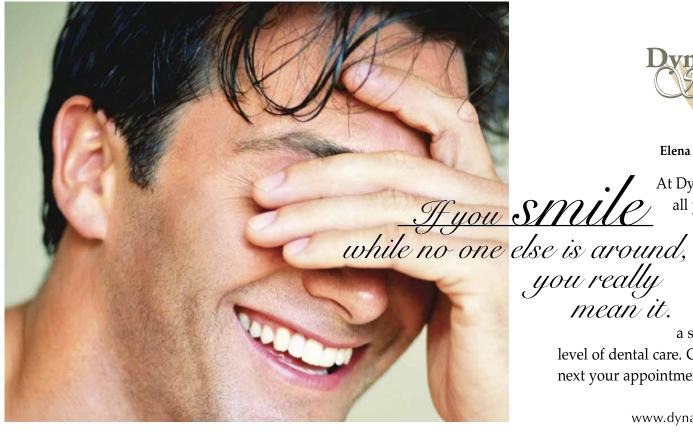
'So many people say that Suncoast isn't going to last or that this lot is going to become a Wal-Mart or a Target," Geller said. "This place isn't going anywhere and I can see the money they're putting into this place. So we're not going anywhere either, and you can add that in bold, under-













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There were no awkward feelings about financing the car together." — Trace Curp & Chris Hold





SECOND ACT from page 1

these factors can push a person from one occupational path to another.

Sandy Pheil is a professional life coach who has experienced her own change in careers and now helps motivate others make their own changes. After giving up a high-powered corporate position in marketing to start her life-coaching firm, she quickly discovered that she was not alone in her desire to professionally start anew.

"I've been amazed since I left corporate America at how many people hate their jobs," Pheil says.

"They go to work because they 'have' to go there, doing things they 'have' to do."

In questioning her own career, she found it easier to describe what she *didn't* like as opposed to what she *did* like. Pheil realized that she felt as if she had to sacrifice her own self-identity – including being an open lesbian – for her job.

"Family, relationships, style of living – these are all things that is really what life should be about," Pheil says. "In our work, we want to do something that makes us feel value and pride and gives us reason for getting up in the morning."

It may be easier for many gay men and lesbians to change careers as opposed to their straight co-workers. It can be less traumatic to take financial risks when you don't have children or families depending on that income.

"We have more of an opportunity – less overhead, if you will," Pheil says.

A THIRD CAREER, A THIRD-PLACE CAFÉ

Sarasota resident Betsy Nelson is in the process of making a rather drastic job change, though it's not the first in her

overall career path. She's giving up her psychotherapy practice of 12 years to open her own coffee and wine café this month.

Some have joked that she herself may be most in need of therapy to take the distinctly different direction her career path.

Others – mostly those with restaurant and bartending

experience – have offered her praise for the new-found ability to capitalize on hearing people's problems *while* making income by selling them food and beverages. Maybe the two fields aren't as far



Life coach SANDY PHEIL emphasizes that positive changes can come with major - but not insurmountable - risks.

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apart as they seem.

Located on the edge of Downtown Sarasota, near the northeast corner of Osprey Avenue and Mound Street, Nelson's new enterprise, Metro Coffee and Wine Café, will take up 1,500 square feet in a mixed-used building that was once an auto dealership. Her neighbors will also soon include an art gallery next door, a suitable companion business that Nelson hopes will take advantage of the café's similar market segments, and vice versa. When completed, Metro will have seating for 48 coffee sippers inside and 30 outside.

"When we're full, the chef's going to be really busy," Nelson laughs.

The chef won't be the only one – Nelson will still see a small handful of her clients in addition to running Metro. The three to four clients she plans to keep – at least for a while – are primarily children.

"Once you take a kid on as a client, it's important to see them through to college age. Attachment issues are important," the therapist-entrepreneur says.

Nelson brings an interesting background to her new profession. After college, her initial career involved teaching golf professionally to the LPGA. It was during that time she met her partner, with whom she's been for 18 years.

"I was in Philadelphia and she was down here," Nelson says about the eventual decision to move to Florida. After teaching golf for a while, she went into clinical social work, an occupation that she followed for 12 years. Though Nelson laughs that "it seemed time for another career."

Nelson, a licensed clinical social worker who specializes in couples therapy and working with grief and loss issues, has seen a rich representation of society in her practice. She hopes to see the same mix of people in her new venture.

The name "Metro" speaks to the environment Nelson hopes to create. To accomplish that, she plans on advertising in several alternative publications, making sure word gets out to the various unique minorities of Sarasota. She's also serving as a sponsor of this month's Sarasota Pridefest and will distribute samples of her frozen beverages.

So far, her therapy clients have had a mixed assortment of reactions. Many have welcomed the opportunity to get to know her in a different atmosphere.

Nelson says that many professions allow for socializing between "provider" and "buyer" – but psychotherapy is not one of them. And even though many in the restaurant business will say they themselves are the original low-cost therapy providers, Nelson has had to talk about setting boundaries with some of her current clients. Though she jokes about it, she wants to make sure her café does not completely become a place where people come for "a beer and an ear."

MORE THAN ADVICE AT THE BAR

In setting up the café, Nelson has also learned about her own boundaries. "Within the last year, I've learned a

Continued on page 9

ACT from page 44

lot about my own needs and self-limitations," Nelson says. "I've learned not to punish myself for things I didn't know.

Ten years ago, I couldn't have done this. I feel pretty confident about it now."

Sometimes the grass isn't always greener on the other side of the fence.

"I used to complain about the amount of paperwork involved in therapy,' Nelson says. "Managed care has made that a very unpleasant part of the process.

She trails off, sighing. Little did she realize the length of the paper trail involved in the food and beverage industry. A lot of the tasks required to open the café have been self-taught. Nelson says she's been "learning along the way and asking others in the field for advice."

"I never would have known I was an entrepreneur at heart," Nelson says. In

"Within the last

year, I've

learned a lot

about my own

needs and self-

limitations. I've

learned not to

punish myself

didn't know."

for things I

doing skill evaluations of herself, she learned that many of the tasks she enjoyed doing – and excelled at - were entrepreneurial based entities.

Though there were certainly many directions she could have harnessed that entrepreneurial spirit, she elected to focus on coffees as it is a product she says she understands. Finding unique coffee bars and bistros on trips out of town, she realized Sarasota was lacking in that market niche. In business,

the best opportunities are found where an under-served market exists.

Beyond the coffees and wines, she's also creating an upscale fun café food menu that reflects much of her own tastes. Nelson is a self-professed "foodie" and her passion shines through when describing how the coffee beans sold in her shop are grown and harvested as well as when she describes the menu.

Working with the chef she's hired – a man who is as passionate about food as she is – they've collaborated on a menu that is also kid-friendly and doesn't appeal to just one demographic.

During the construction process she ran into some friends, blue-collar types, who expressed concerns that her business may be too upscale for their pocketbooks. It was a conversation she's taken

"As soon as people asked if I would have affordable things, I knew I needed to keep an eye on my prices," Nelson says.

To raise capital, Nelson sold some shares in her business and took out some home equity loans. Her approaches attracted the attention of the Southwest Florida Business Guild, which recently asked her to serve on a discussion panel

on how to start a small business.

In hiring staff and bringing on others to share her vision, she realizes she'll still be doing a bit of mentoring, similar to her work in therapy.

"I can't imagine not doing life coaching in this," Nelson says

In both teaching golf and practicing psychotherapy, Nelson has seen how the education process, of learning a new skill or task, can leave a person feeling vulnerable. As she embarks on her newest career, Nelson admits she has her own vulnerabilities. She's concerned about having other people's money invested in her dream and hopes the café is successful not only for her but for her investors as well.

"I've accepted that it's OK not to know some things, that I don't have to be an expert in everything," Nelson reasons. "I'm relying on the expertise of others.

We're gonna learn together."

CHANGE IS GOOD,

RIGHT?

Life coach Pheil would see Nelson's attitude as the correct one. She advises clients to accept that any change is not going to be easy, but that they in turn control their own destiny. Risks and fears are part of any positive growth. It is important to have a plan, one that forecasts five years

"You may be a very self-motivated person, but when you become your

own boss you have to remember there is no one making you do anything," Pheil says. "Still, there's an incredible feeling of freedom that comes along with that.'

As tempting as it is to treat that new profession as a dream vacation, Pheil says it's important to treat it as a real job with realistic goals as part of an established solid business plan.

"Without risks there is no positive change," Pheil says. "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten."

▼



Sarasota entrepreneur BETSY NELSON says that she realizes that her new career as a café owner has more than a few things in common with her work as a therapist. Photo by Kirk Hartlage



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CASH from page 1

Watermark readers stood at \$68,620, while the national average was \$40,816.

Today, the figures for *Watermark* readers' household income jumped about 21% to \$86,485 — while the national average has sluggishly increased about 4%. The average individual incomes of our readers, measured with this survey, tallied at \$51,561

Our survey, upon which we'll continue to report on periodically, suggests that — like several other conclusive studies — gays and lesbians are generally earning some big money. The question is how to harness that power.

'BUYING POWER'

First of all, it's important to see what these figures can mean.

While many people see the U.S. in terms of cultural, governmental and climatologic boundaries, marketers view the country in terms of metropolitan statistical areas, or MSAs. Much of

Watermark's readership is based in an Orlando/ Tampa ADI, or area of dominant influence. That includes Daytona Beach, Melbourne, Orlando, Winter Haven, Lakeland Tampa Bay, Bradenton and Sarasota — and represents a population of 6,445,836.

This puts the *Watermark* readership at No. 4 among rankings of the country's MSAs, behind New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, and ahead of Dallas, Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Washington and Philadelphia.

Using a fairly conservative estimate of 6.6% of population that would identify itself as GLBT, this puts about 425,425 queers in the I-4 corridor and beyond. Using the average individual income,

the hands of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders in our area *annually*.

These figures are not too far off from

These figures are not too far off from the data collected and reported by Witeck-Combs Communication. The firm is regarded as one of the best sources for national research into the spending habits of the gay, lesbian and bisexual population.

The firm's 2005 report on gay buying power estimated it at \$610 billion, up from \$580 billion the year before.

"Buying power is one key signal of the growth and size of the gay, lesbian and bisexual consumer market," said Don Montuori with Packaged Facts, which worked with Witeck-Combs on the 2005 report. The latest data uses the marketing-

friendly term "buying power" instead of "disposable personal income," to designate total after-tax income that's usually spent on personal consumption, personal interest payments and savings. This usually equals about 86%.

In presenting the report earlier this

year, Witeck-Combs CEO Bob Witeck emphasized that "buying power does not merely suggest wealth nor does it imply that same-sex households are more affluent than others."

WHAT ABOUT US?

89% of Watermark

restaurant at least

readers dine at a

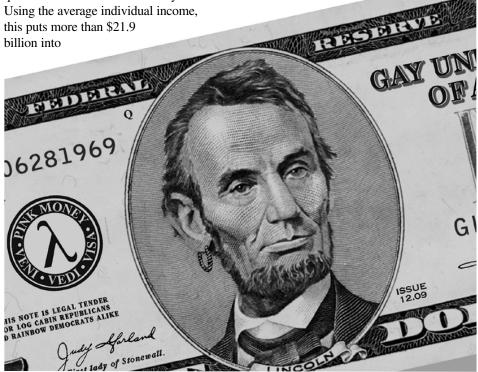
weekly and 2%

dine out at least

11 times a week.

The 2005 national report assumes that the gay population very much reflects the U.S. population in terms of earning money. Yet several factors behind the income generation suggest that those estimates are con-

Continued on page 12



THE BEST LOOKING BARTENDERS IN TOWN* WHAT NIGHT DOES THIS GUY WORK? What's his name? Does he have a boyfriend? Inquiring minds want to know. So, come in, order a drink and find out if your idea of the best looking bartender is behind the bar. BE SURE TO COME TO THESE EVENTS... May 13 Drag King Show May 21

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CASH from page 11

servative when applied to gay and lesbian households.

We've always known that gays and lesbians tend to gravitate to big cities where the culture can be more accepting – and the pay scales are generally much higher. And despite the stereotype, gay couples are much less likely to have children in their households. Far more of these couples have both partners in the workforce, which generates higher household incomes – particularly among gay men.

Still, don't underestimate the gay consumer, long believed to be the bellwether of trends in the marketplace.

In fact, *Watermark's* Readership Survey suggests that gays and lesbians are willing to spend money. The average home value of our readers stands at more than \$217,000 and about a third of them plan to buy a new home in the next year, with 53% planning to buy furniture for it. Some 69% of respondents contribute to an IRA, a 401(k) plan or another retirement plan and 56% own bonds, stock and mutual funds.

Readers buy airline tickets (85%), CDs (80%), books (73%), DVDs (69%), skin care products and cosmetics (63%), theatre tickets (63%), flowers (61%), DVD or VHS players (56%), concert tickets (54%), computers (34%) and jewelry (29%).

If our readers are any reflection on the gay population as a whole, 89% of the respondents dine at a restaurant at least once a week, with about two-thirds reporting meals out between once and three times a week. Two percent of our readers dine out at least 11 times a week.

With an estimated \$610 billion at stake nationally — and \$21.9 billion locally — can this financial power be harnessed? Quite possibly, marketing observers say.

"Gay households should never be over-simplified," Witeck has said.
"Growing trends of acceptance and respect throughout society make it possible for more gays and lesbians to safely self-identify and to vote not only with their ballots but also with their dollars in the market."

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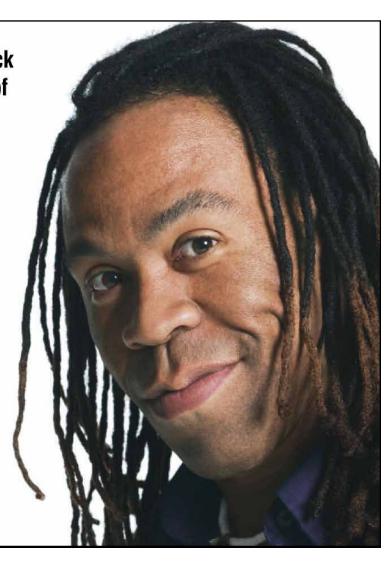
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14May 5-18, 2005

SOUTHERN NIGHTS RECEIVES MAKEOVER

ORLANDO - When Southern Nights reopens later this month, the bright blue awning over the entrance won't be the only major change that patrons will see. The venerable GLBT nightclub is undergoing an extreme makeover worthy of any network reality show.

The club closed without notice several months ago, leaving patrons and employees scratching their heads over the abruptness of the decision.

The club's new management says the prompt closing was necessary to properly begin the renovations, thus allowing

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it to adequately compete in an everchanging and increasingly competitive nightclub market. Time was crucial, particularly when the new owners wanted to reopen the club in time for Orlando's biggest week, Gay Days Weekend.

"We want to have a clean place for people to come in to," said Alex Miotti, the new president and general manager of Southern Nights. "The club needed some work to achieve that."

Among the biggest changes: new air-conditioning, smoke disposal systems, a renovated patio area — and the loss of the club's show bar.

Motorists along South Bumby Avenue have watched crews working to repair a leaking roof that was in desperate need of attention. Crews have even put new shingles on the façade in the front of the building.

"The focus of the renovations is to make the club safe for both the staff and its patrons," Miotti said. "There was so much change needed to be done that to stay open would not have been comfortable for the staff, the customers, or the renovation crew."

Bar manager Dean Collier agreed, saying that the club "needed more than just a Band-Aid" of repairs.

While much will remain the same, primarily the location of the bars and the dance floor, the redesign of the club has been more upscale to match the onslaught of new chic hangouts in Orlando's GLBT nightlife. Miotti agreed that the bar had indeed been raised in the area's club scene, both for new clubs and current operations.

"Southern has always had a basement-type look to it," Miotti said, referring both to the building's low-ceiling, tiered areas, sunken dance floor and general den-like atmosphere. Wood paneling back-lit with lights tied in to the club's sound system will brighten up the building's interior.

The patio has received new landscaping and a newly tiled fountain. An expanded deck will also hold additional seating and will host monthly outdoor art

festivals, according to the club's marketing promoter, John Sullivan.

What is likely to be seen as the club's biggest change is the refocus of the space that formerly held Southern Nights' show bar in the southwest corner of the building.

The room will now be called Rendezvous at Southern Nights and will serve as a low-key lounge area. Rendezvous will serve as a happy hour bar lounge that will open at 4 p.m. A door leading to South Bumby Avenue has been installed to serve as a separate entrance to the lounge area until the remainder of the club opens at 8 p.m.

Still, the rumors still continue to fly about

the newest life of Southern Nights. The new owner and managers have heard them all.

Because the new owner, Randall Greene, is involved in the medical community, some speculated that the building will become a medical office. While high-rise housing construction in Downtown Orlando has boomed, other observers believed the location would be home to the next condo construction project.

And since the new owner is straight

– a trait that past staffers say has been a
long-held "tradition" in the club's ownership – some have projected that Southern
Nights would be turned into a club catering to a heterosexual clientele.

Miotti said none of the above is true. "Randall didn't invest in the Southern Nights name and building to turn it into a straight club," Miotti said. "It just makes no business sense to do it."

Southern Nights has always been known for its show bar and Miotti said that tradition will continue, though not in the same incarnation as before. Drag presentations are anticipated to be held on the club's dance floor, an area that allows for more people to see the enter-



Crews have recently added a bright blue awning over the entrance to Orlando's soon-to-reopen Southern Nights. Another awning covers a new entrance added just to the south of this one.

They also hope to present other forms of entertainment including singers, pianists and musicians, as well as a few surprises.

tainment. Club management also expects

describing them as evening "hot spots"

that will occur randomly throughout the

shorter, quicker shows than before,

Miotti said that he understands much of the disappointment from bar regulars and the club's staff in the building's sudden and unannounced closing earlier this spring, a same-day occurrence from when the club was purchased. He also said that appreciates the anger of many of the staff members, as he has faced similar situations with previous jobs.

Time heals *most* wounds, at least.

Collier said he has heard from several of the club's former employees staff who've been able to find new careers after losing their jobs at Southern Nights. Many have used their layoffs as an opportunity to push themselves into long-held career goals, including real estate and nightclub ownership.

"It was probably the most difficult on dinosaurs like me who've been around here forever," Collier said.

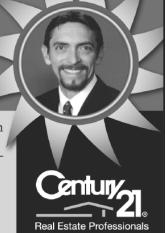
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CLUB SWANK OPENS WITH CAFÉ SOCIETY ATMOSPHERE

ORLANDO - The former Cactus Club has gone metrosexual, as the newly christened Club Swank has quietly opened its doors with a new décor and a distinctly theatrical flair.

The club held a successful soft opening on April 23 and now serves beer and wine. When owners Leesa Halstead Franzen and David Franzen secure the liquor license for the venue, they plan to announce the night spot's grand opening soon.

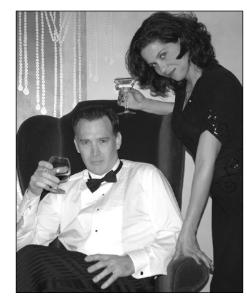
So far, clientele have noticed a change from the low-key, neighborhood feel of the Cactus.

"We're going for a place that's in the Café Society style like the Stork Club, Copa Cabana or the Cotton Club — a sort of 1930s-1940s club atmosphere with fabulous eclectic entertainment and floor shows with an upscale energetic vibe," said Leesa Franzen, who is also an actress and long-time member of Orlando's theatrical community.

All the bartenders and club workers will have theatrical training.

"We want to stay in the vernacular of the period and have them stay in character, maybe have impromptu scenes acted out at various points to make it interesting," she said

She'll have no problem finding enter-



DAVID FRANZEN (left) and LEESA HALSTEAD FRANZEN own the new Club Swank.

tainment. Several local performers have already offered their talents, including polished cabaret acts, karaoke nights, drag shows, and lesbian striptease shows.

Recently, the club co-hosted the Orlando Fringe Festival Preview After-Party with the nearby Peacock Room.

The Franzens, who are married, have redecorated the venue at 1300 N. Mills Ave. to reflect the uptown look.

Along with the new club concept, the Franzens drastically changed the décor to include new lighting fixtures, carpet, tile,



Club Swank's newly re-envisioned patio offers a kitschy Tiki bar motif.

stage area lighting and murals and transformed the outdoor patio with a Tiki bar theme replete with a fountain, masks and thatched-roof sitting areas. They've also added a new roof, reworked the air conditioning and updated the bathrooms.

Initially, the hours will be Tuesday through Sunday, 7 p.m. to 2 a.m.

"We plan to eventually have earlier happy hours and maybe tea dances on Sunday. We want everyone to feel comfortable and enjoy the diverse entertainment."

Margaret Nolan

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TOMES SHORTENS ITS HOURS BEFORE CLOSING FOR GOOD

TAMPA - If patrons haven't had a chance to visit Tampa Bay's remaining gay bookstore, Tomes and Treasures, time may be running out.

After nearly 18 years, the bookstore will close its doors for good on May 29. The coffeehouse portion of the business, A Different Grind, sold its last cup on May 1.

The shop has shortened its hours. Instead of opening at 11 a.m. daily and closing at 11 p.m. weeknights and midnight on weekends, Tomes now closes at 7 p.m. nightly.

Owner Bill Kanouff, who has run

Tomes for the last 17 years, said that increased competition from major chain bookstores and the Internet — as well as a climbing debt load — contributed to his decision to end the business.

Kanouff said he has seen sales drop over the past 5 1/2 years. Located in a storefront on Howard Avenue in Tampa, an area that was once a bustling GLBTfriendly district until many gays and lesbians cashed and moved out.

The store owner will offer 50% discounts on merchandise through May 15, with a 75% discount afterwards.

lacktriangledown Staff reports



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GAY ACTIVISTS BLAST MICROSOFT

FOR NEUTRAL STANCE ON RIGHTS BILL

SEATTLE - Microsoft's decision to end its support for a Washington state gay rights bill it had supported in previous years may have resulted in a public relations disaster among GLBT consumers.

Microsoft has offered domestic partner benefits to same-sex couples since the early 1990s. It also has long barred



Microsoft CEO STEVE BALLMER: The company wanted to focus on business interests, not GLBT politics.

discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Yet, despite the corporation's friendliness to GLBT causes, the decision not to support the Washington bill has activists fuming.

The L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center, a gay and lesbian advocacy

group, asked Microsoft to return a civilrights award the organization gave the company four years ago.

"Because of Microsoft's apparent capitulation to the demands of anti-gay extremists and withdrawal of support for a bill that would do nothing more than protect gay and lesbian people from discrimination, we believe it's no longer worthy of our highest corporate honor," said Darrel Cummings, chief of staff for the center.

The same day, the Human Rights Campaign sent an open letter to Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer expressing "profound disappointment" that the company did not back the gay rights bill.

"While Microsoft's internal policies regarding GLBT diversity have been trendsetting, its reversal sends a signal, intended or not, that it is no longer supportive of its GLBT employees, customers and shareholders," HRC executive director Joe Solmonese wrote.

Because Microsoft had supported versions of the bill in years past, gay rights activists suggested the company had caved to the religious right.

Liberal blogs have lit up with scathing comments and rallying cries to buy machines from Microsoft rival Apple Computer Inc., to quit using Microsoft Internet Explorer to browse the Web, and to close Microsoft Hotmail e-mail accounts.

"I think it's a PR disaster for them, and I think it sort of flies in the face of more than 20 years of being supportive of civil rights and gay rights issues," said Tina Podlodowski, a former Microsoft senior manager who helped the company craft its benefits plan for same-sex partners.

The New York Times reported that

Murray the bill's openly gay sponsor, said Microsoft's top lawyer told him last month that the company was feeling pressure from Hutcherson and was concerned about how its Christian employees might react if it supported the bill.

Microsoft spokeswoman Toni Begasse characterized the controversy as a colossal misunderstanding.

"It's real disappointing that people are misunderstanding and misrepresenting the meetings and what's going on here," she said. "We'll continue to be a leader in providing benefits and policies that prohibit discrimination."

Still, this controversy may have been enough for the company to rethink its decision to withdraw support for state legislation that would ban discrimination against gays and lesbians, chairman Bill Gates said.

In an interview with *The Seattle Times*, Gates said he was surprised by the fierce criticism that followed the company's decision to no longer back a state gay rights bill it had supported in previous years.

The legislation failed by one vote in the state Senate, spurring outrage among advocates who accused Microsoft of caving to political pressure from an evangelical pastor.

"Next time this one comes around, we'll see," Gates said. "We certainly have a lot of employees who sent us mail. Next time it comes around that'll be a major factor for us to take into consideration."

In an e-mail to employees, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer shot down suggestions that pressure from a local pastor triggered the company's decision to not publicly support a gay rights bill before the state legislature this year.

Microsoft Corp. wanted to focus on computer privacy, education and other issues more directly related to its business, Ballmer said.

"I understand that many employees may disagree with the company's decision to tighten the focus of our agenda for this year's legislative session in Olympia," Ballmer wrote. "But I want every employee to understand that the decision to take a neutral stance on this bill was taken before the session began based on a desire to focus our legislative efforts, not in reaction to any outside pressure."

Rev. Ken Hutcherson, pastor at Antioch Bible Church in Redmond, met with Microsoft in February, threatening to launch a national boycott of Microsoft products if the company did not take a stand against the bill.

Ballmer said the meeting was held to clarify that two Microsoft employees who testified in favor of the bill were speaking as individuals, not for the company. (AP)

BUSINESS BRIEFS

BUSINESS

SAN FRANCISCO GAY CLUB ACCUSED OF DISCRIMINATION

In a case closely watched by San Francisco's GLBT community, a city commission found that the owner of a popular gay nightclub discriminated against black patrons and violated local civil rights codes. The San Francisco Human Rights Commission found the club Badlands required multiple forms of identification from some black customers, used discriminatory hiring practices, applied a dress code only to black patrons and denied entry using other policies rarely applied to whites.

INDIANAPOLIS SHOOTS DOWN BAN ON BIAS

A proposal that would have prevented Indianapolis, Ind., employers, real estate agencies and landlords from discriminating against homosexuals was defeated by the City-County Council. The proposal would have imposed stricter standards than federal and state laws by prohibiting Indianapolis companies with six or more employees from discriminating against workers based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. The proposal also would have prohibited real estate agents and landlords from hindering gay or transgender people from buying or renting a home

MAN WINS \$122,225 AFTER CO-WORKERS CALL HIM 'PRINCESS'

A jury ruled that a gay man who worked at a local Shari's restaurant in Gresham, Ore., faced a hostile work environment because he failed to display traditional male behavior. The jury awarded Kevin Turner, 33, \$122,225 in the gender discrimination suit. Turner alleged that he faced constant harassment while working at Shari's in 2002 and 2003. In one incident co-workers, according to the court record, put bananas in their pants and rubbed up against him. In addition, Turner said he was called other female monikers, including "princess."

NCR REFUSES TO END DOMESTIC-PARTNER BENEFITS

Shareholders with the Dayton, Ohio-based computer systems services company NCR Corp. rejected a shareholder proposal that asked the company to consider dropping domestic-partner benefits for its highest-paid employees. Backers of the resolution said paying benefits to the unmarried partners of employees increases premiums for other employees and that the highest-paid workers can afford to privately pay for those benefits. NCR's board of directors opposed the resolution. They said employees should be free from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

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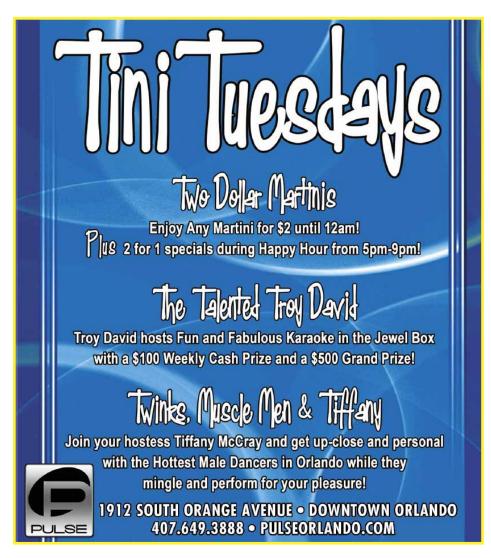
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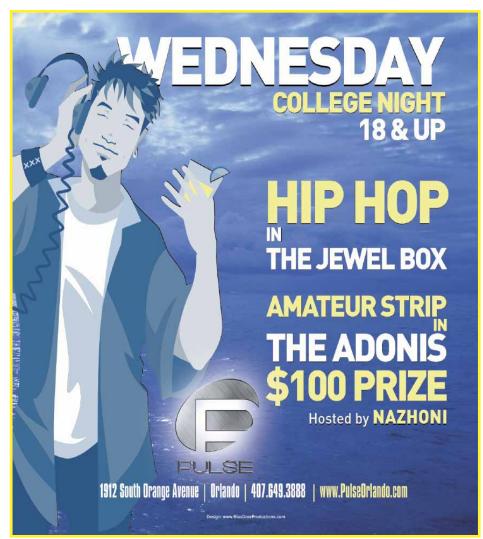
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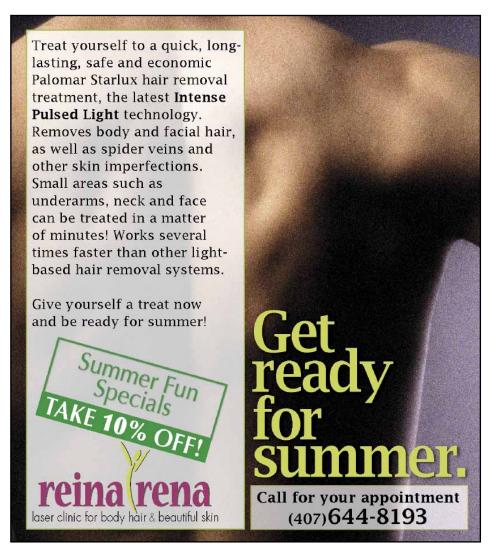
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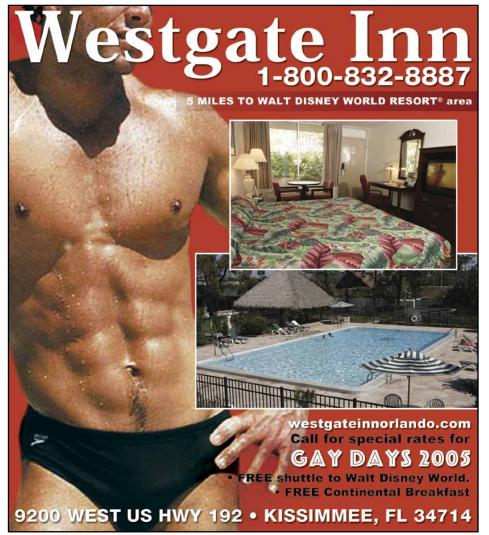














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GAY GAMES ADOPTS ANTI-DOPING POLICY FOR POWERLIFTERS

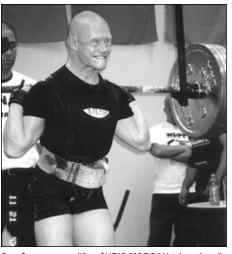
CHICAGO - Organizers of the 2006 Gay Games in Chicago have adopted a new anti-doping policy for powerlifting that rewards athletes who demonstrate that they are drug-free in the year leading up to the 2006 Gay Games. Powerlifters must sign up for the new "Out-of-Competition Athletes Register" by July 15 — one year before Gay Games VII opens on July 15, 2006

The Gay Games' principle of "personal best" encourages individuals to participate at their own level of skill without the use of performance enhancing drugs. Gay Games organizers condemn doping practices and the use of banned substances to enhance performance in sport and in three sports — physique, wrestling and powerlifting — this policy is enforced with drug testing.

"This ground-breaking policy will make sure that Gay Games powerlifters are treated fairly," said Chris Morgan, the British Powerlifter who is an international Gay Games ambassador. As an openly gay man, Morgan won a silver medal in the 2004 World Drug Free Powerlifting Championships, a silver medal in the 1998 Gay Games in Amsterdam and a gold in the 2002 Gay Games in Sydney.

"Those who compete without the use of performance enhancing drugs are to be rewarded," he said.

For powerlifting, the Gay Games has adopted the out-of-competition testing procedures of the International Powerlifting



Gay Games powerlifter CHRIS MORGAN takes the silver medal at the 2004 World Drug-Free Powerlifting Championships

Federation. Powerlifters who join the Games' Athletes Register will automatically become eligible to receive gold, silver and bronze medals on the day of competition. Powerlifters will be required to join their national Powerlifting federation and may be subject to drug testing in the year prior to the Gay Games.

Drug tests will still take place and competitors who are not part of the new Athletes Register will receive their medals only after automatic drug tests come back negative. Full details on how to register are available at GayGamesChicago.org. \P Staff reports

MONTREAL OUTGAMES OFFERS REGISTRATION SPECIAL

MONTREAL - The first World Outgames Montréal 2006 has opened registration to U.S. athletes and is offering an opportunity to get 10% off the regular registration fee before May 8.

The festival will feature sport and cultural activities and an international conference on GLBT rights, bringing together people from all over the world. Currently, more than 4,000 people have registered for the event to be held next summer.

Based on the principles of participation and celebration, respect and fairness, innovation, diversity and empowerment, the games welcome everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, age, gender, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, physical challenge, political beliefs, physical ability, athletic/artistic skills or HIV and

health status.

There are no minimum athletic standards to qualify for the Outgames. The only requirement is the desire to support the ideals of the events.

1* worldOutgames Rendez-Vous Montréal 2006

Coordinators

and team captains are also encouraged to group register participants as they will receive one free registration for every ten people registered.

For more information, visit Montreal 2006.org. W Staff reports

SPORTS BRIEFS

NEW GLBT MEXICAN TEAM FORMS FOR OUTGAMES

During a special Mexico Registration Day for the first World Outgames 2006, a new GLBT sport team, Equipo Mexico, was formed, exciting sponsors and organizers with the development of gays sport in Mexico. Equipo Mexico is starting with 50 members and expects to double its numbers quickly in the coming months. The multi-sport organization includes bolleyball, track and field, bowling, swimming and skating teams.

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BLADES SALON - Upscale salon and spa seeking Hairstylists and Nail technicians for booth rental or commission. Clientele preferred. Contact front desk for interview 407-425-2220

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SERVERS & HOSTS - Would you like a job with a view? Lake Eola Yacht Club is currently hiring full & part time servers and hosts. Experience preferred. Please apply in person between 2pm and 4pm, Monday thru Friday, 407 F. Central Rlyd

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ROOMMATES

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ROOMATE WANTED- Responsible Gay Male Roommate wanted. Rosemont Area . Includes: Large bedroom, Cable , washer/dryer, heated pool, privacy fenced backyard, personal bathroom, and DSL access. \$425 per month includes all utilities. No pets please. Contact Spencer 407-253-7336.

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Roommate Wanted - Responsible Gay Male Roommate wanted - Apopka/Wekiva area 3/2 home. Includes cable and utilities \$500 mo. No pets please. License and References required. Call Barbara 407-814-0775.

CLASSIFIED

SARASOTA

ROOMMATES

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BUSINESS



FILTH **'EATING OUT' MAY BE** HARD TO SWALLOW

For \$20 more, the

Jennifer Coolidge.

producers could

have gotten

By Billy Masters

"I'll watch a Keanu Reeves movie and I'll go, 'Wow. He's really not a great actor.' But the guy works really hard and keeps doing hit movies." — Thespian

Ashton Kutcher gives his candid thoughts on the work of a colleague. Somewhere Keanu is saying, "Who asked him?"

All prospective filmmakers should rush to see Eating Out. Rarely does one see exactly what not to do in one film. The abomination of a script

serves an important purpose — it makes the rudimentary acting look positively

Yes, the two leads are both very sexy and fully naked (one of whom is currently working as a cater waiter — not that there's anything wrong with it.) It also features a leading lady with a range of A to A-minus, JIM VERRAROS hampered with dialogue written in a sort of freaky gay Esperanto, and a very bad

JENNIFER COOLIDGE impersonator (for \$20 more, the producers could have gotten Jennifer!). If you stick around till the end, you'll see that the film attempts to redeem itself with a non-existent heart and sentimentality.

On the positive side, the phone sex/seduction scene is titillating and secures the film's popularity on video. The sets are vibrant and well shot rarely has \$50,000 looked so good on the big screen. Still, that's not enough for me to recommend that you see this in a theater. Wait and enjoy the studs on video or on Filth2Go.com.

As you know, I faithfully watch American Idol. With an ANWAR and an ABDUL, I felt like I'm watching Taliban *Idol*. But did you know that little Anwar is looking for same-sex love on Black Planet Love? In case his profile is gone by the time you read this, we'll post it on Filth2Go.com. Of course, he wouldn't be our first gay Idol - you know it, and I know it. What hurt me was finding out ANTHONY is straight. But I can always enjoy those salacious stories about that former contestant and his close friendship with that hairdresser.

Now that the The Starlet has ended (FAYE came dangerously close to trying to vote VIVICA off), I need something to fill my nights. I guess I could watch Mr. Romance. Strike that — I could never watch Mr. Romance. When someone emailed me a photo of contestant/fitness model ANTHONY CATANZARO, he looked so familiar. Then it hit me -Playgirl. A quick check of our files revealed that Anthony was the centerfold

in January 2001.

Yes, we'll run his "spread" (including some "aroused" shots) on Filth2Go. Doing some research on Anthony, I par-

ticularly enjoyed reading about his first photo shoot.

Apparently, he was 18 years old, living in Bayshore, N.Y., and a guy approached him at a hardware store where he was working, gave Anthony

his card, and asked if he'd like to do some "erotic modeling." Am I the only one who thinks this has "gay pickup" written all over it? He says that he met with the guy and did some "test shots." I bet he did.

By the way, **SCOTT** on *Mr. Romance* is also known as stripper/model SARGE LOGAN. The same Sarge who was the stripper at ANNA NICOLE'S Halloween Party? The same Sarge who posed with whorey TEANNA KAI and f'ed her every which way but loose in the October 2003 issue of Hustler? The same Sarge who advertises in IN Los Angeles (SoCal's premiere gay publication) as giving the "best erotic/sensual massage you will ever experience"? Head to Filth2Go, and you too can experi-

ence every inch of Sarge. Mike in Florida has a very direct "Ask Billy" question: "I'm sure you've gotten a ton of e-mails, but do you have the cut footage showing Colin Farrell's penis in A Home at the End of the World? If anyone would have it, I figured you would."

Thanks for your confidence in me, Mike. This is a very popular question, and I aim to please. So, to prove that your faith in me is not misplaced, yes, I do indeed have the footage, and I'll post it on Filth2Go.com.

Could it

be that a certain sexy cinema stud left wifey at home while he cavorted with the boys at Palm Spring's notorious White Party? Rumor has it that the shirtless actor (who still looks like a gay teenager) rolled into the Saturday night event wearing sunglasses and his wedding ring (and was quickly locking lips with a number of hotties). In order to quell a squall rivaling The Perfect Storm, I should note that I have the best of intentions reporting this story — even though about half of the buff shirtless boys wearing sunglasses at these events could pass for our chaotic cutie. Adding to the mystery are photos that have surfaced of our nowhere man buying beer the very next day — sans wedding ring.

Could it be that one of our favorite funny ladies is barking up the wrong tree ...again? So say my sources on the set who tell me that the distinctive dame has fallen head over heels for that mysterious movie man. Of course, everyone knows the stud who lives to serve (something they have in common) is gay as a goose and our bubbly beauty should turn her face away. But history has a way of repeating itself, and someone's heading for a fall.

When Ashton thinks he's in a position to critique anyone, it's definitely time to end vet another column. Damn — no time to tell you about MICHAEL

DOUGLAS' series deal with the SciFi Channel — but there's a joke that writes itself. If you want to write me, all you

have to do is send an e-mail to Billy@filth2go.com. So, until next time. remember, one man's filth is another man's bible. W Mr. Romance contestant ANTHONY should look familiar — to Playgirl

