

HeatStroke

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Hispanic hilarity for Everybody

Latino writer's off-Broadway Breakdown reveals universal truths

By Allen Kalchik, Editor

“Querida Madre, Only one day in America, and already I have everything I need!”

So begins the tale of Frederico, the “Gay Little Immigrant Who Could,” in Tempe playwright Guillermo Reyes’ comedy hit *Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown*.

As the play continues, the enthusiastic new citizen pens fervent notes to his worried mother, who has stayed behind in their unnamed, Central-American homeland.

To Frederico’s *Madre*, the letters provide glossed-over documentation of her son’s harrowing entree to life in the U.S., “where I come to experience the prosperous and openly gay lifestyle that in my country we only dream of...”

For the audience, they open a window to a subcultural world that many of us rarely think about.

Like the seven other characters who comprise *Men on the Verge*, the prolific playwright’s most widely known work, Frederico is both gay and Latino. As is the case for all the characters in Reyes’ two-act collection of funny and heartfelt monologues, Frederico’s real quest is to find love, acceptance and a sexual identity—dealing all the while with his dual-minority baggage in contemporary American society.

The one-man show was lauded as a must see for queer East Coasters when it played the Big Apple in the spring of 1997. It has been successfully performed across the country in cities that include Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Columbus and Tucson.

Men on the Verge is now being presented in Phoenix for the first time. It will open at downtown’s Playwright’s Theatre Feb. 11, continuing through the month for the next three weekends.

Reyes heads the MFA program in Playwriting at Arizona State University. He is directing the Playwright’s Theatre

production himself, borrowing several ideas from New York director Joe Meigle’s off-Broadway version. Portland actor Andres Alcala stars.

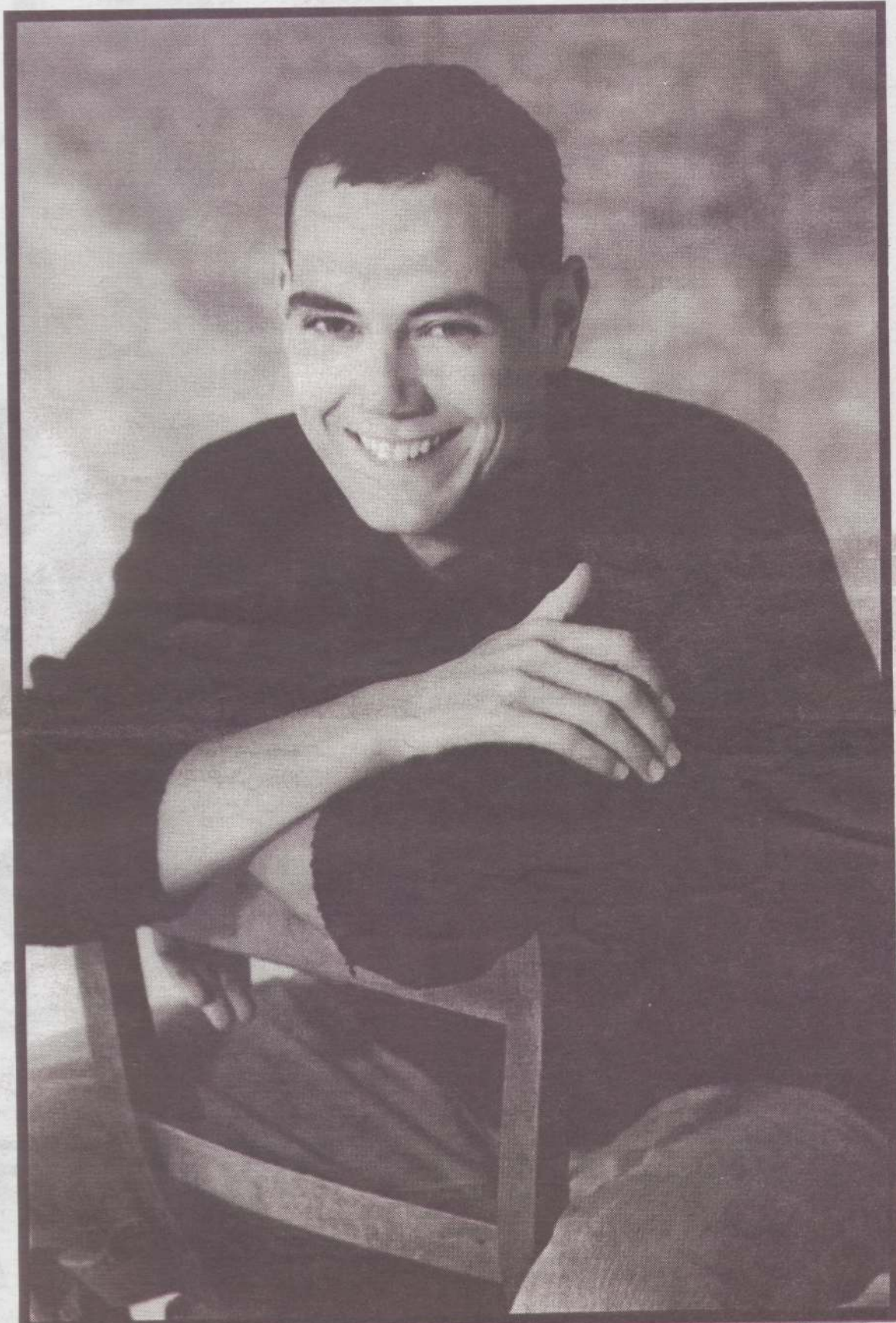
Reyes, born in Chile and raised in Los Angeles, has lived in the Valley since 1996. He said that it is always exciting—and a little scary—to have his finished plays performed here.

“It’s good to have it in town,” he said. “A lot of people haven’t seen it. Also, a lot of people haven’t seen it with Andy [Alcala], who is different in some ways—in many ways—from the original actor.”

The original actor was Felix A. Pire, whose energetic performance made *Men on the Verge* a bona fide hit, first in L.A. and then off Broadway.

In New York, Pire earned the Outer Circle Drama Critics’ Best Actor award for his performance. His muscular torso and movie star-smile also helped get the play—and Reyes—lots of splashy promotional coverage in national magazines aimed at both the gay and theatrical communities. Pire declined subsequent offers to tour with the role, opting to concentrate instead on his film career.

Reyes said, “Whenever you bring in a new actor, it adds another dynamic.” Reyes has worked with Andy Alcala in the play twice before, first in Portland and then in Tucson last summer. In both cities it garnered rave reviews for writer and



Portland native Andy Alcala will reprise the multiple roles of *Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown*, the award-winning one-man comedy written and directed by ASU playwright Guillermo Reyes.

actor, and was granted extended runs.

At Playwright’s, Reyes and Alcala will be reprising the Tucson production’s intricate and highly effective musical cues, as well as the same basic set.

The production’s real treat, however, is Alcala’s performance. Those who caught the show in the Old Pueblo last summer discovered that the handsome 29-year-old brings exactly the right mix of self awareness and reckless abandon to Reyes’ off-beat characters.

“His face seems as plastic as Silly Putty, shifting shape and emotion with the fluidity of computer morphing, and his body and voice, too, have the near-magical variability of a chameleon’s colors,” wrote Jennifer Carrell in her review for *The Arizona Daily Star*.

In Reyes’ opinion, Alcala is all that and more as an actor. “I think he brings a certain warmth, an identifiability, to the characters. The audience can relate to

him.”

Reyes said that while Pire’s off-Broadway performance was outstanding, it was “more what I call a Robin Williams-type of acting. Very high energy and comedic,” Alcala has a different approach, one that “brings a certain realism to the characters, and that creates a greater identification with him.”

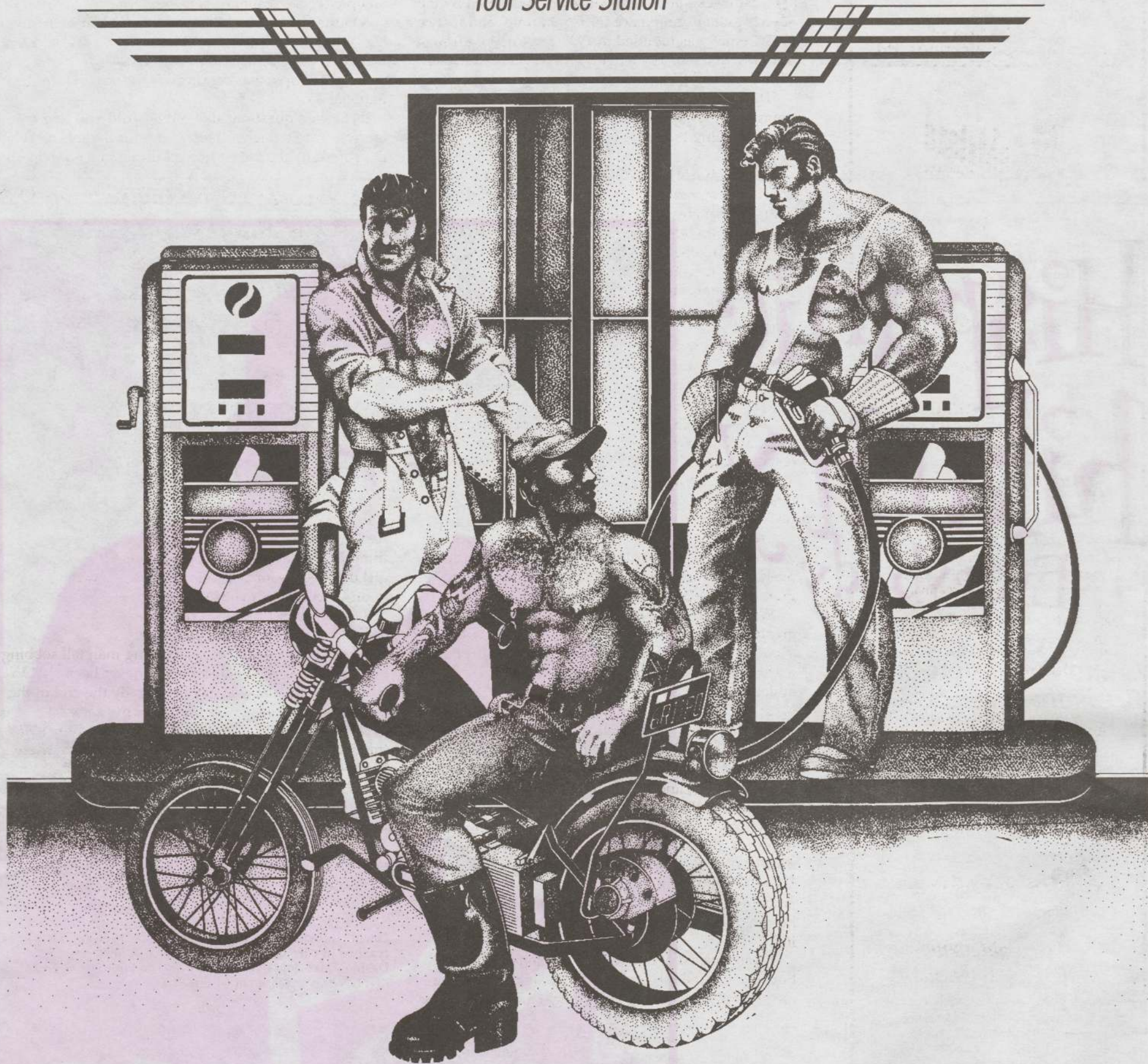
The characters range from youthful and tender-hearted Frederico (who keeps the audience laughing and holds the piece together as the only recurring character) to an aging Cuban restaurant owner. Alcala also transforms himself into a demented English-as-a-Second-Language teacher, a dying drag queen and a Hollywood callboy, among others.

This will be Alcala’s fourth time starring in the demanding show. What he likes most about doing the play is that the audience can actually make his perfor-

See “Men on the Verge,” page 14

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Horowitz:

In any town

Last week I attended a program sponsored by the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) that was founded in 1927 and known throughout most of its history as the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

The award-winning ANYTOWN program helps young people explore their own identities and biases while learning the value of creating an inclusive society.

Although ANYTOWN is normally a week-long summer program with students from many different schools, the program I attended involved kids from only one Arizona high school. There were more than 80 students coming from different races, cultures, religions, ethnic groups and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Throughout the five-day residential program, the students engaged in a variety of experiences that encouraged changed attitudes and increased awareness of prejudice and bigotry.

The staff of 28 people consisted of prior graduates of the ANYTOWN program, college-age counselors, teachers and volunteers who serve as adult advisors and program directors. ANYTOWN provided the many of the students their first opportunity to meet people different from themselves.

Through the exercises, participants were forced to look at themselves an others in ways that had previously not occurred to them. The power of the program took me by surprise.

When I arrived at the ANYTOWN camp, one of my greatest prejudices was against high school students. My high school experience was excruciating. I got teased and slammed into lockers regularly. I was not athletic and felt completely alone. I didn't fit in because I was fat, Jewish and gay-although I couldn't even come close to saying it at the time.

When I saw several of the high school kids arrive, I was afraid for my safety. Several of the boys were gang members, and I had no doubt that they had bashed more than a few fags over time.

A lesbian staff member and I were the only people to come out when gay people were asked to stand during a stereotyping exercise the first evening. When asked to identify gay stereotypes, the kids came up with all the standard names—faggots, dykes, lesbos, homos, and more that I am uncomfortable mentioning.

I was amazed at how much the name-calling still hurt me after all these years. By the end of the exercise, several students came up to me and told me how

brave they thought I was and how they had never met an openly gay, real person before.

On the second day, we conducted a sexual orientation workshop based on a TV talk show. The stage was set so that being gay in society was the norm, and a straight couple was coming out for the first time on national TV.

We asked questions like, "When did you first realize you were straight? How did your parents react? Do you think it's fair to raise children in a straight

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household?" We then allowed the kids to ask us questions about growing up gay in a completely straight world. One girl, whose religious upbringing teaches that homosexuality is a sin, argued that gays couldn't be born that way and that it must be a choice.

By the end of the ANYTOWN experience, that girl said to me, "You are one of the greatest people I've ever met. I love you." One of the Hispanic boys, who had been a gang member, said, "I'm sorry for any bad thing I've ever said about gay people." One lesbian girl thanked us for bolstering her self-esteem. A young member of the Mormon Church said that even though she was taught that being gay was wrong, that wasn't what she believed anymore.

During the final exercise, a young man fell sobbing onto my shoulder because he had never been able to tell anyone that he was gay before. By the end of the program, I was no longer afraid for my safety; I became hopeful for the future. I reaffirmed my belief that we change the world one heart at a time. These high school students provide proof.

NCCJ's mission is to empower young people throughout the nation to become human relations leaders capable of transforming America by fighting bias, bigotry and racism and promoting understanding and respect among all people.

From what I have seen, they do a great job.

David Horowitz is a Phoenix attorney and activist. He can be reached in care of HeatStroke, or by e-mail at DashingDav@aol.com. For more information on NCCJ or the ANYTOWN program, go to www.nccj.org.

Editors:

In December, I saw the word "faggy" used on the Abercrombie & Fitch web site. The same "article" also appeared in the A&F winter quarterly. The context was an "interview" with "Joe Model Dude" about some hot new car. Dude loved the car, but dissed what he called "faggy BMWs."

The use of "faggy" by a less-than-evolved straight boy is, sadly, all too common. But it was unconscionable for A&F to print this idiot's hurtful, gratuitous remark. How many people at A&F had to sign off on this slur and deem it OK for publication? Remember, this is the company that uses half-naked, pouting boys in ALL of its marketing — to lure....whom exactly?

The three letters I wrote to A&F received no reply. I finally e-mailed GLAAD which sent a generic response, and has not publicly reported the offense by A&F.

When GLAAD wants to renew your membership, let them know about the A&F incident and that you will not be renewing. When the new A&F

quarterly arrives in the mail, or when you're thinking about heading to the A&F web site or store, ask yourself, "should I give them my 'faggy' money'?"

I encourage every reader to contact A&F and GLAAD about this shameful episode.

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Deb Price

Finding ways to minimize disruption when gays in military ban is lifted

The U.S. military ban on openly gay soldiers will be lifted. That's inevitable. Discrimination that violates the very ideals that our armed forces are supposed to defend simply won't be allowed to continue forever. Yet it would be naive to think that lifting the un-American ban won't cause any trouble.

How can we minimize the disruption?

With public support for gay military people steadily rising, that's the question all of us who believe in a strong national defense should be asking. A *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll released Jan. 28 found overwhelming voter support—74 percent to 22 percent—for gays in the military. Most civilians—56 percent vs. 37 percent—favor letting gay people serve openly, according to a new report by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies, an academic think tank focused on the military.

"The trend in public opinion may be irreversible. So, the wise military leader looks at this and says, OK, we can either do this on our terms, or the terms can be dictated to us. Let's get out front and craft a policy that would be the least disruptive to military effectiveness," observes Duke University political scientist Peter Feaver, co-author of a 1,100-page Triangle Institute study of gaps between civilian and military attitudes on many issues.

The six-year-old "don't ask, don't tell" law really is the first step toward ending the ban because it established the right of gay Americans to serve—though only in silence. And, in an overdue but critical milestone on Feb. 1, Defense Secretary William Cohen ordered every service member—from general to private—to attend training sessions stressing that anti-gay slurs and harassment are forbidden, and that violators will be punished.

Neither Feaver nor his report takes a position on the ban. But he and his fellow researchers offered me valuable insights into how lifting it could be done as smoothly as possible:

Opposition to the ban would need to be even stronger, cross party lines in Congress and include some of the military's most ardent allies, they said. That would help the military brass not feel the change was being shoved down its throat. A strict new code of behavior would need to apply to everyone, gay and straight alike, but not attempt to change anti-gay attitudes. Commanders would need to demonstrate zero tolerance for anti-gay violence and harassment.



The Feaver team also noted:

- *Team spirit:* Service members would need to be taught that anti-gay behavior threatens unit cohesion—and could put the victimizer and the entire unit and its mission at risk.

- *Do unto others:* Some straight male soldiers who fear lifting the ban are afraid they would receive the kind of inappropriate advances many men make toward women. "When they think of being on the receiving end of that, they really get freaked out," says Feaver colleague Laura Miller, a military sociologist at the University of California at Los Angeles. As the fearful soldiers see men and women working together without sexual harassment, they may be less afraid of openly gay men.

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- *Mission possible:* The Joint Chiefs would need to be wooed. "It can't just be ordered. There has to be an effort to make them understand what is driving the policy," says Feaver co-author Richard Kohn, a military historian at University of North Carolina. "The military has to reflect the attitudes of the society it serves."

- *Quitters:* Twenty-seven percent of rising officers told Feaver's team they would leave if gays serve openly. But on a list of nine possible reasons to leave, lifting the ban ranked only sixth. Higher choices included "less sense of fulfillment" (68 percent) and "too much time away from my family" (39 percent). It's unlikely most of the 27 percent would leave. "For some, this is a way of voting," of just signaling opposition, Miller says.

Lifting the ban on openly gay soldiers is vital to American interests. And working to minimize the difficulty should be a shared national goal.

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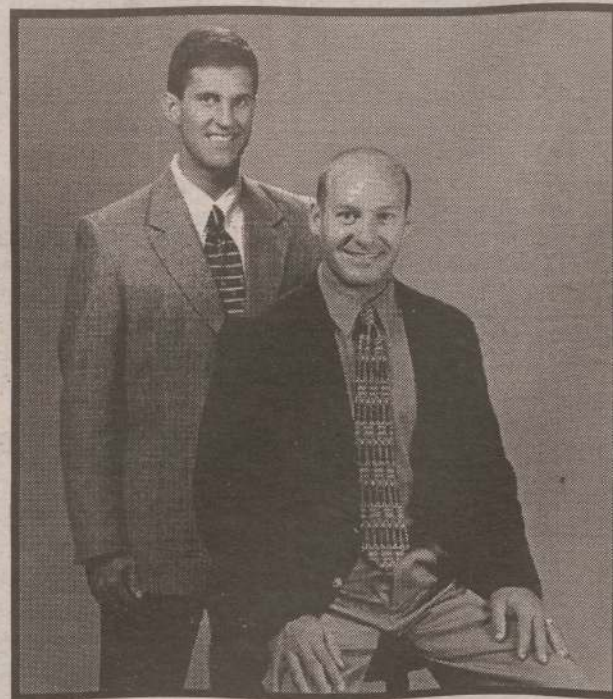
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Anti-gay bill defeated in AZ Senate Committee

By David Braun, Contributor

On Monday, Feb. 7 an Arizona State Senate committee defeated a bill aimed at restricting domestic partner benefits in the state.

By a four to four tie with one senator not voting, the Senate Government and Environmental Stewardship committee refused to pass the bill filed by Republican State Senator David Petersen, (Dist. 29, Mesa).

Petersen's bill would have established a flat prohibition on the state government from granting health or accident insurance coverage to the partners of employees. It also would have mandated a

majority vote of the governing bodies of cities and counties before they could award any domestic partners insurance benefits.

Petersen, a member of the GES committee, had a lively debate with committee member Senator Elaine Richardson (D-Dist. 11, Tucson).

Petersen argued that it would be wrong to grant benefits to domestic partners because those couples were violating the Arizona law that prohibits cohabitation.

Richardson responded by inviting Petersen to join her in repealing the cohabitation law and allowing the gov-

ernmental entities to grant the partner benefits. Petersen declined the offer.

District 27 Senator Harry Mitchell of Tempe protested that the bill took away local control of the issue. Mitchell stated the proposal was unnecessary as the local political entity, either the city council or the county board of supervisors, already decide by majority vote which benefits employees will receive as part of their employment relationship.

The bill was defeated on a party-line vote, with four Republicans voting in favor, four Democrats voting against, and one Republican, Senator Marc Spitzer, (R-Dist. 18, North Phoenix), not present.

After the vote, Richardson stated that although the bill had been defeated in committee, it was quite likely to be revived as a floor amendment. She advised members of the gay and lesbian community who were present that they need to continue to monitor and lobby the legislature to prevent the bill from becoming law.

Ed. note: David Braun addressed the committee in favor of the bill's defeat in his role as Vice President of Governmental Affairs for the Greater Phoenix Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

Judge orders school board to allow gay-straight club to meet

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP)—A federal judge on Feb. 4 ordered school officials to allow a gay tolerance club to meet on campus pending resolution of a lawsuit, saying they would otherwise suffer "irreparable harm."

U.S. District Court Judge David O. Carter issued the preliminary injunction against the Orange Unified School District while a lawsuit filed by two El Modena High School students plays out in court.

"Plaintiffs have been injured not only by the board's excessive delay, but also by the inability to effectively address the hardships they encounter at school every day," Carter said in a written ruling.

Carter denied a request by attorneys for the school district to stay the order pending an appeal. School district officials did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment.

Outside of the courthouse, protesters chanted anti-gay slogans and carried placards. "Gay clubs are propaganda," read one sign.

The students filed the federal lawsuit in November, saying the board discrimi-

nated and violated their free speech rights. The following month, the board, which had earlier put off making a decision, voted unanimously not to allow the club.

In court papers, attorneys for the school district said the club was disallowed because it covers issues taught in the sex education curriculum. The district said it would reconsider the club if it changed its name and refrained from discussing human sexuality topics.

Students Anthony Colin, 15, and Heather Zetin, 16, have said their proposed Gay-Straight Alliance Club is meant as a forum for gay students to discuss discrimination.

Neither student was in court today. But their parents expressed relief with the judge's ruling.

"It's about who these kids are. It's about who they love. It's not about sex," said Zetin's mother, Judy Anderson.

El Modena already allows clubs that represent Christians and ethnic minorities.

In a similar case in Utah, a federal

judge ruled in November that the First Amendment rights of a group of high school students were not infringed upon when they were kept from forming a gay club.

The district's policy barred a group of East High School students from forming a school-approved gay club, the judge said, not from expressing their point of view in one of the school's existing clubs.

The decision resolved a four-year legal battle over gay clubs in the Salt Lake City

School District.

U.S. District Judge Bruce Jenkins granted summary judgment in favor of the school district, ruling the district's current policy sufficiently safeguards students' rights to free expression.

"I suppose that in a literary club they could talk about Walt Whitman and their point of view as to his outlook or his (sexual) orientation," Jenkins said. "If I go to the debate club, I can talk about sexual orientation if I want to."

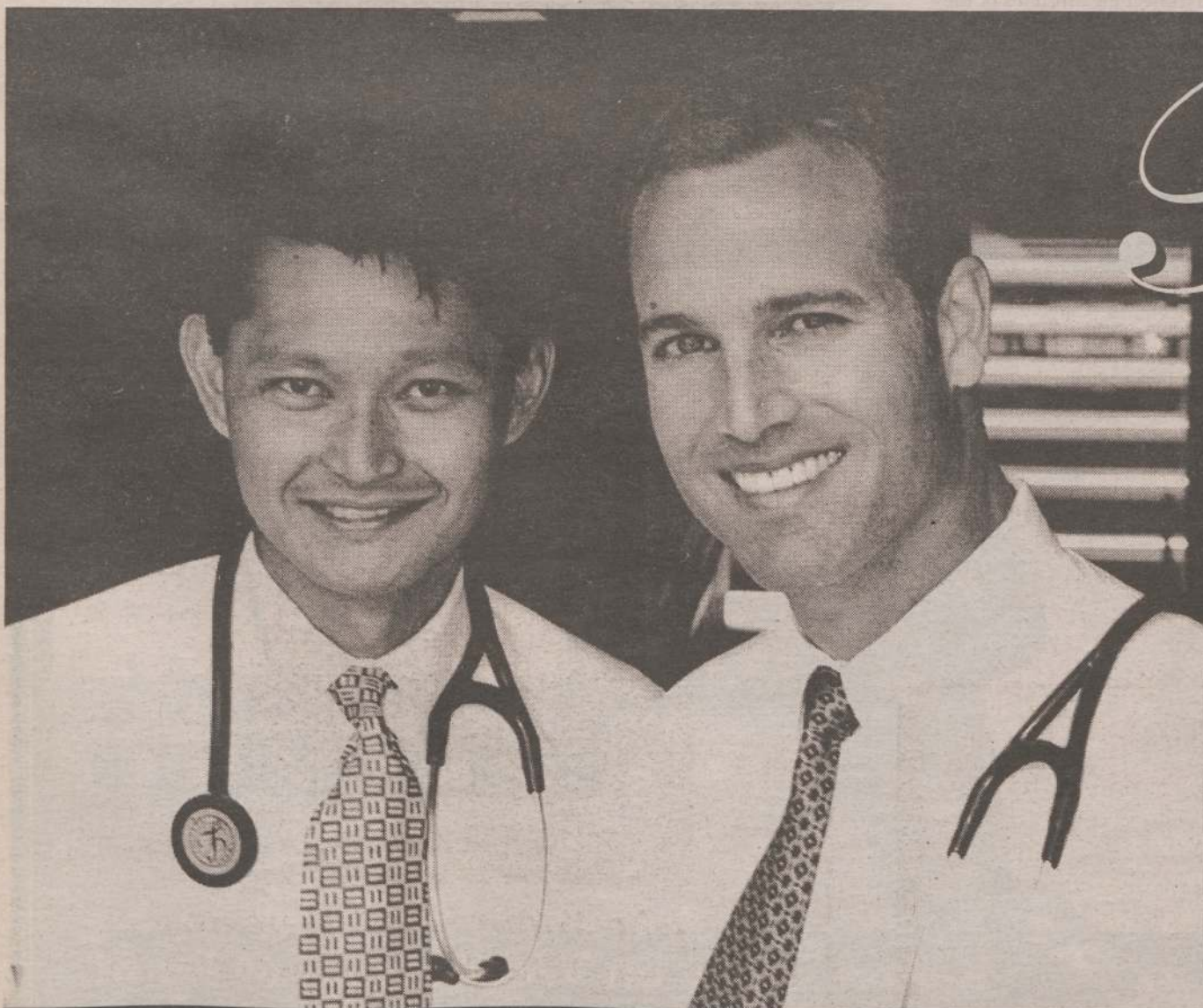
Gay student stabbed in apparent hate crime

TUCSON (AP)—A 20-year-old University of Arizona student was stabbed outside a cafe that caters to gay customers in what police are calling a hate crime.

Witnesses said the attacker yelled slurs about homosexuals before and after stabbing the victim in the back on the night of Feb. 6. He also allegedly said, "Let this be a warning to the gay community" as he fled the scene.

Police arrested Gary Grayson, 37, about a block away from the Rainbow Planet Cafe. He was charged with aggravated assault.

The attack came the day before the university's Pride Alliance kicked off its annual Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Awareness Week. The victim, whose name was being withheld for his protection, is an active member in the group.



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Politically Speaking



By **Kathie Gummere, Contributor**

There are currently 864 state laws that, by using the terms "family," "spouse," "husband," or "wife," discriminate against non-married adults, and especially against the gblt community.

There are other laws that discriminate by using the terms "unmarried," or "opposite sex."

These laws are all the result of religious prejudice and a lack of understanding of the current composition of Arizona

National studies have estimated that as many as 90% of adults have participated in acts that are illegal in Arizona. Arizona is one of only 3 western states that still prohibit such behavior, Utah and Idaho being the other 2.

families. All of these laws need to be changed, but it will take time and effort.

We must be vigilant in watching all new legislation to ensure inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness. Many of the arguments in favor of maintaining the status quo are based on the current Archaic Laws prohibiting sexual activity among non-married adults.

The argument is stated that the laws regarding adoption, for instance, can't be changed to include same sex couples because those couples are "breaking the law." The fact that marrieds may also be breaking the law is not considered. These Archaic laws must be changed prior to

the gblt community being granted full rights.

In furtherance of this ideal, Sen. Cirillo (R) from Sun City, has proposed legislation that would repeal Arizona's Archaic Sex Laws. These laws prohibit cohabitation between unmarried adults, and prohibit oral sex and sodomy between any and all consenting adults, even if they are heterosexual and legally married to one another.

National studies have estimated that as many as 90% of adults have participated in acts that are illegal in Arizona. Arizona is one of only 3 western states that still prohibit such behavior, Utah and Idaho being the other 2.

With 15 sponsors in the Senate and 26 sponsors in the House—in addition to the representatives who have assured us they will vote for the bill if it comes up for a vote—AHRF

believes that we have the votes in both the house and the senate to pass this legislation.

The problem will be whether the conservative leadership will allow it to come to a full vote. President of the Senate, Brenda Burns, and Speaker of the House Jeff Groskost have not previously been our allies in this matter. Each needs to assign the bill to a committee, encourage the committee to approve it, and then allow it to come to the floor for a full vote.

A seriously negative bill, SB 1438, sponsored by Sen. Peterson, is basically a resurrection of Rep. Karen Johnson's bill of last year, which would seriously restrict

state agencies' and municipalities' ability to grant domestic partner benefits to their employees.

This is additional state interference in the ability of agencies and municipalities to govern themselves. It is obviously an attempt by the theocrats to further curtail our rights. Currently assigned to Sen. Cirillo's committee for hearing, we fervently hope it does not get out of committee.

We need to defeat one and pass the other, and making our presence and our views known is one way to help accomplish these goals.

The gblt community is invited to take part in the second annual Equality Begins At Home visit to the state legislature on Feb. 16.

Last year we had 100 people willing to participate in this event. It's really quite simple. We gather at the State Capitol and, as a group, are introduced to the House of Representatives.

It makes a big statement for all the representatives to see so many voters appear on one issue. Our presence puts faces on our community, and helps to prevent the "us" v. "them" mentality of many in the non-gblt com-

munity. After being introduced, the EBAH participants split into small groups, organized by district, to visit individual representatives and introduce themselves.

Simply asking the representatives to vote for or against a particular measure in this way is very effective. Please consider taking the time to stand up and be counted by participating in this important event. For further information, please contact the AHRF office at (602) 650-0900.



A CITIZEN'S PETITION To the Honorable Members of The Arizona Senate & The Arizona House of Representatives

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3. repeal Arizona's "lewd and lascivious acts" law, which applies to all Arizona couples, opposite-sex and same-sex, married and unmarried.
4. apply equally to all Arizonans.
5. stop government interference in private relationships between consenting adults.
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Monday Happy Hour 8am-8pm Beer Bust 8pm-12 am Domestic Beer \$1.75 Draft \$1.25 Free Pool all day	Thursday Happy Hour 8am-8pm, Beer Bust 8pm - 12am
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International Gay & Lesbian News Briefs

Compiled by Rex Wockner

FORMER GAY ACTIVIST ELECTED FINNISH PRESIDENT

Finnish voters elected a former head of the national gay group as president of the nation Feb. 6.

Foreign Minister Tarja Halonen was president of SETA, the national gay organization, in the early 1980s. She now has a male partner, Pentti Arajärvi.

Halonen, 56, is a Social Democrat with a radical past as a follower of revolutionary icon Che Guevara. She remains popular among left-wingers, union members and communists.

VATICAN UNHAPPY OVER WORLD PRIDE 2000

The Vatican is irritated over gays' plans to stage World Pride 2000 this summer during the Roman Catholic Holy Year.

Up to hundreds of thousands of gays and lesbians are expected to descend on the city June 28 to July 9 for the festivities, which will include a large parade July 8.

On Jan. 28, the pope's number-two man, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano, urged the Rome city government to ban World Pride because thousands of Catholic pilgrims will be in the city at the same time.

"Rome is ... a city apart because of the presence of the Roman Pontiff," Sodano said. "I am sure the authorities will reconsider the matter. The civil authorities know how to deal with public order. They know the rules and know how to avoid things that can harm the sensibilities of a city such as Rome."

The city has given \$180,000 to pride organizers to help fund cultural activities, and Mayor Francesco Rutelli said Jan. 28 the event continues to have his support.

"You might not go along with the gay pride event, but it would be a mistake to ban it," he said. "Rome has a millennium-old code of welcome and respect that won't change in 2000."

SYDNEY MARDI GRAS RAKES IN \$99 MILLION

New figures reveal that Sydney, Australia's gay Mardi Gras celebration infuses almost \$99 million dollars (U.S. \$63 million) into the inner-city Sydney economy.

It is the highest-earning sporting or cultural event on the Aussie tourism calendar.

The estimated 5,190 foreign visitors who attend Mardi Gras stay in the country an average of three weeks and spend an average of \$347 per day compared to \$265 for other foreign tourists.

This year's celebration runs from Feb. 11 to March 4.

EURO MPs SUPPORT GAY PROTECTIONS

Parliamentarians from across Europe voted Jan. 26 to recommend that anti-gay discrimination be banned via the European Convention on Human Rights.

The vote occurred as the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly

reviewed a draft of a new "Convention Protocol" put forward by the Council's governing body, the Committee of Ministers.

The recommendation now moves back to the Committee for consideration.

"The inclusion of 'sexual orientation' in the new Protocol to the Convention would make it clear that sexual orientation discrimination is as odious and as pernicious as the other grounds specifically mentioned, such as race, sex or religion," said Nigel Warner, a spokesman for the International Lesbian and Gay Association.

The Council of Europe's main role is to strengthen democracy, human rights and the rule of law throughout its 41 member states. Founded in the wake of World War II, it is the continent's most important human-rights organization. The European Convention on Human Rights is the most significant of the Council's many human-rights treaties. Violations of the convention are settled by the European Court of Human Rights. The Council is governed by the foreign ministers of its member states who form its decision-making body, the Committee of Ministers, and by representatives from national parliaments, who make up its Parliamentary Assembly. For more information, visit www.coe.fr.

POLISH SENATE VOTES TO ABOLISH PORN

Poland's Senate, the upper house of parliament, voted to ban all pornography Jan. 16. Dissemination of any pornographic content would result in a prison sentence of up to two years.

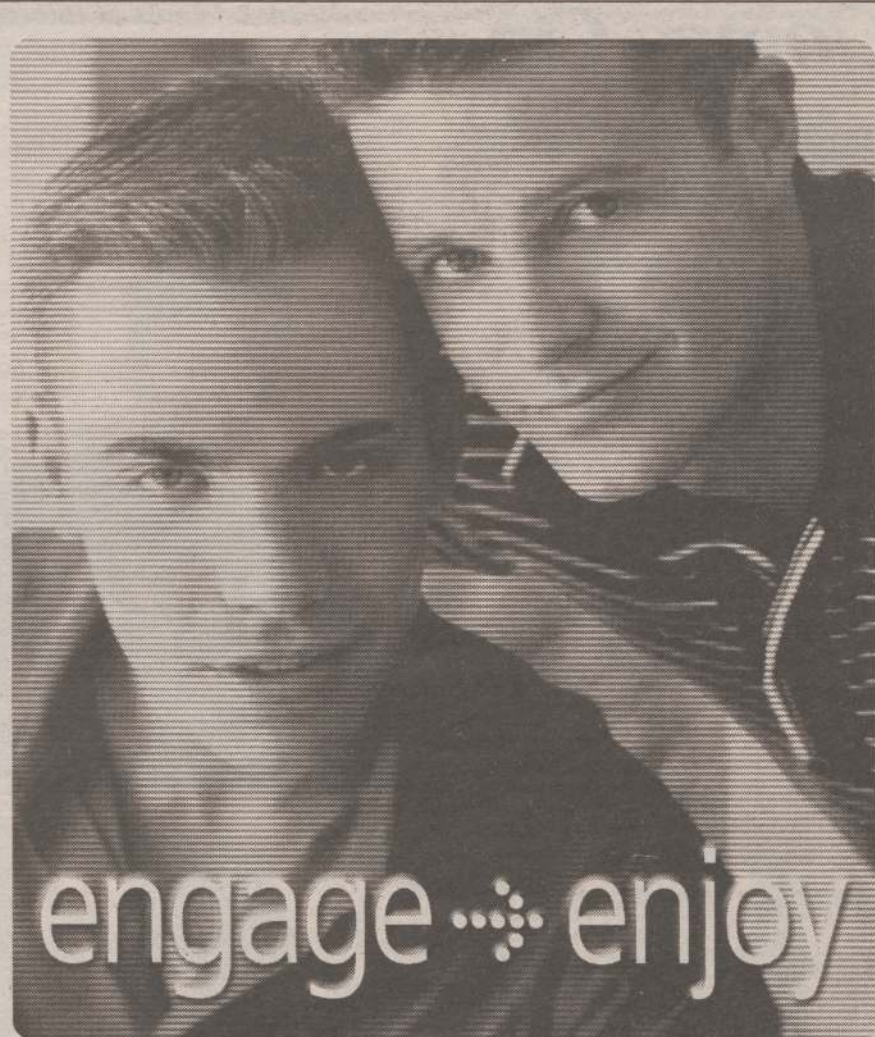
The measure now moves to the lower house and then to the president for his signature.

Poland's nascent gay press is a combination of porn, news and entertainment coverage. The most successful publication, the glossy magazine *Nowy Men*, fills half of its pages with hard-core photos of men having sex and the remainder with high-quality news reporting, entertainment coverage and travel writing.

PELE HAD GAY SEX

Brazilian soccer legend Pele has acknowledged that his first sexual experience was with a man, the *London Evening Standard* reported Feb. 2.

"It was with a homosexual," Pele said. "I was scarcely 14. But let's be fair, it wasn't just my thing. It was with a homosexual that all our team used to go out with. But after that I never again started this type of relationship."



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Goings On

News & Events of Interest to
the Phoenix Queer Community

Youth Group auctioning dates for dollars Feb. 12

For the second consecutive year, The Community Center in Phoenix will hold a bachelor auction on Valentine's weekend to raise money for its youth programs, Valley One in Ten (VOIT) and Horizons.

A *Chance of a Lifetime*, a romantic date auction, will be held at Amsterdam in downtown Phoenix on Saturday, Feb. 12 at 7 pm. There, eligible male and female dates will be on the block, with a number of prearranged date packages available for bidding as well. It's all in good fun, and all for a great cause.

Bachelors up for bid this year include Tempe Mayor Neil Giuliano. Dates sold last year for as low as \$30 and as much as \$300. There will be a \$5 admission fee to view the event.

For information, call 602/264-5437. Amsterdam is located at 718 N. Central Ave. in Phoenix.

Volunteer extras needed for movie crowd scene

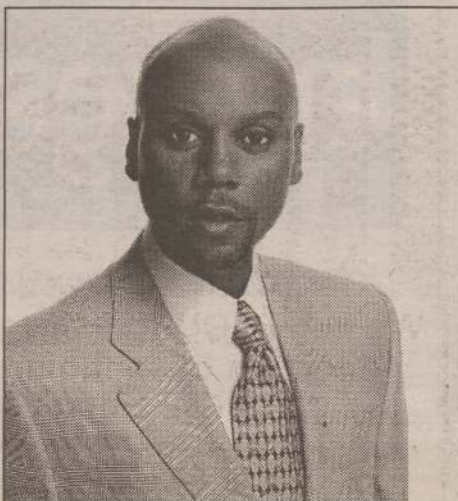
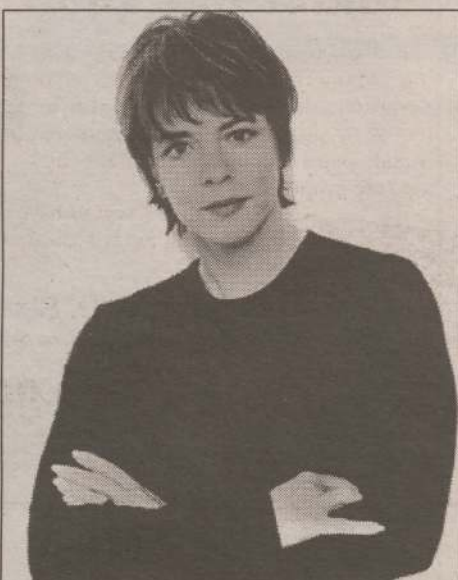
Volunteers are needed to donate their time for a movie being filmed in Phoenix, starring Stockard Channing with RuPaul entitled *Jane's Coming Out Party*.

They will be filming a rally scene at the Capitol Building at 17th Ave. and Adams on Sunday, Feb. 20 at 9 a.m. Producers are looking for 400 people to donate their Sunday morning for a very powerful and moving scene for the film.

The scene will depict a Gay Pride rally and will require a wide variety of volunteers from as many gay organizations as possible. Banners, balloons, shirts and placards are welcomed. The rally will also be filmed by local news stations which will provide additional exposure for the

groups present.

The filmmakers are asking for help making the rally as realistic and true to



form as possible. To donate your time, call the production office at 602/275-1766 and leave a message on the machine with your name and all the phone numbers you can be reached at. Or, call The

Community center at 602/265-7283 to sign up.

For further information on how you can help, call Hartley at Lee Rose Productions, 602/275-1033. Free parking will be provided at the site.

Jane's Coming Out Party has the official support of PFLAG, GLAAD, GLASS, GLSEN and the HRC.

DA plans Feb. events

Desert Adventures, the Valley's outdoor gay and lesbian social club, has several fun activities coming up.

On Sunday, Feb. 13, DA will hold a Valentine's Day Party at a member's home. On Saturday, Feb. 19, there will be a hike up Chair Mountain and around Upper Palm Canyon. The trip leader is Larry Adams, who can be reached at 602/995-8008. On Sunday, Feb. 20, members will gather in the group room at Mandarin Delight Chinese restaurant in Phoenix for a fun brunch get together.

To find out more about DA activities or to join the club, call 602/266-CAMP.

Women's Tea Dance Feb. 13

The second in a series of Women's Tea dances is scheduled for Valentine's weekend, on Sunday, Feb. 13 from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the lovely facilities at the Valley Garden Center, 1809 N. 15th Ave. in Phoenix.

The Garden center is easily accessible from the freeways, north of McDowell and south of Encanto Park. Ample parking is available.

The first Tea Dance, held last fall, was a success, with more than 50 women attending. The dance instructor from Fred Astaire Studios taught participants a variety of ballroom dances. Dance instruction will once again be offered, and light refreshments will be available. Singles are encouraged to attend.

Sponsored by the Women's Project of

The Community Center, this second event should draw even more attendees.

Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$17 at the door, and are available at Obelisk bookstore. For information call The Community Center at 602/265-7283.

PBP Nutrition Workshop Feb. 26

Phoenix Body Positive has announced that it will host "Live Long & Prosper", a seminar on "Nutrition and HIV, eating for a healthier you", on Feb. 26 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The seminar will be presented by Dr. Karen Van Der Veer, NMD and Dr. Chad Schroer, NMD. Dinner will be included. To RSVP, call 602/955-4673.

PLUS Weekend set for Feb. 26 & 27

AIDS Project Arizona has announced that the next edition of "PLUS Weekend", an informative and free weekend of workshops, information and sharing for HIV positive people, will be held Feb. 26 & 27 in the Valley. The location will be announced at a later date. PLUS Weekend is a program of Being Alive, APAZ's early intervention arm.

Call 602/253-2437 for more information on this or any of APAZ's program and services.

SAGE organizing: Feb. 19 lunch

The Central Arizona SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment) group is in the process of organizing as a program of The Community Center in Phoenix.

Regular meetings are on the first and third Saturday of each month at The Community Center, 24 W. Camelback Rd. On Feb. 19, SAGE will have a special luncheon meeting at Pookie's Cafe (dutch

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treat) beginning at 12:30 p.m. The meeting is open to all who would like to meet with contemporaries at a social event.

To RSVP, contact Barbara at 602/840-4993, or Bob or David at 480/922-7015.

SAGE is a loosely affiliated nationwide organization of local chapters whose purposes are to bring together older GLBT people for social activities and collaborative efforts that may benefit the senior GLBT community and the queer community in general, with no obligation, no commitment and no fund raising.

Christianity & Homosexuality workshop Feb. 21

Joseph Adam Pearson, Ph.D., will conduct a seminar and workshop on "Christianity and Homosexuality" at the Christ Evangelical Bible Institute in Phoenix on Monday, Feb. 21 from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration costs \$40, with a reduction to \$25 for the first ten registrants.

The institute is located at 1035 E. Turney (near Casa de Cristo church). Call 602/314-9628 to reserve a place.

Community Center seeks admin. asst.

The Community Center in Phoenix is now taking applications for the position of a part-time Administrative Assistant (up to 24 hours a week).

Minimum requirements are a high school diploma; typing 35 wpm; Word, Excel, Access and basic desktop publishing knowledge. Must be organized, with a positive, "can-do" attitude. Job requires light filing and phone lines with three lines.

Call The Community Center at 602/265-7283 for further information. Or, fax a resume to 602/234-0873.

13th Annual Evangelical Network Conference Feb. 18-20

The Evangelical Network announces its 13th annual conference to be held Feb. 18-20 at the Quality Hotel, 3600 N. 2nd Ave. in Phoenix.

This network of churches, ministries and ministers invites readers to attend the conference with people from across the U.S. and Canada to experience singing, preaching and worship.

Contact the Casa de Cristo church at 1029 E. Turney, 602/265-2918.

Women's dance party Feb. 26

Laughing Dawg Productions will present a "Women of the Millennium" party for the Valley women's community on Feb. 26 at the Parkway Inn in north Phoenix. Doors will open at 9:00 p.m.

Tickets are only \$5 in advance or \$10 at the door. They are available at Obelisk bookstore or by calling 623/847-6868.

March 4 Bike Ride planned

A spectacular Bike Ride will be held at Lake Pleasant (northwest of Phoenix) on March 4 as part of the Valley's Saguaro Cup Spring Sports Festival. The bike race is being jointly hosted by Team Arizona and the Delta Fliers Bike Club.

The ride will follow a gravel road heading north and covering the northwest quadrant of the Lake Pleasant shoreline. The first part of the 14-mile course faces north into beautiful canyons and the Bradshaw Mountains. The turn-around is at the highest point on the north end of lake Pleasant. The return course provides great lake views.

After the ride, a barbecue will be held at the lakeshore. The fee for the event is \$10 per rider, which includes the BBQ.

Profits will go to the Scholarship Team Fund for Team Arizona, to help local athletes attend the Gay Games in Sydney, Australia.

Interested participants should contact Team Arizona at 602/408-4311 to get specific times and sign-up forms.

Get out your tiaras

MGPA Promotions announces the time and location for the Miss Gay Phoenix-America Pageant 2001 as Sunday, March 12, 2000 at the Crown Plaza Hotel Metrocenter and is seeking contestants to compete for the title.

The winner will receive more than \$700 in cash and prizes and will represent the city at Miss Gay Arizona 2001. This year, the pageant will again benefit AIDS Project Arizona. For contestant information and an application, call MGPA Promotions at 602/266-6927.

APAZ's annual WOW dinner March 10

Exceptional contributions to the fight against HIV/AIDS will be recognized at AIDS Project Arizona's Seventh Annual Awards Dinner on Friday, March 10 at Sak's Fifth Avenue in the Biltmore Fashion Park in Phoenix.

WOWfour, chaired by community leader Nancy Silver, will benefit the people served by AIDS Project Arizona. APAZ provides comprehensive services ranging from prevention and early intervention programs to family services. Its programs include a food pantry, a wholesale nutritional supplement Buyer's Club, and a camp for HIV-affected children and their families.

Ticket and sponsorship information is available by calling Louise Bowden at 602/253-2437.

Team AZ hosting April tennis tourney

Team Arizona, the state's primary organization supporting athletes participating in the Gay Games, has announced that as part of its Saguaro Cup Spring Sports Festival, a round-robin doubles tennis tournament will be held April 1 & 2 from 8 and to 2 pm at the Ranch at Camelback Mountain, 5700 E. McDonald Dr. in Paradise Valley.

The tournament will be called "Arizona's Balmy, Crazy Doubles" (ABCD) and players at all levels are encouraged to participate. The \$60 fee includes two days' play, a welcome party, a banquet on Saturday evening, and more.

For an application, contact Paul D. Cain, Tournament Director, at 602/495-9750, or by e-mail at paulcain@aol.com.

AZ Women in Tune bringing Alix Dobkin to Phoenix

March is Women's History Month, and Arizona's lesbian chorus—Arizona Women in Tune—will celebrate with a joint concert with legendary singer, songwriter and feminist activist Alix Dobkin.

The title for the March 29 event, *Watering Our Roots: The Legacy of Lavender Music*, pays tribute to Dobkin's pioneering album, *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, which came out in 1973 on Dobkin's own Women's Waxworks label. Melissa Etheridge was in grammar school when Alix Dobkin was planting the seeds of openly lesbian musical performance, and Women in Tune members are excited about sharing the stage with Dobkin, whose experiences match some of their own.

The concert will take place Wednesday, March 29 at 7:30 pm at the Community Church of Hope, 4400 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix. Tickets are \$15; season ticket and group discounts available. Call 623/878-5430 for information.

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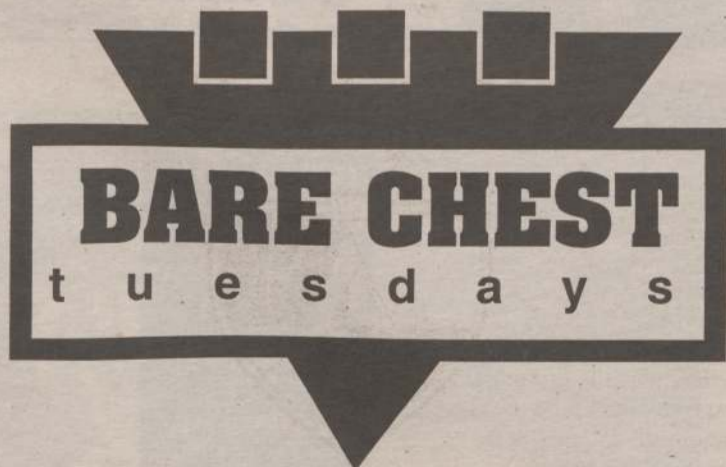
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Mexican retreat on a Phoenix street

Local bar owner's restored home on public tour

By Allen Kalchik, Editor

Most people who know John King are aware that the owner of Charlie's, the Valley's popular country/western gay bar, loves anything and everything from south of the border.

Those who don't already know that will be able to see it for themselves on Feb. 13, when King's Mexican-influenced historic home is put on display during the Willo

ings that King visited on his various travels. In addition, many of the furnishings and fixtures were purchased south of the border and brought to Phoenix to authenticate the look.

It was not a quick remodel. The tile roof was finished in 1990 and the garage was added in 1992, after the original garage was converted to a large master suite. The decorative exterior walls, planters and a new entrance were completed in 1994. The main bathroom was redone in 1996, featuring a pedestal bathtub, handpainted ceramic sinks and a daring open-air shower stall that leads to the patio.

The pool and patio area is arguably the house's most impressive new addition. Famous for his frugali-

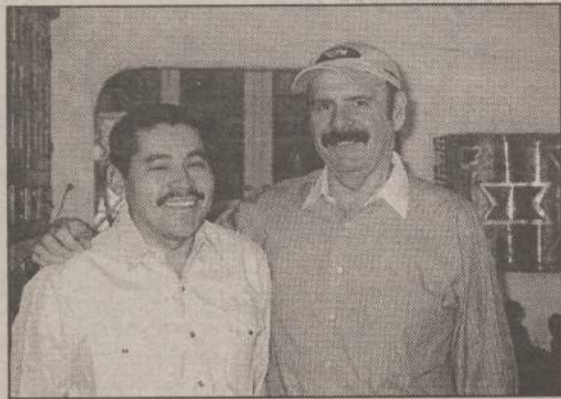
One notable south-of-the-border influence: King has applied mirrors in several inventive ways. The entry-way ceiling, for example, is a solid mirrored panel, adding light and creating the illusion of a two-story space. Whimsical and stately wood-framed mirrors hang on the walls.

The idea for an eye-popping ceramic and inlaid mirror tile combination in the remodeled bathroom came from a popular restaurant in Nogales called La Roca. King noticed the unusual pattern while he was using La Roca's men's room during lunch one day in Nogales. When he got home, he sketched out the design from memory and gave it to Don Hennen, the builder who does all of the repair and building projects at Charlie's in Phoenix and Chicago, and works on King's house as well. Hennen was able to reproduce the pattern exactly.

The remodel was a collaborative melding of King's design ideas and Hennen's building expertise. Hennen's craftsmanship and attention to detail are evident throughout the property. If he didn't know how to do something special that King asked for, he figured it out.

"Don spent two full days reading about fireplace installations before he started work on the outdoor fireplace," King related. King called Hennen's approach to building very slow and deliberate, but said the results are always worth it. "The fireplace is perfect. It never smokes."

The house is not huge, nor is it overtly showy. Comfort and perfection in the details summarize what the ongoing remodeling project means to King.



John King (r) and Carlos Cerna plan to open their home for the Willo Home Tour.

Historic District's annual home tour in Phoenix.

The tour is held each spring so that area homeowners can share decorating and remodeling ideas while showing off their accomplishments. This year, 14 restored homes will be on view for the enjoyment of the general public.

Willo is bordered on the south by



McDowell and on the north by Thomas Road, and reaches from Central Avenue west to 7th Ave. Most of the homes in the district were built in the '30s and '40s.

The home King shares with partner Carlos Cerna and a spunky Chihuahua named Chi

Chi dates to 1939 and represents a modified Monterey Style ranch design. King opened Charlie's - Phoenix in 1985, then bought the house in 1988 after moving here from Denver.

His original plan was to bring some of Denver's mountain-meets-prairie attitude to the redecoration project. "Exposed beams in the bedroom ceiling, brick, wood flooring, that kind of thing," he said.

"Then," King explained, "I went on that first trip to Mexico, and that changed everything."

King's numerous driving trips through Mexico and Central America over the next 12 years would have a major influence on the entire project. Many of the house's decorative details have been based on commercial and residential build-

ty, King began digging the pool himself in the early '90s but finally had Shasta complete the job in 1997.

The end result is a grand, comfortable and luxurious outdoor entertainment space that belies the house's more modest interior proportions. The wet bar and outdoor fireplace were added in 1998.

In the last year, King had tile installed in the living and dining rooms. The kitchen was the last room to be refurbished, with hand-crafted custom cabinets, custom pocket doors, new counter tops and state-of-the-art polished pewter appliances.

The house now has Mexican tile flooring throughout. Mexican arts and crafts figure in much of the decorative details, appointments and furnishings.

"There are times when you think you spent too much, and all because I had to have some new thing done just a certain way," he said.

"But then you notice all these wonderful little areas and, and when you take the time to really just enjoy them and you enjoy the house the way Carlos and I do, you realize it was probably all well worth it."



The Willo Home Tour begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 13. Tickets are \$10, with \$1 off for the donation of a non-perishable food item. The tour begins at the corner of 3rd Avenue and Holly, parking is available a short distance away at the Central Park Square complex on central Avenue and Holly. Two trolleys will provide service all day.

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New Valley resident establishes gay church

By Allen Kalchik, Editor

Rev. Jerry Cook moved to the Valley from Dallas just a few months ago, and has already established a new church here with his partner, Jim Schoenky. He had just retired from leading a very large gay church in Texas and felt he needed some time off.

His rest did not last long. "We visited all of the area churches that minister to the gay community, and while we met some wonderful people and enjoyed the services, they were really not the kind of service we were used to," Cook said.

Raised in Arkansas as a Southern Baptist and trained for the ministry from a young age, the kind of service Cook was used to was one based more heavily on traditional Bible teaching.

He and Schoenky stopped by a local gay-friendly hotel one day to see whether they could hold bible study classes there. Instead, they found a community room and friendly staff that made it the location perfect for conducting services on a weekly basis.

So the brand new Valley of the Sun Community Church celebrated its opening service at The Parkway Inn in Phoenix (on I-17 northbound between Northern and Dunlap) the first weekend in January and has been holding an 11:00 a.m. service every Sunday since.

As founding pastor of White Rock Community Church in Dallas, Cook

grew the church to its current membership of more than 700 before his recent relocation to Phoenix. White Rock Community Church is the largest independent church in the world ministering primarily to the gay and lesbian community.

Cook, 44, began preaching at the age of 14 and worked as a Baptist pastor until he began the gay ministry eight years ago.

Although the primary focus of the ministry of valley of the Sun Community Church will be to the gay and lesbian community, its founders hope that all will feel welcome.



Rev. Jerry Cook (l) and his partner Jim Schoenky.

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Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown

Continued from page 1

mance change from night to night. "Each character will have a little different take on things, depending on how the audience is taking him," Alcalá said.

At times, characters in *Men on the Verge* address the audience directly. At other moments, the actor interacts with others who are with him on stage, though only in the imagination. Because the characters cover so broad a range of ages, nationalities and attitudes, Alcalá has noticed that different audiences respond in different ways.

"So it's kind of fun that way—it keeps me on my toes and allows me to have a little bit of freedom to play around," the actor explained.

Alcalá's own background is Hispanic American—"My ancestors are from Spain, and my dad was born and raised in Mexico"—so he is able to personally relate to many issues the characters address within their individual monologues.

Reyes and Alcalá met about three years ago. The writer was visiting Portland, where the city's esteemed Teatro Milagro (Miracle Theater) was producing another of his queer-themed plays, *Deporting the Divas*. Alcalá, an Oregon native and full-time actor and director in Portland, had a featured role in the comedy. He and Reyes hit it off almost immediately.

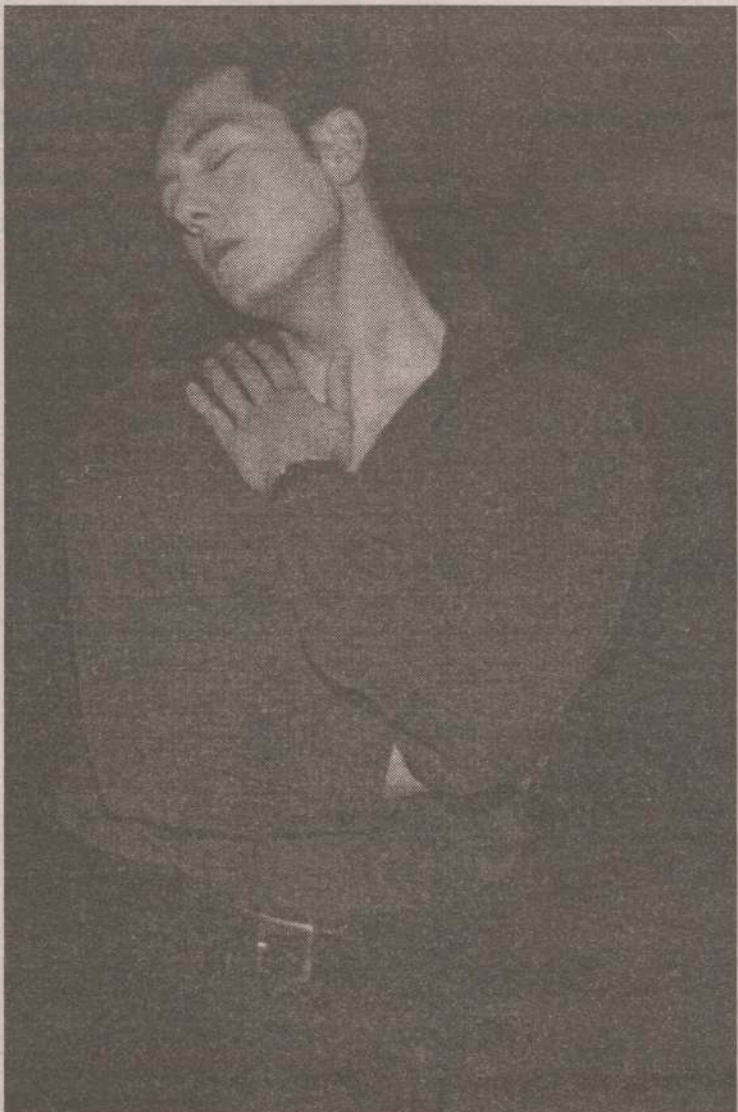
"The more time I spend with Guillermo, I've gotten closer to him," said Alcalá, likening the relationship between the creative pair to "a sisterhood."

He added, "I feel pretty close to him in the sense that I now know a lot of the ins and outs of where his inspiration came from for some of the monologues."

That inspiration sometimes hits close to home. Out of the growing friendship between author and actor, another charac-

ter was developed and added to *Men on the Verge*.

Reyes explained, "I made the adjustment to make [one character] a Brooklyn street tough. It had something to do with



Andy Alcalá as Federico, the "Gay Little Immigrant Who Could."

Andy having played the lead in *Grease*—the John Travolta character, I forget the name—in high school."

The character, Mick, was coming across at first as too much of a "Valley Boy", and Reyes wanted to further distinguish the guy from another, similar character he had already established. "So I rewrote it, adjusting it to Andy's talents."

parents at the age of 17 when they learned he was deep into a romantic relationship with a much older man.

He later left his lover and moved back home to attend Southern Oregon State—from which he earned a degree in theater. The relationship with his parents improved during his college years "only because I was kind of playing it straight. I

"All the characters reflect some characteristic about me in one way or another," Reyes said. But, he warns, that doesn't make them any less fictitious.

Despite his role in Mick's evolution, the tough Brooklyn kid is not the character Alcalá cited as his favorite to perform. That nod goes instead to Paco, the 60-year-old restaurant owner.

"He's kind of got a special spot in my heart," the young actor admitted. "I really relate to him in some senses—most particularly, the fact that his father doesn't speak to him."

Alcalá was legally emancipated from his

was just focusing on school."

Then Alcalá began seeing another man, and his mom found out. "She didn't want my dad to know, and we decided to keep it from him," he recalled.

The secret didn't last long. "My mom was on Prozac or some other type of drug, and she was coming off it. Her mind was kind of going, and at one point she told my dad, 'You're stupid if you don't know that Andy's been gay for all these years.'"

Alcalá continued, "From that moment on, he said that I was not to come back home. I was not to step foot in the house again. That if I did, something bad would happen. That was almost four years ago."

Alcalá returned home for the first time this past Christmas. "My mom invited me, and obviously, I had anxieties about it."

When Alcalá got there, he was told that his father had just left. "Apparently he drove around all night long, and would drive by the house to see if my car was still there—until I left at one o'clock in the morning. Then he came home."

Knowing that history, it's no wonder

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the actor is touched most by the lonely and aging Cuban in Reyes' play. "There's a moment where he realizes his dad doesn't want him at home anymore. If any part in the show has a true moment to it, that's probably the most honest moment on the stage," he said.

The Cuban character also speaks of Castro's notorious gay concentration



Guillermo Reyes, ASU playwright and author of *Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown*.

camp. Other characters relate stories of overt discrimination by Anglos, rejecting traditional cultural expectations of manhood, and of overcoming third-world hardships.

Reyes makes it clear, however, that his purpose as an artist is neither to preach nor politicize regarding the general experience of gay Latinos in America. It is after all, a comedy.

"All the characters reflect some characteristic about me in one way or another," he said. But, he warns, that doesn't make them any less fictitious.

Reyes came to the U.S. from Santiago, Chile at the age of nine. He was raised in Hollywood in a mostly Hispanic/Korean/Anglo neighborhood, and so knows firsthand the experiences of which he writes. He is gay and doesn't have a

problem self-identifying as such.

The idea for the play came out of a conversation Reyes had with a young gay man whom he met in Los Angeles during the Rodney King riots. Coincidentally, the young man was also from Chile. Even more coincidentally, the riots occurred on his very first day in the U.S.

Reyes was fascinated by the idea of an impressionable gayboy traveling thousands of miles in order to realize the much-hyped American Dream, only to be greeted upon his arrival by a city ablaze. He created the character of Frederico based on his riot-night conversation with the idealistic emigre. The rest of the *Men on the Verge* soon followed.

Reyes hopes those who may be curious about the title will get that the play appeals to all kinds of people, whatever their ethnic origins or life experiences.

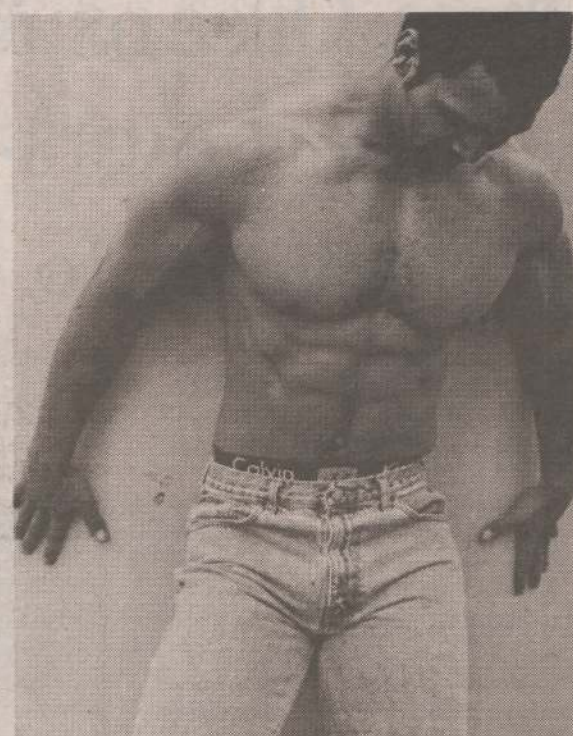
"We can all relate to feeling a little bit of an outsider. Certainly gay men feel that way in dealing with our identity," he said. "Even a straight, white person can relate to the characters' quest—their quest for identity, for love. There are all those various issues in life, you know?"

He added, "I think you have to get past the idea that it is a Hispanic Show. It's certainly based on the Latino experience. But that experience is not just shared by Latinos alone. I think it's everybody's experience."



Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown runs through Feb. 26 at Playwright's Theatre, 1121 N. 1st St. in Phoenix. Tickets are \$12. Call 602/253-5151.

A special reception and benefit performance will be held on Sunday, Feb. 20 at 8 pm. The show will be followed by a party at Amsterdam with the playwright and actor, and the \$12 ticket price on that night only will benefit Phoenix Body Positive. For tickets to the benefit performance only, please call the HeatStroke office at 602/264-3646.



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Opera Queens & Lesbian Lovers: the Duo returns to Phoenix

By Allen Kalchik, Editor

Seattle's Susan Nivert and Barb Glen have been a romantic couple for 18 years and have been performing their special brand of operatic parody together for nearly as long.

As The Derivative Duo, the women—both classically trained sopranos—are an unusual act. They have recorded two highly praised comedy CDs. They also regularly hit the road in their signature tawdry gowns to perform live at a variety of benefit concerts and gay festivals across the U.S.

"We kind of fell in love singing," said Nivert of the pair's unique personal and professional collaboration.

The Duo will be in the Valley Feb. 19 for a benefit show sponsored by Bas Bleu Productions. It will be held at Phoenix College and feature out comic Paul J. Williams as the warm-up act. The last time the pair sang here was for another Bas Bleu production, on New Year's Eve of 1997.

"We are going to make a vacation out of it as well," Nivert said during a recent phone conversation from her Seattle office regarding the upcoming Phoenix booking. They have several friends who live at an all-female RV park in Apache Junction, where they plan to do some post-show kicking back. "We always get a big thrill out of laying around a pool outdoors in winter."

Their music consists, more or less, of operatic standards juxtaposed with their own unapologetically queer and delectably

offbeat lyrics. Their parodies are perfect for opera aficionados, but the hilarious point is never lost on those listeners who prefer Top 40 over Tchaikovsky and think that Wagner is pronounced with a "W".

The Duo's two CDs, *Opera for the Masses* and *Mutiny at the Matinee*, represent the demented divas' lyrical craftsmanship at its funniest. Their acerbic wit and harmonic stylings are always a wry combination, whether they are skewering societal homophobia or poking gentle fun at lesbian stereotypes.

The Advocate called them "savagely funny and right on the mark," while the *Seattle Times* has said they are "extraordinarily talented."

Nivert reported that Phoenixians attending their show on the 19th will have some new material to look forward to, as well as old favorites like "Coming Out to Mozart" and the ever-popular "Ode to Grethe"—a tribute to lesbian icon Margarethe Cammermayer.

Also new at the Phoenix benefit will be more of the "trashy costumes" that the gals have become known for. The outfits come mainly from thrift shops and second-hand bridal stores, said Nivert. "One dress in this particular set, we paid big bucks for in a second-hand store. We probably paid \$65 dollars for this dress. But the number I'm wearing, we probably paid about \$5 for—so, you know, it evens out."

Keeping the arias and costumes fresh keeps the spark in their relationship, according to Nivert. It also helps, she said, that they don't do the musical act on a full-time basis, "because if we did, we'd have broken up years ago. It's just too

damned stressful."

In their priority careers, Nivert is a counselor in private practice while Glen is a psych nurse for children. The concert gigs and recording sessions are a sideline for them, an avocation they find ever challenging and fun. "We have a really nice balance in our lives, because we really love these singing trips," Nivert said. "And we travel very well together."

The whole performing experience is very exciting, said Nivert. "You know: how can you do it different this time? How can you top yourselves? How can you hit that high note? The connecting with the audience—I find that really fun in a challenging way."

Both women are originally from Pennsylvania and both sang opera seriously for years before moving West, falling in love and launching their comedy act. Nowadays, Nivert said, neither sings much outside of the Duo performances. "We're so busy between performing and working full time and, you know, trying to have a life."

Whatever they are doing to maintain a life together, it appears to be working—not only for the partners, but for the many satisfied audiences they've left in their operatic wake.

Nivert attributed the longevity of their "wonderful relationship" partly to luck but mostly to effort. "We work hard at it but we have a lot of fun," she said. "And we each think that the other person is the greatest person in the world. That helps."



The Derivative Duo and comedian Paul J. Williams will appear in Phoenix for one night only, Saturday, Feb. 19, at Phoenix College Auditorium near 15th Ave. and Thomas. Tickets to the 7:00 p.m. show are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door, available by calling Bas Bleu Productions at 602/265-7283. Proceeds from the concert will benefit the Valley One in Ten (VOIT) youth program and the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund.

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A Queer Clown in the Family

Gay comic Paul J. Williams was born to make 'em laugh

By Allen Kalchik, Editor

"I'm lucky that I come from a family with a great sense of humor," comedian Paul J. Williams says of finding his way to a career in standup comedy.

Take, for example, his maternal grandfather: "He was one of these Bohemians that did a little bit of everything throughout his life, and at one point he was actually a clown. He used to be a Santa Claus at the malls, and he had this insane sense of humor."

Williams, born and raised in San Antonio and now living in New York City, is on a cell phone from a Tex-Mex Manhattan eatery with a margarita in his hand, talking about his Southern Baptist background and his upcoming show in Phoenix.

The out-and-proud funnyman will be on the bill with The Derivative Duo on Feb. 19 for a benefit show at Phoenix College. He has appeared in the Valley several times before and says he is looking forward to returning.

But back to the family: "My father—if you used to watch the Dean Martin Roasts back in the '70s on TV, one of the roasters was always Foster Brooks—and my father does a dead-on impression of Foster Brooks. So laughter was always a big part of my family."

Is it any surprise to his parents, then, that their gay boy eventually chose the life of a comedian? "Heeaaavans, no!" he drawls. "In fact, both my parents have commented on how much I'm like my grandfather. It's almost scary—he died when I was like, 13, but it's almost like this man is reliving his life through me."

Unlike many stand-up comics with class-clown antics in their childhoods, Williams says he wasn't a cut-up as a kid in school. "I was very much of a nerd, scrawny and picked on. I was The Fag, if you will."

By high school, however, things had changed. Williams had a best friend with whom he'd grown up and sung in church choir. "We were kind of like the Hawkeye and Honeycutt of our church group" he recalls. "He had a way of having a comeback for everybody. He was a basketball star, and was not gay or picked on. But he taught me at an early age how to fight back with words and to always have a comeback for everything."

Lesson learned. By the time Williams reached eighth grade he had become "this little performer."

He explains, "I appeared in the seventh grade talent show doing Lily Tomlin's Edith Ann character—in full drag." From Edith Ann, Williams progressed to copying Tomlin's snooty telephone operator, Ernestine.

"When I got to high school, I did the Edith Ann skit again and the high school drama department built me this huge rocking chair."

The performing bug had definitely bitten, but Williams didn't go into comedy full time until after he had graduated college and tried life in "the real world" for a few years.

In 1988, he and two friends formed a cabaret-style comedy group called "Less Miserable". They toured widely and to critical acclaim for six years. Then Williams split to try his hand at solo

queer standup in 1994.

It was pretty good timing for Williams to get bookings as an out gay comic. "If you look at comedy in the '70s, it was the African American comic. In the '80s, it was the woman comic. And in the '90s it was the gay comic. And who knows what it's going to be in the 2000's?"

Tomlin's influence remains a part of Williams' act in that he has created a character of his own to portray: Nelda Pickens, a bee-hived, chain-smoking, white trash real estate agent. He also cites Jonathan Winters as an inspiration, and uses his own childhood in South Texas and upbringing as a gay Baptist as the source for much of his humor.

Williams moved to New York to



branch beyond standup, and has performed there in a one-man show he wrote himself called, *Left, Out, ... and Not Right!*. He questions now whether the proliferation of gay standup in the last decade was a only passing fancy. "If it is a fad, the question is: are we able to maintain an audience once the fad slips, and still work? And I really think the fad is starting to slip."

He notes a post-*Ellen* lack of interest in gay standup material on the part of club promoters and managers—particularly in New York, he says, where gay comics are considered not trendy. "It's like, 'oh we'll

put you on our gay night.' Well—that's hauling water to the stream, people."

In the larger picture, meanwhile, comedy clubs have been closing "left and right," he says, "especially in the last five years."

It may be that sitcom stardom has replaced the club-tour gig as an upcoming comic's most desirable goal, or it may be because an explosion of cable programming has made watching standup so accessible that potential club patrons can now channel surf for bellylaughs without ever leaving the house.

Williams likes the former explanation as for why comics don't tour the club circuit by station wagon the way they used to. "It's because we've gotten spoiled and we don't want to do that. I remember seeing Rosie O'Donnell on a show talking about her early days—how every club you play in, you stay in some horrible condo. Hello? I've done that—and it's just not fun."

Which is why, Williams says, he prefers to play almost exclusively at gay and lesbian events like the one in Phoenix on the 19th. "They treat you better, you make more money, and you have more fun."

Williams played a benefit in Phoenix in '95 with three other comics and appeared at a local bar in the early '90s when he was still with *Less Miserable*. "So I have a little bit of a history with Phoenix."

Does he like it here? "Loooooove it!" he says eagerly, the margarita and his southern charm kicking in at, apparently, exactly the same time.

"I'm like the proverbial senior citizen. I want to go back to Scottsdale!"



Paul J. Williams will perform with singing comedians The Derivative Duo at Phoenix College on Feb. 19, at 7:00 p.m. Call 602/265-7283 for tickets and information.

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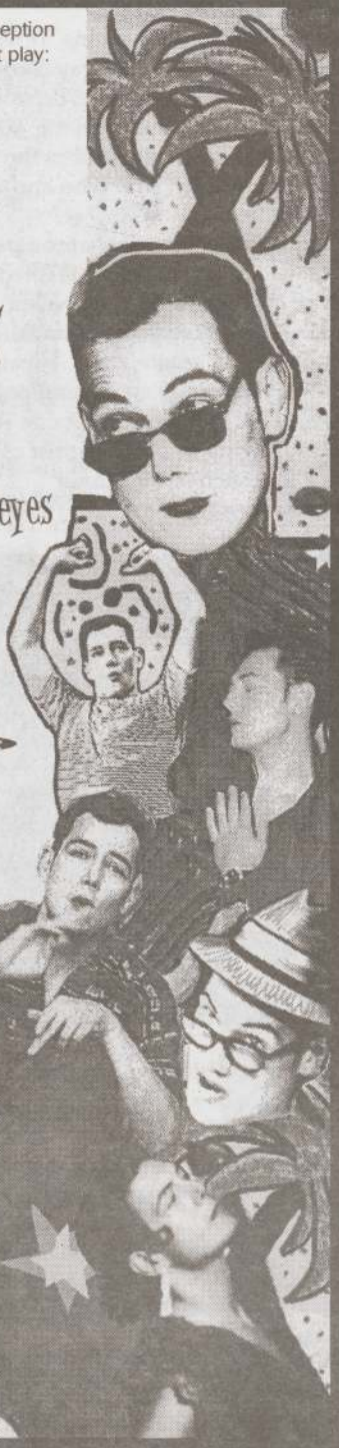
After the show, head to nearby Amsterdam at 718 North Central Ave. to meet and mingle with the playwright and actor.

Tickets: \$12 each

Call HeatStroke at (602)264-3646 to order. Tickets are also available at Amsterdam.



Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown runs February 12 - 26. Proceeds from this special, February 20 performance will benefit Phoenix Body Positive's Man+Plus and minority outreach programs.



Getting Wild and Blue in Mesa Feb. 20

Blues guitarist Lil' Ed Williams and his re-formed band, Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials, have lately been called "the world's #1 house-rocking blues band" by the *Boston Globe*.

The four-man blues ensemble will celebrate the release of their new Alligator Records album, *Get Wild!* with a performance in the Valley on Feb. 20 as part of Blues Blast 2000 at the Mesa Amphitheatre. Lil' Ed and the boys take the stage at 11:00 a.m.

Tickets are \$13 - \$16, call 480/644-2560 for information.



Life's a Drag at the Phoenix Art Museum

By **John Thomas Lotardo, Contributor**

Life may sometimes be a drag, but never at the Phoenix Art Museum (PAM).

On Feb. 17 at 5:30 p.m., the second in a series of new evening events called "After Hours" is set to explode at PAM. The February installment, "Valentine's a Drag", will feature live performers, music, food, and—of course—some great art.

"There will be something for everyone," says Katie Hunt, manager of membership at the museum. Included in the

self-titled CD, as well as other tunes they've long been known for.

In addition to Sistah Blue, there will be special tours and presentations, including a gallery talk on the current Taos exhibit. The talk will be led by Robert White at 7:00 p.m.

With more than 1000 people attending, last month's After Hours program "was a great success", says Cathy Arnold, public information officer for PAM. Arnold expects at least that many for the February event.

Arnold tells *HeatStroke* that the other entertainment includes Hans Olson, who will be performing blues guitar; and performer Annette Foster. Foster will present a 30-minute multimedia solo performance piece called *Drag Woman*, which deals with sexuality/identity issues and is represented metaphorically in the piece by a woman dressing in drag as a woman.

Speaking of drag: several of the Valley's best known female impersonators will make cameo appearances throughout the evening, mixing and mingling the night away among the hip and the happening.

PAM will also present film shorts including one that asks the intriguing question, "How many blind dates from Hell can a person have?"

The After Hours program is geared to appeal to the cosmopolitan population of Central Phoenix. Running from 5:30 PM to 9:00 PM, the monthly event is on the third Thursday of the month with each event having its own special theme. Tickets are \$10 for members of the Museum, \$15 for non-members. For more information, call 602/257-2114.



Sistah Blue

festivities will be a performance by the all-female local blues band Sistah Blue.

Nancy Delassandro, lead guitarist for the sistahs, says the women "are really looking forward to performing at the art museum." This will be the first time the 5-member blues group will be performing at the Valley's premier public art venue. They will be performing music from their

That Pinball Wizard will rock the Orpheum February 22

By **John Thomas Lotardo, Contributor**

The Who's Tommy, the hit Tony Award-winning rock opera, comes to the Historic Orpheum theater in downtown Phoenix for one week, Feb. 22-27.

Tommy made Broadway Theater history, breaking box office records and winning five Tony Awards. "The show is classic Rock n' Roll," says Director Glen Casale.

Originally created by Pete Townsend, lead guitarist for the English supergroup, The Who, *Tommy* is a rock opera that tells the story of a young boy who becomes deaf, dumb, and blind after witnessing his father murder his mother's lover.

The audience follows Tommy on an amazing journey that ultimately leads the boy to recovery and reconciliation. The music is made up of some of the best classic music of the seventies and includes such songs as "See Me Feel Me," "The Acid Queen," "We're Not Going To Take It," and "Pinball Wizard."

Casale, a Who fan himself, remembers seeing The Who actually performing the music from *Tommy* years ago as part of their concert tours. It is a real thrill for him to be able to direct the show.

With a cast of 24 and a Broadway-size orchestra, Eric Kunze plays the title role of Tommy. California resident Kunze is a real

find, says Casale. "It is very difficult to find someone having the vocal range for rock and the ability to act simply and honestly."

Even with all the Freudian fun stuff found in the show, Casale continues the theme of simplicity into the set design by using steel scaffolding to represent Tommy's life.

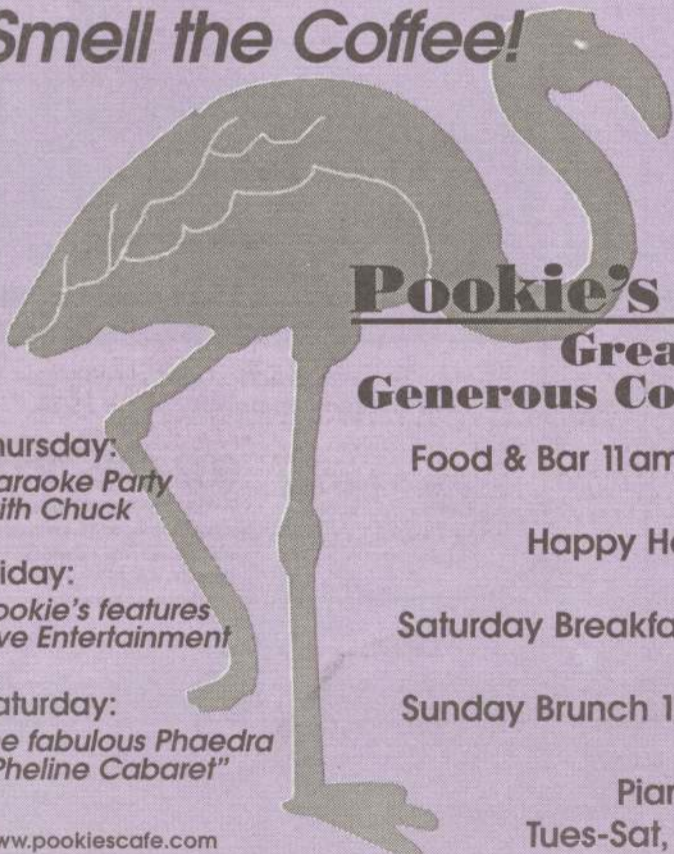
Mark Esposito, who adds a good deal of "real muscularity" to the show, does the choreography. Casale explains, Esposito's choreography allows "the story to be told through movement" as well as through the music and lyrics.

With "two terrific guitarists" being "the key" to this classic rock opera, Casale assures *HeatStroke* that the show will be entertaining if not downright explosive.

Should audiences be concerned that the music will drown out the meaning of the show, Casale explains that, although the rock music is a vital part of the show, the lyrics are meant to be heard and understood.

The show runs Feb. 22 through 27 at the Orpheum Theatre at 203 West Adams in Phoenix. Call for times. Tickets, priced from \$33.50 to \$39.50, are available at the Civic Plaza Box Office, all Dillard's outlets and by calling 480/ 503-5555.

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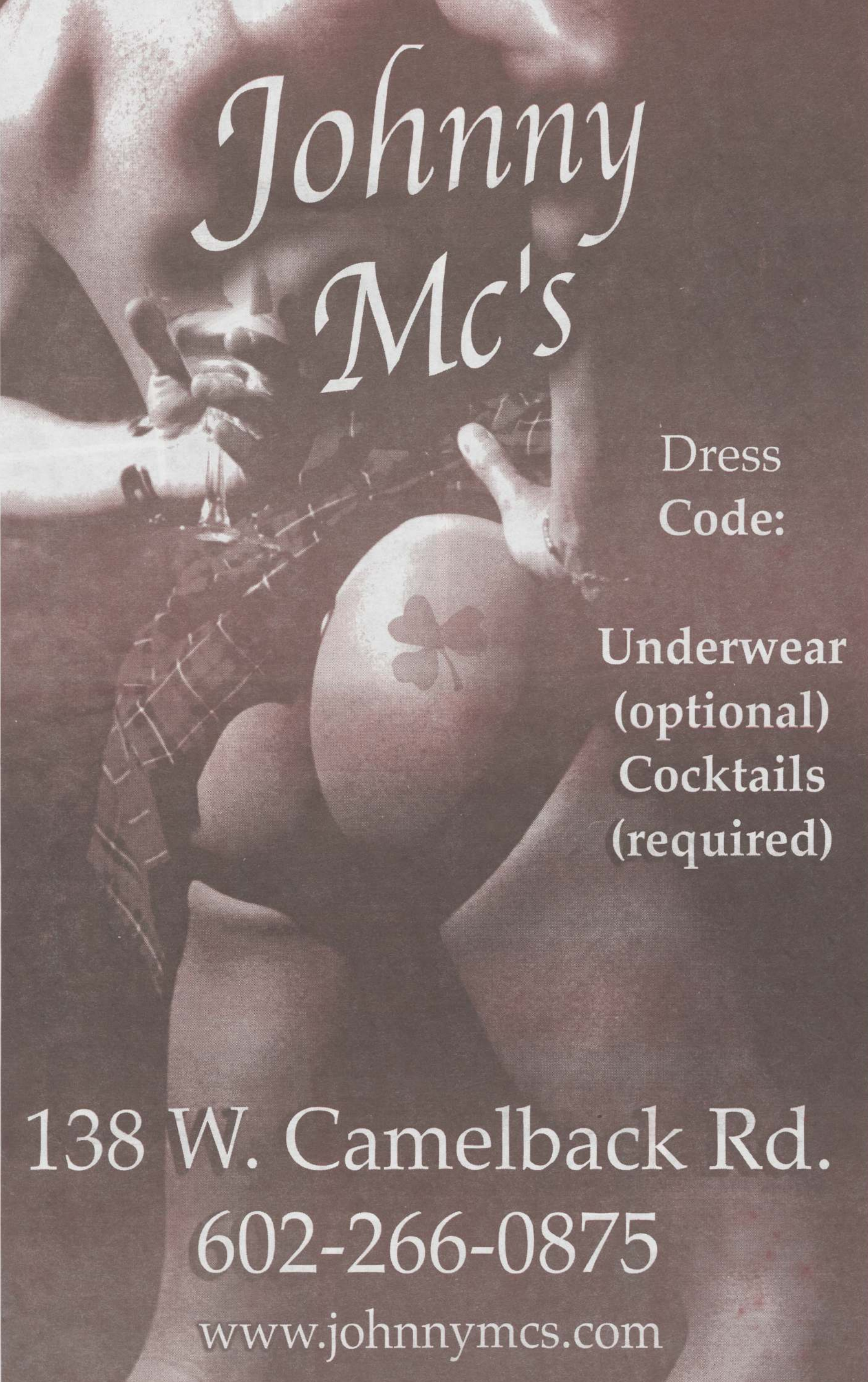
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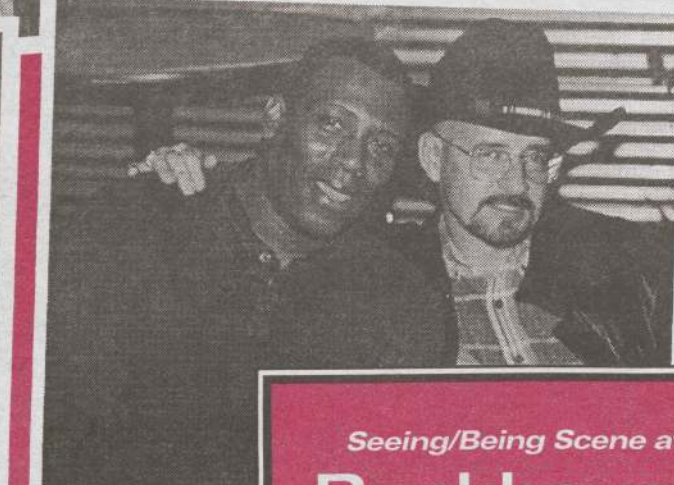
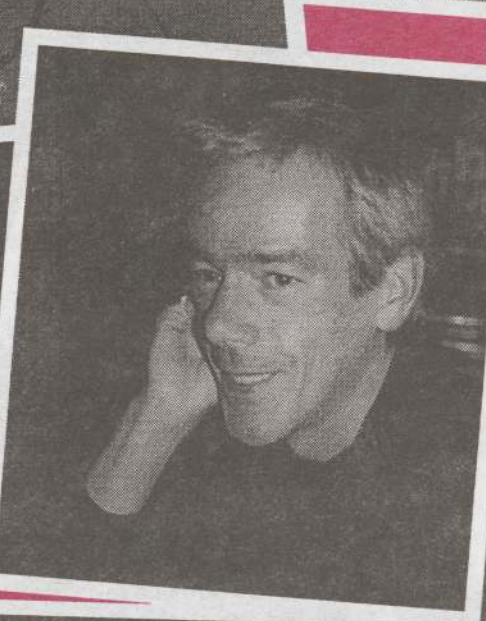
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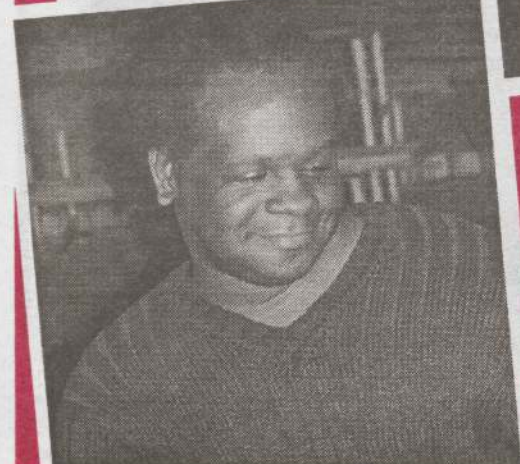
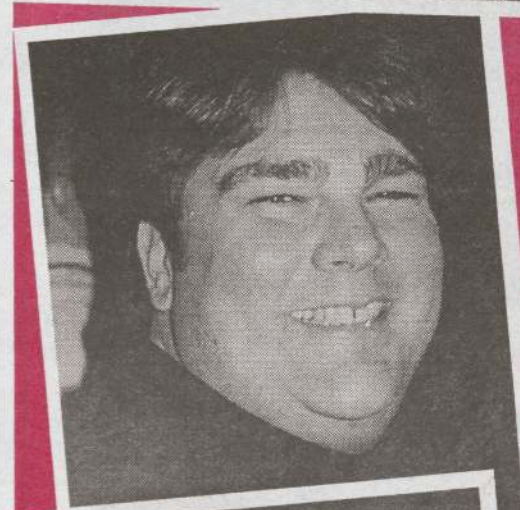
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Seeing/Being Scene at **Bunkhouse**
Photos by Mario Rodriguez



One student's drive brings "V-Day 2000" to ASU

Acclaimed play, *The Vagina Monologues*, in Tempe for anti-violence campaign

A diverse group of Arizona State University students is bringing an Obie Award winning play to Tempe Feb. 13 and 14 as part of a national campaign to end sexual violence against women.

Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* will be performed by 40 ASU students and is part of *V-Day 2000: The College Initiative*.

ASU graduate student Amy Neuenschwander, 25, produced last year's V-Day at ASU and returns to the task this year. She worked with the university and V-Day headquarters in New York to ensure the event's success.

"I am a survivor of rape and have a deep passion for putting an end to sexual violence against women," Neuenschwander says. "This violence needs to stop. Coming to see this show will make you laugh and make you cry, and increase your awareness of violence that could be stopped—if we all join together."

More than 140 colleges and universities have staged Ensler's play, which is based on her interviews with hundreds of women. The play dives into the mystery, pain, humor, wisdom, power, outrage and excitement buried in women's experiences.

The play will be performed in Neeb Hall on the ASU main campus at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 13, and Monday, Feb. 14 at 9:00 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and available by calling 480/965-6447.



Amy Neuenschwander, ASU graduate student and producer of *The Vagina Monologues*.

HeatStroke's Arts & Entertainment Calendar:

- A sexy Phoenix tradition continues when a *Valentine Cabaret* kicks off "Xotic 2000", Alwun House's exotic art show in downtown Phoenix on Friday, Feb. 11. 602/253-7887
- They're guys. No, they're girls. Ah well, "they am what they am". Check out *La Cage Aux Folles* when the venerable musical opens at Theater Works in Peoria on Friday, Feb. 11. The show runs through March 12. 623/815-7930.
- An *All Night Valentine's Art Festival* will offer a multimedia celebration of love and all night dance party at SOHO 121 in Central Phoenix on Saturday, Feb. 12. 602/285-1830.
- Thrill to the flute and guitar sounds of Duozone at Scottsdale's Kerr Cultural Center on Sunday, Feb. 13. 480/965-5377.
- The annual Valentine's offering from *The Essential Theatre* is called "Playback Theatre: Love Stories." It's an audience-participation theatrical improvisation at the Scottsdale Center for the Arts on Monday, Feb. 14. 480/994-ARTS.
- One of the world's most acclaimed ballet companies will make its pointe in Phoenix with *Ballet de l'Opera de Bordeaux's* "A Tribute to Diaghilev" at the Orpheum on Thursday, Feb. 17. 480/503-5555.
- A second magical night with *Ballet de l'Opera de Bordeaux* will feature "Romeo & Juliet" at the Orpheum on Friday, Feb. 18. 480/503-5555.
- How's this for an intriguing title:

The Man With The Ladylike Hands opens at the centrally located On The Spot theater on Thursday, Feb. 17, running through March 18.

- Join *William Eaton and Friends* for a performance of "Music for The New Age" at the Kerr Cultural Center on Friday, Feb. 18. 480/965-5377.
- A classic children's tale comes alive in *James and the Giant Peach* at the Playhouse Theatre For Children, opening Friday, Feb. 18 and playing through March 5
- Carole King's songwriting shines in *Really Rosie* as presented by Mesa Youtheatre, opening Friday, Feb. 18 and running through March 5.
- A musical evening will pay tribute to *The Millennium & All That Jazz* at the Chandler Center For The Arts on Saturday, Feb. 19.
- The drama *Dear Esther* takes the stage at Arizona Jewish Theatre Company, Saturday, Feb. 19 through March 5.
- A European treat comes to Scottsdale when the *Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet* plays the Kerr Cultural Center on Saturday, Feb. 19. 480/965-5377.
- You'll appreciate *Junctions in Music* at the Chandler Center For The Arts on Sunday, Feb. 20.
- Don't miss the tribute revue *Bravo Broadway* at the West Valley's Sun Dome on Monday, Feb. 21. 623/975-1900.

New Bar; Familiar Location

A little more than a year ago, there were no full-time leather bars in the Phoenix area. Now there are three.

Gary Weiss, the new owner of the property at 4343 N. 7th Ave. in central Phoenix, switched his bar's name from "Studio 43" to "Mine Shaft", and officially reopened to the leather community's business on Friday, Jan. 21.

The interior decor, formerly an upscale mix of gilt and glittered furniture set against a multi-mirrored background has been revamped. Mine Shaft features instead camouflage-covered walls, painted oil drums and an Army-green parachute suspended from the ceiling.

The bar was known to many gay Phoenicians in the mid-90s as Foster's. It has since been reincarnated as JY's, Club Roxy, and then Studio 43. Before its long run under the Foster's moniker, the same property housed The Coyote Club, MANeuvers, and Al E. Gator's, among others.



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My Queer Life

WISHFUL THINKING

by Michael Thomas Ford

I've discovered that my mother doesn't know I'm gay.

Really I think it might be more accurate to say she seems to have forgotten I'm gay, because I don't see how she could possibly not know. But she's pretending to.

I found out when she called my sister and, during the course of the conversation, suddenly asked Karen if I was dating any nice girls. Karen, slightly confused, said no, she didn't think I was dating any nice girls.

"That's strange," my mother said. "He used to have so many girlfriends."

This part is true. I did use to have girlfriends. I even, briefly, got myself engaged to one of them. But we spent more time shopping together than we did making out, and even when I had my tongue in her mouth and my hand up her shirt I was thinking about how much nicer it would be to be doing the same thing with my baseball-player roommate.

Anyway, that was a long time ago. I haven't pitched woo with a woman since college, and I'm sure my mother must have noticed that I passed into my third decade with no apparent wedding plans. Even if she didn't, I've written a lot of gay-themed material, some of which she's seen. So this sudden cluelessness baffles me.

Perhaps she believes because so much time has gone by without me actively seeing anyone that I've forgotten I'm gay, and if no one brings it up I'll start dating girls again. She did the same thing when I was a kid and announced that I was going to be something outlandish when I

grew up, like a rodeo clown, or one of the Rockettes. She just smiled and nodded.

Eventually I would forget all about it and move on to something else. I think she's hoping I've moved on yet again.

No one in my family ever talks about anything personal, so it's really not shocking that this subject has never come up before. But the thing is, I was sure that we

But not to hear her tell it. Despite all the evidence, she still seems to be waiting for me to settle down with a nice woman. Now I'm in a quandary.

Part of me is thrilled that I have a chance to out myself to a major figure in my life. I've never really gotten to do that before, primarily because no one I know really gives a rat's ass about such things.

My father certainly didn't. None of my friends did. I guess my girlfriend in college was a little upset when she found out, but only because she said she hated it when her mother was right about her boyfriends.

Now I have an opportunity to surprise someone. I've dreamed about such a moment for years. But now that it's here, I don't really care anymore.

In fact, I resent having to come out at all, to anyone. Why is it any of their business what I am or what I do? Why do gay people get stuck having to explain ourselves to the people in our lives? They don't have to justify to us why they love the people

they love. Why should we?

So I think what I'm going to do is not say a word. Sure, it would be fun to call mom up and say, "Hey, I hear you were asking after my girlfriends. Well, guess what? I have a boyfriend now. How do you like them apples?"

But I know what she'd do. She'd pretend I didn't say it. That's our family's way. A friend of mine calls it Baptist Selective Memory. That's where you look straight at the obvious and insist it isn't there.

"It's too bad about uncle Henry being such a raging alcoholic," you might say, and mom will smile and reply, "Oh, honey, he just acts that way because he was struck by lightning during that big storm in '65. You know that."

"Too bad about the Porter girl getting knocked out and having to go away for an abortion," is countered with, "Isn't it wonderful that little Lou-Ann can be an exchange student to France this summer? I asked her to bring me back a beret."

You can't fight this kind of mental illness, so you might as well join it. I used to think that when I settled down with the man I loved I would want to take him home just to show the family I could do it—that gay men, period, could do it.


But now that I have him, I see no reason to subject Dave to being called "Mike's special friend" and being asked if he is seeing any nice girls. Instead of trying to explain to my mother—or to anyone else in my family—that I happen to be a man who loves men, I think I'm just going to let those who don't want to acknowledge it keep wondering.

Or, even better, they can make up their own reasons for what they see as my ongoing bachelorhood. "Is Mike gay?" someone will ask my mother eventually. "Oh, no," she'll say. "Don't you remember that big storm in '82?"



had addressed it in our own special way.


Besides the books I've written, there was a conversation my mother and I had about religion, during which I am sure that I outed myself. I've even written about it, for heaven's sake, so it must be true.



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HeatStroke

Michael Thomas Ford is the Lambda Literary Award-winning author of *Alec Baldwin Doesn't Love Me* and *That's Mr. Faggot to You*. He welcomes e-mail at Shopiltee@aol.com



Notable Quotes

Newsmakers, Celebrities & Others Speak Out

Compiled by Rex Wockner



"He's musical, which means a lot to me, and I admire his work."

—Melissa Etheridge on why she and lover Julie Cypher choose rock singer David Crosby to father their kids, to *Rolling Stone*, Jan. 14.

"No kitchen implements were involved."

—Julie Cypher, singer Melissa Etheridge's lover, on getting artificially inseminated by singer David Crosby, to *Rolling Stone*, Jan. 14.

"Maybe it's a good thing for a lot of straight families to see that this is not something strange."

—Singer David Crosby on having provided the sperm to father Melissa Etheridge and Julie Cypher's children, to *Rolling Stone*, Jan. 14.

"I'm very pleased to see Bill Bradley and Al Gore competing for gay and lesbian votes. It's the first time in American history that gay, lesbian and bisexual voters have been treated as a legitimate interest group in the presidential campaign within the primary."

—Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., to the Kansas gay magazine *Liberty Press*, January issue.

"I would insist, before appointing anybody to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that that individual support my policy [of letting gays serve openly in the military. And, yes I would make that a requirement.]"

—Democratic Presidential candidate Al Gore during the Jan. 5 Presidential debate in Durham, New Hampshire.

"When you're president of the United States, military people are loyal to their commander and chief whatever the policy is that the commander and chief calls for for the country. And that's what I expect them to do if I'm president of the United States and we move toward gays in the military, which I intend to do."

—Democratic Presidential candidate Bill Bradley during the Jan. 5 Presidential debate in Durham, New Hampshire.

"I was one of only two senators in 1993 to oppose the Clinton-Gore 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' policy. I understood then, as I do now, that 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' was a failed attempt at granting gays and lesbians the right to serve openly in the

military. The policy has done nothing more than create a divisiveness that has spawned hatred and fear among our men and women serving in the armed forces."

—Democratic Presidential

candidate Bill Bradley speaking at the Des Moines, Iowa, gay bar the Blazing Saddle, Jan. 20.

"With some trepidation and a little embarrassment, I've decided to let myself get sucked into the Bill Bradley campaign. Having been in fairly small meetings with both Bradley and Gore, I've experienced Bradley as a real human being who has sat down, thought about it and, as he says, made a decision to make equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, two-spirit and queer people (my list, not his) a centerpiece of his campaign. And I think he's proved his commitment to that by everything he's done publicly. Gore, on the other hand, seemed to me to be a shockingly empty suit (and I'm someone who has defended him over the years). I could go into a longer list of issues, but the bottom line is that I think Bradley is smarter and more of a leader and has a deeper (but still imperfect) understanding of us. And if nothing else, he's certainly pushing Gore to our side. So I'm supporting Bradley."

—Longtime New York City activist and journalist Ann Northrop in a Jan. 13 e-mail to this column.

"I think we know by behavior and by attitudes [when someone is gay]. I think that it's clear to some of us when some people have that lifestyle."

—Republican Presidential candidate John McCain Jan. 17 in New Hampshire.

"Marriage has got historic, religious and moral content that goes back to the beginning of time and I think a marriage is as a marriage has always been, between a man and a woman. ... I think we ought to provide partnership benefits [for gay couples] and make it possible for people to do with their loved ones what anyone in a relationship should be able to do."

—Hillary Clinton, Jan. 10.

"He's so stupid and so offensive that we're blessed with such outrageous enemies. Phelps is such a fool and so virulent that he wins us support."

—Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., on gay-hating Kansas preacher Fred Phelps, to the Kansas gay magazine *Liberty Press*, January issue.

"When I first got started in 1979, I was gay doing straight, but I was young enough that I could get hard. I guess I got lucky because back then all they were

concerned about was beautiful women. The men were ugly, and then I came along and got a lot of work."

—Porn megaproducer Gino Colbert to *Los Angeles' Fab*, Jan. 6.

"When you are happy in your life, you do your job better. I think she makes me feel good and we have a great relationship and she brings me a lot of confidence. I didn't have as much in 1998, but bit by bit it is coming and I am getting stronger in my mind, and on the court it helps a lot."

—French lesbian tennis pro Amelie Mauresmo on lover and coach Sylvie Bourdon after winning the Sydney International on Jan. 15.

"Am I anti-gay? According to several activists quoted by the *Times'* Brian Lowry in a recent 'On TV' column ('Dr. Laura: All Is Fair in Syndication,' Jan. 11), the answer would appear obvious. After all, I've spoken out against gay marriage, am on record as describing homosexuality as a deviant sexual orientation and have spoken favorably about reparative therapy for gays who wish to change their sexual orientation. Well, the truth is, I'm not. What I am is a serious Jew who has consistently stated my belief that same-sex sexual activity is incompatible with biblical Scripture and, in the same breath, that homosexuals are as entitled to love and respect as all other human beings."

—Dr. Laura Schlessinger writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 17.

"I was sad [when my show got cancelled]. I was going through a grieving period, and there was a little bit of bitterness. I made mistakes publicly. There are things I acted out publicly that should've been my grieving period alone, in my corner, in my basement, rocking naked."

—Ellen DeGeneres to the *Dallas Morning News*, Jan. 20.

"I'm playing me, so I will be gay."

—Ellen DeGeneres on her upcoming CBS TV series, to the *Dallas Morning News*, Jan. 20.

"Polls tell us that up to 80-some percent of Canadians believe in individual gay rights, and more than half want our relationships recognized, though not given the same weight as straight marriage. But then, pollsters also find that roughly two-thirds of Canadians think we're either mentally ill or serious sinners. So, they'll respect our right not to be fired because we're gay, but they still think we're fucked in the head or going to hell."


—Gareth Kirkby, managing editor of *Vancouver's Xtra! West*, in a Jan. 13 editorial.

"We're finding out, for instance, that 50 percent of people who take certain drugs die from liver disease rather than AIDS, because the drugs are so harsh on the liver. ... Norvir has now been discovered to cause liver cancer in so many of the people who take it. ... Most of the activists, the AIDS activists who speak for us now, are so in the pockets of the bureaucracy of the drug companies that they have become almost fascist in ramming down their treatment notions down the rest of us."

—Activist Larry Kramer in a Jan. 7 interview at <http://my.webmd.com/>

"Everybody looks for faint hope in these crappy [HIV] drugs that are out there thinking that they're going to get people through. What we're saying today is they're not, and there isn't any good news, and you've got to be scared again. And it's only fear that's going to get people off their duff."

—Activist Larry Kramer in a Jan. 7 interview at <http://my.webmd.com/>



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By Romeo San Vicente, HeatStroke Contributor

STONE'S NEW LOVE

Sharon Stone, the blonde bombshell who played a nasty bisexual in *Basic Instinct*, is contemplating more Sapphic action.

The movie star is considering making her debut on Broadway as a turn-of-the-century lesbian in David Mamet's play *Boston Marriage*, about two women in love. Stone recently had a meeting to discuss the project with director Howard Davies (who garnered critical acclaim for his direction of Kevin Spacey in the London and Broadway runs of *The Iceman Cometh*).

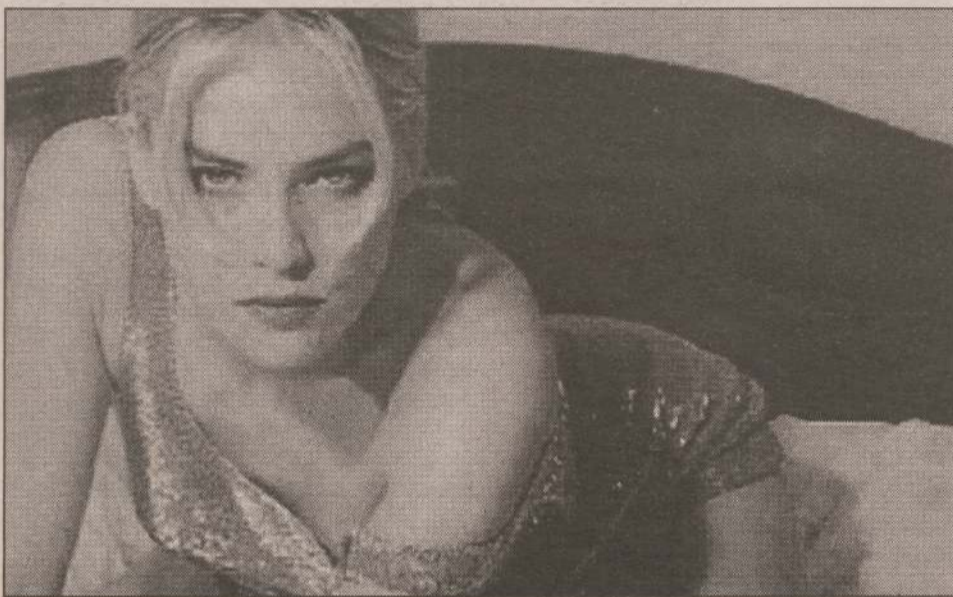
She's thinking about shepherding the play to the big screen and has her eye on

two childhood friends who grow up in different directions—one a gay slacker type, the other a straight and slimy L.A. music exec.

Chuck & Buck is the kind of offbeat fare that Artisan hopes will become a breakout hit. The company has not yet set a release date for the film.

Sony Gets in the Groove

Speaking of shopping at Sundance, Sony Pictures recently paid about \$1.5 million for the distribution rights to the indie flick *Groove*, a feature set in the queer San Francisco rave scene. The film, which takes place over the course of one night in an abandoned warehouse, will



Sharon Stone is considering a lesbian role on Broadway in David Mamet's *Boston Marriage*.

Hole frontwoman Courtney Love as her character's lover. Stone is rumored to have casting approval for the part and Sharon loves Love.

While *Boston Marriage* may not go before cameras in a while, dykes who like blondes can check out some of Stone's girl-girl action in the upcoming HBO pic *If These Walls Could Talk 2*, where she plays one half of a couple with Ellen DeGeneres. *Walls* airs on the cable network Sunday, March 5.

ARTISAN PAYS BUCKS FOR CHUCK

Artisan Entertainment, the indie film company that created a phenomenon last year by buying the distribution rights to a little Sundance flick called *The Blair Witch Project*—and wound up making \$140 million at the box office—has snatched up another potential hit.

The company just purchased a gay-themed dark comedy entitled *Chuck & Buck* for about \$1 million at this year's Sundance fest. Directed by *Star Maps* director Miguel Arteta, the movie centers

probably be released by Sony in the summer.

POST-APOCALYPTIC LESBIAN

Titanic director—and self-proclaimed King of the World—James Cameron is hard at work on *Dark Angel*, a sci-fi TV series for the Fox network about life in post-apocalyptic California.

Cameron recently cast six actors as regulars, including ABC's *One Saturday Morning* star Valarie Rae Miller. She'll take on the role of a feisty lesbian, described as having "a soft, protective side underneath."

Cameron, who co-wrote *Dark Angel*, expects the show to debut this year. The futuristic drama also stars *Never Been Kissed* actress Jessica Alba as Max, a genetically enhanced human prototype who escapes her military handlers.

ETHERIDGE GETS PICKED UP

Beyond Chance, the reality-based television series that dyke rocker Melissa Etheridge narrates for Lifetime Television,

has a new lease on life. The women-oriented cable network ordered 22 new episodes for the series' second season.

MORE GAY TIMES FOR GIBSON

He may play a happy hetero hubby on the hit ABC sitcom *Dharma & Greg*, but Thomas Gibson's acting-queer credentials have recently been renewed.

Hollywood is all atwitter over *The Broken Hearts Club*, in which Gibson plays one of a group of gay men in West Hollywood. The independent film was so hot, it was actually acquired by Columbia TriStar before its debut at this year's Sundance Film Festival.

Described as a gay *Diner*, *Broken Hearts* focuses on a group of six WeHo boys who have to deal with their uncertain futures as gay men. This marks the first time since 1970's seminal gay flick *The Boys in the Band* that a studio has committed to finance and distribute a film with a cast of entirely queer characters.

Gibson, you'll recall, first made a big splash as the bisexual creep Beauchamp Day in the 1993 miniseries *Tales of the City* (he reprised the role in 1998's *More Tales*). Before that, he starred in the very queer Canadian film *Love and Human Remains* playing a gay man on the prowl.

Gibson isn't the only pretty boy in the cast of *Broken Hearts*, the first feature from twentysomething writer-director Greg Berlanti, who is also a scribe on TV's teenage angst-fest *Dawson's Creek*. Be on the lookout for Go stud Timothy Olyphant to lock lips with *Lois & Clark* cutie Dean Cain in the flick. No release date has been set.

WONDER WOMAN LASSOS ZETA-JONES?

Here's the latest casting rumor to generate buzz in Tinseltown. Brunette goddess Catherine Zeta-Jones is being considered by Warner Bros. brass to fill Wonder Woman's bustier for the big screen.

The project, based on the Amazonian DC Comics heroine, has long been in the works; not even famed feminist Gloria Steinem, who had a try at the screenplay, was able to get its invisible plane off the ground. In fact, the project was officially "on hold" until the future Mrs. Michael Douglas' considerable assets were put into consideration for the lead.

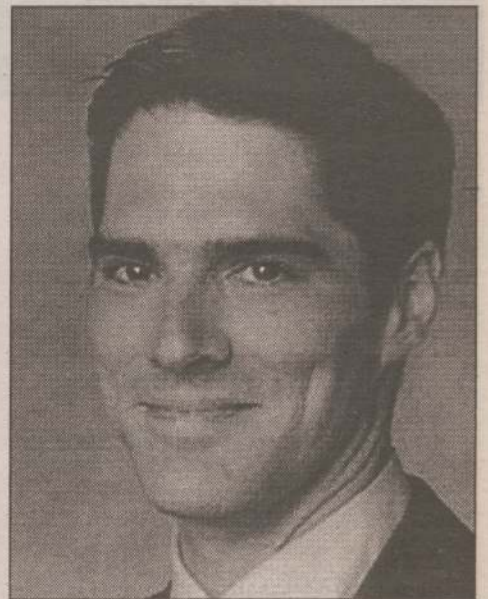
BOWERY BOY GETS BIO PIC

Jon Hart and Jeffrey Sharp, who produced *Boys Don't Cry*, the acclaimed film about transgendered murder victim Brandon Teena, are sticking with the biopic genre.

Their company, Hart Sharp, is teaming with Britain's FilmFour to develop a feature film about the life of drag queen-choreogra-

pher-performance artist Leigh Bowery. Based on Sue Tilley's biography *Leigh Bowery: The Life and Times of an Icon*, the drama will tell the story of the London-based bon vivant who was a fixture on club scene in the early '80s.

Bowery became a favorite subject of painter Lucien Freud before succumbing



Thomas Gibson is featured in the upcoming indie *The Broken Heart's Club*, about WeHo gay boys.

to AIDS complications in 1994. No screenwriter has yet been hired to adapt the book for the big screen.

SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE ON CAMPUS

College queers too young to remember Lily Tomlin and Jane Wagner's 1985 Broadway Hit *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* will have a chance to rediscover the funny women's masterpiece. Tomlin and Wagner are updating the Tony-winning play for the new millennium and touring universities with it this year.

Romeo San Vicente will happily nurse Thomas Gibson through a broken heart. You can reach Romeo in care of HeatStroke or via e-mail at RomeoDeep@aol.com.



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Out of Town

By
Andrew Collins



Winter Wonderland Retreats

While many travelers vacation in warmer climes in winter, there are some great reasons to plan a weekend to a cozy, gay-friendly country inn where there's likely to be snow on the ground—well, frost at the very least.

Foremost, a trip with your lover to some place frigid will no doubt encourage you both to dream up new and inspired ways to keep warm together. Additionally, there's the chance to ski or snowshoe and the promise—if you're an urban-dweller—of escaping from windy cities laced with gray-slush-covered sidewalks. And finally there's the opportunity to wear the ridiculously expensive winter coats and outdoors gear you splurged on a few months back.

Here are five intimate retreats where the fireplace is no doubt filling the parlor with its warmth and amber glow even as you read this. The clientele at all of these inns is mixed gay and straight.

CHESTER HOUSE INN, CHESTER, VT.

With Vermont lawmakers introducing legislation that may pave the way locally for gay marriage or, at the very least, the legal recognition of same-sex relationships, a number of gays and lesbians have begun making plans to visit this mostly rural and breathtakingly beautiful state.

Several gay-owned accommodations exist here, including the stately Chester House Inn, which anchors a quaint colonial hamlet in the accessible southern end of the state. Skiing at Okemo is just up the road, and other acclaimed nordic centers, like Stratton, Bromley, and Ascutney, are within a short drive, as are the tony restaurants and upscale outlet shops of Manchester, the Simon Pearce glass-blowing and pottery-making mill in Quechee, and the arty boutiques and cafes of Brattleboro.

The inn offers a great range of accommodations, from homey, simple, and relatively inexpensive rooms to rather lavish ones: one has a full-size whirlpool tub, another has a steam bath and gas fireplace. All are furnished with an elegant but practical mix of country antiques and decorated in a style that conveys comfort and homeyness, while reminding you that you're some place special.

A full country breakfast is presented in a cozy, fireplace-warmed dining room—lemon poppyseed pancakes are among the hearty but imaginative offerings regularly drummed up.

SARDY HOUSE, ASPEN, COLO.

In Aspen, which has for many years hosted a gay ski week and is always a favorite queer-friendly winter retreat, consider Sardy House, a delightful 20-room red-brick Victorian in the heart of downtown, close to bars and restaurants.

Rooms at this gay-popular getaway are packed with gorgeous antiques and dressed in elegant fabrics and prints; some overlook a shaded courtyard, others the spruce-dotted grounds.

A nice big breakfast comes with the rates, which are relatively moderate by Aspen's high standards (starting in the low \$200s during high season). You can also arrange to have dinner in the well-respected restaurant or sip cocktails before heading out—there's a festive little bar on premises.

Après ski, you might also relax those muscles with a dip in the heated pool or hot tub, or relax in the sauna. The same owners run the 19-room Hotel Lenado nearby, also an excellent property but with a more contemporary, slightly less quaint ambience.

THE CLARK HOUSE, HAYDEN LAKE, IDAHO

Unfairly associated with right-wing militia groups and various gay-hostile elements, northern Idaho is no more or less tolerant than much of the nation—the fringe minority here is just that, on the fringe and in the minority.

Lesbian and gay travelers are thus sometimes surprised to find that the small, picturesque town of Hayden Lake—a few miles north of Coeur d'Alene and 45 minutes east of Spokane, Wash.—is home to a sumptuous gay-owned country inn.

Partners Monty Danner and Rod Palmer bought the 1910 Colonial Revival mansion surrounded by 12 acres of towering cedar trees in 1989, saving it from demolition and then restoring it with both grace and a meticulous eye for detail.

The 10 huge, sun-filled guest rooms are sumptuously appointed—amenities may include feather beds, balconies, fireplaces, or views of scenic Hayden Lake and the region's snowcapped mountains. Furnishings set the perfect balance between comfort and luxury, and the staff is extremely laid-back and knowledgeable about the area.

You can arrange to enjoy a six-course dinner by candlelight in front of the fireplace—exceptionally creative contemporary American fare is served (but you'll need to make a reservation). Also, an impressive full breakfast is included in the rates.

The Clark House lies within an hour of two world-class ski areas, Schweitzer and Silver Mountain. But apart from skiing or driving to visit Spokane for the day, there's little to occupy your time in Hayden Lake, and that's exactly why a number of guests seem to love it here.

1904 IMPERIAL HOTEL BED & BREAKFAST INN, PARK CITY, UTAH

Park City in Utah will overflow with visitors and spectators when the 2002

Winter Olympics descend upon the tiny mountain ski resort; in the meantime, plenty of visitors heretofore unfamiliar with this part of the country are dropping in to see what all the fuss is about.

There's no pronounced gay scene in town, but it's a progressive place where same-sex couples are made to feel very much at home, especially at the wonderful 1904 Imperial Hotel Bed & Breakfast Inn, a 10-room lodging that's just steps from the retail and restaurant action of Park City's Main Street.

The inn, which was begun as a boarding house back in the town's mining days, contains rooms with an intriguing variety of views and configurations—some look up toward the mountains, while others face the bustle of Main Street. Several have sitting areas, and one room, everybody's favorite, has a cozy loft with a spiral staircase.

Decorated with mostly Victorian wallpapers and furnishings, the rooms also have direct-dial phones and cable TV. Full breakfast is included, with apple-granola pancakes among the specialties.

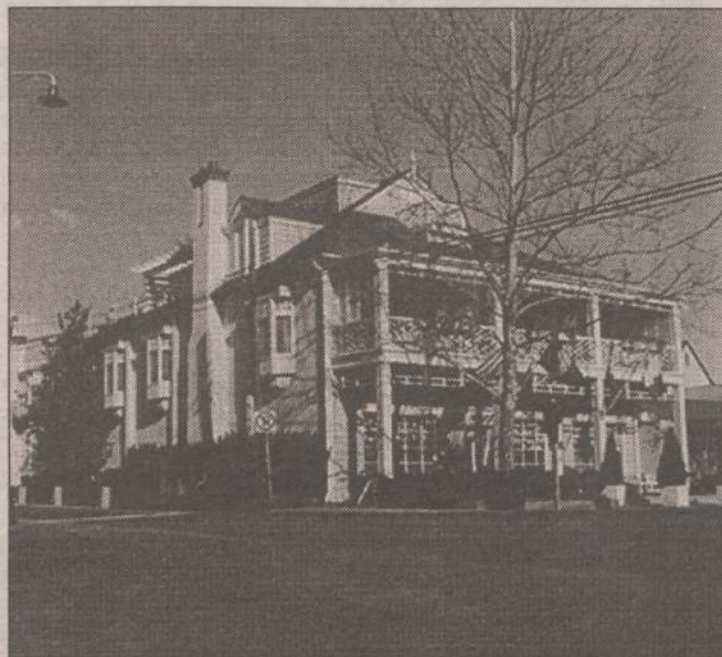
THE INN AT LITTLE WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON, VA.

Having received the 5 Diamond Award from AAA, and 5 Stars for both its restaurant and accommodations from Mobile Travel Guides, the Inn at Little Washington is one of the world's star hostels. And yet, from the looks of its unprepossessing pale-green and white exterior and the peaceful historic village it anchors in the foothills of Virginia's Blue Ridge mountains, you'd hardly guess this is the very same property Barbra Streisand has called "extraordinary!"

Proprietors Reinhardt Lynch and Patrick O'Connell—the latter oversees the stellar restaurant—have created a lavish yet whimsical retreat that feels far-removed from the congestion of the Eastern Seaboard. Yet it is less than two hours from Baltimore and Washington, D.C., and makes a suitable base for exploring the funky collegiate city of Charlottesville and the breathtaking scenery of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

Long-flowing drapes, decadent fabrics, and tented

ceilings set the tone in the public areas and 12 guestrooms, which overflow with treasured antiques imported from London. Members of the staff, clad in black vests and bow ties, tend to guests' every needs, and yet the ambience is relatively unstuffy and definitely festive—a point sometimes illustrated by the hosts' two charismatic Dalmatians, who have



It may look like a simple hotel in a sleepy village, but Virginia's regal Inn at Little Washington is actually an exclusive retreat with a loyal following among countless celebrities and politicians.

been known to greet guests each donning a string of pearls.

In the dining room, a spectacular prix-fixe dinner (\$98 per person) of phenomenal contemporary American fare is served beneath a fine collection of art and antiques. Rates begin at \$340 on weekdays and \$565 on Saturdays. For many travelers, a trip here is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and one that nearly always lives up to its tremendous billing.

Andrew Collins authored *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 in care of HeatStroke or at GayFodors@aol.com.



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NOT SO FUNNY



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Here's one in your boyfriend's handwriting. Addressed to someone named "Gav", who you never heard of, with a "Returned for lack of postage mark in the corner."

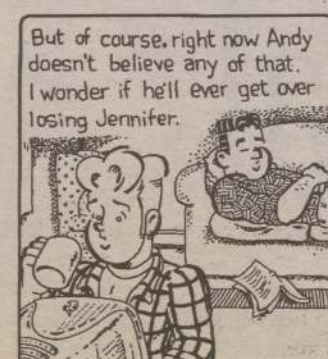
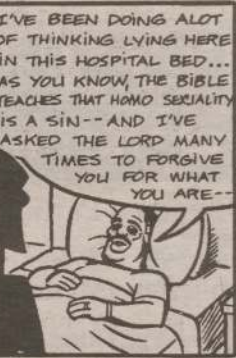
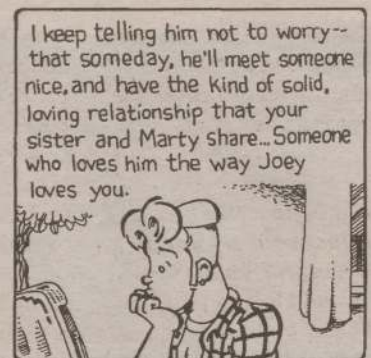
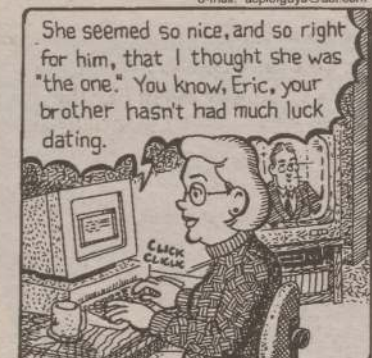


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Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel


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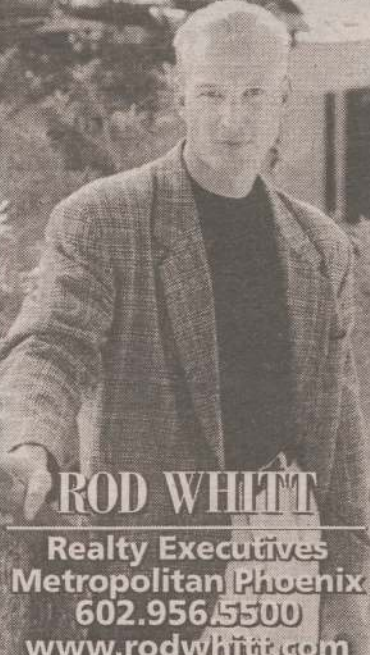


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Dear Cowboy,
I always end up sleeping with guys on the first date, or leaving from the bar right after I meet someone to go back to my place. Then, they never call or want to go out with me afterward. I want more of a relationship.
How can I get to know somebody without ending up in bed right away?
Signed, Too Eager

If a date is what you really want, set one up for later and take your chances on missing out on some instant gratification. Tell yourself, you're worth waiting for, Kemosabe, and your potential Tonto will think so, too. Are your partners forcing you in to that bunk with a .45 between the eyes? Probably not. Take charge—it's up to you to say "whoa".
I suggest you change your expectations. The reality of single life is that bars are where are most likely to find Mr. Right Now, not Mr. Right. Try joining a social club or outdoor group and start networking with other singles and couples, too. Be open to every invitation: movies, cookouts, lunches and dinners, coffee, hiking or biking—whatever comes

Dear Eager,
Going straight home from a bar or party for a little (safe) Mustang love is not always a bad thing. Sounds to me, though, like you feel you have no control over what happens and when.

up. Make yourself available for more than just a late-night quickie and you'll find there are a lot of other cowpokes on the trail who want more than that, too.

Dear Cowboy,
I have attended the gay rodeo here in Phoenix every year for about six years. I've also been to rodeos in Tucson, San Diego, Albuquerque and Oklahoma City. I've met a lot of nice guys and had some interest, but I have never gotten laid at these events. The guys I meet seem to flake out after talking to me for a while. I always end up alone in my hotel room, or leaving the bars alone.
My friends say, "If you can't get laid at a big rodeo, there's something wrong with you." Is there? I am 29, nice looking and a nice guy.
Signed, Lonely Dancer

Dear Lonely,
There is nothing wrong with you, but

there may be something wrong with your method if you can't connect with a horny partner at a large, gay event like the rodeo. Those arenas and dance halls are crawling with men from all over the country who are looking to hide their boots under someone's bunk for a night or two.

You need to be outgoing, direct and straight shooting. Don't wait 'till the last waltz plays to rope in the man of your dreams. Keep in mind that nice guys have friendly, unattached sex too. Pick out your steer, ask direct questions and move right on if you detect any flakiness or hesitation.

Spend some time on yourself—when you think you look good, you'll act like you do and that will get you far. Try dancing with several partners so you look approachable. Relax and have fun, but don't be afraid to make your intentions known. It's a big herd and there is someone in it for you.



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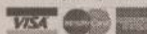
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Phoenix 602/254-7399
72. Orpheum Theatre
203 W. Adams
Phoenix 602/262-7272
73. Phoenix Art Museum
1624 N. Central Ave.
Phoenix 602/257-1222
74. Phoenix Central Library
1221 N. Central Ave.
Phoenix 602/262-4636
75. Phoenix Civic Plaza
225 E. Adams St.
Phoenix 602/262-6225
76. Phoenix Symphony Hall
225 E. Adams
Phoenix 602/262-6225
77. Phoenix Museum of History
105 N. 5th Street
Phoenix 602/253-2734
78. Phoenix Theatre
100 E. McDowell
Phoenix 602/254-2151

79. Planet Earth Multi-Cultural
Theatre
909 N. 3rd Street
Phoenix 602/241-1821
80. Union Hall
512 E. Van Buren
Phoenix 602/253-7100

O**utdoors**

81. Desert Botanical Garden
1201 N. Galvin Pkwy
Phoenix 480/941-1217
82. Margaret T. Hance Park
3rd St. to 3rd Ave. between
McDowell & Roosevelt
Phoenix 602/534-2406
83. North Mountain Park &
Preserve
10600 N. 7th St.
Phoenix 602/262-6696
84. Papago Park
Van Buren & Galvin Pkwy
Phoenix 602/256-3220
85. Phoenix Zoo
455 N. Galvin Pkwy
Phoenix 602/273-1431
86. Pueblo Grande Museum
4619 E. Washington
Phoenix 602/495-0900
87. Squaw Peak Park
2701 E SquawPeak Dr
Phoenix 602/262-6696
88. South Mountain Park
10919 S. Central Ave.
Phoenix 602/495-0222

Finding it in Phoenix

Q A Q A Q A Q A Q A Q A Q A

SCOPES

By Jill Dearman, Contributor

ARIES: Slow but steady progress will help get you out of a financial hole. But you can be more erratic in your love life, especially since, suddenly, friends want to be something more than just friends. If you're feeling slutty, call a Virgo's bluff; it may be just what you need.

TAURUS: Life is full of surprises: What you were hoping wouldn't happen in your career, just might - and it could be lucky for you. In your love life, you might find it hard to tell which of your twisted desires are good for you and which aren't. Find a safe place to hash it all out with a Sag.

GEMINI: Your ruler Mercury is hovering over the top of your chart, which means your ideas will be in the public eye. Be a shameless self-promoter. Valentine's Day could be a weeklong celebration, especially if you plan on spending time with a Scorpio. By the way, your devil-may-care side is showing, and it's very cute!

CANCER: The moon in your sign on February 16 should give you extra confidence and a secret sense of sexiness. A Capricorn wants to get to know you better but can't do *all* the work. Your fears could be based more on the past (and a bitch of an ex-lover!) than on the present.

LEO: This is surely the most romantic time you've had in months, but also the most angst-filled. Your buttons are being pushed big time. Stop reliving the same tired old pattern, and set some new gears in motion. Try a new approach with a Pisces.

VIRGO: Give yourself a break—and your loved ones too. Forgiveness gets you further than worry and fury. Put your bitterness aside and dedicate some time to serving others. This could be a pivotal time for your love life, especially if you give a Taurus a second chance.

LIBRA: Go ahead and act like the attention-craving diva you are. Get out from behind someone else's

glamour and exert your own! This is a great time to indulge in some adolescent drama in the form of a hot and very public romance with a Cancer. Shout your love (or just plain old lust) from the rooftops.

SCORPIO: Jupiter has just entered your house of love, dear, so please, do something to celebrate. If you're single, it's harem time. If you're married, make your home a beautiful brothel just for two. Your home, in fact, is playing a big role in your state of mind right now. A Virgo can help with the details.

SAGITTARIUS: You have a great chance at making some dough by making some art, but only if you drop the attitude, doll. You need to stop living like a monk and start meeting new people. Connect with folks who are different and unusual. A Pisces can expand your spiritual and sexual horizons.

CAPRICORN: The moon in your house of love on the 17th is sure to bring you much amorous attention. But this could be a time of insecurity, too. You're learning how to be vulnerable, which is making you a better lover. Stop resisting a Taurus! Open up your heart and take off your clothes!

AQUARIUS: This is a great time for you to give yourself a huge birthday present. Do something to make a childhood dream come true. Enjoy all the miracles and tiny bits of kismet that come your way. You are a powerhouse right now. A Gemini is in awe of your stamina.

PISCES: The planets are stirring up deep-seated feelings. Rather than resist your dreams and nightmares, take them to heart. Focus on two of your most inspired ideas and nurture them into reality. A Capricorn loves you for your so-called craziness; stop trying to be so normal.

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

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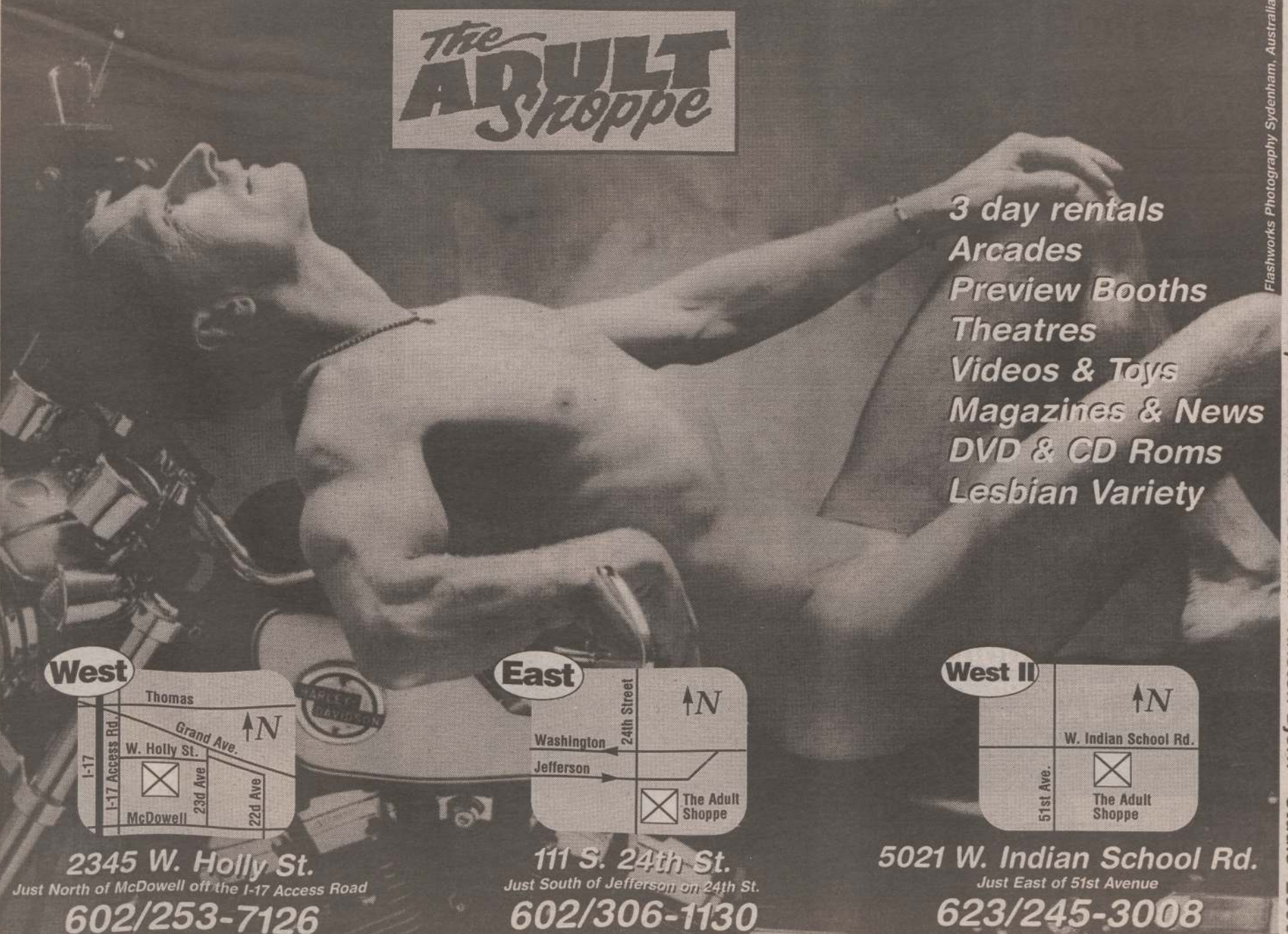
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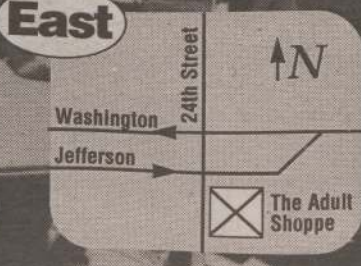
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West



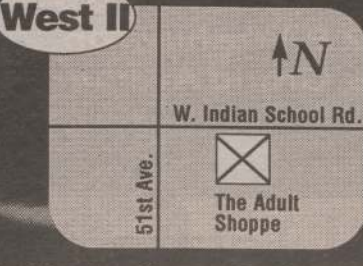
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East



111 S. 24th St.
 Just South of Jefferson on 24th St.
602/306-1130

West II

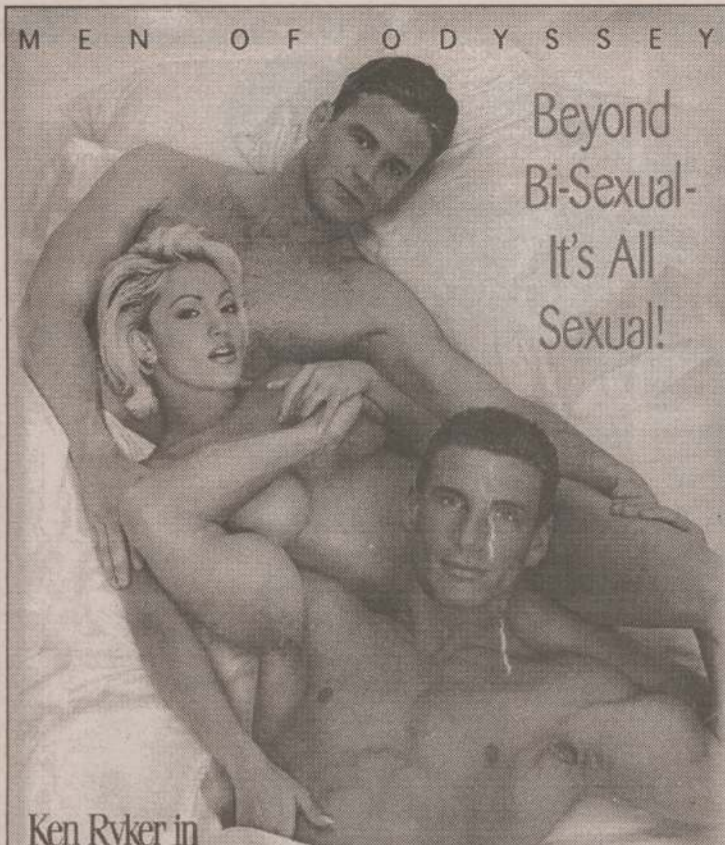


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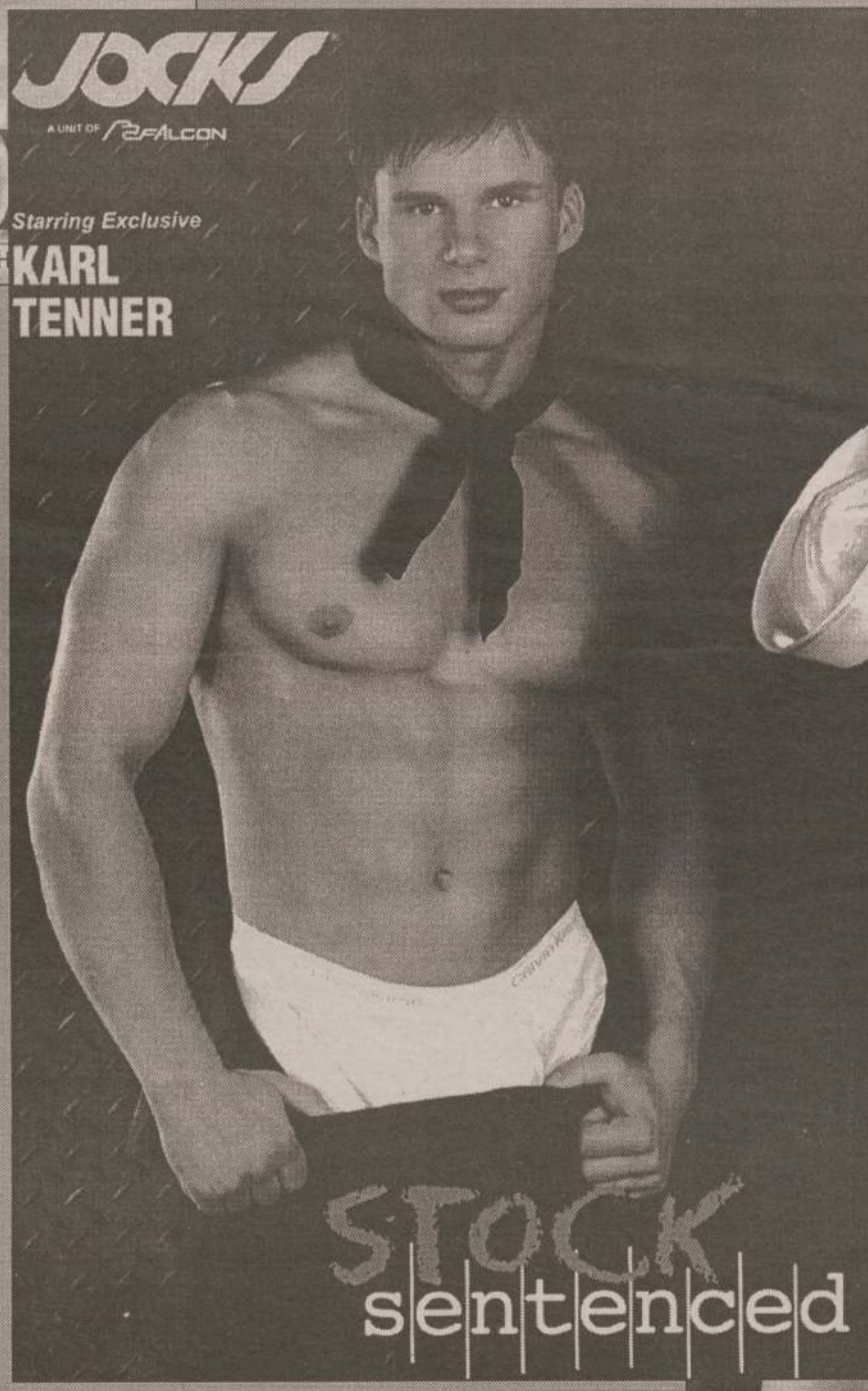


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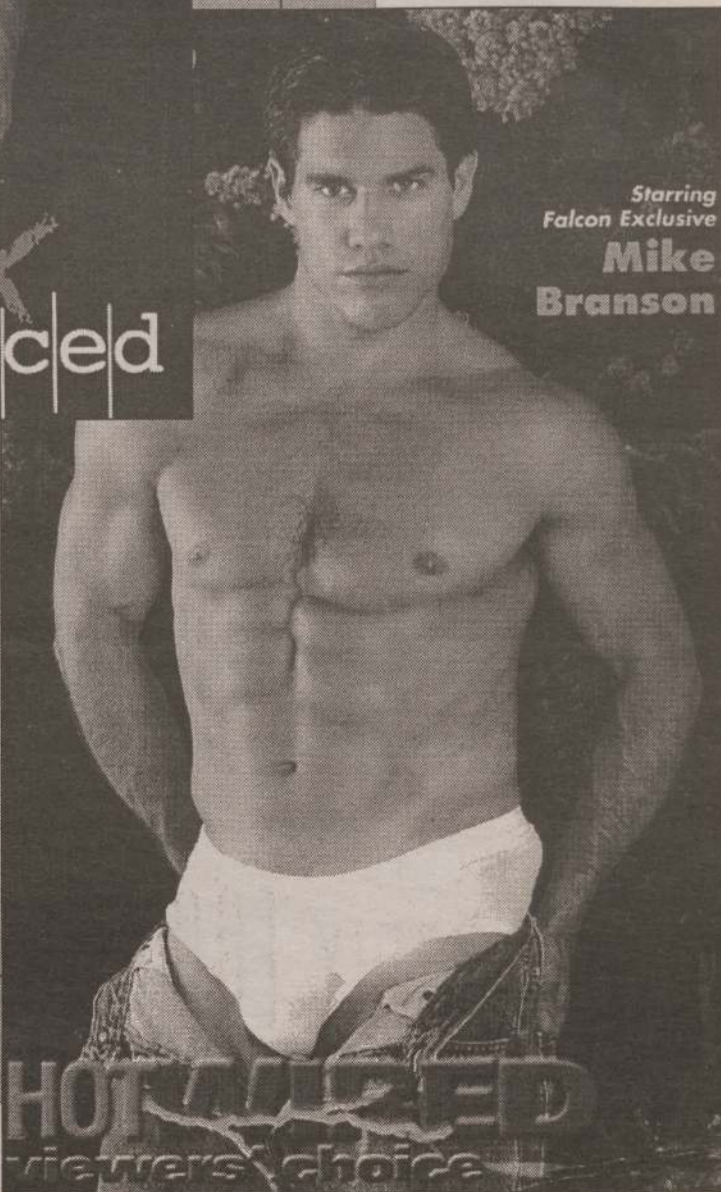
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- 1838 Grand Avenue

Other Location

- 6527 N. 59th Avenue

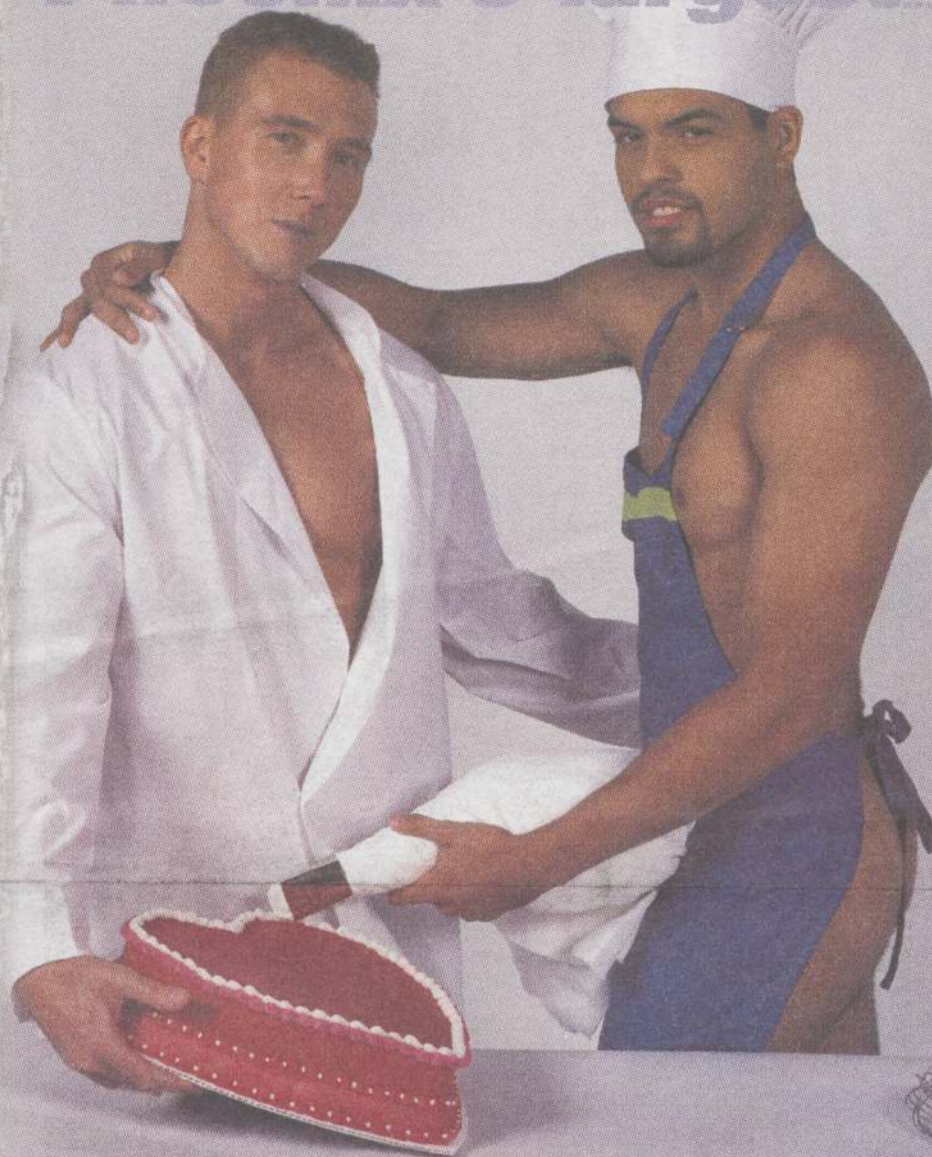


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