

ISSUE 10.14

JULY 3 - 16, 2003



INSIDE:
**St. Pete and Central
Florida Pride Coverage**

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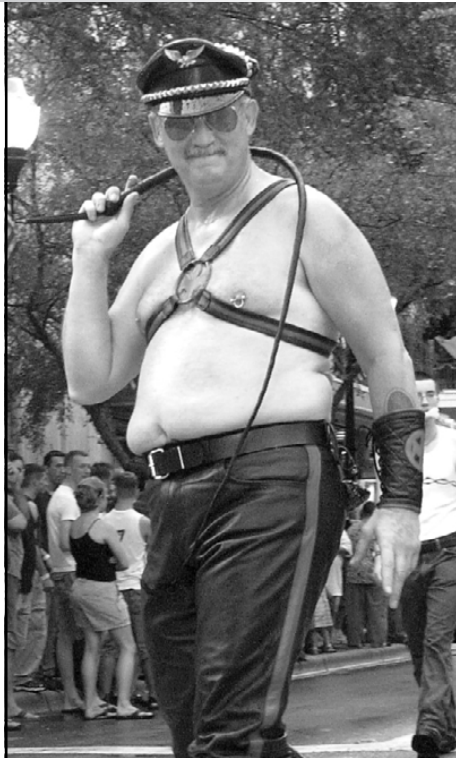
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ON THE COVER: An aerial view of the 900-foot rainbow flag str etched acr oss St. Pete' s Grand Central District.

Photo by Dorians Aerial and Architectural Photographics



This leatherman enjoys the leisurely pace of the Central Florida Pride Parade. Photo by Wheat Wurtzburger.



EDITOR'S DESK

By **Dave Wiethop**

Very soon, some of our most fashionable homos will now whisper that they've "been to Canada." We will respond with the same reverence that one gives to those couples who trek waaaay up the coast for a civil ceremony in Vermont or those domestic partners who pay retail for home furnishings.

But Canada? While the cultural contributions are modest — *Anne of Green Gables*, ice wine, Shania Twain, lumberjack competitions on ESPN and those cuties in kilts at the Canadian pavilion at EPCOT among them — our neighbor to the Great White North has served more as a punch line than as a country.

For years I've considered Canada to be a lot like Idaho: I didn't believe that anyone actually lived there. I was convinced, for example, that the Idaho potatoes simply reseeded themselves each spring and rolled down the hill into Oregon when they were ready each fall.

The same goes for Canadians: I just assumed that children grew up there at 60% of the cost and then moved to Florida.

But here we are, newly excited about Canada. We're fretting that Alberta might not agree to the Canadian edict that will allow same-sex marriages and that suddenly, its provincial capital of Edmonton might outrank Paducah, Ky., as the least popular gay destination. Shows you how much we know about Canada.

In fact, Canada is much like the U.S., if only we had lost the Revolutionary War. They must act impressed when a member of the royal family visits, and it's a legal requirement that Queen Elizabeth II's pinched puss must make it onto the front pages of Canadian newspapers regularly. And unlike in the U.S., when a gay man up there calls something "queeny," odds are very good that he's talking about his cash, not his favorite bartender.

Suddenly, Canada is cool because Canada will let us get married.

I've thought about marriage — years ago to a woman I was crazy about. I now find that she's a magnet for gay men and I wish that she had told me about that when we were both 28. If only she had said, "Instead of going to the effort of actually sleeping together, let me introduce you to my cute friend, Gavin," we both could have saved a lot of angst and lubricant.

I never proposed to her and years later I still haven't proposed to my

boyfriend. Do I love him? Absolutely. Do we function as a couple? Extremely. But marry him? Let me think about that one.

Certainly marriage has a lot going for it. When I discovered that you could register for gifts at Home Depot and Lowe's, I wanted to bag a husband just because I needed a new drill. But I now have a drill — two of them! — and the impulse has passed. For how long, I don't know. Still, my boyfriend would look so good in a tuxedo at an altar (or barefoot on a beach) as we pledge our everlasting love and financial obligation to one another. It's heady, romantic and so far, illegal in the more-sophisticated U.S.

I want the legal ramifications of marriage without having the ceremony itself, and I blame straight people for taking the fun out of weddings. Want proof? Meet any fragile young bride in the china department at Burdine's. Or ask your friend the florist what happens when he suggests using chrysanthemums instead of orchids. Straight people can get so emotional.

They can also be pretty cynical too. A book released last year, *Starter Marriages*, actually extols doomed first marriages because they give individuals a chance to learn who they are and how they can be more successful in *future* marriages.

While that sounds like a lot of gay relationships (but not involving a florist, a cake or a couple of crockpots), the idea of starter marriages belittles the institution that so many in our community want and need. Perhaps a time will come when those who can marry will take the commitment more seriously — and will help our own lawmakers understand why gay Americans also desire and deserve this most sensible right. Shania Twain notwithstanding, Canada has a pretty good idea going.

In addition to coverage about the local impact of this latest turn of events, this issue of *Watermark* looks at the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling overturning Texas' sodomy law, the newest production of *Angels in America* at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, gay pride events in Orlando and St. Petersburg and the Suncoast Resort's fifth anniversary.

With not even a bouquet to toss in sight, we know you'll find this issue of *Watermark* insightful, informative and entertaining. ▼

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PREVIEW

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ORLANDO

THROUGH JULY 26

If you're still kicking yourself because you missed Fall River Production's **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH** last year, please stop. You have now been given another chance. Back by popular demand, **DAVID LEE**, **SAM SINGHAUS** and friends reprise their roles in the Parliament House's Footlights Theatre. Reservations are suggested and can be made by calling (407) 398-6900.

JULY 12 & 13

Lesbian author and South Daytona resident **DARLENE DUNCAN** will be signing her new lesbian romance/murder mystery *Life Is Full of Surprises* at Orlando's Urban Think Bookstore on July 12 at 7 p.m. The following day our Tampa Bay readers can catch her at Tomes and Treasures at 4 p.m. For information call (386) 253-0946.

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JULY 10, 11 & 12

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night. To become a member and get the inside scoop on how it all works, log onto www.gqbtampa.com. Members will be notified 48 hours prior to the July 18 event as to where and when.

SARASOTA

JULY 18 AND JULY 19

Get ready for a cabaret complete with desserts at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens: **WOMEN OF COLOR TOGETHER AGAIN ... FOR THE FIRST TIME** brings together the vocal talents of **ANNIE MORRISON** and **SHARON SCOTT** for a show that should be unforgettable and delicious at the same time. All proceeds go to benefit Kobernick House-Anchin Pavilion, a shelter for women. For reservations call (941) 552-1595.

JUSTIN GUARINI may find it better to rely on his album sales: *From Justin to Kelly* has tanked.



Water Cooler

PEOPLE ARE TALKING



SUCH FRIENDS, INDEED!

What started out as an easy-going gathering of a dozen friends at an area lounge has turned into a major monthly event for the GLBT community in the Lake County area. The new **TUESDAY NIGHT FRIENDS** group in Mount Dora has done just that, attracting nearly 200 people to a dance at the Lakes Reception Hall last week — not bad for a group that only began a year ago as an alternative to the bar scene.

The most recent soiree featured music from the talented **SCOTT CASEY** as well as the Orlando Gay Chorus' **OUT LOUD!** ensemble, dancing, cocktails and a top-notch buffet, as well as a fistful of door prizes and raffles. Previous events have included a Texas-style barbecue and a sunset train trip. While there will be no July gathering, the group will reconvene Aug. 26 at the Gables Restaurant, with a tea dance scheduled for Sept. 28. Check out www.tuesdaynightfriends.com for details.

HE MAY BE PARTLY RIGHT

When **U.S. REP. MARK FOLEY** said that Democratic strategists were conspiring against his U.S. Senate campaign by spreading the rumor that he might be gay, the GOP congressman might have been partly right. According to the *Orlando Sentinel*, a press secretary for Republican **U.S. REP. CLAY SHAW** said she forwarded an e-mail containing the Broward and Palm Beach edition of the *New Times* that outed

Foley. The story was then mass-circulated by someone else, the press secretary said, but Shaw's chief of staff said he was "disappointed" that this had occurred. Meanwhile, Foley feverishly refuses to answer questions about his private life.

OR IT COULD BE THAT WE HATE THEM

The same audience that didn't turn up for *The Real World: Cancun* is also failing to show up for **FROM JUSTIN TO KELLY**, the *American Idol* movie. The latter — facing stiff competition from everything ranging from *The Hulk* to prayer and yard work — tanked at No. 13 in its first weekend. Guess that interracial romance, *Hello, Ruben? It's Me, Clay*, will have to wait.

ELLEN BACK

Some people will laugh at anything that **ELLEN DeGENERES** has to say, and that's probably for good reason. Her new HBO special, *Here and Now*, will be repeated at midnight, Thursday, July 3; 10 p.m., Tuesday, July 8; 2:10 a.m. Monday, July 14, and 1:40 a.m., Thursday, July 17. The special comes just two months or so before her daily talk show hits the airwaves.

STEPFORD'S LADIES

What's more horrifying — **MATTHEW BRODERICK** playing **NICOLE KIDMAN's** husband or the idea that *The Stepford Wives* is being remade as a comedy? That's the plan, and filming is underway on the **PAUL (In and Out, Jeffrey) RUDNICK** script with director **FRANK (In and Out) OZ** at the helm. Matthew and Nic play a lovely couple new to Stepford, where they meet bubbly bubbleh Bobbie (played by **BETTE MIDLER**) and notice that all the other housewives are zombies. The never-gonna-win-an-Oscar **GLENN CLOSE** and the polystyrene country crooner **FAITH HILL** costar, with **ROGER BART** playing a gay confidante who turns into a beer-guzzling soccer dad. Watch for it in 2004.

NOT **illegal** ANYMORE

Gays and lesbians celebrate the Supreme Court's decision as a first of many milestones. **By Dave Wiethop**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - That sound you heard around 9 a.m. Thursday, June 26, might have been the collective sigh of relief from the nation's GLBT community: The U.S. Supreme Court announced they had overturned Texas' ban on sodomy, and in effect, reversed bans on homosexual activity among consenting adults.

In other words, gay people can have sex in private without fear of someone knocking on their door and hauling them away.

"No citizen should be punished for consensual sexual activity between adults within the privacy of one's home," openly lesbian Orlando City Commissioner Patty Sheehan said hours after the ruling was announced. "Sodomy laws have been utilized to persecute and instill fear in the gay and lesbian community, plain and simple."

She wasn't alone in offering words of victory for GLBT Americans.

"The full affect of this ruling reaches far

beyond the issue of consensual sex between same-sex partners," said Tampa-based Stratton Pollitzer, director of the South Florida arm of Equality Florida. "For decades, sodomy laws have been used to destroy families by branding GLBT people as outlaws and therefore unfit to be good parents, employees or role models."

While Americans cheered from coast to coast with rallies on that Thursday and gay pride parades two days later, the ruling itself may be merely symbolic — and, for some, indicative of a sea of change in society.

WHAT HAPPENED

When police kicked in the door of John Lawrence and Tyron Garner, an interracial couple in a suburban Houston apartment, they had expected to find a man "going crazy." Instead, the police discovered a couple going at it — anally, an act illegal in Texas, and upheld by the 1986 Supreme

Court decision, *Bowers v. Hardwick*.

That decision stated that consenting adults had no constitutional right to private homosexual conduct and that states may ban sodomy. About half of the states had sodomy bans on their books 17 years ago, but legal and public opinion drafted quickly in the favor of the GLBT community.

David Slaughter, director of the University of Central Florida's legal studies program, called the *Bowers* decision "idiotic" and one that was "purely a political decision" that focused on the sex act and not the core of the law, which is the amount of latitude the government should be given in an individual's private life.

The number of states with any sort of sodomy law had dropped to 13 as state courts struck them down as unconstitutional and state legislatures repealed them. In fact, New York repealed its own such law with Gov. George Pataki signing the bill into law just prior to the

recent high court decision.

Florida remained among those with a law forbidding oral and anal sex among homosexuals and heterosexuals, although no one has been arrested on this misdemeanor charge in more than 150 years.

Yet, that has changed with the high court's ruling on *Lawrence and Garner v. Texas*.

The court split on the Texas sodomy decision 6-3. Gay people, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote in the majority decision, "are entitled to respect for their private lives. The state cannot demean their existence or control

their destiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime."

He also recognized the short history of the gay rights movement in the U.S. "Far from possessing 'ancient roots,' American laws targeting same-sex couples did not develop until the last third of the 20th century," Kennedy wrote.

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CENTRAL FLORIDA PRIDE

RAIN DOESN'T DAMPEN SPIRIT OF PRIDE IN ORLANDO

ORLANDO – Members of Orlando's GLBT community turned out in record numbers on Saturday, June 28, to take part in the 2003 Central Florida Pride Parade, despite a heavy downpour less than 30 minutes before the procession made its way down Orange Avenue.

Just two days after the U.S. Supreme Court handed a historic gay rights ruling, Central Florida's GLBT community came out to show their pride on the 34th anniversary of the Stonewall riots.

This year the annual event had a Hollywood theme and was called "Lights, Camera, Pride!" and participants were encouraged to pay tribute to a favorite film or movie star.

Organizers say that although they will only break even financially, this year's event was a huge success.

"Even though we had some rain the parade went great and so did the rally and after party," said Debbie Fritts, president of Central Florida Pride. "Everybody had a great time and there were only minimal problems. We are pleased with the turnout and I am already looking forward to next year."

This year's parade included 38 entries from various GLBT organizations ranging from political groups like the Rainbow

Central Florida Pride photos on page 14

Democrats who celebrated *Driving Miss Daisy* complete with Orlando City Commissioner Daisy Lynum to local gay businesses like the Parliament House, with a tribute to the film *Chicago* and featuring the cast of Fall River Productions' *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.

The Orlando Gay Chorus carried rainbow umbrellas as they made their way through downtown with the music from *Singin' in the Rain* as an appropriate soundtrack.

Orlando's GLBT youth group caused a stir with their unit honoring the film, *But I'm a Cheerleader*, a comedy about gay youth whose parents send them to a camp to make them straight. A marcher with the unit wore a shirt like one of the film's characters that said "Straight is great" and another carried a sign that read "No fags." Some parade-goers asked organizers if they were allowing anti- or ex-gay groups participate.

Walt Disney World's contingent included members of the theme park giant's GLBT cast members' group that handed out Mickey Mouse balloons to



LOGAN DONOHOO plays the strict Mary J. Brown in the GALIXY unit's tribute to *But I'm a Cheerleader*, while DAVID LEE glares down the rain as Hedwig from the Parliament House's unit.

onlookers as they paid tribute to Disney's filmmaking legacy.

Universal Studios participated again this year and brought along a faux Marilyn Monroe in a classic Cadillac convertible. The theme park's contingent was one of the largest in this year's parade.

Participants from Hewitt Associates and Tupperware tied for having the largest group of participants overall. Onlookers were treated to free tiny samples of the plasticware as employees tossed them to the crowd along Orange Avenue.

Writer, performer and Hollywood Square Bruce Vilanch served as the parade's celebrity grand marshal, riding down Orange Avenue on the back of a convertible.

Frances Milstead, mother of drag performer and underground film star Divine also participated in the gay pride parade.

Milstead rode in a convertible as part of the contingent from Studz, a local bar popular with the leather and Levi's crowd.

The parade ended on Church Street where organizers had set up an expo with 35 vendors ranging from the Log Cabin Republicans to PFLAG. In the center of it all was a stage where entertainment was provided throughout the night and keynote speeches were made.

Openly lesbian city commissioner Patty Sheehan, District 4, reminded

Continued on page 9

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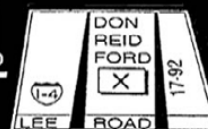


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ORLANDO NEWS

Orlando Pride
from page 8

festival-goers the milestones of the past year including the passage of an amendment to Chapter 57 of the city code that bans discrimination against gays in employment, housing and public service.

"I am ecstatic that they way we love one another are no longer criminal activities according to the Supreme Court of our land and I am proud to live in a city that does not discriminate based on sexual orientation. We've come a long way, baby!" Sheehan told the crowd.

Sheehan delivered a proclamation from the city that proclaimed June 28 as Gay Pride Day. The commissioner also presented Vilanch and Milstead with keys to the city.

Vilanch joked about celebrating gay pride by moving to Canada and marrying Tom Cruise, much to the delight of the crowd.

"I was told that Orlando's pride was a just a small operation but I look out at all of you here today and see that that's not the case at all," Vilanch said. "I am enjoying my visit here and will be going out to Disney's Animal Kingdom

tomorrow to visit some of my relatives."

There were only a few protestors holding signs that quoted the *Bible* and as people walked past they would shout out misinformation regarding the GLBT community. They passed out pamphlets urging homosexuals to repent and turn from a devious lifestyle but many people either didn't take them or they threw them on the ground if they did.

Saturday's parade marked the end of three days of celebration that kicked off on Thursday night with a "Meet the Stars" reception at the Westin Grand Bohemian. Guests at the event, which was

sponsored by *Watermark*, the Log Cabin Republicans and GALIXY, had the opportunity to mingle with Vilanch and Milstead in a more intimate setting.

Friday night offered a "Sneak Preview" party at the Parliament House.

Although this year's event is over, organizers will be meeting soon to discuss the details of next year's event.

"We plan on meeting sometime in July to talk about how this year's parade went, if Church Street was really the answer and about how we can make next year's even better," Fritts said. ▼ *John Sullivan*

"I am enjoying my visit here and will be going out to Disney's Animal Kingdom to visit some of my relatives."

ORLANDO BRIEFS

**WALSH-O'DONNELL MEMORIAL FUND SET**

The family of Ginger Walsh-O'Donnell has asked that any memorial contributions made in the memory of the Central Florida activist and entertainer be made in care of the Journey's End Animal Sanctuary. The Glenwood-area sanctuary cares for abandoned and abused animals. Memorials and condolences to the family can be sent to P.O. Box 4123, Enterprise, FL 32725. Walsh-O'Donnell, also known as Red Hot Mamma among the Tuesday Night Friends, died Thursday, June 12.

THIRTYSOMETHING SUPPORT GROUP BEGINS

The Central Florida Gay Lesbian Bisexual Community Center now offers a support and discussion group for any gender or orientation for those in the thirty something age range. The meetings are held on the first and third Mondays of every month at 7 p.m. The center is located at 946 N. Mills Ave. Call (407) 228-8272 for details.

FLORIDA THEATRICAL ASSOCIATION SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

Florida Theatrical Association, the nonprofit presenter of SunTrust Broadway in Orlando, is accepting applications for volunteers to man its information table during performances. Volunteers will receive tickets to Broadway touring shows. Applications can be obtain by contacting Scottie Campbell at (407) 423-9999.

GALIXY BECOMES OYA

The Gay And Lesbian Idea eXchange for Youth, Orlando's only GLBT youth organization, has changed its name to the Orlando Youth Alliance. The name change came about as part of the process to expand the scope of services offered to GLBT youth throughout Central Florida. OYA is also looking into having a drop-in center for GLBT youth where services like career and mental health counseling would be readily available. OYA is also looking for responsible and mature adults who would be interested in volunteering on a regular basis. For information on how you can have a positive impact on the lives of GLBT youth in Central Florida, e-mail galixygang@hotmail.com.

ORLANDO HOME SHOW SET FOR SEPT. 26-28

Trading Spaces fans, mark your calendars: Designer Frank Bielec (the one who likes crafty motifs) will appear at the Orlando Home Show Sept. 26-28 to present seminars and sign autographs. The event, billed as the largest consumer home show in Central Florida will feature the latest in design and garden trends with exhibitor booths, demonstrations and hands-on activities. For more information, visit www.dmgworldmedia.com.

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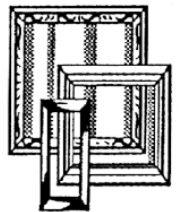
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ST. PETERSBURG PRIDE

INAUGURAL ST. PETERSBURG PRIDE DRAWS 10,000

ST. PETERSBURG - The day of the St. Pete Pride Promenade and Streetfest began as all Saturdays should... slowly. Parade units lingered over brunch at Georgie's Alibi before moving across the street to assemble and rehearse. Over on Central Avenue, Kris Doubles and Jim Luscombe set up the beer garden and tapped the first keg at Grand Central Station. Outside, tables and tents went up methodically down the street. And a few miles to the south, guests at the Suncoast

Resort stretched for early sun before rain clouds could gather.

The rain came, right on cue at 11 a.m. as the Promenade stepped off in front of Georgie's. No matter: the theme this year was "Parasols on Parade," so colorful umbrellas went up and beads and other parade paraphernalia started flying.

Although the inaugural St. Pete Pride celebration included some 20 events spanning more than two weeks, the Promenade and Streetfest were the largest and most eagerly anticipated. They didn't disappoint.

An estimated 600 to 800 marchers representing more than 60 bars, businesses and civic organizations participated in a relaxed, joyful parade through Historic Kenwood to Central Avenue. As a 900-foot rainbow flag was unfurled at the end, hundreds of onlookers joined in to keep the pride symbol afloat. Turns out, it was enough of a display to make it on CNN's wrap-up of pride events across the nation.

Afterward, some 120 vendors welcomed 8,000 to 10,000 into the Grand Central District, where they milled about and enjoyed music, entertainment, and speeches throughout the afternoon. Many wore red, white and blue instead of the traditional rainbow colors to signify their elation at the



An estimated 8,000 to 10,000 crowded Central Avenue for the post-parade Streetfest. Photo by Rex Maniscalco.



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St. Petersburg Pride
photos on page 15

U.S. Supreme Court's ruling two days earlier outlawing anti-gay sodomy statutes.

Indeed, much of the street talk was about the sodomy ruling, and about St. Petersburg's impressive gay renaissance.

"This is a great place to celebrate gay pride," said software designer Bill Lockhart. "The street's wide, it's a relaxed atmosphere, and there are gay bars and businesses in the neighborhood. It's perfect."

Others gave kudos to St. Pete Pride for the simplicity of their overall plan.

"This is back to basics," said photographer Rex Maniscalco, a former Pride Tampa Bay board member. "And I think it's obvious that's what a lot of people wanted."

Attendance even surprised organizers, who just days before the event were projecting 4,000 to 6,000. They were pleased to see large numbers from Tampa and as far away as Pasco County and Sarasota.

"Overall, it was a tremendous success," said tired-but-happy St. Pete Pride co-chair Brian Longstreth. "We've heard nothing but good things from everyone."

One reason was the large number of volunteers, recruited and trained by Chris Lovett and Claudia Cole. Most visible were St. Pete Pride co-chair Ellen Levett, Promenade chair Greg Stemm, and Streetfest chair Carl Kuttler, who whisked about Central Avenue in a golf cart introducing everyone to his very proud mother.

Pride stage emcees Rick Walen and Rene Bray mixed musical performers with speakers throughout the day. The Tampa Bay Gay Men's Chorus drew a large crowd, and onlookers cheered Equality Florida president Nadine Smith's passionate acknowledgment of the sodomy decision. Toward the end of the afternoon, poet Stephen Reigns earned fans with his movingly honest poetry.

Although attendance the following day

at the Equality Florida Family Values Picnic at Spa Beach in front of The Pier was disappointing, organizers were pleased that St. Pete Pride showcased resurgent St. Petersburg in addition to gay pride.

"The event is as much about or pride in our city as it is about pride in our lifestyle," said St. Pete Pride board member Robert Danielson.

Organizers will meet at the St. Pete Pride office on Wednesday, July 9 to recap the event and begin planning for next year. Longstreth said the success of this year's event ensures that they will have adequate seed money. He doesn't envision any major changes next year.

"We might look at re-routing the parade — possibly from Tropicana Field — so that there's more time on Central Avenue," Longstreth said. "But mostly we'll just be tweaking. We're very happy with the way the event turned out this year." ▼



MC Film Festival's MARK BIAS shares his feather boa with two beaded blondes. Photo by Rex Maniscalco.

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TAMPA NEWS

AUTHOR EVENT AT LIBRARY A SUCCESS

TAMPA - A diverse crowd of 100 packed into the domed auditorium at the John F. Germany Library on a rainy Saturday afternoon, June 21, to listen to an equally diverse panel of GLBT authors share from their work. The event was the first-ever Loving in Fear symposium — also the first time a GLBT event took place within a Hillsborough County Library.

Loving in Fear got a late start after moderator Apple Love — filling in at the last minute for Stephanie Shippae — slipped on a wet sidewalk and sprained her ankle. In obvious pain, the popular performer gave a moving introduction.

“She really had a grasp on the importance of the program and what I’m trying to establish at the library,” said organizer Steven Reigns.

The first speaker was Dr. Les Wright, who read from his *Bear Book 1* and 2, and talked about differing notions of beauty, the bear sub-subculture, and how being HIV-positive has impacted his life. “He is

truly an academic and brought a great perspective to the event,” said Reigns.

Poet Minnie Carey read work she dedicated to the women in her life, focusing on lesbian love rather than lesbian politics. “She’s a natural at the microphone,” Reigns observed. “She has a warm, wonderful verbal cadence.”

Reigns read three intensely personal new poems, including one about Andrew Cunanan and one about his mother’s verbal assaults when she found out he was gay. “I was apprehensive,” Reigns shared, “but I believe that if we share our experiences we can reach a greater understanding and help others come out of the closets of abuse.”

Despite tepid support from the library, which housed the event but refused to officially host it, Reigns plans to bring Loving in Fear back in years to come. “To have 100 people show up during a downpour says something about the interest in such an event.” ▼ *Tom Dyer*



(L-R) Loving in Fear organizer STEVEN REIGNS, *Bear Book* author LES WRIGHT, and poet MINNIE CAREY. Photo by The Pictureman.

EVENING IN ASIA RAISES \$40,000 FOR FLORIDA AIDS ACTION

TAMPA - More than 100 guests braved a torrential downpour on Sunday, June 22 to attend the second annual An Evening in Asia: Your Passport to Adventure. The event, at the elegant Profusion restaurant, raised more than \$40,000 for Florida AIDS Action. Tickets to the event were \$175 per person.

The host for the evening was ABC Action News anchor Bob Kendrick. Guest speakers at the party included Tom Liberti, Chief of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS at Florida’s Department of Health, and Paul Kawata, Executive Director of the National Minority AIDS Council. State Representative Sandra Murman was honored for her commitment and service to the more than

100,000 Floridians living with HIV.

Tampa-based Florida AIDS Action is the only statewide nonprofit AIDS support organization in Florida. ▼ *Tom Dyer*



(L-R) TOM LIBERTI of the Florida Department of Health, State Rep. SANDRA MURMAN, and PAUL KAWATA, executive director of the National Minority AIDS Council. Photo courtesy FLAA.

SWIMSUITS IN USE AT FOURTH ONE LAUREL PRIDE

TAMPA - On Saturday, June 21, low-hanging clouds loomed darkly over One Laurel Place, spilling rain on the pool area just often enough to keep things nicely wet. But no matter for several hundred partiers who braved the weather to attend the Fourth Annual One Laurel Pride fundraising pool party: they all wore bathing suits anyway.

As usual, the event was a display of

buff bodies and generous spirits. It raised more than \$1,835 for the Pride Tampa Bay Foundation, Inc. President Don Bentz is just one of some 60 gay and lesbian homeowners at the downtown Tampa condo. He said his organization is gearing up for more fundraisers this year, and major Gasparilla-related events next February. ▼ *Tom Dyer*



When the rain stopped, One Laurel Pride resembled a bathing suit fashion show. Photo by Daniel Lancaster.

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MANATEE SCHOOLS FORBID HARASSING GAY STUDENTS

BRADENTON - The historically conservative Manatee County now has a fairly uncommon rule on its books to protect students in its school district. The school board gave its unanimous support for adding "sexual preference" to its list of classifications protected from discrimination in the new code of student conduct.

In other words, bullies beware: Calling someone a name could get you in serious trouble.

The Manatee County School Board's student conduct code also forbids discrimination based on race, sex, religion, national origin or disability. It's one of only a handful of Florida schools to include "sexual preference."

Under the new policy, a student who discriminates against a classmate because of his sexual preference could face discipline ranging from detention to expulsion, according to the *Herald-Tribune*.

Interestingly, school board members debated at length about a proposal to allow students to carry cell phones before deciding against that measure. At the same time, there was no discussion about adding language to protect students who are harassed because they are gay.

The vote was something of a surprise from a school board whose chairwoman recently spoke out against school counselors referring students to ALSO for Gay Youth.

But after the vote, Chairwoman Barbara Harvey said the two issues were not connected.

"I don't think bullying is good no matter what it is," she said.

School administrators said they were confused why the discrimination policy was needed.

Manatee Schools Superintendent Dan Nolan said it was required under a new law and referred additional questions to Tom Walker, one of the staff members

coordinating the changes.

However, Walker, director of elementary education, said the change was requested by principals. The Florida Department of Education confirmed that there was no new law requiring the change.

"On occasion, you do have a student who has the courage to come out," Herbert Tschappat, the district's director of school management, told the *Herald-Tribune*. "Unfortunately, there are some students who are going to pick mercilessly."

Shelley Craig, ALSO executive director, said the change shows "Manatee County is willing to protect all students and believes all students deserve to be safe in school."

Craig said openly gay students, as well as those who are perceived to be gay, often face harassment in school.

Last year, she said, one Manatee County boy who came out got two black eyes from a classmate. When he went to a teacher for help, the teacher said he asked for it because he told people he was gay. That student eventually dropped out.

Craig said teachers often call her to ask how to stand up for students who are bullied without raising eyebrows from those who may view that support as supporting homosexuality.

In Sarasota County schools, where discrimination based on sexual preference is also forbidden, students who are harassed are more willing to report it, Craig said.

"They push harder because they feel like the system is behind them," she said.

The code of conduct is the domain of the superintendent and does not require a board vote. However, board members wanted to take a vote endorsing the document, which lays out penalties for everything from wearing a too-short skirt to bringing a gun to school, as a sign of support for staff members who have to enforce the code. ▼

SARASOTA BRIEFS



ALSO SAYS FAREWELL TO CRAIG

The ALSO for Gay Youth Board of Directors will host a casual-attire farewell party for executive director Shelley Craig from 7 to 10:30 p.m. Saturday, July 12, at Turner and Anthony's, 1034 Virginia Drive, Sarasota. For more information about the party, call (941) 355-6293.

SPLASH! BENEFIT FOR HRC RAINED OUT

Organizers may consider presenting Splash!, the benefit for the Human Rights Campaign that was rained out Saturday, June 21, in Sarasota's Ken Thompson Park on City Island. While water-related activities were the focus of this evening of music and fun, "the monsoons came," said planner Brian Wiggins. "I think we made the right decision to cancel it that night." Refunds for the June 21 event can be obtained by writing to brian@brianwiggins.com.



SHELLEY CRAIG

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STATE NEWS

MURDER RAP OVERTURNED WHEN DNA SAMPLES MIX UP

FORT LAUDERDALE - For Kevin Hoffman, 27, the discovery of a blunder in his first-degree murder prosecution meant that he could spend a few hours out of jail — and the night on his mother's sofa in her hotel room.

Still, the man accused of attacking a gay man in Fort Lauderdale must now enter a residential substance abuse program to serve two years of house arrest for an attempted first-degree murder of another gay man, according to the *Sun-Sentinel*.

Prosecutors dropped a first-degree murder charge that could have landed Hoffman in prison for life for the death of Michael Sortal, a gay Fort Lauderdale man.

Prosecutors dropped the case after learning the Broward County Sheriff's Department medical lab botched the DNA evidence crucial to linking Hoffman and another, Geoffrey Kennedy, to the murder victim.

Police found Sortal, a storage and mini-warehouse manager, naked and dead at his apartment in March 2001, three days before the other incident. A plastic bag was over his head, his own belt tightened around his neck, according to PlanetOut.com.

Police collected DNA found on the victim and turned it over to their lab. The department said an analyst at the lab mixed the sample linking Hoffman to the victim with a sample from an unrelated serial rape case.

Without the DNA, prosecutors said they couldn't convict Hoffman. Kennedy

was, however, convicted on other evidence in January of 2002. He is currently serving a life sentence. The DNA mix-up should have no impact on his case.

The perpetrator, Kevin Hoffman, is serving a two-year sentence on house arrest for beating and robbing another gay man in a similar crime.

The victim in that case survived by playing dead. He lived to identify Hoffman and Kennedy as having bashed him with a 5-pound dumbbell and tying him up with his own belt and duct tape while they robbed his home.

Hoffman was released from the Broward County Jail around 9 a.m. Tuesday, June 24, although his state Department of Corrections probation officer didn't know that he was out, nor where he was staying. Hoffman's mother said he had spent the night on her sofa in her Fort Lauderdale hotel room. He had asked to serve his other sentence in Indiana, but a judge refused.

"This is of course a concern for the community," said Jay McLaughlin an administrator at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in Broward County. "A man like this shouldn't go free; he sounds like a real danger to the gay community."

McLaughlin said this was the first he had heard of the case. But he added if there is ever a violent threat against Broward County's gay community, local groups are quick to put up signs and send out warnings via the local gay newspaper about the potential danger. ▼

PRODUCERS TO FILM GAY SHOW IN WILTON MANORS

WILTON MANORS - Not only is this Atlantic Coast community one of two in the nation with a GLBT-majority city council — it's soon to become the setting for a new gay reality show.

The Miami Beach-based film company, Foreverfilms International, will shoot a pilot for the as-of-yet-unnamed pilot at two popular hangouts on Wilton Drive: the restaurant and bar Georgie's Alibi and the Boom nightclub.

The show's executive producer, Sal Anthony, told the *Sun-Sentinel* that Wilton Manors is a prime spot for filming because the city presents a realistic look at gay life without stereotypes. It's also packed with shops, restaurants, clubs and bars that cater to a gay clientele.

The plot is fairly simple: Six contestants will perform on stage in front of a packed crowd at Boom. After the show, three people from the crowd will join the six at Georgie's Alibi and eventually three people will get voted off the show. This would leave three couples. Camera crews will capture the chemistry — and the lack thereof — afterward.

Foreverfilms was hit with more than 200 applications from people wanting to appear on camera, even without a casting call.

Wilton Manors Mayor Jim Stork backs the show, saying it will add recognition to the city, but some residents are skeptical. One city councilman said he didn't want any single group singled out in the community. "All kinds of people live in this city ... straight, gay, black, white," Ted Galatis said.

"We want to attract not only a gay audience, but a mainstream one as well," Anthony said. "There's no nudity or anything involving sex. It doesn't stereotype the gay population at all."

The idea for a gay dating show may also face resistance from potential advertisers, as well as anti-gay activist groups. This hasn't deterred the basic-cable Bravo network, which plans to broadcast its own version of this format, *Boy Meets Boy*, as well as a gay-themed fashion makeover program, *A Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, which premieres July 15. No air date has been set for Bravo's dating show. ▼ Dave Wiethop

STATE BRIEFS



BUSH SNUFFS OUT SMOKING IN RESTAURANTS

Think again before you light up after a nice dinner and hope that you're sitting at home: Gov. Jeb Bush signed into law a measure that makes it illegal to smoke in restaurants. Smokers will be able to puff away in so-called "stand alone" bars that serve "incidental" snacks, on outdoor patios at restaurants, at membership associations and at designated smoking areas at airports. Voters approved the measure with a 2-to-1 majority in November. The law took effect July 1.

NEWS ANCHOR MARSHALS FORT LAUDERDALE PRIDE PARADE

WSVN Channel 7 news anchor Craig Stevens led the Stonewall Street Festival and Parade June 22, the fourth year that this parade has wound its way through the gay-friendly Wilton Manors. The Flamingo Freedom Band, the Stonewall Knights Motorcycle Club and other area organizations and businesses took part in the parade, which led to the unfurling of a rainbow flag the length of four football fields.

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CENTRAL FLORIDA PRIDE

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(1) The Saturday night crowd at Church Street Station. (2) Stiltwalkers entertained the parade-goers. (3) MICHAEL O'QUINN and FRANCES MILSTEAD. (4) Parade-goers braved a brief downpour. (5) Central Florida Pride president DEBBIE FRITTS and celebrity grand marshal BRUCE VILANCH. (6) Studz celebrated the Village People's movie *Can't Stop the Music*. (7) The Orlando Gay Chorus parade unit paid tribute to *Singin' in the Rain*. (8) PFLAG made its way to Church Street. Photos by John Boulden, Tom Dyer, Greg McGuigan, David Stowe, Wheat Wurtzburger.

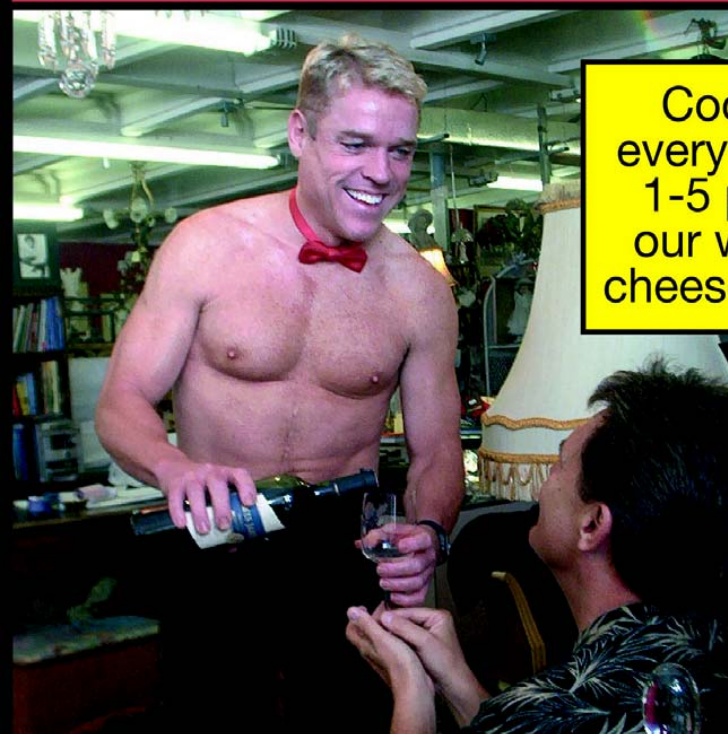
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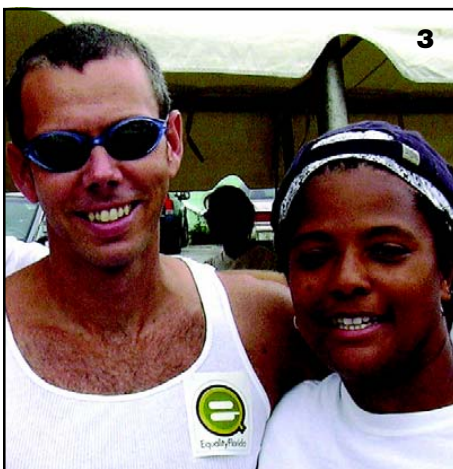
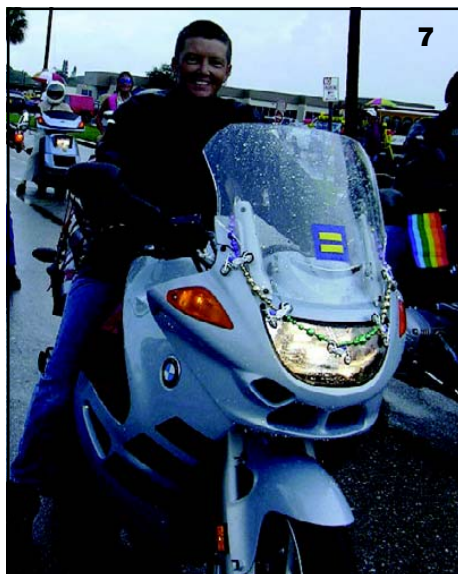
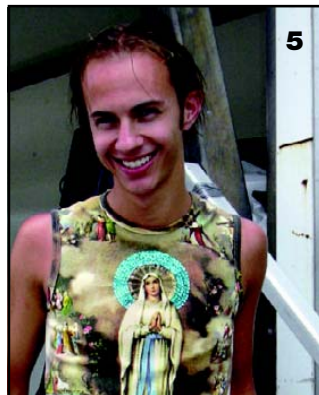
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ST. PETERSBURG PRIDE

STRUTTING AT ST. PETE PRIDE

(1) It took hundreds of volunteers to hold up a 900-foot rainbow flag. (2) Clearwater's Pro Shop Pub sported beads, hand fans and Hawaiian shirts. (3) Equality Florida's STRATTON POLITZER and NADINE SMITH. (4) The Suncoast Resort float rocks Central Avenue. (5) Poet Stephen Reigns found more fans of his touching work. (6) Hanging out at the Equality Florida Family Values Picnic. (7) Dykes on Bikes remained a crowd favorite. (8) Were these crowns borrowed from the Miss Florida pageant, taking place across town?

Photos by Rex Maniscalco, Tom Dyer, The Pictureman



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WORLD BRIEFS



NEW PARK HONORS GLBT HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

San Francisco dedicated the first memorial in the U.S. that honors GLBT victims of the Holocaust. Pink Triangle Park opened near the Castro district, a project of a committee that hopes to draw attention to the way the Nazis treated the GLBT community. During the Nazi regime, concentration camp prisoners wore inverted colored triangles to designate the purpose for their incarceration. Black triangles were worn by lesbians, prostitutes and women who refused to bear children. Pink triangles marked the gay men.

NEW YORK NO LONGER CRIMINALIZES SODOMY

The terms "sodomy" and "deviate sexual intercourse" will be stricken from New York's law books under legislation approved by lawmakers in the waning hours of the Legislature's just-completed session. The legislation replaces the term "sodomy" with "criminal sexual act" and replaces "deviate sexual intercourse" with "oral sexual conduct" or "anal sexual conduct."

GLBT PRIDE FESTIVAL HELD AT MOUNT RUSHMORE

About 50 people attended what was billed as the Black Hills Gay and Lesbian Pride Festival June 22 at the Mount Rushmore National Monument in South Dakota, gathering for a picnic and hiking. The Black Hills-area Gay and Lesbian Youth Support and Resource Center hosted the event.

ARIZONA GOVERNOR SIGNS ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ORDER

Gay rights activists in Arizona are celebrating a long-fought victory: Gov. Janet Napolitano signed an executive order that forbids discrimination based on sexual orientation in state agencies. Napolitano's executive order makes it illegal for the state to hire, fire, promote or discipline any state employee based on the individual's sexual orientation. "To the people of Arizona, I say, 'Welcome to a new Arizona,'" Napolitano said.

OPERATION RESCUE LEADER MOVES TO NORTH CAROLINA

The leader of Operation Rescue/Operation Save America has moved his organization from Dallas to Concord, N.C., where he leads his fight against abortion, homosexuality and Islam. Philip "Flip" Benham and his group have been involved in some of the most publicized anti-abortion events in the past decade. He'll host the annual Operation Save America conference in Charlotte on July 12-20. Last month, he disrupted the Charlotte gay and lesbian festival by screaming throughout a commitment ceremony for more than a dozen couples.

GAY MARRIAGE RULING ENERGIZES TORONTO PARADE

TORONTO - A huge street parade Sunday celebrating gay pride included newly married homosexual couples who traveled to Toronto to get hitched legally in what has become North America's new gay capital.

The event was one of many around the world this weekend celebrating tolerance, even in places that have traditionally been hostile to homosexuality.

Teresa Tedesco, director of legislative services at Toronto City Hall, said the city has issued 255 licenses for same-sex marriages in recent weeks, including 30 to U.S. couples.

Signs showed the marriage issue was on people's minds, with one saying "Queer liberation does not end at the altar" and another featuring U.S. and Canadian flags proclaiming: "Just married. Thank you Canada."

Marchers in Canada's largest city, however, cheered recent court rulings that expanded homosexual rights in North America.

In Toronto, the crowd included Michael Leshner and Michael Stark, who have become symbols of homosexual rights in Canada.

The two were married on June 10, hours after an Ontario appeals court ruled as unconstitutional Canada's definition of

marriage as only between a man and a woman paving the way for legalized gay unions.

The gay marriage ruling prompted Prime Minister Jean Chretien's government to promise a new law that legalized same-sex marriage while allowing churches to decide whether to sanctify them.

Leshner and Stark, their faces painted in rainbow colors, rode in a blue Mitsubishi convertible in the parade, exchanging kisses to cheers from the crowd.

Until the new law takes effect, perhaps by winter, the court ruling stands. City Hall was open Sunday to marry visiting couples.

Canada is only the third nation to legalize same-sex marriage, along with The Netherlands and Belgium.

Times are changing in the England and Wales as well. Most of the rights enjoyed by married people would become available to gay couples under government proposals for new civil partnerships.

Jacqui Smith, deputy minister for women and equality, said the proposal did not amount to marriage, but added it would remove many of the problems gay partners face because their relationships are not legally recognized. ▼



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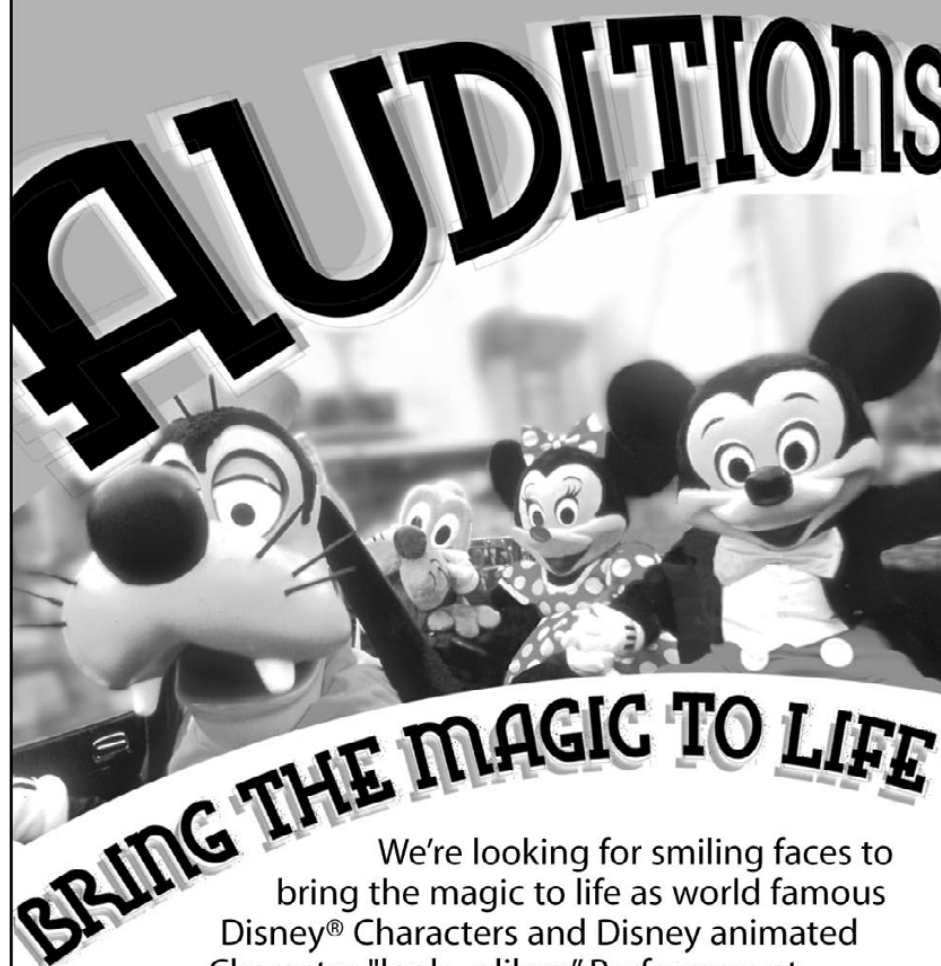
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EXPERTS PROPOSE
HIV VACCINE PROGRAM

WASHINGTON - AIDS will kill 70 million people worldwide by 2020 unless a successful vaccine is found and experts say the quickest way to do this is with a crash program aimed solely at finding the best way to protect humans from the HIV virus.

In a formal proposal appearing in the journal *Science*, some of the world's leading researchers propose a network of coordinated research centers to develop a vaccine to head off an exploding worldwide AIDS crisis.

The 24 co-authors include two Nobel prize winners, college presidents, the heads of major public health departments of the U.S. government, and AIDS researchers from France, South Africa, England and the United Nations.

In concept, said co-author Dr. David Baltimore, the proposal is rather like a Manhattan Project against AIDS.

"In the sense it is a commitment to use the skills of the scientific community to solve a problem, it is like the Manhattan Project," said Baltimore, a Nobel laureate. "But the Manhattan Project depended on secrecy and we're doing the exact opposite." Baltimore said the research would be conducted openly, with information and discoveries shared quickly and completely between labs.

Despite more than 20 years of effort, researchers have yet to find the ideal approach against AIDS. The human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, that causes AIDS attacks the very cells in the body's immune system that play a key role in protecting against infection.

Most vaccines cause the production of antibodies that neutralize an invading microbe, but HIV attacks the immune system itself and antibodies made against HIV are ineffective.

Vaccines that have been tested have failed to trigger the immune system response needed to kill or control the HIV virus, and researchers are still uncertain exactly how to prompt a vaccine-induced defense against the virus.

As a result, the plan calls for each of the labs to take a different approach in an effort to find the best route to a vaccine defense.

"Increasing the diversity of approaches and coordinating the types of vaccines entering clinical trials are fundamental to speeding global HIV vaccine development," the authors write.

Vaccines usually are developed by private pharmaceutical companies, but Baltimore said the problems and expense of developing an HIV vaccine make the traditional ways impractical. ▽

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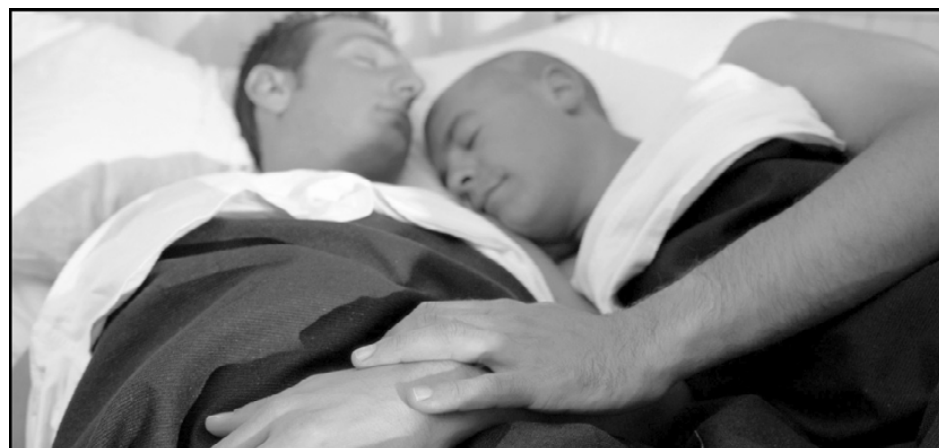
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YOUR HEALTH BRISTOL-MEYERS ADDS PROTEASE INHIBITOR

by Dr. Edwin DeJesus

Just a couple of months after the approval of the first injectable HIV medication enfuvirtide or Fuzeon, another new anti-HIV medication hits the market. On June 20, the FDA gave final approval to atazanavir as a treatment of HIV infection. It will be marketed by Bristol-Meyers Squibb as Reyataz. (Where do they find these names?)

The FDA approval came after a prolonged evaluation of study results on the safety and efficacy of this drug in both patients who have never been exposed to anti-HIV medications in the past and for patients who have already been treated.

Reyataz is new in the class of drugs called protease inhibitors, the same group of other well-known

HIV medications such as Crixivan, Viracept and Kaletra. It is not a cure for HIV but helps to control the infection. In studies, this drug has proven effective in controlling HIV infection by not allowing the virus to grow or replicate

effectively. Reyataz, as with all other protease inhibitors, does not work well alone, and it needs to be administered in combination with at least two other HIV medications such as AZT, Epivir, Zerit, Videx, Ziagen or Viread.

In terms of treating HIV, Reyataz is not much different than other drugs that are currently available, so there is no reason for patients to ask their physicians to change their existing treatments if they are doing well on their current cocktails.

On the other hand, there are several advantages that Reyataz offers over its competitors. For example, the treatment involves only two pills a day, and they are taken at the same time. In fact, it is the first protease inhibitor that can be administered once a day. We currently have four other anti-HIV medications — and in the near future, we will have eight — that can be combined for cocktail treatments as once daily.

Another advantage of Reyataz is that it has very little side effects. In studies, patients who took the drug reported diarrhea very infrequently, unlike the response to other protease inhibitor treatments.

But the best attribute of Reyataz is

that it does not appear to cause problems with elevation of blood lipids (cholesterol or triglycerides), which is one of the main problems seen with several anti-HIV medications available today. This makes the drug very attractive to patients who already have problems with cholesterol or who have high risk factors for cardiac disease or heart attacks.

One of the major adverse events observed with the use of Reyataz is the development of mild to moderate hyperbilirubinemia. This is a condition in which extra bile from the gall bladder accumulates in the blood stream. While this may not be a big deal, bile can cause a slight reversible yellowish coloration of the eye sclera, or the whitish part of the eye.

In my office practice experience, this hyperbilirubinemia has not been a big problem. We have been using Reyataz for the past two years with very good results and very few complaints from patients. We now have more than 60 patients on this drug — some of them for more than a year — and we have not discontinued anyone from this medication because of the side effects. But as with any medication, including aspirin, side effects can still occur, but overall they are very rare.

AZT was the first drug approved for the treatment of HIV infection in 1987. Since then, 21 new drugs (about one new drug per year) have been successfully introduced in the market. So far this year, two drugs have already been approved. More impressive is the fact that by the end of the year, there is a high probability that two more drugs will be approved, fosamprenavir and emtricitabine. They all bring benefits to the treatment of HIV by introducing more potency, effectiveness against already resistant virus, convenience and safer toxicity profile. Despite all of these new drug developments, we are still looking for “the magic bullet.”

Other new and completely different treatments are also being explored, such as vaccines and drugs that allow patients to make interruptions in treatment. These experimental and possibly controversial treatments are still in the early stages of development. Stay tuned. ▼

In studies, this drug has proven effective in controlling HIV infection by not allowing the virus to grow or replicate effectively.

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HEADLINE NEWS

Not Illegal Anymore
from page 6

The court "has largely signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda," Justice Antonin Scalia wrote for the three. He took the unusual step of reading his dissent from the bench. "The court has taken sides in the culture war," Scalia said, adding that he has "nothing against homosexuals."

Slaughter noted Scalia's last few words. "Anytime you say you have nothing against somebody," the University of Central Florida criminal law professor said, "it means that you probably do."

WHAT IT MEANS

Florida has had an act on its books for the last 158 years that prohibited "unnatural and lascivious acts against nature" — yet, no one has ever been arrested for this misdemeanor. Still, the vague law seemed to criminalize the relationships among the GLBT community.

A state Supreme Court ruling in 1981 said that the Florida Bar Association couldn't inquire into a person's private life — and therefore, asking about his sexual activities — before he could be admitted. The 1981 state decision may have quietly overturned that vague law, Slaughter said.

Some sexual acts will remain illegal in Florida, Slaughter said. Prostitution remains against the law because separate statutes prohibit the commercial component of sex between two consenting

adults. Public sex — gay or straight — is still illegal because Lawrence dealt only with private sexual activity, Slaughter said.

But arrests for sex between two consenting adults in the privacy of their own home have always been difficult to make. The Texas case stemmed from a grudge held by one of the neighbors against the couple. The neighbor's claim that one of the men was "going crazy" led police to bust in on them, an action the police might not have taken without the false allegation.

In other words, oral sex and anal sex is not against the law in Texas, Florida or any other state in the union. Still, the case appears to deal more with government intervention than it does the insertion of a man's penis.

"This is not about sodomy. Conservative Republicans should be behind this all the way because that's the basis of conservatism: Keeping government interference out of our lives," Slaughter said. "Baptists should back this as well. If the court had not ruled in the way that they had, this could mean that the government could dictate what goes on in your bedroom — and what's next? Could it dictate how and where you worship? These were possibilities."

In fact, conservative talk show commentators Thursday night found themselves at odds within themselves.

While their distaste for gay sex acts — and by association, some straight sex acts — was evident, pundits like Fox's



Tyron Garner, left, and John Geddes Lawrence, right, are hugged by a well-wisher after a rally at Houston City Hall, Thursday, June 26, 2003, held to celebrate the Supreme Court ruling. (AP Photo/The Dallas Morning News, Erich Schlegel)

Bill O'Reilly hailed the Supreme Court ruling before tackling the other news of the day. Within a day, the news programs were focused on other issues, including the death on Thursday of Sen. Strom Thurmond, a longtime foe of the gay civil rights movement.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW

Within hours of the announcement of the Supreme Court's ruling, the fax lines and e-mail lists were jammed with reactions and statements from everyone from the ACLU to the Concerned Lutherans, a GLBT group that had been part of the original Bowers case. So-called "family-values" lobby groups also chimed in with their fears that the disintegration of the country was at hand, what with Canada agreeing to same-sex marriages and gay sex decriminalized in this country.

Reaction to the ruling has ranged from casual dismissal to a belief that America's legal views on everything from abortion to employment and military service will change.

Once the news of the ruling has sunk in and the pride parades are but a memory, groups have urged the GLBT to take advantage of what has occurred.

"For years, whenever we have sought equality, we've been answered both in the courts of law and in the court of public opinion with the claim that we were not entitled to equality because our love makes us criminals. That argument ... is now a dead letter," said James Esseks, the litigation director of the ACLU's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project. The ACLU will soon launch a "Get Busy, Get Equal" campaign to get anti-discrimination laws on the books in local communities.

The decision may find itself influencing the U.S. military's "Don't

Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network will look at the ruling and determine what role it has in tearing down "the walls to equality in our armed forces," said Dixon Osborn, executive director of the organization. Yet, the court has traditionally shown considerable favor to the military and could continue to do so even by supporting the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

Still, there are sore losers in this battle, but ones with attorneys.

Mathew D. Staver, president of Liberty Counsel, an Orlando-based religious rights group, predicted that cultural conservatives would not let the court's decision stand unchallenged.

"The split decision underscores the importance of the next Supreme Court appointment, not only on the issue of abortion but now on the issue of same-sex unions," he said. "Regulating homosexual conduct and marriage is the right of the people to be exercised through the legislative rather than judicial branches of government."

The president of the Christian Coalition of Alabama, John Giles, agreed that personal privacy should be protected, but said he worries the decision will further a national campaign to legalize marriage between gays. "God have mercy on America," he said.

America, it seems, has already begun to change. "Florida's sodomy law, and legislators' hostility toward gay people, can no longer be used as a basis for discrimination," said Howard Simon, the executive director of the ACLU of Florida. "Even though the law has always applied to all couples, straight or gay, the courts and agencies have treated it as if it were a justification against gay people. They can't do that anymore." ▼

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SPIRITUALITY BRIEFS

CHURCH OF THE TRINITY MCC RAISES MONEY

The congregation of the Church of the Trinity MCC, 7225 N. Lockwood Ridge Road, Sarasota, is raising \$130,000 towards its down payment for land to expand its church campus. So far, the church has raised \$170,000. Church leaders anticipate buying 20 acres to the north of the current property. For more information, call (941) 355-0847.

JOY MCC OFFERS PERSONAL THEOLOGY SEMINAR

Joy MCC, 2351 S. Ferncreek Ave., Orlando, will host a seminar "Who is God? How to Develop a Personal Theology" at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays, July 9, 16, 23 and 30. The seminar will be held in the sanctuary, led by senior pastor the Rev. Carol Trissell.

BAHAMA CRUISE DEPOSITS DUE JULY 10

Deposits of \$200 for the Joy MCC cruise to the Bahama Islands Oct. 30-Nov. 2 are due by July 10. The cruise on the Carnival Fantasy will leave from Port Canaveral and travel to Nassau, Bahamas, with costs ranging from \$330 to \$350 per person. For each 15 Joy MCC cabins booked, the church gets a free cabin to raffle. For more information, call Tami at (407) 774-7730 or write to tamit@contus.com.

SPIRITUALITY LISTINGS

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

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TAMPA BAY

AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

BETH RACHAMIM SYNAGOGUE

Growing reform congregation with special outreach to the gay and lesbian community. Sabbath services are every Friday at 8 PM, 719 Arlington Ave. N, St. Petersburg. (727) 822-7503 or www.bethrachamim.org.

BREATH OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY CHURCH

An all-affirming and nondenominational ministry rooted in Christ and biblically based, pastored by Rev. J. Ricc Rollins, II. Service is at 10:30 AM. At the Doubletree Hotel, 4500 West Cypress Street, Tampa Bay. (813) 873-1889.

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DIGNITY OF TAMPA BAY

Mass for GLBT Catholics, their families and friends on Sundays at 6 PM at King of Peace MCC, 3150 5th Ave., St. Petersburg. A social follows. (813) 238-2868 or info@dignitytampabay.org.

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INTEGRITY OF TAMPA BAY

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SOUTHERN BAPTISTS WANT MEMBERS TO HELP LIBERATE GAYS

PHOENIX - The Southern Baptist

Convention denounced same-sex marriage and homosexuality at its annual meeting, while asking members to help gays become heterosexual through Christian faith.

The nation's largest Protestant denomination also spent much of the gathering that ended recently defending the right of evangelicals to proclaim their religion the only path to salvation.

"There are forces that attempt to silence us, who say don't intrude on our lives," said the Rev. Jack Graham, the Southern Baptist president. "We cannot resist the love and

the call of God to penetrate our world."

The denomination made a special plea to its more than 42,000 churches to befriend gays and help "liberate" them from homosexuality. Gay rights groups said the initiative promoted hatred.

The Southern Baptists also urged all judges and public officials to join them in opposing same-sex marriage.

"Legalizing same-sex 'marriage' would convey a societal approval of a homosexual lifestyle, which the Bible calls sinful and dangerous," reads one of the resolutions passed during the meeting.

The denomination acknowledged the severity of the global AIDS crisis and expressed support for President Bush's \$15 billion initiative to fight AIDS overseas. Bush addressed the meeting in a videotaped message calling the 16 million Southern Baptists "faithful servants" and asking God to bless them.

The denomination also came out against distributing condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS. Abstinence education programs that emphasize "a Biblical view of sexuality" would be more effective, they said. (AP)

MCC LEADERS TO HONOR GAY PIONEER

DALLAS - Metropolitan Community Churches will present its biennial Human Rights Award to pioneer gay rights activist Barbara Gittings at its World Jubilee and General Conference July 6 in Dallas.

An activist for GLBT civil rights for more than 40 years, Gittings returns to Dallas to receive her award, the site

where she picketed and set up an historic "Hug-A-Homosexual" booth run by the Task Force on Gay Liberation in 1971.

Gittings has been an activist since 1958, a time when she said "there were scarcely 200 of us in the whole

U.S. It was like a club — we all knew each other." In 1958, she established the first East Coast Chapter of the first known lesbian organization in the U.S., the Daughters of Bilitis, founded in 1955 in San Francisco.

She marched in the first gay rights picket lines in the mid 1960s at the White House and The Pentagon, and Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

She and her longtime partner Kay Tobin Lahusen are currently organizing forty years worth of movement memorabilia for future distribution to various gay/lesbian archives. ▼

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SPIRIT OF LIFE MCC

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

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF TAMPA

Worship services at 11 AM Sundays, 11400 Morris Bridge Rd.

UNITY CHURCH OF TODAY

Sunday meetings at 9:45 AM, service at 11 AM. 710 Crenshaw Lake Rd, Lutz. (813)909-9590 or visit cctampa.tripod.com. Rev. Bob and Ruth Fatur, ministers.

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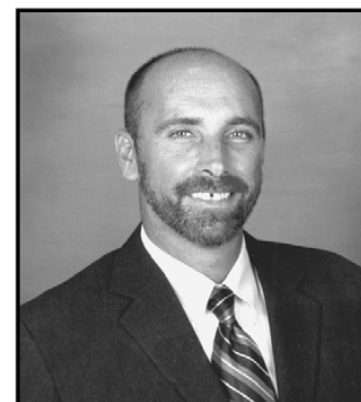


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**NEARLY 80% OF GLBT
COMMUNITY OWNS PETS**

SYRACUSE, N.Y. - It might be called "puppy love," but when it comes to spending money on pets, the GLBT community can be obsessive. According to a new on-line survey, about one-fifth of all gay people who own pets will spend between \$300 and \$432 each year on their fur children.

The information about money spent by pet owners may prove useful for companies serving the gay community.

"This new information is interesting not only to breeders and kennels, but to pet food manufacturers, veterinarians, hair cutters — anyone in the pet industry who wishes to court a significant market," said Jeffrey Garber, the founder of GLCensus Partners' study. "Even airlines, hotels and apartment complexes are evaluating their policies on dogs and cats in light of the strong gay interest in pet ownership."

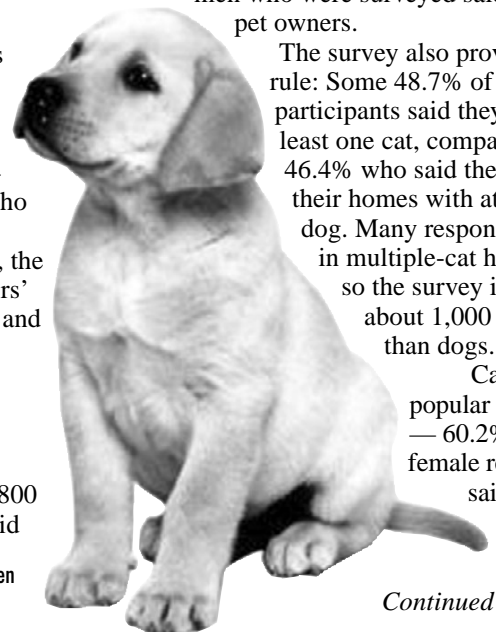
Among the more than 8,800 respondents, some 78.5% said

they own pets — some 10% higher than the number of pet owners in the straight population.

Pet ownership — which includes cats, dogs, birds, ferrets, fish, horses, rabbits, reptiles and rodents — was higher among lesbians than gay men, with 89.9% of female respondents saying they had an animal in their home. About 70.8% of gay men who were surveyed said they were pet owners.

The survey also proved that cats rule: Some 48.7% of the participants said they owned at least one cat, compared to the 46.4% who said they shared their homes with at least one dog. Many respondents lived in multiple-cat households, so the survey included about 1,000 more cats than dogs.

Cats are more popular with women — 60.2% of the female respondents said they owned



Dogs remain more popular with gay men than lesbians, according to one survey.

*Continued on next page***The Preferred Lender**

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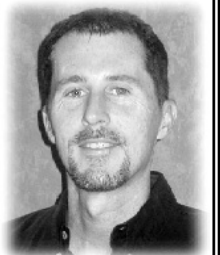
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REAL ESTATE

Pets from page 24

feline co-dependents while 52.9% said they owned dogs. The canines eked out a win over cats for the gay men who responded: 40.7% of male respondents owned dogs vs. the 38.3% who owned cats.

About a third of the dogs mentioned in the survey came from an animal breeder, while 22.7% were adopted from an animal shelter. About 27.5% of cats were strays or injured and taken in, while 24.9% were adopted from a shelter.

The 2002-03 study was conducted by GLCensus Partners, which is part of Syracuse University and OpusComm Group, and provides detailed consumer information about the GLBT community, including spending habits on pets.

The new gay/lesbian on-line consumer census will be conducted from July 7 to Aug. 18, looking at GLBT expenditures on automobiles, child care, clothing, computers, electronics, entertainment, financial services, food, home and garden supplies, medical care, pets, sports and fitness and travel. For more information, visit www.glcensus.org. ▼ *Dave Wiethop*

GE OFFERS DP BENEFITS

General Electric has announced that it will extend domestic partnership benefits to its GLBT employees beginning Jan. 1. The manufacturing and financial services company is one of the nation's largest businesses and owns television networks including NBC, Telemundo, Bravo, CNBC and MSNBC.

The benefits are part of GE's new union contracts. ▼

GAY EARNING POWER QUESTIONED

Men in same-sex couples typically earn less money than other American married men, according to a new survey released by the Urban Institute.

The income gap was reduced in states with laws that protect workers from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In contrast, lesbians tend to earn more than other women. Differences in occupations and child-rearing patterns may explain this finding. ▼

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VIEWPOINT



LIPSTICK GRAFITTI SHOOTING DOWN THE FLYOVER FANATICS

By Jayelle Wiggins

"Let's say you're at that Christian concert they do, um, that Night of Joy," I begin.

"Let's not." My conservative Christian acquaintance scrunches her nose. "I know where you're going."

"No, listen! I listened to you talk about how horrible Gay Days is, and you know I'm bi!" She lets me lead her in a visualization. "You're at Night of Joy. Audio Adrenaline are playing, and they're on fire."

"I love Audio Adrenaline."

"I know you do. Anyhow, all of a sudden, this plane flies over your head. It's got a banner, and the banner says, 'Allah is Great! Hopefor Christians.com!'"

"Come on! Muslims wouldn't do that!"

"They evangelize too, you know. So how would you react?"

She's dead silent.

"Okay," I say. "I'm 99.9% certain it would not be," I adopt a perky voice, "Wow, those Muslims must really care about us to go to so much trouble! As soon as I go home, I'll go on that Web site

and consider what they have to say, because I so need some hope! In fact, I'll go home right now!"

She giggles, but turns serious. "No, it wouldn't. I guess I was naïve, because that is pretty much what I was hoping for." She smiles. "We'll have to try something different, huh?"

I nod and smile back. "All I have to do," I think, "is repeat this convo about 2,000 more times..."

Yeah, the judge decided that the term "no-fly zone" applies to everyone, whether they want to welcome gays to Walt Disney World or insult them. The Family Policy Network, which wanted to "turn Gay Days into Hope Days," are using contributions acquired during the Disney fracas to fly over pride events in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. The banner says, "Jesus Christ. HopeforHomosexuals.com."

The Web site is a demeaning mish-mash of overblown warnings, misused scripture and reprints of 1998s Truth in Love ads. The most offensive part of the Web site is that its authors clearly think all queer people are idiots — idiots who've never attended a church service, learned

about biblical allusions in high school English or been evangelized on-line.

Incidentally, they really love that technique over at FPN.

Another project involves flying banners that advertise the site gaybeer.com over NASCAR events. This site exhorts its readers to boycott Budweiser beer because the company is gay-supportive. Budweiser also sponsors Dale Earnhardt Jr., who is the son of the sainted Dale Earnhardt and a popular driver in his own right. The boycott is even less likely than the prospect of a soul getting saved by their other site.

My friends and I have joked about buying the domain hopeforhomophobes.com, then doing our own "outreach." There's an ideal event for that

coming up, if we felt like being mean. Orlando will be hosting Exodus' annual conference from July 21 to 26. It will attract people from all over the country, just like Gay Days, only about 100 times smaller. And there isn't a no-fly zone over the First Presbyterian Church.

But you know what? An endless round of tit-for-tat isn't really what I want. I'm not offended because other people think differently from me and want to share their beliefs. It's the methods and timing that upset me. Most American sexual minorities aren't lacking for information about what

conservative Christians think of our sex lives — many of us hear about it from co-workers and relatives.

We go to events like Gay Days and pride parades to escape all that noise, to celebrate our lives and to hang out with likeminded people. We don't want our vacations and parties to be dragged down by insults from people who don't even know us. We don't want their "hope"; we want to have fun! After reading about these evangelism attempts, I sincerely wondered whether the people responsible have forgotten about

human nature, or if they believe that its laws don't apply to "the homosexual."

Fortunately, we don't have to make the same error. We know how it feels to be insulted and demeaned. We can

avoid doing that to others, get our points across, and take a different approach by talking — and listening — face to face with our opponents. That would be a real sign of hope.

BI THE WAY... If you're bisexual or bi-supportive, and you want to attend a fun, nurturing event with no threat of evangelical flyovers, why not consider attending the North American Conference on Bisexuality in San Diego? It runs Aug. 21-24. You can learn more at <http://www.bisexual.org/nacb/>. ▼

**The Web site is a
demeaning mish-mash
of overblown warnings,
and misused scripture.**

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PREVIEW



WHAT WOULD GREG DO? NO WHAMMY FOR GAME SHOW NETWORK

Viewpoint by Greg Triggs

As both long-term readers of this column know, I am genetically predisposed to addiction. Certainly, I cannot be blamed for the Capri Menthol Ultra Light years. I only deserve credit for having overcome my programming by having quit. Few people can rewrite their DNA and give up the nicotine. I can and have several times.

As the person who proofreads this column knows, I am perhaps a little obsessive compulsive in that I find new passions, suck them dry and then move on without an explanation. That would explain decoupage, several poorly chosen boyfriends and all the lost mornings spent playing cribbage on Pogo.com.

Clearly, I lead a very rich life full of rewarding pursuits.

But all these phases, all these pastimes, are meaningless now. I have found my true calling, my home if you will. Gone are the homemade greeting cards I used to think about making, the searching for ladies head vases on eBay and the hours spent trying to find the cheapest gasoline in town. I have found a true love and this time I know it is forever.

The Game Show Network is my new favorite thing. It is fun and educational. Not only do you learn things in a high energy, lights and buzzers environment, you also get to feel superior while yelling at the television. It is my belief that those people in danger of choosing the wrong answer can hear me and that I might be able to help them get the bigger prize, perhaps the Amana Radar Range or the fur coat from Dicker and Dicker of Beverly Hills.

You see, as the friends I force to read this column at Watermarkonline.com or at GregTriggs.com can tell you, television has always been my role model. GSN, as we true fans call it, is a chance to see the celebrities that shaped my sense of self, lo, all those years ago back home in front of the color TV in the Mediterranean carved walnut cabinet in my parents' living room.

If I could rewrite the history of my life and change the rules of biology, I think I would be the love child of Charles

Nelson Reilly and Paul Lynde. They would be my dad and dad and we would live in a fabulous ranch-style house full of mod furniture from

the Spiegel catalogue.

I used to think that the Nelson Reilly-Lyndes were the Gaymos and Andy of a bygone era, but in hindsight I could not have been more wrong. They gave hope to all of us kids out there who would rather go see a play than play in the Little League. They reminded us that people could think you were fabulous and fun and play the game you chose to play.

So I am thankful to Channel 117 on Manhattan Cable for the chance to visit with these old friends. I don't know how long this obsession will last. Perhaps the next new thing is just around the corner and until then I am enjoying the ride. We already have our tickets to Brett Somers Cabaret Show next month and I can't wait.

Perhaps there will even be some lovely parting gifts! ▼

Greg Triggs can be reached at gregtriggs@aol.com.

I think I would be the love child of Charles Nelson Reilly and Paul Lynde.



WE ARE WHO WE ARE

Thank you for the lovely picture and the fun at PrideFest in Sarasota! I do find it a bit bothersome that you neglected to mention the troupe, the Karmic Kings in the story that appeared in issue 10-12. We were everywhere, all day at PrideFest and the only mention was "Drag King Wanda Myles."

What's in a name? As a drag king, I prefer "Myles." I know it's a challenge, but it does matter. It's so hard to garnish respect, especially if you don't ask for it! So, here I am asking for the respect of at least correctly identifying The Karmic Kings and not just some people who were there but everywhere (including Girls Night Out and the Sarasota Film Festival party.

Thanks, and be well.

Myles & The Karmic Kings

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*Dr. Gene Copello,
Executive Director
Florida AIDS Action*

COLOSSEUM HIT WAY BELOW EXPECTATIONS

I recently read the article *Beyond — and for Some — Below Expectations*. I am glad to see that Gay Days 2003 was an overall success. I know I had a good time at some of the events. I was, however, amazed at how the article justified the poor planning done for the Colosseum at Hard Rock Live. I feel the article was very one-sided, implying that those who complained should just shut up and accept the mistreatment by promoter

Mark Baker because it's God's fault.

My group arrived at the event around 9:30 p.m. The staff at the gate took our tickets and tore them without saying that the main dance floor was already closed. As soon as we entered, there were literally hundreds of people waiting to get into the main dance floor area. I feel that it is outrageous to assume that Mark Baker did not oversell this event out of sheer greed!

"It's so hard to garnish respect, especially if you don't ask for it!"

The article stated that that "by 11 p.m., it was still raining and no one was going outside and it was hard to keep the flow going." On that evening, the rain stopped at around 7 p.m. Managers at Hard Rock stated that Mark Baker

sold additional tickets to the event with the expectation that people would go into the café area. The use of the café area was part of the plan and not done because of the rain. This was not a last-minute arrangement.

What made it worse is that we had to wait for two long hours and no one knew what was going on. At around 11:30 p.m., we were informed of the refund process. I'm lucky I live in Orlando. Put yourself into the position of someone who had traveled from Los Angeles or New York: They traveled a long distance, paid \$85, possibly took a day off work and could not get into an event, even though they arrived at 9:30 p.m. My friends and I looked forward to this event, yet our night was completely ruined and hours wasted.

I am also offended by the word "latecomers" and that some in our community functioned "on queen time." For a party that was scheduled from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., I would not call the people who arrived at 9:30 p.m. as "latecomers" on "queen time." Those words add insult to injury.

I was taught to take responsibility for mistakes I have made and not to blame others for them. A mistake cannot be corrected if nobody speaks up. What I am asking is for your publication to recognize and print both sides of the story.

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Orlando*

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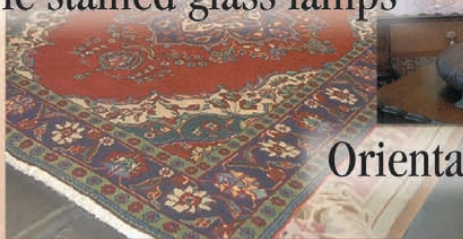
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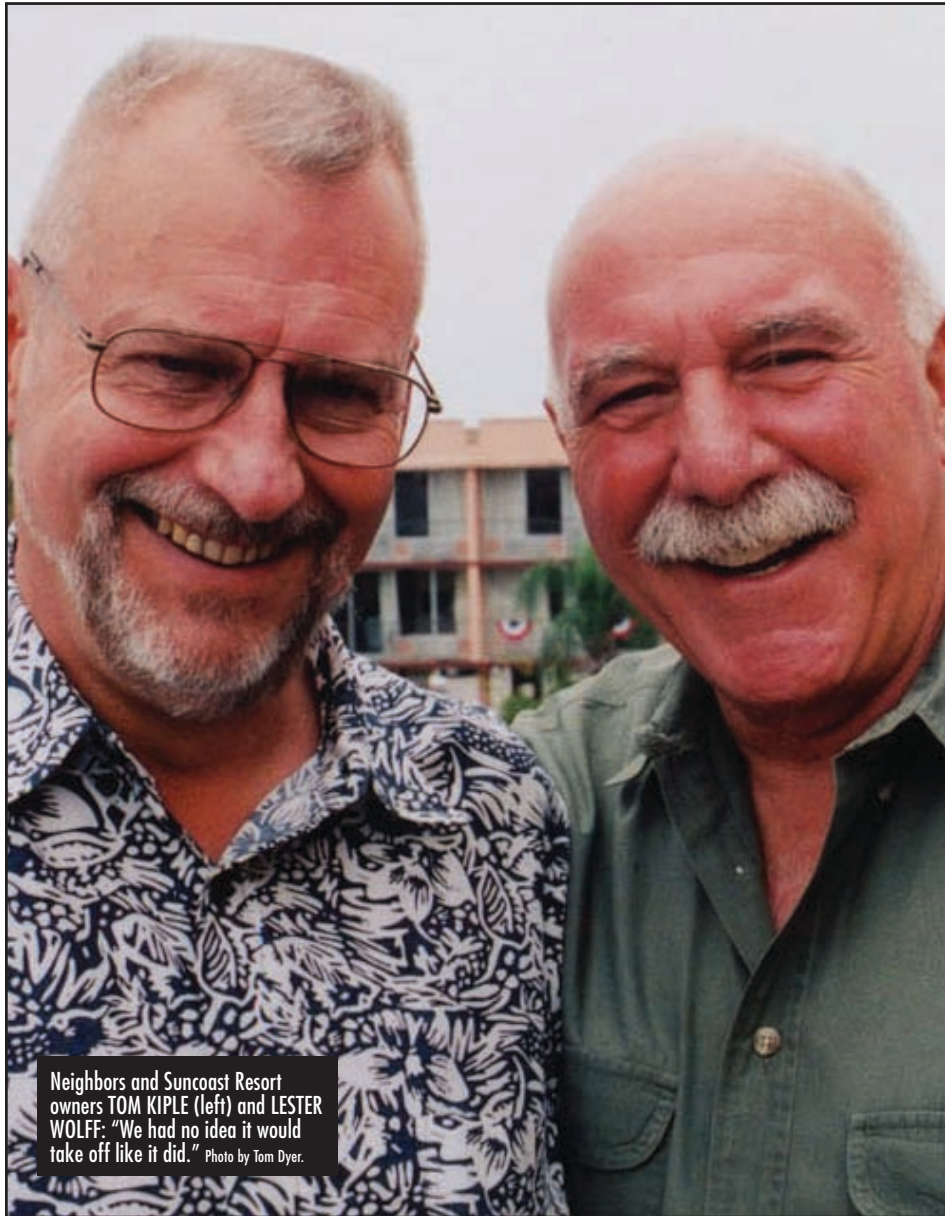
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Neighbors and Suncoast Resort owners TOM KIPLE (left) and LESTER WOLFF: "We had no idea it would take off like it did." Photo by Tom Dyer.

a success from day one

Five years ago, the Suncoast Resort put gay St. Petersburg on the map. By Tom Dyer

ST. PETERSBURG - As somewhere between eight and ten thousand people milled about the Grand Central District during last weekend's inaugural St. Pete Pride, there was a sense that the city had passed yet another milestone. In fact, there was much head shaking as talk on the street focused on the city's rapid gay renaissance.

"Five years ago who thought St. Petersburg would have a gay retail district, same-sex couples would buy lofts on Central Avenue for a quarter-million dollars, and the city would pass a non-discrimination ordinance and welcome all these people for gay pride," commented realtor Greg Burton. "It's really unbelievable."

And he's right. In 1998, most of the Grand Central District was boarded up. The only gay bar on the street — D.T.'s — kept its door locked, buzzing patrons in to keep out the riffraff. And up the road, where Georgie's Alibi now thrives, there was a tired old club that was called, somewhat ironically, The New Direction.

What created the change? Lots of things, but it's no coincidence that Burton harkened back five years. For this very weekend — July 4, 1998 — something happened just a few miles down the road that changed St. Petersburg's gay destiny. That's when two Tropical Shores neighbors, both comfortably retired, opened the Suncoast Resort.

NO IDEA IT WOULD TAKE OFF

When renovation work began in May of 1998 on the run down eight-acre hotel, office and retail complex, few knew what to expect. But a hectic two months later, thousands of patrons parked up to a half-mile away to see for themselves what all the fuss was about.

Inside, they found 120 hotel rooms on four floors surrounding a large, tropically landscaped courtyard. On the first floor, some 20 different retailers awaited to sell everything from jewelry and fine art to swimwear and sundries. There was a dance bar and an inviting thatch-roofed Tiki bar next to the pool and volleyball courts.

Continued Page 40

Angels in Remorse

Stageworks presents the first part of Kushner's powerful tale of greed, Reagan and AIDS. By Rick Walen

TAMPA - Regarded as one of the most important plays of the 20th century, Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* takes flight at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center's Shimberg Playhouse on July 10.

The play touches on several timely, provocative themes, including politics, religion, race and AIDS, all in a humorous, poignant and thoughtful manner. *Angels* focuses on the paths of two troubled couples, one gay and the other straight, whose fates quickly become intertwined.

ANGELS IN AMERICA: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES

WHEN: July 10-27

WHERE: Shimberg Playhouse at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center

TICKETS: Range from \$15.50 to \$21.50 for general admission. Call (813) 229-STAR

Continued Page 42



WATER COLORS



WATERCRESS JULY IS FOR BEING CRABBY AND SASSY

Salad by Jim Crescitelli

JULY IS HERE, and I love telling newcomers that if they think it's hot now... wait until August! July is also notable because we don't have to be as nice to one another as during June, when the eyes of the world are trained upon the gay community and we are expected to be on our best behavior: July is for bitching, sassing and complaining, a release we all need after the rainbow-striped gaiety of the previous month.

FALL OF FASHION. As usual, my fashion suggestions are a bit ahead of Central Florida's sensibilities, but that's typical of WaterCress anyway. (Yet please remember that I'm behind you in so many other ways.)

Let's get right down to business: Why are so many good-looking men wearing dirty-looking knitted wool hats pulled down over their heads? Besides the fact that we're approaching the heat of summer, when only a light cotton ball cap — if anything — should grace the head, why would anyone want to look deranged? Take those hip-hugger jeans that many women are wearing, notably the ones that look mud-smeared — take them right to the dump!

Isn't the point of dressing nicely and looking good to make people want to have sex with you? People are really like sheep ... they don't realize that a very small coterie of fashion deconstructionists are so desperate for funding that they'll ram anything down the throats of people who need to be told what to wear.

CELL PHONES MAKE ME CRAZY

for a lot of reasons, mainly because they turn into lethal weapons in the hands of clueless Maitland housewives steering their big-assed SUVs with their well-manicured talons.

Recently, however, I discovered that cell phones have been put to an even more shameful use.

They've become *de rigueur* when conducting illicit affairs. Otherwise, why would a person be talking urgently on his phone while walking his dog at 6 a.m.? He's planning trouble, that's why.

The poor Pomeranian is trying its best

Isn't the point of looking good to make people want to have sex with you?

to do its business, but can't because its owner is emitting signals of angst and urgency. The same goes when a person is backing out of her driveway and talking into a phone: She's probably talking to the reservations clerk of a cheap motel over in Fern Park. In Publix, you overhear the lustful sentences: "I'll bring the Wet if you'll bring the Oreos. Double-Stuf."

In the old days it was so much simpler — people crowded into phone booths at the drugstore to highlight the byways on their roadmaps of sin. If you couldn't overhear the conversation inside the booth, nobody was the wiser. I ask you — are we aiding and abetting these people by not ripping the phones from their sweaty grips and tossing them into the frozen food bins? The next time you overhear such a conversation, kindly step in and rectify the situation ... after all, the love you save may be your own!

CUT-RATE VIAGRA graces my e-mail in-box each morning, along with numerous offers from offshore companies promising to add two inches to my penis. I'll pass on the Viagra, thank you — after all, a little sponginess never hurt anyone. And to those purveyors of the latter, I say: "I'm in no need of your nice offer of an extra two inches, but while we're on the subject perhaps you can help me. You see, I'd like to donate some spare length to

someone not as blessed as I when he emerged from his brief (so to speak) adolescent nightmare. Is there a penis bank somewhere toward which I can arrange an endowment? It would be such a convenience and, on top of everything else, I no longer will be subject to the embarrassment of having to shop in the Big Boys section at Burdines."

So far I've not gotten any responses, but I do notice an increase in urgent requests from sub-Saharan nations for my assistance in moving \$30 million from their accounts to mine. I wonder if there's a horrible connection somehow?

COOL OFF WITH SOME ICE

CREAM, the little man inside me keeps suggesting, and so I'm reminded of the Mr. Softee ice cream truck that used to ply our Brooklyn neighborhood when I was small.

The truck's tinny, maniacal little song begged forth some obscene lyrics ("What's the name of the ice cream man? His wife says 'Mr. Softee!'"), and drew us from our houses like moths to a flame, dimes and nickels clutched in our grimy little fists. That was Brooklyn. I noticed one summer that the ice cream truck that wends its way along the streets of Winter Park plays selections from Wagner's *Ring*, the scary movements from *Fantasia*, and the always-depressing *Tapioca and Frug in Asia Minor*, by Bach. Try chilling to that. ▼

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

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VIEWPOINT



AMAZONS BIGOTS THREATEN OUR FREEDOM

Speaking Out by Karen S. Murray-Parker

For every one step forward the GLBT community takes, it seems the U.S. government, in cahoots with conservative religious groups, is determined to force our community back two steps.

A case in point in the Gulf Coast area was the recent rejection by Manatee County's Children's Services Advisory Board of a funding request from the group ALSO for Gay Youth. Money for the fund comes from a special property tax approved by voters in 1991 to help provide funding for special children's programs.

ALSO for Gay Youth began in Sarasota 11 years ago, offering counseling for gay teens and children. The organization has since grown to 600 members and also offers services to youth in Charlotte and Manatee counties.

Although board members denied they turned down the request because of moral conflict with the sexuality issue, it is worth noting that several of the board members hail from conservative religious and political backgrounds that consider homosexuality an aberration.

Manatee County, unlike Sarasota County, has a reputation for conservative politics and somewhat backward thinking. Conservative religions have a strong foothold in the area and appear to exert a strong influence over the local government. Apparently gay groups aren't alone in their struggle against personal bias in local government.

Part of the problem appears to be that misinformed officials often assume GLBT programs promote sexual promiscuity instead of the wider issues of how to deal with sexual orientation and community and social opposition to alternative lifestyles.

As many of us know from our own youth, gay teens are statistically up to three times more at risk for suicide as straight teens. They are also at greater risk to be victims of violence by their peers. Counseling services can literally be a life saver for them.

ALSO for Gay Youth provides a safe haven for these teens and children to discuss and work through the depression, harassment and other issues they face on a daily basis. The group had wanted to use the money they'd requested to hire a full-time caseworker for gay youth.

While America seems to be allowing the Religious Right to unduly influence a backward movement in the advancement of gay rights and recognizing the unique

needs of our community, Canada has taken a giant step forward in providing its GLBT citizens with legal rights equal to those of its straight citizens.

Canada's decision to legalize same-sex marriage sets the stage for some interesting legal battles in its neighbor, our United States. American gays who marry in Canada are expected to push for recognition of their unions upon returning to the U.S.

Canada's religious leaders appear to be much more forward-thinking than

America's. Earlier this May, Anglican Bishop Michael Ingham in western Canada authorized six parishes in the Vancouver, B.C., area to marry same sex couples.

Conservative America's argument that legalization of gay marriages will spell doom for traditional marriages is apparently not shared by other countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands and now Canada – all of whom have decided to recognize gay marriages. Predictions of the undermining of traditional marriage roles has also been proved to be untrue in these countries – squashing that argument by America's Religious Right.

American governments from Manatee County to Washington, D.C., need to pull their heads out of the sand and face reality. America was founded on religious freedom and the right to pursue happiness – gay or straight.

There was a good reason the Founding Fathers separated church and state in the Constitution. They didn't want narrow-minded religious beliefs to undermine their intrinsic freedom of life. The ultraconservative government that is now in majority power throughout the U.S., seeks to do just that – in small-town Manatee County and in high-powered Washington, D.C.

Notwithstanding the embarrassing debacle of the 2000 presidential election in Florida, we, too, can have a voice over their lives and government. But we need to use that voice and speak out to our representatives and demand impartial accountability. Until then, injustices such as ALSO for Gay Youth's funding rejection and the failure to recognize gay marriage will continue to outrage the GLBT community. ▼

Karen S. Murray-Parker is a Sarasota writer who can be reached at dolphinwahini@aol.com.

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WATER COLORS

Baring her Soul

Annie Lennox finds new clarity in her emotional solo effort.
By John Sullivan

One of the finest musical voices working today, Annie Lennox is celebrated as an innovator, an iconoclast and a symbol of enduring excellence within a culture too often fixated on the lightweight and the new.

Her songs, both with Eurythmics and as solo efforts, are part of the soundtrack to our collective lives. They have touched

listeners as only the work of the most gifted and intuitive artists can, articulating the emotions that each one of us feels. She is one of music's greatest communicators, capable of speaking directly to and of our hearts.

With the release of her new CD *Bare* Lennox demonstrates her abilities more clearly than ever before. Her first collection of solo, self-written material since 1992's *Diva*, its 11 tracks prove that she has reached a new level of maturity both as a singer and as a writer.

"I'm very excited about this record, I really am. It's an extremely mature album and it doesn't really belong anywhere or to any genre particularly, it's a unique piece of work just by itself," Lennox said in an interview that accompanied the media release of the album. "I'm not hiding behind any personas and I think it's very emotional, very powerful in that sense."

The songs that Lennox has brought together for *Bare* lead the listener through the painful and sometimes despairing territory of a breakup with insight and the

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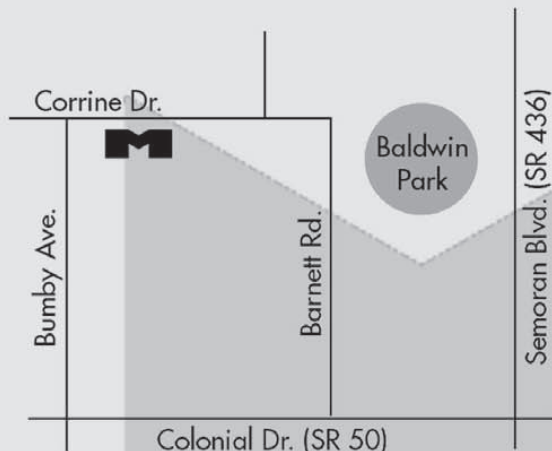
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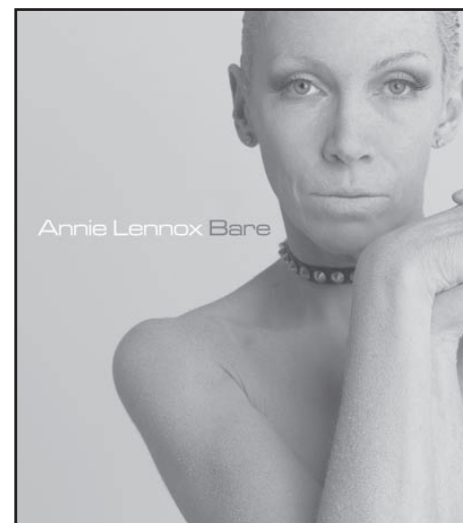
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ANNIE LENNOX reveals more than just her skin on her new CD *Bare*, currently on the top of several charts.

rare originality of expression for which she has become known. Anyone who has ever been heartbroken will know at once that this is the real deal.

"The breakups, the personal tragedies, the this, the that ... I don't know many people beyond a certain age who haven't experienced what I'm singing about," Lennox said about her new songs. "They're symbiotic of what it is to be an adult human being in this world."

Lennox has always written the kind of songs that allow fans and listeners access to her inner self and *Bare* is no exception. Songs like *1,000 Beautiful Things* and *Pavement Cracks* describe the darker places and finding your way back from them, while songs like *Bitter Pill* and *Loneliness* deal with the powerful emotions and feelings that we all have to process from time to time.

"Most artists are speaking from personal experience to a certain degree and part of it is fictitious also because it is all kind of an invention too," Lennox said of her songwriting. "It isn't

Continued Page 51

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WATER COLORS



CINEMA SNOB BITCH-SLAPPED BY AN ANGEL

Film Reviews by Scott J. Smith

CHARLIE'S ANGELS 2: FULL THROTTLE

"Watching *Full Throttle* is like being pummeled for two hours with a feather duster. It leaves no scars, but you do feel the pain."

That's what *Rolling Stone* film critic Peter Travers had to say for the new *Charlie's Angels* sequel, and his is a fairly accurate — and amusing — summation. But

he's overlooking one thing: There's nothing wrong with a little slap-and-tickle every now and again, especially when it's administered with sexy and good-natured finesse.

Full Throttle bombards filmgoers with more of the same silly shenanigans that made the first movie a \$140 million blockbuster. But this time around, there's even less plot to get in the way of Drew

Barrymore, Cameron Diaz and Lucy Liu's devil-may-care exuberance. These girls just wanna have fun... giddy, bombastic fun.

A good time is had by all as the Angels kick, punch, motor-cross and dance all over the bad guys. They certainly have their hands full. They battle everything from the Russian mafia, to the creepy thin man (Crispin Glover), to a character simply billed as "Demented Mongol." Their greatest foe, though, is a fallen Angel, played with vicious tenacity by the amazingly sexy Demi Moore.

And just for the record, here's a little bit of trivia. In 1978, Xerox Education Publications released a book called *Favorite TV Angels*. The author was none other than Peter Travers.

What's in it for us? Bodacious babes, hot hunks and plenty of camp and costume changes. ★★ 1/2 (out of ★★★★★)

28 DAYS LATER

"You're crashing," explains a pharmacist to her companion who finds that he cannot muster the strength to continue ascending the stairway in an eerily abandoned apartment complex. She then proceeds to tell him why he feels the way he does: He has no body fat and follows a diet that consists mostly of sugar. To alleviate his symptoms, she offers pain relievers and Pepsi. He asks for a different flavor soda. And just then "infected" zombie-like creatures suddenly rush toward them.

This scene from *28 Days Later*, the distinctly European thriller from director Danny Boyle (*Trainspotting*), is jarring to American audiences. It's bleak yet tender. It's frank yet dryly humorous. And it is but one example of human compassion and cognizance that runs throughout the course of Boyle's intellectually emotional roller coaster of a film — the likes of which Hollywood seems reluctant to duplicate.

28 Days Later is a striking, thoughtful, and poignant cinematic achievement. Far less of a horror film than its ad campaign would lead one to believe, the overall thrust of the movie plays off of basic human frailties and fears. Fear of abandonment, fear of intimacy, fear of death and the fear of mental and physical abuse are issues presented within this stylish and compelling drama.



LUCY LIU reprises her heavenly role in *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*. Photo credit: Darren Michaels

Beautifully shot with a limited palate of colors, *28 Days Later* almost feels like a black and white movie. And when color — especially red — is splashed across the screen, it compels the viewer to pay special attention to the subsequent action. This effective method of filmmaking harkens back to the Hammer horror films of the 1960s, but has recently been utilized in movies like *Sleepy Hollow*.

What's in it for us? Certainly, gay and lesbian audiences will read the blood-transferred plague as a horrifying commentary on the AIDS pandemic. *28 Days Later* also features a feminist bent, a slightly altered definition of "family," and director Boyle doesn't shy away from full-frontal male nudity. Tres European. ★★★★★

THE HULK

The ambition to be different can produce hot or cold results. Unfortunately for director Ang Lee (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*), his desire to make a stand-out film within the comic book genre is a tepid offering at best.

Lee's *The Hulk* is a \$150 million experiment gone awry. It's painfully long, talky and melodramatic. On the other hand, it's well-acted and has a meatier plot and more interesting character relationships than most films. But the problem with this is that audiences don't want it in a semi-live action cartoon. They want to see an enormous green man pulverize everything in his path. Despite Lee's best intentions, it seems almost cruel to make filmgoers wait nearly 50 minutes to catch the first glimpse of the transformed titular character.

Still, Lee does some interesting things, albeit at a snail's pace. The familial dynamics are surprisingly detailed and deep, and the manner in which the movie screen is split into comic book-styled panels is largely effective. The computer-generated Hulk is hit and miss, but the technology is admirable.

What's in it for us? Considering that the majority of *The Hulk* takes place in and around army bases, there's not much queer content. ▼



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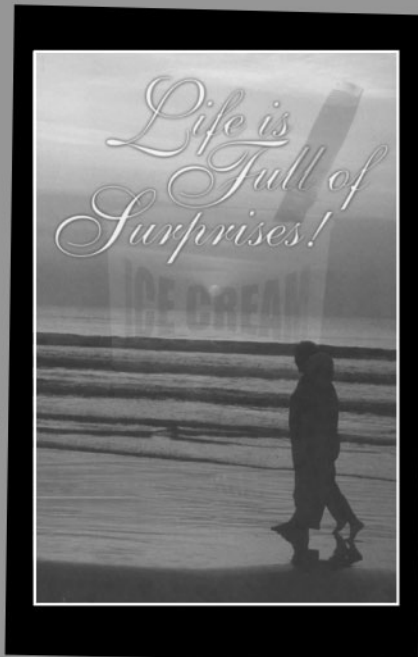
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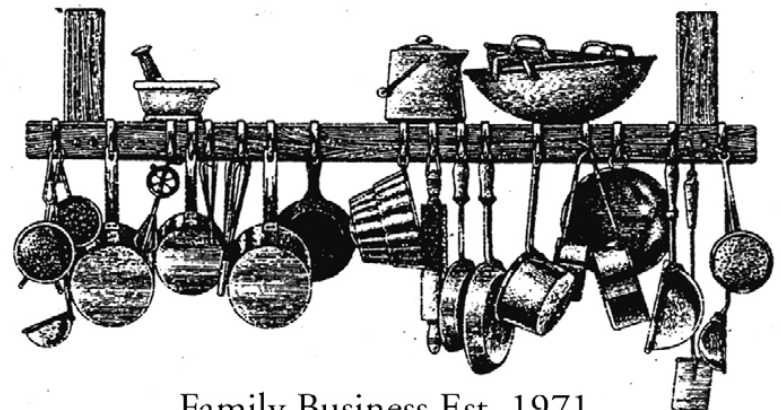
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ART & EXHIBITS

DAYTONA/SPACE COAST

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK MITCHELL

On ongoing exhibition at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, in the Hester Mervin Ayers Gallery. Mitchell is known for his photos of celebrities and dancers. The exhibit is free and open to the public. For more information call (386) 427-6975.

ORLANDO

CREATIVE EXPLORATIONS: RUTH GILBERT

Through July 6 at the Maitland Art Center. This new exhibition showcases the large, playful paintings and mixed media work of New York artist Ruth Gilbert. In Creative Explorations, Gilbert explores the perceptions of childhood. Gilbert is fascinated by the magic inherent in those early attempts at drawing and painting a child makes to express his or her personal view of the world. For more information call (407) 539-2181.

PAINT & SURFACE: CERAMICS BY TIM LUDWIG AND PAINTINGS BY ROSE CASTERLINE

Through July 26 in the Alice and William Jenkins Gallery at the Crealde School of Art in Winter Park. This two-person exhibition will feature works of Orlando-based painter Rose Casterline and Daytona Beach ceramist Tim Ludwig. Although the subject matter differs, the works of both artists complement each other in style and color. For more information call (407) 671-1886.

MOMENTS IN TIME

Through July 21 at the Mount Dora Center for the Arts. This exhibit will feature evocative, nostalgic images in three media — watercolor, hand-colored Polaroid transfers and oil. Sandy Donn, Steve Katz and Polly Podolsky are the artists responsible for this fascinating exhibit. For more information call (352) 383-0880.

TAMPA BAY

COLLECTOR'S VISION II: CONTEMPORARY ART

Through September 28 at the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg. This exhibition includes approximately 50 artworks in a wide range of media, including paintings, sculpture, prints, fiber arts and ceramics, all created post-1960. Among the artists represented are those who live in or have been associated with the area: Rocky Bridges, Christine Federighi, Leslie Frye and more. Other works are by Keith Haring and Jean-Michael Basquiat, who emerged as New York graffiti artists and whose work was quickly championed by some of the world's leading galleries and museums. For more information call (727) 896-2667. MODERN ART IN FLORIDA 1948-1970:

A CLIMATE FOR THE CONTEMPORARY TAMPA BAY

Through July 6 at the Tampa Museum of Art. Artists flocked to Florida and the Tampa Bay area after World War II. A story told in paintings, sculpture, photography and prints, this landmark exhibition will showcase the work of modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, James Rosenquist and Georgia O'Keeffe as well as local artists Syd Solomon and John Corbino, among others. For more information call (813) 274-8130.

THEATRE & FILM

ORLANDO

FRINGE ENCORE!

July 6 at the SAK Comedy Lab. This is your chance to see five acts in a benefit for the Orlando Fringe Festival. The day begins at 1 p.m. with *When Shows Collide* by Eric Pinder, followed by Talentos Ensemble Theatre's *Cukktá Jilue* at 3 p.m., *Street Seuss* with Dave McConnell at 5 p.m., NOMAD Players' *Standing Still* at 7 p.m. and Orlando's own Oops Guys close out the day with *Do I Make You Horny?* The cost of each show is \$7 and all-day passes are available for \$25. For tickets or information call (407) 648-0077.

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

Through July 26 in the Footlights Theater at the New Parliament House Resort. Orlando's David Lee is back by popular demand starring as the transgender songstress that we love most. Also returning are the Sam Singhaus and Zoa as the Angry Inch Band. Call Fall River Productions to reserve seats. For tickets call (407) 398-6900.

IT'S ONLY A PLAY

July 18 - August 9 at Theatre Downtown. Michael Colavolpe directs Terrence McNally's comedy about show business. It's the opening night of "The Golden Egg" on Broadway, and the wealthy

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producer is throwing a lavish party in her ritzy Manhattan townhouse. Downstairs the celebrities are pouring in, but the real action is upstairs where a group of insiders have staked themselves out in the producer's bedroom, waiting for the reviews to come in. The good natured bonhomie with which the evening begins grows steadily bitchier and funnier as the reviews (all bad) come in, and those assembled seek desperately to pin the blame on each other. For tickets call (407) 841-0083.

THE GIN GAME

July 10-20 at the UCF Conservatory Theatre. The winner of the 1978 Pulitzer Prize, the play uses a game as a metaphor for life. Weller Martin is playing solitaire on the porch of a seedy nursing home. Enter Fonsia Dorsey, a prim, self-righteous lady. They discover they both dislike the home and enjoy gin rummy so they begin to play and to reveal intimate details of their lives. Fonsia wins every time—and their secrets become weapons used against one another. For tickets or information call (407) 823-1500.

SCHOOL DAZE

Through July 13 at the People's Theatre. Spike Lee's *School Daze*

examines the tensions, biases and frustrations of middle-class black youth at a southern college campus. Lee combines musical and fantasy sequences with satirical scenes to tell his pointed story of two cousins who attend the same all-black university who have opposing attitudes when it comes to the purpose of college: learning vs. partying. For information call (407) 426-0545.

TAMPA BAY

ANGELS IN AMERICA, PART I: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES

July 10-27 in the Shimberg Playhouse at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. Tony Kushner's play is regarded as one of the most important and entertaining plays of the 20th Century and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1993. The play focuses on the paths of two troubled couples, one gay and the other straight, whose fates quickly become intertwined as they grapple with such tantamount issues as life and death, love and sex and loyalty. The play touches on several timely, provocative themes including politics, religion, race and AIDS, all in a humorous, poignant and thoughtful manner. For tickets call (813) 229-STAR.



JOAN ARMATRADING brings her guitar to the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, July 5.

MERE MORTALS AND OTHER PLAYS

July 11-Aug. 3 at the American Stage Theater in St. Petersburg. Six short plays by David Ives, a master of language and wit, *Mere Mortals* is fresh and thought-provoking. The plays range from the story of a man who goes in search of his personal nirvana in the form of a *Green Hill*, to a chance meeting between a couple that turns into a *Sure Thing* only through the help of a sound designer, to three *Mere Mortals* who claim greater heritages than their blue-collar jobs would imply. For tickets and information call (727) 823-1600.

CATS

July 15-20 at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. Based on T.S. Elliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* and with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Cats* won seven 1983 Tony Awards. Now that it has been seen by 8.2 million audience members, it is time to introduce *Cats* to a new generation. For tickets or information call (813) 229-STAR.

DIVA DIARIES

Through July 20 in the Jaeb Theater at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. The "sassy new musical with big hair," takes place on closing night at Pandora's Box night club as its three aging drag queen stars face their future by reflecting upon their past and spilling a few secrets. Six actors portray younger and older versions of the characters on their 30-year journey from disco amateurs to drag veterans. The electrifying score features new songs, which recall the pop hits of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. For tickets and information call (813) 229-STAR.

SARASOTA

ROSE

July 8-27 at the Florida Studio Theatre. *Rose* is the story of an extraordinary life. Her journey has taken her from a humble childhood in Russia to the ghettos of Warsaw, to an immigrant ship and the beaches of Atlantic City and Miami. A bright, feisty Jewish woman, Rose's story is the history of a life lived to the fullest and shaped by some of the most important events of the 20th century. For tickets and information call (941) 366-9000.

FST IMPROV TROUPE

July 17-26 at the Florida Studio Theatre. The Florida Studio Theatre Improv Troupe returns for six special performances. Audience participation helps spark the creativity of the troupe members as they create a performance of spontaneous laughter and hilarity. All performances are at 8 p.m. and tickets can be purchased by calling (941) 366-9000.

MUSIC & DANCE

ORLANDO

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE AND CHRISTINA AGUILERA

The "Justified and Stripped" tour comes to the TD Waterhouse Centre on July 15. Boy bands may be a thing of the past but ever since Justin's hot Rolling Stone cover many of us still can't get enough of him. Here is your chance to ogle him all night and hear some interesting music at the same time. Aguilera is an added bonus as a beautiful performer who is well aware of her gay fan base. For tickets and information call (407) 849-2020.

STARBUCKS' OPEN MIKE NIGHT

Every other Saturday night at the Starbucks in Thornton Park. Signup starts at 7:30 p.m. with performances beginning at 8 p.m. Open to all poets, comics and musicians. Hosted by Downtown Silas Brown. For more information call (407) 648-2591.

TAMPA BAY

JOAN ARMATRADING

July 5 at 8 p.m. in Ferguson Hall at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. For more than 27 years, English singer and songwriter Joan Armatrading has been entertaining people with her crafty, subtle and sublime songs. Effortlessly eclectic, her sound ranges from soul to sophisticated pop — an apt mix for a performer born in the West Indies and raised in Birmingham, England. Armatrading's songs are in the truest sense soul music, even at their boldest when driven by her passionate guitar. For tickets and information call (813) 229-STAR.

SENSATIONAL 60'S

Tampa Bay Arts and the Tampa Bay Men's Chorus present a tribute to the unforgettable era of free love, Woodstock, desegregation and Vietnam. You have your pick of two sensational performances, on July 20 at 3:00 p.m. at the Palladium Theater in St. Petersburg and on July 26 at 8:00 p.m. at the Friday Morning Musicales in Tampa. Get your tickets now by calling (727) 865-9004 or log onto www.tampabayarts.com.

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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. <www.brevardlesbians.com>.

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

Social group of bears, cubs and other friends who congregate, not hibernate. <www.gaydaytona.com/DBRBA.htm> or e-mail at gntlbear@comcast.net.

FUN COAST BEARS

Social group that meets the 3rd Sun. of the month at 3 PM at Rumors on Nova Rd., Holly Hill. E-mail bears@funcoastbears.org or go to <www.funcoastbears.org> for more information.

GALBA

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Association. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University student group. (904) 226-7222 voice mail 333-3000; <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 PM. (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 and Gays. Meets third Tues.; 7 PM; Hope MCC in Daytona, 500 South 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

Twelve-step program. Meets each Sun.; 10 AM; GLBCC. (407)228-8272; <www.glbcc.org>.

BEARS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

BMCO

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

BOOKLOVERS

American Association of University Women social group for those who love to read and talk about books. 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)841-2437.

CODA

Twelve-step program dealing with codependency. (407)228-8272; <www.glbcc.org>.

COLAGE

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

EVOLVE

A transsexual support group that meets on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month from 1 - 3 PM at the Joy MCC Church. To find out more visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/evolve_orlando/.

FLORIDA GREAT OUTDOORS

A social and educational outdoor recreation group for the GLBT community. Check <www.floridagreatoutdoors.org> for a schedule of activities write to info@floridagreatoutdoors.org.

GALA

Gay and Lesbian Association. Valencia Community College student group. Meets each Thurs.; 1 PM; east campus. <www.geocities.com/vccgala>.

GLBCC-THE CENTER

Gay Lesbian Bisexual Community Center. Hosts various social groups and offers programs assisting the GLBT community. (407)228-8272; <www.glbcc.org>.

GLIMMER OF HOPE

12-step AA group. Saturday evenings from 10 PM to 11 PM; GLBCC (407) 228-8272; <www.glbcc.org>.

GNOMES

Gay Naturist Orlando Males Evolving Socially. Private gay male naturist group welcomes men of all ages, body styles and race. Activities include social events, boating, camping, swimming, cruises and travel. For more information visit www.naturalmales.org/gnomes or call (407) 540-9391.

GREATER ORLANDO COUPLES

A social group for same-gender couples. Various meeting times and monthly events such as potlucks, pool parties, museum trips, etc. Call (407) 644-4486 or visit <www.couples-national.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.

LAMBDA CAMPING

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

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS ORLANDO

Inclusive, diverse Republicans. For meeting times and locations and information on other special events log onto www.lcrorlando.com or call (407) 896-7745.

LONG YANG CLUB

International friends social group for single men and couples of various ethnic backgrounds. (407)324-1846; ifoflor@aol.com.

MEN'S COMING OUT GROUP

Support group for men 18 and over dealing with coming out. Meets Wed.; 7:30 PM; GLBCC. (407)228-8272; <www.glbcc.org>.

MEN'S DISCUSSION

A group for gay men to come together and discuss issues affecting gay men, past and present. Thursdays at 7 PM; GLBCC (407) 228-8272; <www.glbcc.org>.

METROPOLITAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

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

MISHPUCHA

Jewish gay and lesbian group. Meets at the Center Monday night, 7 PM. Please call 407-895-0706 or e-mail Mishpuchamail@yahoo.com for info.

OPEX

Pansexual support group. Meets third Sat.; 11 AM; 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

Playgroup for children of gay parents. Social and networking opportunity for gay parents. Meets for picnic and playtime first Sat. of each month. For information (407)420-9955; or <Jetbabies@cfi.rr.com>

ORLANDO MEN'S DISCUSSION

Discussion group for gay men. Meet Thurs.; 7:30 PM; GLBCC. (407)228-8272; <www.glbcc.org>.

ORLANDO QUEER ACADEMICS

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

ORLANDO SOCIAL CLUB

A gay men's group to network with other professionals meets monthly at different establishments. Beach outings, parties, and community building activities. Go to <http://hometown.aol.com/flausaguy/myhomepage/club.html> for more.

PFLAG

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Meets third Wed.; 7:30 PM; 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 PM; Parliament House Footlight Theatre. (407)884-9834; PRIMETIMECFL@aol.com.

PRINCIPLE BEFORE PERSONALITIES

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

RAINBOW DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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

RAINBOW NA

Twelve-step narcotics recovery program geared toward gay community. Meets Wed.; 8 PM; 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 PM; GLBCC. (407)228-8272; <www.glbcc.org>.

S.H.A.R.E.

A Social Forum for singles: Discussion and Social Interaction. Make new friends, network with singles and participate in outside activities. First Thursday at GLBCC, 7PM, \$5. Third Thursday outside GLBCC (location varies), 7PM, please contact Joe at 407-716-7207 or visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/share-orlando/>.

SISTAH CIRCLE

Support, discussion and social group for lesbians of color. <www.mysistahcircle.bizland.com>; littleafrica77@hotmail.com.

TEEN ACT (AIDS COMMUNITY THEATER)

Group of teens and young adults 13 and older who use theatre to educate others on HIV/AIDS. Meets Thurs.; 6:30 PM; GLBCC. (407)228-8272; <www.glbcc.org>.

TRANS CENTRAL STATION

A transgender, transsexual, transvestite, cross dressers, and gender benders discussion group for those in any stage of transition and supporters. Meetings on the 1st Tuesday of every month at 7 PM at The Center. (407) 228-8272.

TRIDENT INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL FLORIDA

Levi/leather/uniform social group. Meets first Sun.; 2 PM; GLBCC. (321)549-0713; <www.tridentcfl.org>.

30 SOMETHING

A support / discussion group for all genders or orientations in the age range of 30 through 39. helping you to deal with the stress, challenges, & fun of being 30. Meets at The Center 1st & 3rd Monday, 7pm. 407.228.8272

UCF GLBSU

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

WILLOW

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

THE WOMYN'S EXCHANGE

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

ZEN SITTING GROUP

A place for GLBT Zen Practitioners. This group continues the Buddhist meditation tradition of over 2,000 years by sitting quietly in a compassionate way. Second and fourth Tues. of each month at 7 p.m. at Mojo's. For more information visit www.lonekimono.org/ZenAtTheCenter.

TAMPA BAY AREA

BAMACT

Bay Area Men of All Colors Together is Tampa Bay's local chapter of the National Organization of Black and White Men Together. We are a gay interracial group with a social, political and educational focus. Call (727)461-2617 or visit <www.geocities.com/bamact_fl> for more information.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Support group for friends and family who've experienced a recent loss of a loved one. Meets second and fourth Thurs.; 7 PM; The Center of Tampa Bay. (813)871-2232.

BOAT AND SCUBA WEST OF TAMPA BAY

A social and recreational club of gay and lesbian boating, scuba diving, and outdoor enthusiasts in Tampa Bay. Activities include boating raft-ups, kayaking, diving, picnics, parties, and more. Meets the first Weds of the month at Holiday Inn Sunspree, St. Pete. For info visit <www.boatandscubawest.com>

BROTHASSPEAK

Discussion group that touches on issues that are germane to same-gender-loving men of color. Meets the second Sun. of each month, 5 PM at the Equality Florida Offices, 3708 Swann Ave., Tampa. (813)236-8809.

CRESCENDO: THE TAMPA BAY WOMEN'S CHORUS

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

THE CENTER OF TAMPA BAY

GLBT community center. Offers phone referrals, meeting space, resource center and more. Located next to Equality Florida, 3708 Swann Ave. (813)875-8116; <www.tampacenter.org>.

EQUALITY FLORIDA-HILLSBOROUGH

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

EQUALITY FLORIDA-PINELLAS

Meets last Thurs.; 7 PM; 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 the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Tues., from 6:30 - 8 PM at 136 4th St., N., St. Petersburg. (727)895-4439.

FACT SPANISH-SPEAKING HIV/AIDS GROUP

Meets the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month 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 PM. (813)935-4101; Fce2FceYouth2aol.com.

FACT TRANSGENDER HIV/ AIDS GROUP

Meets the first and third Friday of the month at 136 4th St.N. St. Pete. For info call (727)895-4439.

FAMILY BRIDGE CLUB

Playing card variety. (813)832-2999.

FLAMINGO AUTO GROUP

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

FLORIDA GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT

An education and advocacy organization for the trans/gender community and our allies. Meets on the 2nd Saturday of the month at Equality Florida in Tampa. For more information call (813) 870-3735 or visit <www.forge.8m.com>.

FLORIDA GULF COAST COUPLES

Social group for same gender couples. (813)360-6852; (727)347-7412.

FREEDOM RINGS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

FRIENDS CLUB FOR GAY MEN

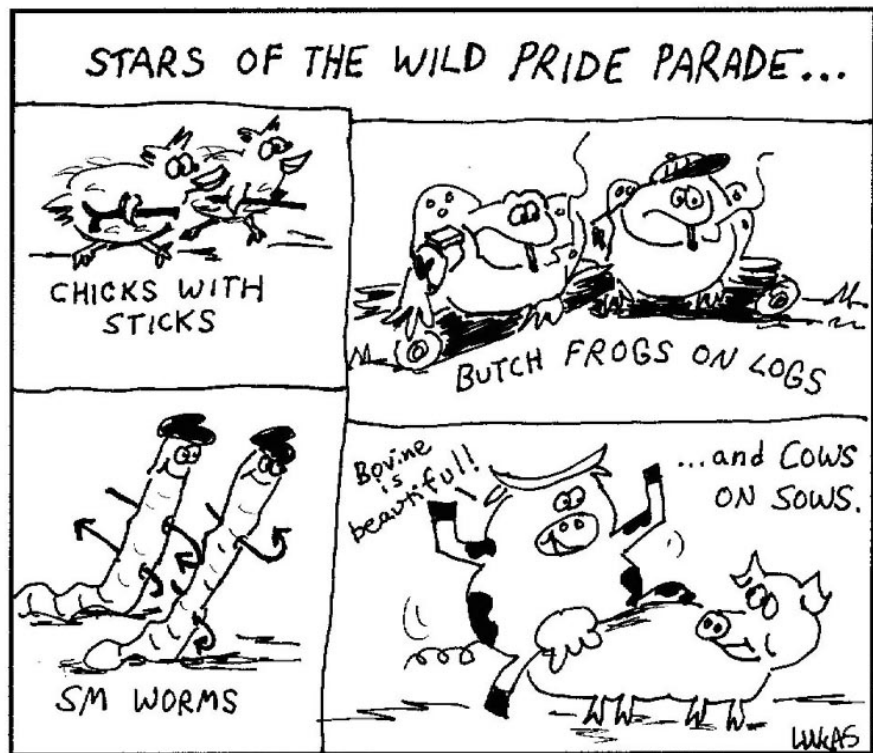
Gay men's social club. A wholesome, healthy atmosphere to make new friends. (813)960-1664.

FRONT RUNNERS OF TAMPA BAY

Not-for-runners only club orientated to the gay and lesbian community. Meets Sat.; 9 AM; Old Hyde Park Village and Wed.; 6:45 PM; Fred Ball Park. (813)891-7098.

Over The Rainbow

by Renee Lukas



WATER COLORS

GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Open and frank discussion on many topics. Meets every Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the G & L Center, 4708 W. Swann Ave. for more information call (813) 961-6871.

GAY & BISEXUAL SENIOR MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Meets Fri.; 10 AM; The Center of Tampa Bay. (813)875-8116.

GAY AND LESBIAN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Meets every evening; 8:15 PM; 3644-A Henderson Blvd.. (813)273-8741.

GAY FUN CLUB

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

GAY MEN'S OUTDOOR GROUP

Biking, hiking, canoeing, diving. Come join us for some good clean, healthy, outdoor fun. Call (813) 961-6871

GAY SKATE

Tue.; 9 PM; United Skates of America. (813)876-5826; <members.aol.com/tampagayskate>.

GENDER QUESTIONING DISCUSSION GROUP

Starting the 2nd Sat. in Jan. at 11 AM at the Equality Florida offices on Swann Ave. Call Janice at (813) 870-3735 x 258 or visit <www.forge.8m.com>.

GIRL TALK

A safe place for lesbians to meet. Coffee, companions, and conversation. Tuesdays at p.m. at the G & L Center, 3708 W. Swann Ave. for more information call (813) 645-2213 or email Girltalkers@aol.com.

GLBT PARENTS

Support group for GLBT parents. Meets second Thurs.; Equality Florida. (813)831-8207; <www.glbtparents.homestead.com>.

GLSEN TAMPA BAY

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

GREATER TAMPA BAY PRIDE

Meets third Wed.. (813)960-3022.

INTERWEAVE/ST. PETERSBURG

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

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 PM; computerized system 11-7 PM. (727)586-4297.

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS OF TAMPA BAY

Inclusive, diverse Republicans. Meet 3rd Weds of each month. 7 PM at HoHo's chinese, 9 PM at Different Grind. (727)455-9866, <www.lcrtampabay.com>, or LCRITampaBay@yahoo.com.

L.O.I.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. <www.metrocharities.org>.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

Open meeting for gays and lesbians. Meets Thurs.; 8:15 PM; 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. Donations of clothing and household items are needed daily. Located at 631 4th St. North, St. Pete. (866)250-1959.

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.

PFLAG

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Meets second Tue.; 7 PM; 5800 Nebraska. (813)831-8207; onecoolguy@hotmail.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 Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. at Saffron,s Restaurant, 1700 Park St. N. St. Pete. For more information call (727) 345-7688 or email Pflag@tampabay.rr.com.

POSITIVE EXPRESSIONS

Non-profit web-based organization working to empower HIV+ individuals by developing and supporting their self-expression and educating the public through presentations of creative work. <www.positiveexpressions.org>.

PRIDE AL ANON FAMILY GROUP

Support group for anyone who has a realitive, friend, partner, co-worker, etc., who has a drinking problem that is affecting their lives. Meets Wed. and Fri.; 6:30 PM; King of Peace Church. (727)323-5857.

PRIDE ALLIANCE

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

PRIDE TAMPA BAY

The general meeting is held on the second Thursday of each month. (813)854-8160 or <www.pridetampabay.com>.

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.primetimerswww.org/tampabay/PTTB_c.html>.

PWA COALITION OF TAMPA BAY

AIDS service organization dedicated to disseminating updated and accurate information about HIV/AIDS. (813)238-2887; <www.pwactampa.homestead.com>.

RAINBOW CHIPS INVESTMENT CLUB

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

RAINBOW FILM SERIES

A series of GLBT films, 7 PM, 2nd Saturday 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 PM. (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 PM. 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.

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

STARBURST OF PINELLAS PARK

Starburst of Pinellas Park, support group for cross-dressing and transgendered persons, regardless of stage. Meetings at 7 PM on the third Saturday each month. Call Georgia at (727)523-8760.

TAMPA BAY BEARS

Bears social club. Meets second Fr.; 7:30 PM; Suncoast Eagle Bar. <www.TampaBayBears.com>.

TAMPA BAY BUSINESS GUILD

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

TAMPA BAY GAY MEN'S CHORUS

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

TROPICAL RAINBOW ALLIANCE FOR THE DEAF

Periodic social gatherings for both hearing and non-hearing gays. (813)236-3123.

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WEST FLORIDA GROWLERS

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

WOMYN'S EXCHANGE TAMPABAY

A diverse mix of womyn that do not support intra-community prejudice, separatism, or discrimination of any kind. Meets Sundays at 3 PM at Gulfport Beach. Check their Web site for activities, polls and other discussions <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WomynsExchangeTampabay>.

SARASOTA/BRADENTON AREA**AIDS MANASOTA**

AIDS service organization. Offers peer counseling, testing, activities, support groups and social events. (941)954-6011; aids-manasota@prodigy.net; <www.aidsmanasota.com>.

ALSO

GLBT youth group. (941)252-2576; jbalso@aol.com; also.executivedirector@verizon.net.

GAY & LESBIAN INFOLINE

Provides information about local faith, social, support organizations and events to the GLBT community. (941)923-INFO.

GLAD

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GULF COAST MEN'S CHORUS

Meets Mon.; Universalist Unitarian Church, Sarasota. (941)377-9043; <www.gulfcoastmenschorus.org>.

PFLAG SARASOTA

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Meets third Tue.; 7:30 PM; 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/>.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA BUSINESS GUILD

Meets third Mon.; 6 PM; Quay. (941)953-8419; <www.swfbg.org>.

PAST OUT**JEAN COCTEAU TURNED EVERYTHING INTO POETRY**

Gay and Lesbian History by Liz Highleyman

Prolific novelist, playwright, illustrator and film director Jean Cocteau helped define the French avant-garde movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Although best known today for films starring longtime lover Jean Marais, Cocteau maintained that all of his work was poetry.

Cocteau was born in 1889 into a well-to-do family in Maisons-Laffitte, a town near Paris. His father committed suicide when Cocteau was a boy, and throughout his life he remained close to his mother. An indifferent student, Cocteau attended the Lycee Condorcet, where he met one of his earliest romantic interests, a classmate named Pierre

Dargelos, who would later inspire characters in several of Cocteau's works.

In his late teens Cocteau became involved with the circle of artists and intellectuals who frequented Paris' Montparnasse neighborhood. Stage actor Edouard de Max, a denizen of the gay Parisian social scene, took an interest in the young man's work and helped him publish his first book of poetry at age 19. Cocteau would later say that the cafes and salons of Paris were his Sorbonne.

Over the years, Cocteau's circle of friends and collaborators grew to include many of the leading artists of his day,

including painters Pablo Picasso and Amedeo Modigliani, poet Max Jacob, composer Igor Stravinsky, ballet director Sergei Diaghilev, and writers Marcel Proust and Colette (who was at one time his neighbor). Wealthy women — including fashion designer Coco Chanel — supported his work, and he wrote a play for chanteuse Edith Piaf.

Just as he himself had benefited from the patronage of older mentors, Cocteau nurtured the careers of younger artists, some of whom were his lovers. When he was 30, he met Raymond Radiguet, a 16-year-old writer whom he likened to Arthur Rimbaud, and

the two began a four-year relationship. When Radiguet died of typhoid fever in 1923, Cocteau was despondent and began using opium — an addiction with which he would struggle for the rest of his life.

Although generally quite open about his sexuality, in 1928 Cocteau anonymously published *Le livre blanc* (*The White Book*), a semi-autobiographical novel condemning society's homophobia. The book's narrator has many homosexual liaisons, and his attempts to go straight are foiled as he falls in love first with a girlfriend's pimp and later with his fiancée's brother.

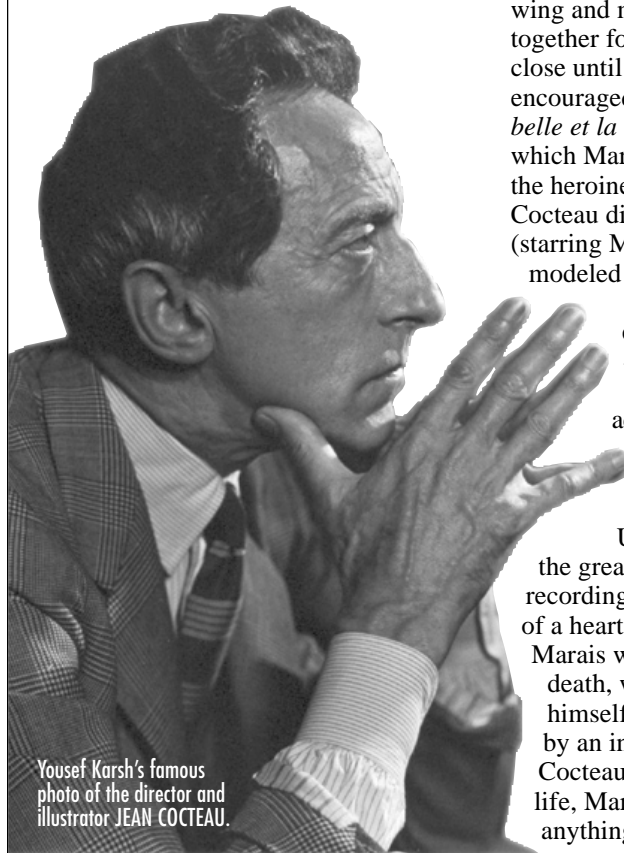
In 1937, Cocteau took the handsome neophyte actor Jean Marais under his wing and made him a star. The men lived together for many years and remained close until Cocteau's death. Marais encouraged Cocteau to make a film of *La belle et la bête* (*Beauty and the Beast*), in which Marais played both the beast and the heroine's human suitor. In 1949 Cocteau directed a film version of *Orphée* (starring Marais as a poet loosely modeled after Cocteau).

Always an iconoclast, Cocteau eschewed authority of all sorts — the state, the Catholic Church, political parties, academia, and the art world itself.

"The instinct of nearly all societies is to lock up anybody who is truly free," he once said.

Upon hearing of the death of the great Piaf, for whom he had been recording a radio tribute, Cocteau died of a heart attack on Oct. 11, 1963. Marais was devastated by Cocteau's death, writing later that a part of himself had died that day too. Asked by an interviewer what he would say to Cocteau if he were to come back to life, Marais answered, "I wouldn't say anything. I would kiss him." ▼

"The instinct of nearly all societies is to lock up anybody who is truly free."



Yusef Karsh's famous photo of the director and illustrator JEAN COCTEAU.

WATER COLORS

A Success From Day One
from page 29

More importantly, there was a sense of exuberance resulting from the freedom to gather so openly and in such numbers. Almost immediately, it was the place to go in gay Tampa Bay — particularly on Sunday afternoons. For the thousands who regularly trekked across the Howard Frankland Bridge — and from as far away as Orlando, Sarasota, Ocala, and elsewhere throughout the state and nation — the Suncoast Resort wasn't a gay bar, it was a spectacle.

"Most people told us we'd never succeed in St. Petersburg," says Tom Kiple, who along with business partner Lester Wolff paid \$3 million for the property. "Lester and I thought differently, but we had absolutely no idea it would take off like it did. It's been a success from day one."

And almost immediately, the rumor mill began to churn — a phenomenon that continues to this day. The owners are broke. The owners are rich beyond description. The owners are selling. The owners are buying more hotels — in Orlando, at the beach, on the moon.

"The best one I've heard recently is that I'm now a greeter at Wal-Mart," laughs Wolff.

Hardly. But the real story behind Wolff and Kiple's purchase of this groundbreaking gay resort is as captivating as any fiction.

TOO MUCH TALK ABOUT DINNER

Now 60, Kiple says he's retired four different times. It never took.

Kiple's first job — and first love — was radio, but his first success came at just 25 when he purchased a television station in Traverse City, Michigan. Within 10 years he'd added four more stations — all ABC affiliates — to what became the Michigan Television Network.

Just 35, Kiple sold it — "I made a buck or two." — and retired to Baltimore, but he was eventually lured back to radio by the Hearst and Cox broadcasting corporations. Into leather since his motorcycle racing days as a teen, he founded the Baltimore Eagle and turned it into one of the most successful leather bars on the Atlantic coast.

The "retired" Kiple also opened a restaurant, started an advertising agency, and with his partner of 13 years owned the top hair salon in town. When his partner was killed in a tragic automobile accident, a devastated Kiple hired Glenn Biffignani to run the salon. Biffignani is



The courtyard at the Suncoast Resort can accommodate thousands on holiday weekends and during special events. Photo by Tom Dyer.

now general manager at Suncoast — one of several Baltimore business associates Kiple has recruited for the resort.

In 1995, Kiple decided to retire again and move further south to St. Petersburg. He purchased a home in Tropical Shores, where some three-dozen homes are gay-owned. No surprise, then, that next-door neighbor Lester Wolff was gay.

Wolff hails from New York City and North Carolina, and obtained his doctorate in dentistry at NYU. He married and went into the army, where he "played dentist for five years" and rose to the rank of major.

But in time he changed careers to finance, divorced and moved back to New York. There he found success, love with a man, and ample opportunities to cultivate his interest in the arts and historic preservation.

In 1985 Wolff, who just turned a robust 70, retired to St. Petersburg, where he purchased a home first on Snell Island and then in Tropical Shores. "It felt like 1962 here," he says.

As energetic in retirement as Kiple, he sat on the board of directors at American Stage and presided over the City Beautiful Commission for seven years. Wolff now chairs the city's Arts Advisory Committee.

After Kiple moved next door, the neighbors became close friends. A tough negotiator with a dry wit, Kiple appears to play the Grinch to Wolff's jovial Santa Clause (it's hard to imagine Kiple handing out cold towelettes by the pool, as Wolff often does), but their differences are more matters of style than substance. Those who know them well say that Kiple can be a surprisingly soft touch, and that Wolff could stare down Kaddafi.

Both are certainly irrepressible visionaries. And they admit they were getting bored hanging out in Tropical Shores.

"There were way too many conversations about where to have dinner that night," laughs Kiple. It was over one of those dinners back in 1995 that they heard Orlando's Parliament House was for sale. "We thought that might make a nice project," says Kiple. "To buy a gay resort and do it up right."

A GAY TOWN CENTER

The estate of former Parliament House owner Michael Hodge was asking \$6 million at the time — a number that didn't compute for the two savvy business minds. But the idea had taken root, and Kiple and Wolff began scouting other properties in Orlando and Tampa Bay.

After years of searching, realtors Rob Elkins and Richard Waugh called about an interesting property on South 34th Street. Built in 1974 for a whopping \$10 million, the complex was an experiment by Holiday Inn to combine a hotel with a business and retail center. But I-275 eventually diverted traffic and customers. Holiday Inn sold to Ramada Inn which sold to EconoLodge and so on until a Chinese dentist purchased it in 1993 and gave it a catchy new name — the St. Petersburg International Evangelical Center Hosanna Hotel.

When Kiple and Wolff first stepped onto the property in early 1998, they noticed two things: it was much larger than anything they'd previously envisioned, and it was in worse condition than any property they'd considered. But it was also isolated and fully enclosed — private and safe. The idea of a "Gay Town Center" including a hotel, restaurant, bars, retail space, offices and recreational facilities began to take shape.

They closed on the property in May with plans for a "soft opening" two months later. Despite wildly impressive financial statements, no bank would loan Kiple and Wolff the millions needed to purchase and update the property. The project was an enormous personal financial risk for both, and they were anxious to test the waters.

"It would've been a secured loan and they turned us down flat because it was a gay resort," remembers Kiple. "Now they line up to do business with us."

So Kiple and Wolff put up the money themselves — including an additional \$1 million for initial renovations — and went to work. Only 35 rooms were habitable, and what is now the Lunar dance club had been boarded up for years. A crew of 50 worked round the clock, and on July 4 the construction tape came off and 20 new employees held their breath and waited.

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel

www.DykesToWatchOutFor.com

A Success From Day One from page 40

"It was an exciting, frenetic learning experience," Wolff says.

"It was hysterical," laughs the earthier Kiple. "We weren't even close to being ready."

Since that time the Suncoast Resort has added 60 employees, two more bars — the Wedgwood piano lounge and the Suncoast Eagle leather bar — and a 90-seat theater, where American Stage and Tampa Bay Arts will soon produce a succession of gay-themed plays. It has housed numerous GLBT conventions and special events, and each year hosts one of the largest annual leather competitions in the country. Courtyard concerts have featured the likes of Thelma Houston, Taylor Dayne, Jennifer Holliday, CeCe Peniston and Jimmy Summerville.

According to Kiple and Wolff, hotel rooms fill up most weekends and easily sell out during any holiday. Sunday afternoon T-dances remain a Tampa Bay institution, and although other nights are less crowded, Kiple says that's misleading.

"We've got 15,000 square feet of bars and clubs, and on any given night there are as many people here as anywhere else... it just doesn't look like it," he notes.

BREAKFAST EVERY MORNING

This past Sunday — the day after St. Pete Pride's Streetfest — was like most others. Thousands crammed into the courtyard to cap off the weekend and the successful local pride celebration. As usual there was bitching — about austere hotel rooms, cheap linens, sparse weeknight crowds, the revolving door among retailers. It reflects the love/hate relationship many locals have with the resort.

Kiple and Wolff — who have donated more than \$100,000 in cash and trade to local GLBT charities since the resort opened — take it all in stride, reading every comment card filled out by guests.

"There's no way you're going to make everyone happy," says Wolff, noting that they've kept room rates at just \$49-99 per night. "We've tried to keep the resort inexpensive so that people from every walk of life could come here and enjoy this. Some people say we're not glorious or glamorous enough, but you know what? When it comes to pretense, so much of it is pretense."

"I'm sure we could upgrade, charge more and make more money," adds Kiple. "But then half our customers wouldn't be able to come here. This is something we wanted to do for the community five years ago, and that hasn't changed."

In fact, the partners happily agree about most things related to the resort. They communicate constantly, have breakfast together every day — even go on the same diets.

"I don't think two people could get along any easier than Tom and I," says Wolff.

And as for all the rumors? Well, they're not selling, and they're not buying.

"This is our last resort," Wolff laughs. ▼



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Angels in Remorse from page 29

Angels is set in the mid 1980s at the height of the AIDS epidemic and the fall of communism. Ronald Reagan's economic and social policies were in full swing. The play opens with a series of questions: "Are we doomed? Will the past release us? Can we change?" Kushner has a way of bringing his ideas down to earth by creating characters that collide on stage through laughter and tears. *Angels* tells the story of people trying to make sense of the world.

Prior Walter is a man living with AIDS, whose lover Louis has left him to become involved with Joe, an ex-Mormon and political conservative. Joe's ex-wife, Harper, slowly suffers a nervous breakdown. These stories are contrasted with that of Roy Cohn who attempts to remain in the closet while seeking immortality.

Kushner's Cohn is a re-creation of the infamous American conservative who was a notorious homophobe and responsible for the executions of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Cohn died of AIDS in 1986. But a brief synopsis does not do justice to Kushner's work, which mixes celestial

visions with political reality. It is both very funny and painfully tragic.

DIFFICULT CHARACTERS

Dr. Gary Luter, who takes the role of Cohn in this Stageworks Theater Company production, said this show plays well for today's audience.

"George W. Bush is Reagan all over again. He is not like his daddy," Luter said. "We're back in the 1980s again with trickle-down economics." The philosophy that's in place in Washington now, was the impetus for Kushner to write the play then. This work is more pertinent now than it was in the 1990s."

Kushner successfully puts AIDS into a historical perspective. Prior is visited by two specters of his lineage that both succumbed to the plague of their era. AIDS is the modern-day plague, the play explains.

John Van Middlesworth, who plays Prior, believes that his character "has enormous courage to triumph over adversity. There is lightness about him. Whereas most people would crumble, Prior tries to find a way to make himself

"Everyone touches everyone else in this play. They may be from different worlds, but they're faced with the same woes."

Continued Page 43

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WATER COLORS

Angels in Remorse
from page 42

better, or at least make himself feel better. It's inspired. He goes through a lot of the same real things that all of us go through when faced with change. The world crashes and someone reaches out to help us. Everyone touches everyone else in this play. They may be from different worlds, but they're faced with the same woes."

Luter sees his character as the anchor of the piece. "Roy Cohn was and remains to this day the Republican Party's favorite homosexual. He was an anti-gay, destructive, self-loathing closet case and that's what they like," the actor said.

Luter volunteered when the NAMES Project AIDS quilt was in town. He remembered seeing Cohn's quilt and it said three words: coward, bully, victim. Luter asserted that someone who really understood him made his quilt.

"Roy Cohn is a liar," Luter said. "He lies to everyone and he lies to himself about his disease. He thinks he's invincible and he's not. He's defeated by natural processes."

Of the two characters in the play dying of AIDS, an angel visits Prior and not Cohn. "Cohn is burning in hell. He is writhing in agony on the fiery lake as we speak," Luter observed. "Cohn is very proud that he sent Ethel Rosenberg to the electric chair based on circumstantial evidence."

A NEW DAY WILL ARRIVE

The ghost of Ethel visits Cohn late in the play to confront him.

"Ethel comes to announce that history is about to crack wide open. The millennium approaches," Luter shared. "She tells Cohn that a change is taking place. Things are going to be different from the Reagan-era manipulation, avarice and selfish greed with lack of a social conscience. A prophet is going to change mankind in the form of Prior, a gay man with AIDS. He is called upon to explain why this suffering is taking place. She announces the coming of the shift. One of these days there's going to be enlightenment. I hope I see it in my lifetime."

Producer and founding director Anna Brennen continues her commitment to combating ignorance, intolerance and injustice with *Angels*.

"When you see the relationships as

they play out, it's really about human beings struggling with life, principles, values and morals in all of the various political configurations, secular, religious, sexual, racial, all of it," Brennen said.

"You see individuals and couples struggling. Prior struggles and at the end of the play he says he's a gay man who is supposed to be strong. We're supposed to be courageous and strong as we make choices. Prior accepts his fate with grace and courage."

Luter believes the play asks many big questions, but doesn't try to answer them.

"The big plays ask the big questions, but they don't necessarily answer them. Kushner's play is profound and hilarious, personal and political," Luter said. "He is asking us to worry, to recognize that we as a planet are not okay and to be prophets, all of us, if we are to make it through the next century human and intact."

This play touches all who see it. It has had a significant impact on members of the cast as well.

"In worrying about the details of acting, I forgot the reason I was drawn to *Angels* in the first place. I sometimes feel inadequate on the outside, but inside it is right there under the surface," said Denis McCourt, who plays Joe.

"I want to give this as a gift to the world, not for me, but for all of us. All those years of pain and self-hate [made me] want to destroy this beautiful light within me. I want people to know that we are all angels, good and bad." ▼



DENIS MCCOURT (left) and ERIC DAVIS in Stageworks' *Angels in America*. "We are all angels."

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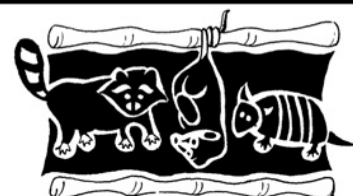


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WATER COLORS

Blonde's pink ambitions

Reese Witherspoon returns in a tale of politics and gay canine romance.
by Lawrence Ferber

You can't keep a good blonde down, especially when her film racks up more than \$100 million at the box office. Elle Woods, the indomitable, bubbly character from 2001's *Legally Blonde* is back with the very pink *Legally Blonde 2: Red, White and Blonde*.

With Reese Witherspoon taking the executive producer chair as well as reprising her role, *Legally Blonde 2* dishes up more laughs, zany situations, and — of course — pink. But there's also a deeper message within about self-empowerment, gay pride and working the political process to progressive ends.

Fresh from graduating Harvard, Elle Woods is preparing to wed Emmett (Luke Wilson) when she discovers that the mother of her beloved chihuahua, Bruiser, is stuck in a cosmetic company's animal testing facility.

Determined to liberate the doggie and all animals, Elle hits Washington, landing a position in the office of Congresswoman Victoria Rudd (a blonde-d out Sally Field). Perky and bedecked in Jackie O.-esque pink outfits, Elle is looked upon as a misplaced ninny by Rudd's other staffers and the rest of Capitol Hill. But with a little effort, some fortunate coincidences, and the help of friends, Elle is able to get her anti-animal-testing legislature proposal, Bruiser's Bill, on the table.

"It's great when you're able to make a fun movie that people really enjoy," said Witherspoon of the sequel, "but it's even more fulfilling, particularly as a mom, to make a film that has a message. It's a great time to get young people interested in government and politics and what's happening in the world. It's really important. And it makes it so easy to digest when (the messages are) in such a sweet, funny package."

Adding an even pinker hue to the package, Bruiser is outed as gay — he falls in love with a conservative Southern senator's rottweiler — a drag queen makes a gut-busting appearance, and out director Charles Herman-Wurmfeld (*Kissing Jessica Stein*) took the helm.

"I think the first film appealed to gay audiences in many ways," insisted Herman-Wurmfeld. "The fish-out-of-water character, the flamboyant dresser, the near-drag proportions of Elle's femininity is a very queer-inspired character."

As a director, Herman-Wurmfeld felt that altering the *Legally Blonde* universe wasn't a consideration so much as perpetuating and enhancing it. "Really what I did was use the first movie as a part of

that template and there were certainly things I didn't want to mess with," he said. "I wasn't about to make her signature color purple, for instance, or change the chihuahua to a schnauzer. I had a lot of respect for what was already accomplished."

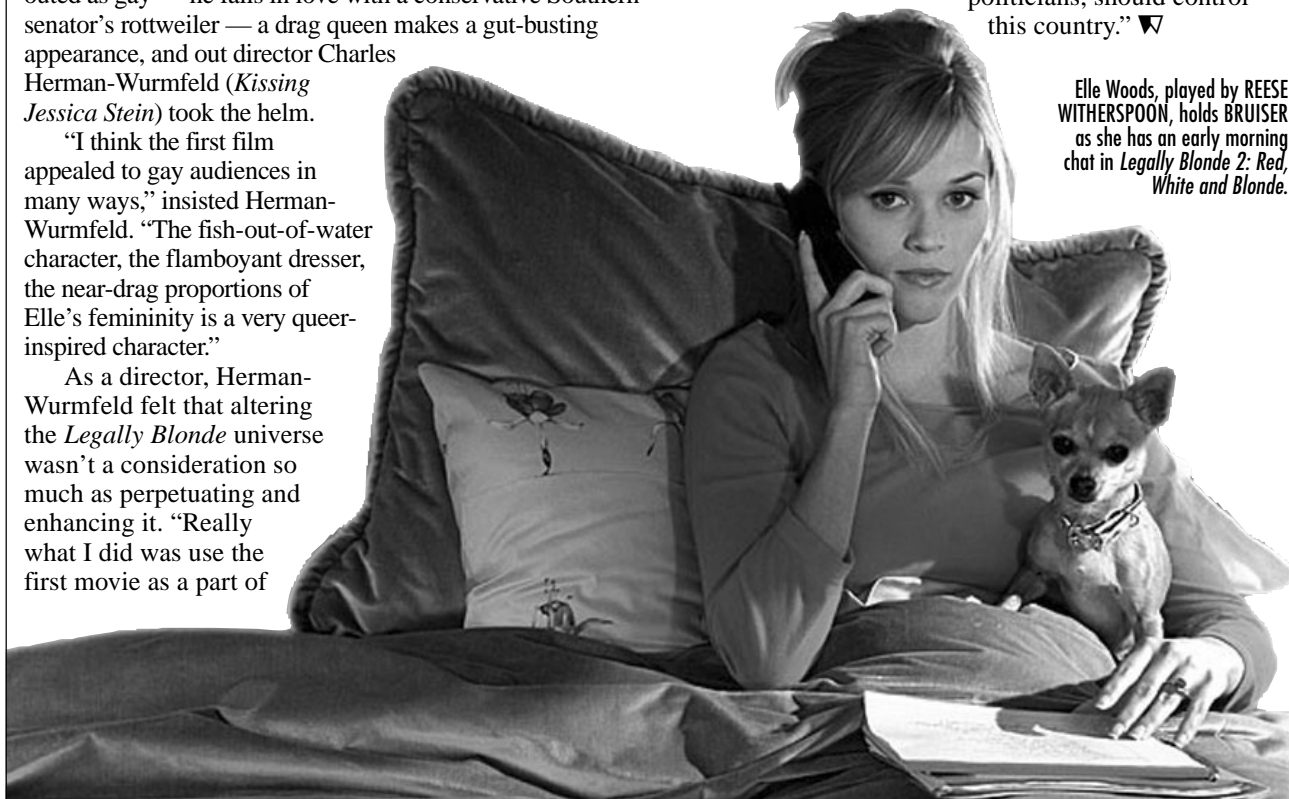
One of Herman-Wurmfeld and director of photography Elliot Davis' most significant new "enhancing" touches was a special pink light that illuminated Elle at almost all times. "To give her that special glow!" he laughed. And one specifically gay touch Herman-Wurmfeld slipped in entailed a surprising drag queen moment during a scene with Elle's junior Delta Nu sisters — Billy Francesca, a writer-performer with L.A.'s Fubar players, appears as one of them. Herman-Wurmfeld confesses that MGM was unaware of this gender-bent addition until they saw the finished scene. "They laughed, but if the test audience hadn't laughed there bigger than almost anyplace else in the whole movie, I'm sure it wouldn't be in the movie," he admitted.

Bruiser's being gay, however, was always part of the script. Decked out in both nelly pink outfits and daddy-esque leather (compliments of costume designer Sophie de Rackoff Carbonell and canine clothiers Fifi & Romeo), Bruiser falls into a merry gay relationship with a rottweiler, which spurs the latter's conservative owner, Sen. Stanford Marks (Bruce McGill), to launch into a pro-gay "acceptance" diatribe at a governmental hearing.

Echoing those Hollywood romances we hear/read so much about, was there any actual off-screen gay romance between the canines? Herman-Wurmfeld laughed.

"Off-set those dogs were friends," he insists. "But there might have been some. On the day we did the million girl march we had like 150 dogs there, and there might have been some dogs humping on legs and chairs and maybe even some other dogs and gay dog activity." Herman-Wurmfeld also believes that Elle serves as a role model and, possibly, inspires audiences to follow in her footsteps and get to work on political issues they believe in. "I really believe in democracy," he assured. "Elle's obviously a fantasy on a certain level — she travels with her own pink light and diamonds on the soles of her shoes — but I believe people, not politicians, should control this country." ▼

Elle Woods, played by REESE WITHERSPOON, holds BRUISER as she has an early morning chat in *Legally Blonde 2: Red, White and Blonde*.



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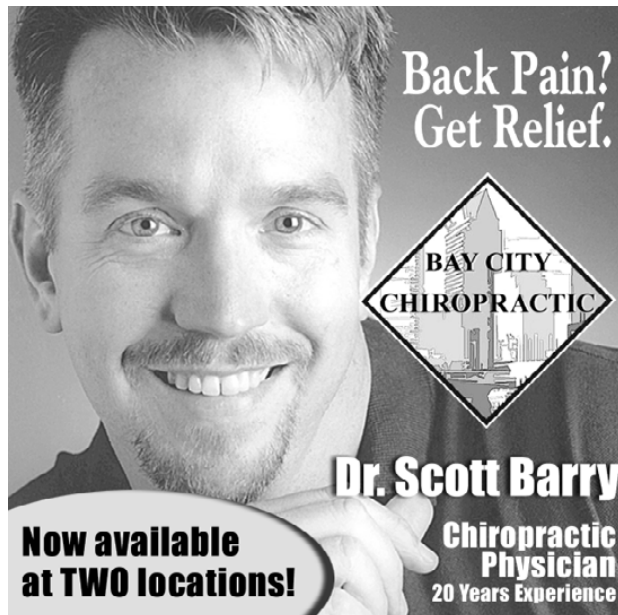
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SPORTS

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FORT LAUDERDALE - Earlier this month, the Florida Marlins became the first Major League Baseball team — and also the first major American sports franchise — to enter into a long-term advertising contract with a gay publication. The Marlins will advertise in the *Express Gay News* through the end of the season. The promotional package also includes an AIDS Awareness Night on Aug. 11 which will benefit AIDS Project Florida and Care Resource.

"This is one more effort to adopt a policy of inclusion for all South Florida sports fans," said Sean Flynn, the Marlins

vice president of marketing.

The Marlins need to attract all the fans they can get. The team averages only 13,000 fans per home game — 28th out of 30 major league teams. The Tampa Bay Devil Rays, based at St. Petersburg's Tropicana Field, are in a similar situation but have not sought gay fans as part of their marketing program.

Express Gay News publisher Norm Kent applauded the Marlins for "stepping up to the plate and going to bat for the gay community." ▼ *Tom Dyer, from The Express Gay News and Outsports.com.*

SUNCOAST SOFTBALL LEAGUE
CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

TAMPA - The Suncoast Softball League celebrated ten years — and 20 seasons — of gay softball in Tampa Bay with a special awards banquet held at Ho Ho's in South Tampa last month. More than 150 past and present league members packed into the popular restaurant, which has sponsored softball teams for years.

The league normally hands out awards for each season at a picnic, but officers decided that the special anniversary warranted a celebration. A highlight of the evening was the honoring of 12 founding members, who were inducted into the league's newly formed Hall of Fame.

The evening began with quiet recognition of the 14 league members who have died in the past 10 years: Michael Brennan, Tim Blunk, Steve Brooks, Stevie Coryea, Bill Hatfield, Bob McCleese, Ray Phelps, Steven Skop, Tom Varrenti, Steve White, Dennis Wilson, Roger Wright, and Brady Mitchell and Doug Zepka who both died this past year. A plaque with their names will be placed at City Side Lounge later this year.

A plaque will also honor 12 founding members who remain active in the league. Four — Chuck Heath, Gerre Reynolds, Rich Searls and Charlie Waters — have played all 20 seasons in the league's 10-year history. The others include Bill Crippen, Russ Fisher, Robert Garrabrandt, Paul Hanson, Mark Lauyans, Chris Panarello, Barry Siebold and Scott Young.

The Steven White Memorial Spirit Award, given to the team that best



Keith's celebrates their third place finish in Suncoast Softball's C Division.

supported league activities and showed sportsmanship on and off the field, went to City Side. And the Tim Blunk Commissioner's Award, given by league officers to the individual who helped the league most during the past year, was presented to Gerre Reynolds. The Team Tampa Bay Award, voted on by fellow league members, went to Rich Searles.

Finally, Spring 2003 trophies were presented to: Georgie's Alibi Krewe (1st in B Division); Chambers, Tropics, Keith's (1st-3rd in C Division); Metropolis Metros, Mojo, Georgie's Alibi Rough Riders (1st-3rd in D Division).

Suncoast Softball fall league play begins in September. For information, visit www.suncoastsoftball.org. ▼ *Tom Dyer*

SPORTS BRIEFS



TEAM TAMPA BAY LAUNCHES FUNDRAISING CRUISE

Team Tampa Bay was formed in 1994 to send local athletes to Gay Games IV in New York City. Since then, they've sent growing contingents to subsequent Gay Games in Amsterdam (1998) and Sydney (2002). Now they're looking ahead to the summer of 2006 and Gay Games VII in Montreal. To help pay costs, Team Tampa Bay will host a seafaring fundraiser in January 2004. Members, guests and supporters will depart from Port Tampa on the Carnival Sensation on Saturday, Jan. 10 for a five-day Caribbean cruise to Cozumel and Grand Cayman. Cabins range from just \$462-512 per person, double occupancy. Call Travel Beyond at 1-800-237-4070, or visit www.teamtampa.org.

C.A.N., ALSO HOST SARASOTA SOFTBALL TOURNEY

Gay softball is coming to Sarasota! The Community AIDS Network and ALSO for Gay Youth are hosting a co-ed softball tournament on July 12 at 17th Street Park. The event, described as "just for fun," starts at 8 a.m. Teams will compete — in a non-competitive way — for awards and prizes provided by local businesses. The organizations are requesting donations to help pay for rental of the softball fees, umpires, balls, prizes and refreshments. They also encourage any groups — experienced or novice — to field teams. C.A.N. provides medical and support services to more than 600 people affected by HIV/AIDS. ALSO is Sarasota's award-winning gay youth organization. To participate in the softball tourney, call John T. Acevedo at (941) 366-0134 x.305.

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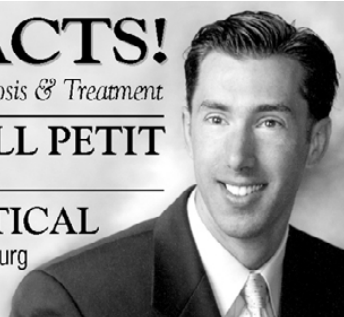
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WATER COLORS

Baring Her Soul
from page 32

autobiographical absolutely. Obviously if it's coming from me it's coming from the core of my soul."

In March, Lennox launched her "Solo" tour in the U.S., playing to soldout venues for the first time as a lone performer. With two decades worth of material, Lennox wowed fans across America before heading back to Europe to finish the tour.

Seeing Lennox perform live is the best way to witness how well she connects with her audience. Whether through well-worn songs like *Missionary Man* and *Little Bird* or with her new material, Lennox knows that people identify with what she is saying in her songs.

"When I connect with other people's music, I feel like that person articulates something for me that I can't say for myself," Lennox said. "So if I do that for other people then I've achieved something."

Although Lennox hadn't toured on her own before, the idea was something that she found uplifting. She also found herself to be more comfortable

A Thousand Beautiful Things, can be found on ANNIE LENNOX's first solo CD of all new material since 1992's *Diva*.

standing there in front of the musicians than she ever had before.

"Listening to music that touches you is a very cathartic and healing thing, I know it is for me. At this point in my life, I feel that my real capacity on this planet might be to connect with other people on that deep level through my songs and therefore that I should get out there and do it,"

Lennox said about touring. "It's not entertain-ment. It's something else. It's about a real exchange of energies."

With the ever-changing horizon of today's musical landscape, Lennox's *Bare* should have little difficulty finding its niche. Smarter than your standard pop fare and emotionally challenging, *Bare*, like most of Lennox's previous work, will still be around, and relevant, decades from now.

"I think that the music that is being played currently is great and I love it," Lennox said. "But there is not a great deal of new music coming out that will maybe make you a little bit more intellectually strong or emotionally reflective. Possibly my record will be in that place." ▼



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WATER COLORS



MS. KNOW IT ALL IT'S YOUR TIME FOR THE SPOTLIGHT

Astrology by Diane Wilde



LEO • JULY 23-AUG. 22: Like it or not, you will have to deal with situations that are not to your liking. You must remember that the only things in life that you can control are your own reactions and choices. Roaring through the jungle won't impress anyone anyhow, so why not use that infamous charm of yours to convince and cooperate instead?



VIRGO • AUG. 23-SEPT. 23: Finally you are able to relax and have some fun with your friends and loved ones, and you'll be able to network with potential new business contacts as well. This is an excellent time to really get to the bottom of your issues and get a handle on behaviors that do not serve you.



LIBRA • SEPT. 24-OCT. 23: You'll have the most success by using fewer of your considerable powers of persuasion, and just go with the flow and see where it takes you. It will take you into the company of the people you enjoy most, your friends and family.



SCORPIO • OCT. 24-NOV. 22: While this is the right time to spread your wings and try to broaden your sphere of influence, it is certainly not the right time to be careless or reckless and take foolish chances based on poor judgment or wishful thinking. Remember that your career ambitions and financial goals aren't more important than your family.



SAGITTARIUS • NOV. 23-DEC. 21: It's very important for you to keep a firm grip on your finances right now, and do not make purchases you cannot afford — even if it's on credit. Eventually, that bill will have to get paid. Instead, conserve your resources, pay off old debts, and make plans to increase your income by implementing some of your creative money-making ideas in your spare time.



CAPRICORN • DEC. 22-JAN. 20: Whether you like it or not, you will need to be more cooperative and understanding

with everyone around you. If you aren't, you'll be making war instead of love. You have purposefully chosen strong people to be involved with, so respect their strengths, their opinions, and be realistic in your expectations and seek to compromise where needed.



AQUARIUS • JAN. 21-FEB. 19: Your attention is focused on making changes that improve the quality of your life, not only financially, but personally. Any work or health issues must be controlled as now is a good time to do away with bad habits. Replace them with better choices in everything from your job, your diet to the quality of your leisure time.



PISCES • FEB. 20-MARCH 20: This should be a fun-filled time for you, and you should be able to share lots of good times with friends and family. Use your intuition to tell you when to let your fantasies run away with

you and when to stay grounded in reality. Remember that all fun and play can take its toll on your health.



ARIES • MARCH 21-APRIL 20: You'll find a rather mixed bag of more social interactions, more business meetings and interactions with the powers that be and more thought given to your home base of operations as well. To be your best, you must take some quiet time for yourself and you must work out stress with exercise, yoga and meditation.



TAURUS • APRIL 21-MAY 21: You're just itching to make a move, or to at least move around all the furniture in the house, perhaps even throwing some out and buying some new stuff. Just be sure to keep your budget in mind while you enjoy bargain-hunting both near and far from home.



GEMINI • MAY 22-JUNE 21: You are very focused on increasing your financial securities and possibilities. Whatever you put your considerable mental powers will flourish but just don't burn yourself out before reaching your goals. ▼



ADVICE-O-RAMA FRIENDSHIPS HELP, BUT THEY'RE NOT CRUCIAL

Advice by Keith Baber, M.Ed.

Dear Keith:

My new girlfriend just doesn't seem to have any friends. I can understand not having close pals because someone is new to the area, but this woman has lived here for a long time. As I get to know her, I'd love to see her from other people's perspectives, but so far, that hasn't happened. Could there be some underlying red flags here?

Social Butterfly in Sarasota

Dear Social,

Creating a network of friends is good for many reasons. True friends can be extremely helpful during emotional times as well as assist greatly with personal and social networking.

It takes effort to develop and maintain friendships. The effort that must be put out

is well worth the benefits that come with good friendships. Just because your girlfriend has no friends does not necessarily mean that there is something wrong with her. You must look at the entire person in order to determine whether her lack of friends is a red flag.

Pay attention to her emotional, spiritual and intellectual self as well as her personal social side. Find out whether she has ever had any close friends and ask her why she thinks that she has not made any close friends in Sarasota. The fact is that some people are simply more social than others and this is true for a variety of reasons.

If you find in your conversations that she blames people and places for her inability to foster intimate friendships than take note of that statement and by all means keep asking questions. ▼



TRANSITIONS

CONGRATULATIONS: BARRY L. MILLER, the president of The Closing Agent, has been named to the National Register's Who's Who in Executives and Professionals for the 2004 edition. The Closing Agent has offices in Orlando, Windemere and Lake Mary.

CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS:

Chanteuse **BETTY BUCKLEY** and orthodontically enhanced **TOM CRUISE** (7/3); always-surprised-looking **NANCY REAGAN**, commander-in-chief **GEORGE W. BUSH** and dead butler **SEBASTIAN CABOT** (7/6); faaabulous director **GEORGE CUKOR** and trend-setter **PIERRE CARDIN** (7/7); related-somehow-to-everyone-on-this-list **KEVIN BACON** (7/8); *Match Game* party girl **BRETT SOMERS**, red carpet favorite **GIORGIO ARMANI** and one-calorie **TAB HUNTER** (7/11); rosy-cheeked **RICHARD SIMMONS** and mama's boy **VAN CLIBURN** (7/12); gay Gypsy and *West Side Story* wordsmith **ARTHUR LAURENTS** and throaty saloon singer **POLLY BERGEN** (7/14); troubled former Miss America **BESS MYERSON** and grimacing *Lord of the Dance* **MICHAEL FLATLEY** (7/16); stretched, pulled and tucked **PHYLLIS DILLER** and under-rated girl singer **PHOEBE SNOW** (7/17).

Transitions may include memorials, remembrances, weddings, anniversaries, promotions or other announcements, published free of charge. E-mail them to editor@watermarkonline.com.



BARRY L. MILLER



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WATER COLORS



FILTH SOAP STARS BUBBLE AT BENEFIT

Celebrity Gossip by Billy Masters

I recently attended the kick off event for Daytime for Planned Parenthood, spearheaded by one of my favorite people and a friend of the gay community, **HEATHER TOM**. Heather and her longtime publicist, **THOM DeLORENZO**, organized a benefit reading of **JANE MARTIN**'s *Talking With* that starred 11 soap divas — **TAMARA BRAUN**, **DARLENE CONLEY**, **LYNN HERRING**, **AMELIA MARSHALL**, **MARILYN McINTYRE**, **MELODY THOMAS SCOTT**, **MICHELLE STAFFORD**, **TONYA LEE WILLIAMS**, **JACKLYN ZEMAN**, **ARIANNE ZUCKER** and of course Heather Tom. The two-night benefit took place at the Court Theatre in Los Angeles, and the place was filled to capacity both nights with an exuberant audience.

Over the weekend (because I had to go both nights), I schmoozed with people like Heather's best friend, **CHAD ALLEN** (looking the cutest I've ever seen him), the whole Tom family (including siblings **DAVID** and **NICHOLLE**), **PETER BERGMAN** (cheering his on-screen wife, the dynamic Michelle Stafford), sexy **KYLE LOWDER** (supporting "wifey" Arianne Zucker), and many others.

A fan sent me a quote from **LIZ SMITH**'s column implying that **ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER**'s

penis is *so* large (everybody — "How large is it?") that he wishes it could be smaller. I don't know what penis he's talking about, because we have a photo of him in the buff from his bodybuilding days, and it doesn't look like anything that would stop traffic. And, to be an equal opportunity voyeur, here's something for the ladies — at a recent concert, **LIL' KIM** caused quite a scene when her breasts fell out of the blouse she was almost wearing. Yes, my darlings, we've got photos of it all at www.filth2go.com. What the hell, I'll throw in a few hot skin pics of **KYLE LOWDER** while I'm at it.

Billy's Book Club recommendation for the week is *In and Out in Hollywood* by **BEN PATRICK JOHNSON**. This is a fun, dishy, gay novel about a young man who is hired to anchor one of those

entertainment programs on television and is unceremoniously demoted when the brass finds out that he's gay. Nope, it's not the **STEVE KMETKO** story. Ben certainly has the real life experience to make this a fascinating read. I don't want to give the impression that it's a light book, but I read it on the plane to Chicago and still had time to watch *Maid in Manhattan*. And, as a side note, let me mention that Ben has one of the greatest physiques in the world, which makes me think that the fictional aspect of this novel kicked in during the sections about the hero needing to lose weight and get in shape. Both the book and Ben get two thumbs up from Billy.

How would you like to have **CHRISTOPHER ATKINS**

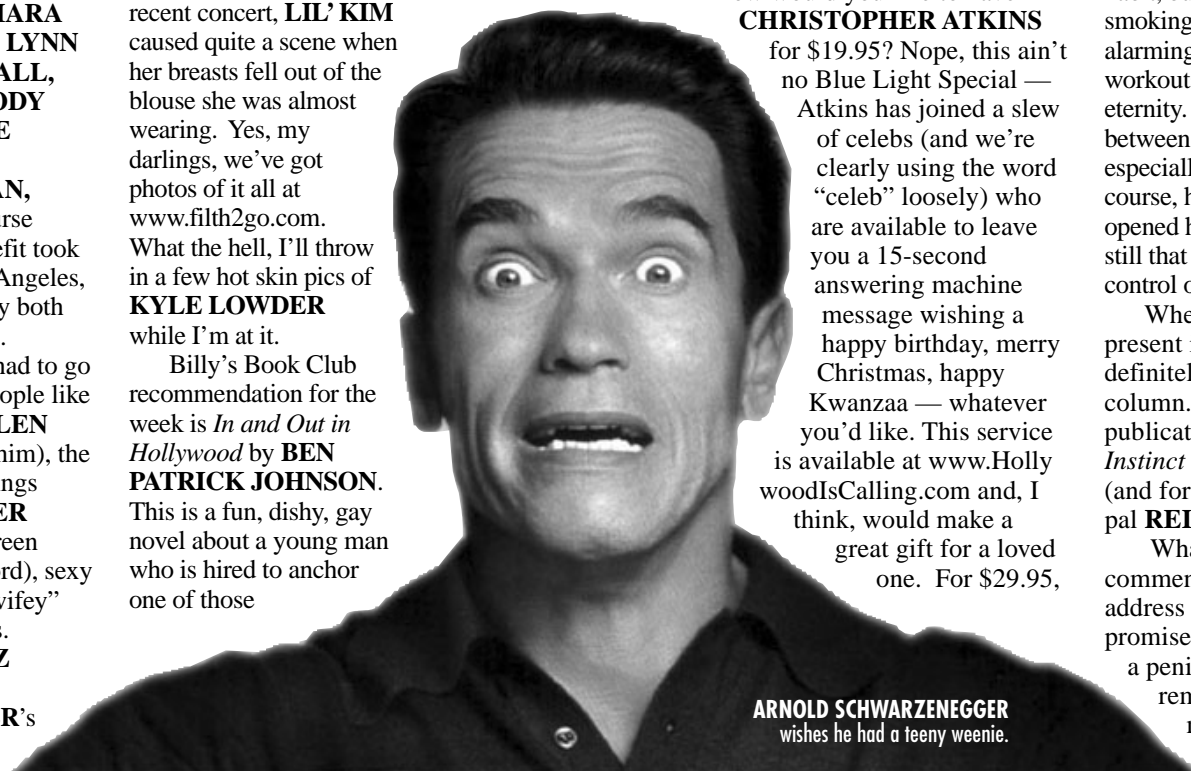
for \$19.95? Nope, this ain't no Blue Light Special — Atkins has joined a slew of celebs (and we're clearly using the word "celeb" loosely) who are available to leave you a 15-second answering machine message wishing a happy birthday, merry Christmas, happy Kwanzaa — whatever you'd like. This service is available at www.HollywoodIsCalling.com and, I think, would make a great gift for a loved one. For \$29.95,

you can purchase the "Hollywood Romance Special," which is a 30-second message that you can personalize anyway you'd like. People available to leave that message include **TODD BRIDGES** and **ANDREA THOMPSON**. I'm just curious — what happens if you pick up the phone before your machine answers? 'Cause I'm guessing that anyone who wants a romantic message from Todd Bridges probably doesn't go out much.

Could it be that a certain sober designing dude is taking his new-found clean living to extremes? You betcha. I'm told by my Gotham gossips that the obsessed one has not only kicked the drug habit, but also banned booze, stopped smoking, and goes to the gym with alarming regularity. And these aren't brief workouts — in fact, they seem to last an eternity. I'm told that nothing comes between him and his training sessions — especially given his hunky trainer. Of course, he wants to look good — he just re-opened his house in the Hamptons. There's still that one health issue that he has little control over, but you can't have everything.

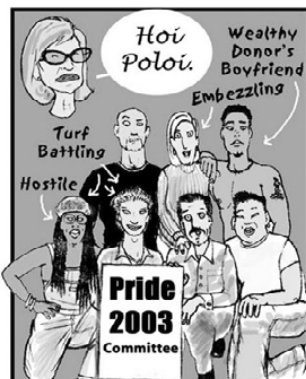
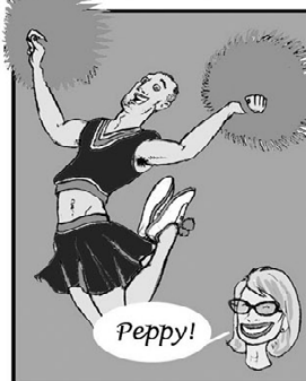
When I can sniff out a story and present it to you as a blind item, then it's definitely time for me to end yet another column. Since I brought up gay publications, I want to congratulate *Instinct* on the occasion of its 50th issue (and for having the good taste to put my pal **REICHEN** on the cover).

What do you think? Send your comments and questions to my e-mail address of Billy@filth2go.com and I promise get back to you before Arnold get a penis-ectomy! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible. ▼



The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of ETHAN GREEN

by Eric Orner



Back next week with more on Eeth and Peter.

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