

Sweet Treat for GRRRLs

Better than Chocolate takes a fresh look at lesbian lives

By Allen Kalchik, Editor

Filmmaker Anne Wheeler loves Vancouver.

The Canadian coastal city has been her home for the past five years. In the last decade it's also become a major hub for TV and movie production companies from both the U.S. and Canada seeking cost-effective location shooting.

It was an easy choice, then, for the director of the new lesbian romantic comedy *Better than Chocolate* to set the film in her own backyard.

"It's kind of famous for that you can ski in the morning and sail in the afternoon," Wheeler says of the Vancouver area. "And it's got a lot of different topographies. It's got the Rocky Mountains right up against the ocean. And it's got a huge delta of farmland with big rivers coming through it. Just off Vancouver there's a multitude of small islands that still look like they're in the fifties."

It sounds great, particularly if you're interviewing Wheeler from Phoenix in the midst of an August monsoon. "You've got a wonderful spectrum of locations and

looks from one core," she adds, "you don't have to go very far to get out in the country. In L.A. you have to go forever to get out of the city. But you don't have to go that far before you can get a wilderness look here."

Wilderness looks play no part in Wheeler's newest picture, opening in Phoenix Aug. 27. *Better than Chocolate* instead shows off Vancouver's dazzling urban side, from its busy Pacific docks to its eclectic and cosmopolitan downtown night life.

Co-Produced by longtime Wheeler collaborators Sharon McGowan and Peggy Thomson (who also penned the screenplay), much of the film's action takes place at the Cat's Ass Lounge, a fictitious lesbian nightclub, and at 10 Percent, a queercentric bookshop fighting to stay afloat despite lackluster sales and meddling government censors.

Here's the story: Karen Dwyer plays Maggie, a newly out 19-year old femme with an activist soul and a teenage libido. Maggie has dropped out of law school and is working at 10 Percent, which is owned by a harried and hapless intellectual dyke named Frances (Ann-Marie

MacDonald). Maggie works alongside a horny, bisexual clubkid named Carla (Marya Delver).

Carla's boldness is too much for Maggie, whose first big crush is on Kim (Christina Cox), a smooth-talking portrait artist. Kim drifts into town, into Maggie's arms, and then quickly moves into her new sublet.

Maggie's mom, Lila (Wendy Crewson) soon shows up—more or less uninvited—with younger brother Paul (Kevin Mundy) in tow. Lila's self image is a shambles. She's just been jilted by her husband and wants to make a new start in the big city, so she pesters her daughter for attention while drowning her sorrows in wine and an endless supply of boxed chocolates.

Sweet natured Lila simply doesn't get the relationship between her daughter and her new "friend", despite the cramped quarters they all share. Maggie is too preoccupied with Kim's curves and too annoyed by Lila's presence to clue her mom in, so Lila turns to an attractive entertainer named Judy for friendship and advice.

What everyone but Lila knows, of

course, is that demure Judy (superbly played by Peter Outerbridge) is as yet an operation away from the gender she proclaims.

Though it suffers from some of the sheepish plot contrivances and the too-understated acting typically found in low-budget indies, *Better than Chocolate* nevertheless lives up to its title and gives audiences something new to view in the way of lesbian movies—particularly when it comes to onscreen sex.

According to Wheeler, the erotically charged scenes in the movie aren't there by accident. The director discussed the scriptwriting and casting processes, and cheerfully answered other impertinent questions about the making of her movie during our interview.

HeatStroke: According to publicity information sent out with your movie, the screenplay was a somewhat collaborative process. But the writing credit goes to Peggy Thomson alone. So how did the actual script come about?

See "Director," page 14

Judge recommends gay doctor keep license with probation; BOMEX chief says case isn't over yet

By Kelly J. Reidhead, Managing Editor

The Administrative Law Judge assigned to hear the evidence of sexual misconduct against Dr. Ken Fisher has recommended that the Board of Medical Examiners (BOMEX) allow the physician to continue practicing medicine, subject to indefinite probation and continuing psychotherapy that may continue for the "duration of his medical career."

Fisher, 48, established a reputation in the 1980s both as an openly gay physi-

cian, and as one of the first doctors in the metro area to specialize in the treatment of people infected with HIV. He continues to practice in North-Central Phoenix.

In a puzzling and often contradictory recommendation issued Aug. 16, Judge Brian B. Tully, of the Office of Administrative Hearings, characterized Fisher as "an internationally renowned expert in the treatment of HIV and AIDS... on the cutting edge of research and treatment of those diseases." But

without a continued commitment to life-long recovery and proper psychological and business management help, the Judge continued, Fisher will be "a threat to the public's health and welfare".

Claudia Foutz, executive director of BOMEX, would not comment on the specifics of Judge Tully's recommended order. She stressed, however, that the Judge's recommendation is not final. At an upcoming public meeting of the regulatory agency, tentatively scheduled for

September 24, the 12 board members will review the hearing record and then determine whether Judge Tully's recommendation should be adopted, amended or modified.

Because the hearing before Judge Tully was closed to the public to protect the confidentiality of the witnesses, *HeatStroke* could not discern the specific grounds for Tully's recommendation. But a few non-confidential exhibits obtained by

See "Fisher," page 4

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Voice
602/264-3646

Fax
602/294-9695

Managing Editor
Kelly Justin Reidhead
reidhead@idt.net

Editor
Allen Kalchik
alkalphx@aol.com

Contributors

Alison Bechdel, Eric Orner,
David Horowitz, Karyn Riedell,
Andrew Collins, Jill Dearman, Bobbi Dugan
Glen Hanson & Allan Neuwirth,
Mario Rodriguez, Michael Thomas Ford,
Mark Hoffman, Dave Brousseau,
Kathie Gummere, Rex Wockner,
Romeo San Vincente, Deb Price

National Advertising Sales
Rivendell Marketing Company, Inc
212/242-6863

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Horowitz:

Then & Now

I recently interviewed a young lawyer who graduated from The University of Arizona College of Law nine years after I did. We talked about common professors and similar classroom experiences.

Our law school experiences differed dramatically because he was openly gay during law school and I was in the closet. We both acknowledge that society is very different today than ten years ago, but I couldn't help but wish I had come out earlier.

Academically, I enjoyed the law school experience. I did very well in most of my classes, and I found the entire environment intellectually stimulating. Socially, however, I spent most of my time away from the law school.

I regularly played tennis with one of my classmates and contemplated coming out to him. He would have been the first non-gay person I told. I felt him out a little bit for a reaction, and one day I told him that my best friend from college was gay. He said that if he found out his best friend was gay, that they wouldn't be friends anymore. That remark kept me in the closet for the remainder of law school.

There was a law school club on campus called Lesbian and Gay Rights Advocates (LAGRA) whose only members were female. There were no openly gay men in my class. To this day, there is no one else I even suspect is gay.

In Constitutional Law, we discussed Bowers v. Hardwick, the Georgia sodomy case, and I was really concerned about voicing feelings contrary to the Supreme Court's antigay ruling for fear that people would think I was gay. I brought a female date to a law school dance. When I served as a student government senator, other senators made homophobic remarks during the club budgeting process when LAGRA asked for funding. I defended the spending package, but I said nothing about the antigay rhetoric.

Back then, the U of A's non-discrimination policy did not include sexual orientation. There was no law school class that included sexual orientation issues, nor did more than one or two attorneys statewide openly specialize in that area of the law. Reagan and Bush were in the White House. The gay and

lesbian organizations dealing with AIDS and other community issues were in their infancy.

Today, the College of Law Dean is openly lesbian. There is a class entitled 'Sexual Orientation and the law.' LAGRA has many more members, some of whom are men. The U of A's policy handbook lists sexual orientation in its definition of unacceptable discrimination. A significant number of lawyers advertise in gay and lesbian publications.

It used to be that the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund stood alone in its focus on gay and lesbian legal issues. Today many gay and lesbian legal organizations serve our community, including the Service Members Legal Defense Network.

Not only has our community come a long way in its societal and political visibility, we have significantly enhanced our ability to use the justice system to our advantage. Our civil rights movement has gained momentum on the streets and in the nation's courtrooms. Since Bowers v. Hardwick, we have had success at all levels of the legal system.

My colleague went through law school without hiding his sexual orientation. He was active in LAGRA, and he took classes and wrote papers about sexual orientation issues. I have to believe that his law school experience was much more full than my own.

I know there are a lot of lawyers still in the closet, but the number of openly gay lawyers is rapidly increasing. And we're not losing jobs, clients or money by coming out. Lawyers are not only specializing in gay and lesbian issues, but within those issues as well.

The legal profession is but a microcosm of the larger community. It's a long way up the hill, but we've got a good start, and we know that the first step is out of the closet.

By the way, my law-school tennis partner now knows I'm gay and we are still friends.

David Horowitz is a Phoenix attorney and community activist. He can be reached through *HeatStroke* or at *DashingDav@aol.com*

Editors:

Thank you for not dropping the ball on your in-depth coverage of Dr. Fisher's struggles with BOMEX. I know you've taken a lot of heat for running the articles and figured you could use the strokes.

I was distressed (but not surprised) to visit a local gay community retail shop that I've not stepped into for a while and discovered your paper still absent from their extensive periodicals rack. It's well known that the owner had originally stopped displaying your publication as part of a knee-jerk reaction to your first article on the subject.

Granted, such stories are not easy to read and I'm sure not easy to print but whether we like it or not are unfortunately necessary. We all want to believe the best about those who've made significant contributions to our community.

However by the same token, a physician is by nature a person in which patients place a great amount of intimate trust. Should the possibility exist that such trust is being abused and an investigation is under way to the validity of claims to that effect, the public needs to be aware.

HeatStroke has always used the highest degree of journalistic integrity in breaking this news. Each time this story has been reported, the coverage has been balanced and included Fisher's defense

whenever possible.

The news is not that "Fisher is guilty of these accusations" but rather "allegations have been made and are being investigated." In the end they may turn out to be true, false, or some degree in between.

After reading these articles, a reader may then make an informed decision as to whether such claims have merit and take business elsewhere or that Fisher is being targeted for a smear campaign or had been misunderstood in his techniques/comments and continue to support the doctor. The irresponsible approach would be to ignore the story and keep potential patients in the dark.

Deciding to remove a paper from one's shop because an owner may not like the news within is a classic example of shooting the messenger. I'm reminded of when people wrote in to the mainstream press saying they were dropping subscriptions because the papers had the audacity to report on gay rights hearings in the City Council. Printing the news is the purpose of a newspaper even though such news may not be what we wish to hear. The difference between the two scenarios is that a store owner's decision affects not just his own access to the paper but also that of all his customers.

Yet, here's what truly puzzles me.

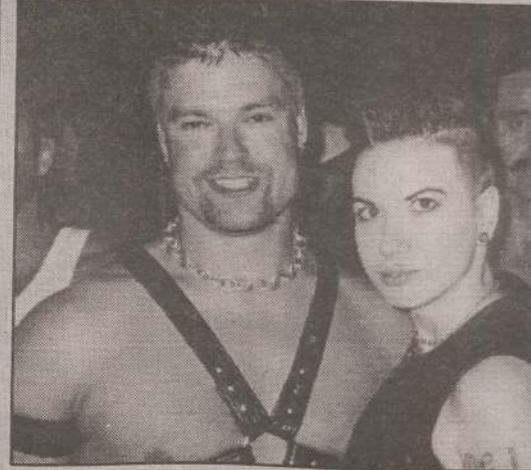
Fisher's case is not the first time in recent history where a local community leader has faced allegations of inappropriate behavior. Earlier this decade before HeatStroke debuted, another generally respected individual was the focus of a sexual harassment suit by multiple plaintiffs. This same shop apparently had no objections to the magazine that reported on the story at that time—the periodical has never disappeared from their racks and still remains there today.

Since HeatStroke entered the scene, the other paper, previously well known for its investigative excellence, has since seen a severe slide in substance, choosing to pose as a "news" magazine while devoting cover article space to swimsuit spreads and Ten-Steps-to-a-Narcissistic-New-You type fodder. Maybe they figured since someone else had stepped up to the plate that they can now get by on the reputation of their heyday. Or perhaps taking a cue from the store owner's actions, fear that if they offer anything more substantial than a "feel good" zine peppered with photos of shirtless himbos, they may end up being banned as well.

To this type of publication, I can only echo, "Get a clue". When it's noteworthy journalism I want, you can find me sitting in the shade tending to my HeatStroke.

d.w.mckim
Phoenix

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Dr. Fisher to keep medical license, Judge recommends

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HeatStroke provide some insight into the Judge's recommendation.

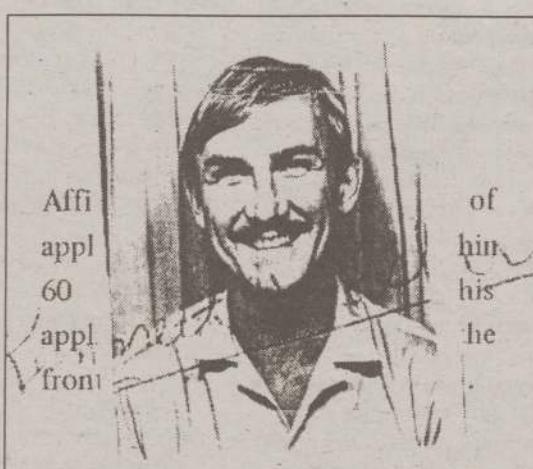
Tully pointed out that Dr. Fisher "has acknowledged boundary issues with gay male patients." Although the term "boundary issues" is not defined in the recommended order, an exhibit showed that Fisher had previously admitted he was guilty of sexual misconduct with his patients. The Judge allowed into evidence the transcript of a recorded conversation between the physician, his attorney and a polygraph examiner that took place on Jan. 18, 1999—a month before Fisher's hearing began.

In that transcript, Fisher said he had previously admitted sexual improprieties to treatment officials at Sante—a Texas institution described by Fisher as specializing in sexual addiction. Although he later disclaimed these admissions at Sante as "fictitious," Fisher nevertheless said on the transcript that he was "fascinated" and "flattered" by the sexual arousal that his patients displayed during medical examinations. Also, Fisher's attorney, Calvin Raup, stated on the transcript that Dr. Fisher derived "emotional gratification" from the sexual arousal of his patients.

Despite finding that Fisher admitted having "boundary issues" with his gay male patients, Judge Tully apparently did not believe any of the eight former patients who testified that they had been sexually abused by the physician. Specifically, Judge Tully found that there was insufficient evidence to prove that Dr. Fisher intended to sexually arouse them. (See Sidebar, page 5).

With no other witnesses to the alleged sexual abuse except for the former patient

and Dr. Fisher, the evidence undoubtedly presented the classic "one person's word against another's" problem. The Judge found Fisher's side of the story to be more credible; i.e., although the patients may have thought they were being sexually abused by Fisher, it was not the doctor's intent to sexually abuse them. Judge



Dr. Ken Fisher, from his 1981 application to practice medicine in Arizona.

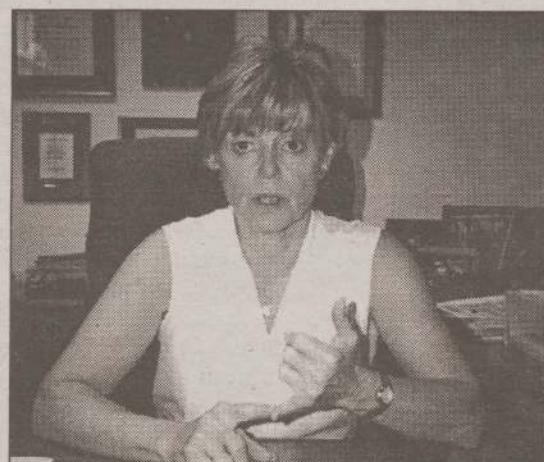
Tully evidently concluded that none of the eight former patients had the capacity to tell the difference between undergoing an appropriate medical examination and being sexually abused by their physician.

Even when Fisher didn't dispute the specific allegations, the Judge still found that the patients' testimony was not accurate. Judge Tully wrote: "During his testimony at the administrative hearing, [Fisher] could not, nor did not, state that J.T.'s allegations were wrong, only that it was not [Fisher's] intention to engage in

the perceived improper sexual conduct. While [Fisher] is not found to have committed the alleged improper conduct, he is found responsible for causing his patient to believe that such improper conduct occurred during [Fisher's] medical care."

In other words, Judge Tully found that Fisher was not responsible for sexually abusing J.T.; he was, however, responsible for making J.T. think that he had been sexually abused.

Judge Tully incorporated the following findings of fact into his recommendation: "[Fisher] created a social aspect in his medical office that allowed inappropriate



Claudia Foutz, Executive Director of BOMEX, was appointed by Governor Hull in May, 1998.

sary to use sexually suggestive language. Within that transcript, both Fisher and his attorney make condescending and insulting comments about his gay male patients to explain the physician's use of sexually suggestive terminology.

Specifically, Fisher stated that he had to tailor his language to meet the socioeconomic and educational background of his patients—despite the myriad studies that indicate gay men have higher levels of education than the general population. "I probably won't talk about your penis. I'll probably talk about your dick," Fisher explained. "I won't ask you: do you have anal intercourse? I say: when it comes to butt sex are you—do you participate? are you top or bottom? Do you pitch or catch."

Fisher's attorney then offered his own analogy, comparing Fisher's gay male patients to prostitutes. "This would be the equivalent of having a prostitution practice where you don't talk about sex with your patients. If all of your patients are prostitutes, you're going to talk about their johns, you're going to talk about where they take it, how they do it," Raup said.

Judge Tully apparently found this explanation reasonable enough to justify his conclusion that each of the eight men had confused sexual abuse with a proper medical examination. Faced with accepting either the claims of the eight gay men—described as uneducated, lower-class and likened to prostitutes—or the version told by a physician and his attorney, perhaps the Judge believed the choice was obvious.

In addition to the sexual impropriety allegations, BOMEX charged Dr. Fisher with violating a 1996 Stipulation and

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Order that required the physician to have a chaperone present for all patient examinations, and to have the chaperone sign the chart after each exam. Fisher agreed to this Order—which also required continuing therapy and quarterly reports to the Board—after a former patient complained to BOMEX that Dr. Fisher caused him to have an erection and ejaculate during a medical procedure.

Judge Tully found that “[Fisher] knowingly and intentionally violated the Order by seeing patients without a chaperone.”

The whole check and balance to this system is that the Administrative Law Judge's decision is not final. It's a recommendation... This case isn't over. There is a lot left to be looked at.

Claudia Foutz, BOMEX

erone, by shielding chaperones from directly viewing his examination of patients, and by failing to have attending chaperones annotate patient medical records as required by the Order.” Although he found that Fisher’s violation of BOMEX’s chaperone Order constituted unprofessional conduct under two different state laws, Judge Tully nevertheless concluded, “the evidence... does not warrant either the suspension or revocation of [Fisher’s] license to practice medicine.”

Instead, the Judge determined that requiring a chaperone for every patient examination would no longer be necessary, and recommended placing the decision in the hands of each patient. Tully

wrote, “Notwithstanding the problems [Fisher] has experienced resulting in the chaperone requirement of the Order, a patient should be afforded the option to make knowing and voluntary waiver of that requirement so that [Fisher] may treat her or him privately. Such waiver should be in writing signed by both the consenting patient and [Fisher].”

The finding that patients should be examined by Fisher in private—so long as they sign the requisite waiver—is yet another puzzling aspect of the Judge Tully’s recommendation that raises a host of additional issues.

Arguably, a patient’s written waiver of the chaperone requirement would exempt Dr. Fisher from the regulatory scrutiny of the Board of Medical Examiners—thereby precluding that patient’s right to complain to BOMEX if he later believes he has been sexually abused by the physician. Also, if valid, a signed waiver might prevent Fisher from being sued by a patient who claimed sexual abuse on the grounds that the patient was aware of Fisher’s past “boundary issues” with previous patients.

It is likely, however, that Judge Tully’s waiver provision is on shaky legal ground. Courts have consistently ruled that similar waivers are not enforceable because they violate public policy. For example, courts have said that clients cannot waive their right to sue their attorneys for malpractice—even if the clients have signed waivers to that effect.

Also, neither Dr. Fisher nor his patients would have the legal authority to exempt the physician from the regulation of the Board of Medical Examiners. BOMEX is empowered to regulate Fisher’s practice of medicine by state laws; a waiver between Fisher and a patient would not change that statutory

obligation.

Claudia Foutz, executive director of BOMEX, declined to speak on the record about the specifics of Judge Tully’s recommended order. Foutz did, however, discuss the procedural steps that will come next.

Judge Tully’s recommended order will be added to the agenda of an upcoming BOMEX meeting, and will be subject to modification by the Board at that meeting. “The whole check and balance to this system is that the Administrative Law Judge’s decision is not final. It’s a recommendation,” Foutz explained. “And now what we’re going to depend on is that body of twelve people—made up of public and professional members—to review the entire transcript of the hearing, as well as the findings of fact and conclusions of law.”

The Board members will also consider whether Judge Tully’s recommendation “meets their own guidelines for discipline and for consistency—meting out similar penalties in similar cases,” Foutz added. Once they have considered the entire hearing record, reviewed their own policies and considered similar cases, the Board members will agree with, amend or modify the findings of fact and conclusions of law contained in the Judge’s recommendation.

“From a procedural standpoint, this case isn’t over,” Foutz reiterated. “There is a lot left to be looked at.”



At press time, Judge Tully’s recommended order had been tentatively scheduled for consideration by the Board of Medical Examiners at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, September 24.

In the Matter of Ken Fisher, M.D. Fisher's word versus the claims of eight former patients: the Judge bought the doctor's version of the events

The following passages from Judge Tully’s recommendation regarding the testimony of patient J.T. are typical of his dismissal of the claims of sexual improprieties brought by the eight former patients.

“30. [Dr. Fisher] first saw J.T. as a patient in October 1995. There is insufficient evidence of record to support findings that [Fisher] inappropriately fondled J.T.’s penis and testicles in a medically inappropriate fashion at the initial physical examination.

31. There is evidence that J.T. experienced a penile erection during a rectal examination by [Fisher]. However, the evidence of record does not establish that [Fisher] intentionally manipulated J.T.’s prostate with the intent to sexually stimulate J.T. to achieve an erection.

32. There is insufficient evidence that J.T. was required to inappropriately disrobe each time he went into the patient examination room despite his physical complaints or symptoms.”

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Deb Price

Domestic partner benefits being embraced by airlines

Domestic partnership benefits are soaring toward becoming commonplace in corporate America. The rapid pace of change is vividly demonstrated by the domino effect caused by United Airlines' recent decision to get on board.

United, the world's largest airline, announced July 30 that it will extend domestic partner benefits—including health, pension and all other spousal fringe benefits—to the partners of its gay workers. Just six days after United became the first U.S. carrier to offer domestic partner benefits, American Airlines became the second. A day later, U.S. Airways said it, too, is joining the trend.

"This is another instance of how domestic partner benefits cascade through a market sector. It happened first in the information technology sector in the early 1990s, and it's happening now in the oil industry, in the Big Five accounting firms,

in banking and elsewhere," notes Kim Mills, head of WorkNet, the gay Human Rights Campaign's workplace fairness project.

Just a few years ago, domestic partner benefits were embraced by only a handful of high-tech startups, universities and progressive city governments. Corporate managers were dubious about what many viewed as a radical innovation rather than as natural outgrowth of the principle of equal pay for equal work. The first publicly traded company to offer domestic partner benefits was Lotus Development Corp. The year was 1992.

But astute managers soon saw the cost of treating gay workers' partners fairly as minimal and saw fears of a significant consumer backlash as groundless. They began teaching corporate giants to recognize that domestic partnership benefits make good business sense. Also driving home that lesson were San Francisco's

historic 1997 law forcing city contractors to treat gay and straight workers equally, the growing influence of gay employee groups, and an unusually tight job market. Domestic partner benefits are now widely viewed as a smart way to attract and retain good workers.

Today, domestic partner benefits are as mainstream as IBM, AT&T, General Mills, Marriott, Walt Disney and Avon Products. They are among the 71 Fortune 500 companies already offering them. All told, more than 2,800 U.S. employers provide such benefits, according to HRCs ever-increasing count (available at <http://www.hrc.org/worknet>). Often, partner benefits are also extended to straight unmarried couples.

Domestic partner benefits, which range from survivors' pension benefits to credit union membership, are offered by 73 state and local governments, and 99 universities.

United's momentous announcement came just hours after a federal court ruled that airlines must be in compliance with the innovative law when they renew their leases at San Francisco's airport. However, the judge only required that airlines give "soft" benefits, such as bereavement leave and spousal flight discounts,

to San Francisco-based workers. United went much further by extending full benefits to its gay workers worldwide.

"United was saying, 'We acknowledge our gay employees.' It was a bold stand," says Billy Kolber-Stuart, editor of the gay travel magazine *Out & About*.

"I think we will see the other airlines come around," he says, adding that hotel chains lead the travel industry on partner benefits.

Terry Thompson, a Hewitt Associates consultant who helps set up domestic partnership programs, compares the spread of partner benefits to the way 401(k) savings plans quickly became a corporate fixture. Within large companies, partner benefits are "moving rapidly toward being the absolute norm," she says. More and more she hears, "We really have to do this for competitive reasons."

Clearly, the wind is with us. We're flying toward a fairer workday world.

Deb Price of the *Detroit News*' Washington bureau writes this gay-issues column. Write to her in care of HeatStroke, or at GNS Features, 1000 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Va. 22229-0001. (c) 1999, the *Detroit News*. Distributed by the *Los Angeles Times Syndicate*.



King of Morocco outed

Dutch national television news' *NOS-Journaal* has reported that the new king of Morocco, Sidi Moulay Mohammed (Mohammed VI), is gay, according to the Dutch newspaper *De Gay Krant*.

The report has led to weekly anti-media demonstrations in the city of

Utrecht, which has a large Moroccan population and is 15 kilometers from the TV network's headquarters in Hilversum.

Mohammed, 36, went to college in Brussels, Belgium, and regularly hung out in gay bars there, *De Gay Krant* said.

And his homosexuality is "common knowledge" in Moroccan intellectual circles, Marrakech resident Tony Flavel told the newspaper.

"But you better not talk about it," he said. "The police and the armed forces are against the new king for precisely this reason. They would prefer his younger straight brother, Moulay Rashid."

NOS-Journaal Editor-in-Chief Hans Brom told *De Gay Krant* that the program's journalists are sure of their facts.

"The truth cannot be rectified," he said. "Our correspondent, Robbert Bosschard, spoke with the chief of police and the commander-in-chief of the Moroccan army. They were convinced that the new king is gay and they were afraid of the future under a homosexual monarch."

Gay sex is banned in Morocco by Article 489 of the Penal Code. The punishment is up to three years in jail and a fine of up to 1200 dirham (US\$122).

UN employees cry foul

Although the United Nations claims to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, the organization does not provide equal benefits to gay workers, the UN gay employees group complained Aug. 16.

GLOBE-UN (Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Employees at the UN) seeks access to spousal benefits in areas such as insurance, pensions, relocation expenses and visas.

"The 30-year partner of a lesbian staff member is not entitled to the survivor's benefits afforded under the pension scheme," GLOBE said. "The UN will not pay to travel a gay family to a staff member's new assignment, nor will the UN assist in securing a visa for a gay or a lesbian partner."

UN spokesman Kevin St. Louis, special assistant to the assistant secretary general, told Inter Press Service the UN cannot take the lead ahead of member nations in recognizing gay families.

But, he added, "As more nations come up with new laws, the United Nations will at least have to look at [the issue]."

Dolphin tries to rape Norwegian swimmers

The Oslo newspaper *Verdens Gang* and the wire service Agence France-Presse reported Aug. 17 that a male dolphin tried to rape two male Norwegian swimmers.

In separate incidents, the dolphin circled the men then suddenly tried to stick his penis between their legs and their swimming suits in a clear attempt at anal penetration, the reports said.

"At first I thought it was pushing me with its flipper but dolphins don't have flippers beneath their bellies," one of the swimmers told reporters.

South African court delays decision on immigration

South Africa's Constitutional Court delayed judgment Aug. 17 on the question of granting permanent residency to foreign partners of gay South Africans.

The National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality had won a lower-court case in which the group claimed denying residency for gay lovers violates the constitution, which is one of only four in the world that ban discrimination based on

sexual orientation.

The ruling was appealed to the Constitutional Court by the Department of Home Affairs.

Urals gays want to marry

The Chelyabinsk, Russia, gay group Freedom of Conscience called on the government to legalize gay marriage Aug. 19.

The group's leader, Vasily Barkov, 19, told the daily newspaper *Kommersant* that letting gays wed would raise public awareness of their problems and reduce anti-gay violence.

Chelyabinsk, with a population of more than 1 million, is located on the Miass River in the Asian part of the Southern Urals, 950 miles (1,500 km) east of Moscow.

AIDS memorial planned for Manchester

Manchester, England's gay Mardi Gras festival will fund construction of a stainless-steel sculpture in Sackville Park as a memorial to people lost to AIDS.

It will be located on a podium covered in multi-colored tiles that can be sponsored and dedicated to the memory of a loved one, said the *Manchester Evening News*.

"I think people want a very dignified and tasteful HIV memorial," said Coun Pat Karney, chair of the planning committee. "There are a lot of people who know someone who has died from HIV or who is ill, so it will be an important place for them."

Spanish mayor marries gay couple

The mayor of Calvia in Spain's Balearic Islands performed a wedding for two men at the town hall Aug. 15.

The marriage of Julian Diaz, 35, and Rodolfo Olocco, 45, was recorded in the town's civil registry but will not be recognized nationally.

Mayor Magarita Najera said she was happy to be a "pioneer" in the battle for gay equality.

Chinese University evicts student group

Members of the Tongzhi Culture Society at Hong Kong's Chinese University were forced to dismantle an unauthorized booth they erected at City University's student-registration day Aug. 11.

The stand displayed gay books and promoted gay culture. "Tongzhi" means "comrade" but now also translates as "gay."

City University officials said security guards confronted the group because there was no room for displays from organizations affiliated with other schools.

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Politically Speaking



Arizona Human Rights Fund

By Kathie Gummere, HeatStroke
Contributor

AHRF's Growing Pains

Every organization goes through growing pains, adjustments and controversies regarding its internal policies. The Arizona Human Rights Fund is experiencing some of these right now.

Several things have come together at once to make the board of directors reexamine what direction the organization should take. I want to take this opportunity to get the opinions of as many readers as possible, prior to my participation in the decision-making process.

I know that this is somewhat risky, because there is no way any organization can please everyone all the time. I also know that the person who raises the questions gets the most flack—but I am willing to take that risk because I believe it is important to generate a dialog.

One of the factors in AHRF's current reexamination of itself is the fact that it is growing. AHRF has recently hired new staff (a replacement and an addition), and although they are both part-time, it has allowed us to get out from under a growing amount of work, and take a look at the best ways to structure the organization for the future.

Another factor in the current state of affairs is more painful to report.

AHRF has consistently asked all political candidates about their stand on the issue of abortion. That information is then used in evaluating whether or not that candidate will receive AHRF's endorse-

ment, and the information is disseminated when we publish the voter guides.

Recently, Phoenix City Council candidate Felipe Zubia specifically asked AHRF for its endorsement. The Community Action Network, (a committee of AHRF) met with Mr. Zubia's representatives and asked numerous questions regarding his stand on various issues, especially those relating to GLBT issues. The responses were all favorable and it was determined that AHRF would sponsor a fund-raiser for Zubia.

Unfortunately, questions regarding Zubia's stand on abortion somehow went unasked. The fund-raiser was held, the attendees and sponsors talked with Mr. Zubia and asked him questions, one of which was his stand on abortion. A devout Roman Catholic, Mr. Zubia replied that he was personally opposed to abortion. He also stated that he would not impose his personal views on others.

Whether Zubia would ever vote for or against the choice issue is unclear, because reports of the "discussion" are varied. Several individual sponsors of the event were quite upset that they had contributed to a candidate that is "anti-choice." Discussions within AHRF since the event have also been somewhat passionate.

The underlying question seems to be whether AHRF should take the position that it will not endorse or sponsor or recommend any candidate who does not support pro-choice, or if it should report the views of the candidates on this issue, and endorse, support, etc. based solely on the candidate's stand on GLBT issues,

such as repeal of the archaic sex laws, employment non-discrimination legislation and granting of domestic partner benefits.

There are other issues that are not specifically related to GLBT issues, but which are also important to some members. Each of us has his/her own political agenda and beliefs. How many—or which—of these should be included in the AHRF agenda? Which shall be used to evaluate candidates and be reported in the voter guides, and which should prohibit AHRF from supporting a candidate? Is it important to support candidates that are good on our issues, but may not be good on related issues?

The basic question boils down to whether the organization will stick with homosexual issues alone, and therefore represent all lesbians and gay men, or if it will represent a liberal agenda, which may not represent the feelings of all members.

The Log Cabin Republicans have been

fighting this battle for some time, stating that it is possible to be both politically conservative and pro-equal rights for all citizens, including gays and lesbians.

It is an argument that will not be settled with this brief column, but I urge you to examine your own feelings about what AHRF should represent and then express your opinion.

Send your comments to Heatstroke or directly to me, or to the AHRF office, (620/650-0900 or AHRF@swlink.net).

If this organization is going to continue to grow and to represent the gay male and lesbian community in the political arena, it is important for at least a majority of the gay male and lesbian population to support its overall agenda.



Kathie Gummere is a Phoenix attorney practicing in the areas of wills, trusts and estates for the gay & lesbian community. She receives e-mail at kgrn@goodnet.com.

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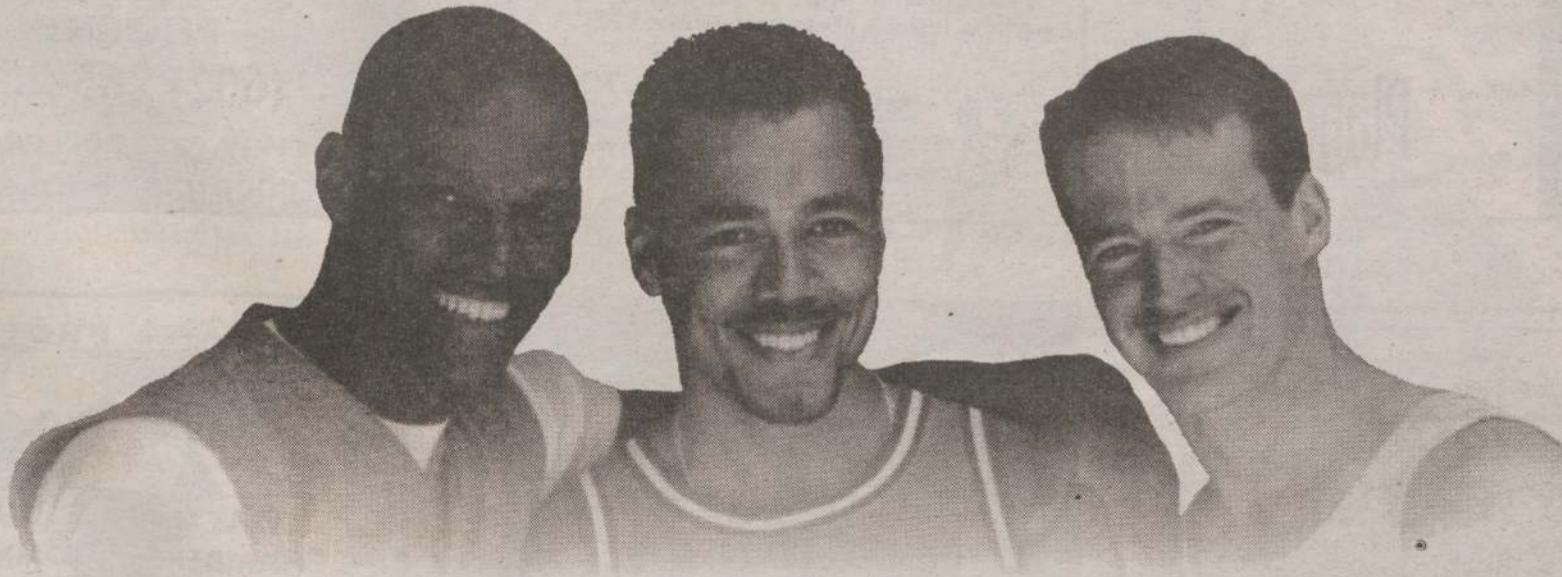
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Photo: Steven Underhill

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Arizona Human Rights Fund 1999 Voter Guide

Phoenix Municipal Election Tuesday, September 7, 1999

For the office of

- MAYOR-----No Recommendation
- Council District #1-----Dave Siebert
- Council District #3-----No Recommendation
- Council District #5-----Felipe Zubia
- Council District #7-----Doug Ligner

Proposed Amendments to the Phoenix Code of Ordinances—Vote YES on all.

- Proposition #101-----Phx. Parks & Preserve Initiative
- Proposition #102-----Public Safety Initiative
- Proposition #103-----Locally Controlled Alternative
Expenditure Initiative
- Proposition #104-----Retirement Board Investment Goal
Requirements and Expanding
Investment Authority
- Proposition #105-----Minimum Pension Amt & Adjustments
- Proposition #106-----Recommendation from Citizen's
Commission on Salaries for Elected
City Officials
- Proposition #107-----Reemployment of Former City
Employees & Retirement Adjustment
- Proposition #108-----Natural Gas Franchise Agreement
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Phoenix vaccine volunteers aim to stop HIV's spread

PHOENIX (AP)—Two weeks after Brooks Blanton was injected with what might be a vaccine for HIV, he sits in a small, fluorescent-lit lab room with his right fist clenched, ready to undergo another round of blood tests.

He inhales deeply and channels his nervous energy into turbo-speed chatter with a nurse. His wide brown eyes focus on her face and away from the three vials she's filling with his blood.

Blanton wonders what reactions—if any—researchers will find in his blood stream.

What he hopes is that by volunteering for the study of an experimental vaccine against HIV called AIDSVAX, researchers will find the key to protecting others just like him—people who aren't infected with HIV, but who are at risk of contracting it.

"We've watched too many people die from this disease," Blanton said. "When it first started out it was strictly in the gay community, but now it's spread to everybody, even senior citizens and babies. This is not a gay disease, this is now everybody's disease ... and we need to stop this."

Blanton has joined 5,000 volunteers in major cities across the country—mostly gay men—with the same goal. They'll spend the next three years of their lives helping researchers for Brisbane, Calif.-based VaxGen Inc. determine if AIDSVAX is capable of stopping the virus that infects approximately 16,000 people worldwide each day.

While more than two dozen potential vaccines have been tested around the world, AIDSVAX is the first to reach a human trial of this size, known as a Phase III trial. If the vaccine proves to prevent or minimize HIV infection, it would then be reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration for licensing and mass distribution.

VaxGen maintains there's no chance of

participants contracting HIV from the vaccine, since AIDSVAX isn't made with the live virus, but with a synthesized protein coat found on the outside of the HIV virus. The developers hope the vaccine will create enough antibodies to train the immune system to recognize the protein

excitement that "there's a chance they could play a role in maybe making a huge advance," said Dr. Andy Meyers, the physician at Phoenix Body Positive where the local AIDSVAX trial is taking place.

By the year 2002, Blanton will have endured seven injections—the original vaccine, plus one booster shot every six months. But that's nothing compared to the suffering he's seen in people who have AIDS, he said.

He's seen two friends and a cousin contract the virus, and was amazed at seeing one HIV-positive friend take 60 pills in one day just to function normally. Blanton said contracting HIV is a fear "everyone should live with every day, whether they're gay or straight, because anybody can get it."

So when Blanton, a 27-year-old planning editor at a Phoenix television station, saw a press release about the AIDSVAX study cross his desk last March, he saw not only its newsworthiness, but also the potential for him to do something tangible in the fight against AIDS.

He made a copy and immediately called Body Positive to learn more about the project. By April he was sitting in a small room while several Body Positive staff members looked

on to witness the first injection in the Phoenix AIDSVAX trial.

He felt like a part of history.

"Twenty years down the road (the vaccine) might be a common thing," Blanton said. "But I want to be that trail blazer. I want to be able to say I was the first person in Phoenix to get the vaccine. And I will be if I'm not getting the place-

bo." One in three participants receive the placebo.

For three days after each injection Blanton monitors his reactions carefully, recording his temperature with disposable thermometers and writing down every detail of how he's feeling in a diary. After the first injection, he indicates a mild headache, soreness at the injection site, and a slight temperature increase.

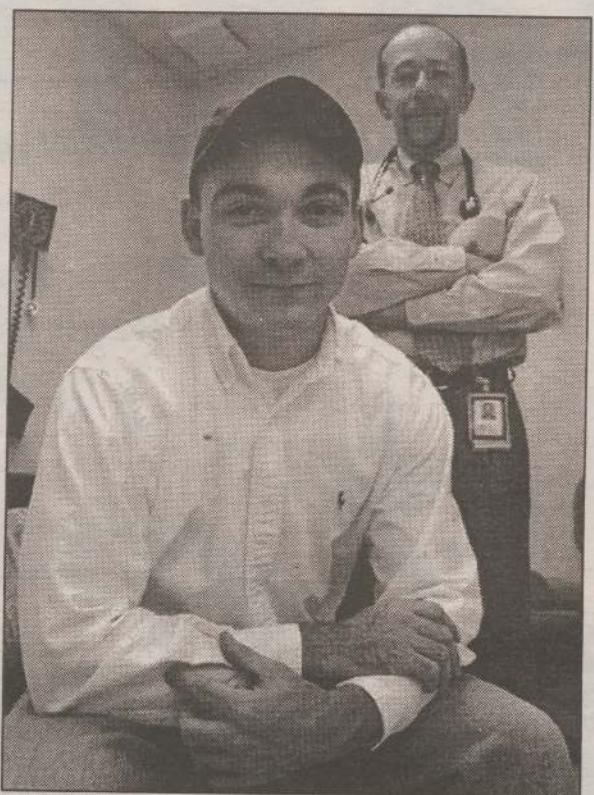
Two weeks later, Blanton returns to the clinic with his symptom diary in hand, ready to discuss tolerability of the vaccine and to hear the results of his HIV test. He also receives regular counseling encouraging safe-sex, since researchers don't want volunteers interpreting the vaccine as protection against HIV.

Blanton already feels close to the staff at Body Positive, where colorful jazz festival posters decorate purple walls and where the mostly HIV-positive staff is dealing with HIV-negative patients for the first time. They know every intimate detail of his sex life, information Blanton was asked to divulge during the extensive screening process.

There are risks involved in the study, researchers told him, but the only real danger is potential social harm—what an employer, friend or lover might think when they learn about participation in the AIDSVAX study. Be careful who you tell, they warned him.

Blanton's family and friends enthusiastically applaud his participation in the trial and his best friend even refers to him as his "hero."

"I'm definitely going to do more in my life, but if I finish this study and the day after, if I get hit by a bus and killed—I accomplished something in my life and I left a mark in this world," Blanton said. "If I'm part of eliminating this thing, I think that's probably one of the best things I could do."



Brooks Blanton could be making history by participating in the AIDSVAX clinical trial coordinated by Dr. Andy Meyers of Phoenix Body Positive (standing).

coat and battle it if exposed to HIV in the future.

Critics say the vaccine is too weak and needs to trigger more than one part of the immune system to be effective.

Blanton's story is one that's repeated among many of the AIDSVAX volunteers across the country, most of whom are motivated by a sense of altruism and an

on to witness the first injection in the Phoenix AIDSVAX trial.

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Beer Bust 8pm-12 am
Domestic Beer \$1.75
Draft \$1.25
Free Pool all day

Tuesday

Happy Hour 8am-8pm
"Vulgar Vodka" Night
Well Vodka \$2.00

Wednesday

Happy Hour 8am-8pm
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8pm-12am
Reduced prices on well
drinks, domestic beer &
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Goings On

Annual PBP Bowl-a-Thon Aug. 29

Strike it Up, the fifth annual summer Bowl-a-Thon to benefit Phoenix Body Positive's programs and services, will take place at the AMF Squaw Peak Bowling Alley in Phoenix on Aug. 29. Bowling starts at 3 pm, with lots of prizes and giveaways.

Spectators and sponsors are encouraged to come down and cheer on their favorite teams. The lanes are located at 32nd Street and Indian School Rd. in central Phoenix. To find out how to pledge or participate, contact Gary Abeyta at 480/483-0884.

Lot Sale Sept. 4 to benefit youth

The Community Center's Youth Services programs and the Phoenix Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veteran's of America (PGLBVA) are joining forces to host a fund-raiser to send participants to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change Conference which will be held this year in Oakland, Cal.

Youth Services is aiming to send five participants and the veteran's group is hoping to send two. The organizations are asking for community support in donating items to a Lot Sale.

The sale will be held at Charlie's, 727 W. Camelback, on Sept. 4 from 7 am till noon. For more information, call Donna McHenry at 602/264-5437.

DA gearing up for Grand Canyon trip

One of Desert Adventures' most popular and well-attended annual camping

News & Events of Interest to the Phoenix Queer Community

trips will take place the weekend of Sept. 9-12, when the outdoor social group heads up to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

The club will stay in the Mather Group Campground at an elevation of approx. 7,000 ft. The cost is \$20 for members for two nights, \$25 for three nights, and Saturday night supper is included. Guests pay \$30 for two nights or \$35 for three nights. The National Park Service charges and additional \$20 fee per car to enter the park.

To join a car pool or to get more information on what to bring and what to wear, call DA at 602/2666-CAMP.

Women's Tea Dance Sept. 12

A Tea Dance for women will take place Sunday, Sept. 12 from 2-5 pm at the Valley Garden Center, 1809 N. 15th Ave. in central Phoenix.

The dance will be the first in a planned series of new events for women sponsored by The Community Center/Women's Community Project. There will be ballroom dance lessons, door prizes and refreshments for a cost of \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door.

Advance tickets are available at Obelisk Bookstore. Call the Center at 602/234-2752 for information.

Gay golf tourney Sept. 18

Team Arizona has scheduled a Pride golf tournament for 7 am on Sept. 18 at the San Marcos Resort in the East Valley.

The Phoenix based gay and lesbian community's established athletic group is seeking commitments from interested golfers for this event, which will offer spe-

cial prizes and will raise funds to help send local athletes to the next international Gay Games in Sydney. The tournament cost is \$75.

Other activities for Team AZ include the establishment of a volleyball league set to start in Oct. with a six-week schedule planned, and the formation of a Front Runners group kicking off on Sept. 26.

Call 602/408-4311 to get an entry form for the golf tourney or to learn more about the group's coming events and membership meetings.

Tucson Center benefit set for Sept. 18

Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), will be the keynote speaker at the 1999 Wingspan Benefit Dinner on Saturday, Sept. 18 at the Marriott University Park Hotel in Tucson.

Entertainment will be provided by comedian Bob Smith, author of *Openly Bob*, and Elvira Kurt from the movie *We're Funny That Way*. Tickets start at \$60 and are available by calling 520/647-3436.

Wingspan is the umbrella organization for many activities of the GLBT community of Southern Arizona.

Diamond Ladies lunching in Sunnyslope

The Diamond Ladies, a social group of Valley women who are either retired or otherwise free to have a leisurely lunch, will gather on Thursday, Sept. 19 at Tom and Tiny's, a warm family restaurant at 524 W. Hatcher in Phoenix. The time to meet is 1:30 pm. Call Barb at 602/840-4993 for more information.

CCH Hosting popular gay gospel singer

Lesbian evangelist and gospel singer

Marsha Stevens will be returning to the Valley for a concert of her original music at the Community Church of Hope in Central Phoenix on Friday, Sept. 24 at 7 pm.

The concert is free to all. An offering will be collected to benefit Stevens' Born Again Lesbian Music (BALM) ministries. The church is located at 4400 N. Central Ave. Call 602/234-2180 for information.

Women in Tune on new member quest

Arizona Women in Tune, the only all woman choral group in Phoenix, resumed practice after a short summer hiatus on Aug. 12. With plans for a winter concert December 5 and fund raising events throughout the fall and winter, Arizona Women in Tune will be learning new songs and perfecting their voices on a regular basis.

Practices are held at 7 pm Thursdays at Augustana Lutheran Church, 2604 N. 14th Street in Phoenix. No auditions are held, everyone is welcome. Prospective members must enjoy music, want to have fun and to continue to expand their musical horizons.

Under the musical direction of Kim McCreary, the group will be performing at GALA 2000 in San Jose, California, July 23-29, 2000. GALA represents over 180 lesbian and gay choruses with over 9,500 singers internationally. The San Jose event will draw 6,000 visitors, a record number of women's choruses and entertainers and clinicians from all over the world.

"Arizona Women in Tune is proud to be registered among the performing women's choral groups and will actively promote and prepare for this trip to GALA 2000," said Operations Manager Barbara Wodrich. Membership inquiries may be directed to Wodrich at 623/878-5430.

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UPCOMING RAINBOWS FOR RELIEF PARTIES

Wednesday
September 1

Apollo's
6-8 pm

Thursday
September 2
Harley's Too
6-8 pm
Harley's 155
10-12 mid

Friday
September 3
Boot Camp
10-12 mid

Saturday
September 4
Johnny Mc's
7-9 pm
Incognito
10-12 mid

Sunday
September 5
BS
5-7 pm

Wednesday
September 8
The Park
8-10 pm

Thursday
September 9
The Rose
8-10 pm



Aunt Rita's
Foundation

Tuesday, August 31, 1999

Join the fun for lots of free stuff and an auction featuring a trip to San Francisco.

Hors d'oeuvres & \$1.00 Lite & MGD

ACP sets 2000 Festival date, elects members

Ernie Mendoza, President of Arizona Central Pride (ACP) announced at the group's Annual Meeting on Aug. 22 that the City of Phoenix has okayed Friday and Saturday, April 14-15, 2000, for the Valley's annual Gay Pride Parade and Festival.

A Treasurer's Report that was released at the meeting showed that the April 17, 1999 event turned a profit of more than \$50,000, making it the most profitable in its history and bouncing the all-volunteer organization back from a nearly \$20,000 deficit in 1997. ACP is currently flush, with more than \$34,000 in the bank.

Reelected to serve 3-year terms on the ACP Board of Directors were Mendoza, Garry Mangum, and "Daddy" Wayne McKinley. New Board members elected at the same meeting were Mallere E. Whatley, Juan Terrazas, and Sandy Mason.

Over 30 people attended the meeting to hear committee chairmen and officers present their 1998-1999 Fiscal Year Annual Reports. Those attending were heard during the Town Hall Meeting, a time when community members are recognized to make suggestions, comments or offer proposals for consideration by the ACP Board of Directors.

"The success of the 1999 event places ACP in a much better position to help make the 2000 event even bigger and better," Mendoza told the group. "The extra money will put us in a better position for securing higher-caliber headline entertainers, as well as making improvements in many other event areas," he added.

The entertainment budget was increased by more than \$10,000 over the previous year for the 1999 event, which

featured '80s disco diva Jody Watley. The 1998 headliner was Valley-based recording star CeCe Peniston.

Director of Volunteers Jan Rice reported that more than 150 volunteers were part of the 1999 event, and she is hoping to have 200 volunteers ready for the 2000 event. Anyone interested in volunteering may contact Rice by calling the PrideLine, (602)279-1771 Box 2, or by e-mailing "volunteers@azpride.org". A Volunteer Application is also available at the ACP website, "www.azpride.org".

Other subjects discussed at the meeting were proposed participation in the City of Phoenix's "Year 2000 Celebration", membership in the Greater Phoenix Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, and



attending the upcoming International Association of Lesbian and Gay Pride Coordinators (IAL/GPC)—InterPride Conference in Scotland in October.

The first meeting of the new Board of Directors is scheduled for Noon, Sept. 19, at the Community Center (24 West Camelback Road). Anyone desiring more information may contact ACP by phone at the PrideLine as mentioned or by e-mailing "info@azpride.org".

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Thursday: Clogging lessons for beginners, 6:15-7:30.
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Friday: Country Western Music with DJ Molly

Saturday: Country Western Music with DJ Molly

Sunday: Our Steak Fry returns September 5—
\$4 gets you steak or chicken & all the fixins. Stick around for Country Western Dancing with our DJ Molly, spinning from 7-11pm!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday

September 5: **Golden Oldie's Reunion Party, 4-11—**
contact Indian Ruthie for details. Our Steak Fry is back from summer vacation starting today—\$4 steak or chicken & all the fixins!

Friday

September 10: **Aunt Rita's Rainbows for Relief Party**
\$1⁷⁵ Miller Lite; \$2 Miller Lite Pitchers
Lots of Prizes & Free Stuff!



**CASH IN
COUNTRY**

2140 E. McDowell Rd • Phoenix, AZ

Canadian Director Anne Wheeler

Continued from page 1

Anne Wheeler: It was pretty collaborative between Peggy, Sharon and I, once Peggy had set down the broad strokes. Certainly this story kind of comes from her experience.

She's a middle aged woman like myself. So we also pulled together a young group of gay women and they shared their experiences and became very candid with us—you know, what their lifestyle was, how it was different, what things they didn't like about the movies that were out for them. And what they wanted to see in a movie. So they became part of the process.

I never put the script into my computer and wrote. It was always Peggy's role to translate that into the structure of the film. But I was attached to the film for a couple of years before we went to camera, so there was lots of opportunity to say, "I just don't think this is going to work," or "I really think that this is a dead moment," something like that.

HS: Did that focus group of young gay women say that one of the things they wanted was to have more erotic sex scenes in a lesbian movie?

AW: Yeah, I think they were kind of tired of—I suppose that in contrast, the gay male population has a huge library of videos of all sorts. Gay women have a very limited library and most of it is fairly issue oriented, and quite angst-ridden, actually.

There are some lovely films like *Go Fish* and *Bound*, and also *Desert Heart*, that have kind of broken through that mold. But for the most part for young lesbians it's always sort of this painful ordeal, coming out.

And usually the movie—as noted by our young group of consultants, as we called them—paid off in kind of a short, romantic scene at the end. They thought they were being sort of titillated for an hour and a half without much payoff. And that it really didn't reflect their lifestyle. There's a whole new wellspring of clubs that are run by women. And they have a much more interesting social life than was being depicted.

tion of young women. And certainly some of them don't fall into bed with somebody on the first night. But there was a good 50, 60 percent that did.

HS: You also included a heterosexual public sex scene that occurs between the younger brother and Carla, the bisexual character. If that scene were part of a gay men's movie, it would be a cliche—that two men would go down to the docks to have sex outdoors on a park bench.

AW: Sex isn't exclusive to gay men. We were very conscious of all that, and we knew it was going to be very sexy. Umm, though I don't know if [producers] Peggy and Sharon knew it was going to be quite as hot as it is.

HS: Was the eroticism difficult for your two lead actresses?

AW: They were two feisty young women, and when people came to audition for this they knew what the script was. We said, "We don't have time to politic

straight people reviewing it think it's exploitative.

HS: How did the young male actor handle the news that he'd be simulating being on the business end of a butt plug during his only sex scene?

AW: He laughed hilariously. He'd never seen one personally. He kind of looked at me and said, "does it really go in there?" And I said, "we're not being that explicit, Kevin. It's an implication—but you'll have to react to it." He said, "yeah, I think I know what reaction I'll have—I think I've got that." It was all very good humored on the set, and the woman playing Carla, the bisexual, is very close [in personality] to Carla. She is hilarious, and I think she made him very much at ease.

HS: I suspect many people who aren't familiar with your all-Canadian cast will come out of the movie believing that the actor who plays Judy is a real transsexual.

AW: Of course, he isn't. That was the first role we cast but it was probably the hardest role we cast. We brought in drag queens and they didn't seem to work. We said, "Please come in and play it like you're applying for a secretary's job, not a

never seen himself like that before. It amazed him. Then he went off to do a movie in Czechoslovakia and was working with Wendy Crewson, who ended up playing Lila. And she became kind of his coach in how to be a woman.

He'd already gotten the part but he was practicing walking in high heels and using his hands in a more feminine way, and she started reading the part of Lila against him, then got hold of her agent who got hold of us and said, "There's somebody that's dying to be in your movie."

HS: So the characters' good friendship in the movie is a carryover from their real life friendship?

AW: Yes. They're good buds.

HS: Your movie is essentially a romantic comedy, but you included a lot of different sociopolitical issues in the story. There's some gay bashing, transgender-phobia, censorship, a lot of different things that come up. Were you purposely trying to make a political statement?

AW: Well, being Canadian, we're a little earnest. We are prone to making documentaries. And Peggy, and Sharon and I have all come from documentary filmmaking. So I guess there's part of us that couldn't be denied and we had to have a little backbone in there of politics.

We didn't want it to weigh the movie down, though. Every once in a while it would get written and we would go, "Oh, no this is too heavy, this is too much." We had more skinheads and then we had more scenes about the censorship. We really wanted to alert people to the issue more than explore it.

HS: What are some of the differences in gay issues in Canada versus the U.S.? Your government recently passed some major advances, like national non-discrimination and health benefits for same-sex partners in the military. Are equal rights for gays and lesbians more readily accepted by Canadian society?

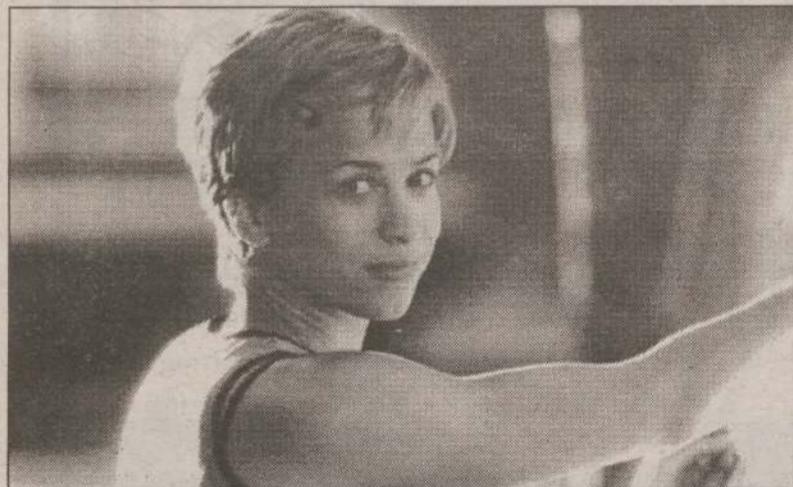
AW: You're talking about a big place, here. Certainly the West Coast has always been an enclave of left-of-center politics; it's where Greenpeace got started. It's kind of an outdoors kind of place,

so everybody's outside all the time. Probably because we get the least snow of anywhere in Canada.

If you go to the prairies you swing way over to the right, and that's just the next province over—Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. You have to remember the communities there are pretty small. The Premier of the Province of Alberta fought hard to see the [pro-gay rights] legislation defeated.

Then the East Coast is a lot of small towns, and it's probably pretty quiet there, though it's more tolerant than the prairies. I would say the prairies are probably the least tolerant. Toronto's a big city, and so gay people can just get lost in the masses. It depends on where you are.

I've seen a new awareness among native people of different sexual preferences. They're rediscovering who those people were in those cultures. Certainly it was pretty much pounded out of them for a century, but there's a new awareness growing there.



Above: Christina Cox stars as Kim. Right: Marya Delver (l) plays Carla, and Karyn Dwyer is Maggie.



HS: Your movie breaks some new ground in the way the sex is handled, due mainly to the situational and casual sex your lead characters get into. For example—they do it in a club bathroom. They do it in a parked van. And they also fall into bed right after they meet. These are sexual situations we habitually associate more with gay men than with lesbians.

AW: Yes! Which, certainly from our research is pretty much—well, it's not standard, I mean, everybody is an individual—but it's not like never done, which is the feeling you get from the selection of gay women's films. That it's never done.

HS: So you were very conscious of the way you handled the sex—you wanted to show that these sexual situations do occur between two women.

AW: Oh yeah, for sure. That's how these—I mean, we had a wonderful cross section of women. People who were studying to become doctors and people who were running clubs, it was a real cross sec-

about whether you're going to take your clothes off and be painted [the erotic centerpiece of the film is an extended, all-nude body painting sequence featuring Dwyer and Cox]."

We certainly gave them as much protection as we could in terms of modesty and were very careful to keep the set quiet and sparsely peopled. But they knew that we were going to have to shoot this film in 22 days. We weren't going to be able to take a whole day to do a sex scene. In Hollywood, I suppose they take two or three. But they knew they were going to do it on the same day that they probably would do a breakfast scene, and a playing-scrabble scene, and whatever else.

HS: So they had to rise to the occasion and just do it.

AW: And it was probably more painless because it was over before they knew it. [The body painting sequence] is hard for straight people to watch. It seems like

performance piece." And still it was always too big.

Then we tried to bring in some transgendered women and they were very self conscious. If they were in the entertainment world, they were people who were mostly behind the scenes. They really wanted to fold in to society. They weren't actors at heart and I tried to bring a performance out, but then I just thought, "This is not going to work."

Our third choice was bringing in straight women and men who were just great actors. And there were a couple of other guys that did well, but Peter is one of our best up here and he'd never done anything like it. He is known to take on very risky, challenging jobs. And so he took it upon himself. He came to the audition just all ready.

HS: All made up?

AW: When he looked in the mirror, I think he was really stupefied because he'd

It's part of globalization, when you start understanding what the gay community has been in Thailand. Or India. You know, I think people all over the world are becoming more aware.

Canada's a kind of very mosaic place, a lot more than the states. The cultures are kept more defined here. We have truly Italian areas, Korean areas, Vietnamese areas. They continue to have their own languages, often their own schools.

HS: That's a marked contrast to Phoenix, especially, where everything is spread out and homogenized.



Peter Outerbridge (l) stars as Judy; Wendy Crewson plays Lila.

AW: To Canada, "Phoenix" says "retirement." I come from the prairies, and it's a place that our farmers go to in the winter. There are huge communities down there of Albertans.

HS: Where did you grow up?

AW: I grew up in Alberta. I'm of cowgirl ilk.

HS: The music in the film is great. The soundtrack really sets the atmosphere.

aside and flag.

I've got an incomplete masters in music so it's sort of my background, and I did a lot of editing in my early days of filmmaking, so it was a puzzle and a challenge for me to manipulate music that was already produced and to create a score from it.

Often we took the instrumental passages of a cd that was with a song that we were using, and I'd loop it, or would play it backwards or slower, or whatever, to make it unique. I had so little money for music

that we could either go this way, or we could have someone score it on a synthesizer. And I thought this was a much more satisfying way to solve it. And you had all that talent that we could put into the movie.

HS: What's next for you?

AW: I'm just preparing to shoot another film that's kind of full of music but it's sort of a dysfunctional family story. Again, it's relationships. I don't do much action. And I just did a pilot for television, kind of a very dark, back-alley, drama of a coroner's service investigation. I do lots of work, it's primarily Canadian, which is odd because I think only three or four percent of the film and television work that's done in Vancouver is Canadian and the rest is American.

HS: Right, they shot *X-files* and *Millennium*, and several other TV shows up there. Why is that?

AW: Oh, there's so many movies shooting in Vancouver they have to fight for parking spaces. The value of your dollar is the big one. And I guess over the last five to ten years, because it's grown so much, we've got terrific crews. And I think the attitude of the crews is excellent up here. They're very generous. And the weather—although we do get a lot of rain. But if you want snow you can just go up to Whistler, which is only an hour and a half away and has snow probably eight months of the year.

HS: Where did the title "Better Than Chocolate" come from?

AW: We always knew that we wanted to have "chocolate" and hopefully "sex" in the title. And there's a premium on these titles—it's hard to find one that hasn't been used. We were fiddling around and we had

a list that went, "Sex and Chocolate", "Sex After Chocolate," "Sex Before Chocolate." And then we had "Better Than Chocolate." And one of our friends told us that was a line from a Sarah MacLachlan song, and so it all came together during post production.

During the shooting, we called it

Sex isn't exclusive to gay men. We were very conscious of all that, and we knew it was going to be very sexy. Ummm, though I don't know if the producers knew it was going to be quite as hot as it is.

"Maggie and Lila" and told everyone it was a nice Canadian mother/daughter story—which it is—when we were trying to get locations. So we wouldn't be grilled as to what it was about. We had a very low profile during the shoot.

HS: You've said it is pretty cosmopolitan up there and that the gay community is more accepted. Then why did you feel it necessary to keep quiet about your subject during the shooting?

AW: We had very little money, and so when you're dealing with the city and the communities and everything, it's easier to be just a little more bland. But we had a lot of access, because the three of us are pretty well known up here as filmmakers.

HS: What does Sarah MacLachlan think of the film?

AW: I haven't talked to her personally. Our makeup lady is one of her best high school friends, which is how we got to her. We had to show her sort of a cutting copy of the movie before she would sign off so that we could use her song. She watched it with her song in it and she loved it, so it passed her test.

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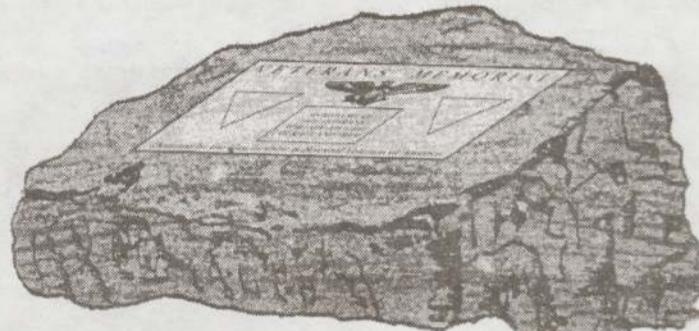
VA okays gay memorial for National Cemetery

The Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs in the National Cemetery Administration, Roger Rapp, has accepted the design and authorized the donation of a memorial for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Veterans of the US Armed Services.

The memorial, proposed and donated by the Phoenix Chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America, will be placed in a Phoenix area VA cemetery and will be dedicated to all veterans who have served with honor and pride.

Dedication ceremonies are slated for Veterans Day, November 11, 2000 at the National Veteran's Cemetery in Arizona.

In approving the donation, Mr. Rapp stated, "The design of the proposed boulder conforms precisely to the established National Cemetery Administration criteria for size, shape, and material. The proposed inscription is non-offensive and clearly commemorates veteran service.



Phoenix gay veterans plan to raise \$5,000 to erect this proposed memorial in the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona.

tive is to commemorate military service."

The Rainbow Memorial will be located in the founders plaza of the National Cemetery in north Phoenix. It will be a boulder shaped monument, made of rainbow granite. On its face will be inscribed "VETERANS MEMORIAL, In Memory of all Veterans who served with courage and pride, donated by the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America."

AGRA riders snag two Bronc Riding buckles in Albuquerque

The Arizona Gay Rodeo Association's top roughstock riders brought home both the men's and women's Bareback Bronc Championship Buckles from the 1999 Zia Regional Rodeo held in Albuquerque Aug. 14 and 15, 1999.

AGRA contestants Chuck Browning and Claire Miller scored both days to win

year in Little Rock, AR on Oct. 30 and 31, 1999.

The Arizona team placed second overall at Zia with 1638 points, behind the large home contingent from the New Mexico Gay Rodeo Association with 2385 points. Arizona cowboy Andy Anaya took All Around Cowboy honors in New



Phoenix favorites Claire Miller (l) and Chuck Browning are the number one ranked female and male bronc riders in the International Gay Rodeo Association.



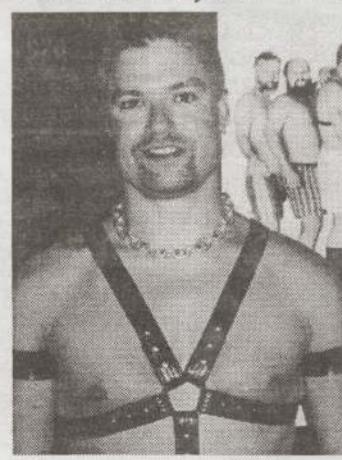
the weekend championship. Browning and Miller are now the number one ranked male and female bronc riders in the International Gay Rodeo Association. Both champs will be invited to compete in that event at the IGRA Finals, to be held this

Mexico, with 725 individual points. The Arizona Road Runner Regional Rodeo 2000 will be held on Jan. 15 and 16, 2000 at the Corona Ranch and Rodeo Grounds near 27th Ave. and Baseline Rd. in Phoenix.

Southwest Mr. Drummer, Drummer Boy named

Approximately 250 Phoenix leather enthusiasts attended the Southwest Mr. Drummer and Drummer Boy contests, held at Boot Camp Aug. 14, where the judges selected David Fellon Mr. Southwest Drummer '99 and Michael Gordon the new Drummer Boy. Both men are now eligible to compete for national titles at the Drummer contest finals, to be held in Sept. in San Francisco.

Fellon was sponsored by Pike's Peak Summit Masters of Colorado Springs, CO. Gordon was spon-



SW Drummer Boy Michael Gordon

sored by Padlock, a Phoenix leather bar. Runners up for the Mr. Drummer title were Tom Fierros, sponsored by Padlock; and Bryce Desey, sponsored by Boot Camp. Drummer Boy runner up was Ruben Gomez, sponsored by Tucson's Venture Inn.

The contest was the first leather man title event held in the Valley in five years. It was presented by Drummer Magazine, and locally by Bob DeJardine of Tuff Stuff Leatherware in conjunction with Boot Camp.

Outonfilm

The Dinner Game (Le Diner de Cons)

The great French comedic actor Jacques Villeret stars with Thierry Lhermitte in this wonderful tale of snobbery and deception. It's centered on a cruel game in which wealthy, sophisticated Parisian men organize dinners to which they each invite working class "idiots" as guests, then award a prize to whomever can locate the biggest idiot. Written and directed by Francis Veber (*La Cage Aux Folles*) it's based on his original play and he knows this territory well. Tightly constructed, marvelously acted and wickedly witty, this subtitled gem



may well be the year's best comedy in any language. Don't miss it.

Twin Falls Idaho

Identical twins Michael and Mark Polish are very talented guys: they write, direct, act, compose and perform music in *Twin Falls Idaho*, their first feature-length film.

A hauntingly beautiful and multi-layered love story, it follows two conjoined—aka Siamese—twins (stunningly played by the brothers). Blake and Francis leave their lifelong home—a circus sideshow—to search for their birth mother in the big city. Gorgeous cinematography, a lush score and cameo performances by

Lesley Ann Warren and Garret Morris work together seamlessly to make for a terrific movie.

The Muse

Love him or loathe him, Albert Brooks is back with his first new film (he stars, he directs, he co-writes, he produces) since his much-admired *Mother*, which resurrected Debbie Reynolds' acting career for about ten minutes when she portrayed Brooks' memorable title character more than four years ago. This time, it's Sharon Stone who gets the chance to strut her comic stuff under Brooks' tutelage, and she fares quite well.

Not so the rest of the film, unfortunately. *The Muse* is intended as an indictment of the way movies get made (or don't get made) in Hollywood, but it's pretty obvious from the outset that Brooks is only partially willing to bite the hand that feeds him. Despite a funny premise wherein a failing screenwriter (Brooks) hires one of the nine daughters of Zeus (Stone) to provide fresh inspiration and jumpstart his career, the story just doesn't hold up and even a great ending can't save what comes before.

The story isn't the only problem. A former stand-up comedian, Brooks' deadpan one-liners are often the best part of his films. In this case, however, too much smart material is left hanging. Oddly, the problem seems to lie in the editing—shouldn't that be an easy fix? And yet we're distracted by one awkward pause after another. It's a shame Brooks couldn't pull this reckless collage together, because Sharon Stone makes one hell of a goddess in any century.

Industry power brokers James Cameron, Rob Reiner and Martin Scorsese all play themselves. Andie MacDowell, Mark Feuerstein and Jeff Bridges costar.

Cabaret Balkan

Set in 1995 Belgrade, this Yugoslav import is billed as a black comedy but there's precious little to laugh at in its 100 minute duration. Directed by Goran Paskaljevic and based on Dejan Dukovski's play *The Powder Keg*, the film dramatically explores the horror of what happens when postwar military control breaks down the region's tenuous social structure.

Cabaret Balkan is fiction, but it sure feels like a documentary. In the course of one long, angry night, the stories of several individuals are deftly intertwined in a loose, running narrative.

There's the cab driver who takes his revenge on a policeman who once beat him for a minor infraction. There's the street punk who hijacks a bus and pulls a switchblade on the frightened passengers. There's the Bosnian refugee family crammed into a tenement basement, the cocaine-crazed petty thief who terrorizes a young couple, and a half dozen other examples of extreme cruelty bred by desperation and fear. *Cabaret Balkan* is a powerful, moving film about humanity stripped to its bones. It's hard to watch, and even harder to turn away.



Community Center's A Night of Comedy August 28

The Community Center, in cooperation with local business sponsors, will host the 5th Annual *A Night of Comedy*, a benefit concert for The Community Center and its programs.

This year's concert will feature the talents of nationally renowned gay and lesbian comics Sabrina Matthews, Scott Silverman, John McGivern and Karen Williams. All four comics have appeared on national television and cable shows. McGivern and Williams can be seen in the upcoming HBO special *We're Funny That Way*. Laura K. Smith of 101.5 "The Zone" will be the emcee for the evening.

"*A Night of Comedy* has become a much-anticipated annual event for the Valley's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities", said Lyle Miller, Executive Director of The Community Center. He added, "this event is the perfect opportunity for our community to come together, have fun, laugh and roll in the aisles with side-splitting comedy, while supporting the multitude of services The Community Center offers the Valley."

Proceeds from *A Night of Comedy* will benefit the many programs and services of The Community Center, including: SAGE/Central Arizona, Horizons Young Adults, Valley One In Ten Youth, Bj Bud Memorial Library, Community Recovery Support Group, Community Switchboard and AZ AIDS Information Line to name just a few. A special highlight of the evening's raffle prize drawing is an autographed WNBA basketball from all the players of the Phoenix Mercury.

A Night of Comedy will take place on Saturday, Aug. 28, 1999 at 7 pm at the historic Orpheum Theatre in downtown Phoenix. All seating is reserved and advanced tickets are \$40 (which includes a post concert "Meet the Entertainers" reception) or \$22 (concert only) and are available through Civic Plaza Box Office (602/262-7272) and all Dillard's Ticket Outlets (602/503-5555).

A Night of Comedy is made possible through the generous support of HeatStroke Newspaper, Camelwest Tax Service and KMS Creative Designs.

SUNSET PEOPLE

Return to 1950's Hollywood when the much lauded touring production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Boulevard*, starring Petula Clark as Norma Desmond, rolls into ASU's



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The part of Joe Gillis, the doomed but sexy screenwriter, is handled by seasoned Broadway actor Lewis Cleale. Reports have it that in this version, the relationship between the aging screen goddess and her kept man is much hotter than it was in the original Broadway interpretation with Glenn Close, and several reviewers agree that Britain's Ms. Clark makes the best Norma yet.

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Notable Quotes

Newsmakers, Celebrities & Others Speak Out

Compiled by Rex Wockner



"My gay fans have been so loyal, and so great—at times when other fans weren't there. Gay fans usually love you when you're in the dumps, the toilet. I have a very Judy Garland feeling about it. It's a special thing."

—Cher to Toronto's *Xtra!*, July 15.

"I burst out laughing [when I tested HIV-positive]. I guess because the people who told me were so serious. Also, I was relieved, because once you've got it you can't catch it. I don't think I'm the kind of person who could get away with not being positive. I can't live like that—if I'd had to be vigilant up to this day, it would've killed me."

—Former gay porn star and now author Aiden Shaw to *POZ* magazine, August issue.

"I heard about safer sex and understood it, but disregarded it. Nothing felt as deeply right as having sex I was told not to, doing it in a way that was dangerous and knowing I could suffer because of it."

—Former gay porn star and now author Aiden Shaw to Britain's *Positive Nation* magazine, July/August issue.

"Nobody on this earth has the right to tell anyone that their love for another

human being is morally wrong. I will never forget how it made me shudder to hear Pat Buchanan say that he stood 'with George Bush against the immoral idea that gay and lesbian couples should have the same standing in law as married men and women.' Who is Pat Buchanan to pronounce anyone's love invalid? How can he deny the profound love felt by one human being for another? ... Unfortunately, however, as long as people like Newt Gingrich and Pat Buchanan continue in public life, the fight to codify gay marriages will be a tough battle to win."

—Barbara Streisand to the *Advocate*, Aug. 17.

"I would never wish for my son to be anything but what he is. He is bright, kind, sensitive, caring, and a very conscientious and good person. He is a very gifted actor and filmmaker. What more could a parent ask for in their child? I have been truly blessed. Most parents feel that their child is particularly special, and I am no different. I have a wonderful son. My only wish for my son, Jason, is that he continues to experience a rich life of love, happiness, joy, and fulfillment, both creatively and personally."

—Barbara Streisand to the *Advocate*, Aug. 17.

"My parents are very supportive of me. God, I generally don't like to go into personal issues, I'm pretty private. I was never in the closet, anyway, but I think that, within a family that's heterosexual, you're always going to be an outsider if you're gay. I don't think it's easy to grow up gay anywhere, especially with the amount of fear and uncomfortableness that surrounds sexuality, let alone homosexuality. It's painful. But I think we've made some big strides now, we don't have to apologize for being gay. I believe we were created this way by God."

—Jason Gould, Barbra's son, to London's *Gay Times* in July of 1997.

"Clearly, coming out at the [1996] GLAAD Awards was the most important moment of my life. From that moment on I was able to join my life as an actor and an activist in a way I was never able to do before."

—Actor Mitchell Anderson (Party of Five) to the *Advocate*, Aug. 17.

"Instead of acting as if they will never exchange bodily fluids with each other—which was never true anyway—gay men are doing what they have done since the epidemic began: Deciding which bodily fluids to exchange with unique partners, and in what permutations of the active and passive roles of anal and oral sex. ... Many HIV-positive men are deciding to have unsafe anal and oral sex with other men who they know also to be positive. HIV-negative men are allowing partners who they know to be HIV-negative to ejaculate inside of them. If they know someone to be HIV-positive or are not sure, they mostly will either have safe sex or will be the active partner in unsafe anal or oral sex—that is, not allow someone to boink them without a condom."

—From an editorial in Boston's *Bay Windows*, written by Editor Jeff Epperly, July 1.

"The gay scripts I get are usually filled with bad characters and are just tragically bad, period. The movie I'm making now [*The Next Best Thing* with Madonna] is a script I rewrote, because the gay character was totally stereotypical in a very dull way. Good script, bad character."

—Gay actor Rupert Everett to www.gfn.com, July 26.

"We have organizations in America called Log Cabins; gay people who are Republicans. I don't understand it myself. I'm kind of glad they're there. Maybe they can make a difference, though I really think they are mistaken. For me it's like being a Jew in the Nazi Party. But there's a lot I don't understand, like people who live in the closet. I just don't know how anyone does that."

—Playwright/actor Harvey Fierstein to London's *Pink Paper*, July 30.

"Rupert Everett in *My Best Friend's Wedding* was so wonderful. He is like so many gay men that I know, which is like, handsome and debonair and sexy and witty and someone that you are attracted to and not some flaming poofter but A MAN."

—Chastity Bono to London's *Gay Times*, August issue.

"There are some instances where people really want to do it [come out] but they don't quite have the courage, so they put themselves in a situation where it happens. I look at George Michael—why was he going into some public bathroom? I think that somewhere deep down he was pushing the envelope and he kinda wanted to get caught."

—Chastity Bono to London's *Gay Times*, August issue.

"My mother? Plastic surgery? Her wardrobe? I don't know, you go ask her how many fucking shoes she has."

—Chastity Bono, on Cher, to London's *Gay Times*, August issue.

"Social activism and queer collectivism sadly seems (sic) to have been replaced by corporate logo-ism. Thousands of rainbow-colored balloons and a ton of signage imprinted with Molson Dry and Labatt's insignias assaulted the eye wherever one looked. I mean, what are we supposed to be celebrating here—queer Pride or beer Pride?"

—Letter to the editor of Toronto's *Xtra!* from reader Ken Kaukola, July 29.

Oh, please! Lets get real. The issue—the real, bottom-line issue here—is that for once a small group of extremists is not dominating the March or imposing their views on the grassroots. Every segment of our community should be—must be!—part of this broad and diverse March. But no segment should dominate, saying that they represent their mythical version of the grassroots."

—Millennium March on Washington Executive Producer Robin Tyler in an Aug. 5 open letter attacking critics of the April 30, 2000, event.

"The LGBT press is similar to the mainline press: both love controversy. Controversy sells. My perception is that too many in the LGBT press have printed lies and myths and unsubstantiated allegations about the March on Washington, 'just because' somebody says them, 'just because' if they come from someone perceived as an oppressed victim they must be assumed to be telling the truth. I'm tired of myths and untruths that continue to appear 'just because... just because... just because.' ... Will I be fired for this response? Possibly. For in politics, telling the truth has become the 'low road.' But at this point, with or without me, this 4th national March on Washington will take place on April 30, 2000. Why? Because our community wants it. And that's good enough for me."

—Millennium March on Washington Executive Producer Robin Tyler in an Aug. 5 open letter attacking critics of the April 30, 2000, event.

"What I've done is brought sexuality back to men over 35 as far as being represented on film. Being over 40 and being a vibrant, active man. I'm an HIV-positive man who has done the unthinkable. I'm living my life. I'm having a ball. I'm not living to die. I'm living to live, and I'm not afraid to die. I'm afraid not to live."

—Gay porn superstar Cole Tucker to Boston's *Bay Windows*, July 29.

"We just saw this cloud of smoke coming. ... Then I saw the crowd screaming and running toward me. People were screaming, 'Run, run, run' and 'Get away, get away, get away.' So, obviously, I started running because all these people are running toward me. And then all of a sudden there were tears in my eyes, and it got in my throat. It was pretty nasty. ... Our faces were all red. Some people were vomiting in the street."

—Guido Gaietta, a spectator at San Diego's July 24 gay-pride parade which was hit with a tear-gas attack. Hundreds of marchers and spectators were affected.

"[N]ot one of the 26 new [TV] series scheduled by Fox, NBC, CBS and ABC has even one black lead or major supporting player. ... But when you count both new and returning series, there will be 17 gay leads or major cast members on those four major networks. In fact, there are more gay characters featured in the new fall season than all other minorities combined."

—Brian Lambert, media critic for the St. Paul [Minnesota] *Pioneer Press*, Aug. 8.



Nothing like a little gossip to spread the word.

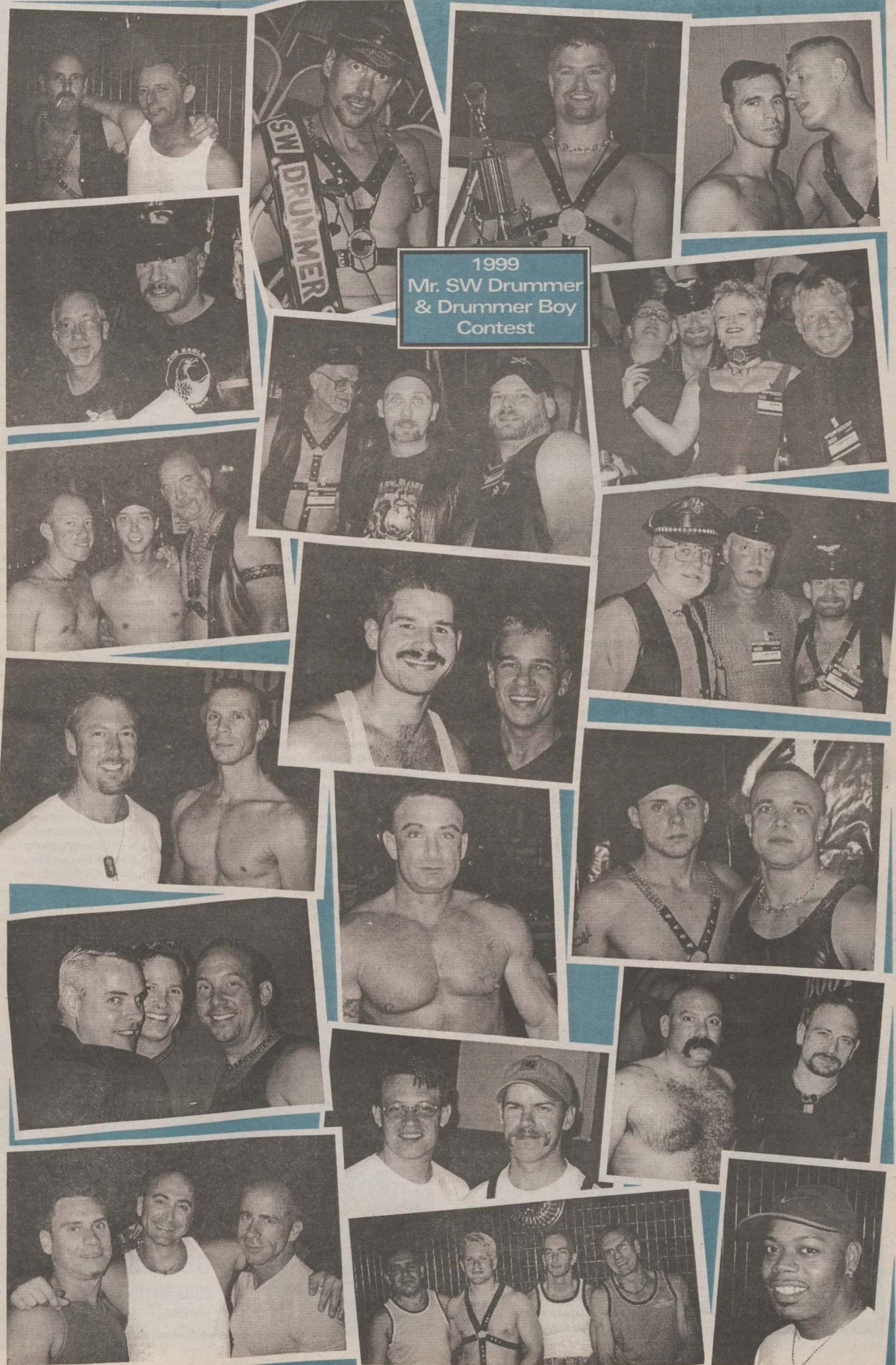
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Deep Inside Hollywood

By Romeo San Vicente, *HeatStroke* Contributor

From Liam to Lesbian

Liam's legendary lightsaber isn't enough to keep *Cabaret* cutie Natasha Richardson from playing for the other team. The Tony Award-winning actress is currently in negotiations for a lesbian role in the Miramax black comedy, *Never Better*.

The film (formerly known as *Blow Dry*) is written by *The Full Monty* scribe Simon Beaufoy and tells the story of rival beauty salons in a small English town. Richardson would play the ex-wife of a hairdresser (British bad boy Alan Rickman) who gets involved in a lesbian relationship with one of the salon owners.

Co-starring as her love object is Rachel Griffiths, whose role in *Hilary and Jackie* garnered her an Oscar nomination. *Never Better* is about to begin shooting in Ireland and England.

Casting Against Type

Legendary womanizer and *Playboy* founder Hugh Hefner is the latest porn mogul to get his own bio-pic.

The Viagra-endorsing septuagenarian is the subject of a film being produced by Ron Howard and Brian Grazer; the drama will show how Hef revolutionized the sex industry and coined the phrase "entertainment for men." The kicker is that Hef is rumored to want none other than man-loving actor Rupert Everett to fill out his ubiquitous smoking jacket.

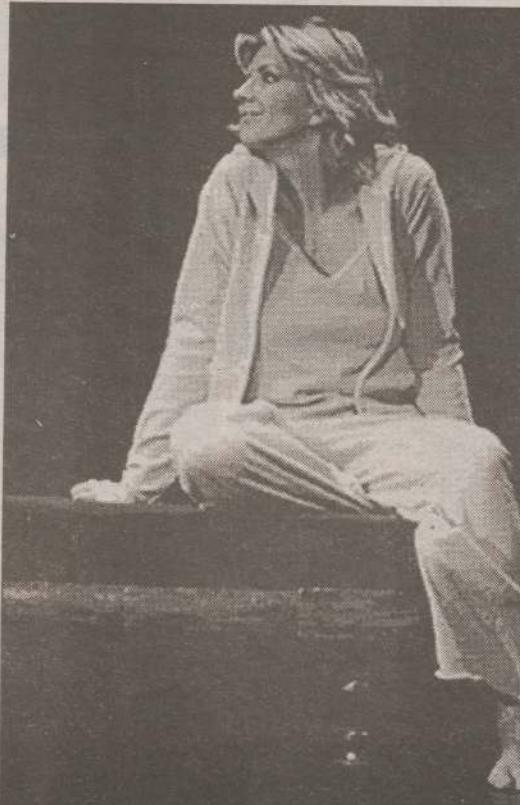
Seems like Everett's turn as a horny gentleman-about-town in *An Ideal Husband* impressed the Chicago-born playboy, who concluded that Everett exudes a Hef-like charm. Hmmm... If Everett's up to the challenge, we could be seeing him at the Oscars.

Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus

Gay producer Scott Rudin, whose work includes *In and Out*, has opened his personal checkbook to purchase the film rights to Michael Cunningham's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Hours*. Rudin intends to develop the project on his own without the help (or hindrance) of a studio; he'll worry about distribution later.

The Hours, which was published last year, is inspired by Virginia Woolf's *Mrs.*

Dalloway. Cunningham's story deals with three characters from different eras who all share a connection to the Woolf novel.



Natasha Richardson will be playing a lesbian role opposite Alan Rickman in the upcoming Miramax black comedy *Never Better*.

the bisexual Woolf herself as she writes *Mrs. Dalloway* circa 1923; a 1940s housefrau who reads the book while pregnant; and a contemporary New York woman who plans a party for an ex-lover, now stricken with AIDS, who many years before had dubbed her *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Lily Hits the Road

Comedienne Lily Tomlin, who recently gave such a convincing onscreen portrayal of a lesbian in *Tea with Mussolini*, will be returning to the stage after a 12-year hiatus.

Her one-woman show, *Lily Tomlin Live*, debuts in late September in Austin, Texas, and then tours other mid-size U.S. cities. If all goes well, the show, to be directed by Tomlin's longtime collaborator Jane Wagner, may wind up on Broadway next year.

Tomlin's last Broadway foray, in 1986 with *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, won her a Tony.

High Times for Highsmith

Patricia Highsmith, the late great lesbian suspense novelist, may become the

gay community's answer to Edith Wharton. Heat is building on the production of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, with Matt Damon and Gwyneth Paltrow, which is based on her homoerotic thriller.

And now Highsmith's novel *Carol* is being developed for the big screen by director Hettie McDonald, who helmed the 1996 boy-meets-boy romantic comedy *Beautiful Thing*. The drama deals with a married woman who is pursued by a younger woman.

Highsmith's work has been brought to celluloid before, most notably by Alfred Hitchcock in *Strangers on a Train*.

Passport to ScottLand

No stranger to cutting-edge entertainment, Scott Thompson, the openly gay member of the former comedy group Kids in the Hall, has a new series that debuted this month... on the Internet.

Thompson, who became a regular on HBO's *Larry Sanders* after the Kids dispersed, is co-writer of *ScottLand*, a Web-based show that uses a combination of live action and puppetry. Set in a dysfunctional kingdom, storylines deal with everything from political revolution to foot fetishes, with Thompson playing the lead characters (including his alter ego, gay barfly Buddy Cole).

The show, which resembles a cross between *H.R. Pufnstuf* and *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, promises "to piss your parents off." Viewers can register as official citizens of ScottLand and vote in all town elections.

Tours of *ScottLand* begin at www.scottland.com, which is part of ComedyNet.

Surly Berle

Ninety-something TV legend Milton Berle doesn't like to be mistaken for a homosexual. The vaudevillian, who never seemed to mind sporting dresses and heels as part of his shtick, is suing the real estate company Century 21 for using an image of him in drag in an ad that ran in a Chicago resource guide for the queer community.

The \$6 million suit alleges violation of privacy and defamation, and says the old pic of Uncle Miltie, doing a Carmen Miranda impression complete with makeup and fruity headdress, was used without proper authorization. The photo was accompanied with the caption, "every queen deserves a castle," to which the hetero Berle took offense.

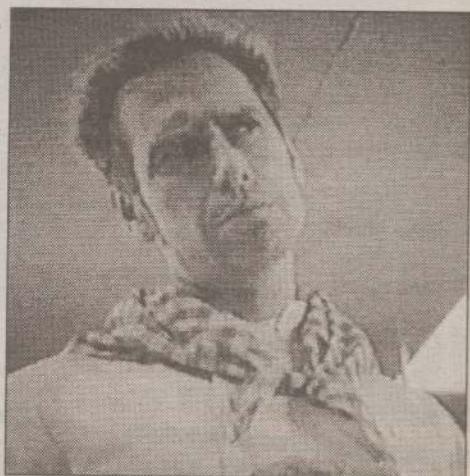
(Berle is also the subject of an age-old Hollywood rumor that credits him with being more endowed than Tommy Lee. As of yet, Mr. Television hasn't filed any defamation suits regarding that allegation.)

Britney in Stereo

Twenty-four-year-old Robert Stephens beat out 30 female wannabes in a recent

Britney Spears lookalike contest, winning backstage passes to the former Mouseketeer's Los Angeles show and the chance to meet the *Baby, One More Time* singer in the flesh.

Stephens's parochial school garb was so convincing, he fooled an E! Entertainment camera crew who gave him an interview thinking he was the genuine teenage crooner. But when one of Britney's handlers from Jive Records got a whiff that a Britney imposter—a drag queen, no less—was in their midst, Stephens got his backstage credentials revoked and evicted before he got to meet his much-admired doppelganger.



Gay comic—and former Kids in the Hall alum—Scott Thompson has created a new web-based comedy series, *ScottLand*.

Vacancy in L'Appartement

Gay filmmaker Joel Schumacher (whose work includes the last couple of *Batman* movies) is having a hard time casting his next picture, a remake of the French thriller *L'Appartement*.

The cameras were set to roll with Mummy hunk Brendan Fraser and *Titanic* beauty Kate Winslet in the leads, when the actors upped their asking prices. Fraser, who got paid \$4 million for *The Mummy*, reportedly wanted a raise—to a mere \$10 million; Winslet would have settled for \$5 million.

Schumacher, whose budget for the entire project is \$30 million, is now looking for less pricey headliners. The filmmakers are now approaching hottie Freddie Prinze Jr. for the male lead. The *She's All That* hunk's asking price is a more reasonable \$2 million.

The recent success of the übercheap *Blair Witch Project*, with no-name stars, and the flaccid box office receipts generated by the *Cruise-Kidman* borefest *Eyes Wide Shut* has Hollywood rethinking star salaries.

Romeo San Vicente is too young to know who Milton Berle is. You can reach Romeo in care of *HeatStroke* or via e-mail RomeoDeep@aol.com.

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Out of Town

By Andrew Collins



Baltimore—by Night

There will always be those who believe that Baltimore's proximity to Washington, D.C. (an hour's drive away, tops) robs the city of a vibrant after-dark scene. This may be somewhat true if you're seeking high-profile international gay discos, restaurants frequented by big-wig politicos, and luxury hotels that have figured prominently in political scandals. True enough, Baltimore is more about substance than glitz, but if you think this unpretentious city by the Chesapeake doesn't know how to celebrate, you're sorely mistaken.

Of course, there are plenty of folks here who would just as soon continue to see the spotlight remain on D.C. In Baltimore, you almost never have to stand in a line to get into a gay club, and you'll encounter very little attitude inside.

Rates at hotels have risen over the past couple decades with the city's rapidly rising cachet, but accommodations still fall below those of other major Eastern Seaboard cities. And foodies know that Baltimore offers some of the best noshing in the region—and, typically, not even the hottest restaurant requires reservations more than a day ahead.

Most visitors shack up near the Inner Harbor, close to great restaurants (and also many engaging daytime attractions, like the aquarium and the science center) and an easy stroll from such colorful outlying neighborhoods as Little Italy and Federal Hill.

But if bar-hopping rates high among your priorities, consider the several nice properties in Baltimore's hub of queer nightlife, Mount Vernon. You'll still be only a long walk (don't do this at night) or short cab ride from the Inner Harbor.

Downtown, the Harbor Inn Pier 5 offers the hippest and liveliest accommodations in the city—it's a postmodern, whimsically decorated property with spacious and stylish rooms, many directly facing the Inner Harbor.

In Mount Vernon, big spenders favor the historic (1924) Clarion at Mount Vernon Square, while those on a budget go with the perfectly amenable Mount Vernon Hotel. Or, if staying at an intimate and gay-friendly 19th-century inn piques

your curiosity, check out (or into) the Abacrombie Badger B&B, set inside an 1880s town house, or the similarly delightful Mr. Mole B&B, north of Mount Vernon in historic Bolton Hill.

When dinnertime rolls around, remember that Baltimore's cooking is full of flavor—the city even has its own spice, Old Bay Seasoning, a feisty concoction of 16 seasonings sprinkled mostly on shellfish but required by some locals on everything but ice cream.

If you're on the run, just wander through the copious food stalls in the Harborplace pavilions. It may look like a zoo of tourists, but you'd be surprised how many locals graze here. Many of these places offer top-notch local seafood—particularly oysters, clams, and Chesapeake Bay blue crabs.

Walk a bit south to Federal Hill to sample great Indian food at Banjara or an

intriguing selection of wines by the glass at the convivial neighborhood bistro, Bandaloops. One World Cafe is a nice place to end up for coffee and desserts, and you'll normally see a few fellow lesbians and gay guys lingering in here, too.

Or make your way through Little Italy, with its many classy eateries, most notably Boccaccio, or historic Fells Point, checking out the tempting California-meets-the-Chesapeake menu at Pierpoint.

Farther east, the once-industrial Canton neighborhood gets trendier with each passing day and presently offers several good dining options, including the chic seafood restaurant, Atlantic.

While there are more than half a dozen gay bars in Mount Vernon, good eating is as strong a reason to check out this neighborhood, from simple pub fare at the very gay-spirited Mount Vernon Stable and the campy late-night hangout, Gampy's, to sophisticated contemporary American fare at the Ruby Lounge and Spike & Charlie's.

Don't overlook City Cafe, either—it's an airy and inviting space with both food and a liquor license; the ambience strikes the balance between an intimate bar and a laid-back java joint.

Baltimore bar-goers congregate mostly at a handful of the city's mainstays.

Blacks and whites mix more in Baltimore than in many large cities, as do women and men, but there are still favorite hangouts catering to particular types.

If you're a lesbian, you'll probably enjoy Coconuts Cafe, the first major women's club to make a splash in Mount Vernon in decades. African-Americans prefer Club Bunnies, famous for its happy hour, and to a lesser extent Randy's Sportsman's Bar, the cruiser of the two.

is Le Salon, a gay porn shop with videos, magazines, and gay buddy booths.

It's a bit harder to classify the crowd at the Gallery, a few blocks from the Eagle, except to say this is an extremely low-keyed place where the regulars all seem to know each other by name. Back in Mount Vernon, Leon's is a classic dive that's been serving the gay community for more than 50 years (longer, allegedly, than any bar in America); it's especially popular for "last call" on weekends and "happy hour" on Sunday afternoons.

There are only two serious disco options in Baltimore, both in Mount Vernon. The Allegro draws fair-to-decent-size crowds depending on the night (the dance floor, however, is quite small), while the Hippo is considered the only serious game in town. Its large dance floor and a reputation for great music attract quite a few straight (but enlightened) folks, though the primary clientele is gay. All in all, this is a great place to cut loose.

Along with a fun piano bar on Thursday and Friday nights, the Hippo is also the best spot to catch Baltimore's unique brand of bitchy drag queen.

Remember, this is the city that gave us Divine.

Andrew Collins authored the greatly expanded second edition of Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA, as well as six gay guides covering the West Coast, New York City, South Florida, and Amsterdam. He can be reached on HeatStroke or at gayfodors@aol.com.



The lobby of the Harbor Inn Pier 5 exudes the hotel's whimsical yet sophisticated aesthetic.

Guppies and stand-and-model types flock almost religiously to Central Station, which, despite a slightly upscale aesthetic, still staffs some of the nicest bartenders in town—there's a pretty decent restaurant, Donatello, here as well.

The Stagecoach is next door and draws a loyal cadre of queer two-steppers and line-dancers. Leather aficionados head half a mile up Charles to the Eagle, which cultivates as racy an atmosphere as any bar in town—note the feverishly popular monthly "full-moon" underwear parties.

By the way, Washington, D.C., has the nearest bathhouses, but Baltimore has a couple of gay strip joints where the guys take it all off—the kitschy Atlantis just east of Mount Vernon (it doubled as "the Fudge Palace" in the movie *Pecker*) and the Custom House Saloon downtown in the city's once-famous red-light district ("The Block"). Next door to the Custom House

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41. *Flex*
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Phoenix 271-9011

45. *Culture*

60. America West Arena
201 E. Jefferson
Phoenix 379-7800

61. AZ Hall of Fame Museum
1101 W. Washington
Phoenix 255-2110

62. AZ Historical Society
Museum
1300 N. College
Tempe 929-0292

63. AZ Mining & Mineral
Museum
1502 W. Washington
Phoenix 255-3791

64. AZ Science Center
600 E. Washington
Phoenix 716-2000

65. AZ State Capitol Museum
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix 542-4675

66. ASU Art Museum
Nelson Fine Arts Center
Mill Ave. & 10th Street
Tempe 965-2787

67. ASU Gammage Center
Apache & Mill Ave.
Tempe 965-3434

68. Blockbuster Desert Sky
Pavilion
2121 N. 83rd Ave.
Phoenix 254-7499

69. Celebrity Theater
440 N. 32nd Street
Phoenix 267-9373

70. Heard Museum
22 E. Monte Vista
Phoenix 252-8848

71. Herberger Theater
222 E. Monroe
Phoenix 254-7399

72. Orpheum Theatre
203 W. Adams
Phoenix 262-7272

73. Phoenix Art Museum
1624 N. Central Ave.
Phoenix 257-1222

74. Phoenix Central Library
1221 N. Central Ave.
Phoenix 262-4636

75. Phoenix Civic Plaza
225 E. Adams St.
Phoenix 262-6225

76. Phoenix Symphony Hall
225 E. Adams
Phoenix 262-6225

77. Phoenix Museum of History
105 N. 5th Street
Phoenix 253-2734

78. Phoenix Theatre
100 E. McDowell
Phoenix 254-2151

79. Planet Earth Multi-Cultural
Theatre
909 N. 3rd Street
Phoenix 241-1821

80. Union Hall
512 E. Van Buren
Phoenix 253-7100

Outdoors

81. Desert Botanical Garden
1201 N. Galvin Pkwy
Phoenix 941-1217

82. Margaret T. Hance Park
3rd St. to 3rd Ave. between
McDowell & Roosevelt
Phoenix 534-2406

83. North Mountain Park &
Preserve
10600 N. 7th St.
Phoenix 262-6696

84. Papago Park
Van Buren & Galvin Pkwy
Phoenix 256-3220

85. Phoenix Zoo
455 N. Galvin Pkwy
Phoenix 273-1431

86. Pueblo Grande Museum
4619 E. Washington
Phoenix 495-0900

87. Squaw Peak Park
2701 E. Squaw Peak Dr.
Phoenix 262-6696

88. South Mountain Park
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Phoenix 495-0222

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Send your questions to "Dear Cowboy," c/o HeatStroke, P.O. Box 33430, Phoenix, AZ, or e-mail to alkiphx@aol.com — we'll pass them along to the wise one for you.

Dear Cowboy,

I need some tips on how to stop having sex on the first date.

I'm like a male version of that girl in Oklahoma who couldn't say no. Dinner, lunch, a movie—it doesn't matter what the situation is, I'm a sure thing. Before I go out with every new guy I meet, I tell myself to hold out for more of a developing relationship before getting physical. But then I always end up giving in and I feel just terrible afterwards.

I know I'll never have a long term relationship with a guy if I keep acting like a slut, but I can't help it. How can I learn to be stronger when it feels so good?

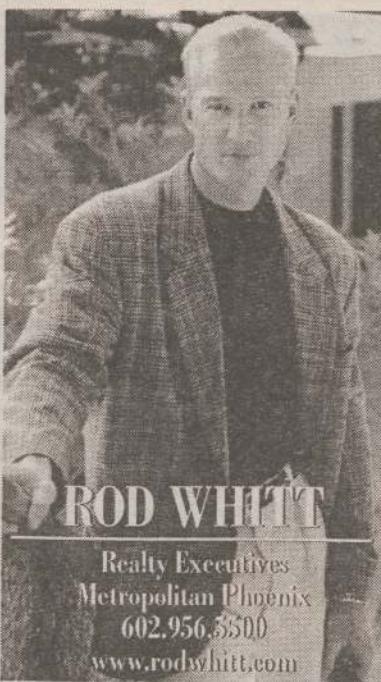
Signed, Ado Andy

Dear Andy,

Lunch? You're getting lucky over your lunch break? Buddy, you shouldn't be fretting, you should be celebrating.

Listen, what's far more worrisome than your enjoyment of casual sex is the way you're beating yourself up over it. My tip is to ease up on the reins. You've established a habit you'd like to change, that's all. Calling yourself names and feeling terrible will only make things worse. It's my hunch that your feelings about how you "should" be behaving compared with how your life is going run deeper than this one issue.

An active sex life doesn't make you a bad person. And the decision to jump into the bunk anytime/anywhere is not always exclusive of developing a long term relationship. I strongly suggest you



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call one of the counselors listed on this page and hitch yourself to a friendly professional who can spend a few weeks helping you explore your thoughts about intimacy and guilt, an hour at a time.

Good luck.

ing the meal as well?

My friend says it's always done that way, I say it should have been mentioned ahead of time. Last time I went to such an event it cost me \$65, plus a present, and I didn't even eat that much.

Signed, Wondering What's Fair

Dear Wondering,

Yes, the cost of the birthday boy (or girl)'s meal is always split among the rest of the cowboys at the shindig. And if we're talking more than six people, the bill and tip should be evenly divided, no matter who ate what. The exception would be if the birthday boy's lover or best friend is hosting everyone and picking up the whole check.

Sixty five bucks sounds awfully steep, unless you and your friends are all doctors and lawyers. It was the responsibility of whomever set up the party to choose a more reasonably priced locale. Chalk it up to experience and put in your vote for less pricey chow next time.

Lunch? You're getting lucky over your lunch break? Buddy you shouldn't be fretting, you should be celebrating.

Dear Cowboy,

When a bunch of gay men get together to celebrate a birthday at a restaurant, is it normal for the group to split the ticket and cover the dinner of the birthday boy, even though gifts were given to him dur-

HeatStroke's Funny Page

The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green...

...by Eric Orner

Romance Tips

With Ethan Green



This week's topic:

What to look for in a Man

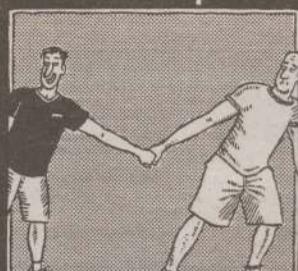
1. Your Man should be employed.



2. He shouldn't be jealous.



3. He should be just a little bit jealous.



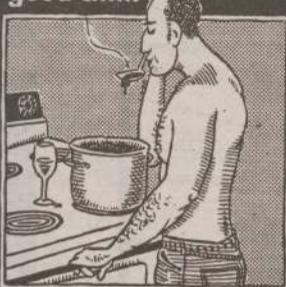
4. Your man shouldn't be too precious.



5. Getting along with his "ex's" is a good sign...



6. He should make good chili.



He should remember Your pet's birthday.



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Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



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Q-S-C-O-P-E-S

By Jill Dearman, Contributor

ARIES: As the Sun and Mercury hit your house of health, take care of that fab body of yours. Try giving yourself a complete makeover, inside and out. But be careful who you open your heart to; let people prove themselves first. A Leo is loyal.

TAURUS: Hot Mars finishes up a transit in your house of love, so please, stop playing coy and just start playing! Be a little more adventurous in your romantic life and more creative in your career. A show of passion wins the heart of a Libra.

GEMINI: Hot and sexy Mars slips into the love sector of your chart on September 3, so expect a long stretch of decadence, my darling. But don't neglect your home life or your family. Talk to loved ones in full sentences, darling, not just snappy quips. A Virgo stands by you during your emotional dramas.

CANCER: The Moon in your sign over Labor Day weekend kicks off a glorious fall season for you, but it's up to you to follow up with people. Your reputation as a hermit precedes you, so change your image. A Sagittarius wants to remake you (or just make out with you), and I don't hear you complaining.

LEO: A slew of planets are retrograde in your career and romance houses. No need to panic; just soften up your style. You have special psychic powers when it comes to love; you know just who to do and how to do it. An Aquarius wants to be picked.

VIRGO: This is your time to shine, darling, so please, buy the proper outfits and don the most tigerish 'tude. People are more than willing to help you succeed—and not only in business. Take advantage of what they offer. An Aquarius is in an especially giving mood.

LIBRA: Pace yourself, my dear. Your solar year is drawing to a close, so it's no wonder you're feeling a little burnt out. In business, bide your time. You don't have all the information you need yet. In your social life, you could be having *too* much fun. A Taurus knows how to stop you from obsessing.

SCORPIO: It's time to expand your horizons, honey. Put a more creative spin on your career while Venus is stirring up truth and beauty at the top of your chart. Friends do you favors that help get your name out there. A Gemini wants to serve you in a more personal way.

SAGITTARIUS: The Sun and Mercury are putting a spotlight on your career, so don't drop the ball, you savvy Sag, run with it. Your ruler Jupiter brings you lots of luck, but it's time to put some elbow grease into it. And while you're all greased up, give a Scorpio a ring.

CAPRICORN: Usually you're known for your restraint, but this is a rambunctious cycle for you, baby, and you'd be better off taking a pushy approach to love and life. Put a last-minute end-of-summer getaway, maybe with a Leo, on your agenda. You can be careful and calculating in your career, but your love life is due for some drama.

AQUARIUS: That contrary streak in your nature is starting to stand in the way of you and the love of your life. Take a good hard look at the obstacles you are creating—then tear them down. A long-term business partnership is blessed. A romantic partnership with a Cancer takes work but is worth it.

PISCES: Your love life could take a most magical turn as September kicks off. So pull a Capricorn out of your hat—and into bed. If you want to enjoy a thriving career and money in the bank, you're going to have to do it on your own, my dear. Taking care of details leads you to huge success.

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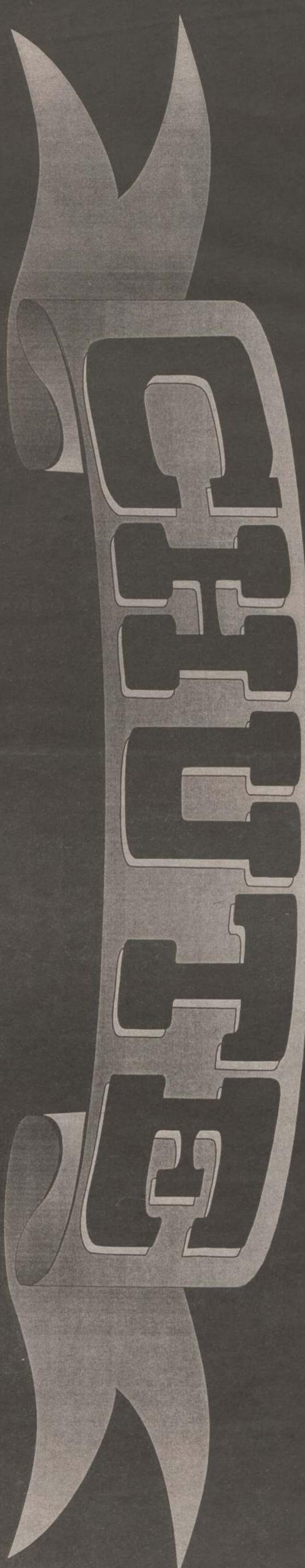


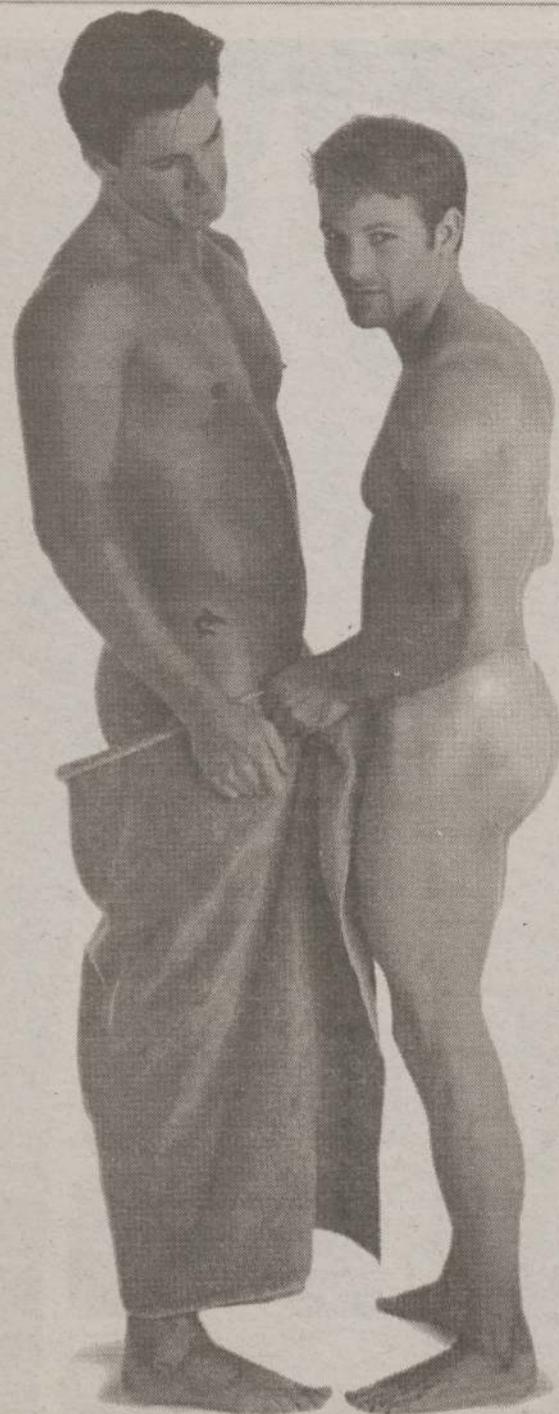
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Jill Dearman is the author of two new books, *Queer Astrology for Men* and *Queer Astrology for Women* (both from St. Martins Griffin). For information on charts and consultations, call 212-841-0177 or e-mail QScopes@aol.com.

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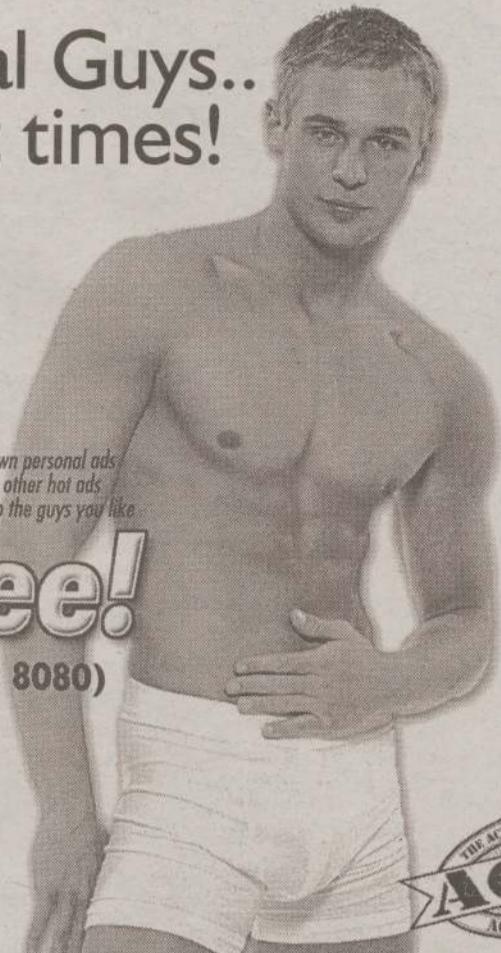
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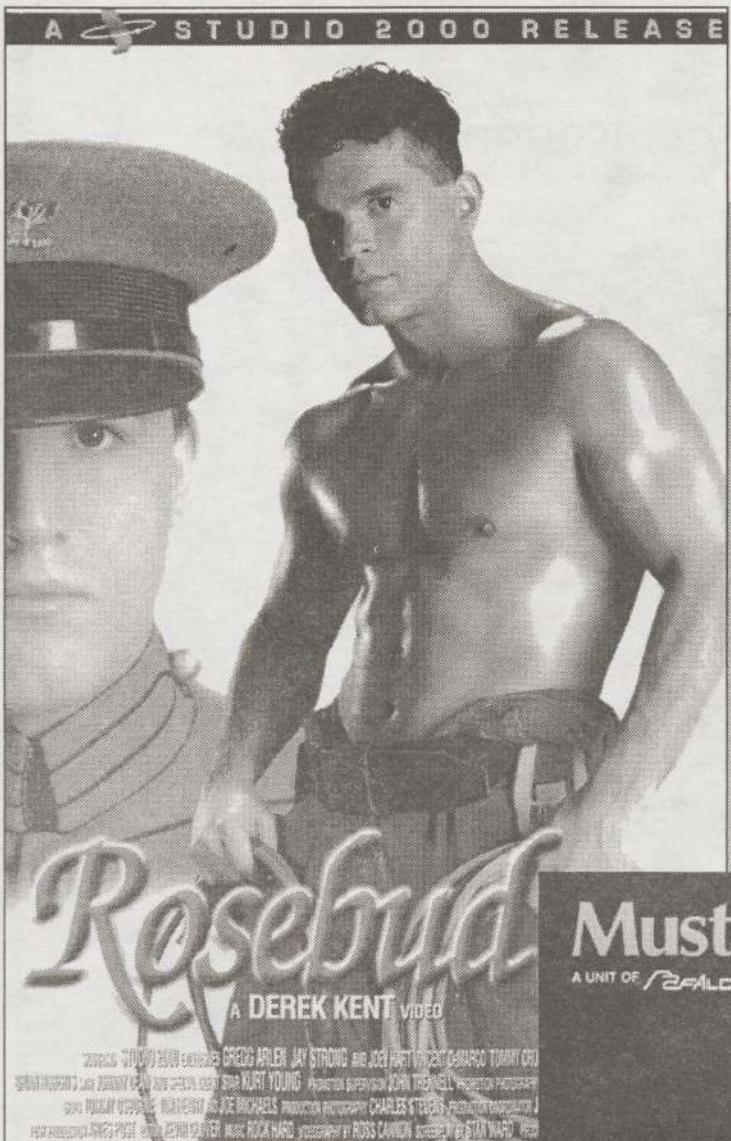
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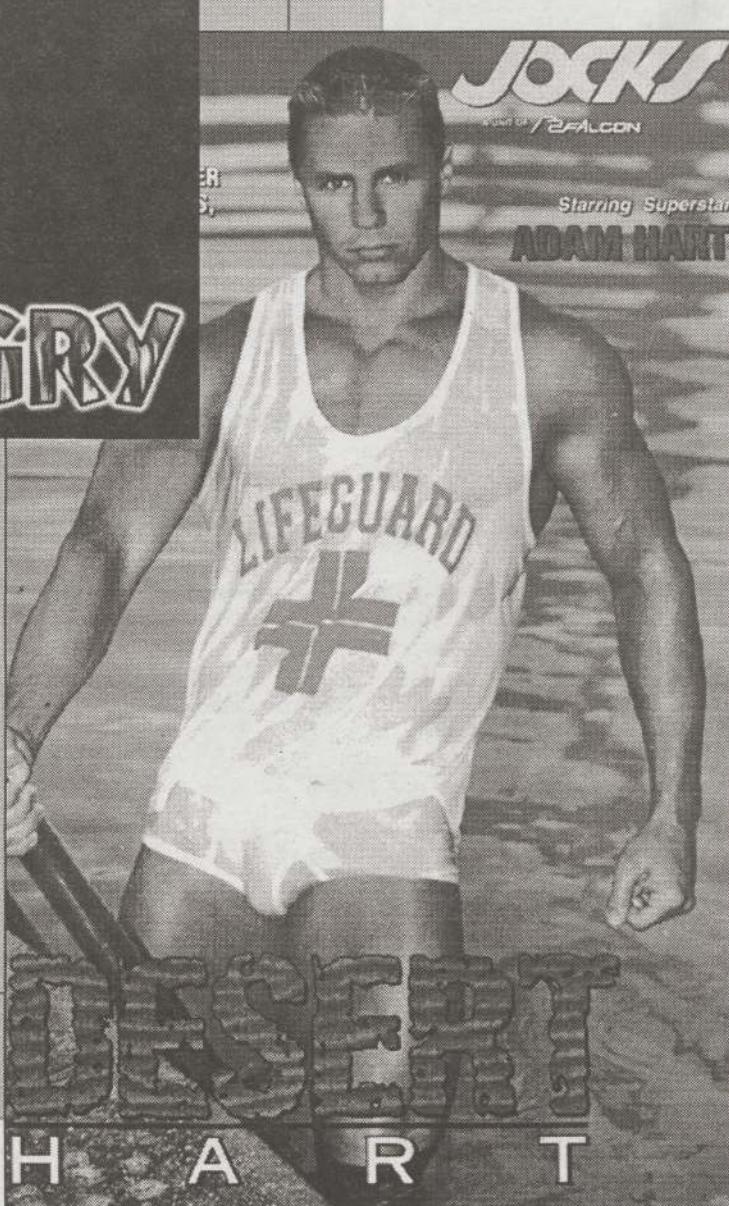
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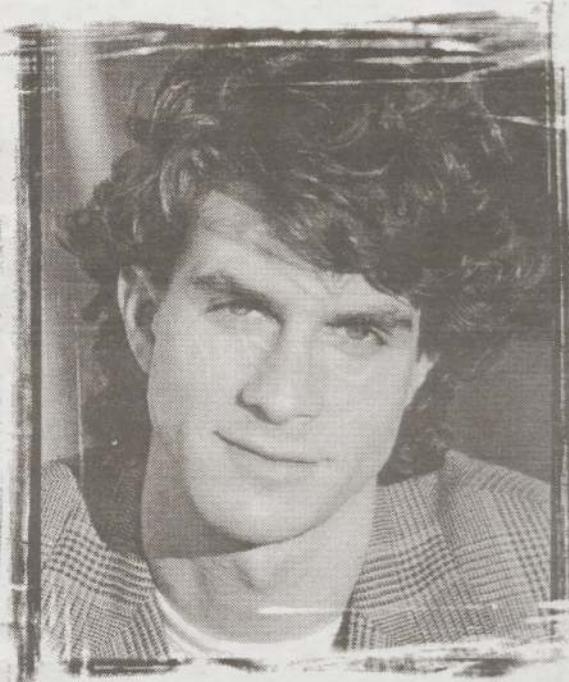
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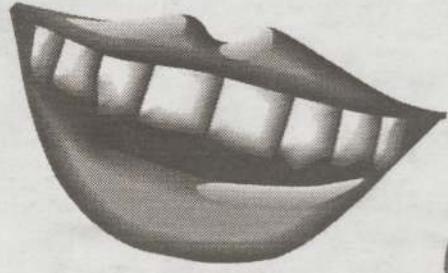
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