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About the Cover

Sterling Powell, photographed by Michael Heape in his Ybor City loft studio.



editor'sdesk

BY DAVE WIETHOP

I'm always interested in how other couples communicate with one another. Some people are so well suited for one another that their non-verbal cues communicate more – and more sweetly – than anything couples counseling could ever suggest. Other people have partnerships that seem incredibly 50-50.

Particularly in the gay community, there are relationships that seem unbalanced, perhaps on purpose. Daddy and boy? Butch and femme? Those are hardly the models that our parents offered us, but it seems to work for many.

Recently, a study took a look at how same-sex relationships fare against those of our straight counterparts. Even I was surprised to learn that, according to the Gottman Institute, gay people tend to be more positive in dealing with conflict than straight people. The study suggests that straight people don't always understand the way the opposite sex thinks.

This was in the back of my mind as I visited with my parents over the

served up the swingin' sounds of the Staulcup Orchestra, and every weekend my parents were there. They were also on the lake the next morning, racing off for the best spots to sink a line for bass and crappie. Eventually, Dad learned to love to cha-cha and Ma became an expert at baiting her own damn hook.

"So, it was all about compromise, then?" I asked. She said they never fought about money or the kids. Sure, there was always the all-too-common threat of infidelity. One of my dad's favorite line's is, "Your mother and I have marvelous sex lives... and occasionally we tell one another about them." Even today, there's "that woman" who lives in the assisted living facility near Dad.

Ultimately, both he and Ma knew early that not every fight could be won, and not every conflict needed to be fought.

I'm not sure I was asking out of fascination at their dynamics, or because I wanted to learn more about how I relate to John, my boyfriend-husband-partner of five years. For every

“Your mother and I have marvelous sex lives and occasionally we tell one another about them”

New Year's weekend. Both as cranky as octogenarians can be, they celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary last summer. It wasn't an easy 62 years because, frankly, they proved the Gottman Institute correct. When in doubt in a disagreement, they both knew how to go for the jugular, if only figuratively.

And because I'm the nosy child, I questioned them both over the holidays about their marriage. I was only an active witness to 18 of those years, yet the marriage seemed somehow to work.

"What exactly do you two like about one another?" I asked Ma one evening, after visiting my dad in his assisted living facility. (This was not the day that Ma called me an "a—hole" and I responded matter-of-factly with, "Bitch." Ma and I had somehow moved from Lucy and Little Ricky to Will and Grace over the past 40-some-odd years.) "What exactly do you two like about one another?" I repeated.

She thought for a moment about my question. "I liked to dance. He liked to fish," she said. "And I told him that I would learn to enjoy fishing if he took me dancing."

And they danced — the tiny nightclub that served American-style Chinese food in my hometown also

landscaping industry show I attend with feigned enthusiasm, he tries to show excitement at the prospect of a new Steven Sondheim production.

And somehow, it works. I don't always get my way with John, but neither did Ma or Dad in their relationship. I guess I had been paying attention after all. But that night, I learned more about the inner workings of their lives than I really expected, and I'm glad I did.

Less than a week after my visit to Missouri, Ma passed away in her sleep. We were all stunned — she was certainly not expected to go first. I figured that I had a couple more years left with her. I'll miss her giddy joyfulness that came with each telephone call and her ability to cry on cue. I credit her with what I do with myself these days. My sister sings, my brother plays music and I write.

"I was never very talented," she told me last week. "But my one talent is that I listen."

What an incredible legacy. I hope that I — hell, we all — can live up to it. It's the least that she would expect.

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PREVIEW

Water Picks

Events You Shouldn't Miss

ORLANDO

THURSDAY, JAN. 19

The **RAINBOW DEMOCRATIC CLUB** will present the 2006 William Jefferson Clinton Award to Metropolitan Business Association president and Orlando businesswoman **DEBBIE SIMMONS** during a social on Thursday, Jan. 19, at Savoy Orlando. The social will begin at 6:30 p.m., and the award will be presented at 7:30 p.m. There is no charge to attend. Savoy is located at 1911 N. Orange Ave. in Orlando.

BEGINNING JAN. 22

Proving once again that beauty can be found throbbing between your legs, the **ORLANDO MUSEUM OF ART** opens a seven-month run of **THE ART OF THE MOTORCYCLE** Sunday, Jan. 22. Promising a provocative look at all things two-wheeled and high-powered, this sleek and polished show should please everyone from mid-life-crisis straight guys to dykes on bikes. Check out OMart.org for details.

TAMPA BAY

JAN. 13-FEB. 5

It may be one of the most depressing plays you'll see, but **THE BOYS IN THE BAND** could also be among the most compelling. **GYPSY PRODUCTIONS** presents this classic through Feb. 5. Dated and self-loathing, the 1968 Matt Crowley script was among the first to prove that gay men were more than promiscuous sex buddies, but that they were excellent at the bitter one-liner. Tickets are \$18 and reservations are strongly recommended. Call the Suncoast Theatre box office at (727) 456-0500.

JAN. 13-FEB. 5

If you don't have your tickets for **WICKED** by now ... well, you're probably not getting them. Ticket sales for this Tony Award-winning (but not for Best Musical, that went to *Avenue Q*) musical have been brisk at the **CAROL MORSANI HALL** in the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. With a dynamite score and the story of the relationship between Glinda the Good Witch and Elphaba, who would become the Wicked Witch of the West, it brings to mind this question: Couldn't we just stage a gay

pride event in the lobby during intermission? Try to get tickets by calling (813) 229-7827.

SUNDAY, JAN. 15

The few gay men left without theatre tickets on Sunday, Jan. 15, may want to venture to the **FERGUSON HALL** in the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center — theatre legend **CAROL CHANNING** presents her one-woman show, **THE FIRST EIGHTY YEARS ARE THE HARDEST**. Odds are very good she'll do a number or two from *Hello, Dolly* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, but it's guaranteed that Channing will treat the audience to a visit from silent-screen legend, the sibilant Cecilia Sissons, a character the actress has performed for at least 40 years. Call (813) 229-7827.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JAN. 21-22
KING OF PEACE MCC

celebrates its diamond anniversary (that's 30 years) on Jan. 21-22 — and it has plenty for which to be joyful. Begun with a congregation of 12, the church has blossomed to membership of 300. A dinner dance that begins at 6 p.m. on Saturday at the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort kicks off the weekend, followed by a 10 a.m. service featuring UFMCC moderator the **REV. NANCY WILSON**. A complimentary breakfast reception follows. Details? Visit KingofPeaceMCC.com.



Water Cooler

People are Talking

DOES SHE LOOK TOO FAT TO YOU?

Want to see the sitcom that drove **MARGARET CHO** over the edge? **ALL-AMERICAN GIRL: THE COMPLETE SERIES** will be released on DVD Jan. 31. This is the sitcom that launched the gifted and acid-tongued comic and actress' rant, *I'm the One That I Want* — and gave even more credence to the effects of weight issues among U.S. women.

The producers' concerns that Cho was too fat and too Asian to play herself remains bizarre even 11 years after the show's one-season run on ABC. Interestingly, Cho has a pilot this spring that would cast her as her own mother.

While **AMY HILL** is a stitch as her long-suffering grandmother, watch for the openly gay **B.D. WONG** as her intellectual brother and the openly lesbian **JUDY GOLD** (who deserves more attention than she gets) as her best pal, Gloria. Amazon.com inexplicably suggests that this purchase is better with a season or two of **BEWITCHED**. Considering the appearances of **PAUL LYNDE** and **AGNES MOOREHEAD**, maybe that's not so far-fetched after all.

SOMEONE DOESN'T WANT TO PLAY COWBOYS

It looks like the increasingly invisible *Today* show film critic **GENE SHALIT** got his woolens in a knot over **BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN**. Instead of actually reviewing the film's merits, Shalit chose to rail against the gay element.

Calling **JAKE GYLLENHAAL**'s character a "sexual predator" who "tracks

Ennis (del Mar, **HEATH LEDGER**'s character) down and coaxes him in to sporadic trysts," Shalit neglected to mention romance involved.

GLAAD was quick to point out that Shalit wouldn't have called **LEONARDO DI CAPRIO**'s character a "sexual predator" in *Titanic* because he was trying for a romantic relationship with **KATE WINSLET**'s Rose.

He did say that the film had "a few dramatic peaks," adding that it has been "wildly over-praised, but not by me."

Apparently, he's alone. The film has won numerous critics groups awards — and seems like a leading contender for **GOLDEN GLOBE** wins and **OSCAR** nominations. Incidentally, the Golden Globes will be broadcast at 8 p.m., Monday, Jan. 16, and the Oscar nominations will be announced at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 31.

ANOTHER REASON WHY WE'RE BETTER

As it turns out, gays and lesbians do know a few things about **RELATIONSHIPS**. According to new studies reported by the awkwardly titled **JOURNAL OF HOMOSEXUALITY**, researchers have found that same-sex couples have better skills at conflict resolution than their straight counterparts — and that may be the "glue" that holds them together.

According to the studies, heterosexuals start the discussions in a negative way and the arguments degenerate from there. On the other hand, queers keep focused on the positive aspects within the conflicts.

"Gays and lesbians are warmer, friendlier and less belligerent," said University of Washington professor John Gottman, who heads the Relationship Research Institute in Seattle. "With married heterosexual couples a discussion is much more of a power struggle with someone being invalidated."

It's so nice to see how straight couples are protecting the sanctity of their relationships by brow-beating one another into submission. ▼

The source of a lot of **MARGARET CHO**'s material — and angst — comes to DVD later this month.

HEADLINE NEWS

COMMUNITY CENTER IN TAMPA OPENS

Metro Charities provides GLBT anchors on both sides of the bay

By Steve Blanchard

TAMPA – Community leaders have wanted a full service GLBT community center in Tampa for more than a decade. On Jan. 20 – and thanks to the efforts of two driving forces — the new Tampa Metro Center opens its doors. Based on the success of the year-old Metro Center in St. Petersburg, the new location will be operated with the support of MCC Tampa.

In the early 1990s, benefactors raised close to \$150,000 for a GLBT community center building fund. The Center of Tampa, Inc. was formed, operating in rented headquarters while more funding was sought. But donations, volunteers and interest waned, and the Center closed its Swann Ave. offices last spring. The board voted to merge with the larger and more established Metropolitan Charities, which had just opened the Metro Center next to Georgie's Alibi in the Kenwood area of St. Petersburg.

The Center was still sitting on a substantial building fund, but was reluctant to release it for purposes other than purchase of a permanent headquarters. Enter Lorraine Langlois, the energetic executive director of Metropolitan Charities, who convinced them to help fund a community center in Tampa – now. When



Tampa Metro Center director DAVID GANT said "it was a lot of work to make this a reality."

Rev. Phyllis Hunt, Senior Pastor at Tampa MCC, agreed to join forces, a plan was formulated.

"The money from the Center of Tampa was enough to get things going, but it's not exactly an endowment fund," Langlois

said, noting that Metropolitan Charities is ultimately responsible for expenses for the new center. "We'll definitely need gifts and sponsorships and fundraising activities to keep us going."

Along with Tampa MCC, former members of the Center of Tampa Inc. board will serve as advisors, giving the new Tampa Metro Center a broad base of community support.

"Rev. Phyllis started some activities in Tampa, and those activities are comparable to what we would do at a community

center," said Langlois. "I said, 'Geez, we're opening there too, so why don't we do something together instead of create a competition.' And that's what we did."

Specifically, the two organizations will jointly fund a full-time employee who will serve as both director of the Tampa Metro Center and education director for Tampa MCC. They have hired David Gant, who recently held similar positions in Albuquerque. Gant arrived in Tampa in December, and has been working to familiarize himself with the organizations and the community since. He is looking forward to helping shape the future of the Tampa Metro Center.

"There has been a lot of work to get us to where we are today," Gant said.

"Volunteers, advisory board members and community leaders have labored a long time to make this a reality. I'm here now because of their efforts."

"David works for both entities, but we really lease him from MCC," Langlois explained. "Through the agreement, we get to use his talents as well."

Langlois and Hunt worked for several months to come up with the joint job description, and to work out details for the Tampa Metro Center. Staff and volunteers

have developed workshops and guided discussions on topics like "Dating in the Internet Age" and "GLBT community history." There will also be a free lending library, peer discussion groups and referrals for mental health counseling.

Located in Seminole Heights, at 6421 N. Florida Ave., the building includes several rooms suitable for group meetings and large parties. Noting that Tampa lost its only regular non-alcoholic gathering place when Tones & Treasures closed last spring, organizers also hope to create a place for casual socializing.

"The key to all this is partnerships," Langlois said. "Volunteers, donors, program organizers, other organizations, and people who just need and want to use a community center. These people, working together with our staff, are the ones who make it all possible."

The grand opening of the Tampa Metro Center is Friday, Jan 20 at 6:30 p.m., and will include entertainment and door prizes.

"We look at this as a celebration of something that will last many, many years," Langlois said. "Having Metro Centers on both sides of the bay gives residents a chance to access the services they want without having to travel too far from their home. By teaming with MCC Tampa, we've been able to make this a reality sooner."

For more information about the Tampa Metro Center, call (813) 232-3808 or visit www.metrocharities.org. ▼

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TAMPA BAY

LORENZO SENTENCING SCHEDULED FOR JAN. 20

TAMPA — Steven Lorenzo will learn his immediate fate when a federal judge sentences him Jan. 20.

A jury only needed three hours to find Lorenzo guilty in November on nine counts of administering GHB and one count of conspiring with Scott Schweickert to distribute the date rape drug. Each count carries a maximum of 20 years in prison and prosecutors are seeking the maximum — 200 years.

Jurors were faced with disturbing photos of men in various stages of bondage — some appearing lifeless — throughout the two-week trial. Prosecutor Anthony E. Porcelli also presented a video depicting torturous acts in Lorenzo's Seminole Heights bungalow, where he had created a dungeon in the basement. Jurors often reacted to the evidence with disgust and several would clasp their hands over their mouths.

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

Each man said Lorenzo slipped drugs into their drinks and they later awoke to find themselves naked, injured and bound.



Prosecutors want 200 years for STEVE LORENZO.

Jurors saw photos of bruises and marks indicating restraints had been used and evidence of rape.

Lorenzo could still face charges of murder in the cases of Jason Galehouse and

Michael Wachholtz, who both disappeared in December of 2003. Wachholtz was found dead in his Jeep Cherokee a few weeks later and Galehouse has never been found. Prosecutors say any murder charges would be presented after the trial of Schweickert, who faces a jury in February.

Lorenzo's sentencing comes just weeks after members of Equality Florida met with the State Attorney's Office about the case. Equality Florida executive director Nadine Smith and communications director Brian Winfield met with State Attorney Mark Ober Jan. 4 to discuss the delay in bringing murder charges.

"We basically walked out with the

feeling that he was completely committed to pursuing this case to the fullest extent of the law," Winfield told the *Tampa Tribune*.

The GLBT community has become increasingly anxious over the delays, but Ober asked that the public remain patient while the state builds the strongest case possible. If murder charges are brought against Lorenzo, he could request a speedy trial immediately following an indictment. Prosecutors want to be prepared for such a request.

During Lorenzo's recent trial, prosecutors said DNA collected from a gas mask matched that of Galehouse's. That's not the only evidence placing the victim at Lorenzo's Seminole Heights home.

According to a federal affidavit filed over the summer, Schweickert said Lorenzo placed a chokehold on Galehouse after the three men had sex in late December of 2003. Galehouse never regained consciousness. Schweickert, 39, added that he and Lorenzo dismembered the 26-year-old's body in the garage before disposing of it in several different dumpsters throughout the Tampa Bay area. Blood samples collected from the scene match Galehouse's DNA.



Evidence suggests more than one murder was committed at Steve Lorenzo's Seminole Heights home.

A similar chain of events unfolded when the two men met Wachholtz, the affidavit says. However, after Wachholtz was killed the pair didn't dismember the body. Schweickert said he and Lorenzo placed Wachholtz's dead body in the back of his Jeep Cherokee and left it in an empty parking lot.

Authorities found Wachholtz two weeks later but no reported evidence directly links his death to the two men. So far authorities have not brought murder charges against either man.

Authorities believe the two men met through an America Online chat system. During Lorenzo's trial, prosecutors showed the jury transcripts of the chats, which detailed the two men's plans to abduct and rape men in the Tampa Bay area. ▼ *Steve Blanchard*

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GROUP GATHERS TO SUPPORT STORMS

BRANDON — Roy Davis doesn't want his granddaughter to become a go-go dancer and he doesn't want his son to see any library displays promoting homosexual authors. For those two reasons, Davis says he supports District 4 Commissioner Ronda Storms, who made headlines in 2005 with her anti-gay stance and questionable handling of a bikini bar in Brandon.

"We need more public figures like Ronda Storms," Davis shouted from the back of a pickup truck during a celebration for Storms Jan. 6 outside Brandon Realty. Davis was an organizer of the pep rally which brought out just over 100 people to support Storms.

The sight was a sharp contrast to anti-Storms protests last June, when more than 3,000 people marched in downtown Tampa to oppose Storms and the commission's stance to ignore gay pride. In Brandon, signs proclaimed, "We Love Ronda" and "This is Ronda country."

For Melinda Morgan of Brandon, Storms is a beacon of hope in a time in history where fewer and fewer voices fight for what's right.

"Ronda has spoken on several controversial terms just as I would have,"

Morgan said. "I don't want my kids to have homosexuality flaunted in front of them. They get enough of that on television. I sure as heck don't want nude bars here either. Someone with the right morals has to be in charge, and I fully support Ronda."

It's support like Morgan's that Storms may be depending upon as she considers a rumored race for the state Senate. Contenders may include House Speaker Johnnie Byrd and Plant City businessman Ray Young. So far Storms has neither confirmed nor denied her candidacy.

While there were no visible protesters at the Storms celebration, plenty of letters were sent to Brandon Realty expressing disappointment that such a business would support a commissioner with Storms' views. Brandon Realty is owned by Storms' brother and sister-in-law.

"Look at what she says about gays," one letter-writer said. "Take the word gay out and insert black, Latino, or Jew... and read it again. Does it still sound right to you?"

"The residents of District 4 value Commissioner Ronda Storms' integrity and appreciate her unwavering loyalty to District 4." ▼ *Steve Blanchard*

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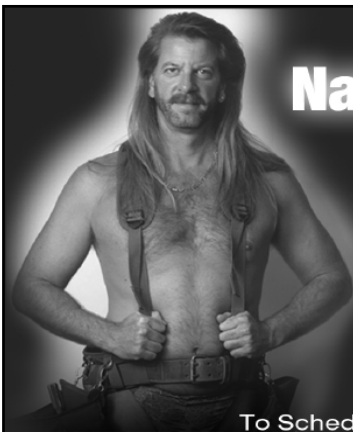
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TAMPA BAY



King of Peace MCC has held worship services in the former Fifth Avenue Cinema building for 15 years.

KING OF PEACE MCC CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

ST. PETERSBURG – King of Peace Metropolitan Community Church has held a front-row seat to the changes in this coastal city for the last three decades, and on Jan. 20, it intends to celebrate its own history.

King of Peace MCC celebrates its 30-year anniversary with a weekend-long celebration Jan 20-22. The celebration will look at past accomplishments while focusing on a vibrant future.

“There are many firsts to celebrate here,” said the Rev. John Gill, King of Peace senior pastor. “An MCC church performed the first holy union for a gay couple. Collectively, the fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches was the first denomination to welcome everyone who set foot in the door, regardless of sexual orientation.”

King of Peace has been a staple to the St. Petersburg GLBT community. The church stepped in at the forefront of the AIDS crisis and ministering to HIV and AIDS patients. It also founded Metropolitan Charities, Inc. and continues to light a candle on the altar every Sunday to remember those who have died from AIDS and to offer hope for a cure.

The church has also developed a Human Outreach Team that provides meals for the area’s homeless.

“This celebration gives us an opportunity to reflect on these and other past accomplishments,” Gill said. “And, we look forward to a vibrant future.”

The celebration will offer a Who’s Who of the church’s clergy and staff. Former pastor and MCC founder, the Rev. Troy Perry, will be on hand Jan. 20 for a book signing and the Rev. Nancy Wilson, the new UFMCC moderator, will be honored with a celebration service Jan. 22.

On Jan. 21, the congregation and friends will take part in a celebration banquet.

King of Peace hasn’t always been at its current address of 3150 Fifth Ave. N. In fact, the church started very modestly in a private home in Seminole. The Rev. Gloria Merrill met with 12 others on that night to initiate King of Peace’s first worship service – a far cry from today’s average of 300 each week.

The group moved from one rented location to another – including the Largo Theater. In 1983, King of Peace hired its first full-time pastor, the Rev. Fred Williams. The church purchased a building known as “The Yellow House” on First Avenue North in 1984, and it relocated to a former funeral home on Ninth Avenue North in 1985.

“At the Ninth Avenue building, we worshiped in old restaurant chairs in a building known for the concrete relief of Jesus on the front,” said Phillip Ketchum, King of Peace archivist. “We finally purchased pews from a Lutheran church.”

In 1990, King of Peace bought the Fifth Avenue Cinema building – its current location. The former theater was in major disrepair but a team of volunteers renovated the entire building. Today the building not only houses the church, but the local offices of Equality Florida.

In 1995, Gill began his tenure at King of Peace. Rev. Lorraine Brock, director of worship and congregational life, and new music director Jaye Sheldon joined shortly afterwards.

For more information on the church and for a listing of anniversary activities, visit KingofPeaceMCC.com or call (727) 323-5857. ♡ Staff report

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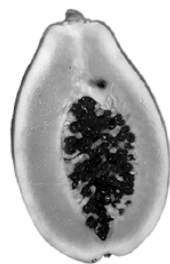
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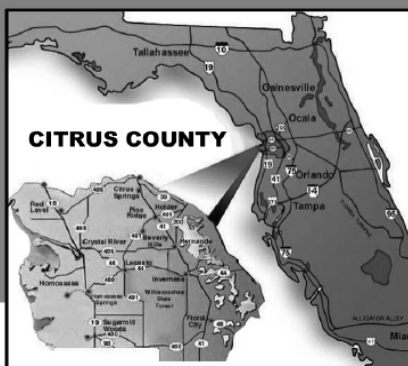
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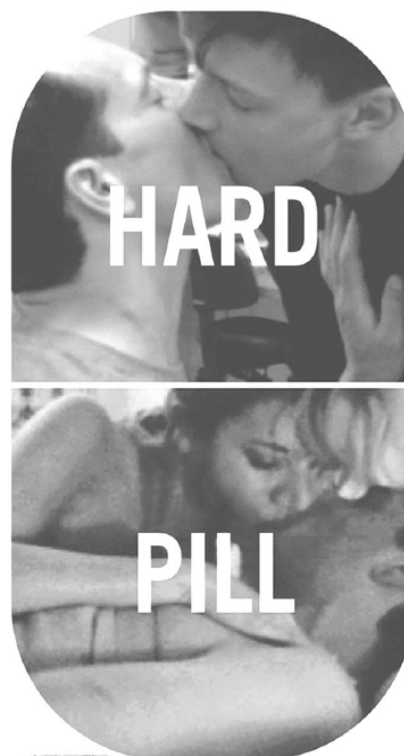
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SARASOTA

'BAPTISTS' PROTEST CHARLOTTE GSA

PORT CHARLOTTE – The students of Port Charlotte High School in Charlotte County wanted to send a simple message — “Foster a more understanding and tolerant community on campus and in the area.”

So they formed a gay-straight alliance.

In late December, the alliance drew the attention of the ever-vigilant Westboro Baptist Church, the anti-gay congregation led by Rev. Fred Phelps and made infamous by protesting at Matthew Shepherd's funeral.

About 20 members of the Westboro congregation stood outside Port Charlotte High School with signs claiming “God hates fags” and “Thank God for dead soldiers.” Members of the church said they wanted to make sure that the community understood that gays should not be tolerated. The group believes homosexuality goes against the Bible.

“That's our job, to deliver that message,” Rebekah Phelps-Davis told the *Charlotte Sun*. “These children are being taught from the time they are in kindergarten to be gay.”

Children with the protesters were encouraged to kick balled-up American flags and hold signs saying “Fag Xmas.”

On the other side of the barricade, nearly 100 counter-protesters supported the

school and its GSA.

“The parents of these children don't need these morons here,” retired U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Don Pedriali told the *Sun*. “They're a hate group hiding behind the first amendment.”

Residents and students from as far north as Tampa and as far south as Fort Myers came to the counter-protest to support the GSA, which was formed in September. One Lakewood Ranch student held a sign proclaiming “Love is never an insult to God.”

While the protest raged outside, students were taking mid-term exams. Administrators did not allow PCHS students or members of the GSA to interact with the protestors in any way. GSA president Asher Levine was surprised by all of the attention.

“I can't believe the chaos this has caused,” Levine told the *Charlotte Sun*. “When I finally saw them (the protestors), it was so serious.”

As a silent counter-protest of their own, GSA members and other PCHS students wore white to represent purity and planned to take a vow of silence for the day. The protest also motivated Levine to pass out fliers explaining the GSA's mission. *W* Steve Blanchard

SARASOTA BRIEFS

ALSO OUT YOUTH SELLS OUT BLOCK FOR TOMLIN SHOW

ALSO Out Youth, Sarasota's award-winning GLBT youth support group, has sold out a preferred block of 300 tickets for “An Evening of Classic Lily Tomlin” at the Van Wezel Center on Sunday, March 5. But tickets are still available at \$49 and \$60. The show features an evening of Tomlin's “greatest hits” with more than a dozen of her famous characters, including precocious Edith Ann, gossipy Ernestine, matronly Judith Beasley and charmingly schizophrenic Trudy. ALSO Out Youth provides peer support services, social activities, educational programs, workshops, advocacy and referrals for GLBT youth ages 13-21. For information, contact Kiki Towhill at (941) 951-2576.

BUSINESS GUILD MEETS JANUARY 19

The Southwest Florida Business Guild will hold their January general membership meeting on Monday, January 16, from 6-8 p.m. at the Waterside Room at The Quay. The fee for members is \$10, \$15 for non-members. For more information visit www.swfbg.com.

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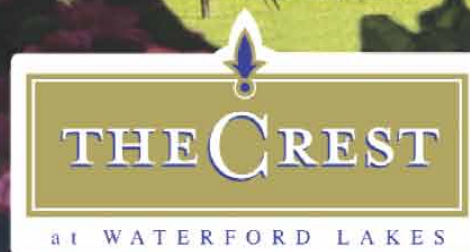
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ORLANDO

COMMUNITY CELEBRATES LIFE OF LONGTIME ACTIVIST REED

ORLANDO - The large extended family of Lorraine K. Reed gathered at Joy MCC Jan. 6-7 to celebrate her efforts as a GLBT community leader and as an advocate for the disadvantaged, as well as her sense of humor and her love of animals.

Reed, 60, died Jan. 1 from an aneurysm. She leaves her wife, Penny Reed, several godchildren and a multitude of pets.

A native of Massachusetts and a former religious sister, Reed moved to Florida in the 1980s. She became active in community efforts quickly, serving on the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Community Center's board of directors for several years, working with its Spectrum Awards and the annual pride picnic, and helped create the GLBCC Endowment Fund.

A singer popular among the ranks of the Orlando Gay Chorus, Reed also worked part-time at EPCOT. Many recalled her infectious sense of humor, as well as the way she blended the image of a tattooed biker with that of a compassionate friend.

But her work with Joy MCC's food bank and Thanksgiving Food Drive drew upon more of Reed's talents and efforts, and many attending the Saturday morning memorial services remarked about them.

Reed helped initiate the John C. Garrett Memorial Thanksgiving Food Basket Project, which provides dinners to



LORRAINE K. REED remained instrumental with the Joy MCC Thanksgiving Food Drive.

more than 10,000 people throughout Central Florida every year.

Balancing a frozen turkey upon her casket, Bubbalou's Bodacious Barbecue founder and longtime Thanksgiving food drive

supporter Sam Meiner laughed that it was difficult to refuse Reed when she would call for more and more contributions. She was at it again in 2005, leading the efforts to collect money, supplies and manpower for the Thanksgiving baskets and dinners.

She was also integral in the creation of the Winnie Toal Food Bank at Joy MCC, one of the most active church-based food banks in the area. In lieu of flowers, her family asked for memorial contributions to the food bank.

In a tragic coda to the memorial services, a 33-year-old security escort leading the funeral procession to a Winter Park cemetery was struck and killed by another driver. Police are investigating the incident. **W Dave Wiethop**

BUSINESS AS USUAL AFTER GLBCC DIRECTOR RESIGNS

ORLANDO - Despite rumors that the area's Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Community Center is undergoing difficulties following the resignation of long-time director Bob King, Center board president David Schuler said that it is "business as usual" at the Center.

"With Bob's resignation, our number one priority was to not impact the 18 groups that meet here throughout the month," said Schuler, adding that the Center serves 1000 people monthly. Schuler praised King's devotion to the Center, saying he stepped up to the plate to assist when no one else in the community seemed to want to help.

Schuler said the goals for the Center include looking for a salaried executive director to manage the Center's operations; King had served in his position as a volunteer. The building's ongoing maintenance issues have made budgeting for the position difficult. Because of that, the Center's board is also looking at the possibility of relocating.

"We know our base is in the central core area of Orlando," Schuler said. "We're not looking to move to Alafaya Trail or to the UCF area. Our core is the 32801 zip code area. We'd like to stay if

possible, but real estate is quite expensive in that area."

If the Center does relocate, Schuler said they will probably sell all three properties that they own. GLBCC owns the Center building in addition to the two adjoining properties, Forbidden City Chinese Restaurant to the North and Statscript Pharmacy to the South. Still, he said, there are leases to be considered if that option is pursued.

"Our mortgage balloons in three or four years," Schuler said. "We would like to make a decision before that. If we stay where we are we'll have to look into refinancing the mortgage at that time."

While the Center is continuing its focus on fundraising, Schuler said that the organization's foremost goal is to continue to provide a home to the numerous groups that use the facility.

"One of the new groups we have is a crystal meth support group," Schuler said, "We are one of only four places in the state offering that type of support group." **W Kirk Hartlage**

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BOY ON BOY KISS REMOVED FROM HOLIDAY PLAY

ORLANDO - When is a kiss not just a kiss? When it's cut from a theatrical production because it's between two boys.

The Orlando-UCF Shakespeare Festival did strong business over the holidays with its new comedy, *Every Christmas Story Ever Told*. Featuring three actors taking on 35 characters and numerous yuletide clichés, the show mocked numerous Christmas conventions.

One of the targets: *The Gift of the Magi* — the story of the poor couple who sold their most valued items to give one another things that they would cherish.

Because the cast was comprised of three men, the show featured two men as the heterosexual couple. At one point they kiss — and get a big laugh.

According to a cast member who didn't want to be identified, the kiss was in the script during a reading of it last year, but it was taken out during rehearsals this fall.

"To be honest, it wasn't a real integral moment in the show, but it was a fun moment for the audience during the reading," the performer said. He wasn't sure why the one man-on-man kiss was excised, but it didn't affect the scene badly.

"It wasn't a make-or-break. In fact,

it made the scene work better without it," he said.

The performer said that other "suggestive" elements of the show were toned down, possibly reflecting that the show may have a more "family-friendly" audience. Even then, the publicity for *Every Christmas Show* implored that the play was not suitable for children ages 10 and younger.

Rumors have circulated that the kiss was cut because of pressures from corporate sponsors, Jim Helsinger, the UCF-Shakespeare Festival's artistic director, could not be reached for comment.

Even if that was the case — and the cast member would not comment on those rumors — he did point out that theatre companies make tough decisions all of the time.

"You have to choose your battles, and make sure that these are worth fighting for. This kiss was kind of a throwaway," he said. "It's not like performing *Gross Indecency: The Trials of Oscar Wilde* (another UCF-Shakespeare Festival show, which discussed at length the gay writer's penchant for men) and cutting a kiss from that." **W Dave Wiethop**

ORLANDO



This is the third season that the Human Rights Campaign and Showtime have teamed up for this event.

WOMEN TURN OUT FOR L WORD PREVIEW

ORLANDO - *The L Word's* Tina and Bette may be trying a new method of child rearing where they don't put baby Angelica down, but those in attendance at the hit show's third season kickoff party in Orlando weren't afraid to put down nearly \$3,000 in donations to the Human Rights Campaign.

Showtime sponsored the sneak preview party with the nation's largest GLBT rights advocacy group in locations across the country on Sunday, Jan. 8. HRC Orlando held its party at Pulse nightclub and saw over 300 people attend. Co-chairs Jennifer Foster and John Ruffier were extremely pleased with the turnout.

"We raised almost \$3,000, based on the suggested \$5 donation at the door, through raffles and an auction of an *L Word* autographed poster," said Ruffier. Foster added that the group's 20 volunteers were also able to recruit 25 additional new members to join the organization.

"It's important to join HRC because we're the largest national lobbying agency that fights for national GLBT rights, which also trickles down to the state and local levels," said Foster. Orlando's chapter was recently designated an "emerging community" by the national organization.

Ruffier said the local chapter's goals

for this year are to sustain the momentum that the group has started in the community.

"This year we want to continue to outreach to the various groups within the GLBT community, especially African-Americans, Hispanics and gay parents," said Ruffier. "We've been very fortunate in reaching out to gain lesbian members to HRC, but it was very nice to have a special event targeted just for them. Obviously *The L Word* is a great draw for that." Ruffier added that the premiere drew people who may not normally go out to a bar or club from as far away as Melbourne.

Though Foster is a fan of the show, Ruffier said he had not actively followed the lesbian-focused program. Sunday's event helped Ruffier become quickly educated on the show.

"We had a lot of Shane look-alikes," said Ruffier, laughing. "That's the hip new look, or so I gathered."

In addition to a sneak peak preview of the show's third season opener, DJ Baby Blue also performed and provided music and entertainment for the mostly female crowd. An equally successful event was also hosted by HRC Tampa Bay at Georgie's Alibi in St. Pete. ▼ *Kirk Hartlage*



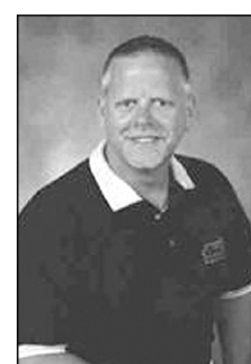
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STATE

STATE BRIEFS

NEW FELLOWSHIP CREATED TO ADVANCE GLBT RIGHTS

Thanks in part to a \$50,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Broward, the ACLU Foundation of Florida has created the John C. Graves Fellowship to advance GLBT rights. The foundation has also recently hired attorney Robert Rosenwald Jr. to lead the group's statewide efforts to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation. During the one-year fellowship, the Graves Fellow will focus on a variety of public policy issues that impact the gay community, including the anti-gay initiative threatening protections for the families of same-sex couples.

GAINESVILLE AIDS MARATHON ORGANIZERS PLEASED BY TURNOUT

Organizers of the December World AIDS Marathon — and its companion HIV and cancer conference and art exhibit — said they were encouraged by the turnout for the first-time effort. Participants came from Europe, Africa and the Caribbean. Organizers said the Dec. 3-4 event had some logistical problems, including some poorly marked paths for the marathon. For more information about the conference and future AIDS awareness efforts, visit richardmbrotsky.org.

STUDENTS SEEKING GSA TOLD TO REAPPLY FOR CLUB STATUS

ST. AUGUSTINE — A group of students seeking to form gay-straight alliance at St. Augustine high school have been told by their school superintendent that they must re-apply to gain full club status after their first application was denied.

Karen Doering, regional counsel for the National Center for Lesbian Rights and legal counsel for the student group, said the school district was making the students jump through hoops that would not be required of other groups.

Pedro Menendez High School senior Marissa Burrier submitted a request to form

a GSA to her school principal, Robert Allten, earlier this school year. After considering the request for several weeks, Allten denied the request, stating that he would allow an unofficial "tolerance group" that would not be considered an official school club and would not have the privileges other clubs receive.

"I anticipate that the GSA will receive quick approval," Doering said. "If not, or if they attempt to add any restrictions or additional requirements on the GSA that other groups are not required to comply with, we will file suit." ▼ *Kirk Hartlage*

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HEADLINE NEWS

LESBIAN NAMED TO MAJOR NEW YORK COUNCIL POST

NEW YORK - A lesbian now serves in New York's second-most-powerful political office. Christine Quinn, 39, who represents the west side of Manhattan, which includes Chelsea and Greenwich Village, has been elected as the speaker of the city council.

She had been a leading contender among the seven people vying for the position, but all opposition to her collapsed over the New Year's weekend when the powerful Democratic political organizations in the boroughs of Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx endorsed her candidacy. Her leading opponent then threw his support to Quinn. That made the Jan. 4 vote of the 51-member City Council all but pro forma.

Quinn has worked as a tenant's rights organizer, executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, and chief of staff to then-Councilman Tom Duane. She won a special election to succeed the openly gay Duane on the City Council, when he moved on to the State Senate in 1998.

She has been a strong advocate on GLBT issues, championed progressive health benefits and labor laws, and was among the leaders in successfully opposing Mayor Michael Bloomberg's push to build a football stadium in her district.

The speaker is considered the second-most-powerful elected office in New York.



New York city council member CHRISTINE QUINN represents the gay-friendly Chelsea and Greenwich Village areas.

It helps to shape legislation and spending priorities on the city's \$50.2 billion budget.

Quinn's election "means a lot," said Ken Sherrill, a professor of political science at Hunter University and a long time Democratic

activist in New York. "It's a sign of the coming of age of the community and a transformation of New York City politics."

He recounted how the last three mayors of New York have been supportive of nondiscrimination legislation that included gays, but until recently, past leaders of the council had bottled up that legislation. Quinn's ascension to the office, he said, "is a delicious irony."

"She is getting this position because she is an effective legislative leader who has enabled other members of the council to pass their own legislation," Sherrill said.

▼ Bob Roehr

NATION BRIEFS

BRITISH SAME-SEX COUPLES NOW ALLOWED TO ADOPT

It gets better and better for gays and lesbians in the U.K.: Just days after same-sex couples began taking part in civil partnerships, they're now allowed to adopt children in the biggest overhaul of British adoption laws ever. Previously, same-sex couples in England and Wales had to choose which partner would adopt the child, giving the other fewer parental rights. The British Parliament approved this measure three years ago, putting the law into effect Jan. 1.

RIKER'S ISLAND CLOSES ITS GAY, TRANSGENDER HOUSING

One of the nation's few jail dormitories specifically for gay or transgender prisoners is closing on Rikers Island, prompting complaints from some activists who say it is a needed safe haven. Plans call for the specialized unit to be replaced with a new protective custody system that would be available to prisoners who feel threatened, regardless of their sexual orientation. The change has alarmed members of some civil liberties and gay rights groups that note the new housing would likely be more restrictive than the old unit.

HONG KONG'S GOVERNMENT FIGHTS SODOMY RULING

The fight for gay rights in Hong Kong may be far from over. The city-state's government is appealing an August decision that found its sodomy laws unconstitutional and discriminatory. One of the laws demands a life sentence for gay sex when one or both of the men are younger than 21. The same punishment applies to sodomy between straight couples, but in that case only the man — not the woman if she is under 21 — is considered a criminal. There are no corresponding laws for lesbians.

GIRLS SUE SCHOOL FOR ACCUSING THEM OF BEING LESBIANS

Two 16-year-olds who were expelled from a Lutheran high school in Riverside, Calif., because they were suspected of being lesbians have sued the school. They want to return to school, receive damages and prevent the school from excluding gays and lesbians ever again. The lawsuit alleges that the school's principal called the girls into his office, grilled them on their sexual orientation and "coerced" one girl into saying she loved the other. The principal told the girls' parents that he had seen no physical contact between the girls, but noted that their friendship was "more characteristic of a lesbian one."



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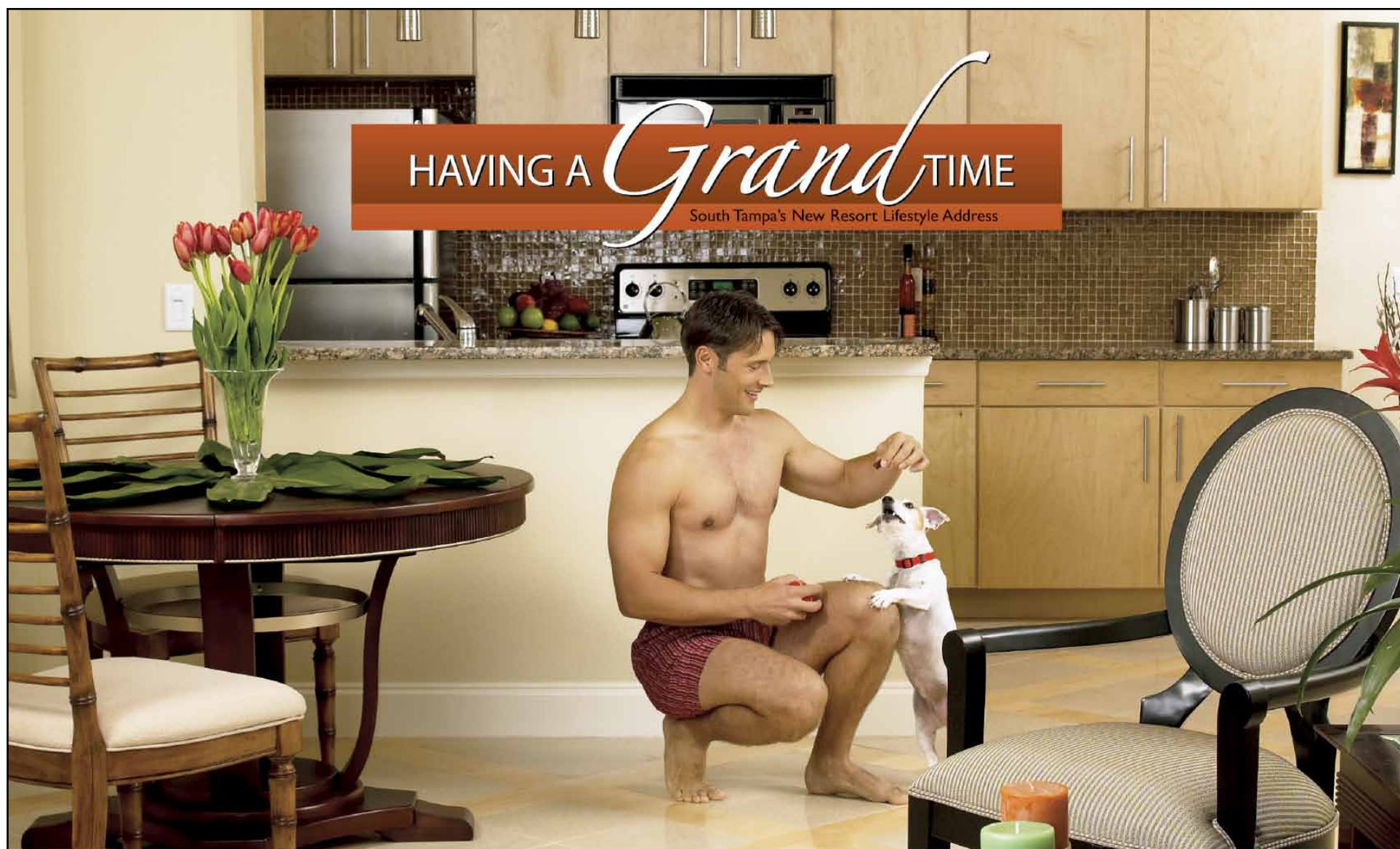
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BUSINESS

GAYDAYS.COM EVENTS RETURN TO ROYAL PLAZA

ORLANDO – With a less than six months until Gay Days Weekend, promoters have begun to announce their entertainment schedules. The actual Gay Day – the centerpiece of nearly a week of parties, shows and other events – has been set for Saturday, June 3.

GayDayS.com organizers have announced their events will return to the Royal Plaza Hotel, which will also serve as their host hotel. The group's events, which start May 30, will include a cruise, pool parties, a fashion show and the third annual Roundup. The Roundup, this year titled "We Are Not Saints," offers 12-step educational programs and spiritual-growth activities for gays and lesbians in recovery.

The eighth annual expo will also be held at the Hotel Royal Plaza June 1-3 and will include the Gay Days wedding expo. Vendor space has sold out for the past five years, and applications are now available. For details about the GayDayS.com events, visit GayDayS.com.

Johnny Chisholm, who last year purchased all of local promoter Mark Baker's events as well Brian Bottorff's

Reunion festivities has announced his 2006 One Mighty Weekend schedule. Beach Ball at Typhoon Lagoon featuring DJ Kimberly S., One Mighty Party at the Disney/MGM Studios featuring DJs Tony Moran and Brett Henrichsen and Colosseum at Hard Rock Live featuring DJ Tracy Young will each cost \$85. Magic Journey after-hours parties at Arabian Nights will feature DJs Roland Belmares, Abel and Manny Lehman and will cost \$50 each night. DJs Alyson Calagna, Don Bishop and David Knapp will be the featured spinners at the Reunion pool parties at the Buena Vista Palace, the new name for the Wyndham Palace Resort and Spa.

Package plans are available for the various parties and will run from \$245 to \$525. An entire schedule can be found at OneMightyWeekend.com. The Parliament House Resort is still in negotiations for its entertainment offerings but is expected to include three big-name performers familiar to the GLBT community. ▼ *Kirk Hartlage*

BUSINESS BRIEFS

GROUP BOYCOTTS MATTEL OVER 'TRANSGENDER' ISSUE

A Far Right Christian group wants to boycott Mattel for "overstepping a line" and joining forces with the "transgender movement." The Concerned Women for America points to a poll on Mattel Web site for Barbie, which asks visitors if they are "a boy," "a girl" or "I don't know." Mattel officials said this was a human error and that it should have stated, "I don't want to say." GenderPAC's executive director, Riki Wilchins, was incensed. "So far they've attacked Winnie the Pooh, Tinky Winky, SpongeBob SquarePants and now Barbie for either sex or gender issues," continued Wilchins. "What's next? Finding that Bugs Bunny liked kissing Elmer Fudd?"

WAL-MART WORKING TO MARKET TO GAYS, LESBIANS

Wal-Mart may say it rolls back the prices, but CEO Lee Scott said he wants to roll out the red carpet to gays and lesbians – as well as Hispanics, Asians, African-Americans, women, Native Americans and the disabled. Recently, gay Wal-Mart employees have begun to advise the company on better ways to market to the community in an on-going effort to boost sales. Scott told the Associated Press the company is also looking at several ecological initiatives, including creation of new "green" stores that would use less fuel and resources and offer new lines of organic cotton items.

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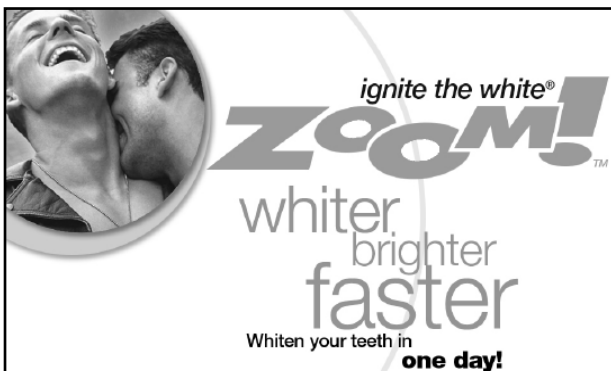
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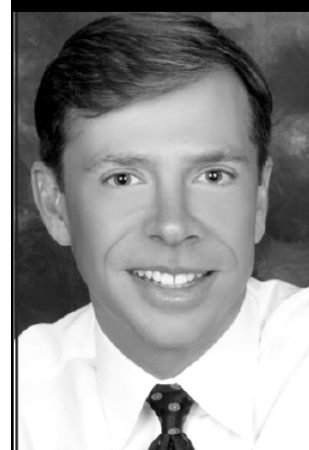
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SPIRITUALITY

SPIRITUALITY BRIEFS

TRINITY MCC HOSTS ALL-CHURCH RETREAT JAN. 13-15

Church of the Trinity MCC will host an all-church retreat Jan. 13-15 at the DaySpring Conference Center in Ellenton. The weekend will look at the theme of "What Are You Looking For: Moving from Resolutions to Intentions," led by the Rev. Mona West and the Rev. S. David Wynn. The overnight retreat costs \$50 per person and includes dinner, some meals and the overnight accommodations. For more information, call (941) 355-0847.

UFMCC TO CONDUCT AFRICAN DESCENT CONFERENCE IN TAMPA

Mark the calendars now: The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches will host its 2006 People of African Descent Conference in Tampa in April, hosted by MCC Tampa. The conference will be open to everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity. The Rev. Lynice Pinkard of San Francisco will serve as the conference keynote speaker. Visit MCCConferences.org for details.

CHURCH LEAVES UCC OVER SAME-SEX MARRIAGE ISSUE

MILLSTADT, Ill. - A 170-year-old congregation outside of St. Louis, Mo., is breaking away from the United Church of Christ, citing the denomination's support of same-sex marriages and abortion rights has eroded its membership.

The Zion United Church of Christ accused the denomination in a written statement of promoting "unbiblical teachings and practices." The church's pastor said the discontent had been building for some time.

"The congregation was growing more

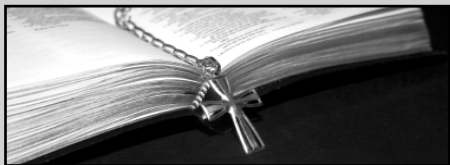
and more upset over where they felt the denomination was going," said the Rev. Darrell Weber. "That has shown in a decline in membership and in giving that goes back 15 years."

Weber said Zion's membership has decreased from 1,000 members 15 years ago to about 550, primarily because of the United Church of Christ's support for the ordination of gay clergy, same-sex marriage and pro-choice rights.

The support for marriage equality should have come as little surprise to UCC members, as the church has been on the forefront among mainline denominations in supporting the GLBT community.

Two months before the Stonewall Riots in New York in 1969, UCC leaders declared their opposition to all laws that criminalized private same-sex relations between adults. The leaders also voiced their opposition to the ban on gay and lesbian U.S. service members.

Local denomination officials say they were "saddened" by the news. The Rev. Gene Kraus, interim minister for the United Church of Christ's Illinois South Conference, said Zion's leadership prevented the denomination from reaching out to the membership before the vote was held. ▽ *Staff and wire reports*



[daytona/space_coast]

Community Catholic Church

Open and welcoming congregation. 1124-FF Beville Road, Daytona Beach. Call Chris: (386)441-8431.

Hope MCC

All faiths welcome. 500 S. Ridgewood Ave. Services: Sundays 11 am, Wednesdays 7 pm. (386) 254-0993.

[orlando]

Congregation of Reformed Judaism

Shabbat Fridays 7 pm. 1st Fridays preceded by 6 pm dinner. Rabbi Steven W. Engel. www.crjorlando.org.

DignityOrlando

Mass and social hour 5 pm Sundays at GLBCC, 946 N. Mills Ave. www.dignityorlando.org.

First Unitarian Church of Orlando

Worship in a gay-friendly environment. Sundays 10:30 am. 1901 E. Robinson St. (407) 898-3621. Rev. Marni Harmony.

Gateway for Integrated Consciousness

Spiritually-based transformation-oriented workshop for GLBT and friendly people. www.mensinnerjourney.com Call Dan: (407) 895-1194.

Good Shepherd HIV/AIDS Support Group

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

Hope Unites Church

9 a.m. Sundays, Rollins College Chapel in Winter Park. Call (407) 247-5294.

Integrity

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

Joy MCC

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

Mid-Week Oasis Fellowship

Spirit-filled worship and Bible study. Weds., 7:30 p.m. For more info, (407) 869-8308.

New Hope United Methodist Church

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

Orlando Church of Religious Science

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

Pathways Ministries & Church

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

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University Unitarian Universalist Society

spirituality_listings

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

Uplift Ministries, INC.

Minority-focused ministry meets Sundays at 10:50 a.m. at House of Power, 750 S. Orange Blossom Tr. Discussion Tuesday at 8 p.m. HIV counseling/testing Wednesday at 6 p.m. (407) 839-5051 or email upcenter@bellsouth.net.

[tampa_bay]

American Catholic Church

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

Beth Rachamim Synagogue

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

Breath of Life Fellowship CC

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

Christ the Cornerstone Church

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

Congregation B'nai Emmunah

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

Faith Presbyterian Church of Dunedin

Part of the "More Light Presbyterians" seeking full participation of GLBT people of faith. Services are Sundays at 10:30 a.m. at 5 Patricia Ave., Dunedin. (727) 233-2956 or www.faith-pc.org.

Fellowship/Bible Study

For information, call (813) 494-5736.

Franciscan Center

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

Francis House

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

Holy Spirit Ecumenical Church

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

Holy Spirit Ecumenical Catholic Church

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

Integrity of Tampa Bay

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

Interweave of Clearwater

Giving support to GLBT Unitarian Universalists and their

heterosexual allies. (727) 531-7704.

King of Peace MCC

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

MCC of Tampa

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

Potter's House Fellowship

Spirit-filled ministry offering hope and the love of Christ for all people. Sunday services at 10 a.m. at 3702 W. Kennedy Blvd. (813) 238-6330. or www.pottershousefellowship.com or PoHoFellow@aol.com.

Rainbow Promise MCC

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

Spirit of Life MCC

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

St. George's Anglican Church

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

Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater

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

Unitarian Universalist Church of Brooksville

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

Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Pete

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

Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa

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

Unity Church of Today

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

[sarasota]

UU Rainbow Outreach of Tampa Bay

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

Church of the Trinity MCC

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

Dignity of Sarasota

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

▽ Updates? Email changes to: Kirk@watermarkonline.com

ANTI-GAY PASTOR ARRESTED FOR SOLICITING SEX

OKLAHOMA CITY - A staunchly anti-gay member of the Southern Baptist Convention's executive committee was arrested in Oklahoma City for propositioning a male police officer.

Lonnie Latham, senior pastor at South Tulsa Baptist Church, was booked on a misdemeanor charge of offering to engage in an act of lewdness. He was found in a parking lot which is in an area where the public has complained about male prostitutes flagging down cars. Plainclothes officers were investigating these complaints.

Shortly after his arrest, Latham told a television station that "I was set up. I was in the area pastoring to police." Officers said he had been seeking oral sex.

The lewdness charge carries a penalty of up to one year in jail and a \$2,500 fine.

Latham has spoken out against same-sex marriage and in support of a Southern Baptist Convention directive urging its 42,000 churches to befriend gays and lesbians and try to convince them that they can become heterosexual "if they accept Jesus Christ as their savior and reject their 'sinful, destructive lifestyle.'" (AP)

VIEWPOINT



KEEPING AT BAY RESOLVE TO RESPECT THE PRIDE OF OTHERS

By Steve Blanchard

I had an interesting conversation with a friend of mine over the holidays and he surprised me with some of his views. We were making sure our gay chromosomes were active by discussing the upcoming awards shows – from everything from the Grammys to the Academy Awards.

Of course, January through March is awards season and most of us will be either glued to the television or Internet this year to see just how well *Brokeback Mountain* fared at the Golden Globes. Other less-watched programs will dominate the airwaves too. There really does seem to be awards for just about anything these days.

While talking about the chances of a gay epic winning any awards – much less a best picture statue – my buddy brought up the Black Entertainment Television Awards. The cable network says some of its highest ratings come during the awards show – and with good reasons. Live performances, red carpet interviews and entertaining acceptance speeches move the show right along. I can't wait to see the Luther Vandross dedications this year.

It's great that cable – which is now the mainstream media outlet – is so diverse. There's something for everybody.

But this buddy of mine didn't think that was such a great thing. The idea of a "black awards show," he said, is ridiculous and is discriminatory. Where are the white awards shows or the white networks, he wanted to know.

After calmly referring him to CMT and GAC – and any of the original big three networks, I told him I was surprised that a gay man would hold such views. It's the exact same thing as a straight person saying "Where's the straight pride parade this year?"

That sentence is laughable. But how many of us have heard that very sentence muttered during a turbulent 2005 for gay rights in Hillsborough County? Talk show guests, letters to the editor in both mainstream newspapers and people on the sidewalks counter-protesting Equality Florida have all asked that very question.

Any group that wants to celebrate its own achievements should have every right to do so. Whether it's a segment of our society that characterizes itself by race or by orientation shouldn't matter. When a

group that has faced discrimination starts to discriminate against other groups, everyone suffers.

The African-American community has done so much for the nation that there is no way to list every achievement in this limited space. Regardless of your political standing, you can't ignore the achievements of blacks in our society. From Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King to politicians like Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell, that segment of the population has plenty to celebrate.

Why shouldn't that community

celebrate its entertainers? Can you imagine a gay club without the influence of Whitney Houston, Deborah Cox or Patti LaBelle? I didn't think so.

BET

has survived more than a quarter of a century and has paved the way for the GLBT community. Today we have Logo – in some markets – and Q Television. If the folks at BET hadn't taken the initial steps to create a niche network, there's no way we would have the development of these brand new GLBT channels.

Some in the straight African-American community don't appreciate the similarities that many of us see relating to our own present-day struggles. While people like Hillsborough Commissioner

Ronda Storms fight to take recognition and freedoms away from us, we can carry the hope that comes with history. If the African-American community survived its civil rights movement, we can survive ours.

We should be thankful to the successes of blacks in our community and in our country, not condemning them for celebrating those achievements.

It's a new year and everyone is looking to the future. Everyone promises to enter the gym and eat right. Hopefully everyone will stick to that.

But here's a resolution for us all to consider: Attend a pride event other than a gay one. For example, St. Petersburg offers a Caribbean festival every year. Check it out and see what that community has to say for itself. During the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, visit a church recognizing his achievements. If you don't know much about this man, educate yourself. See why he is "such a big deal."

Then look around at our gay pride celebrations and thank those who aren't directly involved in the fight for our rights for being there to support us. Imagine what we could accomplish if every minority group supported each other. Then we might really need to help organize a "straight pride day."

Steve Blanchard is Watermark's Tampa Bay bureau writer. He can be reached at SteveB@watermark-online.com. ▼

When a group that have faced discrimination starts to discriminate against other groups, everyone suffers.



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VIEWPOINT



VOICES IN MY HEAD SEEKING RESPONSE IN MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

By Bryan L. Middour

"Cast me gently into morning/For the night has been unkind." — Sarah McLachlan

This lyric summarizes the year that I've just left. I feel as if I've been cast out from a long and unkind night into a bright and unexpected day. What remains to be seen is what will become of it and of me. I feel the past days have strained what little stamina I have and my mind, body and soul are about to be pushed to their very limits.

So what of my mind? This is hardly unexplored territory, after all I lived with depression for decades and I've been in analysis for a good number of years. Let me state clearly the illness was always there, AIDS only made it worse and at times deadly. Yet as one point of the triad which makes up my intellect, I feel it the most friable, without my daily regime of antidepressants and anti-psychotics I'd find myself falling down that dark rabbit hole of blackness in short order.

I'm very thankful of the mental health staff in my life, this includes family and friends – they are important

in keeping me buoyed above the dark and dangerous waters within me. It's paramount for me to keep this in mind, because when I feel a little "down" it's a fair guess I'm really drowning in those black waters. A call, an e-mail or a short trip to Publix is in order to float me back into the thick of things. Is it any wonder that I volunteer three or more days a week?

And what of my body? I've a new little friend at my left elbow; he's called a PICC line. He's the permanent IV catheter I've had since September and it looks as though he's here to stay to do battle with my other little friend, candida albicans, better known as thrush. In my case not only is this fungus in my mouth and throat, but also in most of my digestive track. It's so much fun; the diarrhea alone keeps me in stitches!

As for the rest of my corporeal self, I'm getting by. This means I'm getting by on a 100th of what a non-infected

person gets by on. Meet my T-cells: They're named Hughie, Dewey and Louie; I pray daily that the three of them are causing mischief and making more T-cells as well as teaching these newbies what to attack and destroy. As for my viral load, it's measured in the millions, I'm simply awash in virus, but damn it! I'm still here!

Because I've burned through all of the available anti-viral medications on the market, I've been relegated to playing a waiting game for the next new miracle drug to make an appearance. This is a little like Russian roulette, you never quite know if what you're taking

will help you or kill you. I'm faithful to my regime; I take my meds like clockwork, but something in my makeup doesn't foster the least little give I need to make some headway against this nasty bug.

As for spirit, I've got that in bundles. Without my constant back talk to the Creator, I don't think I'd have

made it this far and in such good condition. When you amaze the docs around you with your ability to keep plugging along despite the obstacles in your path; that speaks to having God in the details. I detail my demands for life

in everyway and everyday when I talk to God. Yet I don't forget to say "thank you" or "please," as it's only polite when you're dealing with an omnipotent being.

I try very hard to think of others and to focus on what I can do for them. In my book, I'm not as important as the folks around me are. Whether they're PWAs or not, for me it's all about lending a hand, an ear or a leg up to the one who really is in need. This keeps my spirit polished like a brand new penny, I find it amazing the amount of good that can come from one simple act of kindness, and it can literally take your breath away.

As for my mind, body and soul, the triad that keeps me going, I know the dire importance of keeping them fed with the very best I can bring to the table. My mind needs knowledge; my body needs its meds and nutritious meals, and my soul not only needs hope, it needs to be exercised just as my body does. These three seemingly simple things are really incredibly complex, and they have just delivered me into this bright new day.

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

Meet my T-cells: I pray daily that the three of them are causing mischief and making more T-cells as well as teaching these newbies what to destroy.



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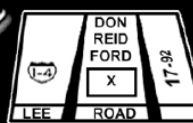
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VIEWPOINT

Mail



SMITH MAKES A GREAT POINT ABOUT 'LIVING OUT'

I like what Nadine Smith said in her recent *Watermark* column about the need to not just "come out," but "live out" as well.

It is a pain when a simple moment like buying flowers at the grocery store causes the clerk to say, "Your girlfriend is going to be happy." At that moment I have to decide whether I want to take the time to correct her or just get my change and leave. Either option can sometimes seem like a no-win situation. Leaving without saying anything is one more time society succeeded in shutting me up.

Saying something makes it appear to the clerk that I'm making a big deal out of nothing, etc.

I try my best to "live out." Carrying my sign stating that I'm a gay school librarian during the St. Pete Pride march and identifying myself as that in the papers and announcing that I am a gay man and a school librarian to the county commissioners was not done for attention. I did it for the young gays and lesbians who may be scared in the same way that I was as a kid.

The other day, I was in a mall and ran into another teacher I hadn't seen in years. She was with her partner, who recognized me from my problems with e-mails in the public school system. She thanked me sincerely for standing up for what I believed in. Still, I'm amazed at the number of people who can't — or don't.

My partner, Tim, has a bumper sticker that reads, "My Family Values: Gay Rights" and straight men and women, as well as lesbians compliment him on it. Still, no gay man has mentioned it, and I think that's due to self-hatred. Sure, they'll put a Human Rights Campaign sticker on their cars because it's "safe," but you won't see a

rainbow flag. Too many people know what that means these days.

Nadine Smith said that we internalize this self-hatred. I see it in myself and in others.

Bart Birdsall
Tampa

GLBCC'S BOB KING WILL BE MISSED

I have had the honor of working with Bob King at Orlando's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Community Center over the last few years. He is a remarkable person who has always given 125% of himself to the center.

It has been because of his reputation and commitment that the center has been able to pick itself up from its past problems. Bob has been the foundation for all the events, activities, etc., that have happened there since he volunteered as the administrator, working to make every event the best it could possibly be.

The Christmas in July fund-raiser was only the tip of the iceberg. Without his help, the Rainbow Health Fair would not have been as successful as it has been in the three years that I have helped with it.

He will be greatly missed. I know many people have come to the center because they knew that Bob represented honesty, reliability and stability. I, for one, want to publicly say, "Thank You, Bob King."

Linda "P"
Via e-mail

Letters to the editor are always welcome, but they may be cut for length and clarity. Drop them in the mail to Editor, Watermark, P.O. Box 533655, Orlando, FL 32803 or write to editor@watermark-online.com. ▼

THE DATING DIET
LEARN A LITTLE FROM CLUB ETIQUETTE 101

By Anthony Paull

There's nothing more exhilarating than Saturday night at the club, this we know. The flashing lights, the sweaty bodies, the promises we never intend to keep — these are the things that make gay life worth living. But sometimes, amidst the allure of temptation and sin, we gay men simply forget that there are rules of proper club etiquette to which one must adhere.

First and foremost, we seriously need to talk about the vintage T. If you do choose to wear such a common item to the club, please be advised: Such a T can not truly be deemed vintage if you purchased it that very same day on the clearance rack at Target. And guess what? It makes no difference if you spent \$100 on it at Abercrombie & Fitch either.

As the indigenous people who crafted the T will tell you, go sniff under the moth balls in your Great-Uncle Louie's cedar closet if you truly desire the real thing.

Moving on to shoes: It is highly suggested that your stick to the basics. Black, brown, and shiny are always good. And unless you're on stage wearing a bad wig and lip-synching to Shakira, anything with a heel is not a keen idea, even if you are vertically challenged.

And in case you think sneakers are acceptable, they're not. Long gone are the high school dances where you ruled the gymnasium in Converse All-Stars. You're a big boy now, and such a tragic wardrobe flaw has been known to make certain gay people be mistaken for straight. And in case you're wondering about sandals, save yourself the grief. Nobody wants to see your toes unless they're really into kink.

Hats are a tricky affair. Please note: Such an accessory is deemed acceptable if, and only if, it flatters your personality. In laymen's terms, no cowboy hats unless you truly are corn-fed and living on a farm. Also, wearing a hat to disguise a bald spot is a serious no-no.

Remember: showing off the real you is much more attractive. Besides, the Daddy Warbucks vibe can be quite sexy. And in case Ashton Kutcher hasn't informed you yet, trucker hats are over, even if they are strategically placed off-kilter.

Now about technique. Please be

aware that what you do, who you do and what you say speak volumes about you. It is one thing to have a tasteless hook-up back at your place, and quite another to expose spectators to it on the dance floor. Please note that the lavatory is not your personal brothel either. In other words, if the stars align and your very own Greek god enters the club, be a dove and escort him somewhere peaceful instead of swallowing his tongue in the john.

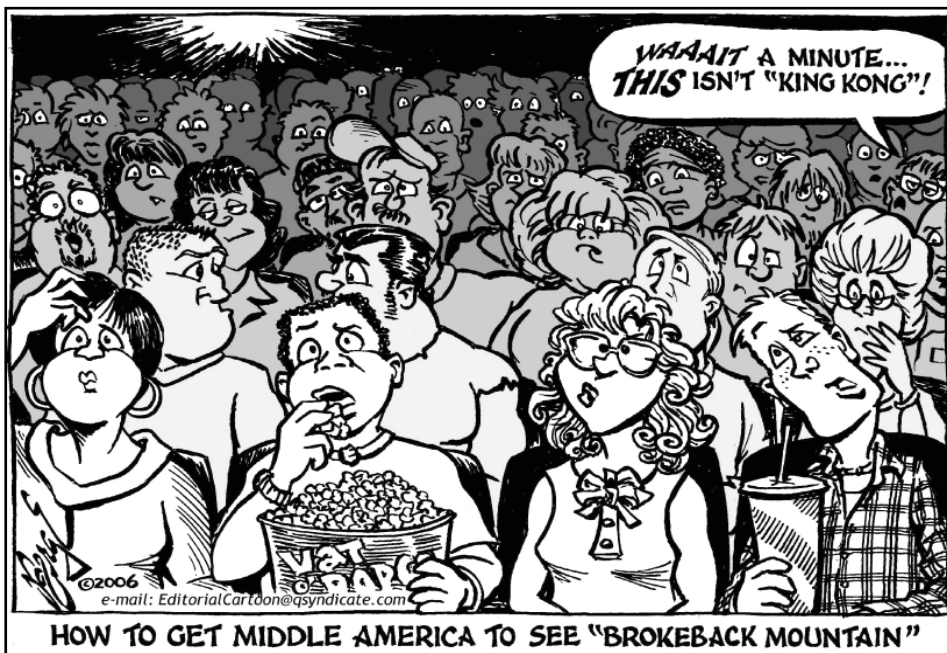
A shout out to all the peeps prepared to dance: The dance floor is not your personal runway. Please save any delusions of grandeur for when you're back at home practicing that dated Tyra Banks routine. Do us a favor and put down that lit cigarette as well. Beside the risk of causing an unsightly burn, cigarettes breed cancer. And non-smokers are said to be quite fond of their lungs.

Just a few side notes: When it comes to glow sticks—just say no. And take a break if you become too sweaty. No fellow dancers want to bathe in the shower of you.

Finally, cheers to the good chaps who can properly purchase a drink at the club. In case you do not fall under this category, please take heed that tipping a bartender anything less than a dollar is rude.

So is knocking over a stranger's drink and not offering to replace it. The type of drink you consume is your choice. But remember: unless it's raining men, tiny pink umbrellas in fruity drinks are unacceptable, and consuming beer from a can is blasphemous.

Anthony Paull is a Sarasota writer who can be reached at anthony@watermarkonline.com. ▼



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HARD ROCK TROCKS

For one member of Les Ballets
Trockadero de Monte Carlo, it's a trip home
By Kirk Hartlage



Winter Haven native CHASE JOHNSEY (right) supports two of his fellow Trocks ... for the time being.

Gays and lesbians have long embraced cultural offerings that blur gender lines. Boy George, Annie Lennox, RuPaul, *Kids in the Hall*, *Little Britain* – just about any form of entertainment where the boys are girls or the girls are boys is quickly adopted by the GLBT community as its own.

No surprise then that Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo – the all-male professional ballet troupe that performs classical ballets and modern dances both as men and as women – has been loved by GLBT audiences since its inception in 1974. The company performs a full repertoire

of ballet and modern dance, including classical and original works in faithful renditions of those styles. That men dance all the parts – heavy bodies delicately balancing on toes as swans, water sprites, romantic princesses, angst-ridden Victorian ladies – enhances rather than mocks the spirit of dance as an art form, and provides a unique comedic element to each performance.

The Orlando Ballet and The Maitland Art Center have joined forces to bring the Trocks, as they are affectionately known, back to Orlando after a 20-year absence. Staged at Hard Rock Live on Thursday, Jan. 19, at 8 p.m., the Trocks could very well be the gayest act that venue's seen outside of hosting circuit parties during Gay Days each June.

The performance is also a bit of a homecoming of sorts for Trocks member Chase Johnsey. Johnsey grew up in Winter Haven and went to school in Lakeland before enrolling in a specialized boarding school for the arts in Virginia.

Johnsey joined the troupe two years ago when he was barely 18. He's still the youngest member of the troupe, and at 5'6", 125 lbs., he's also one of the smallest. His petite size allows him to be lifted easily, so he often performs the female role in *pas de deux*, or ballet dances for two. All members of the troupe are required to perform both male and female roles.

"I always knew I wanted to be part of the Trocks," Johnsey said by telephone from New York. "I had seen them on TV and really liked the comedic aspect of what they do."

The Trocks prove that men can, indeed, dance *en pointe*—on the tips of their toes — without falling flat on their faces. It came easily for Johnsey.

"I had been dancing *en pointe* for years," he said. "I practiced it to develop the muscles in my feet."

Though his mother enrolled him in dance classes at the age of seven, Johnsey didn't begin classical ballet training until 15.

"My philosophy is that I was born to be a dancer," said Johnsey. "I guess I was always dancing around the living room, even as a young child. I think there is something in my soul that always wanted to dance."

But having achieved his goal of becoming a professional dancer, Johnsey still isn't content.

"When you do something artistic,

Continued on page 44

what: Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, presented by the Orlando Ballet and The Maitland Art Center

when: 8 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 19

where: Hard Rock Live, Universal Orlando

tickets: Range from \$100 (table seating) to \$32 and may be purchased by calling the Orlando Ballet at (407) 426-1739 or Hard Rock Live at (407) 351-5483. For more information, visit OrlandoBallet.org.

waterbugs

Mouths of the South

Michael Wanzie revisits the Ladies of Eola Heights
By Kirk Hartlage

Sequels are a funny thing. Sometimes they rise to the top, equaling or even surpassing their original source. More often, they sink so fast it makes one wonder why the original material wasn't left undisturbed.

In the case of *After the Prom: Ladies of Eola Heights Part 2*, there's every reason to believe it will be the former. The first installment was a surprise hit, garnering rave

reviews and selling out the Parliament House's Footlight Theater for nine months – mostly to busloads of straight folk. Doug Ba'asar, Sam Singhaus and Tommy Wooten are all back to play eccentric Orlando siblings. And Wanzie knows and loves these types of characters well. He's previously visited with them in *Carolina Moon* and then *Trailer Trash Christmas*.

Continued on page 38



Despite their penchant for wearing mesh tutus, the Ladies of Eola Heights will not perform any ballet dances.

WATERCOLORS



WATERCRESS 2006 KICKS OFF WITH A BANG AND A BITE

Salad by Jim Crescitelli

HAPPY 2006! So far so good, considering that 2005 ended with a crack at our house. How, you're wondering? So I'll explain.

A pesky buried back tooth decided to give Kirk some trouble after 50 years; who knew it was even there? It made its presence known in the most uncomfortable way, and so the good dentist sent him to an oral surgeon for an extraction — which turned out to be major. In the surgeon's 30-odd years of poking and pulling, Kirk's was one of his Top Ten Worst Cases Scenarios. Oy!

I was there all day, waiting and reading ancient magazines (did you know Nixon is probably going to resign? And who is this Madonna person?) and nodding knowingly to the other spouses and mothers in the room. When he came out of surgery, he was brought to the recovery room and the doctor and all the nurses sat me down and told me all the things I had to do in the way of medications, cold compresses, foods and comfort.

Not once did they ask who I was, not once did they ask how I was related, and not once did I have to call my lawyer to

prove that I was the responsible party — it was great! It was nice not being looked at sideways for once in a situation like that. Afterwards, the nurse brought Kirk to the car and, after he and I amused ourselves with numerous Baby Jane/Blanche-in-the-wheelchair references, we were off toward home.

Florence Nightingale I was, with the ice packs and the trips to CVS and the changing of the cotton. I tried to be like Melanie at the hospital when she was tending the Confederate wounded, but I sounded more like Scarlett because that's how I express myself. It prevents me from being too emotional, especially when someone you care for is laying practically comatose on a bed and you don't know what the next minute is going to bring.

But we got through the first two days. The pain became bearable, and I often considered dipping into the Tylenol 3 myself, but I had to remind myself not to be so selfish; it wasn't my prescription,

after all.

And three days later, as he was slowly enjoying some soup, his jaw cracked — he heard it, felt it and knew it. We phoned the surgeon, who had warned us that this could happen, and we went the next day for X-rays. I wanted to see if my heart was breaking, but deferred to Kirk, whose jaw was indeed snapped.

So, I was sent back into the waiting room for more smiling and nodding and reading — Roosevelt is probably going to be elected to a second term, did you know that? — and they wired Kirk's mouth shut

so that the jawbone could set and, we hope, heal. We'll know in six weeks, they tell us; six weeks of living with a man who now sounds very much like Thurston Howell III — Locust Valley lockjaw and all that.

If setting didn't occur, it will be time to install a metal bridge, and the lame jokes will center around tin men and oil cans. And it's good that we can laugh about all this, even though I was originally instructed by the patient not to ask him any questions that required more than a "yes" or "no" answer.

That didn't last long; Kirk's mysterious information system — a combination of e-mail, telepathy and tom-toms — soon had the phone ringing off the

hook, and well-wishers stopping by the house, which was very nice and normal. They oohed and aahed at the aluminum Christmas tree, and politely admired the creche figurines that I'd finally Windexed after 40 years, and a Merry Christmas was actually had by all.

Kirk is incredible. He never complains, and he supports everyone around him through thick and thin simply by being his good, true self. He's the most non-patient-like patient I've ever known. (Happy Anniversary, Kirk...thanks for these past nineteen years!)

MY CO-WORKER LINDA and I recently had a discussion about dysfunctional families, and realized that *no* family is truly functional: Cram two people into a house along with a brood who share all of their chromosomes, and you're bound to have conflict. It's a wonder most kids stick around for as long as they do!

We thought that many adults seem to look for childhood problems on which to pin their disappointments. Conchata Ferrell, playing a TV psychologist, put it aptly: "So you had a lousy childhood. Who didn't?! *Next!*" Maybe this year we should all stop blaming the wonder years for our problems ... and blame the people next door instead.

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

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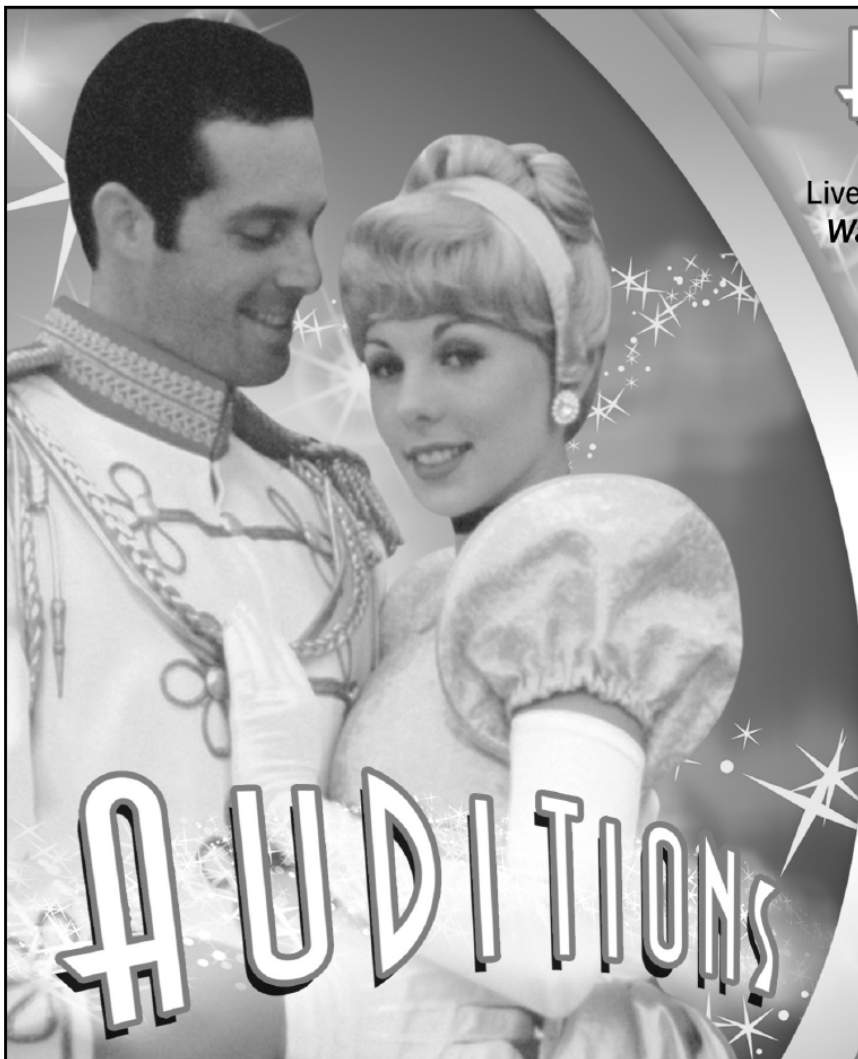
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VIEWPOINT



AMAZONS

SHE ONLY REINFORCES
THE U-HAUL STEREOTYPE

By Karen S. Murray-Parker

Jokes about lesbians and renting U-Hauls on the second date are a dime a dozen. I can't figure out this habit that lesbians have developed of moving from one relationship to another without taking some time out to regroup and rethink our lives.

Recently, a friend of ours broke up with her honey and needed a place to stay. She'd moved into her girlfriend's house soon after they'd met, and now that they'd broken up the tension between the two of them was, well, tense.

She was sleeping on the couch and feeling miserable. The ex – also a friend of ours – just wanted her to move on with her life and move out of the house. Since housing in our area isn't cheap, my partner, Alta, and I decided to help both women out by offering to let the homeless partner move in with us temporarily until she could save enough money to get her own place.

Now, Alta and I are very easy-going types. In fact, Alta is a self-described marshmallow. I'm a little more wary having been burned by more friends than I like to remember over the years. So I placed a lot of conditions on our friend and made it clear that the offer of sanctuary was good for two months or less.

Our stray lesbian moved in and she's been an ideal guest: quiet in the morning, helping around the house and picking up after herself.

She's also been a revelation to Alta and I regarding the dating game. Barely had our friend moved into our house before she began prowling around to meet a new honey. While we're spouting well-meaning platitudes about getting to know one's self better before plunging into new relationships, our friend has been single-mindedly looking for a new love interest when we thought she should be looking for a new place to live.

I can't blame her since the holidays without a sweetie can be depressing. Besides that the ego is always bruised when a lover rejects one and our friend was no exception. For the right woman she will be a real honey, very affectionate and she loves to laugh.

But since Alta and I have been partners for a while, it has been a revelation for us to watch how modern lesbians seek out partners in a wide-flung community like ours. I joked with our friend about seeking out a mate to import, since no one among our local community much interested her.

Our friend took my suggestions to

heart and signed up for some online chat rooms and singles Web sites on the Internet. She wound up communicating with several women online – and one woman from Tampa in particular.

While we were marveling at how well and quickly our friend's heart had healed from the recent break-up, she could talk of nothing but meeting someone new who could appreciate and love her.

Now in all fairness, Alta and I are cautious types. We dated for a year before deciding to move in and buy a house together. Heck, I socialized with Alta for a month after I met her, uncertain if we were dating or just hanging out together.

Thank God one of us finally got up the nerve to kiss the other or we might still be in dating limbo.

Our friend has no such hesitation and I don't know whether that's a good thing or a set up for heartbreak down the road. She rendezvoused with her computer pal and

swears she has met her soul mate. We haven't seen much of her since that initial meeting and I'm expecting any day now she'll be packing her bags and moving in with her new honey. She's even suggested such a possibility is imminent.

More power to her if that makes her happy, but our lesbian culture is full of more failures than success when we pack up the U-Haul too soon. I hope she doesn't become one of those statistics.

Karen S. Murray-Parker is a writer, artist and nurse working on her masters degree and living in Sarasota. She is also a contact dyke for Lesbian Connection and can be reached at dolphinwahini@aol.com. ▼

Our friend has been single-mindedly looking for a new love interest when we thought she should be looking for a new place to live.

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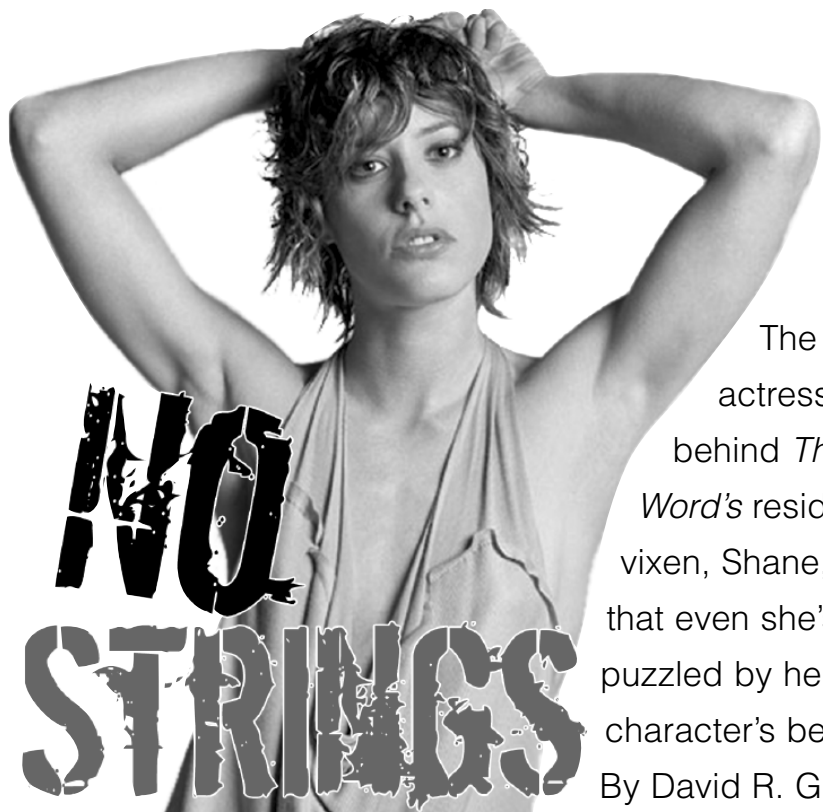
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WATERCOLORS



The sultry actress behind *The L Word*'s resident vixen, Shane, says that even she's puzzled by her character's behavior
By David R. Guarino

Sexy actress Katherine Moennig takes romantic angst to new heights as fast-lane lesbian vixen Shane McCutcheon on Showtime's woman-on-woman drama, *The L Word*.

She likes being called Kate and has beautifully expressive eyes and a pouting mouth. Her figure is svelte and she looks great in tight designer jeans. She's straight in real life, and on Showtime's signature lesbian drama she plays a charmer who usually runs from the scene of anything that remotely resembles a serious romantic involvement.



Actress KATHERINE MOENNIG says that she was just beside herself when her character, Shane, wouldn't want to be with Carmen last season.

Life in Shane's ever-evolving world can seem quite overwhelming to the viewer at times, but for the 28 year-old Moennig, who has made the character a household word, it is all in a day's work.

The daughter of renowned violin maker William Moennig, Katherine's mother was a Broadway dancer. Interestingly enough, Kate has talent peppered throughout her family tree, as she is the niece of award-winning actress Blythe Danner and the cousin of Gwyneth Paltrow.

She recently chatted about the third season of *The L Word*, her sexually voracious character and what it all means — sort of.

WATERMARK: What aspects of Shane's character do you have the hardest time relating to and why?

Her infidelity. And not her closed emotional space, but her reasoning for (the) infidelity. There are a few things that I usually really have to wrap my head around to figure out why she's doing it without judging her. And sometimes it's not easy, because it's vastly different from who *I* am.

But I think the main thing is her reasoning for not being in a relationship and not staying true ... not so much in the first season, but I think that when we were doing the second season last year I just couldn't for the life of me figure out why she didn't want to be with that character Carmen. Because Shane just kept sabotaging it and pushing herself farther and farther away and I would just sit there and think, "Why would this person be doing this?"

Do you envision Shane as someone who has the capacity to cultivate a serious love relationship and maintain it?

Yes, I think everyone does, to a certain extent. It's just a matter of what road you're going to go down to really find it. I think she (Shane) does (have the capacity to love), I think she does at the end of the day, I just think it's going to take a lot for her to get to that place of just being a vulnerable person. I think she put up a lot of walls, but I believe those walls could be broken down, and she could really feel.

Is there any substance, to your mind, to the oft-heard argument that *The L Word* showcases a strictly fantasy lesbian community and lifestyle? That is to say, on the show the characters are all very svelte, very well dressed, very successful.

Yeah, of course, there's some truth to that. Absolutely.

But I don't think it's the end-all, be-all. You know, this is a TV show. That can't be forgotten, and also it's the first one. So if anything I think the show is paving the way for other shows down the line. And if that's the case then other shows will have more opportunity to show a whole array of women. Our show happens to be like this and you can love it or hate it but it is what it is. And it's hard to please everyone; it's just trying to do the best job you can.

Do you ever have any trepidation about doing the lesbian sexual scenes that are written for your character, Shane? And how do you prepare for that kind of interaction with another actor?


I don't have a problem with it. But I will say it's not easy nor fun to be doing a love scene with someone who would be considered an extra whom you've just met five minutes before shooting. If you've watched the show you know that Shane's slept with a lot of people. And you've seen a lot of those scenes with random girls; that's not very easy.

Is there any kind of a scene that you absolutely would not do?


I don't think I'd do full frontal again. Unless it was for a really good reason. I think that's harder than doing a love scene.

Have you ever thought of your character as being comparable to the Brian Kinney character played by Gale Harold on *Queer as Folk*?

No. Honestly, I've seen maybe a few episodes. Aside from both characters being promiscuous, I can't really see a thread that would connect the two from an emotional standpoint. ▽



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WATERCOLORS



KENDRA KASSEBAUM as Glinda and STEPHANIE J. BLOCK as Elphaba in the national touring production of *Wicked*, headed to the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center Jan. 18.

'Wicked' Fun

The tale of Glinda and Elphaba, currently on tour and headed to Tampa, may be the gayest musical ever

By Kirk Hartlage

Forget *Rent*, *Falsettos*, *The Producers* and *La Cage aux Folles* — the gayest musical to hit Broadway may be *Wicked*, which will be presented at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center later this month.

In fact, this big, bold tale of two witches goes far, far deeper than simply putting two men in an embrace or a drag queen in a tiara. Here's why.

Source material: The show is based on gay author Gregory Maguire's engaging 1995 novel of the same name. It tells the back story of the Frank L. Baum novel, *The Wizard of Oz*, which was turned into a film ripe with gay association.

Garlands for Garland: *Oz*'s tale of Dorothy Gale mirrored gay icon Judy Garland's own painful road to stardom. Garland, incidentally, died on June 22, 1969, and her funeral was held in New York on



June 28 — the day before the Stonewall Riots broke out.

Politics: Beyond the basic *Wizard of Oz* back story, *Wicked* presents culturally relevant themes such as the dangers of political propaganda and prejudice based on appearance — themes faced by the GLBT community daily.

Sense of belonging: This version of the *Oz* story is about friendship, loyalty, and the times when the appeal of belonging is tested by a commitment to one's own integrity — a challenge often faced by those who've dealt with a friend's coming out.

A place in the world: Beyond being a story solely about rejection, *Wicked* also

presents a plethora of political and social commentary, while presenting a tale of making one's mark in the world.

Ohhh, pretty!: Though only a side street in the stage musical, the Yellow Brick Road is paved with gold — and we all know how much gays are attracted to shiny objects. (Plus, is it any mystery that "oz." is also an abbreviation for how gold is measured?)

TV connections: The libretto was written by Winnie Holzman, a television writer known for creating positive gay characters in *My So-Called Life* and *thirtysomething*.

Over the ...: The show takes a look at the darker side of the rainbow, a vision apparent at each and every gay pride event ever held.

Similarities: Elphaba, who later becomes the Wicked Witch of the West, is cast aside by her own father, stared at in school and mocked by the popular kids, simply because she is different. It's a story with which many gay men and



[wicked]

when: Jan. 18-Feb. 5

where: Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center's Carol Morsani Hall

tickets: Good luck. Only partial-view single seating is available — if at all. Call (727) 229-7827 for details.

waterbugs

lesbians who've known the bitter cold of social rejection can relate.

Witchery: Film actress Margaret Hamilton's Wicked Witch of the West inspired a battalion's worth of bitchy drag queens.

The girls: One number, *One Short Day*, shows two girlfriends taking a day trip through the "big" city — shopping, catching a show — and just being girly ... much like many a gaggle of gays who make a catching a production of *Wicked* an entire episodic adventure out with "the girls."

Celebrate!: Here the Emerald City is presented as a near-Mardi Gras environment, one of the gayest bacchanalias anywhere.

Playful: Colorful costumes, shadowy lighting and special effects including a giant dragon and flying monkeys combine to make *Wicked* one of the campiest productions ever.

Bringing home the gold: On Broadway, *Wicked* took home 14 major awards including a Grammy and several Tony Awards — gays love winners and award shows. ▼



A Deaf Artist in Early America: THE WORLDS OF JOHN BREWSTER February 3 — April 30, 2006

Comprised of approximately thirty paintings, the exhibit is the first major comprehensive study of works by the American artist John Brewster, Jr. (1766-1854).

The body of work will cover the full range of Brewster's long and successful career.

Organized and circulated by the Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York.

John Brewster, Jr., (1766-1854) American, *Francis O. Watts with Bird*, 1805, oil on wood panel
Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York
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events calendar



DJ Tracy Young

Though Hurricane Wilma knocked out power to her Miami studio for two weeks, Tracy Young still has energy to spare for Club Firestone.

Jen Foster

Catch this Texan singer/songwriter before her new CD *The Underdogs* hits stores in February.



Liza Minnelli

Liza's one-month understudy role in the original stage production of *Chicago* - stepping in when Gwen Verdon swallowed a feather - may have financially saved the musical.



arts+exhibits

[TAMPA_BAY]

The Sixties Show and Peter Max

Despite growing up in Israel, China, Paris and across Europe, Peter Max developed his own ideal of American culture and dreamed of living in the U.S. Moving here as a teen, Max found his dream a reality and directed his idealistic impressions into his art. *The Peter Max* exhibition partners *The Sixties Show*, both exhibitions honor the St. Petersburg Museum of Fine Arts' founding in 1965, a critical period in American art and society. The exhibits show until Jan. 22 at the museum, located at 255 Beach Drive N.E., St. Pete. Call (727) 896-2667 or visit Fine-Arts.org for more details.

music

[ORLANDO]

DJ Tracy Young

Florida's most well-known lesbian record spinner returns to Club Firestone for an encore performance from her *DanceCulture* CD tour. Fresh from spinning her incredible New Year's Day party in Miami, Young is sure to feature some of her yet-to-be-released exclusive remixes on top of her signature tribal beats. Catch young in this intimate venue before she returns to the Hard Rock Live in June for Gay Days. Young spins at the Club, 578 N. Orange Ave., on Saturday, Jan. 21. For more details, visit ClubAtFirestone.com.

music

[TAMPA_BAY]

Jen Foster

The singer/songwriter and past *Watermark* cover girl tours behind the upcoming release of her new CD *The Underdogs*. A certain showstopper will be Foster's performance of *Amen*, a song that scored Foster a surprise first prize win in the Gospel category of the USA Songwriting Contest. Of the win, Foster says, "The victory transcends the contest itself. It's an affirmation that your spiritual core can be respected and appreciated by those around you, regardless of who you are or where you come from. Everybody may not agree with you, but they can appreciate the sentiment of your beliefs." Amen to that. Though the new CD won't be available until Feb. 7, you can catch Foster at 9 p.m., Friday, Jan. 20, at The Flirt, 1909 N. 15th St. in Tampa. Tickets are \$8 and available at the door.

[SARASOTA + MELBOURNE]

An Evening with Liza Minnelli

The woman who has held onto a single hairstyle longer than Farrah Fawcett heads to the area in mid-January. Perhaps more famous today for marrying a man with a big, wax head than she is for her vocal talents, Minnelli will no doubt make her rendition of *New York, New York* sound as if she's performing it for the first time. Minnelli appears at Sarasota's Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall on Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 17-18 and at Melbourne's King Center for the Performing Arts on Friday, Jan. 20. Tickets are available at the box offices or by calling (941) 953-3368 in Sarasota or (321) 242-2219 in Melbourne. For more info, visit VanWezel.org or KingCenter.org.

theater

[ORLANDO]

Couch Potato Theater

The OOPS GUYS Comedy Troupe, aka Fiely A. Matias and Dennis T. Giacino, is turning downtown's Studio Theater into Couch Potato Theater. Out go most of the theater seats and in come comfy sofas, easy chairs, recliners, plus microwave ovens to make free popcorn and cook TV dinner giveaways! It's like sitting in front of the television in the comfort of your living room, only you're watching live theater. The Guys are presenting three of their most celebrated productions: sitcom spoof *The Naked Guy*, reality game show *Do I Make You Horny?* and cabaret whore act *Lounge-zilla!* Initial shows of *Naked* mark the return of celebrated naked guy Sammy D'Angelo, while an all new naked guy steps in Jan. 26. *Horny* features celebrated local spin-mesiter DJ Cap'n Kirk. For showtimes and tickets, visit CouchPotatoTheater.com or call (407) 827-0691. Studio Theater is located at 398 W. Amelia St.

The Imaginary Invalid

Hypochondriacs unite! The Orlando-UCF Shakespeare Festival presents this satire on the medical profession that dates back to 1673. The story follows a man who wants his daughter to marry a doctor so he can have constant medical attention for his imaginary ailments. The show runs through Feb. 5 at the Margeson Theater inside the Lowndes Shakespeare Center in Loch Haven Park. Tickets are available at the Lowndes Shakespeare Center box office, 812 E. Rollins St., by calling (407) 447-1700 or at ShakespeareFest.org.

theater

[TAMPA_BAY]

Dial 'M' for Murder

Is there such thing as the perfect murder? American Stage's 28th season continues with the classic thriller once lensed by Alfred Hitchcock. Infuriated by his wife's one-time marital indiscretion, a scorned husband blackmails an old college acquaintance into murdering his guilt-ridden spouse to collect her inheritance. Previews are on Jan. 18 and 19, the show opens Jan. 20 and closes Feb. 12. Tickets prices are \$21 to \$34 depending on date and time of performance. For more information and to purchase tickets call the box office at (727) 823-PLAY or visit AmericanStage.org. American Stage is located at 211 Third St. S. in St. Petersburg.

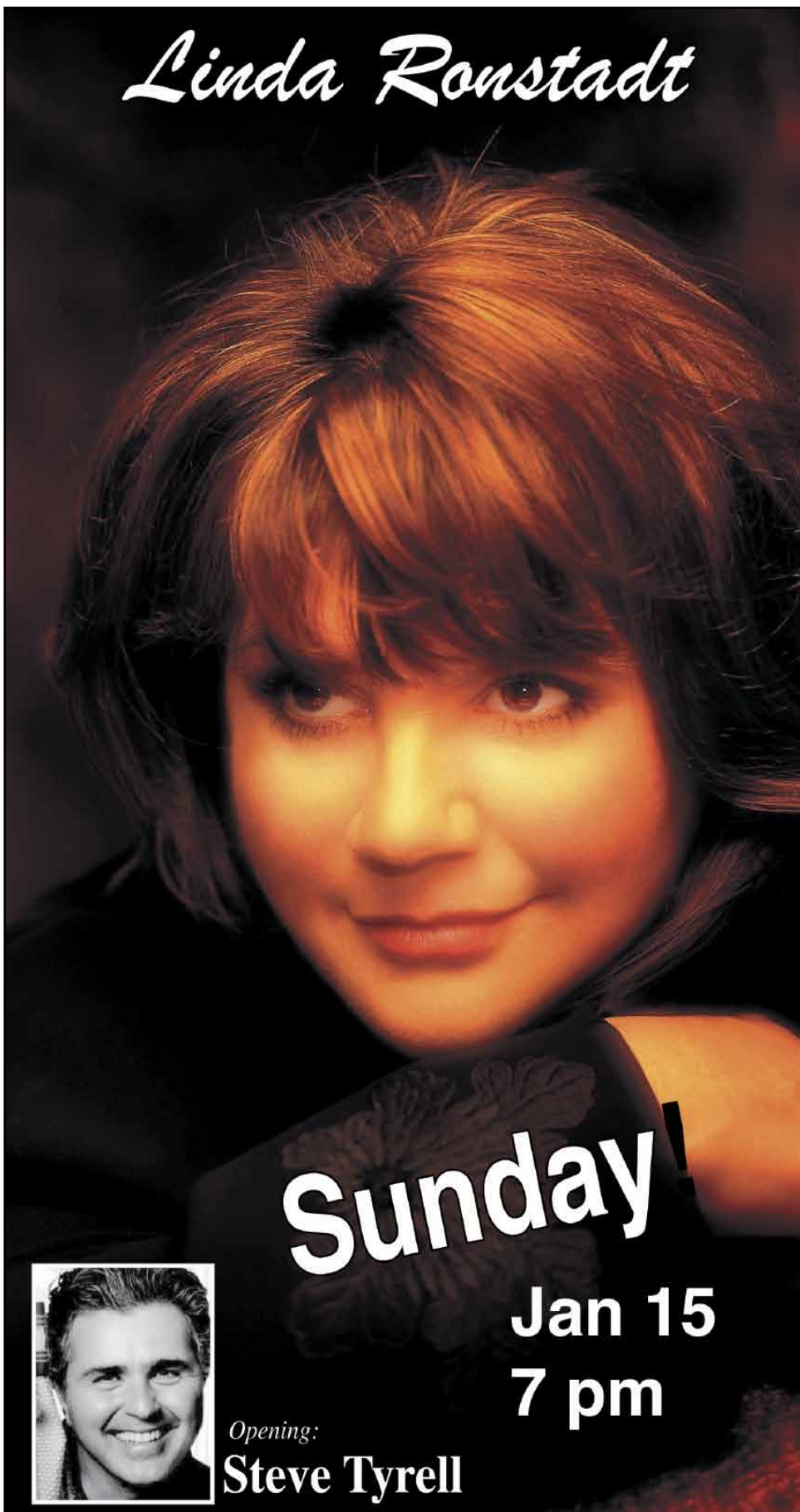
[SARASOTA]

What the Butler Saw

The FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training will present gay playwright Joe Orton's racy, riotous farce through Jan. 22. The play's title was inspired by a 19th-century British expression, "what the butler saw," which referred to a coin-operated peepshow machine popular at seaside resorts and penny arcades. The phrase evolved into a byword for shameful secrets or voyeurism, both of which figure into the play's hilarious plot twists. The FSU/Asolo Conservatory's Jane B. Cook's Theatre is located at 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts, next to the Ringling Museum. For tickets and information, call (941) 351-8000 or visit Asolo.org.

Email your calendar events to:
Kirk@watermarkonline.com

Linda Ronstadt



Sunday

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Steve Tyrell

Liza Minnelli



**Jan 20
8 pm**

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Each ticket includes the sum of \$2 that is allocated as a charitable contribution for capital improvements of the King Center.

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WATERCOLORS

South from page 31

In recent years, Wanzie has established himself as the most notorious mouthpiece in Central Florida's glbt community. Formerly affiliated with the GLBCC Center and Gay Days, Wanzie is now public relations director at the Parliament House resort. He appears with Ba'asar every Monday afternoon on Real Radio 104.1 FM's Philips Phile – sometimes reviewing movies, always pontificating about anything that crosses his mind. In addition, he's emceed numerous benefits, and once hosted a talk net-radio show from a gay-porn Web-cam house.

But it's his stage work – both at the Footlights Theatre and at the Orlando International Fringe Festival – that showcases Wanzie at his best, giving his madcap hilarity just enough structure to build sharp dialogue and touching characterizations.

Those who missed out on the *Ladies of Eola Heights* will get a sampling before each performance of *After the Prom*, in the form of video montage created by Lantern Lights Studios. Just enough time for audiences to buckle their seat belts.

Wanzie took a break from his busy schedule to discuss his latest production, a show he says was his most difficult project to write.



Clockwise from top: Tommy Wooten, Doug Basar, Michael Wanzie, and Sam Singhouse – The jeweled sisters of *Ladies of Eola Heights* reunite for the play's sequel, *After The Prom*.

WATERMARK: How did this comedic glance back on Orlando become so popular?

MICHAEL WANZIE: When we were doing *Carolina Moon*, a story appeared in *The Orlando Sentinel* about all the local references to old time Orlando. That little mention started this influx of senior citizens coming to the Parliament House to see the show. I got a dozen pieces of mail from people who lived at the *Carolina Moon* — people from Ocala and even Tampa who had once lived there. That show ran eight months, with a break in between. It survived cast

changes, and it was truly sustained by seniors.

There was a sequel to that show called *Trailer Trash Christmas*, which also got great reviews. By time I started writing *Ladies of Eola Heights*, I purposely made it an Orlando neighborhood based on the momentum built up from the past two shows. When it opened, it was crazy what happened. We only had two shows out of nine months of

Saturdays that were not complete oversells. This time the *Sentinel* attended a performance and interviewed members of the audience – another huge boost. The only reason we closed is that cast members had scheduling conflicts – none of us imagined it would go on so long.

It's humorous that you attracted so many seniors – to the Parliament House.

We also were real popular with bachelorette parties, too! We even did a couple of baby showers. Women would

come in and unwrap presents before the play. Pretty bizarre, actually. The Red Hat Lady Society came several times, and schoolteacher associations – they'd take 20 seats at a time.

How do you explain it?

I don't write specifically for a gay audience. I write with gay themes and cross-dressing actors, but in the age of *Will & Grace* it's become kind of cool to see something gay — not necessarily raunch and dirt, but a bit of camp humor.

I wrote *Ladies* with the current cast in mind, but the script reads so that women could play it. Only Miss Sammy's character has to be a cross dressing man.

So what's next for the original *Ladies*?

There's a theater group in Saratoga Springs, New York, that has requested materials from the show and may stage a summer stock production in July. It's the first time someone's contacted me to produce one of my shows.

That's got to be a rush.

I almost want to go up and see one of their shows first. It's a wonderful thing to have others see your work and then want to produce it. And it's close enough to New York City that a New York producer could easily see it. I just want them to do it right. The last thing I

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SAMMY D'ANGELO
Jan. 13 - Jan. 21

JOEY REINERT
Jan. 26 - Feb. 18



WATERCOLORS

need is to have a bad review of the show so close to New York.

Tell me more about writing part two.

Honestly, it's the most difficult thing I've done. None of us involved with the first one has ever enjoyed that measure of success with a show before, where we've had to turn people away. People kept coming back because they loved the characters. Also, that show is full of surprises... but now those surprises are out of the bag. That they have a brother who comes out singing is no longer a joke. Plus people who came to see one of my broad comedies now also know that the show ends up dealing with a strong subject — abuse.

Knowing that the same audience will come back looking for new surprises... well, conceptually it was a real challenge. I had to come up with something new, and that's where I hit on the idea of bringing Darcel into the cast. How she's utilized is a secret for now, but that's one of the ways I've managed

to put something fresh into part two.

The original cast was such a cohesive team, and that allowed for a lot of improvisation. How does bringing in a new character, a new actor, change the dynamic?

Well, in a way it really is unfair to Darcel. And until *Ladies*, Sammy had never really spoken lines in a show before. In the sequel she plays Jackson [the brother, as a male] quite a bit. At the initial table read it was a bit intimidating. Doug, Tommy and I knew our characters — all the phrasing and that sort of thing. It was a hump Sam and Darcel had to get over.

I'm also in weekly management meetings at the P House with the man who creates Darcel. He's nothing like his character. But the rest of the cast doesn't know that side of Darcel. They were taken aback and expected her to start doing her part like the powerhouse emcee that most people know. They haven't seen her rehearse drag shows. She barely moves when she's rehearsing. But when she is in costume, she becomes her character. The cast will see a huge difference once she puts on the costume.

What are your expectations with this new show?

I'm trying to not have any! It scares me. When I read it now, it seems

too silly and too stupid to even attempt. But Kenny Howard, our director, loved it immediately. He thinks I'm too close to see how good it is. I don't want to appear overly optimistic. We'll see what the audience thinks.

Knowing that a large part of your audience will be senior citizens, did that affect the way you wrote?

In fact, this script is raunchier. There was no raunch in part one, but there is pure raunch in part two. There are more sexual references, more gay references. I didn't pull back. I went in the opposite direction. We've earned their trust, now let's broaden their horizons!

Can you go too far? Are you afraid of breaking that trust?

No — I don't think I went *that* far. With *Ladies* we had a special matinee for a retirement travel group — 165 seniors on three busses. It was a mystery tour for them, they didn't know they were coming to our show. When they arrived we had greeters go to each bus and give them a history of the resort. But in the lobby there are go-go boy posters advertising strip contests. The women were all smiles and teetering, but the men ... they kept looking at the floor. They did not look happy at all.

As it turned out, everyone ended up loving the show so much. We did a meet and greet in costume after the show and

everyone — men and women — said something lovely and wonderful to us. The group organizer said that at the end of the year, our tour stop got ranked as the favorite of the year.

All that alcohol on stage... is it all real?

It's written as Jack Daniels, but we're not all Jack drinkers. So it's actually Captain Morgan and Coke, with an emphasis on the Coke so we can get the right color combination. But we are drinking the entire time and are drunk by the end of the show.

But poor Miss Sammy — she's not onstage as much. Is she playing catch-up backstage?

Actually, on occasion, she'll spin over to the bar and take a swig out of the bottle. Once, when we were really messing up, she came out during one of her numbers with a script of the show and slammed it on the table. Of course I had to say, "Fuckin' bitch has no lines and she still found a way to ad-lib."

This show I wrote in some on-stage drinking for Sam. Another thing that is different... Sam only lip-synced snippets in the first show. Here she has two complete numbers, from start to finish.

I've never had more fun than with this cast or with doing any other show. It was reason enough to do a sequel. ▼

[ladies of eola heights 2]

when: 8 p.m., Saturdays: Jan. 14 - Feb. 18.

where: The Footlight Theater at the Parliament House Resort, 410 N. Orange Blossom Trail, Orlando

tickets: Online Reservations: Pre-pay with MasterCard, Visa or Pay Pal at Wanzie.com. Tickets by phone at (407) 540-0317. Cash only at the door.

waterbugs

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ORGANIZATIONS



ORGANIZATIONS & MEETINGS

DAYTONA BEACH/SPACE COAST

BREAKTHROUGH

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

BREVARD LESBIANS

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

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

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

DAYTONA BEACH REGIONAL BEARS ASSOCIATION

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

FUN COAST BEARS

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

GALBA

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

GAY/BI MARRIED MEN RAP GROUP

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

GREATER DAYTONA BUSINESS GUILD

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

OUTREACH, INC.

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

OVER THE RIVER

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

PFLAG DAYTONA

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

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

SPECTRUM

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

ORLANDO

AA WAKE UP CALL-FRIDAY

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

AA WAKE UP CALL-SATURDAY

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

AA WAKE UP CALL - SUNDAY

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

BEARS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

BOOKLOVERS

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

CENTAUR

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

CENTRAL FLORIDA GAY & LESBIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

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

CODA

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

COLAGE

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

COUNTRY SATURDAY NIGHTS

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

CRYSTAL CLEAR

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

DIGNITY

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

FLORIDA GREAT OUTDOORS

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

GBT MEN

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

GLBCC-THE CENTER

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

GLBT DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS OF SEMINOLE COUNTY

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

GLBT YACHT CLUB

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

GNOMES

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

GREATER ORLANDO COUPLES

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

HARBOR HOUSE

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

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

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

LAMBDA CAMPING

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

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS OF ORLANDO

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

LONG YANG CLUB ORLANDO

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

METROPOLITAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

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

NA RAINBOW RECOVERY

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

OPEX

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

ORLANDO GAY CHORUS

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

ORLANDO GAY PARENTS GROUP

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

ORLANDO QUEER ACADEMICS

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

ORLANDO SOCIAL CLUB

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

ORLANDO YOUTH ALLIANCE

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

PFLAG

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

POLY-CENTRAL

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

POSITIVELY SOBER

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

PRIME TIMERS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

RAINBOW DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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

RAINBOW SPIRIT

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

REFLECTIONS

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

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

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

TRANS CENTRAL STATION

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

TRIDENT INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

UCF GLBSU

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

THE WOMYN'S EXCHANGE

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

TRIANGLE TEES

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

TRIDENT INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL FLORIDA

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

WILLOW

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

WOMEN HERE AND THERE

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

ZEN SITTING GROUP

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

FOUR CORNERS RAINBOW FAMILY SOCIAL

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

POLK COUNTY GAY LESBIAN ALLIANCE

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

POLK COUNTY GAY AND LESBIAN INFO LINE

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

POLK COUNTY HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUP

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

A LEAGUE OF OUR OWN

Weekly Bowling at Gulfgate Lanes. Jimphi@aol.com, hometown.aol.com/srqbowling

ALSO OUT YOUTH

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

GULF COAST MEN'S CHORUS

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

PFLAG SARASOTA

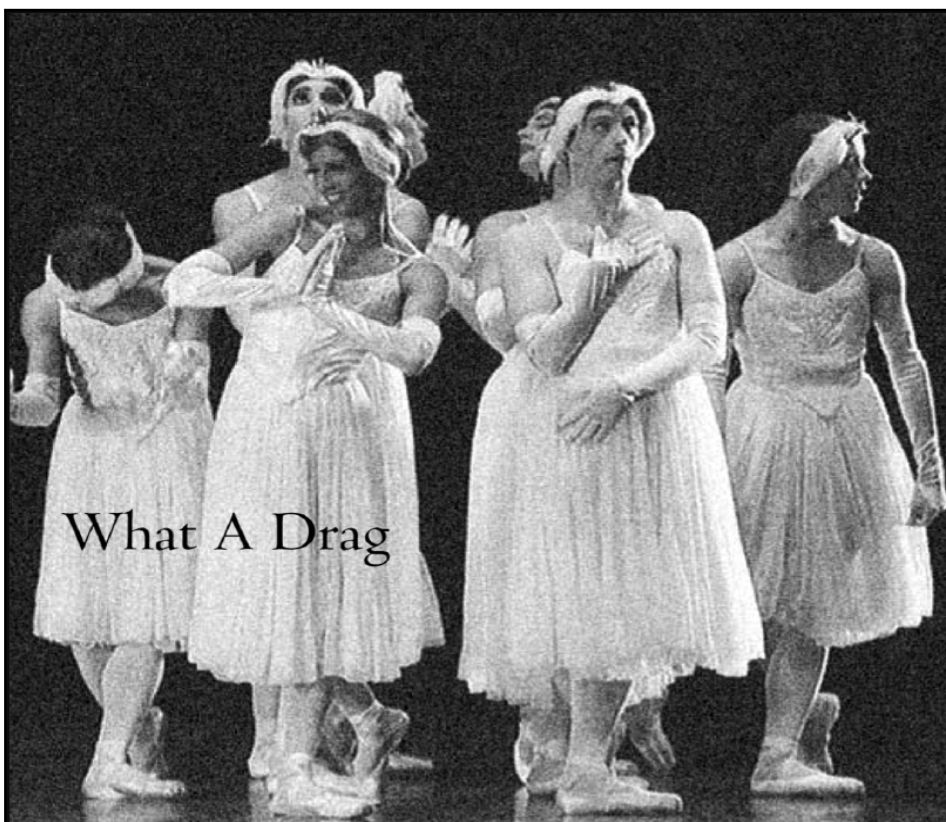
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Meets third Tue.; 7:30 p.m.; Unitarian Church. (941) 378-3536.

GAY AND LESBIAN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

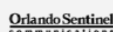
GAY FUN CLUB

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



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ORGANIZATIONS

PFLAG SARASOTA

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

PRIMETIMERS SARASOTA

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

READING GROUP

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

SARASOTA PRIDE, INC.

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

SERVICE ACADEMY GAY AND LESBIAN ALUMNI

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

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA BUSINESS GUILD

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

SUNSET BEACH WALK

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

TRINITY CHARITIES, INC.

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

TAMPA BAY

www.trinitycharities.org.

BOAT AND SCUBA WEST OF TAMPA BAY

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

BROTHAS SPEAK

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

CRESCENDO: THE TAMPA BAY WOMEN'S CHORUS

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

THE CENTER OF TAMPA BAY

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

EQUALITY FLORIDA-HILLSBOROUGH

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

EQUALITY FLORIDA-PINELLAS

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

EZRA GROUP

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

FACT HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUP

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

FACT SPANISH-SPEAKING HIV/AIDS GROUP

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

FACE TO FACE YOUTH GROUP

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

FAMILY BRIDGE CLUB

Playing card variety. (813) 832-2999.

FLAMINGO AUTO GROUP

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

FLORIDA GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT

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

FLORIDA GREAT OUTDOORS

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

FLORIDA GULF COAST COUPLES

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

FREEDOM RINGS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

FRIENDS CLUB FOR GAY MEN

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

FRONT RUNNERS OF TAMPA BAY

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

7098.

GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

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

GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

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

GAY & BISEXUAL SENIOR MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

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

GAY AND LESBIAN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

GAY FUN CLUB

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

GAY MEN'S OUTDOOR GROUP

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

GAY SKATE

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

GIRL TALK

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

GLBT PARENTS OF TAMPA BAY

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

GLSEN TAMPA BAY

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

HIV TAMPA BAY

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

INTERWEAVE/ST. PETERSBURG

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

KAPPA XI OMEGA SORORITY

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

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

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

THE LINE

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

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS OF TAMPA BAY

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

L.O.L.A.

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

METROPOLITAN CHARITIES

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

THE METRO CENTER

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

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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

OUT OF THE CLOSET THRIFT STORES

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

PFLAG TAMPA

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

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

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

PFLAG PINELLAS

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

POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

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

POSITIVE EXPRESSIONS

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

PRIDE AL ANON FAMILY GROUP

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

PRIDE ALLIANCE

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

PRIME TIMERS OF TAMPA BAY

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

PWA COALITION OF TAMPA BAY

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

RAINBOW FILM SERIES

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

RAINBOW READERS

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

RAINBOW TRAVEL CLUB

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ROTC - RIGHTEOUSLY OUTRAGEOUS TWIRLING CORP

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SEX AND LOVE ADDICTS ANONYMOUS (SLAA)

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

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

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

ST. PETE PRIDE

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

STARBURST OF PINELLAS PARK

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

SUNCOAST SQUARES

Tampa Bay GLBT square-dancing. Classes Tuesday

evenings at the Suncoast Resort, Room C-104. Call John and Leo at (727) 343-8466; suncoastsquares@yahoo.com

TAMPA BAY BEARS

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

TAMPA BAY BUSINESS GUILD

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

TAMPA BAY GAY MEN'S CHORUS

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

TAMPA BAY LESBIANS

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

TAMPA INTERNATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL

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

TROPICAL RAINBOW ALLIANCE FOR THE DEAF

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

TRUE EXPRESSIONS

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

UNA-VOCE: THE FLORIDA MEN'S CHORALE

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

WESTCARE TRANSGENDER SELF-AWARENESS

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

WEST FLORIDA GROWLERS

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

WOMYN'S EXCHANGE TAMPA BAY

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

YES (YOUTH EDUCATION SERVICES)

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

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HS-3455

WATERCOLORS

Trocks from page 31

your work is never done," he said. "You continuously challenge yourself to find new ways to express yourself and use your body. The moment you feel completely satisfied, you need to find something else to do. You can always find something you can do better."

Training as a dancer at such a young age did not come easy for Johnsey, who says his peers tormented him for being gay.

"They poked fun at me, called me 'faggot' or 'queer boy,'" recalled Johnsey.

But he now realizes that, sexual orientation notwithstanding, it was his difference that led him to dance, and to living in New York and traveling around the world with the Trocks. Johnsey credits his mother for helping build his character and not allowing his peers to distract him.

And despite the fact that the majority of the Trocks is gay, Johnsey is unwilling to define theirs as a gay act.

"Gay or straight, artistic energy comes from the same place — it comes from what you feel," he said, noting that even while wearing makeup the troupe remains manly.

"We're not mocking or imitating women, and we're not drag queens," Johnsey said. "We're supposed to be somewhat ridiculous... but in a tasteful way. There's a lot of slapstick, a lot of



Les Ballets Trockadero's CHASE JOHNSEY dances en pointe as his female alter ego, Yakatarina Verbosovich.

humor. We're well received by all dance companies because we do it well. We never lose our integrity."

The troupe performs upwards of 150 times a year, which doesn't allow the self-proclaimed reading freak much time for rest. But the performing



CHASE JOHNSEY as his masculine self performs for two of his fellow Trocks.

schedule has taken Johnsey to some incredible places. He just returned from Australia, a trek he describes as "an amazing experience."

Though performing in a major American tourist destination may not provide the same type of "wow"

experience, Johnsey is looking forward to seeing his local friends and family, albeit briefly. After their Orlando appearance, the troupe travels through five more states before month's end. ▽

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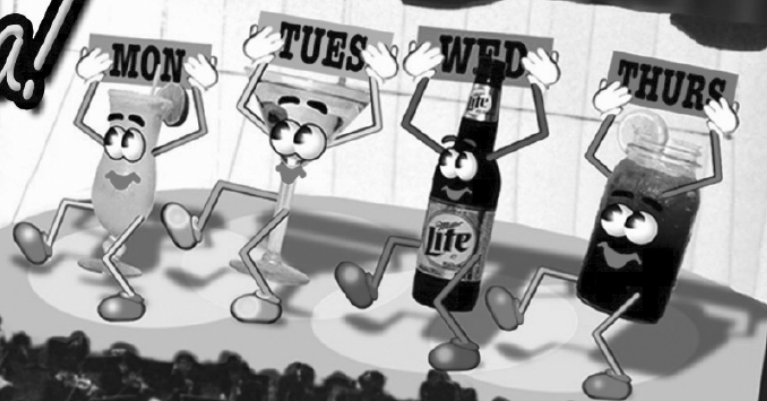
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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TAMPA BAY

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WATERCOLORS



FILTH TOM CRUISE'S NUTTINESS MADE 2005 MEMORABLE

by Billy Masters

"I always knew **TOM CRUISE** would end up with someone from Dawson's Creek. I just thought it would be **JAMES VAN DER BEEK**! **KATIE HOLMES** — she looks in love to me. If she was this good an actress on Dawson's Creek, she'd have won an Emmy." — **KEITH MARDER**

(mouthpiece for the WB) provides some spot-on observations at the annual Television Critics Association press tour.

Yes, this is the Year in Filth, the column where we recap the stories that stand out for both good and bad reasons. 2005 will go down in history as the year Tom Cruise went from a somewhat respected actor to a joke akin to **MICHAEL JACKSON**. Never in show biz has someone's reputation taken such a nose dive.

Some will say it was his pontifications about Scientology. Others will point to his unconvincing declarations of love for Katie Holmes. But what actually happened is that Tom revealed his true self to the public, now that he is no longer being protected by super-publicist **PAT KINGSLEY** at PMK. In fact, I am not entirely

convinced that Pat herself didn't help instigate this self-destruction upon Cruise's departure. I like to think of her calling up friends in the media and saying, "Let's teach that little midget a lesson!"

Everyone expected a big television showdown between E!'s new red carpet correspondent **STAR JONES** and **JOAN RIVERS**, who jumped ship and went to the TV Guide Channel. Nobody could have imagined that the war to watch would be between two personalities on the same network! E! hired funny gal **KATHY GRIFFIN** to spice up its coverage but got a loose cannon. Star pointedly ignored Kathy and told the press not to even refer to their coverage as joint.

E! announced that Star will not return this season, while Kathy's been waiting by the phone. She might as well stop waiting, since **RYAN SEACREST** has inked a three-year deal to host *E! News Daily* and host all the network's red carpet events. Big mistake. No gays will watch that coverage — TV Guide and Joan will gain more viewers.

The week of March 28 was possibly

the greatest week of my life. That's when phone messages were leaked on the Internet from **PAT O'BRIEN** to an unknown "friend" that exposed the *Insider* host proposing an evening of wild sex, drugs, alcohol and hookers! At the end of that week, **MARIAH** maintained her dignity when she was seated at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame dinner at the same table as ex-hubby **TOMMY MOTTOLA** and his current wife, **THALIA**! Photographs from their cordial meeting were priceless.

We recently discovered an alleged nude photo of **TAB HUNTER** in his prime — something he neglects to discuss in his autobiography, *Tab Hunter Confidential*. Real or not, it left Filth2Go members weak in the knees.

There was more than enough gossip to go around: from **JANET JACKSON'S** alleged daughter to **ARETHA'S** son's paternity and the paternity of **CAMRYN'S** son (Brezovar, not Cooper) to the size of **COLIN'S** penis (lies, lies, lies). The folks at *TV Guide* destroyed their own magazine, while the minority owners of the Boatslip in Provincetown succeeded in saving the landmark from the majority owners, who wished to destroy it.

Hot guys were everywhere in 2005, but nowhere quite as visible as in VH1's *Strip Search*. This show featured sexy **SEAN CASSIDY** (not of *The Hardy Boys*), who maintains a Web site with his best friend, business partner, roommate, and fellow stripper, **MATT**, at SeanAndMatt.com. Both are available for private sessions at a rate of \$225 for a half hour. From the same show, **DAVID** had a past stripping in gay bars in Dallas under the name "Tristan."

The worlds of gay porn and mainstream entertainment collided several times. First, gay

porn star **MARCUS IRON** showed up on HGTV's *Curb Appeal* using his real name — **MICHAEL LOFTIS**. Then, Bel Ami stars **LUKAS RIDGESTON**, **JOHAN PAULIK** and **SEBASTIAN BONNET** turned up at **ELTON JOHN'S** annual Oscar soirée. As if that wasn't enough, a photo surfaced on Filth2Go.com of Sebastian with his arm around **VIN DIESEL** at an event!

The blind items always fascinate people, and here are my two favorites:

Could it be that a certain television twosome is kaput? So say sources on the set with the close-cropped cutie, who point out the extraordinary steps one will take to avoid being killed off — including booting a live-in love. Egads, I'd probably feel buried alive under all of those hair care products.

Could it be that a certain ambitious (and ambiguous) boy is making an unholy alliance to further his thespianistic career? So say sources close to that sexual predator, who tell me that he's had the sexy siren in his sights — and perhaps in his bed. One thing leads to another, so don't be surprised to see mentor and apt pupil joined at the hip and making beautiful music. Who's in front and who's in back has not been revealed.

It's time to end yet edition of *Filth*.

If you have questions, don't hesitate to write to me at Billy@filth2go.com and you can count on hearing back from me — privately or publicly. So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible. ▽



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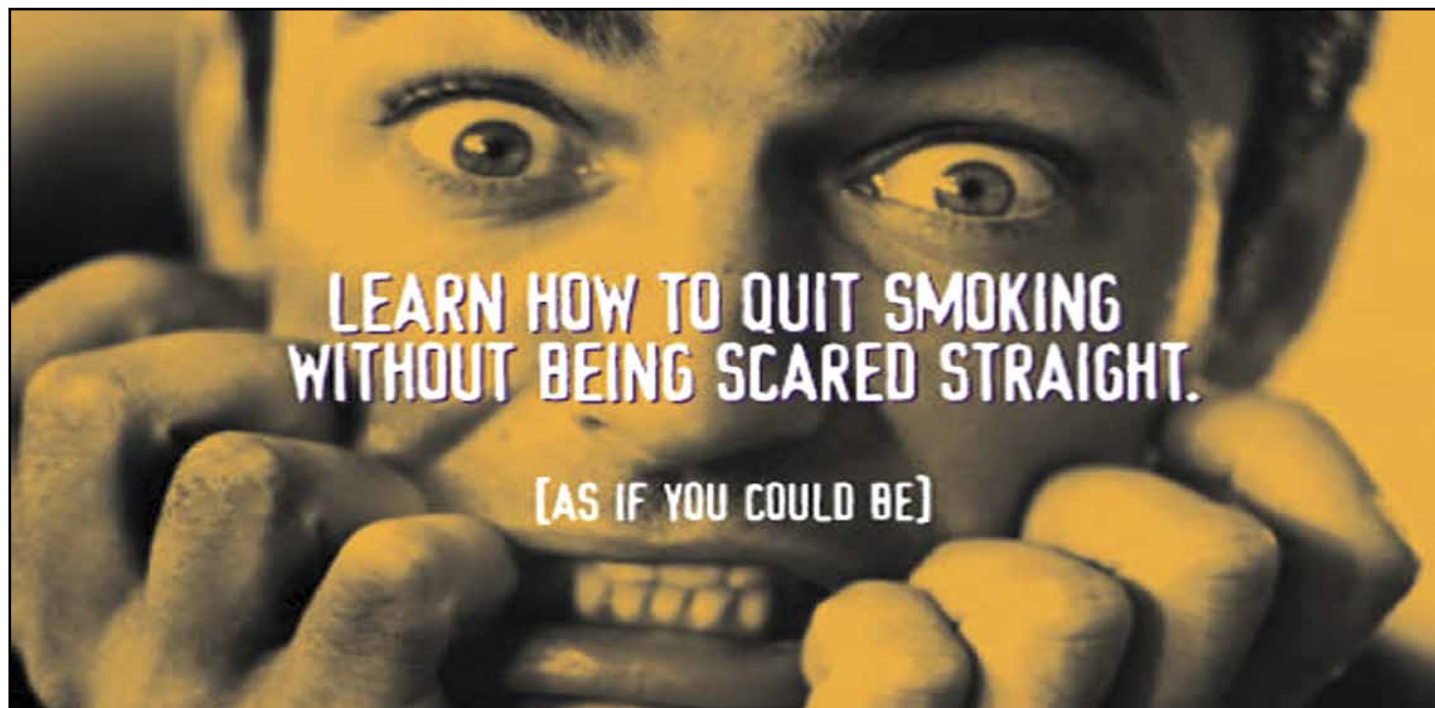
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The Los Angeles County Board of Health created a marketing campaign specifically to combat GLBT smoking in California, which is twice the rate of the state's general population.

kicking *butts*

Gays and lesbians smoke at twice the rate of straight people — and some groups are waging war on putting the lights out

By Kirk Hartlage

Music. An attractive service staff. Drink specials. They're all factors designed to get patrons to frequent a bar or club.

But for some people, no matter how hot the DJ is or how cold the beers are, there is one factor likely to keep them away: cigarette smoke.

"There are some bars in town that I leave saturated with smoke," said Marcus Vahle, an Orlando art director. "But if I really was opposed to it I could go somewhere else — there are always outdoor bars."

True, the Sunshine State's climate offers smokers comfortable outdoor locations to appease their habit nearly year-round. That may become a deciding factor if Florida's metropolitan areas elect to follow trends established in some major locales around the world, banning smoking



inside any drinking establishment.

But despite his distaste for bringing home a souvenir of fumes after a night out on the town, Vahle has an even stronger dislike for Big Brother-type governmental decrees.

"I'm not a big fan of government telling people what to do with their lives," said Vahle on the subject of blanket bans on smoking. Indeed, Vahle is the rare non-smoker whose personal views on public smoking mirrors the majority of smokers. But even he admits that the issue isn't one with a simple resolution.

"There really is no good solution," said Vahle, "But legislating morality is always the worst. I just don't believe in



With shirts reading "Breathe Easier. Play Harder." the Last Drag L.A. street team is introduced by Jonathan Fielding, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A. Director of Public Health and Health Officer.

having other people tell you how to live your life."

But when it comes to matters of public health, there will always be advocacy groups and governmental agencies that seek to create change for the greater good. It's change that may be more important than ever for the health and well-being of gays and lesbians. Some alarming

Continued on page 10

10 *great* habits to start in '06

By Dave Wiethop, Kirk Hartlage and Steve Blanchard

You're well into the third week of your New Year's resolutions and one or two of them seem like an evil joke played by someone less sane than you are today. Perhaps "resolutions" is too strong a word for you.

Then consider some good habits. There's less pressure with a habit than with a resolution — and there's less guilt if they don't become an everyday thing.

Keep in mind that not all good habits deal with physical health. The mind and the spirit also need your attention as well.

1. Protect your skin. If you're reading this newspaper, odds are very good that you're living in Florida — and that means you're getting more exposure to the sun than you really think.

"If you want to protect yourself from the effects of aging, then you must use a sunscreen or a sunblock," said Dr. Inda Mowett, who runs the Aesthetic & Wellness Center in Bradenton. While sunscreens and sunblocks are different, they both will protect you.

"It's important to understand that everyone needs it, regardless of skin color," Mowett said. She also recommends limiting exposure to the sun between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., when the sun's rays are the most harmful.

If you want to further protect your skin, consider dropping that smoking habit, Mowett said. See the story at the left for details.

2. Let your workout be as diverse as you are. At this point we'll assume you've long ago heeded the advice of joining a gym and developing a workout regime. If you're like most people and focus solely on one activity, you may be setting yourself up for injuries, overuse syndromes, or worse yet, staleness; factors all that could lead you to abandon your workout program.

Cross training is an ideal way to develop a balanced fitness program and a total body tune-up. A balanced

Continued on page 8

HEALTH & FITNESS

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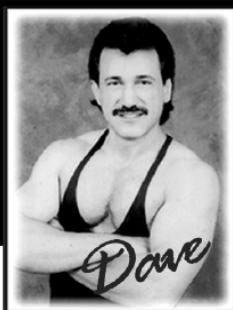
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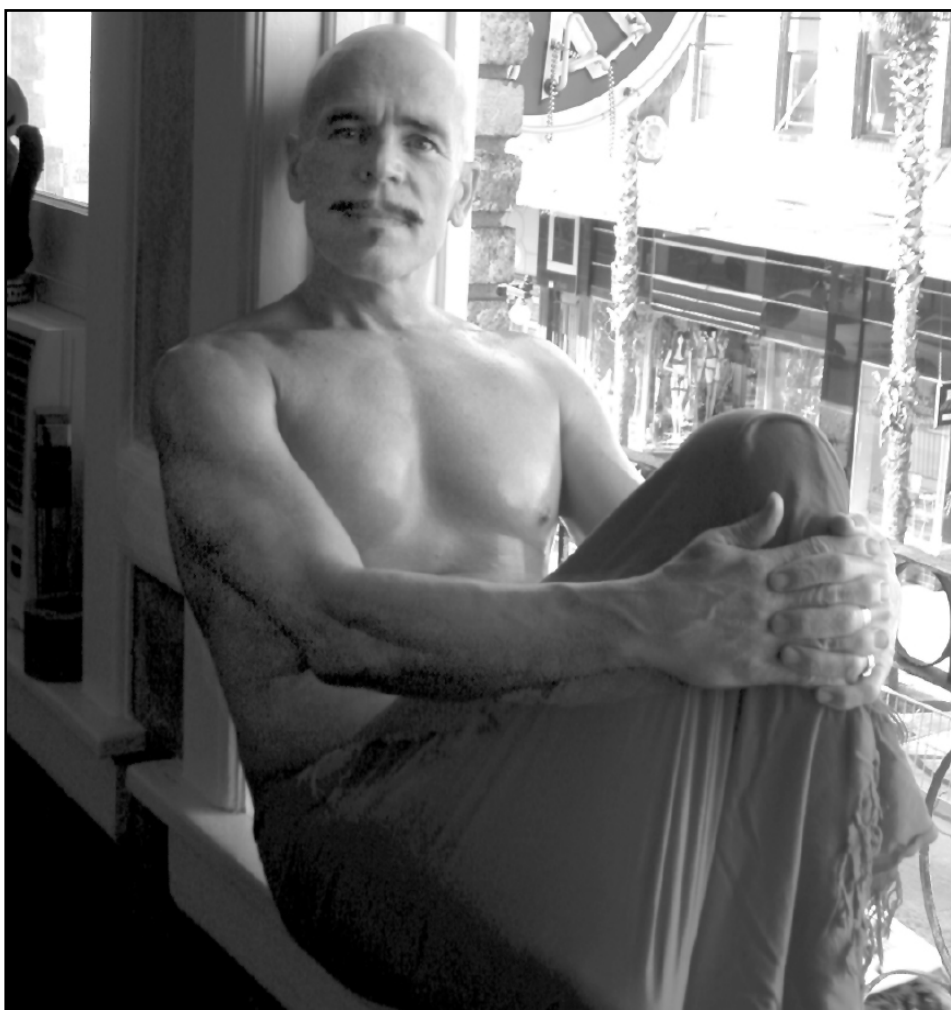
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HEALTH & FITNESS

STERLING POWELL got in shape for a feature in his magazine, *Citilife* (inset).

STERLING POWELL circa 2002: Living life to its fullest.

award-winning drill corps.

When his family moved to Orlando in the mid-1970s, Powell stepped in to disc jockey at Sgt. Pepper's Paradisc one New Year's night and promptly threaded Christmas lights through his jump suit and plugged himself into the booth.

"I was a lousy DJ," he says, "but I made people feel like they were experiencing something special."

At the Parliament House, Powell befriended a member of the Gambino family and followed him out to Los Angeles, where he wound up as maitre d' at Studio One – the Studio 54 of the West Coast. When his mother developed cancer he returned to Orlando and created a commercial cleaning company. It was lucrative until one of his employees, a roommate and friend, was murdered while cleaning a Burger King in 1988.

"I'm still recovering," Powell says somberly.

Seeking a change of venue, Powell discovered the beaches, parks, galleries and museums of St. Petersburg and was enamored. He worked as a nursing assistant and devoted his down time to painting — and cultivating that distinctive persona.

Exhibits at the Positive Expressions Gallery and major fund-raising shows caught the attention of the *Weekly Planet*, where Powell was given his own high profile *Sterling Beat* from 1996 to 2002. Contractual issues tanked the popular column, but gigs on radio and WFLA's *Daytime* show, as well as commercials for the Treasure Island Fun Center, kept Powell in the public eye.

But in 2003, he was ready to shed his flamboyant skin for something new.

No.1 priority

St. Petersburg was booming with new development and local entrepreneurs wanted some sort of publication to showcase the revitalized

downtown. Powell was suggested as a columnist, but when he met with key investors one complained about slow progress.

"Let me do it!" Powell recalls blurting out, and he soon sold them on his ambitious concept for *Citilife*, a sophisticated glossy reminiscent of *Ocean Drive* and *Vegas*.

Other than his column, Powell had no experience in magazine publishing but he was undaunted. The first issue of *Citilife* hit the streets of St. Petersburg in May 2004 to enthusiastic response. Powell had earmarked a whopping \$5,000 per issue for photography and it showed, giving the publication an urbane quality unexpected in a startup. The dozen or so issues since have spotlighted the likes of actor Patrick Wilson (HBO's *Angels in America*) and Peter Max, who produced original cover art for the magazine. Free circulation has increased to 12,000.

Although *Citilife* is not gay per se, Powell's artistic sensibility permeates the magazine. That hasn't prevented him from securing Baker as a contributor, or landing an upcoming cover interview with Republican gubernatorial candidate Charlie Crist.

Powell's new look also springs from the magazine. When a reader was chosen for a *New Year* – *New You* feature last January, Powell decided to join in. He hooked them up with City Gym trainers Tera Guzman (2005 Woman's Class winner, National Bodybuilding Championships) and Johnathen iJazzman Hurst, who supervised a rigorous diet and workout regimen for nine months.

Powell highly recommends working with a trainer if you really want to beat the odds and attain your goals.

I made the decision to really get in shape, he says. I'm an artist, and I think living life to its fullest is like the ongoing creation of a masterpiece. ▼

The Art of Reinvention

In his latest incarnation, Sterling Powell is a pumped publisher

By Tom Dyer

“Will people think you put my head on someone else's body?

Sterling Powell is standing in an Ybor City loft, looking over photographer Michael Heape's shoulder at a computer screen displaying the stunning nude pictures just taken of him. Lean, pumped and oiled, the image is self-consciously statuesque. Across Seventh Avenue, some early drinkers whoop their approval from a bar balcony. Powell crosses to the window and waves, teasing them with his red sarong.

"Not bad for an old guy, huh?," he chides.

A print, radio and television personality, Powell has one of the most recognizable faces in Tampa Bay. For years, his vivid presence – think Salvador Dali as the Mayor of Munchkinland – was the stamp of approval at local social events. But the openly gay "Arbiter of Hip" has shed his

red suit, round glasses and kewpie doll hair and reinvented himself as the no-nonsense publisher of *Citilife Magazine*.

Now in its second year, the monthly glossy promotes St. Petersburg's transformation from sleepy to sleek. Filled with striking images of glass towers and glamorous people, it includes profiles of local movers-and-shakers and a regular column by Mayor Rick Baker. It's hardly the first time Powell has reinvented himself. But like the changes to his beloved hometown, Powell's latest incarnation is, well, pumped. "Change your body and you change your life," he says.

Something special

Sterling Powell (his real name) discovered that he could adapt at an early age. Poised to become the baton-twirling drum major for his Toronto, Ohio, high school marching band, he learned that he

would be required to play a musical instrument. So instead, he and his sister, Judy, opened a school of baton and recruited more than 200 students. Known as "Judy's Torontoettes," Powell led the



sterlingstats

age: Unspecified, but remembers Mamie Eisenhower.

height: 5-foot-8 – without the curl on top.

weight: 160 pounds, down from 172 pounds nine months ago.

waist Size: A svelte 30, formerly 36.

diet: Egg whites, lean chicken, salads, steamed vegetables, no bread or pasta.

weakness: Fried chicken

suggestion: Start out planning meals one day a week, then build until the whole week is balanced.

cardio: Jogging/speed-walking 30 minutes every day.

weights: 45 minutes three days/week with trainer.

favorite exercise: Bench press, triceps.

hated exercise: anything for legs.

motto: "Success is a sure thing when you expect it." ▼

HEALTH & FITNESS

What's the Rub?

Massage therapy, chiropractics go hand in hand

By Steve Blanchard

You're in pain, and it strains you to reach for the phone book — or your keypad. So, who do you call, a massage therapist or a chiropractor? Deciding what treatment is right for you may depend on several factors, but one thing is certain: Any injury to your back should be treated right away.

Chiropractors offer non-surgical alternatives to pain relief through adjustments to the spine. Massage therapists can also offer that pain relief to those who have tenderness to their muscles. While the two fields may seem to work on separate areas, more and more chiropractors and massage therapists are joining forces to help their clients.

"Chiropractic services and massage therapy go hand in hand," said James Bowman, a licensed massage therapist in South Tampa. "Both offer different healing benefits and we work with chiropractors to do what's best for the client."

After a client receives an adjustment from a chiropractor, Bowman said it's important to work the back muscles to help the adjustment stay in place longer.

"Your muscles push against your vertebrae so there are healing benefits to spinal problems by getting a massage," Bowman said. "But the chiropractor can work directly on your spine. The two services really go with each other."

According to the Bay Area Wellness Center in St.

Petersburg, which offers both chiropractic and massage therapy services, an adjustment technically lets a body heal itself.

"Gentle adjustments can soothe pinched nerves, stiff necks and muscle spasms by relieving pressure from the nerve roots," said one employee answering the telephones. "Massage is an aid in helping the soft tissues of the body to recover from the trauma of an injury or an illness."

“Our job is to relax your muscles, not to rub you down and get you off.”

Licensed and Knowledgeable

Any doctor's office will display the diplomas and credentials of the professional offering services. Chiropractors and massage therapists have similar licensing procedures.

According to Bowman, ensuring that your massage therapist is licensed in his or her field is essential, especially since there are many factors to the practice that many clients may not even consider.

"We have to be very careful and always know everything we can about the client," Bowman said. "For someone who has any kind of disease — like HIV or AIDS — massage therapy is beneficial because it helps promote the flow of blood. That breaks up blockages and promotes healing. But, if your client has high blood pressure, the last thing you want to do is get the blood moving even faster and overwork the heart."

Cancer patients, Bowman pointed out, are not always good candidates for massage therapy because strong blood flow can actually spread the disease. However, there are instances when they can benefit.

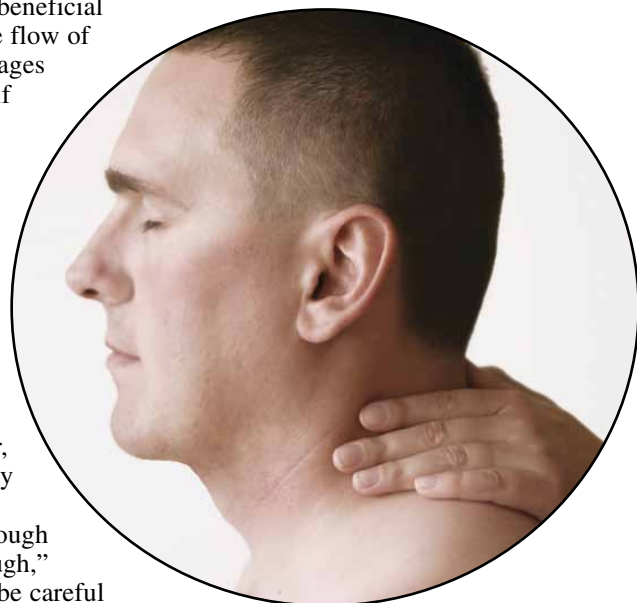
"That's why we go through the training that we go through," Bowman said. "We have to be careful

and know our clients' bodies to offer the best treatments for them. Sometimes we need to refer them to a chiropractor and sometimes clients come to us from the chiropractor's office. The goal is to improve the patient."

By fusing the two techniques, patients improve faster than with just one.

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“A lot of the ads you see offer body rubs. Usually these are former massage therapists who may not have passed their exit exams or people who just feel like they are good at giving massages. You have to be careful.”

muscles and soft body tissue in place. After an accident or trauma it may react by crinkling up like saran wrap and pulling the tissues unevenly. That causes the pain.

By releasing that tissue, the pain subsides and the patient is comfortable.

Massage therapists may also use muscle energy therapy, which helps muscles that have been abnormally shortened to regain their full lengths. Each muscle group requires a different method of treatment, thus the need for the proper training.

“A lot of the ads you see in newspapers offer body rubs,” Bowman said. “Usually these are former massage therapists who may not have passed their exit exams or people who just feel like they are good at giving massages. You have to be careful.”

Massages and Sex

It's very common for massage therapists to get telephone calls from potential clients asking about the “happy ending.” A licensed massage therapist doesn't offer such a service and could

lose his or her license if the massage ends with anything sexual.

“A massage can cause an erection in men, and it's part of becoming relaxed,” Bowman said. “But it doesn't mean massage is a sexual thing. Anytime someone asks about the happy ending, I have to tell them that massage therapists are not call boys or hustlers.”

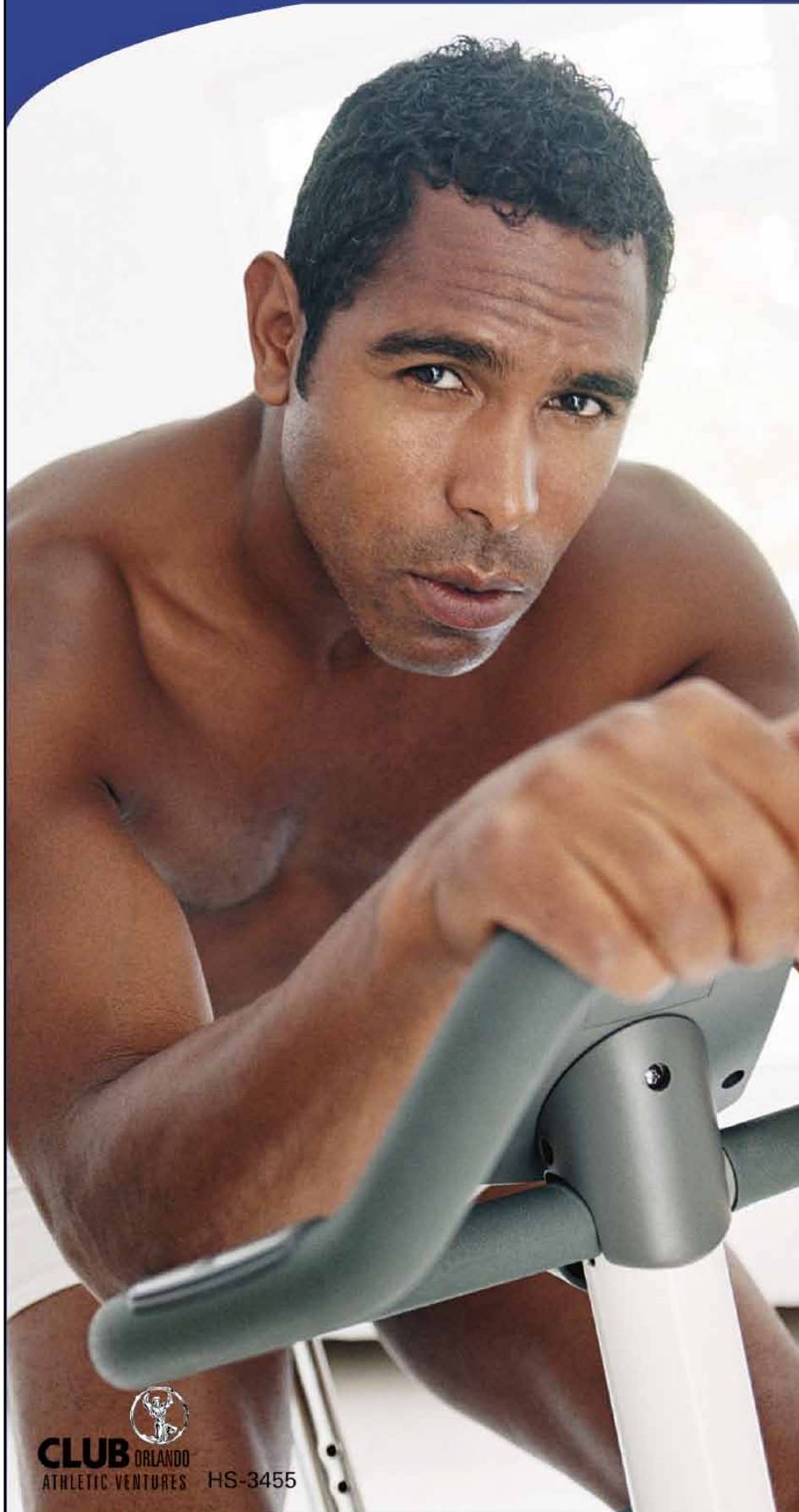
According to Florida law, any massage therapist who develops an interest in a client on a personal level must wait six months after the last appointment before contacting that client. To pursue a personal relationship of any kind while the client is still in the care of the therapist is reason to revoke the license.

“Whatever two consenting adults do is their business,” Bowman said, “but if it happens in the realm of massage therapy, it's wrong. That's not what we do and our job is to relax your muscles, not to rub you down and get you off.”

For more information, contact James Bowman at (813) 468-8251 or call the Bay Area Wellness Center at (727) 327-4522. ▼

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HEALTH & FITNESS

Getting that Boost

Choose wisely if you're considering supplements for your health regimen

By Steve Blanchard

CLEARWATER - With the new year firmly upon us, gyms are busy, trainers are booked and bodybuilding supplements are flying off the shelves. But are those packages of bottled miracle powders really worth the effort?

It depends on your own health and metabolism, according to health and fitness professionals.

Legal supplements like protein mixes, creatine powder and energy bars can all be

used to bulk up, but the population they actually help is a small one, according to Dr. Bozena Sabala, a general practitioner in Clearwater.

Truthfully, there aren't any great studies showing what the supplement creatine does or does not do, Sabala said. But for sure, if you have too much creatine in your system and you have renal disease or high blood pressure, you can't take it. Your kidneys would suffer.

Creatine is produced naturally in the kidney, liver and pancreas of humans and is plentiful in meat and fish. The body stores the creatine in muscles where it becomes a quickly available source of energy for muscle contraction and muscle growth.

When your muscle breaks, creatine is a by-product, Sabala said. If you have too much creatine in your system your body has to filter it through your kidneys, and if you have a problem there you can go into renal failure.

However, if you are young and without health risks, creatine shouldn't hurt you. The supplement is only helpful for those who do intense workouts.

It's important to stay hydrated at all times, but especially when you take creatine, Sabala said. If you take any other

street drugs or amphetamines, then you need to stay away from it.

According to Bally Total Fitness personal trainer Gerry Costello, supplements are great for bodybuilders and people in intense training, but probably not for those just starting a workout routine.

"I've used creatine and I really did see a difference in muscle development," Costello said. "But I used it when I was in competition in the early 1990s. I don't rely on it quite as much anymore."

Costello agrees that before anyone decides to use supplements, he or she should first see a doctor to ensure there are no problems.

"Most creatine regimens tell you to start off with 20 grams a day for the first week and then back off to 5 grams a day," Costello said. "I always recommend a little less than that to start off to see how your body reacts. It is an enhancer and it does work."

Sometimes it isn't only muscle weight that creatine fans gain, according to Sabala. Creatine is a natural water retainer, meaning a few of those pounds on the scale relate to excess water.

More often than not, you'll see a gain in water weight instead of muscle mass, Sabala said.

Protein Shakes

Protein feeds our muscles, which go through a revitalization process every day—whether we do intense exercise or not. So for most fitness buffs, drinking a protein shake after a hard workout is the ideal way to replenish those depleted muscles.

But, like with any supplement, there are guidelines to be followed.

Whenever you train, the muscle actually breaks down, Costello said. While your body rests, the muscles rebuild themselves and actually grow. You don't see growing at the gym. The growing of the muscle is the result of your workout at the gym, but your muscle builds when it's resting.

To rebuild, muscles need protein. Most gyms offer protein shakes and other mixes to fuel that rebuilding, but you may not need those fitness drinks if you eat right.

There is a certain amount of protein

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people should take a day, Sabala said. If you eat right and have a regular diet, you have enough protein in your body and you don't need the supplements. That extra protein does help you build better muscles, but you're overloading your kidneys, just like with too much creatine.

The body is a natural filtration system, Sabala said, and turns excess protein into urea products, which must be displaced through the kidneys. Protein shakes are also not recommended for people with high blood pressure – again because of the strain on the kidneys.

The amount of protein a person needs is based on his or her body mass. Doctors recommend that people consume one gram of protein per kilo of their body weight. For easy math, consider a person weighs 100 pounds. He or she would need to consume about 50 grams of protein each day.

Protein is protein, regardless of the form it comes in, Sabala said. The difference between say soy protein and whey protein is just the way the body digests it. The protein you get from meat is the same thing.

The most common reason why trainers recommend protein shakes is because of the hectic lifestyles of so many clients, Costello said. The shakes are easier and most people don't eat right.

"We live in a fast-food nation," Costello said. It's a nation of convenience and sometimes convenience does not equal healthy. Protein shakes are perfect for someone who doesn't eat from all the correct food groups or is always on the go.

And of course, Sabala said, intense training may require additional protein, and shakes can provide that easily.

Preparing your Workouts

Most gyms offer a free training session with a licensed personal trainer. Costello recommends taking advantage of such promotions, especially if you've never

seriously considered a workout before.

"Too many people waste time in the gym," Costello said. "They focus on how much weight is on a bar and don't focus on the movement. I don't care if you have 400 pounds on a bar, if your movement isn't right you're only increasing your chances for injury or not working the right muscles at all."

Costello said he often tells his clients to eat before coming to their sessions, even if it's just an energy bar to keep them motivated.

"When your body works it burns food like cars burn gasoline," he said. "If you come to the gym on an empty stomach or you haven't eaten all day, you're going to suffer. You need that fuel as much as your car needs fuel to get you to work."

Sabala doesn't endorse energy bars, but she said they can be beneficial if

consumed correctly. Hydration is the key with any type of fitness routine and energy bars often soak up that hydration during the workout.

"You always need water," Sabala said. "You sweat when you're on a workout routine and you're losing more water than someone just watching television. You need to replace that. I would say take a

bottle of water with you before you take energy bars. Your body responds naturally to water. We're made up of water and we have to replace that."

It's important to remember that supplements aren't all bad, but you have to be smart when using them, Costello said. It also depends on what your goals may be.

Energy bars, creatine and protein shakes are perfect for someone in the bodybuilding circuit who wants to achieve an incredible mass or a certain weight, Costello said. "But I wouldn't recommend the supplements to someone who wants to live a healthier lifestyle and drop pounds or tone up."

“Energy bars, creatine and protein shakes are perfect for someone in the bodybuilding circuit. I wouldn't recommend them to someone who wants to drop pounds or tone up.”



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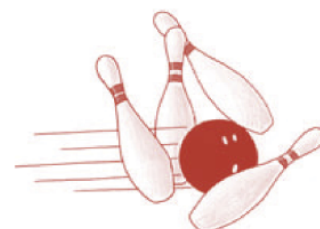


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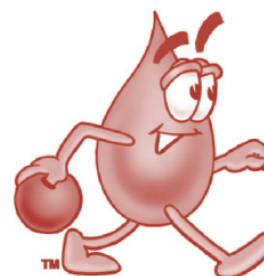
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HEALTH & FITNESS

Habits from page 1

fitness program should contain three components: aerobic exercises, strength training and flexibility exercises.

Jeremy Seymour, owner of Orlando Fitness Boot Camp, teaches an overall fitness workout that includes cardio, stretching, Pilates, core conditioning, strength training and cardiovascular training. He finds using a mixture of training techniques helps prevent boredom, provides variety and reduces injuries from over-training the same muscles.

"When you switch it up, it makes working out not become the same routine day in and day out," Seymour said. "The biggest reason people stop working out is because of boredom."

At the other end of the spectrum is the person who tends to over-focus their training on one body part or another. We've all seen the guy at the club with the well-developed upper body – only to look down and see it all sitting on top of two bird legs.

"They're really doing themselves a disservice by only working out 50% of the body," Seymour said. "Is 50% of your salary all that you'd want? Likely no."

3. Learn the basics of a second language. Most community colleges and community centers offer basic second-language courses for minimal fees. By learning a second language you'll not only broaden your communications skills but also make friends and acquaintances you would otherwise never know.

Developing a new language skill may also provide an opportunity to learn about another culture or even inspire a trip out of the country where you can mingle with the citizens.

4. Reconnect. Every year we all say the same thing "Where did the year go? I ran out of time." This year make it a habit to stay in touch with the people you care about, regardless of the miles separating you. Internet message boards, e-mail and even this new service called the U.S. Postal Service can help you keep up with the lives of others. (And, c'mon, an extra two cents a letter isn't going to break you!)

Not only do you get to learn about your friends' lives, you have an outlet for yourself. Let your best friend from high

school know about your recent promotion or that there's a new baby on the way. Get your new year moving with a blast from the past.

5. Explore your spiritual side. It's more than making it to the Sunday morning service at church (although many gay-affirming churches do offer on-line services these days).

The Rev. Lorraine Brock, the director of worship at King of Peace MCC in St. Petersburg, suggests that reading something inspirational on a regular basis can enrich your spirit.

"Consider reading other books than the Bible. Sometimes God can speak through other people and their words," she suggested. Or, simply find a ritual at home that will allow you to center yourself and provide some peace. Light a candle, take a walk or simply sit quietly and reflect. You'll feel recharged.

6. Pay attention to your prostate and not just in "that way" (men only).

One of the biggest differences between a gay man and a straight man is the awareness of the joy that can come from his prostate. However, this walnut-sized gland can cause problems in later life.

Prostate cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer among men (behind lung cancer), but about half of all men over 50 will suffer from benign prostate hyperplasia. While this ailment – typified by pain during urination and a feeling that you're not done peeing – isn't curable, several treatments are available for its symptoms.

A recent study from the Mayo Clinic suggests that the problems will only get worse if it goes unchecked by a physician. And who knows? The digital exam might even be worth the trip.

7. Get that physical. Women, this is directed to you: According to the Mautner Project – an organization devoted to lesbian health – lesbians have a higher risk of cancer because they're more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and be overweight than their straight counterparts.

And, because many lesbians are less likely to use oral contraceptives, bear children, breast-feed, eat fruits and

vegetables daily, get mammograms or go to the doctor, the risks of other health conditions continue to increase.

A physical is a great way to start and then listen to what the health care providers suggest.

Visit Mautner-Project.org for details about the health risks that lesbians can face.

8. Read the label.

Gays and lesbians have long had a history of being label whores. But here we're not talking about Gucci, Dolce and Gabanna or even Plain Pockets. Commit to scanning the nutrition facts label on the food products you buy, realizing that the phrase "low-fat" or "Healthy Options" on the box front may not be enough. Sure, that microwave meal may come in handy for a time crunch, but there could be enough sodium inside for several days' intake requirements.

A label may say that the food is reduced fat or reduced sodium. That means that the amount of fat or sodium has been reduced by 25% from the original product. It doesn't mean, however, that the food is low in fat or sodium. For example, if a can of soup originally had 1,000 mg of sodium, the reduced sodium product would still be a high-sodium food.

Remember that those numbers listed in the nutrition facts box are "per serving." A common mistake people make, especially with packages dispensed from vending machines, is to assume that a small item contains one serving just because the package is small. You'll need to do the math to figure out how many calories you've actually consumed, especially if you finish that entire box of Snackwells in one sitting.

Take the time to learn more about specific kinds of fats. Although some types of fats, such as mono and polyunsaturated fats, are healthy, it is still important to pay attention to the overall number of calories that you consume to maintain a healthy weight. If you are trying to lose weight, you'll still want to limit the amount of fat you eat.

9. Learn how to fix it when something goes wrong. Many people can't imagine themselves getting behind the wheel without knowing how to change a tire in case of a flat. But far too many individuals are operating their own human vehicles without knowing how to make a simple repair or, worse yet, sustain a life until medical professionals arrive on the scene of an accident.

"It's extremely important to have at least one person in every household trained



The Tutankhamun exhibit runs through April 23, 2006 at the Museum of Art, Ft. Lauderdale.

and ready to respond to an emergency," said Maria Yabrudy, communications manager for the Central Florida Chapter of the American Red Cross. "It doesn't matter what type of family it is, it's important to know the proper tools and skills to get someone in need the right assistance."

Yabrudy recommends every family have an emergency plan and builds a disaster supply kit, in addition to becoming trained in first aid and CPR. Volunteering also provides an opportunity to learn skills useful for helping friends, family and neighbors in times of need.

But of course, there are additional, albeit superficial, reasons for learning first aid and CPR. That hottie you've met in the running club? What better excuse to putting your hands on his quivering body when he trips and sprains his ankle? Knowing rescue breathing could provide an opportunity to finally go mouth-to-mouth with your cutie coworker when she chokes on her chicken salad at lunch. And CPR has revived many a parent who was just informed their child was gay or lesbian.

10. Get cultured. Florida museums have some great exhibits on the way in 2006. Check out the *Bodies* Exhibition at MOSI before it leaves in February or travel to Fort Lauderdale and see what the big deal is with King Tut.

The Florida International Museum in St. Petersburg presents a unique collection for *Ink & Blood: Sacred Treasures of the Bible*. Take an afternoon and check out those Dead Sea Scrolls for yourself. Check out Mesopotamian art and walk away knowing a little bit more about history. Finally make it to those hidden treasures that you've often talked about visiting: the Maitland Art Center, the Mennello Museum of American Art and the Orlando Museum in the Orlando area, or the Ringling Museum in Sarasota. ▼

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HEALTH & FITNESS

Butts from page 1

new research on smoking within the GLBT community has seen that the rate of smoking within the community far outpaces the population at large. The majority of bar employees and customers have made mention of the risks of second-hand smoke to bar owners and management. But most frightening of all is how the gay community is seen by the tobacco industry.

The smoke-filled bar motif

Still, some creative attempts are being made to reduce the number of smokers within the GLBT community, methods that the tobacco industry has used on consumers for years that are now being used to reduce the numbers of people who use their products.

Research estimates that at least one-third of GLBT adults use tobacco, compared to only a quarter of the adult population at large. Health professionals say cultural pressures – self-esteem issues and the need for peer acceptance, the need for rebellion and liberation, the development of style and individuality – are compounded for lesbians, bisexuals, and gay men struggling with their sexuality as teens. These pressures often result in teenage smoking, a habit found difficult to quit as an adult.

“One of the reasons our community smokes so much is the tacit acceptance of smoke-filled bars as a cultural norm – which makes it much easier for young

GLBT people to start smoking and more difficult for older ones to quit,” said Kathleen DeBold, executive director for the Mautner Project, a national lesbian health organization.

A recent study by Mautner focused on the effects of smoking and GLBT bars and restaurants. More than half of the 140 bar owners and managers that participated in the survey reported that their own employees had made mention of the high levels of second-hand smoke in their establishments.

“The biggest surprise in our study was that more than 55% of respondents reported their own bartenders complained about the smokiness of their bar,” said Amari Sokoya Pearson-Fields, the Mautner Project’s director of research. “Owners and managers also reported that 86% of their customers had complained to them about smokiness.”

That bartenders and wait staff are expressing their distaste of exposure to second hand smoke speaks volumes. Disgruntled employees are presented with the idea of “Unhappy? Find another place to work” find that it is a concept more easily said than done. In some locales, it may be difficult to find work outside of the community that presents an equivalent comfort level.

“GLBT bars are where we work and where we socialize as a community,” said Pearson-Fields. “But the amount of smoke has health implications for employees and customers alike. We were especially surprised to learn that 16% of the owners and managers themselves reported having personal health conditions that are exacerbated by exposure to tobacco smoke.” Those conditions included chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, emphysema and HIV/AIDS.

A previous nationwide survey conducted by Harris Interactive and Witeck-Combs Communications on behalf of the Mautner Project revealed that 70% of the gay and lesbian respondents preferred smoke-free bars and clubs compared with only 53% of the heterosexual respondents. In the same survey, GLBT respondents said they would even be willing to pay *more* to enter a smoke-free bar.

Gays are S.C.U.M.

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“Want to kiss me all night? All over? Put that cigarette away. Let’s put your lips to better use.” says the Mautner Project’s “Delicious Lesbian Kisses” campaign, which encourages lesbians to quit smoking.

smoking.

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death – greater than HIV, illegal drug and alcohol use, auto accidents, suicides and murders combined. Smoking increases the risk for several types of cancer, including lip, larynx and oral cancers and cancers of the lung, pancreas, bladder, kidneys and cervix. Because smoking causes reduced circulation, it has been linked to erectile dysfunction in men. For women, research has associated cigarette smoke with breast cancer and lower bone density.

But only in recent years has the tobacco industry’s designs on boosting sales been exposed.

A program launched by RJ Reynolds in the mid-1990s under strict secrecy and which was later exposed by subpoenas, showed how the tobacco company planned on boosting sales of their cigarettes by targeting two new consumer markets: gays and homeless people. Amazingly reprehensible in its title, the plan was called “Project Sub Culture Urban Marketing” or “Project SCUM.”

The market research project studied the gay male and homeless communities in San Francisco’s Tenderloin District in hope of developing cigarette brands that each “subculture” would like. For gays, the result was the Red Kamel brand, with its hip, retro packaging.

Other tobacco industry documents released in recent tobacco settlements show how the GLBT population was targeted. A 1994 internal document titled, *Benson &*

Hedges in the Gay Market, suggested that the Marlboro man served as a key marketing tool among gays because of his image as “an overt cue to masculinity/sexuality.”

Despite the successes in getting the tobacco industry to provide assistance in anti-smoking campaigns, an *Adweek* investigation discovered Philip Morris is spending far more on *advertising* its charitable efforts (\$100 million) than on the charitable efforts themselves (\$60 million).

Virginia Slim she ain’t

Lesbians may be at higher risk than women in the general U.S. population for some forms of cancer, as well as for cardiovascular and other chronic diseases, according to a study published in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

The reasons for the possible heightened risks are that lesbians are more likely to be overweight, to smoke and to drink alcohol, even moderately, than women overall, and they are less likely to bear children or to use birth control pills, both of which may provide some protective benefits against cancer.

The study also found that lesbians are less likely than other women to have health insurance and less likely to have regular preventive cancer screening tests such as mammograms, pelvic exams and pap smears because many are reluctant to seek out health care in a system that seems designed for heterosexual women.

Because of that, the Mautner Project has developed a national anti-smoking

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campaign, "Delicious Lesbian Kisses," that works in partnership with women's health organizations and local health departments in cities across the country including Madison and Milwaukee, Wis., Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Pa., and Phoenix, Ariz. The campaign offers support and smoking cessation information using positive, sexy images designed by and for women who partner with women.

A tantalizingly suggestive advertisement illustrates a sexy substitution to smoking. Posters show images of women's lips with a tagline that reads: "Want to kiss me all night? All over? Put that cigarette away. Let's put your lips to better use."

The DeliciousKiss.com Web site offers tips to help women quit smoking while a street team that visits lesbian bars helps get the word out. Typical in an appearance is a fund-raising kissing booth and the distribution of wristbands, mints, lip balm and information.

Last drag

California has seen a number of unique successful efforts to curb smoking, important in a state where the GLBT community has a smoking rate of 30.4%, nearly double that of the general population. The L.A. County Department of Health Services' Tobacco Control & Prevention Program instituted a "Last Drag L.A." campaign this past October, which utilized several tactics from the tobacco marketer's playbook.

Health officials set up smoking cessation programs targeting gay men at three local area health organizations and plan to start programs early this year for lesbians. In addition to print advertising, the program hired a group of six beefy men who visited area gay bars and clubs promoting the idea that not smoking is more hip than lighting up. As tobacco and alcohol companies have long incorporated the use of attractive models to sell their products, it only made sense for the Last Drag campaign to do the same.

Linda Aragon, director of the program, said the response to the street team was phenomenal.

"People were very happy to see the health department out there concerned," Aragon said. "The tobacco industry is targeting the GLBT community. For us to counter that we also needed to be there." Aragon said the campaign was highly successful, driving people to the LastDragLA.com website for information and to the regional health centers for cessation classes.

"The gay community has had a finger waved at them so many times for various health concerns," Aragon said, emphasizing that the health department didn't want to preach about knowing the risks of smoking, rather to put the emphasis on turning people towards available resources.

"This was definitely a creative, think-outside-the-box way of getting the message out there," Aragon added that, best of all, the program didn't cost a lot in the grand

scheme of things.

In Florida, the most dramatic changes in successful anti-smoking campaigns have been seen in the youth population.

The state's Office of Tobacco Control, formed in February 1998 following the state's settlement with the tobacco industry, developed the TRUTH campaign, seen as one of the most effective efforts to reduce teen smoking in the world. Since the program's inception in 1998, there has been a 60% decrease in smoking among middle school students and a 42.7% decrease among high school students, said Fernando Senra, agency spokesperson for the Florida Department of Health.

But due to budget woes by the Florida state legislature, TRUTH's media education partnership and diversity program budget was cut in 2003, making it difficult to reach various communities served by the program. However, Senra said, campaign organizers are in the process of preparing outreach fliers to different demographics, one of which will include the GLBT population. They hope to have the outreach program ready to launch this winter.

Putting out the fire

As controversial as they may be, the Mautner Project's Pearson-Fields said all-encompassing smoking bans do level the playing field in getting people to reduce or stop smoking. And bars in municipalities that have enacted such legislation have still survived and stayed in business.

"Years ago, we used to be able to

smoke at our desks," said Pearson-Fields. "When we couldn't do that anymore, we didn't all quit our jobs."

Pearson-Fields said that any advocacy program is not meant to demonize smokers. As a former smoker who smoked 20 years, the activist knows the delicate nature of properly presenting her message. Her campaign and others are also not meant to demonize bar owners, rather to find out from them and their employees what concerns exist and to at least create dialogue on the subject where none has previously existed.

Still, some GLBT non-profit groups and businesses, particularly publications, are financially tied to the tobacco industry. Non-profit groups may have their budgets assisted by grants and donations by tobacco companies while gay magazines often have numerous advertisements for cigarettes.

By 1999, tobacco was the top ad category in *Out* magazine. From 1995 to 1999, tobacco companies sponsored 44 AIDS events and AIDS service organizations. In fact, in 1994, Philip Morris was Gay Men's Health Crisis' top donor, at \$150,000. The tobacco giant gave more than \$14 million to HIV/AIDS causes between 1986 and 2001.

"These are issues that ultimately the community will have to address," said Pearson-Fields. Still, there is one ultimate goal that she would like to see come to fruition.

"Ideally we'll all go smoke free and live long and healthy lives." ▼

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ORAQUICK'S MAKER STUDIES BAD READINGS

NEW YORK - The manufacturer of OraQuick Advance Rapid HIV antibody test has begun its own internal probe into the high number of false-positive readings in San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles.

In December, San Francisco's Department of Health stopped using the popular test at two clinics after a large number of positive results later turned out to be negative after using traditional screening methods.

A few weeks later, the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center discontinued use of the oral version of the rapid OraQuick HIV test after 13 people who took the oral test at the center falsely registered as HIV-positive. Health officials in New York are also monitoring a number of false positives, which shot up inexplicably in November, but they have not discontinued the test. No other testing agencies have

reported an unusual spike in false-positive readings.

FDA officials pointed out that OraQuick is a "screening" test, not a "confirmation" test, like the Western Blot.

The test's manufacturer, OraSure Technologies, is now working with affected customers, health care officials and government agencies to determine the causes for the bad readings.

Use of OraQuick spread fairly extensively after the FDA's approval for professional use in March 2004. It uses fluids swabbed from the mouth and can produce results in about 20 minutes.

The company has filed an intent to manufacture a home HIV test. Officials have not said if the recent concerns about the false-positive readings will delay — or derail — these plans. ▼ *Staff and wire reports*

INFLUENTIAL ANTIGAY PSYCHIATRIST, AUTHOR DIES

NEW YORK - A pillar of antigay psychiatry, Charles W. Socarides, has died at his home in Manhattan. He was 83. He provided much of the intellectual rationale for the discredited concept of "reparative therapy," that gays and lesbians could be cured of their sexual orientation and made straight.

Socarides' obsession with homosexuality resulted in a handful of books on the topic, including *The Overt Homosexual* (1968), and *Homosexuality: A Freedom Too Far* (1995).

His central premise was that for gay men, homosexuality was a "neurotic adaptation" to a distant father and a smothering mother. He claimed to have cured about a third of those he treated and made them straight. He was a vocal advocate for his positions and was frequently quoted in the media.

Socarides was one of the leading opponents to the 1973 decision by the American Psychological Association to reclassify homosexuality from a mental

illness to part of the continuum of normal behavior. He never came to accept that position by the overwhelming majority of his peers.

He helped to found the antigay National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality in 1992, and served as its president for several years. The splinter group was a safe haven for those therapists who still tried to "cure" homosexuality.

However, NARTH differs from most religious advocates of reparative therapy in that it does not support coercive therapy.

It is perhaps ironic that one of his sons, Richard Socarides, not only ended up being gay but served in the White House as liaison to the GLBT community in the Clinton administration. The younger Socarides was from the first of the elder's four marriages. He acknowledged that the relationship with his father often was strained. ▼ *Bob Roehr*

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HEALTH BRIEFS

ILLINOIS NOW REPORTS NAMES OF HIV PATIENTS TO CDC

Illinois has begun reporting the names of people who test positive for HIV to the federal Centers of Disease Control and Prevention instead of using an anonymous code, leaving only a dozen states that offer anonymous reporting. The CDC has pressured these states to follow suit, saying that it will only count HIV cases reported by name in its allocation of federal funds. Among those states: California, Massachusetts, Vermont and the District of Columbia. Critics say that the policy discourages individuals from getting tested.

POSCON TAMPA BAY GROUP TO WATCH PLAYOFF GAME JAN. 14

PosCon Tampa Bay will host a social at 4 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 14, at the St. Petersburg Ale House, 7901 Ninth St. N. in St. Petersburg to watch the football divisional playoff game. The table will be listed under the name "PosCon." To RSVP or get more details, call Brian at (727) 458-1249.

HEALTH & FITNESS

TRANSITIONS

CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS: Pier One's *Cheers* gal replaced by a *Queer* guy **KIRSTIE ALLEY** (1/12); original Catwoman **EARTHA KITT** (1/17); singer with a heart – and chest – as big as all outdoors **DOLLY PARTON** (1/19); Tampa singer who proclaimed *I Wanna Be Bad* **WILLA FORD** (1/22); Chicago hoofer long before Catherine Zeta-Jones **CHITA RIVERA** (1/23); and Grammy standee who “keeps on falling” **ALICIA KEYS**. ▼

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Much — but not all — of DOLLY PARTON will turn 60 on Jan. 19.

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\$50.00 with cocktail party and reception
with Ms. Channing following show**FOR INFORMATION****Please Call 727-849-3758****or visit www.johntimpanelli.com****PENN STATE SUED OVER
'NO LESBIANS' POLICY**

HARRISBURG, Pa. - The National Center for Lesbian Rights has filed a federal lawsuit against Penn State Lady Lions basketball coach Rene Portland and others, saying that they violated several federal and state protections when she harassed a star on her team.

The complaint states that Portland repeatedly inquired about Jennifer Harris' sexual orientation, often pressuring her to appear more "feminine." The complaint also alleges that Portland harassed and targeted other African-American athletes, eventually demanding that they not associate with Harris.

In 2005, Portland abruptly told Harris to find somewhere else to play.

In addition to seeking damages, the two-year player is asking Penn State to conduct mandatory non-discrimination training for all athletic department employees, as well as create new policies to help student athletes report discrimination without fear of retaliation.

"My departure from Penn State was very painful," said Harris. "I struggled with whether I should just walk away and try to forget what happened. I finally realized that I could never put this incident behind me."

According to the complaint, this is not the first time Penn State has been asked to take action in the wake of reports that Portland has a longstanding "no drinking, no drugs, no lesbians" policy. The complaint noted that Portland created a stir in 1986 after she told the *Chicago Sun*



A lawsuit alleges that Penn State basketball coach **RENE PORTLAND** has a "no lesbians" policy.

Times she does not allow lesbians on her team, and again in 1991 when reports surfaced in the press. Harris' complaint alleges that although Penn State officially added sexual orientation to the school's non-

discrimination policy, Portland has continued to discriminate against athletes and staff whom she suspects of being gay.

"Coach Portland's decades-long practice of engaging in deliberate discrimination on the basis of actual and perceived sexual orientation, gender, and race has continued virtually unabated despite the harm to players and staff," said Harris' attorney, NCLR regional counsel Karen Doering. "We are hopeful this lawsuit will serve as a catalyst for a new era of inclusiveness and respect."

Harris has now taken her high-powered game to James Madison University where she is coached by Kenny Brooks. Because of NCAA transfer rules, Harris must sit out the 2005-06 season before she is eligible to play her junior and senior seasons. ▼ *Staff reports*

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SPORTS BRIEFS**ORLANDO MELTDOWN SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT SET FOR JAN. 13-15**

Players from throughout the state are expected at the Orlando Meltdown Softball Tournament Jan. 13-15. The 2006 tournament will be held again at the Seminole County Softball Complex after previous years in Osceola County and at Disney's Wide World of Sports. It all begins with registration and a managers' meeting on Friday, Jan. 13, at the Parliament House Resort, with ice-breaker round-robin play at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 14, and tournament play afterwards. Southern Nights will host a ladies' night on Saturday, while the Parliament House will offer an event that evening as well. Tourney play continues on Sunday, Jan. 15. The awards ceremony will begin at 6:45 p.m. in the Footlight Theatre. Visit OrlandoMeltdown.com.

RAINBOW FLIPPERS LOOK FOR NEW MEMBERS

The Rainbow Flippers are actively looking for members for its online scuba diving community. The lesbian organization was created for divers looking for diving buddies or for those seeking diving trips. The group travels to the Keys and to both Florida coasts throughout the year. E-mail RainbowFlippers@yahoogroups.com.

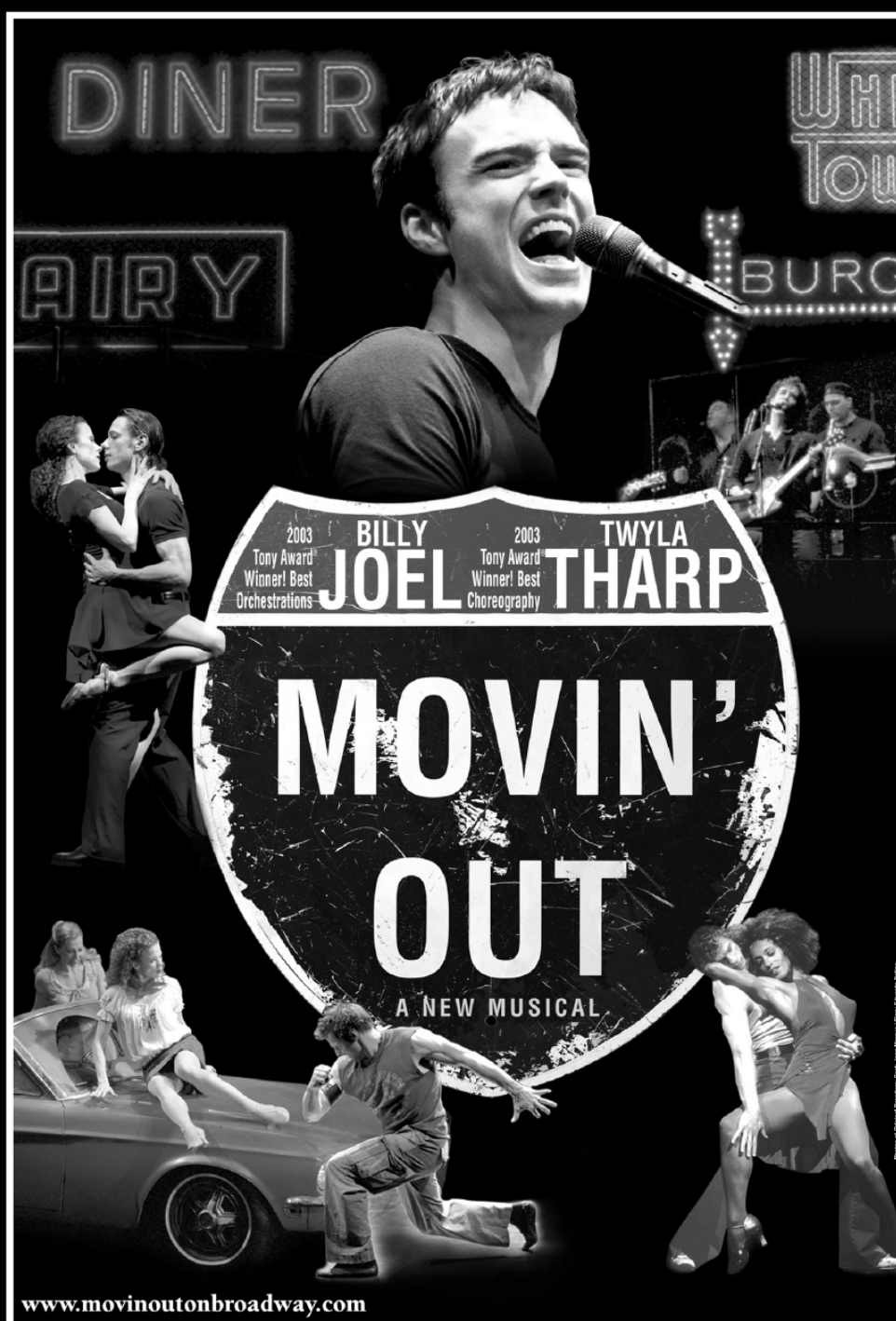
FGRA SEEKS VOLUNTEERS FOR APRIL EVENT

The Florida Gay Rodeo Association is seeking volunteers for the 2006 Sunshine Stampede slated for April 7-9 at the Bergeron Rodeo Grounds in Davie, near Fort Lauderdale. The FGRA is seeking a barn boss responsible for checking contestants and their horses into the barn, timers, security members, arena crewmembers and greeters. For more information, e-mail volunteers@fgra.org or visit www.fgra.org.

WALKERS, RUNNERS READY FOR ST. PETE BEACH CLASSIC

The third annual St. Pete Beach Classic will get underway Jan. 13-14. The event features a 10K and 5K run and walk and a health and fitness expo. The event has been so well attended in past years that organizers have moved it from its old location by the Dolphin Village in the County Park.

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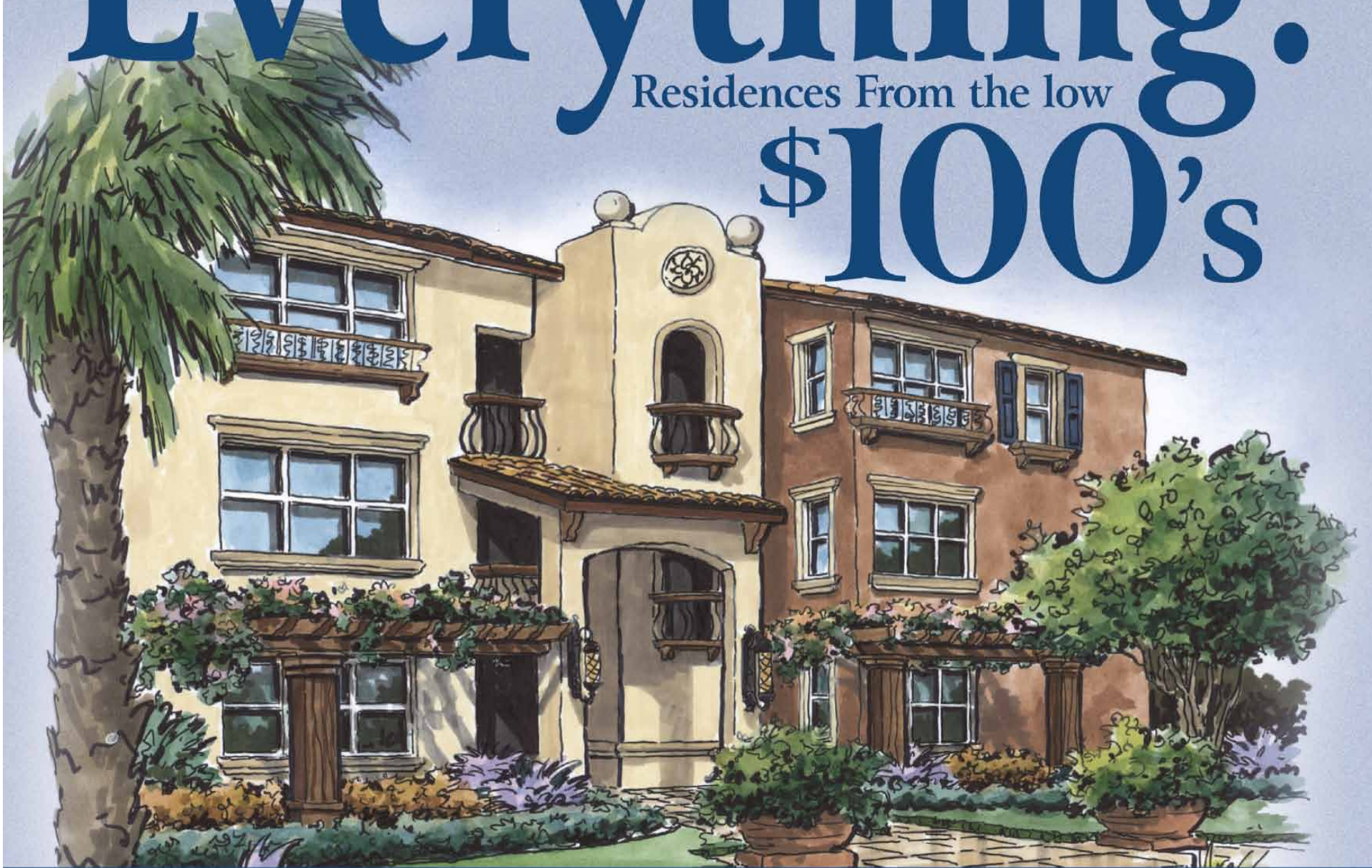
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