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WATERMARK

Florida's Distinctive Gay and Lesbian Publication
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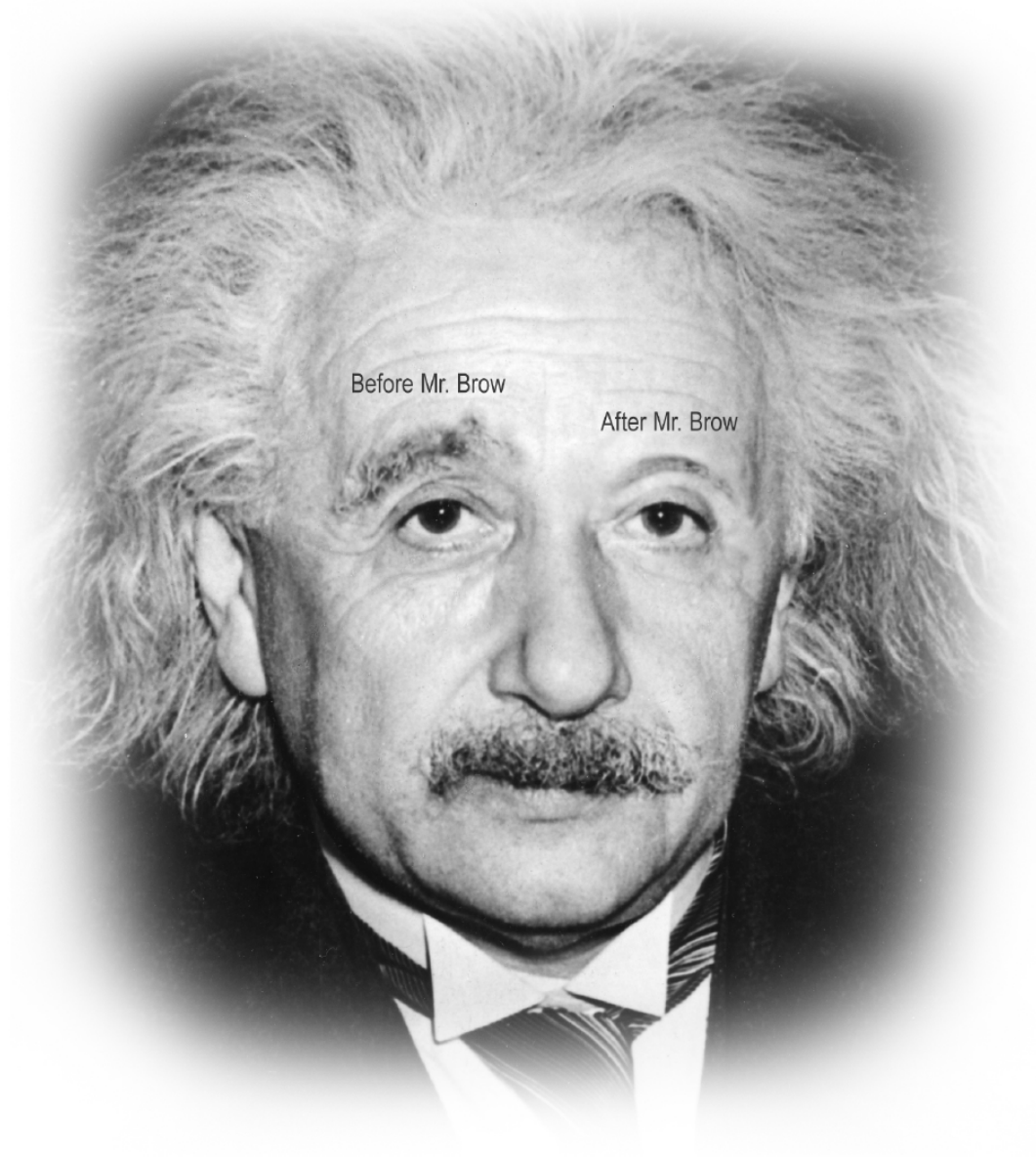
ALSO INSIDE:

- The Legacy of Ryan White
- Our Annual Travel and Boating Guide
- Tampa Center's Merger with Metro Charities

**ROSEANNE
LAUGHS LAST**

The original fat actress talks about gay marriages, Loretta Lynn
and the end of the world

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PREVIEW

CONTENTS

FEATURE NEWS.....6-7

15 years after the death Ryan White, his mother reflects on what it all meant.

ORLANDO NEWS.....8-9

Southern Nights shutters — temporarily?; a new life for the Cactus Club; One Mighty Party returns.

SARASOTA NEWS.....10

The 'crown prince of cabaret' heads to Sarasota.

TAMPA BAY NEWS...12-13

Tampa's GLBT center merges with Metro Center; Lester Wolff honored as 'Artitarian'; date-rape suspect pleads guilty; PFLAG memo sparks furor.

WATERCOLORS.....31

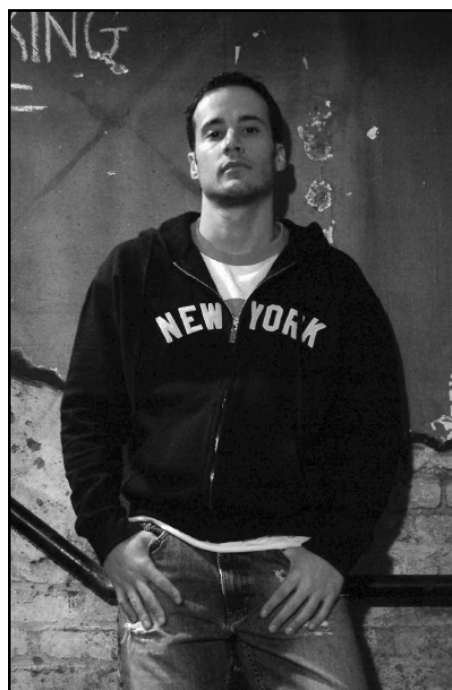
Roseanne Barr; DJ Joe G; 'Chicago' dream casts; Ybor City film fest's GLBT flicks.

SPECIAL SECTION: TRAVEL

Gay cruises; packing 'politely'; places that love GLBT travelers; gay boating clubs.

ABOUT THE COVER

ROSEANNE BARR: "Never fear: My ego is still enormous."



DJ JOE GATHREUX has spun at some of the hottest parties in the country — and now he's headed to Tampa Bay's Temple Saturday, March 27.



WATERMARK

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EDITOR'S
DESK

By
Dave Wiethop

After almost eight years, two of my closest pals will head to Florida next week and I almost talked them out of coming. I've known Royce and Anne for about 18 years and they plan to drive for 22 unnerving hours with two little girls from Chicago just to take in the sights and, I presume, me.

I pointed out that they'll be here during Spring Break, which anyone who lives within a couple hundred miles of this state will recognize as a poor choice of timing. Love the Northern visitors, but could they stagger their spring breaks a little?

But Royce and Anne insisted, yammering on about not wanting daughters who couldn't read because they had to go to Disney World in the middle of the school term. I don't know what they were saying, actually; all I knew is that it seemed likelier that I would find myself in a theme park next week with the entire populations of Michigan, Iowa, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

You do things for love, and I truly love these two humans — and presumably their offspring, one of whom I have not yet met. We have a history: Royce and Anne took me to my first-ever big bookstore, where I found an entire racks devoted to gay titles. How cool was that? (I remember buying my first issue of *Honcho* like it was yesterday.)

Years later, they took me to my first-ever gay pride parade. I remember watching hesitantly from the sidelines, then slowly wanting to flex my faggy little wings. About half-way through, I wanted to fly off with a gaggle of leather daddies flitting down Chicago's Halsted Street, but I recoiled into the safety of Royce and Anne's protection. You can play with them next year, Royce reassured me. Maybe you're not ready.

As I became more and more comfortable with my big, ol' gay self, Royce and Anne were settling into their own couplehood. By the time that they announced their engagement, no one was surprised. These were two people who matched one another beautifully and continue to do so. I often use them as my moral barometer in stressful situations. What would Royce do? Why he would just give in and shave the sides of his head. What would Anne do? Why, she would give the offender that "Catholic school-girl look" (furrowed brows, pursed lips, upside-down smile) until the offense stopped. You can learn so much from straight people.

They endured tales of tricking, dating, moving in and breaking up. I was in Homosexual Junior High as they graduated to Straight People Community College.

As their wedding approached, I groused as I browsed through the gift registry. Ashtray tables? I grumbled. What on God's Green Earth do they need with ashtray tables? It was enough to send me out of the store, into my car and back to my apartment where I could call Anne and gripe about my discovery. I repeated that I didn't appreciate their greediness.

Anne was quiet as she carefully formed that Catholic school-girl look so it would be audible. Those were tray tables made of ash. Ash is a type of wood. This is something that I had not known until that moment. If I can recall correctly, I bought those damned tables as my way of apologizing.

On the phone the other night, Anne and I revealed that it had been — with one brief exception — almost eight years since I had seen them. Time moves more quickly as you grow older, we reasoned. Besides, more and more of our time off is devoted to our rapidly aging parents.

Still, that sounded less like a reason and more like an excuse. Blood relatives have to love you, but the families of choice that gay people often create — and Royce and Anne play key roles in mine — deserve as much love and attention.

I can feel it already. For the sake of this family, I'll be seeing Mickey or the Cat in the Hat sometime around Wednesday. Coincidentally, their visit comes at a time when *Watermark* publishes our annual Travel and Boating Issue. You'll find our tales of cruising, boating and properly packing your sex toys in the special section tucked inside.

We also offer interviews with two dynamic women: Roseanne Barr and Jeanne White-Ginder. If you're not familiar with Roseanne Barr's name, then I'd like to welcome you to Planet Earth. White-Ginder, however, is another prominent middle-class mom from the 1980s: She is the mother of the late Ryan White, who passed away from the complications of AIDS 15 years ago.

So, hold on tight and keep your legs and arms safely inside the vehicle. You will certain find this issue of *Watermark* to be entertaining, informative and insightful.

editor@watermarkonline.com

Would you like me to seduce you?

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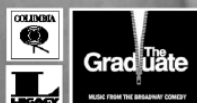
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PREVIEW

Water Picks

EVENTS YOU SHOULDN'T MISS

SARASOTA

SUN., MARCH 27

One of the most engaging openly gay Christian singers working today, **MARSHA STEVENS**, returns to **CHURCH OF THE TRINITY MCC** on Sunday, March 27, for a day of music, worship and Easter egg hunts. Stevens will sing at the 6:30 a.m., 9:15 a.m. and 11 a.m. services. An old-fashioned pancake breakfast will be served after the sunrise service and at 10:30 a.m., with the egg hunt at 11 a.m.

TUES., MARCH 29

Remember those birthday parties you had growing up at the local skating rink? Well, add a group of gay men and women and the cross-dressing Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, and you have the upcoming **GAY SKATE SESSION** at the Rainbow Skate Center in Largo on Tuesday, March 29. The monthly event will feature the condom-pushing sisters from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the rink at 9185 Ulmerton Road in Largo. For more info, visit gayskate.com.

TAMPA BAY

FRI., MARCH 25

Everyone has endured the struggles of a night of karaoke. You have to sit through some pretty awful stuff before the great singers of the night get their turn at the mike. Fortunately, the best of the best will be featured at **FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE**, March 25, at Grand Central Station. The "Grand Central Singers" will take over the stage at 10:30 p.m. with an encore at 12:30 a.m. Finally, those for whom we wait to see claim the mike will be in charge all night long.

SUN., APRIL 3

She's enjoying being a mom and a grandmom, all while watching residual checks come in from two cable networks showing reruns of the landmark sitcom that bears her name. **ROSEANNE BARR** returns to her stand-up roots with a stop at Orlando's Hard Rock Live at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the box office, at (407) 351-LIVE or www.hardrocklive.com.

SAT.-SUN., APRIL 2-3

Lights, Camera, Action is the latest

offering from the **ORLANDO GAY CHORUS**, features songs from TV and movies, including the *Cocoa Beach-set I Dream of Jeannie*. (We didn't know the theme had words, either.) Shows are at 7:35 p.m. at the Shakespeare Center in Loch Haven Park. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, and are available at (407) 841-SING or at www.orlandogaychorus.org. Founded in 1990, the chorus is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year.

THURS.-SUN., MARCH 24-27

When a young cub reporter named Maurine Dallas Watkins wrote a satirical play about a showgirl who murders her lover, little did she comprehend that this sordid tale would still resonate almost 80 years later. The razzle-dazzle musical, **CHICAGO**, returns to Florida for a March 22-27 engagement at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center. For information and tickets, call (407) 423-9999 or visit broadway-acrossamerica.com.



The openly lesbian Christian singer and songwriter **MARSHA STEVENS** will perform at Church of the Trinity MCC's Easter services on Sunday, March 27.

Water Cooler

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

PRIDE SEASON'S BACK IN FULL SWING

It seems like only last month that thousands poured onto the sun-baked streets of St. Petersburg for the second annual St. Pete Pride Parade and Promenade. Well, believe it or not, the third such celebration is rapidly approaching and the pride folks are already in full-swing.

Only two weeks after kicking off "pride season" with an art show at the Metro Center, the Friends of the Festival are hosting a fund-raising event in Tampa Sunday, April 3, for this year's celebration. The **EAST BAY FILM FESTIVAL** event begins at 11 a.m. and will last until 4 p.m. The event asks for volunteers to host individual

brunches in their homes and ask for donations, typically \$25 per guest.

Then the groups can enjoy an evening of movies at a designated theater.

The best news for hosts is that everything is tax-deductible.

Money raised also benefits the St.

Petersburg Summer Film Series and the 16th Annual Tampa

International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. For more information, visit stpetepride.com, www.tiglff.com or contact Christopher Constantinou at Christopher@tiglff.com or call him at (727) 638-665.

BEARS BEARING CASH

The **BEARS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA** don't just host one of the best parties of the fall. They also hand out big checks to deserving organizations. The Bears recently presented \$3,000 to the American Cancer Society, \$2,000 to Camp Challenge, \$1,500 to Hope and Help of Central Florida and \$500 to the Delta Youth Alliance. The donations were the results of a successful 2004 Bear Bust.

The generosity continues: To celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the bears and friends enjoyed a corned-beef and cabbage dinner with proceeds going to **JOY MCC's** Winnie Toal Memorial Food Bank and the John C. Garrett Memorial Thanksgiving Food Drive.

While we're at it, registration for the 2005 Bear Bust with the theme "Let's Play Hardball" will be on-line at BearBust.org, in April.

COMEDY DIVA, PART 1

First, **MARGARET CHO**. Then, **ROSEANNE BARR**. In June just in time for Gay Day/Gay Days, **HARD ROCK LIVE** will bring in the too-queer-to-be-gay **KATHY GRIFFIN**. She'll appear on Saturday, June 4.

As she says in her hysterical DVD, *Allegedly*, she's got a negative attitude because she's busy. With that in mind, we hope she bitches non-stop about red carpet co-diva **STAR JONES REYNOLDS**.

COMEDY DIVA, PART 2

Speaking of comedy divas, openly gay comedian **JASON STUART** (who spends more time in Florida than most grandparents) will return to Orlando for the Gay Days Kick-Off Party at the Orlando Museum of Art Tuesday, May 31. This makes his fourth appearance in the City Beautiful in the last 18 months.

FEATURE NEWS

15 YEARS AFTER RYAN WHITE

Jeanne White-Ginder says son's legacy was simply to have humanized HIV and AIDS *By Dave Wiethop*

LEESBURG - On Friday nights, some ladies go to "all-night crops." They share ideas for scrapbook pages, the tools for making the precise cuts on photos and mattes, and the tiny toys and doll clothes that make the pages so endearing.

Jeanne White-Ginder of Leesburg has been working on a series of scrapbooks for some time. Unlike most books that record the births, the vacations and the weddings, hers is dotted with images of Elton John, Michael Jackson and Ronald Reagan. Most often, however, the books offer photo after photo of her son, Ryan, who was at one point during the late 1980s, one of the most famous teenagers in the U.S. without a singing career.

Jeanne looks back on the mid- to late-1980s with a mix of matter-of-factness and awe: She says that she was simply a mother trying to keep her son alive and happy, all the while a battle waged to return him to the Kokomo, Ind., school that rejected him. Though Ryan eventually moved to another Indiana school before his death on April 8, 1990 — an astonishing 15 years ago — he left a legacy that some feel affect the HIV and AIDS community every day.

"He humanized the disease," Jeanne recalled. "And that's what he said he wanted. He wanted people to recognize that it was a disease and not a dirty word."

Shortly before his death, Ryan lent his name to the Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act — the federal legislation that has allocated more than \$17.8 bil-

lion in the last 14 years to the health care needs of those living with HIV and AIDS.

Some believe that he placed a more humane face on AIDS that hadn't been seen before in the media. Ryan, perhaps, was the straight person's view of AIDS. And despite the time, the place and the circumstance — and his own determination — Ryan did what many gay men dying in the 1980s simply were not able to accomplish.

'EVERY COUGH ALARMED US'

"I don't know how we did it," Jeanne said recently over lunch near her Leesburg home. "It didn't seem all that real when we were going through it. We thought that we were going to wake up one day and it would all be over."

Ryan, a hemophiliac, contracted HIV from a contaminated sample of a blood-clotting product, not from a blood transfusion. Because it was the mid-1980s and AIDS had been viewed as primarily a disease affecting only gay men, Ryan's physicians tested him for tuberculosis and cancer. Taking two inches of his lung for a biopsy, physicians found that Ryan had AIDS.

His T-cell count stood at 25 and he never went above that in the 5 1/2 years that he had the disease. Still, he wanted to lead a normal life and that was sometimes difficult to accomplish.

"People have this belief that we were suing the school district because he was kicked out and that we



JEANNE WHITE-GINDER holds one of the thick scrapbooks that she has made about her son, Ryan. Photo by Dave Wiethop

would get all kinds of money, but that wasn't the case at all. We were suing for the right to go to school. I'm not sure if I would have done it if I had known how long it would take," she said. "I was under the belief that Ryan

Continued on page 7

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FEATURE NEWS

RYAN from page 6

had three to six months to live and I wanted to get him back in school because that's where he wanted to be.

"Every cough, every fever alarmed us and I was so worried that he would not get back to school. Still, I can't imagine that parents wouldn't do this for their children. I just can't."

Today, Jeanne wonders if the efforts to return him to school, which was Ryan's idea, didn't keep him alive for longer than anyone expected.

"This fight gave him a reason to stay alive," she said. "He wanted to go back to school like a normal kid and this may have been what kept him well for so long. You know how there are people who act differently on camera than they do off-camera? That wasn't Ryan. He was always a little spunky — all of the time — and I think people responded to that."

A LACK OF INFORMATION

His diagnosis was difficult for the middle-class Indiana divorced mother.

"I had absolutely no involvement with the gay community when we learned that he had AIDS. I mean, I was this real strong Christian from Indiana and I had my own ideas (about AIDS). But my eyes started to open. I had to learn everything I could about the disease, and there was just not a lot of information out there," she explained.

This led her to the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFAR). One of the first people she met was Terry Bern, "who worked harder than anyone I have ever met." Understandably, New Yorkers were given much more current information about AIDS than elsewhere.

"I called Terry a lot and we got to be really good friends," she recalled. "And I met a lot of people with AIDS. They were calling me and we would talk for hours. They couldn't talk to their own families about the disease. I don't want to say that I enjoyed this, but it was good therapy for me and for them."

Ryan, meanwhile, remained unimpressed.

"Because of what people thought about AIDS at the time, other kids called him 'faggot,' and he didn't like that at all," Jeanne recalled.

With AmFAR offering up-to-date information about the disease, the former auto electronics factory worker found little help from hemophiliac support groups. Those organizations wanted nothing to do with Ryan's situation, and Jeanne was surprised.

When Ryan visited Roosevelt Memorial Hospital in New York for a new drug, PHA-23 at the urging of Terry Bern, he was approached by a stranger as he sat in a corridor. The man recognized Ryan from the television reports of his battle to attend school.

"Ryan looked at him and said, 'I ain't nobody,' like a kid would do, but he thanked him. He told Ryan that the gay community was so scared because of the disease and that he gave so many people

hope," Jeanne said.

The teenager was fairly ambivalent about his role with the gay community, adopting an "I'll help you if you help me attitude," his mother recalled.

Then, there were the strangers. Jeanne received numerous requests to pray over Ryan, and she let them in the house in an effort to find a miracle. Maybe — just maybe — one of those offering prayers might be able to cure Ryan. One of them just might be Jesus Christ.

"It went on for months. Finally, after listening to someone praying in tongues, Ryan said, 'Can we talk about this?'," she recalled. "He said, 'I am not afraid to die, Mom. Besides, all of these people can't

Continued on page 21

**"Never place a period
where God has placed a comma"**

| Gracie Allen |



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ORLANDO

SOUTHERN NIGHTS TEMPORARILY CLOSES

ORLANDO - In what seems to be the latest in a series of changes in Orlando's nightclub scene, Southern Nights, one of the area's oldest clubs has closed.

According to the club's staff, the venue was sold to new owners who closed the club the same day they purchased it.

Employees were told on Tuesday, March 8, that the club was being sold. They discovered the deal had been made and the doors were shuttered when they showed up to work two days later. The only notice they received were signs posted outside saying that construction and renovations had begun, including interior and exterior design improvements as well as installation of state-of-the-art sound, lighting and special effects.

"It would be impossible to operate during a renovation of this magnitude," the signs said. "We sincerely regret the inconvenience of a sudden closing to our loyal patrons and staff. We are anxious and excited to unveil our 'makeover' and our design team is committed to completing the work as soon as possible."

Some employees are understandably upset.

"To not give us some sort of notification, so we could make arrangements, that was wrong," said DJ Blue, one of the club's resident DJs. Having talked with



With a day of the closing of Southern Nights on North Bumby Avenue, the new owners posted a sign asking for customers' patience during the makeover. Photo by Dave Wiethop

many of the club's performers, bartenders and managers, she said that all felt dismayed at the club's sudden closure, as well as feeling a sense of abandonment. They were surprised the new owners did not keep the club open at least through

the weekend to view the operations and allowing the staff to make money.

Page King, one of the club's performers, spoke with the new owners recently and was told that the renovations would take "two months or so."

"I was told to stay in touch," King said, "And nothing more than that." The lack of information did nothing to reassure her of future employment with the club, not to mention her and other staff's ability to keep up with bills. "We still have mortgages - the bank ain't gonna wait. We were all devoted employees and all of a sudden it's not there. It's kind of tough to deal with."

Much of the staff has found temporary employment in other clubs, eager to capitalize on the potential increase of business. King said she plans to work with Carmella Marcella Garcia, another of the club's entertainers, for a new show starting at The Club at the Firestone on Tuesdays, starting in April. The Club has also hired much of Southern's bar staff for a "relocated" College Night on Thursdays.

Blue, who DJed the successful Thursday evenings at Southern has been picked up by Pulse. She will also be moving Southern's popular Lesbo-a-Go-Go night, what she said is the longest-running lesbian party in the Southeast, to Pulse on Sundays at 5 p.m.

CACTUS CLUB TO BECOME 'SWANK'

ORLANDO - The long-shuttered Vi Mi District neighborhood bar, the Cactus Club, will soon emerge as Club Swank.

Actress Leesa Halstead and her husband, stuntman David Franzine, have taken over the venue and plan to reopen it as "a retro-themed nightclub." The pair plan to host decade-themed evenings highlighting the 1940s to the 1980s, with live music, a Tiki Bar on the patio, a VIP area and live theatrical performances two or three nights a week. This is the first nightclub venture for Halstead and Franzine.

While few details were available, work on the club continues with the exterior of this North Mills Avenue landmark getting a fresh coat of exterior paint recently.

▼ Dave Wiethop

The DJ is still looking for a venue to host her self-produced "Varietase," a show she describes as "drag with vaginas." Blue said she is in discussions with several local venues in hopes of finding a new home for the monthly production. ▼ Kirk Hartlage

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EVENTS COMING UP.....

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Ms. Alexis Latrelle
Ms. Ashley Santine

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*Of course, the town is Winter Park. So, that kind of limits the choices, but what the heck? We work with what we've got!— The Owners

ORLANDO BRIEFS

SHEEHAN HAS NO INTENTION OF RUNNING FOR ORLANDO MAYOR

Openly lesbian city commissioner Patty Sheehan joked that she could have kept embattled Orlando mayor Buddy Dyer on office: She could have been appointed as mayor pro tem last year instead of Ernest Page. "There would have been no way that Jeb Bush would have allowed a lesbian to become mayor," she said recently. She added that she will not toss her hat into the ring for the May 3 special mayoral election that will find a replacement for Dyer, who was indicted March 11 on charges of violating state election laws. Sheehan said she would prefer to see Page remain in office without a special election, fearing that too many shifts in city administration will do more harm to the city than necessary. Among the contenders who are likely to add their names to the May electoral race are former mayor Bill Frederick and *Orlando Weekly* columnist Billy Manes was among the first to announce his candidacy.

LOCAL RAINBOW DEMOCRATIC CLUB ELECTS FIRST HISPANIC LEADER

The Orange County Rainbow Democratic Club has elected its first Hispanic president, Luis Grajales. He is one of the nation's few Hispanic presidents of any GLBT Democratic political organization. Grajales served as the previous chair of the outreach committee for the Orange County Democratic Executive Committee and succeeds outgoing president Carol Bartsch. Grajales has worked in numerous political arenas and currently serves as vice chair to two local citizen advisory boards: Orange County Zoning Adjustment Board and the City of Orlando Citizens Police Review Board. "Luis is very modest regarding his political knowledge and connections," Bartsch said. "He has already proven to be a great asset to RDC and I strongly believe in his leadership and his vision for our group."

QUEER ART COLLECTIVE CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Florida Queer Art Collective will accept submissions for their second annual Spring Show to be held at the GLBCC in April. The event is a juried exhibition and all artist's submissions should be delivered to the Center at 946 N. Mills Ave. between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday, March 30 and 31. Judging will be held Friday, April 1, installation of works will be Saturday, April 2, and an artists' reception will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday, April 9.

GAY DAYS

ONE MIGHTY PARTY RETURNS TO DISNEY/MGM ON JUNE 4

ORLANDO - One Mighty Party, one of the original circuit events of the annual first-weekend-of-June festivities returns to the Disney/MGM Studios, and under the direction of one of the event's original producers, Johnny Chisolm.

Originated in 1997, the Saturday evening event at the Disney/MGM Studios has been one of the most popular circuit events each Gay Days weekend. Concerns by Disney on the amount of sound that this event would produce that could possibly disturb nearby hotel guests, in addition to his own desire to freshen up his event schedule, led producer Mark Baker to move his Saturday event to the Universal Studios backlot.

Chisolm said his organization had

received "tons of requests to bring the party back." Chisolm had co-sponsored the event in previous years with Jeffrey Sanker, but had dissolved their partnership last year. Sanker teamed with Baker to produce the Saturday MGM event, Hollywood: The Party, last year. Chisolm said that the year off was necessary for him to be able to rethink his approach to producing this event.

This year's party, at 9:30 p.m., Saturday, June 4, features DJs Tracy Young and Alyson Calgna spinning on two separate dance floors. In addition, guests will also be able to ride Star Tours, The Great Movie Ride, the Tower of Terror and the Rock 'n' Roller Coaster. Advance tickets are \$85 and are available at Onemightyparty.com or by calling (850) 433-7499. ▼ *Kirk Hartlage*

BOTTORFF SELLS REUNION EVENTS

ORLANDO - In an effort to focus on the future growth of Gay Day weekend, Brian Bottorff, one of the original organizers of the Reunion events during Gay Days weekend has sold his company, Reunion Events, Inc., to New Orleans' nightclub owner and circuit party promoter Johnny Chisolm.

The company already has more than 75% of the Wyndham Palace Resort and Spa's 1,014 rooms and suites sold in group bookings for the first weekend of June.

Bottorff said the hotel is the largest group hotel block of gays in one place in the world.

"The Reunion gatherings were founded by a small group of Central Florida friends are a proud tradition during the weekend, attracting more than 33,000 guests over the course of eight years," said Bottorff, who retains ownership of gaydayevents.com and the Gay Day World Welcome Center, located at the Wyndham. ▼ *Staff reports*



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SLEEK, HOT AND SEXY.

NEW YORK CABARET PERFORMER STEVE ROSS HEADS TO SARASOTA

SARASOTA - ALSO Out Youth and a host of sponsors will bring a taste of the New York supper club scene with a special performance of *Steppin' Out with Steve Ross* on Sunday, April 10. The 7 p.m. show will be held at the Players Theatre, 838 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota.

Called the "crown prince of cabaret," Ross will perform favorites from the American songbook, including tunes by Gershwin, Porter and Berlin and popularized by the likes of Fred Astaire.

The singer and pianist got his big New York break at the popular piano bar Backstage, where such performers as Liza Minnelli and Ginger Rogers were known to join him for a song or two. He later became the first cabaret performer in the newly renovated Oak Room at the



New York cabaret singer **STEVE ROSS** will appear in Sarasota in April.

Algonquin Hotel.

Ross is back in the U.S. after an extended engagement in London and will also soon appear at The Colony in Palm Beach.

Ross has received the endorsement of Broadway's original Marian Paroo, Barbara Cook, who demanded that Sarasota audiences should "pull yourselves away from the palm trees for a moment and see this consummate performer. Steve Ross has become the quintessential New York night club person-

age."

Tickets are \$25 and \$50.

Reservations may be made weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. by calling the Steve Ross Hotline at (941) 957-0802. Proceeds from the concert will benefit ALSO Out Youth. ▼ Staff reports

TAMPA BAY BRIEFS

CLUB HEAT BETS ON CASINO NIGHT BENEFIT FOR PRIDEFEST

Club Heat in Bradenton will host a Casino Night benefit for the 2005 Sarasota Pridefest on Monday, April 11. Doors will be open from 7 to 10 p.m., with tickets costing \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. They can be purchased by calling Leslie Dawley at (941) 928-9390. The entrance fee starts everyone off with \$25,000 in fake gambling money. In addition to the games, the evening will include auctions, food and a cash bar.

WOMYN'S MUSIC PIONEER WILLIAMSON HEADLINES ALSO BENEFIT

Tramp Productions, which brought comedienne Kate Clinton to Sarasota last fall, will present *An Intimate Evening with Cris Williamson* on Saturday, April 16. Proceeds of the concert will be shared with Sarasota's ALSO Out Youth. Williamson, a pioneer in the womyn's music movement, will perform tunes from her new CD, *Real Deal*, in the concert at the Catherine A. Hickman Theatre in Gulfport. Priority seating tickets cost \$25 and general admission tickets are \$20. Tickets are now on sale and may be purchased by sending a check to Patricia Petruff, 1904 54th St. E., Bradenton, FL 34208. Call (941) 747-1789 for details. For more about Williamson, visit CrisWilliamson.com.

PRIDEFEST BOOKS HOUSE, GOSPEL MUSICIANS

Sarasota Pridefest 2005 has booked recording artists Kim English and Vernessa Mitchell to perform on Saturday, May 14. The Chicago-based English has scored several hit house music singles in the U.S. including *Nite Life* and *I Know a Place*. Mitchell, a popular gospel singer, will soon release an album called *Shout!* The 16th annual Pridefest will be held again at Sarasota's Robarts Arena. Companies, groups or individuals interested in renting a booth or becoming a sponsor should call Gary Halloran at (941) 809-6778.



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TAMPA BAY

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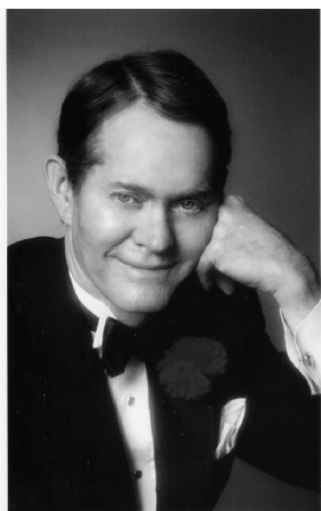
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TAMPA BAY

CENTER OF TAMPA TO CLOSE, ALIGN WITH METRO CHARITIES

TAMPA - If two heads are better than one, then two facilities with a common goal working together will get more accomplished than if they work in opposition.

So with the common goal of serving the GLBT community of Tampa Bay and St. Petersburg, the Center of Tampa Bay has aligned with Metropolitan Charities to form a strategic partnership to share resources and work to improve services and activities on both sides of Tampa Bay.

"When two organizations have the same mission, it makes a lot more sense

for them to work together than separately," said the Tampa center's founder and chair, Dr. Craig Linden. "We think this partnership and eventual merger will help us do a better job of serving the entire Tampa Bay community, which has been our purpose all along."

The first step of the merger between will begin April 1, according to spokesperson Jim Harper. The Center of Tampa will then use the money it has been spending to rent space on Swann Avenue to support activities at the Metro

Center.

Metropolitan Charities will continue to operate out of the Metro Center at 3170 Third Ave. N. in St. Petersburg next to the popular Georgie's Alibi. The center opened last fall and has already attracted numerous community groups.

The future of the expanded organization will include more than the St. Pete area, Harper said.

"This is an interim step," Harper said. "The two groups are working together on a strategic plan, including a feasibility study to open a new Metro Center in Tampa, maybe as early as next fall."

When that happens, Harper explained, the two non-profit organizations expect to merge.

"Joining forces with the Tampa center gives us resources we didn't have yet," said executive director Lorraine Langlois, who has led Metropolitan Charities since its founding 11 years ago. "We took a big step forward when we expanded our services in St. Petersburg, and we're pleased with the results. But without the financial and volunteer help of the Tampa supporters, we wouldn't be ready to extend ourselves further."

Metropolitan Charities uses an organizational model that has proven to be successful around the country, according to Langlois, who recently returned from a national conference of GLBT community center leaders in Washington, D.C., learned

Continued on page 21

ST. PETE PRIDE EVENTS HONOR WOLFF, CELEBRATE ART

ST. PETERSBURG - Beautiful weather helped usher in several hundred art lovers who ventured through the Second Annual St. Pete Pride Art Festival March 13 at the parking lot of the Metro Center in St. Petersburg. The event brought artists from throughout the area to display their works.

At a black-tie affair later that evening, Suncoast Resort owner Lester Wolff was named as the first recipient of the "Artitarian" Award for his contributions to the area arts community. The celebration of art throughout the day and evening raised more than \$5,000 for St. Pete Pride.

Art festival co-chairman Dan Fiorini said Wolff was an obvious choice for the award. In addition to serving as a past chair of the area's Art Council, Wolff has been instrumental in the creation of the Suncoast Theatre and committed to Bay Area's GLBT community.

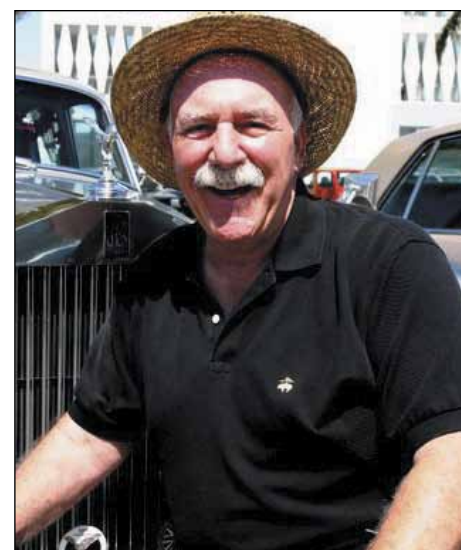
"It takes a lot of guts to be the first of anything, and he did us proud," Fiorini said about Wolff. "Lester was a gracious and wonderful recipient of this award."

More than 500 people visited the daytime art festival outside of Georgie's Alibi and the Metro Center. Browsers could vote on their favorite artworks. The winner will be reproduced on merchandise, event programs and promotional materials for the 2005 St. Pete Pride celebration.

"We're extremely happy with the turnout today," Fiorini said. "The community has been very supportive and this very pleasant weather has just been perfect."

Everything from paintings and sculptures to sketches on metal were displayed for the community to see. For artist Trinity Rivard, it was an opportunity to showcase his talent - that he uncovered only two years ago.

"I did a lot of drawings when I was growing up, but I really started painting about two years ago," Rivard said while standing in his booth at the festival. "It's been a great opportunity to show the



Suncoast Resort owner **LESTER WOLFF** received the first-ever Artitarian Award.

community what I can do."

Rivard wasn't alone. At least 15 booths graced the parking lot of the Metro Center, next door to Georgie's Alibi on third Avenue North.

"This is all leading up to pride for our signature event," Fiorini explained. "Pride is a party for us, but it really is a memorial to the Stonewall Riots, which happened in June. While we focus on the future, we have to look at how far we've come. Thirty years ago, there is no way the gay and lesbian community could hold an art festival outside for all to see. Pride is fun, but it is very serious."

The outdoor festival coincided with a classic car show by The Flamingo Auto Club at Georgie's Alibi located next door to the art festival venue, and Founder's Day activities by the Kenwood Homeowner's Association at Seminole Park located just up the street from the Metro Center.

Several more pride events will be announced soon, Fiorini said, which will lead to the Promenade and Street Festival on Saturday, June 25. Last year's Pride Street Festival was attended by more than 20,000 people. ▽ *Steve Blanchard*

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TAMPA BAY

DATE-RAPE SUSPECT PLEADS NOT GUILTY

TAMPA – A Seminole Heights man plead not guilty on March 16 to multiple charges of sexual assault. Steve Lorenzo, 45, remains jailed without bail.

Lorenzo is charged with giving illegal "date-rape" drugs such as GHB to over a half-dozen local men between 2000 and 2003, and then restraining and sexually attacking them. He is also being investigated in association with the death of Michael Wachholtz and the disappearance of Jason Galehouse, two 26-year-old Tampa Bay men first reported missing Dec. 20, 2003.

New affidavits filed in the case reveal that a seventh man has accused Lorenzo of drugging him with GHB in October 2003 in St. Petersburg. Others say they met him at Metropolis, or online. One was a prostitute picked up on Kennedy Boulevard, another met Lorenzo at Club



STEVE LORENZO is now accused of attacking seven men.



STEVE LORENZO is accused of restraining and assaulting several victims at this Seminole Heights home. Photo by Tom Dyer

2606 – the last place Galehouse was seen.

Authorities have also disclosed that U.S. Postal Service inspectors intercepted a parcel of illegal date-rape-type drugs from Canada as recently as August 2004 at Lorenzo's former address on Powhatan Avenue near the Henry and Ola Playground in Seminole Heights. A Drug Enforcement Agency affidavit states that when questioned about the drugs, Lorenzo repeatedly stated, "I'm gay... I'm gay."

▼ *Tom Dyer, with wire reports*

PINELLAS JUVENILE BOARD MEMO SPARKS CONTROVERSY

ST. PETERSBURG – Two prominent national organizations — Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) have asked a Pinellas County Juvenile Welfare Board member to retract recent statements.

In a Feb. 7 memo, Cecilia Burke asked fellow board members to sever ties with the organizations because they promote "unhealthy sexual practices among youth." The memo also criticized a JWB mailing to school principals stating that "reparative" or "conversion therapy" is harmful to GLBT children and should be discouraged.

In a letter, PFLAG, GLSEN and the National Center for Lesbian Rights has demanded that Burke read an apology into the minutes of the next JWB meet-



Pinellas Schools Chair NANCY BOSTOCK said the JWB should not "promote the homosexual lifestyle."

ing. "These are scandalous remarks," said Ron Schlittler, PFLAG executive director. "If we don't get what we want, we are prepared to take the fullest legal action possible."

The JWB receives \$42 million from property taxes annually to fund programs to help children. Burke's memo has been endorsed by Nancy Bostock, chair of the Pinellas County School Board. "The JWB ought to spend our taxpayers' money on the children and families struggling to

overcome obstacles, not to promote the homosexual lifestyle," Bostock said in a letter to the *St. Petersburg Times*.

Burke told the *Times* that PFLAG and GLSEN seek to normalize gay sex. "There's nobody saying it's wrong, it's dangerous, it's unhealthy," she said. ▼ *Tom Dyer, with wire reports*

TAMPA BAY BRIEFS

ADOPTION COALITION CREATING FAMILY ALBUM

In an effort to humanize the issue of gay adoption, the Coalition for Fair Adoption is creating a Family Scrapbook featuring pictures of GLBT families. "The scrapbook will allow our elected representatives to quickly and easily see the faces of their GLBT constituents," said Cathy James of CFA's Parents/Children Outreach Committee. Forward photos "that express the love in your family" to Cathy James, 700 Central Ave., Suite 201, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. Addresses will not be used, but are required to identify congressional districts.

THIRD 'LOVING IN FEAR' LITERARY SEMINAR SET

The third "Loving in Fear" literary seminar, honoring GLBT history month, has been scheduled for Saturday, June 11, at 2:30 p.m. at the John F. Germany Library in downtown Tampa. Featured speakers include Erick Alvarez, author of *Muscle Boys: Gay Gym Culture*; Conscious, author of *Getting Unstuck: Girl to Girl, You Can Be Infected*; and event founder and organizer Steven Reigns, who wrote *Your Dead Body Is My Welcome Mat*.



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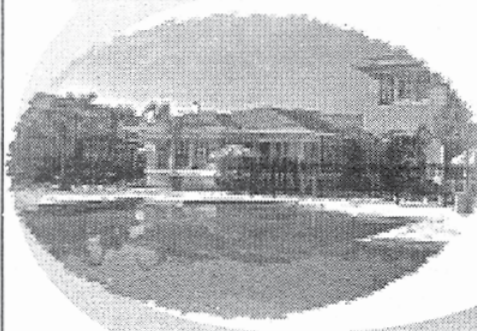


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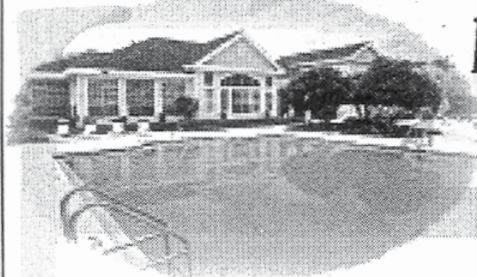


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PALM BEACH OFFICIALS SEEK 'CREEP' MAILING HIV DATA

WEST PALM BEACH - Palm Beach County's top health official has demanded a criminal investigation into anonymous letters received by HIV-positive people.

The letters have been mailed since a confidential list of about 6,500 HIV patients was mistakenly e-mailed to at least 16 county health workers in February. The list did not include addresses.

One letter with no return address said, "Your name appeared on a list of HIV-AIDS patients for Palm Beach County."

County health department director Jean Malecki said that the letters are not official correspondence, and she wants a criminal investigation, calling the mailings "terrorism."

"We have a creep or creeps out there trying to frighten people following a separate incident with that e-mail," Malecki said. "I believe people are taking advantage of this situation and frightening people who are already living with this horrendous disease."

Florida requires people who carry HIV to register for monitoring purposes.

Disclosing the list is a crime.

The letters carried printed address labels and were mailed in West Palm Beach. They listed the phone number of a medical billing firm in Indiana and asked recipients to call to "become a sponsor and donate your time to help the families" of HIV-positive people in the county.

Scott Herbst, an attorney for the Indiana company, said a number of callers have asked about the letters, but he denied any link between the company and the mailings.

Concerns about the list's security surfaced when a health department statistician e-mailed his monthly report on HIV and AIDS cases and mistakenly added the list as an electronic attachment. The department shut down its e-mail system 12 minutes later and removed the data.

"I wish we could say that the stigma attached to HIV-AIDS has faded and disclosing that someone is affected would be the same as any other communicable disease, but that is not the case," said Tony Plakas, executive director of the GLBT advocacy organization Compass. (AP)

O'DONNELLS, ACTIVISTS TO BE HONORED AT FAMILY CONFERENCE

FORT LAUDERDALE - SunServe, a Fort Lauderdale's GLBT social services agency, and the Family Pride Coalition have announced that they will honor Rosie and Kelli O'Donnell and two other activists during its second annual Valuing Our Families conference April 8-10.

The gathering of families and allies will take place at the Metropolitan Community Church's Sunshine Cathedral in Fort Lauderdale.

Florida activists Carole Benowitz and Steven Alicea will also receive a Valuing Our Families award on Sat., Queer as Folk actress Sharon Gless will present the awards to the O'Donnells. Gless received the first Valuing Our Families award last year.

Benowitz is the Florida state coordinator for PFLAG is the founder of many of Florida's PFLAG chapters, and has done similar work in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Puerto Rico. She has recently focused her talent and energy toward connecting GLBT youth in crisis to appropriate and safe foster care.

"My job, and PFLAG's, is not done until every gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgen-

der and intersex person has the same rights as I do," Benowitz said.

The openly gay Alicea, a 17-year-old GLBT teen advocate from Miami, has been in and out of 17 foster homes since he was 10 years old. After Alicea met Denise Hueso at Miami's Pridelines Youth Services, all that changed. Hueso and her partner took Alicea into their home, and Alicea credits them for turning his life around.

Alicea formed a local chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network). After enduring rejection and hardship during his own years in foster care, Alicea now speaks to foster parents about issues regarding GLBT youth.

The awards will be presented as part of a family-focused conference that will feature nearly two dozen workshops on all aspects of gay and lesbian family life, from decisions about whether to have a child to practical guidance about caring for frail elders. For more information on the conference and the award celebration, go to SunServe.org or call (954) 462-2004. W Staff reports

STATE BRIEFS

GLBT COUNTRY WESTERN DANCE CLUBS TO MEET IN FORT LAUDERDALE

An estimated 500-600 cowboys and cowgirls will kick up their heels at the Semi-Annual Convention of the International Association of Gay and Lesbian Country Western Dance Clubs March 24-27 in Fort Lauderdale. One-day registrations are available for Saturday. The hoedown will raise money for Project YES, the Comprehensive AIDS Program and the Gay and Lesbian community Center of South Florida. For details, visit laglwc.org.

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WATERMARK



NATION / WORLD

CALIF. JUDGE STRIKES DOWN STATE'S GAY MARRIAGE BAN

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - California Superior Court Judge Richard A. Kramer considered rulings on interracial marriage and sodomy when he struck down the state's prohibition on same-sex marriage March 14, saying the law is unconstitutional. Kramer served for eight years as a judge in San Francisco before being appointed to the California bench by Republican governor Pete Wilson in 1996.

Still, gay activists say they recognize that it's a little premature to begin ordering

the wedding invitations again. Same-sex marriages conducted in San Francisco were declared invalid last year by a lower court.

Kramer's decision is known as *Woo-Martin v. State of California* and consists of six separate lawsuits filed by pro- and anti-gay parties. All had agreed to the consolidated procedure in order to expedite the hearing and appeal process for what most believe will be final resolution by the California Supreme Court.

Kramer first examined the "rational basis" for the state creating the law and found, "The state's protracted denial of equal protection cannot be justified simply because such constitutional violation has become tradition." He cited the 1948 *Perez* case in which the California Supreme Court struck down a ban on interracial marriage.

He then turned to the U.S. Supreme Court which struck down state sodomy statutes in the 2003 decision of *Lawrence v. Texas*: "The fact that the governing majority in a State has traditionally viewed a particular practice as immoral is not a sufficient reason for upholding a law prohibiting the practice; neither history nor tradition could save a law prohibiting miscegenation from constitutional attack."

"Simply put, same-sex marriage cannot be prohibited solely because California has always done so before," Kramer said.

Right-wing plaintiffs had argued that case law established procreation as the basis for marriage. Kramer dissected their examples concluding that, "Instead, these cases establish that annulment is a remedy for the fraudulent inducement to marry. The facts in plaintiffs' cases also confirm the obvious natural and social reality that one does not have to be married in order to procreate, nor does one have to procreate in order to be married."

Despite the ruling, Californians are braced for a lengthy appeals process, which seemed to begin only moments after Kramer's ruling was announced.

Lawyers for two California groups opposed to same-sex marriage plan to appeal the ruling after March 30, the day Kramer is scheduled to make his opinion final. Kramer's ruling has been stayed automatically for 60 days.

Five years ago, California voters passed a law that tried to preserve marriage as the province of heterosexual couples.

While lawyers on both sides braced themselves for lengthy appeals that will most likely take the matter to the California Supreme Court, activists on both sides agreed that in the long-term it will be won or lost in the court of public opinion. If the state follows the 13 others that added gay marriage bans to their constitutions last year, the move would put the issue out of the control of judges and lawmakers.

A conservative group has persuaded two legislators to sponsor anti-gay marriage amendments. Under that likely scenario, the question probably wouldn't get put to voters until next year.

Supporters of same-sex marriage, however, think the public's acceptance of gay couples has changed significantly since Proposition 22 passed with 61% of the vote in March 2000. The initiative, which stated that California would only recognize a marriage between a man and a woman as valid, came about in the wake of Vermont granting marriage-like status to gays who entered into civil unions.

▼ Bob Roehr and Lisa Leff

NATION/WORLD BRIEFS

SUSPECT CHARGED IN DEATH OF WASHINGTON ACTIVIST

Washington, D.C., police arrested a neighbor in the death of GLBT activist Wanda Alston, who was found stabbed March 16. William M. Parrot Jr., 38, was charged with first-degree murder. Alston, 45, the director of the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs, was found stabbed to death near her front door. Parrot and Alston knew each other, police said. Investigators would not discuss a possible motive, but said the killing probably was not a hate crime.

BISHOP DENIES LAST RITES TO GAY NIGHTCLUB OWNER

San Diego's Roman Catholic bishop said a man who operated a bar and dance club popular with gays would not receive last rites because his work conflicted with church teachings. John McCusker, who was gay, died of congestive heart failure. Arrangements had been made to hold funeral services at the Immaculata Catholic Church on the University of San Diego campus, McCusker's alma mater that is affiliated with the church. But San Diego Bishop Robert Brom decided none of the 98 Catholic churches in San Diego or Imperial counties could provide funeral rites for McCusker.



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NATION / WORLD

HRC HIRES EMILY'S LIST CHIEF FOR ITS TOP JOB

WASHINGTON - After the rumors circulated for more than a week, the Human Rights Campaign announced March 9 that it has hired Joe Solmonese as its next president. He starts on April 11.

Solmonese, 40, has worked for EMILY's List for a dozen years, the last two as the head of that group where he managed a budget of \$40 million and a staff of 85. The organization describes itself as "the nation's largest grassroots political network, dedicated to taking back our country from the radical right-wing by electing pro-choice Democratic women to federal, state and local office." The name is an acronym for "Early Money is Like Yeast," meaning that it makes the dough rise.

Solmonese began his career as an aide in the office of governor Michael Dukakis and played a significant fundraising role in Rep. Barney Frank's 1990 congressional campaign. He came out at 22 and has been a long-time HRC volunteer.

The search committee was impressed with his long track record both within and beyond the Washington Beltway and his extensive fund-raising prowess with EMILY's List.

"The organization has done very well and he has done all of the fund-raising, and all of the management, and all of the politics in the top job there for the last two years," said search committee co-chair Vic Basile. "He has done enormously well over there, you can't argue with success."

HRC ostensibly parted ways with its last executive director, Cheryl Jacques, over differences in management approaches, so it is understandable that the search committee focused on that area. Solmonese now manages a staff almost as large as the one at HRC.

"We need somebody who can help people grow in their jobs and will feel nurtured by him," Basile said.

Solmonese said he's confident that the EMILY's List experience will provide him with the needed background for the HRC job.

"At EMILY's List, we have a real record of getting things done. What I bring to this is the experience of walking into a state like Kansas and saying, 'How can we get a pro-choice Democratic governor elected here?' What about the social fabric? What about the political climate? What about the issue's agenda?" he said shortly after his hire was announced.

One of the bigger challenges facing the HRC is the continued push for same-sex marriage equality throughout the

country.

"As a political issue in the last election, it was not nearly as divisive an issue that people would have you believe. That election was decided on one thing, fear. We have marriage in Massachusetts and a natural reaction to that in a handful of states around the country. To me, that is the ebb and flow of social change," Solmonese said. "I like to say, it's as though you gave people the final exam on the first day of class. We have not immersed ourselves in an education around this issue around why do we seek marriage. That is a process that we have to work on."



EMILY's List leader **JOE SOLMONESE** has been named as the new HRC chief.

Chicago political consultant Michael Bauer has worked with Solmonese "on a couple of races" and called the decision "a great hire. Joe is

very politically savvy, he has great interpersonal skills, and he is very smart."

"The gay community is in desperate need of allies right now," said Ken Sherrill, the doyen of gay political science who is a professor at Hunter University and has been active in Democratic politics in New York.

"In general, the problems that we face are not unlike those faced by EMILY's List except that women's rights are much more popular than ours are," Sherrill said.

Sherrill said that many of those who attack gays use it as "a veiled attack on women's rights." He said he is hopeful that Solmonese might strengthen the ties between those two communities and open political doors in Washington.

But for the head of a powerful, highly visible political organization, Solmonese barely casts a public shadow. An Internet search of his name turned up more than 100 hits, most of which are listings as a cosponsor or participant in fund-raising events. **Bob Roehr**

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RESEARCHERS WORKING ON HIV-PREVENTION LUBES

WASHINGTON - Imagine a lubricant that can help protect you from HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. Such products may be available within five years, if current research pans out.

The field is called microbicides and the products under development can take a handful of different approaches to kill HIV or prevent it from entering your body. Most of the work has been done on products for vaginal use, as heterosexual intercourse appears to be the way that most HIV is transmitted throughout the world, but a small group of researchers is looking at their use with anal sex.

Studies have shown that a compound known as cyanovirin-n can protect monkeys from being infected through the rectum. It's an encouraging proof of principle. But monkeys are not humans; they seem to be better able to fight off the simian version of HIV, and the virus used is not HIV.

Ian McGowan says that researchers are particularly cautious because of the experience with nonoxynol-9 (N-9), a spermicide initially thought to be a promising anti-HIV agent. The researcher at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine says the chemical was used in lubricants to kill sperm and prevent pregnancy. It did the same thing to HIV in the test tube and soon gay men were squirting lube with N-9 into themselves.

All of that came to a screeching halt in 2000 when David Phillips, a researcher with the Population Institute, looked at what the chemical did to the rectums of mice and then of humans. Within minutes of being applied N-9 was stripping off "huge sheets" of the single layer of cells in the rectum that protects against infection. Most manufacturers quickly dropped N-9 from the lube used on their condoms.

Why hadn't that been caught before? McGowan says it was largely a matter of timing, particularly of when researchers looked at the rectum. Within 15 minutes there was "profound damage, but by two hours there is pretty good reconstitution (of the injured tissue), and by eight hours, you would never have known that there had been a problem," he said.

The UCLA team is a leader in learning



Researcher DEAN HAMER is now studying a way to introduce genetically modified bacteria into the gut.

about the rectum toward developing a microbicide.

It is testing the anti-HIV drug tenofovir, mixed into a gel form, in a rectal study in monkeys, and also is looking a UC-781, a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor. UC-781 was very effective against HIV in a test tube but development was abandoned because it isn't very water soluble and wasn't absorbed well by the body. That weakness as a drug might be a strength in a microbicide where you don't want absorption.

Pamina Gorbach says the UCLA team also is trying to get a better sense of attitudes and behaviors among gay men who have anal sex.

"Context can be very important. Factors such as the use of methamphetamines can impact the types, duration, safety and numbers of partners in an encounter," Gorbach said. Location of the encounter in bed or out, prone or standing, naked or clothed can affect willingness to use products with certain characteristics of stickiness or the likelihood of creating a mess. Other researchers are exploring just how much lube people are willing to put into themselves.

Most of the microbicides under development are a gel or foam or cream that would be applied minutes or hours before having sex, almost like a douche. Dean Hamer, the NIH researcher who discovered the "gay gene" more than a decade ago, has proposed a very different approach to protecting against HIV infection — he wants to put genetically modified bacteria in your gut.

Your intestines are filled with swarms of different types of bacteria. Many of them help break down and digest the food we eat so that it can be absorbed through the walls of the intestines. Many of the bacteria that cause illness also are there but are kept in check; you get sick only when that balance becomes upset.

The dream is that taking a pill or a shake or yogurt with the specially engineered bug every couple of weeks or months will offer complete protection from HIV. ▼ Bob Roehr

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HEALTH BRIEFS

NEW HEPATITIS B DRUG RECEIVES ENTHUSIASTIC ENDORSEMENT

Treating hepatitis B may be about to get a lot better. An FDA advisory committee unanimously recommended approval of Bristol-Myers Squibb's entecavir (Baraclude) to treat the infection. Hepatitis B affects the liver. Some 1.2 million Americans have HBV, though the numbers are down sharply since a preventive vaccine was introduced in 1982. It's easily transmitted through sex and blood exposure, the same routes as HIV, so co-infection with both viruses is common.

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Fridays At Noon

WANZIE TAKES NEW ROLE AS P-HOUSE CREATIVE DIRECTOR

ORLANDO - Michael Wanzie has been named creative director and manager of public relations for the Parliament House, 410 N. Orange Blossom Trail, Orlando.

Wanzie is charged with breathing new life into and creating new events at the GLBT entertainment complex, which currently plays host to more than 4,000 visitors a week.

He will also handle public and media relations for the ever-expanding resort, which recently celebrated the groundbreaking of its adjacent The Gardens a 164-unit luxury time-share



MICHAEL WANZIE has been hired as creative director at the Parliament House.

vacation resort..

Wanzie is no stranger to the Parliament House, where its Footlight Theatre has played host to several of his productions, including the current *Ladies of Eola Heights* and the past hit, *Carolina Moon*. He has also become a well-known figure in Central Florida's cultural scene in recent years, thanks to his participation in the *Monday Movie Review* with Doug Ba'aser on *The Philips* on WTKS Real Radio 104.1, and regular appearances at the Orlando Fringe Festival. ▽ *Staff reports*

'AMAZING RACE' WINNER SAYS PRINTER HATES THAT HE'S GAY

VACAVILLE, Calif. - *Amazing Race* winner Reichen Lehmkuhl thought he was finished with a race that took him all over the world meeting various peoples and cultures, but it turns out, his biggest challenge may have been in his own backyard.

On Feb. 22, Lehmkuhl received a "30-day notice of intent" letter from the owner of Progressive Ventures in Vacaville, Calif., who has been printing his posters for the past few months. In the letter sent to Lehmkuhl, it mentioned that in 30 days, Progressive Ventures will no longer print his posters because "I learned you are homosexual, and your Web site is helping to promote a homosexual lifestyle. Not only in adults, but in underage children as well," wrote Mark Jones, owner of the company. "I also realized the posters I have been printing help promote you and your lifestyle."

Despite the popularity of the Emmy Award-winning CBS reality show, from



Openly gay *Amazing Race* winner REICHEN LEHMKUHL believes his printer discriminated against him.

which Lehmkuhl shared the \$1 million prize with then-partner Chip Arndt, Jones did not know about his client's sexuality.

"When he went to my Web site (Reichen.org), he must have seen my biography listing me as a 'gay rights advocate' and also a mention of the radio show on the internet that I co-host on TheFishBowl.com, called *Coming Out with Reichen*," Lehmkuhl said.

Jones also wrote in his letter that "People are not born gay, anymore than they are born adulterers. Or murders. Or thieves. It is the choices they make that they will be judged by, and this is contributing to the decline in moral values in our nation today."

Lehmkuhl said this is nonsense. "Promoting homosexuality is impossible. Homosexuality simply exists. His accusations are absurd. lifestyle," he said.

Lehmkuhl said he is considering legal action against the printing firm. ▽ *Staff reports*



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BUSINESS BRIEFS

ORLANDO ARCHITECTURAL FIRM WINS TWO AIA AWARDS

HuntonBrady Architects, an Orlando-based planning, architecture and interior design firm, has been presented with two prestigious awards by the Orlando chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The firm received an Honor Award for the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute at the University of South Florida in Tampa. The project was designed in collaboration with NBBJ, San Francisco. Chuck Cole served as principal-in-charge of the project for HuntonBrady. An Award of Merit was presented to the firm for the Hillsborough Community College Student Services Building located in Brandon.

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS PRAISE AFL-CIO FOR MARRIAGE STANCE

The National Stonewall Democrats said it applauds the AFL-CIO for opposing both federal and state amendments that would specifically bar marriage equality for same-sex couples. The AFL-CIO, the largest organization for working Americans, passed the resolution at the meeting of its Executive Council in early March. The AFL-CIO's resolution states that such amendments would "deny important rights to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families, such as the right to hospital visitation, inheritance, and health care rights for partners."

FEATURE

RYAN from page 7

be Jesus.”

INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Celebrities took notice of Ryan. Among the first: Michael Jackson, who brought the teenager to the Neverland Ranch. Jeanne is on the list to testify in the Jackson molestation case, which caught her a little by surprise. Jeanne calls the singer “the most misunderstood man in the world,” and believes that he’s innocent.

Others who befriended Ryan: Elton John, Sarah Jessica Parker, Phil Donahue, Judith Light. George C. Scott, who would portray his attorney in the made-for-TV movie *The Ryan White Story*, was a pussy-cat around the boy.

Suddenly, Ryan White had as much name recognition as some of the people who responded to his battle to return to school and stay alive. But celebrity — whether or not it’s desired — has its drawbacks.

Life in the White household had become increasingly odd. At one point, local radio stations began broadcasting that Ryan was at a local supermarket, licking all of the produce.

“That aggravated me because my dad was a produce manager for 45 years,” she laughed. There were notes written on her timecard at the factory and nasty letters to the editor. Other rumors: Jeanne neglected her family and couldn’t clean her house very well.

She didn’t like the tenor of the fight with the school district as well. Attorney Charlie Vaughn began portraying the school district and the city of Kokomo as a bunch of rednecks.

“That offended me because I’m a redneck. He really got under a lot of people’s skin, but that was his job,” she said.

“People believe that I was fighting to

get Ryan back in school, but that was his idea. My No. 1 priority was to keep Ryan alive and my second priority was to keep the family together. No. 3 — or even farther down the list — was getting him back in school,” Jeanne said.

At one point, Jeanne told Vaughn that maybe the school fight wasn’t worth the effort. He asked Ryan if the battle should continue.

“He said that he no longer worked for me. He worked for Ryan,” she said.

Ryan, Jeanne and Andrea (who grew increasingly tired of all of the attention on her brother) learned not to think about the spotlight too much. It was simply their lives.

When the CARE Act was making its way through Congress, Ryan lay dying in Riley Children’s Hospital. Sen. Ted Kennedy, one of the sponsors of the landmark research bill, called

Jeanne at the hospital, asking if Ryan would lend his name to it.

“I didn’t think so at first, but Sen. Kennedy was so insistent — he said that Ryan’s story was so fresh in people’s minds. Never before had so much

focus been placed on the disease and he believed that Ryan’s name would help the cause,” Jeanne said. “I thought it was a nice thing to do, but I never dreamed of the enormity of what it would be.”

When she was asked to appear at a Senate hearing several weeks later, Jeanne asked Sen. Orrin Hatch if he could find someone better qualified. No, he insisted, the senators should hear her tale.

“He told me to just be a mom,” she said. “People needed me to speak for them.”

She remained active with the AIDS community, knowing the frustration about the lack of information in the 1980s. Deep inside, however, she remained a mom from Indiana.

At an ACT-UP protest about the lack

of funding for AIDS research and services during the 1980s, Jeanne found herself facing the television cameras as she stood in front of the White House. While some of the protesters handcuffed themselves to the gates, she demurred.

“Suddenly, I heard a ‘pop,’ and then a reporter asked me what I thought about someone burning an American flag in protest,” she recalled. “I hadn’t seen it, and I didn’t know that was going to happen. I said that I didn’t support burning the American flag, but I certainly understood their frustration.”

Jeanne, who was divorced from Ryan’s father long before he became ill, remarried several years ago. He and the rest of the family convinced her to move from Indiana, to Florida about six years ago. It’s a different world for her, and her daughter, Andrea, who lives nearby.

She still very much recognizable from the time when teams of television camera crews and reporters staked out her home in the mid-1980s.

Today, Jeanne White-Ginder continues to speak about Ryan. Instead of congressional hearings, she takes part in conferences for social workers and AIDS service organizations. Requests to speak at colleges and universities have dwindled.

“Not as many college-age students know his name,” she said, matter-of-factly.

But for those who receive treatment or education about HIV and AIDS, they know his legacy. ▼

“This fight gave Ryan a reason to stay alive.”

METRO from page 12

that attaching a community center to a larger, grant-funded non-profit service organization proved to be the most successful management model.

“The best example in Florida is the Compass Center in West Palm Beach,” Langlois said. “When I attended a statewide Equality Florida leadership conference two years ago, I was surprised to learn the center had an annual budget of more than \$1 million. Much of that is grant-restricted and can’t be used for the community per se, but many of those services are complimentary.”

Langlois also added that having a full-time human service provider on-site not only offers financial stability to a center, but a personal feel as well.

Metropolitan Charities has a full-time presence and professional administrative staff and many of its 31 staff members are

supported by government grants to provide AIDS support services. Its stability has attracted other funding sources as well. The Center of Tampa has survived on volunteer help alone and almost closed three years ago.

“We were just trying to hang on, to keep the idea of the center alive until we could create the right combination of circumstances to move forward,” Harper said. Harper led the group that took over the center in 2002. Harper and two others from that group, Martin Padgett and Herbe Murray, have remained on the board.

Future locations and plans are in the works, but nothing concrete yet, Harper said. But the two groups are very optimistic about the merger.

“We’ve been wanting something like that in Tampa for a long, long time,” he said. “All we need is a few more months of patience and hard work. It’ll come.” ▼

Steve Blanchard

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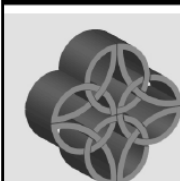
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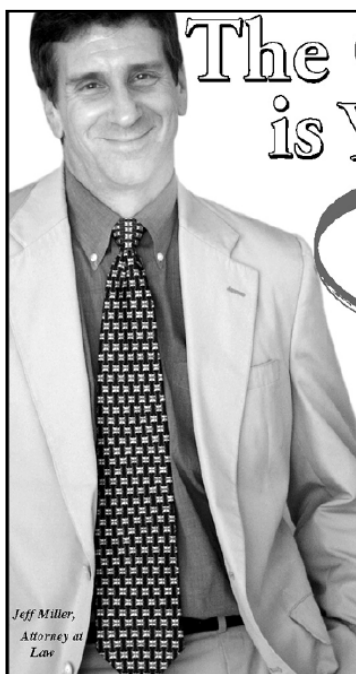
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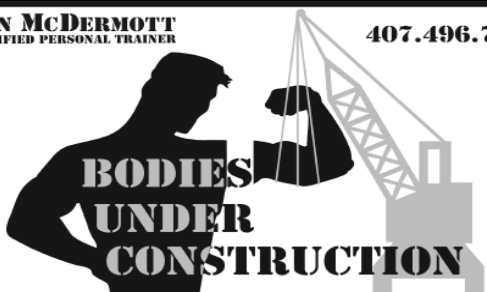
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VIEWPOINT



WHAT WOULD GREG DO? LIFE MAY NOT BE RIGHT IN STRAIGHTVILLE

By Greg Triggs

Sometimes late at night in bed, when I can't sleep, I look over to my right at my slumbering boyfriend and play a little game I like to call, "What If I Were Straight?" The rules are pretty simple. I just close my eyes and imagine that which might have been had my genes been more traditional.

Immediately I am aware of fundamental changes. In real life I've lived in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Florida and now New York. In Straightville, I never escaped the Midwest. In real life, I didn't find the right guy until I was 36. In the imaginary Land of the Heterosexuals, I get married around the age of 27 to a wonderful girl I've known since my first day of high school.

Evidently being straight made me less adventurous. I explored less. I settled down earlier and gave up the fight sooner. After all, even when you're with someone you dearly love, the root word of settled, is *settle*.

I don't know if this is true of most gay men, but I've met the woman that I would have married were I born straight. I don't know if she feels the same way,

but that doesn't really matter. It is my friend Laurie. She's smart and very attractive; we have similar priorities and our neuroses match up nicely. We would have been a good match. God had different plans, but in my late-night fantasy we're together and happy.

In my late-night-lack-of-dreaming land, we have three kids; two boys and one girl. The oldest boy is named Art, age 15. He's very traditional and prefers science and math over his namesake. We don't have much in common, but I love him. He makes me proud. Our middle child, Sam, at age 13, is more like me. He's probably gay but it isn't difficult for him. He knows his parents love him. He's free to be whom and what he wants to be. Our daughter, age 11 and the youngest, is named Frances and she's perfect; feminine without being too feminine just like her brother Sam. We are a lovely family.

I take over my father's home remodeling and construction company and it continues to grow. Eventually I buy out my cousin's plumbing company. I combine the dynasties, hire designers and architects and open Triggs Home Center.

Laurie and I buy a house in the nicest section of Madison, Wis. We get a mini van for her and a sensible four-door American-made car for me. We visit a breeder one autumnal Sunday in October and come home with a border collie named Nubbins.

I'm almost ready to fall asleep content that life is good in my pretend world,

but even in my imaginary life I cannot leave well-enough alone.

Art comes home and tells us that he needs braces. Laurie

catches Sam wearing her bra and panties. Chaos erupts as Nubbins starts humping our slightly cross-eyed Siamese cat Victor. I go visit Frances in her Disney Princess bedroom to find a little peace and quiet and discover her flirting in biker chat rooms on the Internet.

No matter how hard I try to avoid it, reality comes crashing in and ruins the

fantasy. Life has a way of doing that. And frankly that's why I'm not too worried about gay marriage. We're here. We're not going anywhere. Someday it's going to happen.

Let the Catholic Church, a monument to repressed sexual desire, tell us we're evil. Let them suffer the consequence of diminishing membership and increasing litigation. Let the hypocrites be exposed for who and what they are. Let the government pretend that the Constitution only applies to straight people. The pope gets replaced and administrations change. The young replace the old. Change is inevitable.

I remember that when my youngest sister was born, school systems didn't need to provide for children with special needs. I remind myself that when my grandmother was born she didn't have the right to vote. Those wrongs were righted.

And so, when I finally fall asleep, I am peaceful. I'm exactly where I am supposed to be. My head rests on a pillow in the middle of New York City. I'm lying next to a wonderful man with whom I expect to be for the rest of my life — Defense of Marriage Act be damned. They think they have the power to deny us our rights. I go to sleep knowing they don't.

Greg Triggs is a long-time Watermark contributor who now lives in New York.

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VIEWPOINT



CURRENTS YEARBOOK FRACAS TEACHES DISTURBING LESSONS

By Georgia Jenkins

Senior year is a uniquely wonderful time. The future stretches out ahead, an endless tapestry of unbridled possibilities. There are proms, Grad Nights and Senior Skip Days. There is the pomp and circumstance of graduation, when proud parents blink back tears as they watch their offspring march onstage to accept their diplomas.

And there are senior pictures, kids immortalized in the pages of their yearbooks in formal dress, early and incontrovertible evidence of the adults these children have become while we weren't looking. These are the pictures that they will look at in 30 years, marveling at the innocence staring back at their older selves, the pictures their children will giggle over when they're found in a box in the attic: "Mom, is this really you?"

But Kelli Davis will have a different set of memories than most. The 18-year-old is a senior at Fleming Island High School in Green Cove Springs near Jacksonville. She is, by anyone's standards, a good kid: 4.0 GPA, a part-time job, no disciplinary problems in school or with the law. She is also an out lesbian and has paid a price for living honestly in high school, a brutal environment in which to be nonconformist. At the photo shoot for her senior portrait last fall, Kelli chose to wear a tuxedo top rather than the black drape generally worn by the girls.

"If it was good enough for Sharon Stone and Sigourney Weaver, it's good enough for me," she said.

Doesn't seem like the makings of a controversy, does it? But in late October, rumors began circulating around the school that principal Sam Ward was not going to allow Kelli's picture in the yearbook. When her family attempted to investigate the matter, they were put off until late November, when Ward called to tell Kelli's mother, Cindi Davis, that Kelli's picture wouldn't appear in the yearbook because it wasn't "uniform." Cindi disputed his reasoning.

Ward also told a television reporter that Kelli's decision violated school tradition. The reporter made him look foolish by pointing out that this is Fleming Island High's first graduating class.

Cindi finally made an end-run around Ward by purchasing a full-page ad space for Kelli's portrait in the back of the yearbook. She and her fiancé, Jacksonville neurosurgeon Scott Boggs, continued to fight Ward's decision. They sought the intervention of Clay County School District Superintendent David Owens, who declined to get involved. "Mr. Ward thinks the picture is not uniform," said Owens. "He has the final decision."

Contacted in November by a *Folio Weekly* reporter, Owens repeated his support of the principal's decision. "I'm leaving it up to Mr. Ward," he said. "I'm

very much supportive of him."

"But," he added, "you know why she wore that tuxedo, don't you?"

Invited to elaborate, Owens backed off. "I can't say."

At a school board meeting on Feb. 24, hundreds of people filled the room to hear Cindi Davis speak. Twenty-five people approached the podium, most of them to speak on Kelli's behalf. Despite the outpouring of support, the board backed Ward's decision to ban the photo.

Although the Davis family has consulted an attorney, their options are limited at this point. Even if they won a lawsuit, it would likely be a moot point; the case would be lost to the clock, dragging on well past Kelli's graduation.

Ward has admitted that Kelli's choice violated no school rule or policy.

No one is contending that she was trying to make a statement of any kind. She will graduate wearing the usual robe and mortarboard. She did not appear at the photo studio with rainbow-dyed spiked hair or a nose ring. In fact, her wardrobe choices that day were provided by the studio.

The Clay County school board has taught its students some valuable civics lessons in this case. First, it demon-

strated why anti-discrimination laws are needed by showing how authority figures can otherwise arbitrarily mandate policy based not on a need for the rule of law, but simply on personal opinion.

Then, having created a controversy where there need never have been one, it underscored the students' and community's powerlessness by using the absence of basic civil rights protections as sufficient justification for its actions. "Unfortunately," said board member Carol Valencourt, "the First Amendment rights stop at the school gate."

Further, it showed that even a strong base of support can't help you negotiate with a small minority of idiots when the idiots are in power, because idiots won't change their minds even when confronted with overwhelming evidence or public assessment that their decisions are idiotic.

Important lessons, all. The senior class, coming of voting age, can use those lessons. It seems Kelli's empathy and wisdom far outweigh the same attributes in her educators.

Seniors get to pick a quotation of their choice to appear with their picture in the yearbook. Kelli chose a quote from German philosopher Herman Hesse: "If you hate a person, you hate something in him that is part of yourself. What isn't part of ourselves doesn't disturb us."

Georgia Jenkins is a Daytona Beach area writer, paramedic and massage therapist. She can be reached at gjenkins1@cfl.rr.com.

**"Unfortunately,
the First
Amendment
rights stop at the
school gate."**



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Watercolors

ENTERTAINMENT & DIVERSIONS

the original fatactress

Roseanne Barr brings her standup to Orlando
and she's got plenty on her mind By Dave Wiethop

ORLANDO - Roseanne Barr has come so full-circle in the last 20 years that not only is she calling herself by that given name (considering that she's been "Roseanne Arnold" and simply "Roseanne"), she feels good, and by many accounts, she even looks great. She's now headed to Orlando's Hard Rock Live for an evening of standup comedy, which earned attention for her in the first place.

Barr actually grabbed national attention by taking women's (well, straight women's) comedy to the next level. While Phyllis Diller and Joan Rivers complained about their husbands and their kids, they did so with a fairly upper middle-class

ROSEANNE BARR

WHEN: 8 p.m., Sunday, April 3

WHERE: Hard Rock Live, Orlando

TICKETS: \$28.50-\$32.50. Call (407) 351-LIVE or Ticketmaster at (407) 839-3900.

attitude. Barr reveled in her white-trash roots, connecting with an audience that was often ignored.

When *Roseanne* hit ABC in 1988, it jumped to the top of the ratings, thanks in large part to the actress' vision. She would have no "B-stories" on the episodes, she demanded, and the Halloween episodes

Continued on page 40



DJ JOE G?

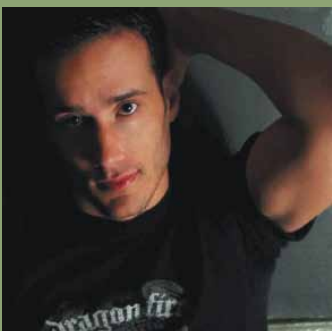
GESUNDHEIT!

The young crown prince of
circuit parties will spin at

Tampa's Temple

By DJ Kirk Hartlage

He's only 27 and he's already being seen as the new crown prince of circuit party royalty. DJ Joe Gauthreux has head-



lined some of the biggest gay circuit events, including White Party in Palm Springs, White Party in Miami, Hotlanta in Atlanta and One Mighty Party in Orlando. He's also about to release another mix CD from Centaur Records, *Cherry Ball*, in early May in conjunction with the famed event in our nation's capital.

Fitting for *Watermark's* annual travel issue, Gauthreux talked with *Watermark* via email from a cruise ship docked in St. Lucia. Many gay charters book top DJs to spin for the various parties on ship; we caught Gauthreux on a break between gigs on deck. Gauthreux docks anchor in Tampa to spin at Temple (the old Chrome at Club XS) on Saturday, March 26.

DJ JOE G

WHERE: Temple Nightclub, located in Diesel, the old Chrome at Club XS 238 S. Franklin St., Tampa

WHEN: Sat., March 26. Doors open at 10 p.m.

MORE INFO: DJJoeG.com.

WATERMARK: You grew up in New Orleans – quite the party town. Aren't people pretty schnookered that they'll dance to anything?

GAUTHREUX: I would hope that even if they're f'ed up, they still care about what

Continued on page 39

WATERCOLORS



WATERCRESS AND 'BINGO' TRAGICALLY BECAME MY 'NAME-O'

Salad by Jim Crescitelli

BINGO WITH BUNNY sounds like a 1950s situation comedy starring Bea Benaderet and Gracie Allen, but it's actually what I played in Cape Canaveral recently while everyone else was walking the beach. That's Kirk's Aunt Bunny, by the way, not a young lady running around with big ears, a carrot and a fluffy tail pinned to where she should know better.

And what a time we had at the VFW hall! I tell you, it was gratifying being the youngest one in the joint — and probably the gayest one as well! We had the option of either sitting in the big room with the hoi polloi or at the bar where we could be closer to the Mannhattans (laced with Metamucil as they were, but still — I'm just saying).

You pay \$12 for a stack of Bingo cards printed on what looks very much like recycled toilet paper, and then the obsessive-compulsive caller begins verbally firing numbers into the ether. "I-29," he intones precisely, and the geriatric muttering begins: "Damn ... hell ... I want new cards." If you crave a drink, you order it in sign language because God forbid the octogenarian gambler to your immediate left loses his already

gossamer-thin concentration and misses a number — it would lead to pandemonium as well as rival the negotiations which ultimately resulted in separating Schleswig from Holstein.

When someone does eventually caw "Bingo!" the place fills with resentment and recrimination, which is fine because it loosens the tension. Then there's a break, what I called "time to socialize." Cigarettes are lit, drinks are freshened by a waitress who calls you "Hon," and personal histories are exchanged. I struck up a conversation with the old gentleman on the barstool next to me, and it turned out he was a veteran. "Yankee Army or Rebel?" I shrieked, and was firmly put in my place when he brought me up to date on his World War II experiences. From what I could gather, he had been responsible for transferring 54,000 women from the European continent safely across the channel to England, a mobilization I am sure they are still talking about.

**After three hours in
that nicotine-
stained circus, I
hadn't won a cent.**

"Fifty-four thousand women," he reminisced. "And I picked *her*!" He pointed to his wife, a tiny lady in puffy white hair, a white track suit and large glasses which turned her pretty blue eyes into outsized orbs. She looked like a snowy owl perched on a branch.

"Who?" she asked, but of course he didn't answer her question — why should he suddenly change his behavior after 60 years? "She's 80 years old, and I'm 82," he bellowed proudly, which caused his compatriot across the bar to holler: "Cradle robber!" Bunny nudged and whispered to

me, "I never talk to them, I just listen."

The little food jokes I made as I slathered mustard along their pinkish lengths were not appreciated; I got those beady-eyed stares which made

me realize that I was very much a blue-state fleck of plankton in a sea of red-state whales. After three hours in that nicotine-stained circus, I hadn't won a cent, but Bunny won \$25. (She also won big at the Dakota Magic Casino in Hankinson when we were there with her in 2000, but that's another story.)

She went back the next day and won \$150, and I'm told the crowd wanted to draw and quarter her. Imagine having nothing carved on your tombstone except for G-

54!

DARYL AND ANDY had us over to their place recently to play a sort of Cinematic-DVD Trivial Pursuit, or something like that; basically, it involved two teams squaring off against one another while trying to correctly identify actors, actresses, film titles, plots, and the like. Since I am steeped in cinematic lore which rarely progresses beyond 1939, I knew I was screwed when most of the film references seemed to be representative of the last three decades of the 20th century, an epoch I know from nothing about.

I mean, some of my favorite actresses never got the opportunity to even make sound films, so there you have it. Besides, they plied me with wine until I couldn't tell the difference between *Easy Rider* and the Easy Bake Oven, but you know what? We came in a very close second anyway. The evening's entertainment, ably fueled by a host of various and Distinctive Pepperidge Farm treats, was provided by Jose, whose ability to quote perfectly all the lines from *Mommie Dearest* was truly awesome and not just the obvious lines, but some of the more obscure ones too.

Not a stretch, really: Faye Dunaway is clay in the hands of gay men, something she must realize because that epic biopic is not included in her official biography. And who can blame her?

Jim Crescitelli is Watermark's oldest living contributor. He can be reached at WaterCressGuy@aol.com.

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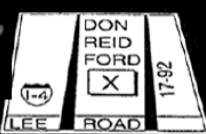
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WATERCOLORS



AMAZONS DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

By Karen S. Murray-Parker

My wife Alta and I settled into our new home four months ago, and are well along in the nesting process. We love our home and its convenience, but something is missing. While all our neighbors are friendly, we still feel we are living a kind of double life as the "Are they or aren't they" lesbian couple on the block.

It's a very intriguing guessing game for our neighbors, since they are far too polite to just come out and ask. But you can see the little wheels whirling behind their eyes as we chat.

You'd think they'd get the picture – two middle-aged women living together and calling each other "honey." Yet our next-door neighbor and his best friend from Vietnam were living together and they definitely are *not* gay – but then again they don't call each other "honey."

In a world filled with atypical living arrangements, one never knows what the specifics are about the people they meet or the new neighbors on the block. I'd actually prefer being the out lesbian couple on the block. Then I would feel more comfortable taking

evening walks hand-in-hand with my honey or hugging and kissing her in the driveway before she drives off for the day.

We still kiss and hug each other in public, but there is an invisible-yet-still-sensed feel of constraint when we do. We are discreet lest somehow we offend, and that offends *me*.

We never mention it to each other, but we don't tease one another or express our love and affection as freely in the front of the house as we do in the fenced-in back area. When the neighbors come over, we don't casually pass our arms around one another like a cozy and affectionate heterosexual husband and wife might.

Three doors down from us lives a gay guy who walked over and introduced himself a couple of weeks ago. He'd noticed the rainbow stickers on our car and put one and one together. He introduced us to a couple of the neighbors we hadn't met yet, but before he did, he took me aside and warned me not to let on that he was gay and suggested we keep a low profile as well.

I found myself complying with his request without really understanding why. Later I felt embarrassed that I'd felt this way. I felt *defensive*. But I'd created the situation and encouraged it. To me, I was somehow complying with the way society wants us to behave – Don't ask, don't tell. Don't rock the boat.

That experience led me to be more

aware how I act when straight folks come over to our house. I'm not talking close friends here, I'm talking about work acquaintances, new neighbors, repairmen and so forth.

I recently carpooled to St. Pete's All Children's Hospital with two other nursing school students for some clinicals. I had the bigger and more comfortable car so I offered to drive. The two students, one female and the other male and both straight, met at my house for two days.

The woman student who had met Alta the day before, while we were out front in our yard gardening, commented several times on how nice a roommate Alta seemed to be. I replied that she was my partner and my best friend and agreed that indeed I was lucky to have found someone so special. The woman still didn't

understand what I was clarifying. I wondered whether or not I should just come out and tell her that Alta and I are lesbians, but at 5:30 am. I really wasn't awake enough for a discussion on the issue.

Later, I wondered whether I was just

dodging the bullet and used feeling sleepy as an excuse not to further clarify who I am and that Alta and I are a couple. Then I wondered why I was making it such a big issue in my mind. Wasn't that the whole point – that being a lesbian should be a non-issue?

I know now from talking to the gay real estate agent from whom we bought our house that there are at least 13 other gays and lesbians living in this community. But we are so closeted here that except for two gay men and the gay real estate agent and her partner, I have no clue who the other nine GLBT people in my neighborhood are or where they live.

I guess that's the absurdity of the situation. We're all living underground in our own small community. So long as we let society make us feel obliged to live that way, what kind of headway can we expect to make it demanding equal rights?

So the next time a neighbor comes over I'm going to put my arm around Alta, and call her my sweetie and plant a kiss on her cheek like any loving couple would – but I think I'd better clue Alta in on the plan first, or we could be showcasing our first domestic spat – and that would really get the neighborhood tongues wagging.

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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lest somehow
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FEATURE PRESENTATIONS

This year's Ybor City film festival offers three gay selections By Tom Dyer

TAMPA – In just its third year, the Ybor Festival of the Moving Image has carved out a unique niche. Like other large-scale film events, more than 60 feature, documentary and short films will be screened over four days from Thursday, March 31, through Sunday, April 3. But the quirkily historic east downtown district also provides the perfect backdrop for a festival that makes avant-garde artists accessible to a new generation of filmmakers.

"This festival highlights film artists working in traditional ways such as narrative and documentary, but also artists using a moving image component in any medium – especially music, dance, theater and the visual arts of sculpture and painting," said David Audet, special projects manager at Hillsborough Community College.

Prompted by HCC president Dr. Lois Gaston, Audet came up with the idea for the festival to enrich Ybor, where he resides, and HCC students and faculty.

"We're here to educate, entertain and inspire future filmmakers. Our featured artists are selected for their desire and ability to share their experiences with the audience."

Given the cutting-edge nature of the event, it should be no surprise that several features have gay themes. Three – all playing at Muvico Centro Ybor, are expected to be festival highlights:

That Man Peter Berlin is

the first feature-length documentary by award-winning filmmaker Jim Tushinski. It

recounts the life of stunning photographer, filmmaker and model Peter Berlin, dubbed "the Greta Garbo of gay porn."

Tushinski's movie focuses beautifully, and brutally, on the up and down sides of self-invention and self-absorption, depicting a haunting real-life character. The North American premiere of the film – a real coup for the Ybor Fest – will be screened at 10 p.m. on Friday, April 1.

Tarnation was recently named Best Documentary at the Los Angeles Film Festival, and was an official selection of the Sundance, Cannes, Toronto, New York, and Chicago film festivals. The film was created by Jonathan Caouette with his boyfriend's Apple iMovie program, and records his life in abusive foster homes and with his mentally ill mother.

"It's about youth, art, sexuality, mental illness, America and survival," said Caouette. "Everything in *Tarnation* is true. It reflects my constant feeling of disconnection, and my constant sense of unreality."

Tarnation plays at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 2.

A Letter to True is famed photographer Bruce Weber's tribute to his dog. "This is an incredibly touching and personal film," said Victoria Jorgensen, assistant program director for the Ybor Fest. "Anyone who has ever loved a dog will be deeply moved by this beautiful movie."

Although not gay himself, Weber is familiar to GLBT audiences as the photographer who created the homoerotic look of Calvin Klein and Abercrombie & Fitch advertising. He is also an award-winning filmmaker. *A Letter to True* will run at 8 p.m. on Friday, April 1, along with a short film about an angel who helped George W. Bush overcome drugs and alcohol, and has now returned to correct the mistake.

Jorgensen noted that each of the GLBT-themed films is in the running for Audience Favorite, and would then be re-screened at 4 p.m. on Sunday, April 3. Other films – including entries from Canada, Brazil, India, Germany and Sweden – are listed at the festival's Web site at www.yborfilmfestival.com. Many will be screened at HCC's Performing Arts Building at 15th Street and Palm Avenue in Ybor City.

Another highlight of the festival will be a Saturday evening performance by Mass Ensemble, a California musical group that builds and plays large sculptural instruments featuring a video component. ▼ Tom Dyer



That Man Peter Berlin profiles "the Greta Garbo of gay porn."

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WATERCOLORS

ROLL YOUR STOCKINGS DOWN

The razzle-dazzle of *Chicago* returns and evokes a feisty game of 'What If ...' By Dave Wiethop

ORLANDO - It may be hard to believe, but the musical *Chicago* has been trodding the boards for 30 years. Suffering the indignities of losing Tony Award after Tony Award to *A Chorus Line* shortly after its 1975 Broadway debut, *Chicago* was only a modest hit at first.

Because of its fairly adult content after all, the show is about unre-pentant murderers and the cynicism of the

CHICAGO

WHEN: Through March 27

WHERE: Bob Carr Performing Arts Center

WHO: Terra C. MacLeod, Bianca Marroquin, Carol Woods and Gregory Harrison

TICKETS: \$34-62, available by calling (407) 950-3900 or through Ticketmaster

media *Chicago* lived on primarily through the popularity of its original cast recording. And it was intoxicating: Gwen Verdon, Chita Rivera and Jerry Orbach sang the hell out of John Kander and Fred Ebb's brassy, show-stopping songs.

Still, it was a 1997 revival helmed by Walter Bobbie and Ann Reinking (who was once the girlfriend of original director Bob Fosse) that make *Chicago* a major success. Rethinking the show as more of a stylish, modern vaudeville, Bobbie and Reinking replaced the lingerie with classy mini-skirts and smart short jackets and made room on their mantels for the Tony Awards the show deserved years before.

Now, one of the few musicals ever to win a Best Picture Oscar (the last one was *Oliver!*, the last inhabitant of the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center), *Chicago* remains a rare critical and financial success. Part of that durability may be the result of the great score, fine choreography and wry comedy. Or, it could be the product of some key roles that are flexible, showy and resonant.

The production that plays to the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center through March 27 is largely the same one that played in Tampa Bay last fall: Carol Woods, Bianca Marroquin, Terra C. MacLeod and Gregory Harrison.

Over the years, such performers as Bebe Neuwirth, Sandy Duncan, Melanie Griffith, Jennifer Holliday, Patti LaBelle, Wayne Brady and Page Davis have stepped into the revival both in New York and on the road. Still, it's fun to imagine how this durable and highly enjoyable tune-fest would look if it had been placed in some different hands.

DREAM CAST — As produced in Heaven
VELMA: Josephine Baker

ROXIE: Marilyn Monroe
MAMA MORTON: Totie Fields
BILLY FLYNN: Rock Hudson
AMOS HART: Tony Randall

DREAM CAST — As produced for American Idol
VELMA: Fantasia Barrino
ROXIE: Clay Aiken
MAMA MORTON: Ruben Studdard
BILLY FLYNN: Bo Bice

DREAM CAST — As produced for Florida drag performers
VELMA: Miss Sammy
ROXIE: Stephanie Shippae
MAMA MORTON: Darcell Stevens
BILLY FLYNN: Wanda Myles
GO-TO-HELL KITTY: Oh, pick one.

DREAM CAST — As produced by MGM Studios in the 1940s and 1950s
VELMA: Debbie Reynolds
ROXIE: Judy Garland
MAMA MORTON: Ann Miller
BILLY FLYNN: Gene Kelly
AMOS HART: Mickey Rooney

DREAM CAST — As produced by Martini and Rossi
VELMA: Liza Minnelli
ROXIE: Courtney Love
MAMA MORTON: Elizabeth Taylor
BILLY FLYNN: Charlie Sheen

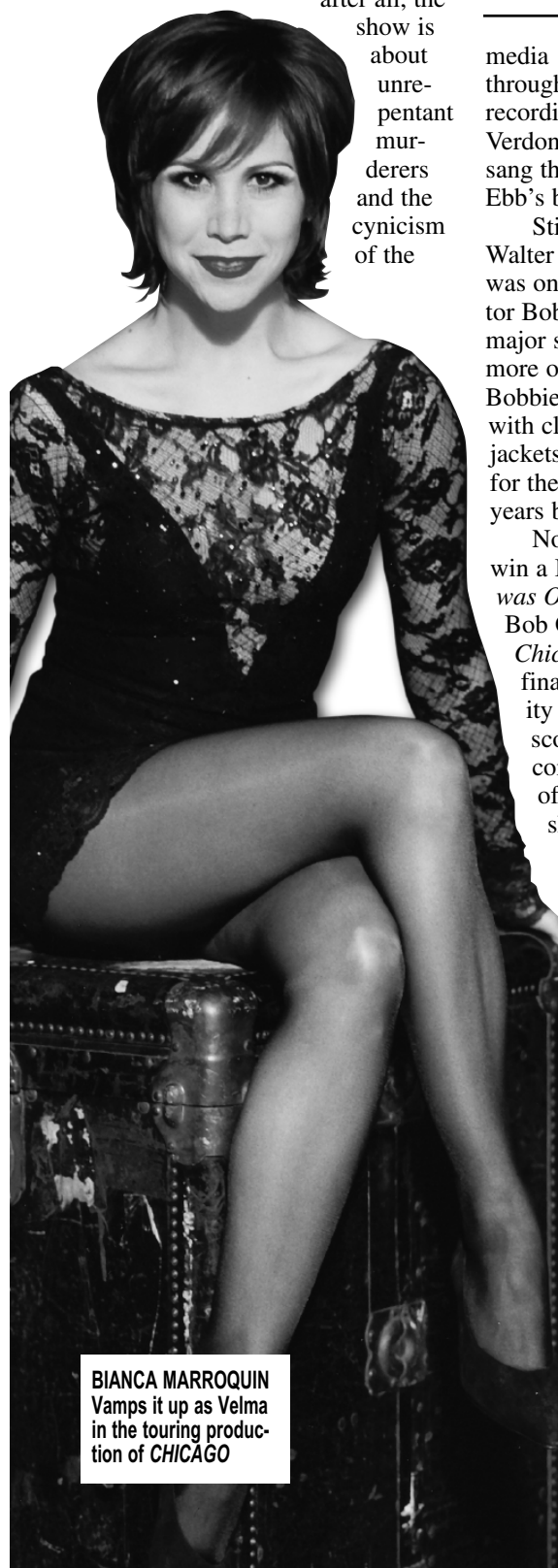
AMOS HART: Robert Downey Jr.

DREAM CAST — As produced by the Country Music Association
VELMA: Brooks
ROXIE: Dunn
MAMA MORTON: Loretta Lynn
BILLY FLYNN: Toby Keith

DREAM CAST — As produced by the Motion Picture Retirement Center
VELMA: Elaine Stritch
ROXIE: Betty White
MAMA MORTON: Marla Gibbs
BILLY FLYNN: Eddie Albert
GO-TO-HELL KITTY: Gloria Stuart

DREAM CAST — As produced by the WB as a sitcom
VELMA: Jennie Garth
ROXIE: Amanda Bynes
MAMA MORTON: Faye Dunaway
BILLY FLYNN: Steve Harvey
GO-TO-HELL KITTY: Shannen Doherty

DREAM CAST — As produced at the Plastic Surgery Wing, Cedars Sinai Hospital, Beverly Hills
VELMA: Kate Jackson
ROXIE: Goldie Hawn
MAMA MORTON: Roseanne Barr
BILLY FLYNN: Kenny Rogers
MARY SUNSHINE: Michael Jackson



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WATERCOLORS

CALENDAR of Events

ART & EXHIBITS

TAMPA BAY

Diana: A Celebration

This extraordinary exhibit 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 devoted to her charitable works around the world. A special section highlights her wedding to Prince Charles, the wedding seen around the world. The exhibit had its U.S. debut in Fort Lauderdale but is extending its run in the Sunshine State with a brief stop in St. Pete through May 15. The museum is located at 100 South St. N. in Downtown St. Pete. For more details visit www.floridamuseum.com.

The New York Yankees and the American Dream

What with 'roids being all the rage, baseball is hot all over again! Granted, Sammy Sosa and Barry Bonds may come off as asses, but they sure do look

cute – it's as if they're the poster children both for and against using steroids, all at the same time! Still, baseball is America's sport, and to celebrate the New York Yankees' Spring training in Tampa, the Tampa Museum of Art is hosting an exhibition celebrating the legendary baseball team's history and significance to popular American culture through April 3. Works of art inspired by baseball, some specifically commissioned for the show, will be exhibited alongside artifacts which evoke memories of Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio and other stars of the game. The museum is at 600 N. Ashley Drive, Tampa. For more info, call (813) 274-8130 or visit tampamuseum.com.

THEATRE

ORLANDO

The Graduate

"Would you like me to seduce you?" When it's Morgan Fairchild asking the question, it's hard for any man – gay or straight – to say no. Watch the former

Flamingo Roader drop trou in the touring version of the acclaimed Broadway comedy that originally saw Kathleen Turner do the same disrobing stunt. Though they may be appropriate for last month's performance of *The Mikado*, leave the opera glasses at home. Graduation ceremonies run April 5 to 10 at the Bob Carr, tickets available at the box office or at (407) 839-3900.

The Ladies of Eola Heights

On stage together for the first time, Miss Sammy joins Michael Wanzie, Doug Ba'aser and Tommy Wooten for the latest saga of Wanzie's Orlando anthologies. We can only hope the upcoming Gardens resort names one of their buildings or storage units after the famed trailer park so often eulogized in Wanzie's productions. Comedy, drama, lip-sync and bitchiness culminate at 8 p.m. at the Parliament House Footlight Theatre. The show has been extended through April 20. Tickets are \$15 and can be reserved at (407) 540-0317.

SARASOTA

Sideshow

The Hilton sisters have a musical about them. OK, so, it's not *those* Hilton sisters – this show is a musical look at the lives and loves of conjoined twins Daisy and Violet Hilton in the heyday of Vaudeville. Together they journey to Hollywood in pursuit of fame and love. The ambitious Manatee Players are bringing the story to the Riverfront Theater stage, 102 Old Main St., Bradenton, through March 27. Call (941) 748-

5875 or visit manateeplayers.com.

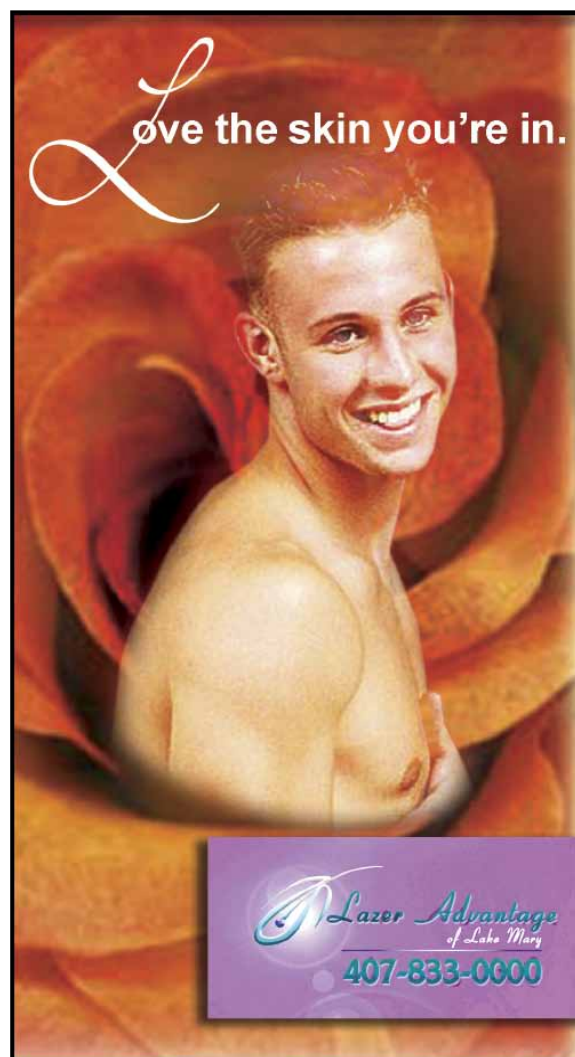
TAMPA BAY

Big River

Heralded for its unique interpretation and addition to America's theatrical palette, *Big River, the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* stops in Tampa. The show has received critical acclaim for including deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing actors performing each role in a synchronized ballet of speaking, signing, gesture, song and dance. Spoken English and American Sign Language are interwoven with music, dance and storytelling techniques from both hearing and deaf cultures into a "third language" creating a unique and groundbreaking theatrical experience. Sail on *Big River* from March 29 to April 3 at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. Tickets available at the box office, at (813) 229-STAR or www.TBPAC.org.

The Joy of Gay Sex

This romantic comedy, which premiered a decade ago in San Francisco and will make its New York premiere this winter, is the featured show by Gypsy Productions at the Suncoast Theater. Sex tells the stories of a group of friends falling in and out of love through the 1990s and includes musical numbers from the Golden Age of Hollywood. Boy meets boy (meets boy) and girl meets girl amid a hail of sharp one-liners about political and aesthetic correctness, through March 27. For tickets and info call (727) 456-0500.



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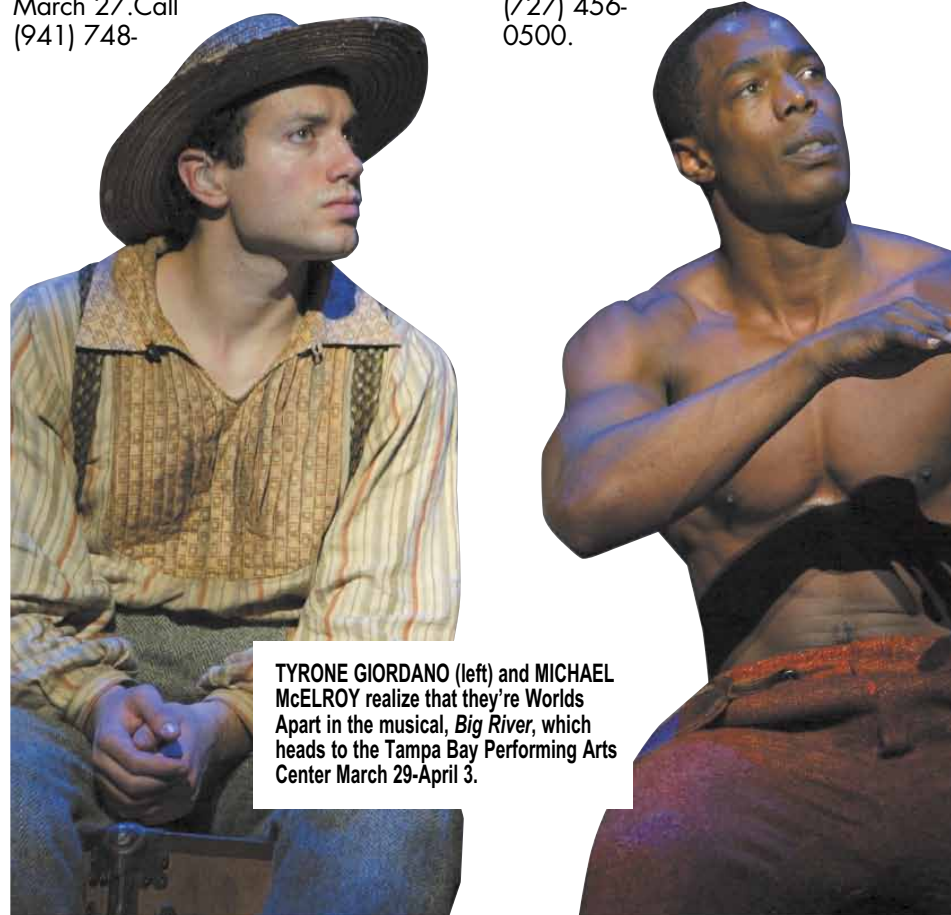
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TYRONE GIORDANO (left) and MICHAEL McELROY realize that they're Worlds Apart in the musical, *Big River*, which heads to the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center March 29-April 3.

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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) 238-4727.

DAYTONA BEACH REGIONAL BEARS ASSOCIATION

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

FUN COAST BEARS

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

GALBA

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

GAY/BI MARRIED MEN RAP GROUP

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

GREATER DAYTONA BUSINESS GUILD

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

OUTREACH, INC.

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

OVER THE RIVER

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

PFLAG DAYTONA

Parents, Families, Friends of Lesbians & Gays. Meets third Tues.; 7 p.m.; Hope MCC in Daytona, 500 S. Ridgewood Ave. (US1). (386) 322-4169; support@pflagdaytona.org; www.pflagdaytona.org.

SPECTRUM

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

ORLANDO

AA WAKE UP CALL-FRIDAY

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

AA WAKE UP CALL-SATURDAY

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

AA WAKE UP CALL - SUNDAY

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

BEARS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

BMCO

Big Mens Club of Orlando. Social club for big men and their admirers. Visit communities.msn.com/BIGMANSCLUBO-FORLANDO/whatsnew.msnnw 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.

CENTAUR

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

CENTRAL FLORIDA GAY & LESBIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

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

CODA

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

COLAGE

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

COUNTRY SATURDAY NIGHTS

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

CRYSTAL CLEAR

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

DIGNITY

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

FLORIDA GREAT OUTDOORS

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

GBT MEN

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

GLBCC-THE CENTER

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

GLBT DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS OF SEMINOLE COUNTY

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

GLBT YACHT CLUB

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

GNOMES

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.greaterorlandocouples.org.

HARBOR HOUSE

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

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

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.lcrlorlando.com.

LONG YANG CLUB ORLANDO

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

METROPOLITAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

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

NA RAINBOW RECOVERY

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

OPEX

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

ORLANDO GAY CHORUS

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

ORLANDO GAY PARENTS GROUP

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

ORLANDO QUEER ACADEMICS

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

ORLANDO SOCIAL CLUB

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

ORLANDO YOUTH ALLIANCE

Central Florida's GLBTQ youth group meets each Tuesday night at 6:15 p.m. For meeting location, call (407) 599-7453.

PFLAG

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

POLY-CENTRAL

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

PRIME TIMERS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

RAINBOW DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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

RAINBOW SPIRIT

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

REFLECTIONS

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

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

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

TRANS CENTRAL STATION

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

TRIDENT INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

UCF GLBSU

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

THE WOMYN'S EXCHANGE

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

TRIANGLE TEES

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

TRIDENT INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

WILLOW

Social group for women who live in Lake County. Meets 2nd Sun.; Mt. Dora Chamber of Commerce. (352) 383-2165.

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.pcgl.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 for details.

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.

GLAD

A Manatee Community College social and support group. <http://hometown.aol.com/mccglad/myhomepage/gaylesbian.html>.

GULF COAST LOG CABIN CLUB

"Inclusive, diverse Republicans." GulfCoastLogCabin@iname.com or jimbofla@yahoo.com.

GULF COAST MEN'S CHORUS

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

PFLAG SARASOTA

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

PRIMETIMERS SARASOTA

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

READING GROUP

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

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.

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-scubawest.com.

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ORGANIZATIONS

BROTHAS SPEAK

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

CHASE

For youth ages 13-24 affected and infected with HIV. Free and confidential. Meets last Monday of the month 5:30-7:30 p.m. (727) 215-2914; Yes@westcare.com.

CRESCENDO: THE TAMPA BAY WOMEN'S CHORUS

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

THE CENTER OF TAMPA BAY

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

EQUALITY FLORIDA-HILLSBOROUGH

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

EQUALITY FLORIDA-PINELLAS

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

EZRA GROUP

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

FACT HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUP

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

FACT SPANISH-SPEAKING HIV/AIDS GROUP

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

FACE TO FACE YOUTH GROUP

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

FAMILY BRIDGE CLUB

Playing card variety. (813) 832-2999.

FLAMINGO AUTO GROUP

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

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.forge8m.com.

FLORIDA GULF COAST COUPLES

Social group for same gender couples. (813) 759-1805; (727) 347-7412.

FREEDOM RINGS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

FRIENDS CLUB FOR GAY MEN

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

FRONT RUNNERS OF TAMPA BAY

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

GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

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

GAY & BISEXUAL 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.

GAY FUN CLUB

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

GAY MEN'S OUTDOOR GROUP

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

GAY SKATE

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

GIRL TALK

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

GLBT PARENTS OF TAMPA BAY

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

GLSEN TAMPA BAY

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

HIV TAMPA BAY

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

INTERWEAVE/ST. PETERSBURG

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

KAPPA XI OMEGA SORORITY

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

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

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

THE LINE

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

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS OF TAMPA BAY

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

L.O.L.A.

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

METROPOLITAN CHARITIES

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

THE METRO CENTER

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

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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

OUT OF THE CLOSET THRIFT STORES

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

PFLAG TAMPA

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

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

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

PFLAG PINELLAS

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

POSITIVE EXPRESSIONS

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

PRIDE AL ANON FA.M.I.L.Y 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.pwac-tampa.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.

SEX AND LOVE ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (SLAA)

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

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

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

ST. PETE PRIDE

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

STARBURST OF PINELLAS PARK

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

SUNCOAST SQUARES

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

TAMPA BAY BEARS

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

TAMPA BAY BUSINESS GUILD

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

TAMPA BAY GAY MEN'S CHORUS

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

TAMPA BAY LESBIANS

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

T.A.N.G.L.O.

Tampa Area Naturists Gay and Lesbians Outdoors. Gay and Lesbian and bisexual naturists outdoor activity club. (813) 962-8459.

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 EXCHANGETAMPABAY

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

YES (YOUTH EDUCATION SERVICES)

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

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DJ JOE G from page 31

I'm playing. But yeah, New Orleans is a *big* drinking town. It's fun to visit, but wasn't the right place for me to live.

As we speak, you're actually on a cruise. What's that like to DJ on a massive ship? And from one DJ to another, how does one score a gig like that?

It's a ton of fun. The parties I play are pretty incredible, but I get to meet so many new people that I can call "friends" by the end of the trip. My roommate in New York right now is someone I met on a Hawaiian cruise last year.

What was the most shocking thing to you on your first cruise?

Nothing really shocked me too much, except for the amount of fun I had. Not to put any of the circuit weekends down, but they can kinda blend together after a while.

Anything you plan different for when you're playing on a cruise versus the audiences you've come to know at the landside clubs you play?

Each DJ does a T-dance and one big night-time party. Usually I spin the Tropical Heat party at night, so that's a bit more of a jungle/tribal vibe, and the Dog Tag Tea Dance I do is fun, happy tunes. They're *real* big on the themes at Atlantis.

What do you pack when you go on a cruise - not music per se, but other stuff?

Umm, I don't really pack any of the outfits that some of these guys bring, like for the themed parties. I'm a shorts and t-shirts kind of guy.

What's in your CD player right now?

Green Day's *American Idiot*. The album is fucking brilliant from beginning to end.

Do you take someone with when you go on the cruises, like a boyfriend?

I'm single. I go alone sometimes, and sometimes I bring a friend. Sometimes I can't even stay on the boat for the entire time because I have another gig to get to.

From one DJ to another, what do you find is the biggest misconception about DJs?

That we're rich. That we just sit at home all week eating bon-bons. That we can get any guy we want. That we're perfect. I could go on for days!

What's been the weirdest request you've ever gotten while DJing?

Sometimes people want autographs - that's kind of weird to me.

What's the biggest guilty pleasure about you that people would be most surprised to learn about?

That I love Avril Lavigne and *The O.C.*! I guess everyone knows now! ▼

WATERCOLORS

ROSEANNE from page 31

had to kick ass. And while she played the lower middle-class schtick in a classy way with John Goodman and Laurie Metcalfe, Barr's show was often brutally honest and intensely funny.

Her queer-themed episodes caused a lot of ripples too, particularly when Barr's character kissed a friend played by Mariel Hemingway. Later, Roseanne Conner's openly gay boss, Leon (played by Martin Mull), decided to marry his long-time partner, Scott, in one of the first-ever same-sex marriages on episodic television.

"It was no big deal for me," she says. "There are gay people in my family and I wanted that to be part of the show."

Eventually, her television mother announced that she was a lesbian. After a tumultuous final season in which the Conner family won the lottery, Roseanne Conner revealed in the last 15 minutes of the show that much of the last few years had been a fictional account of the real family.

"My mom came from a generation where women were supposed to be submissive about everything. I never bought into that and I wish mom hadn't either," Roseanne Conner said in a gripping monologue. "I wish she had made different choices. So I think that's why I made her gay. I wanted her to have some sense of herself as a woman. Oh yeah, and she's nuts."

Since then, she has experimented with the reality-based *Real Roseanne Show* that ABC abruptly cancelled when she became ill.

Now, she not only has her original last name but a microphone in her hand. It's a great place for her because damn if she doesn't have things on her mind.

Roseanne talked with *Watermark* about the end of the world, same-sex marriages and Kirstie Alley's "thunderously, gigantically huge ass."

WATERMARK: Why did you return to standup?

ROSEANNE BARR: I never stopped. I've always been doing standup, sometimes in smaller clubs here and there, sometimes in bigger places. I like seeing the people and being part of it all.

I gather that you're not doing this because you have bills to pay.

That's for sure. I have money. Don't get me wrong — I'm not one of those people who doesn't like money. Money's a good thing to have.

You were on tour with Michael Moore this fall, right?

Yeah, it was awesome. We went to a

lot of college campuses and talked to students about the election and stuff. It was cool to do the standup because generally young people are more aware than they used to be. They got all of the jokes, especially about politics.

Some people say that the atmosphere of the 2004 election as being much like the college campuses of the 1960s.

Yeah, it felt like that, except that I never went to college.

What do you talk about in your act?

I mock everything — everything! — because everything is so hilarious! When you take things too seriously, you're in serious trouble. I talk about George W., because in my book, he's insane.

He's out of his fucking mind! And it's not just him, it's the whole world and we don't care. Everyone is too fucked up to care. Everything has been dumbed down and we're too drugged up to care anymore.

I mean, how many people vote on that show ...

American Idol?

Yeah, that show. Stop calling *American Idol* and stop watching so much porn because it's rotting your brains. Everything is only going to get worse and it's only going to get weirder until people wake up and realize how bad it's gotten. And what's worse is that these crackpots in charge are only getting braver the way that they're bullshitting us.

My act is a wake-up call to people to take a look around them and get angry enough to put down the porn and do

something.

What pisses you off the most?

The fact that society is still so much for the haves, with nothing for the have-nots. And it's so orchestrated!

I'm very frightened myself. You can feel something bad coming our way and I know that I am fully, insanely neurotic, but something bad is going to happen unless we do something.

So you grabbed the microphone.

That's right! You know, standup is the last form of free speech in the world. It's an art form. You can be kept off the radio and off television if you don't toe the party line, but you can say what you honest-to-God feel when you're in the clubs. But that's not the case anywhere else.

It's not a good time for artists. I have a voice and I want to make sure that I let myself get heard.

Hollywood is so isolated and it just breaks my heart that no one is speaking for the Dan and Roseanne Conners of the world. The working people are under attack and no one is even mentioning it.

There are so many people who can't even afford what Dan and Roseanne Conner had. They have jobs, but they

can't pay the medical insurance and put money away for college and sock money away for retirement and own a home. They can't afford that. I have to speak for these people.

Michael Moore was a good match for you, then.

Yeah. This war makes me sick. They're recruiting kids to go overseas who are not going to be able to get jobs, or who live in abusive homes and need someplace to go or they're not mentally right. That's just insane. It makes me so mad.

You've spoken up for gay people for a long time. Your show was one of the first to show a same-sex marriage and your kiss with Mariel Hemingway. You have regular, realistic gay characters.

I know. I've always had gay people in my family. It was just part of who they were and what my family was. They had kids and I had kids. We were just who we were and I wanted to show that aspect of my family as well. It's not weird.

I've quoted you many, many times: "He couldn't be any gayer if his name was 'Gay Gayerson.'"

That's hilarious! Martin Mull wrote that. We totally cracked each other up on the set all of the time.

You really opened a lot of doors with gay characters like Leon and his husband, Scott (played by Mull and Fred Willard).

I meant to do that. I went into the show and said that I was going to kick those doors down.

Do you think we'll ever see gay marriage legalized?

Probably not. I'm so depressed. I mean, within just a few minutes of that ruling here in California, already people were challenging it. So, probably no. I wish, though. It only seems fair.

I mean, I grew up in Utah, where they're worried about plural marriage — but just as long as no one adds another guy to those 40 people you can marry.

Some people in Florida have said they're worried that if women marry women and men marry men, they'll soon ask for the right to marry their pets!

That's hilarious! You know, I'll marry a dog before I marry another man!

Are you a feminist icon?

They always say that. Not that I'm not grateful, because it's nice to hear, but I stopped caring a long time ago what people thought, both good and bad. I just focus on getting my soul right.



Continued on page 41

WATERCOLORS

ROSEANNE from page 40

How are you doing that?

I don't know. I just feel so bad that things aren't going well in the world. In my show, I sing an end of the world medley. I mean, we all know that we're going to die for what we've all done and that's so liberating. We just don't have any time to sit down and get BS'ed about anything. We're going to have to answer for what we've done and that's a heavy burden. We can't keep sweeping things under the rug because we're going to have to get a bigger room if we keep doing that.

You know, I think it all comes down to the movie, *Wall Street*.

We can blame all of society's problems on Oliver Stone?

No! I think too many people heard, "Greed is good," and thought to themselves, "You know, greed is good." Oliver Stone was just making fun of that.

I want us all to just cut the shit. Let go of the fear. I come out in my act and I tap-dance in my underwear and I'm not afraid to do that.

I don't know what sounds more difficult: Appearing in public in my underwear or dancing in public. What am I saying? I could take a dump on stage at Carnegie Hall and not even bat an eyelash.

So you're saying you don't like to dance?

I guess so. I mean, I don't have many inhibitions, but I get a little freaked when I have to dance.

You must be very repressed. I'm psychic and I can tell a lot about these things. Let me help you through your problem. What race are you?

I'm white.

And what nationality?

My mom is Southern white trash and my dad is German-American.

Oh, jeez. Let me tell you on behalf of all Jews: We forgive you. Totally.

Why, thank you.

Yeah. So, do you ever dance at home by yourself?

Once in a while. I get all liquored up and do some interpretive dances.

Well, that's good. What kind of music do you like?

Broadway ...

Jeez.

And country.

I love country music! Do you like Loretta Lynn?

Love her! Love her new album, *Van Lear Rose*!

Me too! I was so proud of her winning all of those Grammys. If it wasn't for Loretta Lynn, I wouldn't be here today. When I was growing up in Utah, she gave me the right words to say. She taught me in her songs that I didn't have to marry someone to boss me around and that no one has to suffer. I so totally ripped her off.

So, put on Loretta Lynn's album and dance by yourself and get used to it, and in a year, I want to see you dance.

You make it sound so dirty.

Yeah, well?

I want to ask you about two people.

I know who they are: Johnny Carson ...

He's one.

He was such a great friend, a really great person. He's another one who gave me the right words. I so wish him peace. I'm glad that he didn't suffer for any longer than he had to because he was such a kind guy.

I also wanted to ask about ... Rodney Dangerfield.**No, but I guess I could have.**

Yeah, that would have made a really good question, wouldn't it?

I'm ashamed. I wanted to ask about Kirstie Alley.

Every time I see her thunderously, gigantically huge ass on television, I think about how proud I am of her! She's brave and she tells it exactly how it is. I want to appear on her show and play her skinny friend!

I was accepting an award the other night and I go up on stage and say, "Now that I'm skinny ..." and no one laughed because they're thinking, "Wait, she doesn't know she's still fat." But my son was in the audience and he started the applause, and then they all caught on that it was a joke. Rest assured that my ego is still morbidly obese!

I love that you laugh at your own jokes. I do that.

Yeah, I have a rule: You can laugh at your own jokes all you want, but someone else has to laugh at least one-third of the time. Otherwise, you're not funny. ♪

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SUNDAY 5/29

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WOMEN'S FOOTBALL HITS THE FIELD AGAIN APRIL 2

TAMPA - Local women's football action gets underway Saturday, April 2, when the Tampa Bay Terminators face the Orlando Mayhem. Play will take place at the Dr. Phillips High School stadium at 7 p.m.

Both teams are full-contact football teams, members of the International Women's Football League and part of

the South Atlantic Division of the Eastern Conference.

The two teams will face one another April 16 in Tampa, and May 21, also on the west coast. For more information about the Terminators, visit Tampabayterminators.net, while the Mayhem's site can be found at Orlandomayhem.com. ▼

NAVRATILOVA FILES SUIT AGAINST GLBT CREDIT CARD

PHILADELPHIA - Tennis legend Martina Navratilova recently filed a lawsuit against the company behind the Rainbow Card for allegedly using her name and likeness after she had asked them to stop because of a dispute over how the credit card is marketed.

Late last year, Navratilova called the card's marketing "inappropriate and repugnant." She did not elaborate on how the marketing offended her. Navratilova's attorneys have sent a letter asking the card's marketing company, an agency that specializes in marketing to the GLBT community, to stop using the tennis champion's likeness.

The tennis champ has worked with



MARTINA NAVRATILOVA says the marketing of the Rainbow Card is "repugnant."

the marketing firm, Do Tell Inc., since 1995. She has said that she believes that it's imperative to find a way to harness the economic power of the gay community to "achieve humanitarian goals."

The Rainbow Card is directly marketed to the GLBT community, and proceeds are funneled to GLBT causes. The card has raised nearly \$1.5 million in charitable funds to date.

The inspiration for the Rainbow Card came from the strength and unity that was shared by nearly a million people during the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights.

▼ Staff reports

SPORTS BRIEFS

ORANGE BLOSSOM TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS KICK OFF THIS WEEK

The Sixth Annual Orange Blossom Tennis Championships kick off Thursday, March 24 with a welcome party at the Full Moon Saloon. The 7 p.m. event will also serve as the draw party. Tournament play begins 8 a.m. Friday, March 25, and continues throughout the weekend. A tournament banquet will be held Saturday, March 26, at Crazy Buffet in Altamonte Springs. For details, visit Theorangeblossom.org.

TRIANGLE TEES HIT THE LINKS DURING GAY DAYS

The Triangle Tees will host its Third Annual Gay Days Golf Tournament on Friday, June 3. The tournament will begin at 8 a.m. at Walt Disney World's Eagle Pines Golf Course. For more information, visit the club's Web site at Triangletees.com, or call (863) 223-0247, or write to triangletees@aol.com.

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SPIRITUALITY

SPIRITUALITY BRIEFS

CHURCH BUYS PROPERTY IN PINELLAS PARK

Christ the Cornerstone Church, now in its 11th year, has announced that it is purchasing property at 5545 62nd Ave. N., Pinellas Park. This property consists of two buildings, an existing church and separate day care facility on 1.8 acres. The move from the current St. Petersburg location is expected to take place the first week in May with the first service in the new facility on Mother's Day, May 8. Christ the Cornerstone is an open and affirming church. For more information, visit the church's Web site at Christcornerstone.com, which also features an AIDS Memorial e-quilt.

PHELPS ACCEPTS OFFER TO ATTEND GAY RIGHTS SEMINAR

The infamous anti-gay minister, the Rev. Fred Phelps Sr., said he would take part in a forum on gay rights. The Equal Rights Coalition held a forum at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, Ind., in conjunction with a production of *The Laramie Project*. Phelps told the local newspaper he would accept the offer to attend. "We'll accommodate it if it's anywhere near reasonable," Phelps said.

SPIRITUALITY LISTINGS

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CONGREGATION OF LIBERAL JUDAISM

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

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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.

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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.

INTEGRITY

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

JOY MCC

Meets Sundays at 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. at 2351 S. Ferncreek Ave. 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. Discover inner peace and empowerment. (407)492-7405.

UNIVERSITY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY

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

A.MERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

TAMPA BAY

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 Wednesdays at 7 p.m. 6424 N. Armenia Ave. (813) 873-1888 or www.breathoflifefcc.org

CHRIST THE CORNERSTONE CHURCH

All are welcome at this Christian church. 1025 7th Ave. N., St. Petersburg. (727) 823-1806 or www.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. (813)229-2695.

FRANCIS HOUSE

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

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.holyspiritcch.org.

IHOLY SPIRIT ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Sunday Mass, 10:30 a.m. 10623 106th Avenue North, Largo. (727) 709-1542 or www.holyspiritcch.org

NTEGRITY OF TAMPA 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) 988-5283.

INTERWEAVE OF CLEARWATER

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

KING OF PEACE MCC

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

EASTER WEEK SERVICES
INCLUDE BREAKFASTS, MUSIC

ST. PETERSBURG - Several area churches will host special Easter week services through Sunday, including:

KING OF PEACE MCC, ST. PETERSBURG

A 6:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday service will be followed by a roast pork dinner. Admission to the dinner costs \$6. On Friday, March 25, the church will offer a Good Friday service at 7:30 p.m.

King of Peace MCC will host a sunrise Easter service at 6:45 a.m. in North Straub Park (across from the Renaissance

Vinoy) in St. Petersburg, followed by a traditional Easter celebration service at 10 a.m. at the church.

JOY MCC, ORLANDO

In addition to its 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. services on Easter Sunday, the church will host a sunrise service at 7 a.m. The church will also offer Maundy Thursday services featuring Marsha Stevens and Good Friday services at 7 p.m.

MCC TAMPA

Easter Week services will include a Maundy Thursday service at 7 p.m., March 24, a Good Friday service at 7 p.m., March 25, and an Easter Vigil at 7 p.m., Saturday, March 26. The Saturday service will feature special music and dramatic readings.

The Easter celebration service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, March 27.

RAINBOW PROMISE MCC,
AUBURNDALE

Rainbow Promise MCC will offer a Good Friday Tenebrae service at 8 p.m., Friday, March 25. On Easter Sunday at 10:30 a.m., the congregation will celebrate at the Lake Mirror Theatre in Lakeland. The Sunday service will feature special guests and special music. ▼

MCC OF TAMPA

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

RAINBOW PROMISE MCC

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

SPIRIT OF LIFE MCC

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

ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Evangelical Anglican Church — a progressive gay-affirming church in the Anglican tradition. 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. PETERSBURG

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

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF TAMPA

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

UNITY CHURCH OF TODAY

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

UU RAINBOW OUTREACH OF TAMPA 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.

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

Meets at 9 a.m. for traditional services and 11 a.m. for 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

This welcoming congregation with an openly gay minister features worship services at 10:30 a.m. each Sunday, 3975 Fruitville Road (941) 371-4974. Rev. Don Beaudreault.



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BODY RUBS BY SMOOTH HOT BOI - Get a Body rub by slim, tan, smooth boi in the buff. See my happy trail to make you happy. Pager 407-231-0371.

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PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

House Cleaning - Free estimates, Reasonable rates, No contracts. Call John at 407-592-8774 or 407-823-8774.

House Cleaning - Free estimates, 13 years in service in the Orlando area. Licensed, Insured, Bonded. Vince Hutchison's Quality Cleaning, Inc. 407-694-3960.

Simple Pleasures Mobile Massage - Swedish Relaxation Massage, Neuromuscular, Deep Tissue Sports Massage, Medical Massage. Available 24 hrs. 7 days a week. 407-230-6320 MA37201.

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Psychic Readings - Home Seances Call Dennis 407-721-3396 <http://www.orlandopsychic.com>.

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Downtown Condos - Condos for Rent & Sale! "Metropolitan" & "Grande" Units. Rent \$895 to \$1295/mo. Sale Priced \$154,900 to \$215,000. www.jasoncmysers.com, Call ReMax 407-694-2449.

LOVELY - Winter Park house for rent, 2/1 1/2, clean, fenced yard, screened patio, quiet neighborhood, great location. \$900 or \$950 w/lawn service. Call 407-671-7996, leave message.

Fully Furnished 3/2 Condo - 5 miles from Downtown, Beautifully furnished looks like a model condo, \$1400 month, sorry no pets. 407-649-2449.

Duplex For Rent - Eustis Area 2 Bedroom, 2 Bath, Kitchen, Living room, New Carpet, New Paint, New tile Floor, Pet Ok. \$650 month. Call Ken at 407-947-9280.

College Park - Downtown Bungalow. Walk to Lake Adair. Totally Renovated. Like New. 1100sqf 3BR 2 Bath, Open Great Room Plan. Landscaping redone and maintenance included. Fenced Yard. \$1595 month. Sec Dep. \$800 729 Hayden. Call Dona 407-620-1307.

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ROOMS FOR RENT - Low nightly and weekly rates. Close to downtown and bars. Gay Friendly - 407-896-3611.

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House to Share - N.W. Orlando, Rosemont, -15 Minutes to downtown or Universal Studio. Gay Males, masculine, nudists partners, seek single, social, gay male, 40+ to be responsible housemate, sharing, 3 br. home, all amenities, clean, quiet (most times), cable, privacy gardens, sun decks, hot tub. No Pets, smoker ok outside. Licenses and references required, \$400/monthly. Call George/Tom, 407-298-5678.

Responsible Gay Male Roommate wanted - NW Orlando Rosemont area. Amenities include large bedroom, Cable tv, utilities, washer/dryer, private pool, private bathroom and DSL access. \$440 per month + deposit. Sorry no pets. Call Spencer 407-532-0907.

ORLANDO - Unfurnished room available in 3/2 home South of Downtown. DSL and Direct TV furnished. No smoking, drugs, or pets. \$400 per month + \$100 deposit. Call David 407-816-1389.

ROOM FOR RENT - Share 3bedroom 2 bath pool house with 2 adult males. 11x11 bedroom, share bath, basic cable, W/D, and pool included. \$400.00 MONTH. Quiet area w/parking. NO DRUGS AND MUST HAVE JOB. Florida mall area, call john 1-407-852-6441.

Professional Roommate Wanted - to rent room in large home on lake Whippoorwill. Pool, W/D, satellite TV + utilities included. \$500. email scott@blspublishing.com or 407-701-6800.

SARASOTA

PERSONAL SERVICES

HEAD-TO-TOE BODYRUBS - Session includes: Hot tub, Hot oil rubdown, Great hands, \$40/In only: Call Ken 941-351-7364.

TAMPA BAY

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TRAVEL & BOATING

ISSUE 2005



Celebrity cruise lines' Constellation isn't gay all the time, but you'll see stars when it is.

PACK YOUR LUGGAGE POLITELY

Be prepared for everyone at the airport seeing everything
By Kirk Hartlage

I've always envied those who travel for their work. From sales reps crossing the country for a convention to flight attendant friends circling the globe – all on the time-clock, no less – the notion of getting out of town for one's employment is something I've more than romanticized.

One skill that would prevent me from gaining such type of employment is my complete inability of knowing how to pack. It's a trait inherited from my mother – the woman who brought her own bed sheets and cleaning supplies when she flew into town to visit some years back. How she made it past airport security, even pre-911, with more chemicals in her possession than Whitney Houston and Bobby Brown put together escapes me to this day.

I know my abilities of packing are limited as it was that same mother who outed me when she "discovered" gay porn in my luggage while *allegedly* – a term I use lightly – "helping me clean up" during a post-collegiate weekend trip home. Those TSA agents have nothing on this woman's ability to search through luggage for contraband.

At least it was only reading materials that Mom found – not that there would have been other sex-shop-type purchases to uncover back then. Some people haven't been so lucky when it comes to having their luggage professionally (and legally, I might add, dear mother) pilfered, and not by their parents but by TSA agents at the air-

Cruisingⁱⁿ Style

Gays and lesbians are drawn to the mermaids' songs, as long as the cruise ship has a great nightclub. By Kirk Hartlage

Hitting the high seas these days is almost like taking a vacation on land. The newest cruise ships often contain shopping malls, nightclubs, theaters, restaurants, multiple pools, sports areas and, in at least one case, an ice-skating rink. They've come a long way from the Love Boat and the S.S. Minnow. Diane Berube, travel services manager for Gay Days Travel, says cruises are becoming a more popular vacation option for gays and lesbians, thanks to the all-inclusive nature of sailing.

"On a cruise you can easily experi-

ence a lot of little things that you may not be able to on a land-based vacation," Berube says. "There can be a lot of added expenses where you'll just be nickled-and-dimed to death."

Generally, the only extra costs on a cruise are drinks – meals are included with the price of the voyage. The exception lies in a few high-end restaurants that may have an additional charge and are generally nominal at best. "Plus with a cruise, you only have to pack and unpack one time," she says.

That makes a difference to most

style-conscious sailor boys and girls. Cruising options for gays and lesbians abound with possibilities. While general cruises such as Royal Caribbean, Disney or Norwegian are available, there are several charter companies that offer predominately, if not all-exclusive, GLBT tours.

The three largest companies are RSVP, Atlantis Events and Olivia. Several others have sprung up as well, including Rosie O'Donnell's R Family Vacations and the Gay Days sponsored

Continued on page 10

Continued on page 11

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THE TRAVEL ISSUE

10 PLACES THAT REALLY WANT GAY TOURISTS

Some — like P-Town and Fort Lauderdale — are obvious, but have you been to Hvar? By Kirk Hartlage and Dave Wiethop

We've all been to the odd cocktail party or reception where we've strangely felt out of place. But imagine an entire week spent on vacation, no less, where, despite your money spending just as well as anyone else's, it isn't welcome. For GLBT travelers, the possibility of visiting a unique locale that turns out to be nothing but a homophobic nightmare is altogether a potential reality.

But some locales take the opposite approach, welcoming GLBT travelers with open arms. Though we've only the budget to travel these cities virtually through our computer, it's amazing to see how receptive to gay vacationers some towns can — and can not — be. Here are a fraction of the areas now marketing fairly assertively to gay tourists:

1. PHILADELPHIA

The Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corp. has not only recognized that GLBT travelers are a strong audience, it has been assertively marketing to us for the past year. Few cities beyond the San Francisco-Key West-Palm

Springs roster of GLBT favorites have made such an effort.

In addition to ads in national gay magazines touting the City of Brotherly (and Sisterly) Love's nightlife and cultural activities, the marketing group has broadcast some oh-so-queer commercials for the city in the GLBT-rich Northeast.

Check out GoPhila.com/gay for details. And remember that while Stonewall may have been the site of the first GLBT riots, many credit the peaceful protests in front of Independence Hall in 1965 as the first actual gay rights rally.

2. FORT LAUDERDALE

If the West Coast has Palm Springs, then the East Coast has Fort Lauderdale. Even the city's visitor's and convention bureau has specific links on the website for gay and lesbian travelers, enabling folks to design their own "rainbow" vacation.

There's more than 30 gay-owned and gay-friendly guest houses and hotels in town so you'll have plenty of places to stay. Plus there's plenty of good gays



Historic Philadelphia, an area of the City of Brotherly Love, offers Colonial-era re-enactments throughout the tourism season. Photo courtesy of the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corp.

here too — Fort Lauderdale has the second largest Metropolitan Community Church congregation in the U.S.

3. SOUTH AFRICA

So, you've traveled the Continent and domestic trips are beyond boring these days. Why not try that racially oppressed nation of South Africa? Charlize Theron's home country has made an enormous effort to market to

GLBT travelers looking for that new vacation spot.

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Continued on page 7

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SHIP AHOY!

A group of dedicated boaters and divers gather regularly to enjoy real-life water sports **By Steve Blanchard**

TAMPA - With the warm sun and the plethora of water surrounding the state, it's no wonder that Florida is one of the nation's biggest boating states. It's only natural that boating groups would form for GLBT boaters. In Tampa Bay, the Boat and Scuba West Club is celebrating 17 years.

"It all started with a small group of friends that had congregated in the Tampa Bay Area and decided to put a club together," explained Todd Parent, president of the club. "They put out the information and slowly but surely, we started to grow. Now we have anywhere from 50 to 100 members, depending on the year."

Those members are from Tampa Bay and as far away as Gainesville and Fort Myers. Parent actually lives the farthest east of any of the group's members, living in the decidedly inland city of Lakeland. The group boasts several boats ranging in size from a 14-foot fishing boat to a 60-foot cruiser.

"Our membership is split at about 50-50 between boaters and divers,"

Parent said. "We also have a number of members who do kayaking as well."

In fact, according to Parent, the group has planned a kayaking outing on the suitably chosen Rainbow River April 13. In the past, outdoor activities have included several of the state's rivers and even a swim with manatees. The group has organized diving trips into the gulf, the Atlantic and the Keys. Parent said the group also plans an annual scuba trip to a resort destination.

"Our international dive trips have taken us to the Bahamas, Costa Rica, Bonaire, Belize, the Caymans, Honduras and other world-class dive spots," Parent said. "This year, we're going to St. Croix on a diving trip."

The group has already planned the June trip and allows its members to make monthly payments before the trip so that the cost is covered by the time the group leaves.

"We're flying over and staying from a Saturday through the following Sunday," Parent explained.

Boat and Scuba West is a diverse

group and welcomes both genders.

According to Parent, the group "has a good mix of male and female members. I don't think one gender outnumbered the other."

While the group is definitely a social club for the area's gay and lesbian boating and diving enthusiasts, Parent said many of the members are actually experts in different areas of water activities.

"Many of us have boated all of our lives," Parent said. "Our commodore actually teaches a squadron class and we're an excellent resource for anything you need to know about boating in Florida. Boating in Florida is different than boating up north."

Parent, who grew up in Michigan and moved to Florida three years ago from Salt Lake City, Utah, knows firsthand that navigating the waters of Florida is a different experience – especially when it comes to tides.

"If you boated on the Great Lakes – fresh water – you didn't have to worry about the tides coming in or going out," Parent said. "As the old adage goes, 'out of channel, out of water.'"

The group welcomes guests to its meetings, which include a meet and greet, a Dutch-treat dinner and a 45-minute discussion of general club business.

Membership in the club is \$30 per year and the funds go toward different group activities – whether it be a picnic



BOAT AND SCUBA WEST

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MORE INFO: visit Boatandscubawest.com.

or a club party.

"We're a group of friends," Parent pointed out. "The parties are at a member's home and we all enjoy each other's company. We do have a formal meeting, but it's about enjoying the outdoors and the water. There's been times we'll send out an e-mail just saying, 'We're going to Egmont Key for lunch – does anyone want to meet us?' Sure enough, you'll have a group meeting that day." ▼



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THE TRAVEL ISSUE

REV UP YOUR ENGINES

The new GLBT Yacht Club offers trips for boats of all sizes

By Steve Blanchard

ORLANDO - In an area rich with lakes, it only makes sense that a handful of gay and lesbian boat owners in Orlando would find each other. This is how the GLBT Yacht Club began last year.

"Being a boating person myself and having met other gays and lesbians while boating, it made sense to organize and do things together," said John Rosselle, a member of the group. "Boating is a great way of life and it's fun - and it's fun to do things together as a group."

Currently, the unofficial group has 12 members and 10 boats, according to Rosselle. The boats range in size from a jet ski to a 33-foot cruiser. All boat owners and enthusiasts are invited to enjoy the social group.

"We're all inclusive," Rosselle said. "There's no boat too big or too small. But of course, you have to use your judgment when it comes to some of the trips."

Rosselle said the group wants to make the trip from Miami to Bimini a yearly event. The 56-mile trip only takes a few hours, but of course is much more suitable for a large boat than a jet ski. However, trips along the intercoastal waterway or lunch gatherings at a sandbar can include any type of water vessel.

"We're just a fun group looking to have fun with other like-minded boaters," Rosselle said. "Florida is the perfect setting for boating. We're surrounded by water and if you have the opportunity to take advantage of that, you should. I've made some great friends over the years."

Rosselle is a native of Florida and has boated his entire life, he said. After meeting many gays and lesbians while out on the water, the group decided it might be a good time to organize. However, no official organization has yet occurred.

"But we're looking for more people to join us," Rosselle said. "And if someone wants to take on the task of officially organizing us, they are more than welcome to do so. It's all about having fun."

The group prides itself on its confidentiality, and both men and women, gay and straight, are part of the group. The only outing the organization wants is the type involving a trip on the water.

For more information, contact Rosselle at (407) 353-5529. ▽

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THE TRAVEL ISSUE

10 PLACES from page 3

4. CROATIA

Paris is luminous, Rome is romantic and Hamburg is cozy, but the real European must-see these days is Hvar, Croatia. (We'd never heard of it either until the press materials arrived.)

But nestled along the northern Adriatic Sea's coastline, the smallish community is working hard to draw GLBT travelers by billing itself as the "Croatian Mykonos." Hvar Town is a small medieval town that has been proving popular with both European jet-setters and GLBT charter tourists alike. There's a rich GLBT night life, nearby gay and nude beaches and plenty of music.

Visit Touristinfo.gay.hr/hvar.php for details, including a map of where it is.

5. KEY WEST

Like their neighbors to the north, America's southern most city also has a specific section of their convention and visitor's bureau devoted to gay travel. Gay travelers have their own website and brochures of information. The town proudly boasts of having one of the most diverse populations anywhere in the world and for anyone who has visited Key West, they'll admit that's true. The city's status as the only frost-free town in the continental United States likely draws a good number of travelers – who doesn't look for a near guarantee of nice weather for their hard-earned vacation?

6. ASHEVILLE, N.C.

Though the city's visitor bureau may not have embraced us quite yet, at least one local with an interest in couple of all orientations making romantic trips to the area has. At romanticasheville.com, Mark File has provided numerous suggestions and links for area trips designed for couples, both gay and straight.

The mountainside city has a rich art scene and a diversified community with divergent and eclectic views. The town's gay community may be so welcoming to outsiders as many residents were once visitors themselves before they fell in love with the area and moved there.

Overall, there are nearly a dozen gay owned bed and breakfast's offered and a complete tour of what to do in town, including a number of antique stores, book stores, coffee shops and several gay clubs and bars. (Gay bars in Jesse Helms' home state? Who would have thunk it?)

7. SAUGATUCK/DOUGLAS, MICH.

With a feel of Cape Cod, the "arts coast" of Michigan is a haven for Midwestern gay and lesbian travelers. The area's gay anchor is the Dunes Resort, which features numerous high-profile performers entertaining visitors who've come to visit this thriving artistic community. (Face it: any place that describes itself as an "arts community" is almost automatically gay-friendly.)

Pristine beaches and a plethora of

restaurants beckon vacationers – but generally only in the summer months. An annual June Film Festival is another highlight of this town featuring a surprising spectrum of diversity.

8. PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

Finding a homophobe in Provincetown is as difficult as looking for a straight guy who owns a Streisand album. The place is so gay that it runs the risk of coming full-circle and becoming (horrors!) straight again.

Every self-respecting queer owes himself or herself a trip to P-town at some point, if only to see Kate Clinton or Peter Paige browsing at the local supermarket.

9. CANADA

Yes, we know that this is a big place, but Canada is also an enormously friendly place for gays and lesbians. Whether you're visiting the immaculate Victoria Gardens in Vancouver, British Columbia, attending the Same-Sex Wedding Expo in late June in Toronto, Ontario, or roping goats at the Alberta Rockies Gay Rodeo in Calgary, the breadth of this country can be breath-taking.

Plus, queer couples can marry there. You may have seen something about that in the press. Visit TravelCanada.ca for details. It's a good place to start.

10. SAN FRANCISCO

Though its info for gay and lesbian tourists isn't as forward as some other cities, the San Francisco Visitors and Convention Bureau does offer information and resources on taking a "Queer Culture Tour" of San Francisco.


The link is listed on the same Web page as links to the "African American Excursion," the "Asian Immersion" and the "Latino Love Affair" trip (which, frankly, all sound like gay tours to us). Nicer still is the bureau acknowledging the recent legalization of gay marriages, noteworthy in a city known for being socially progressive. Though the Castro district is seen as some as the gay mecca, the entire town has a high tolerance for the gay community.

Even the visitor's bureau admits there's barely a street in town that doesn't have a rainbow flag flying on it somewhere. Visit Sfvisitor.org for details. ▼



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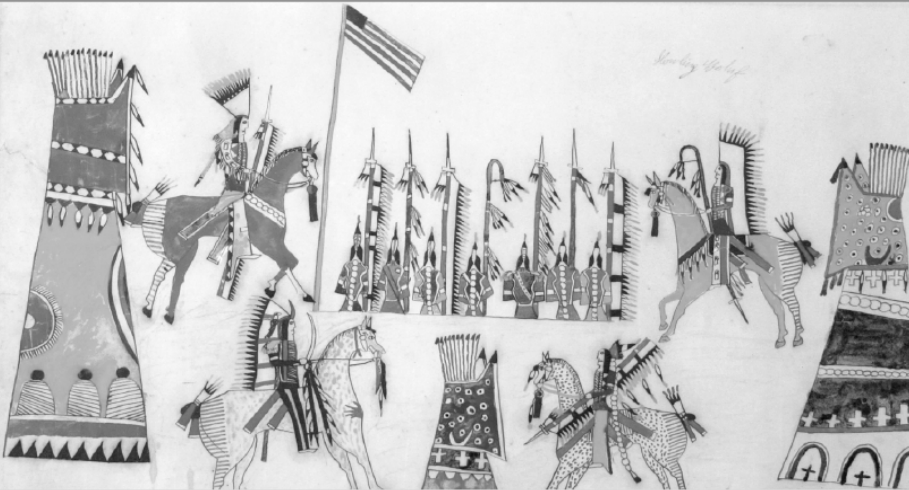
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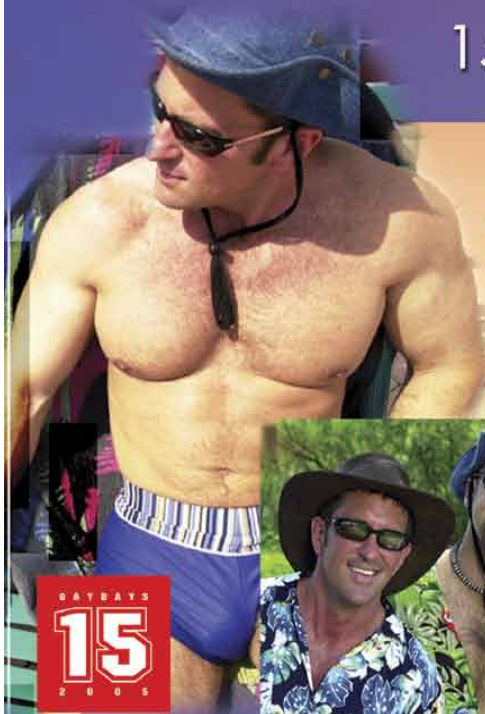
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THE TRAVEL ISSUE

CRUISE from page 1

pre-Gay Days weekend cruise. All offer great opportunities to sail the seven seas with a boatload of your closest "family" members.

Years ago, RSVP only offered cruises and Atlantis hosted only land vacations, though both specialized in providing unique gay environments. Today they and Olivia are similar in their offerings, though there are more male vacationers with Atlantis, RSVP's groups are mixed, and Olivia caters predominantly to women. Most trips are a good diverse mix of the community, despite what their ads may show. (Cruisees are not all buff 20-somethings, though there are some of them around.) RSVP and Atlantis say their cruise lines' average cruiser is in his late 30's to early 40's.

R Family Vacations held its first cruise last July and has geared their vacation business towards gays and lesbians with kids. The company is backed by Rosie and Kelli O'Donnell along with their business partner Gregg Kaminsky, who's worked for many years in the gay travel business. Last year's inaugural cruise from New York Harbor hosted over 1,700 guests, entertaining them with Christine Ebersole, Billy Porter and Rosie O'Donnell herself, in addition to Broadway style shows. This summer's cruise will head north, exploring Boston, Canada and Cape Cod.

Gay Days Travel promotes an alterna-

WHY YOU MAY BE A TRULY DIZZY QUEEN

Luckily, most people aren't affected by seasickness, but it can certainly disrupt a well-earned vacation for those that are afflicted.

Seasickness happens when the body, inner ear, and eyes all send different signals to the brain, resulting in confusion and queasiness. The signals your eyes send your brain are misleading - they visualize things such as cabin walls and furniture as stable when in actuality, they're not. Your brain is being told by the vision system that the world is standing still, while your inner ear is screaming that it's not.

Your sensory perception gets out of synch when your nerves attempt to compensate for the unfamiliar motion of moving on water.
▼ Kirk Hartlage

tive to the other large group vacations available, offering group bookings on regular mainstream outings. Berube said her company's tours provide a different type of partying and vacation atmosphere than

the en-masse outings.

A cruise is also a great place to catch gay entertainment outside of most cities' pride festivities. Some of the charters bring aboard top name circuit DJs, gay friendly music acts and comedians. Olivia, for example, is currently booking a Caribbean comedy extravaganza in May that features laughs from *Last Comic Standing* finalists Kathleen Madigan and Tammy Pescatelli. Comedians Elvira Kurt, Suzanne Westenhoefer, Amy Boyd, Julie Goldman, Page Hurwitz and Rene Hicks will also be on board.

Even such country-music mainstays as Wynonna and Mary Chapin-Carpenter have found fans aboard women's cruises.

Shore excursions offered by the cruise lines are often expensive and can be disappointing. If you're comfortable with a map and adventurous, you may want to explore the local areas on your own. Still, if seeing new cultures is not your cup of tea, you may relish the chance to enjoy the ship's amenities when there's practically no one on board. With any cruise, you can participate in as much or as little group activity as you choose, and there are always plenty of possibilities to try ... or ignore.

"RSVP and Atlantis provide a high-energy experience - but not all gay travelers may want that in their vacation," Berube says. Its upcoming cruise aboard the Carnival FunShip *Fascination* during the week prior to Gay Day weekend is expected to be 10% of a 2,000-person cruise ship. Berube says the cruise is the perfect way for gay days revelers to kick-start their celebration. Lasting five days and four nights, the cruise departs Miami on Monday, May 30, and stops in Key West and Cozumel in Mexico.

Though the cruise will not be gay-exclusive, Berube has arranged for a large block of cabins on the ship and will be hosting exclusive events just for her guests. Those will include group dinners, shore excursions and appearances by the Oops Guys as part of the onboard entertainment. Future trips are planned in conjunction with Southern Decadence and other pride and gay celebrations. ▼

WHAT YOU'LL NEED FOR CRUISING

CARRY-ON BAG: At check-in you'll leave your bags with the land-side crew on the day of departure who'll deliver your bags to your rooms, though that may take several hours. You'll want a carry-on bag with vitals, including medicines, cameras, wallets and required travel papers. You may also want to toss in a light pair of shorts or a sweater, depending on the weather.

CLOTHES: You'll be in the sun, so swimsuits are a must. But there are also night-time dinners and shows where suit jackets or more formal clothes are appropriate. Experts still say to pack light. As storage space is limited in most cabins, soft-sided or collapsible luggage is also helpful.

'DRAG': Theme events are popular on gay cruises, including leather, western, toga and drag. Remember there won't be much storage space in your cabin, so that six foot head-dress may best be left at home. Much like your local leather bar, expect that less than half of the people in attendance will actually dress to theme. The same goes for dressing formal for dinner; still, be prepared to at least pull off one outfit that would be considered business casual (long pants and a collared shirt).

'PERSONAL' ITEMS: While toiletries will be available on board, just like in any resort area, their prices are likely to be higher than average, so be sure to bring plenty of sunscreen, condoms, lube, sea sickness pills and the like. Film and extra batteries for your camera are also important.

DRUGS: Check with your cruise line ahead of time about in-room refrigeration if you have medication that requires cooling. Bringing a small cooler may be a necessity, though ice will certainly be available. As far as other "medications" go, you likely won't be searched when, but you can be put off the ship at the next port of call if you're caught using illegal drugs while the ship's at sea. Your cabin is also subject to search by customs officials at each and every port.

KEEPING PRETTY: Beauty treatment appointments on board and in some ports-of-call (particularly those islands or ports that are owned by the cruise line) book up quickly. If you're hoping to enjoy a massage, haircut, facial, pedi or mani, schedule it soon after obtaining your meal assignments. ▼ Kirk Hartlage

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THE TRAVEL ISSUE

LUGGAGE from page 1

seen what the devise was intended for, I think the agent should have been checking my friend's pants for *that* weapon of mass destruction. But I digress.)

As embarrassed as my friend may have been, it paled in comparison to the ordeal his fellow passenger was about to endure. The woman behind him had gotten married right before her husband went off to Iraq; she was flying cross-country to meet him on leave. She packed lightly, compactly, and only in a carry-on as it was just going to be a short 48 hours visit. Her contents, however, included a negligée and other Victoria's Secret garb, condoms, a vibrator, lube, spermicide and not much else. While my friend believes his Walkman with batteries and wires exposed provoked his search, he thinks a bottle of small bottle of wine in the military wife's bag is what triggered her exam.

Anyway, the security guy continued taking things out piece by piece, only to her increasing embarrassment. It wasn't until after several attempts of my friend loudly clearing his throat that a manager came by, stopped his clueless staff member, and continued the security check himself in a far more discrete manner.

These days you have no expectation of privacy when airport security goes through your carryon bags, as they do, out in public. They're also much more rigorous going through checked luggage as well. But many people don't realize they may request that their bags be examined behind a privacy screen, assuming they have one.

If you're gun-shy about what you're typically packing (inappropriate pun completely intended) there are a few ways to help diminish the potential embarrassment. Whatever it is you're putting in your bag, make sure it's clean, in plastic and visible. But if you're packing what could feasibly be a Fairvilla Mega-Store outlet in your Samsonites, it's best to just tell the person who takes it before they open your bag and start hauling things out for all in the termi-

nal to see.

Some security agents say their main gripe is that the contents in people's bags are unclean – and that's not even unwashed dildos and other nastiness. Mothers will put their baby's used spit-up towels in the side pocket and forget about it (obviously not *my* borderline-OCD clean-freak of a mother). Other passengers will leave razors laying in their luggage without their protective caps so the roving hand gets nicked. You should pack with the expectation that a blind concert pianist will be checking your bags, so pack politely.

The other gripe security has is coming across things that they just can't identify. A couple of straight agents may not know that the strip with metal spikes is a cockring when viewed in the X-ray. And they may not even be sure what the hell it is when they examine it. But you can be sure they'll be grossed out and not exactly feel accommodating if there's residue or lube or worse

on it when they do. Clean it, put it in a baggie, and check it through.

Another pal who travels frequently once witnessed a pissy queen become all upset when they went through his bag – and what a bag of toys it was. "Privacy!" he yelled. "Discrimination!" Blah blah blah.

Sure it's nice to have your "pride," but we live in a new world. Perhaps they should do security checks here as they do in Africa – check everything on everybody. Only one unsafe fellow passenger is all it takes to delay an entire flight for God-knows-how-long. So pack wisely and go with it – those security agents are there for all of us.

Remember too that these are federal agents with whom you're dealing. That means dealing with a government drone who is not highly paid doing essentially boring work. Do you remember what happens when you piss off someone from the DMV or the IRS? You get nowhere. They can be understandably pissy in return. They just want to do their jobs and go home.

Even if it just a few miles down the road and not on the other side of the country. ▼

Pack with the expectation that a blind concert pianist will be checking your bags



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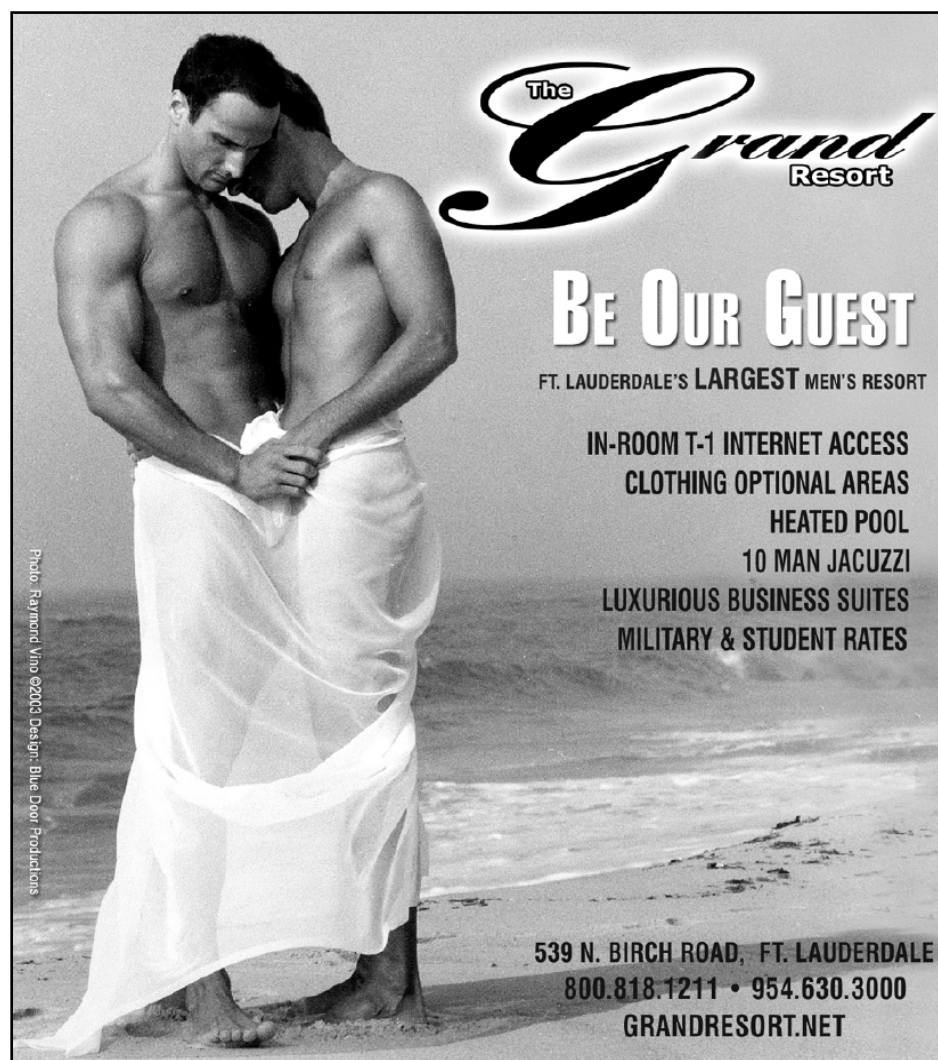
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LOCAL BIRTHDAYS: Watermark Tampa Bay ad rep and famed voice-over gal **RENEE SCHILIZZO** (3/31) and Watermark's own news chief **DAVE WIETHOP** (4/1).

WELCOME: to **STEVE ALLEN** Watermark's newest ad rep servicing the Tampa Bay and Sarasota areas. Who says that we don't promote from within? Steve served as a distribution guy for the Tampa Bay area, making sure that the papers were stacked neatly. He also drives a nice truck and has an extensive background in real estate sales.



DEBBIE REYNOLDS' to-do list for April 1:
"Upstage Carrie before 73rd birthday party. Blow out candles. Upstage Carrie after party."

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



www.DykesToWatchOutFor.com

THE TRAVEL ISSUE

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THE TRAVEL ISSUE



FILTH ALLEY'S NEW 'FAT' SHOW EARNS A TON OF OPINION

By Billy Masters

"I definitely don't think **KIRSTIE ALLEY'S** fat peak was 201 pounds. I think she's lying. I'd like every woman who is over 201 pounds who agrees with me to, you know, send a letter because I feel for all the women like me, I'm 220, who struggle to stay in the 220s, to have her come up somewhere near 3 (hundred) and say she's 201 is insulting. And I do think it's odd that in Hollywood you could sell a show about the truth with a big fat lie." — **ROSIE O'DONNELL** shares her candid thoughts on *Fat Actress* in a Bay Windows interview.

Everyone has been talking about Kirstie Alley as *Fat Actress* (I guess I'm the only one riveted to the last 15 minutes of *The Starlet*). Although response has been passable for the Showtime series debut, the proof will be in whether anyone watches in the upcoming weeks. Alley has been both praised and vilified for the show's concept, and it seems everyone has weighed in (so to speak) with an opinion.

But leave it to **JOAN COLLINS** to impart some advice that's at least useful. When it comes to keeping off the pounds, the *Dynasty* vixen told Kirstie she has one rule: "I eat only a third of what's on my plate." Shortly thereafter, I believe Alley

was overheard saying, "Who do you have to fuck in this restaurant to get a bigger plate?"

Speaking of Joan Collins, look for her to reunite with **LINDA EVANS** — on stage. Plans are being finalized for the *Dynasty* duo to tour the country in a production of *Legends!* that will eventually land on the Great White Way. This play was originally conceived as a vehicle for **MARY MARTIN** and **CAROL CHANNING** — although it mercifully died on the road (around the same time Miss Martin did). The show has since been reshaped and has been waiting for the right pair of ladies to bring it back to life.

Someone just sent me a clip from *Modern Vampires*, a flick I somehow missed at my local megaplex. Although the section I'm going to put on Filth2Go.com features **CASPER VAN DIEN** and **NATASHA GREGSON WAGNER** (**NATALIE WOOD**'s little girl), the movie stars a veritable cavalcade of B-list actors: **KIM CATTRALL**, **ROD STEIGER**, **NATASHA LYONNE**, **CRAIG FERGUSON**, **ROBERT PASTORELLI**, and **CONCHATA FERRELL**. In the film, Casper is a vampire, and he turns Natasha into one, too. For *Modern Vampires*, biting

people on the neck isn't enough to make them undead — you have to have sex with them. Preferably on the hood of a car. Yes, you get to see every inch of both Natasha and Casper, which did prove to us once and for all that vampires prefer boxers over briefs.

BENICIO DEL TORO is being quite circumspect when it comes to the sexual history he shares with **SCARLETT JOHANSSON**. When asked to confirm a widely circulated story about the pair, Benicio told *Esquire*, "Did I ever have sex in an elevator with Scarlett Johansson after an awards show? I kind of like ... you know, I ... well ... I don't know. Let's leave that to someone's imagination. Let's not promote it. I'm sure it has happened before. It might not be the last time either." On the other hand, perhaps del Toro simply can't remember who Scarlett is.

This week, the *Ask Billy* mailbox had several questions about a sexy male who popped up on TV. Walter in Tucson, Ariz., writes: "Wow — where did **FRANK GRILLO** come from? I saw him on *Blind Justice* and thought he was just stunning. My friends say that he came from the soaps and you might even have some nude photos of him. What do I have to do to see them?"

Just check out Filth2Go.com. You'll find a series of full-frontal nudes that Frank did just prior to his stint on *Guiding Light* (where he met his current wife, the lovely **WENDY MONIZ**). I must say he was (and is) in spectacular shape, and he's certainly given Filth2Go members an eye-full.

Leila in Miami Beach, just found out about Filth: "I never heard of you before, but I saw you perform at Jade in South Beach and thought you were a hoot. You might remember me — I'm the one who partied with **PRINCE ANDREA** in Europe. I was wondering if you had any dirt about him — or a way to contact him."

Ah, a royal stalker — I love it! Here's an idea: drop a note addressed to "Andrea Casiraghi, Royal Palace, Monaco." My hunch is that the folks in the Monte Carlo post office will get it to him! I

don't know much about Andrea, but he's technically not a prince. Being a child of Caroline (or Stephanie, for that matter) really doesn't count for much. That could all change if his uncle, **PRINCE ALBERT**, legally adopts him and makes Andrea his heir (I don't think children are in the cards for Albie, if you catch my drift).

Back to Andrea, he's 20 years old, enjoys partying (which I'm guessing you already knew), and is cute enough to be named one of *People* magazine's "Most Beautiful People." And it seems that Andrea shares something with his uncle Albie — they both enjoy being naked in and around the water! I'll post photos of them both on Filth2Go.com.

Could it be that there's no living with that certain Oscar loser? That was the prophecy prior to the ceremonies, and once it was a fait accompli, no-one envied the royal consort who'd have to smile throughout the night while cat-like claws dug through those designer duds. All smiles disappeared seconds after the couple was safely ensconced in the privacy of their car. Thank God for a chauffeur with loose lips who was more than happy to share just a sample of the flood of filth that flew forth from the far-from-festive phonies.

All I have time to do now is tell you that you can find the best in gossip at Filth2Go.com. For some one-on-one attention, you can write to me at Billy@filth2go.com and I promise to get back to you before Kirstie and I get home from an all-you-can-eat buffet. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible. ▼

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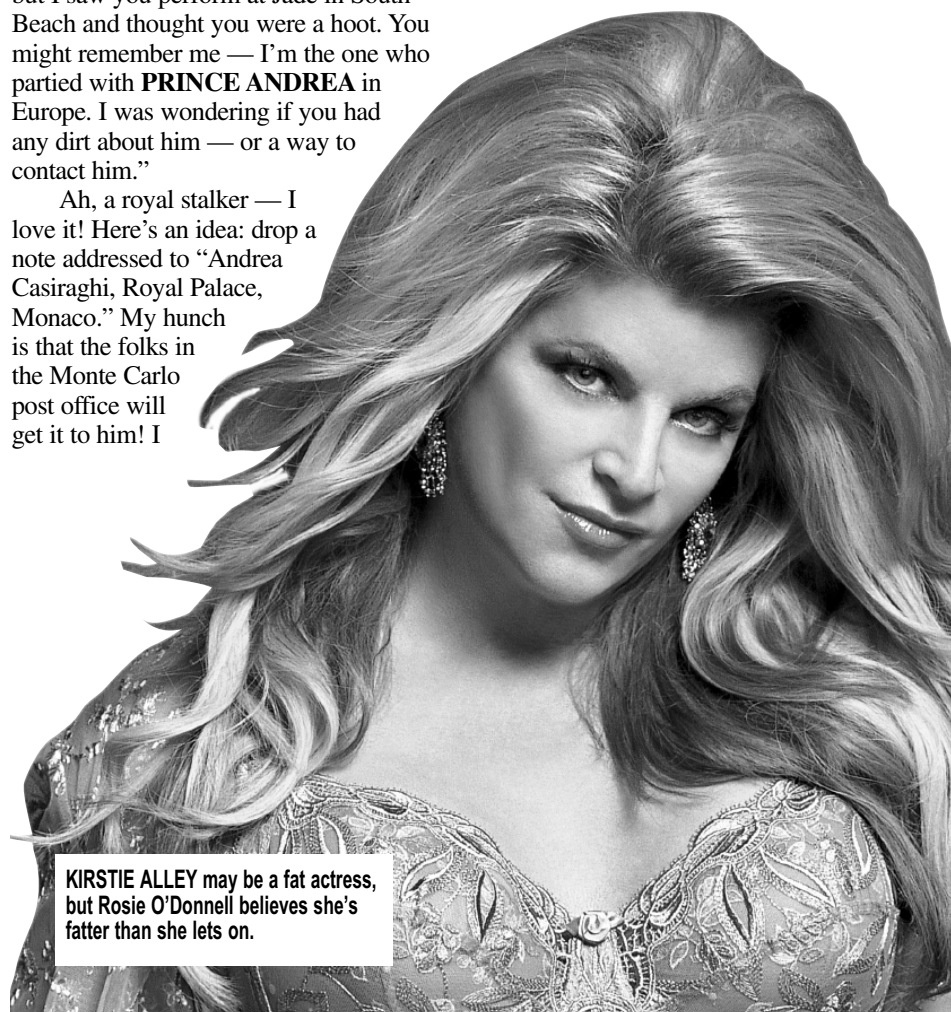
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