

HeatStroke

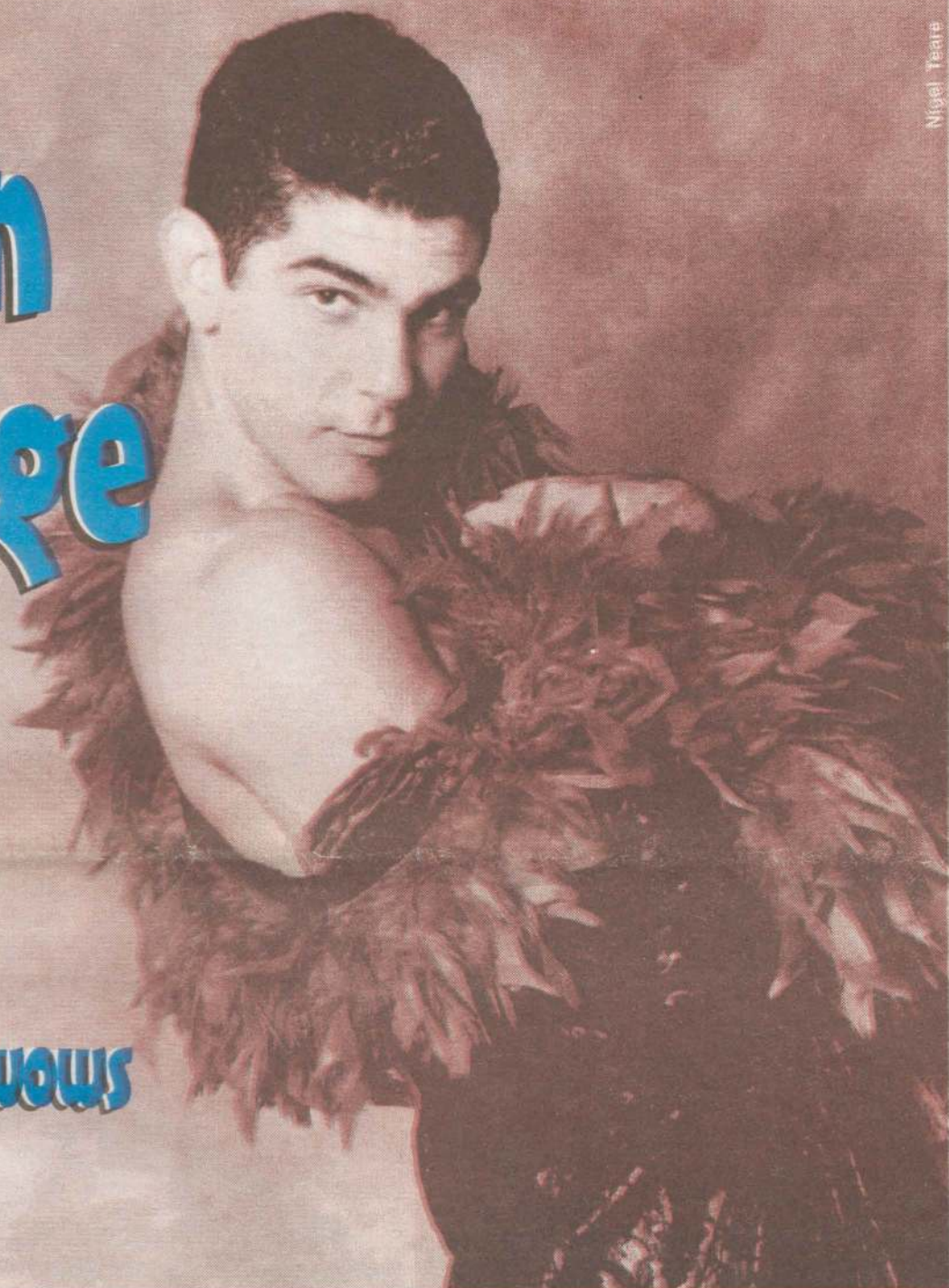
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Valley Man on the Verge of a hit

ASU professor's sexy, uproariously gay play wows New York critics



Nigel Teare

By Allen Kalchik, Editor

Playwright Guillermo Reyes lives and teaches in the Valley of the Sun. But now his *muy Latino* name is rolling off the eastern-twanged tongues of Bostonians, Jerseyites, and Long Islanders far east of here—as his work is celebrated and applauded in all the trendiest theater circles in (and surrounding) the Big Apple.

In 1970 — at the age of nine — Reyes emigrated to Washington, DC from politically turbulent Santiago, Chile with his mother. And in 1997, this openly gay, assistant theater professor at Arizona State University has achieved one of the highest goals of any American playwright working today: one of his plays is being produced in New York City, drawing full houses and getting rave reviews.

The new comedy by Guillermo Reyes that has set eastern tongues wagging is called *Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown*. The play stars Felix A. Pire, a Los Angeles actor who performed the show in Los Angeles before it moved east. Directed by Joseph Megel (who also helmed the LA version), the New York production opened in March at off Broadway's 47th Street Theater.

Reyes says he hopes the title reminds people

of gay Spanish director Pedro Almodovar's film *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, a cult favorite among many gay men in this country. "I want people to get that it has that Almodovar brand of humor, so they sort of know what to expect," the writer explains. "I also love the play on the word Hispanic, where it can be broken



Steve Savage

ASU professor and playwright Guillermo Reyes, author of *Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown*, starring Felix A. Pire, above-right.

into His Panic, so that's where the title comes from. It's a humorous look at the panic these characters are feeling as gay Latinos in American society."

Having just completed his first year on the faculty at ASU, Reyes has headed to Los Angeles for the Summer to "finish packing and visit with friends and my Mom."

Men on the Verge... is a one-man play, consisting of eight separate sketches; Pire plays six characters. Each character is different, though all are gay men and all are Latin-American immigrants.

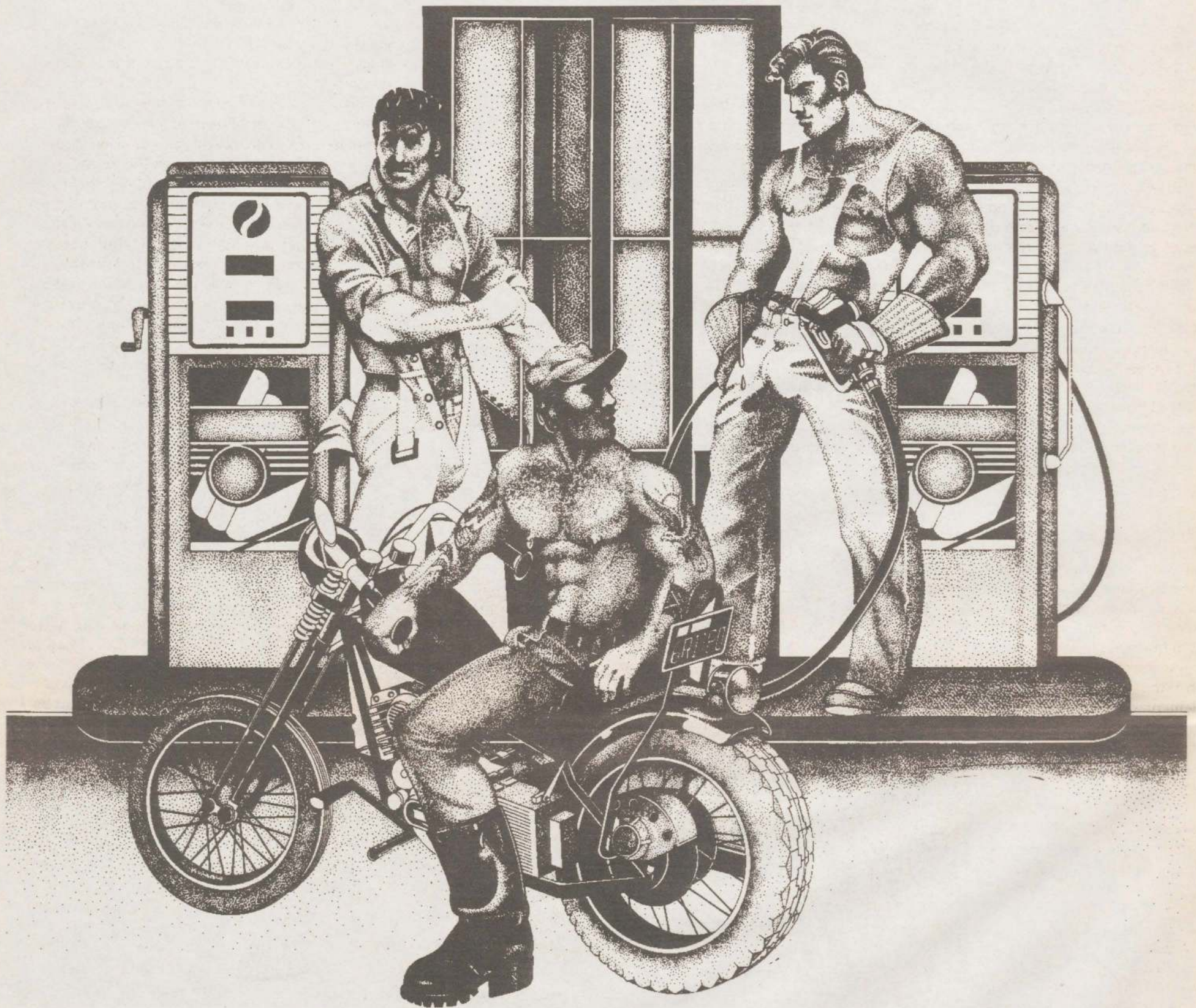
From a 60-year old Cuban-American restaurateur in Phoenix to a Colombian-American West Village kept boy, each character was created with humor and passion by Reyes. The playwright knows first-hand the drama and challenges—as well as the humor—associated with being a gay male in the US whose roots run deep into the machismo cultures of Central and South America. In the play, 25-year old Pire shifts from one character to another without leaving the stage.

Reyes says there has been a noticeable coming-of-age in the theater world for plays with Hispanic and gay themes. Today, the Chilean

See "Off-Broadway Hit," page 14

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Phoenix women bashed:

16 year-old male beats up lesbians, claims self-defense; cops charge one woman with assault

by Karyn Riedell, Staff Writer

For three years, Lorri Peltz drove around Phoenix proudly displaying two symbols of gay pride—the pink triangle and the rainbow—on the back window of her blue Ford pickup. Occasionally, someone (always a male) would yell out, "Dykes!" to Peltz and her partner, Betsy Helseth. But, except for the yelling, nothing ever happened, so she kept the stickers on and didn't think too much about it.

That all changed on Feb. 11 of this year. It was on that day that Peltz would be bloodied and battered—and then arrested for assault.

The day began much like any other Tuesday for the two women. As usual, Peltz planned to drop her 10-year old daughter off at school, and then take Helseth to work. The two women, both mechanics, have busy schedules. Peltz works as a mechanic, and Helseth is a delivery driver for a transmission company. Both are also attending night school for a degree in automotive training, with the goal of someday opening up their own business.

As the family drove north on 19th Avenue toward the elementary school, Peltz got in the left lane to turn onto Maryland Avenue, preparing to drop her daughter off at school.

Suddenly, the driver of the green Chevy pickup in front of them started backing up. As far as Peltz could determine, there was no reason for the driver's actions.

"He put the truck in reverse and began backing up toward me. I'm wondering what he's doing. I really couldn't tell you what he was doing," Peltz said.

Both trucks turned left onto Maryland. Then, suddenly, the other driver slammed on his brakes. To avoid a rear-end collision, Peltz swerved onto the oncoming traffic lane and passed the other truck.

Once Peltz arrived at her daughter's school at the corner of 21st Avenue and Maryland, she pulled to the curb in order to drop off her daughter. According to Peltz, it was at this point that the other driver, Michael Laramee, rear-ended her truck.

"When we exited (the trucks), the first thing he said was 'What the hell do you think you're doing?' He came up so fast that I felt threatened. I put my hands up, and that's when he called me a 'dyke.' He just pushed into me and started swinging," Peltz said.

At this point, Helseth intervened, rushing over and pushing Laramee, trying to stop him from hitting Peltz. So, the teenager slugged her in the face too. After a brief scuffle, during which Helseth was punching and pushing Laramee and he was punch-

ing her in the face, the fighting ended as quickly as it had begun.

Both women were taken to the hospital, where they were treated for facial injuries. Peltz had a bloody nose and a swollen lip and cheek bone. Helseth had swelling and bruising around the eye.

The worst damage was yet to come, however. Peltz soon discovered that she was charged with assault. Deciding that Helseth had intervened only to protect Peltz, Phoenix police did not charge her with assault. Nor did they charge Laramee.

Peltz's account of the incident differs dramatically from Laramee's statement to the police. According to Laramee, Peltz intentionally applied her brakes while he was driving behind her, thus causing the collision. According to Laramee's account, he

But Peltz, who has hired gay Phoenix attorney Roger Rea to defend her, maintains that there are serious flaws in the police investigation and handling of the case and that Smith's account of the fight is not accurate.

Rea notes the following discrepancies:

- Even though Laramee's passenger was interviewed by the investigating officer, Helseth was not;
- Post-incident photographs show significant injuries to both women, but none to Laramee;
- It is unreasonable that Peltz would be driving erratically with her own child in the car;
- Police did not charge Helseth with assault;
- The police report contains factual errors, for example stating that the trucks were turning left on Bethany Home Road, instead of Maryland;

don't think he (Laramee) ever got a good hit in."

According to Peltz, this statement is illogical. "If that's the case, why did I have to go to the hospital? And why did I have to take a week off from work and school? That throws her credibility down the drain."

Smith herself has stated that there was a van in front of her part of the time, Peltz says, "so how could she say anything when she didn't see everything from start to finish?"

Peltz, who has no previous record for assault, denies that she is the one who started the fight. "I can't hurt anybody. I've never fought anybody in my life. I was never a physical person at all."

In a letter to the court (the trial date is set for Sept. 2, with Judge Matt Tafoya presiding), Laramee's parents state that they fear for their son's safety and their own. In addition, they worry about their son contracting AIDS, "a fear that every parent dreads."

In his letter to the court, Laramee also expresses concern that he may have contracted AIDS. "I had to obtain an HIV test because of this attack, the cost of which may or may not be covered by my medical insurance. I have to be tested again in six months before I can be certain that I am in the clear. This is extremely frightening at any age, but I am only sixteen years old and if it had not been for her attack there would be no possibility of my being infected and because of her attack, there is a risk, no matter how slight."

In a May 28 letter to assistant city prosecutor

Mary Stoner, Rea states that Laramee's reference to AIDS indicates a "preoccupation" with Peltz's sexual orientation. Rea then adds, "As a matter of fact, the 16-year old's complaint was his bloody knuckles, which were a result of having pummeled my client. The report is silent as to any significant injuries he received."

In the same letter to Stoner, Rea states his concern about the impartiality and thoroughness of the investigation. He expresses this same concern in a May 29 letter to Police Chief Dennis Garrett, stating that Detective Pat Boyd of the Community Relations Department did not follow up on the case as he had requested. In

addition, Rea advises Garrett that it might be advisable to investigate the case as a possible hate crime because of the gay pride stickers on Peltz's



Lorri Peltz, left, and partner Betsy Hulseth, photographed shortly after their violent encounter with Michael Laramee. Police have charged Peltz with assault.

and Peltz started walking toward each other when she said, "I'm going to kick your ass." Laramee told police that Peltz then punched him in the neck and face three times, while he attempted to just push the punches away. Laramee said that he finally punched Peltz in the face a few times to get her to stop hitting him. When Helseth came over and hit him in the face, he also struck her with two to three blows to the face.

This incident might have been just another case of one person's words against another's—but there was an outside witness to corroborate Laramee's version and provide damaging testimony against

Peltz. Melinda Smith, who was driving by at the time, confirmed Laramee's version: that it was the two women who started the fight and that Laramee merely fought back in self-defense.

• Officer Berry Geisemann's report states: "Melinda Smith saw the driver of the green truck (victim) fall to the ground during the fight." Rather, it was Peltz who fell to the ground.

• Geisemann's report also states, "Then Melinda Smith saw the driver of the blue truck slug the victim with his fists on his face and then shoved

Laramee's parents worry about their son contracting AIDS, "a fear that every parent dreads."

the victim with her two hands on the victim's shoulders." (As Rea notes, this statement makes no sense);

In a statement to the private investigator hired by Peltz, Smith said, "I

Two Valley men ask ACP to apologize

Tempe Cops said dancer showed too much of his pride at gay festival

By Allen Kalchik, Editor

A Mesa man who left Phoenix's 1997 gay pride festival in anger—claiming he was singled out and humiliated due to his attire—is asking for an apology from the board of Arizona Central Pride (ACP), the all-volunteer committee that produces the annual event.

Tommy Pina, 35, believes the Pride Committee was wrong to side with Tempe police on June 1, when they said an outfit he was wearing was indecent and inappropriate for the popular gay festival. The event took place at Tempe Diablo Stadium Soccer Fields over the weekend of May 30 - June 1, drawing thousands of people from throughout the Valley and State.

"I just want them to admit they were wrong, because we should not have to conform to other people's ideas of the best way to dress during what is supposed to be our gay celebration weekend," Pina said. "That was not right." The two men have drafted and signed a letter to ACP asking the Board to apologize for its "lack of support for [their] side of the story and/or cause."

The incident occurred on the afternoon of the festival's last day. Pina, who manages a Great Clips hair salon in Mesa, was browsing vendor booths with his friend, Michael Emry. The men say they were visiting with friends when they were approached by Tempe police officers. The officials asked to speak to Pina about his clothing, saying there was a problem with the "skirt" the gay man was wearing. The police said it was indecent for Pina to be nude beneath his skirt and a woman had complained that Pina's bare bottom offended her children.

"We asked them who complained, and if she was straight or gay," said Emry, a 29-year old Phoenix resident who works for American Express Travel Services. "They wouldn't tell us, which is understandable. We were never mad at the cops because they were only following up on a complaint—just doing their job. We are mad at the Pride Committee," he said.

Pina and Emry are members of Charlie's Knights, one of several dance troupes that performed at the 1997 festival. They told the officers—who were acting as security guards for the event—that Pina was wearing a kilt—not a skirt—and he was wearing a g-string under it. Pina said he has worn the same thing to Pride festivals before and to other gay events where his group performed, including the Pride parade in Central Phoenix last March.

The police told Pina to change his underwear or leave the festival grounds. Pina and Emry began to argue with the police and then asked to speak to someone from the Pride Committee.

ACP Vice President Ernie Mendoza arrived. Mendoza told Emry and Pina that the police were doing the right thing. "Part of Pride Committee's agreement with the City of Tempe," he told

HeatStroke, "included a stipulation that any complaints of indecency would be investigated and could lead to removal from the park."

Mendoza stood by the officers because he agreed that Pina's g-string was inappropriate. "The skirt was really short," he said, "and the wind was blowing it straight up. He is a very big guy, and there was no way that little bit of material was going to keep this guy covered. Believe me, everything was showing."

Mendoza said Pina was not asked to leave the grounds, only to "cover up". "But," he said, Pina and his friend "would have nothing to do with that idea." Mendoza said they became "pretty agitated" and Pina refused to change out of his g-string. After much heated discussion, Pina and Emry left.

Pina said he and Emry chose to leave rather than to change clothes as a point of principal. "I was getting really upset. I should have been able to wear a kilt if other people were wearing them. Finally, we just gave up arguing and left," said Pina.

It is on the basis of Mendoza's support of the Police officers that the two men have asked for an apology from the ACP board. They say Pina was singled out and that Pina left the park feeling humiliated and angry. They want to know why Pina's ensemble was not considered offensive earlier, when they re-entered the grounds from the parking lot. They had left briefly to change from their performance costumes, walking past several ACP volunteers and security people to check back in.

They said they also pointed out to the police and Mendoza that many other men were in kilts on the grounds, a point they also make in their letter to the Pride Committee. "We know of one other guy in our dance group who was wearing nothing at all under his kilt," said Pina.

Mendoza said the kilt was never a problem, but the fact that Pina appeared naked was. "The law says there has to be a two-inch width of fabric covering your butt,"

he said, "and there was no fabric visible in this case. His skirt blew up several times even as I was talking to the police about it." He said the men were approached by the officers only after someone complained, and that if anyone complained about others at the festival in inappropriate attire, they would also have been given the choice to cover up or leave.

But Pina and Emry think the Pride Committee made a mistake in standing by one mother who complained about the amount of skin an openly gay man was showing at a Pride festival. "That was supposed to be our day," said Pina.

Emry agreed. "We were treated completely wrong. Who is this woman, to say Tommy offended her kids? She should have known what to expect and either left the kids home or just dealt with it. There were men in drag, men in leather harnesses, women with no bras and everything showing right through their shirts. That's the way Pride events always are. It's part of the diversity of our community," he said.

"We're talking about an event that is already very tied in to sex," he continued, "so what was her

big problem with Tommy's butt? I mean, there was a huge, inflatable condom on the grounds advertising an adult book store, there were advertisements for lube on the garbage containers, there were condoms and lube everywhere. You could buy the g-string, and you could buy the kilt at Pride. You just couldn't put them on. Well, that's dumb. What kind of gay pride is that?"

Emry and Pina think the police should have been asked to lighten up on the indecency charges for the weekend and been more accepting of different modes of dress. But Mendoza said that changing the attitudes of the police was not an option.



Michael Emry, left, and Tommy Pina

"We are talking about the law," he said, "and [Pina and Emry's] letter only talks about his kilt. Kilts are okay with everybody. The problem was the g-string. For my own personal preference, yes—people should get to wear what they want. But I was not about to go against the police, and neither would anyone else on the Board."

Emry thinks that as long as this kind of conservative attitude continues, the Pride festival here will never be as big or popular as festivals in San Francisco or Los Angeles. "If wearing a g-string is really illegal in Arizona, and there is no way around that, then they should post a dress code

where every-one comes in," said Emry.

Mendoza acknowledges that the men were very upset, but said they could have solved everything

"You could buy the g-string, and you could buy the kilt at Pride. You just couldn't put them on. Well, that's dumb. What kind of gay pride is that?"

simply by complying with the officers and putting on something else. "They had to know Pina was taking a risk by wearing the g-string in a public place. I could have found them something else to wear. They were the ones who left, they didn't have to," he said.

"Everyone has a suggestion on how to make the Pride weekend better," said Mendoza. "We hear it all the time—'this isn't like it is in LA, they do this or that in San Francisco.' Well, I'm sorry but this is Phoenix. Let's be real. We are not going to get away here with what they do in San Francisco. No matter what my opinion or anyone else's opinion is, the law is the law," he said.

"This committee is made up entirely of volunteers," Mendoza continued, "and we all put in many hours to make these events successful. We know there are ways to make things better and we are always looking into them. But I don't think [Pina and Emry] are going to get an apology because the police made the determination that he was not properly dressed and we will have to stand by that."

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HeatStroke

Phoenix lesbian charged with assault

Continued from page 7

truck and Laramée's use of the word "dyke."

For her part, Peltz believes that she might have been killed if her partner had not intervened. "If it wasn't for her, I probably would have ended up dead that day because he was just pounding on my face. She jumped in and got him away from me.

"After it was all over, he's leaning on his front fender, just laughing away as if nothing had ever happened. I just can't understand why. My whole life has changed because of that. I don't do things I used to do. I'm more afraid than I used to be."

Because Laramée lives right around the corner from her, Peltz says she is afraid he may seek retaliation. She says she worries when she goes shopping that she might run into him, and she now goes a different route when taking her daughter to school.

Because of what happened, Peltz also decided to remove the gay pride symbols from her truck.

In addition to fears about her family's safety, Peltz said she is concerned that the experience could have lasting repercussions for her daughter, who was crying and screaming at the time of the attack.

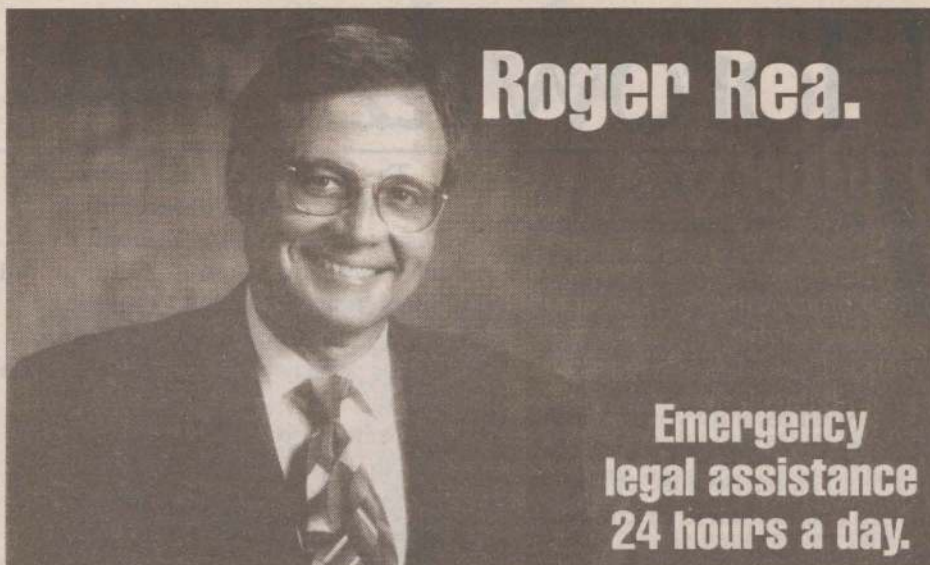
"My daughter was watching the kid pounding me. That's really something you want to show a 10-year old," Peltz says.

Worst of all, Peltz says she is worried about her reputation, about having a record for assault. Peltz could accept the city prosecutor's offer to settle out of court, in which case her 20-day jail sentence and \$400 fine would be suspended if she agreed to Diversion counseling. On the other hand, she would still have to pay the damages to Laramée's truck. And she would have a record for assault.

Peltz is still hoping that the charges against her will be dismissed without a trial.

"I don't know if it will go to trial. I'm hoping we can get everything settled out of court. But if I have to, I will. I'm spending money I don't have.

"I'm hoping that any half-way decent judge will look at the report and see that something's not right. (Laramée) walked away with nothing, and I walked away with a bloody face. If he doesn't (dismiss charges), I have no faith in the system anymore."



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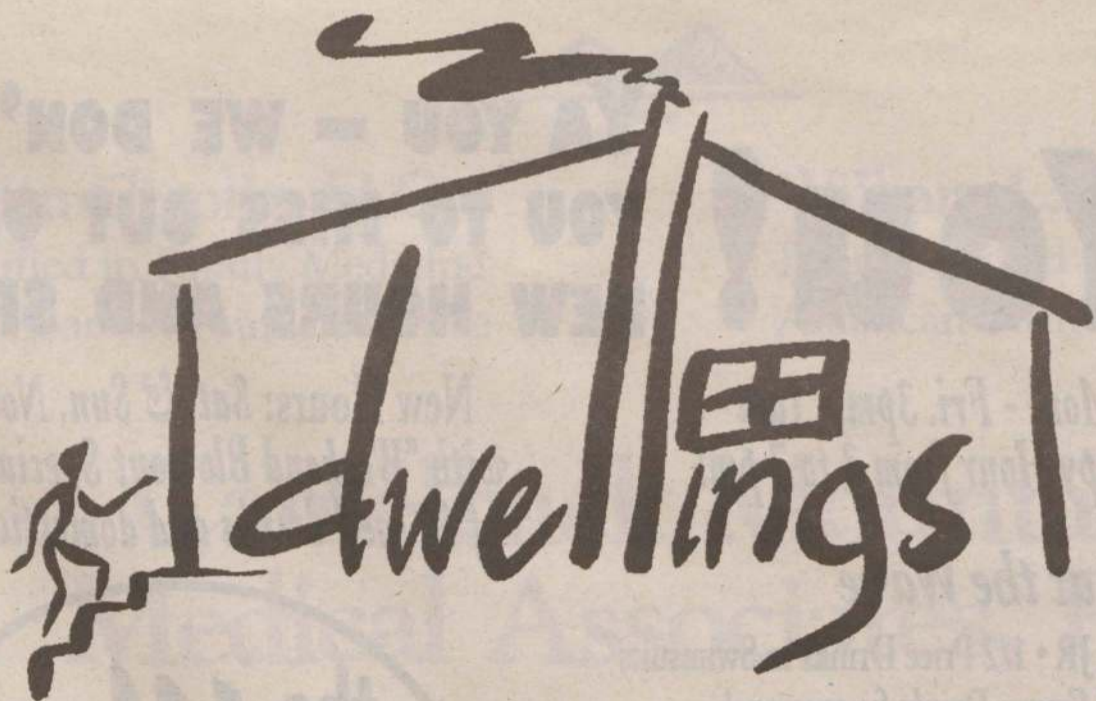


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Horowitz: A Baptist's travel guide

I'd like to offer the Southern Baptist religious denomination some family vacation suggestions to substitute for the Disney-related tourist destinations they'll be giving up this Summer. The Southern Baptist Convention recently voted to boycott Walt Disney Company theme parks and retail stores because of Disney's alleged abandonment of family values.

The group argues that corporate policies and programming decisions don't live up to the illustrious reputation and purported expectations of Old Walt himself. "Disney" used to be synonymous with "family"—apparently, no more.

The denigration of family values also occurs in corporate policies that provide employee spousal benefits to same-gender domestic partners of Disney employees, allow community groups to hold "Gay Day" at Disneyland and Walt Disney World, and offer gay-sympathetic programming—like *Ellen* on television and in movies like *The Priest*. I can't continue without addressing these "concerns".

I'd like to know how anyone who claims to be a Christian could argue that health care benefits, which the employee would pay for anyway, should not be made available to any human being. I'll put aside the fact that if there are no benefits, a sick domestic partner may wind up on the public dole.

The Baptists say they protest the "promotion" of homosexuality in Disney programming through ABC television and Miramax pictures. But openly gay characters appear less often than even the lowest estimates of our presence in the general population.

There is one open lesbian among all the leading characters on network TV. When you consider the number of programs Disney produces, it is clear that no "promotion" is going on. The Baptists hate Disney's willingness to include us.

So, where should Southern Baptists go instead of "The Happiest Place on Earth"?

Why not try...

- Washington, DC: Teach the kids how government works. Take in the history of our nation's capital. Be sure to explain the contrast between the opulent architecture and the homeless people leaning against it. Take in all the museums. The Holocaust Memorial Museum will certainly provide valuable historical and emotional lessons. But wait—you can't go there. Gay people are included in the exhibits. Better try elsewhere.

- National Parks: Get out into the wilderness and explore the great outdoors. Unparalleled beauty awaits visitors to our national treasures. Park fees are still low. Camping brings us all closer to nature and to God. Oops—sorry! The park rangers are federal employees, and

with that turncoat (Southern Baptist) Bill Clinton in the White House, some of them might be gay or lesbian. Better not take the chance. Can't even wear blue jeans—Levi Strauss & Co. has a non-discrimination policy like Disney's.

- The Beach: You won't go wrong in the sun. The kids will get great exercise. The ocean is a perfect place to cool off on a hot summer day. Seaside resorts are famous for great entertainment and culinary delights. Darn—my mistake! All those gay men spent months in high-priced health clubs to show off their defined bodies. And so many resort employ-

ees—particularly waiters and entertainers—are gay, too.

- Better not fly anywhere, either. You know how those flight attendants are. And if you drive, be sure you don't take a car made or distributed by an automaker who doesn't discriminate against gays and lesbians.

Actually, your best bet is to just stay home. Go to Cracker Barrel for a special dinner. Stay among your own kind. We'll all go to Disneyland.

David Horowitz is a Phoenix attorney and Vice President of the Lesbian and Gay Public Awareness Project.

VALLEY ONE IN TEN

VALLEY ONE

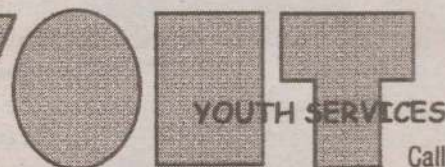
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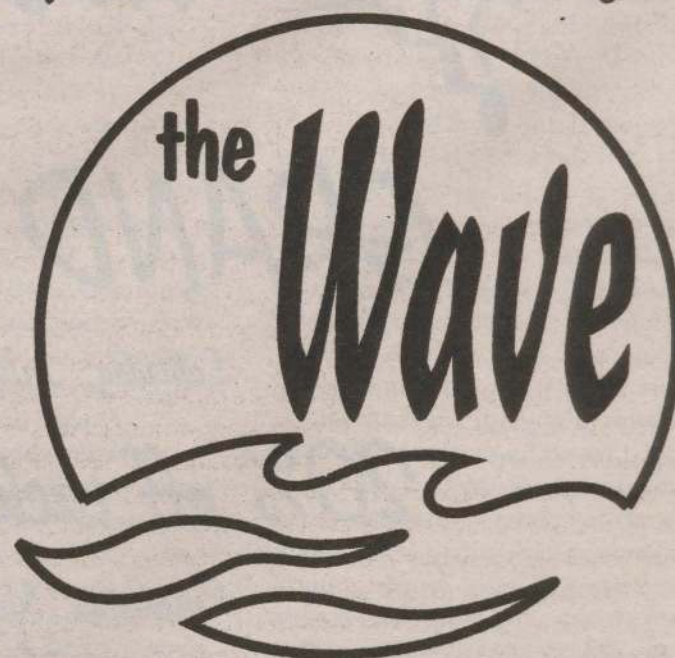
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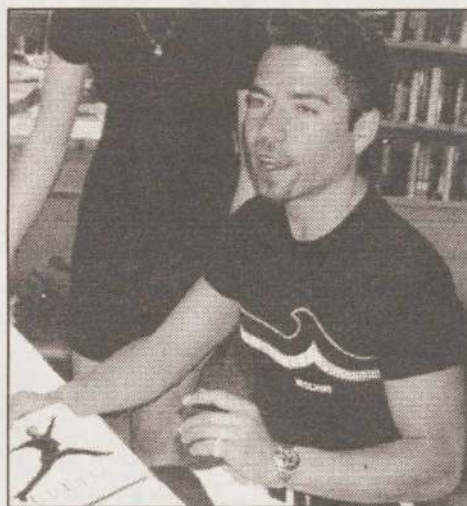
Skaters & supporters meet Galindo at local booksigning

More than 80 people lined up at Bookstar in Phoenix's Town and Country Shopping Center on June 17 to meet gay figure skater Rudy Galindo. Galindo was in town to perform with Campbell's Soups 1997 Tour of World Figure Skating Champions and to promote his new autobiography, *Icebreaker*.

At the Central Phoenix store Galindo autographed pictures, tour programs and even ice skates—as well as copies of the book he coauthored with Eric Marcus. The autobiography details Galindo's rise from humble beginnings in an East San Jose trailer park to 1996, when he became

the first openly gay and the first Mexican-American to be named Men's US National Champion. The book was published by Pocket Books this Spring.

"We were very happy with the turnout," said Bookstar's Scott LeRoy. "We sold almost 40 books, and there were many more people who came in just to meet Rudy. He was very nice, very gracious, and he spent a lot of time talking to the kids." LeRoy estimated the crowd to be about half gays and lesbians and half fans of ice skating, including many child skaters whose parents



brought them in to meet the openly gay champion.

The skater was a *HeatStroke* coverboy last month (issue #15, June 5 - 18), and the in-depth interview that accompanied his story was exclusive to a Phoenix-area gay publication. For back copies of the Rudy Galindo issue (or any other *HeatStroke* issue you might have missed), call or fax a request to 1 nightstand publications, ltd. at 602-264-3646.

Lesbian children's author defends book that started NYC debate

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (AP)

Leslea Newman, whose children's book started a debate years ago over homosexuality and school instruction, finds herself still defending her work.

Heather Has Two Mommies became central to a New York City School District controversy five years ago when the district piloted the "Rainbow Curriculum."

The curriculum was intended to educate school children about differences among people, including gays

and lesbians, which drew fire from much of the community. Newman's book, which tells of a young girl being raised by two lesbians, was part of the curriculum's suggested reading.

At a recent meeting at the University of Arkansas, Newman said she was considered by some to be the "most dangerous writer living in America today" because of the book.

But she said parents shouldn't feel threatened by the book; it doesn't

promote sex of any kind. She said the book is about families and wasn't intended to "recruit" anyone into the gay community.

"The most important thing about a family is that all the people in it love each other," the book concludes.

Newman chastised groups who criticized this conclusion. She sarcastically referred to "outlandish" behavior promoted in the book such as going to the park and eating dinner together.

Newman said schools need to go further than just condemning violence. They need to stress "cultural education to ensure that violence doesn't happen at all", she said. While parents of heterosexual children may feel it doesn't affect them, Newman said, numerous children have been beaten before simply because they were thought to be gay, but weren't.

"It's everybody's problem," she said of the violence.



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Wednesday

Top Shelf Night, 7-12. \$2 Top Shelf, \$1.25 well drinks. Dance lessons with Troy at 7:30pm.

Thursday

The Original 1/2 Price Night, 7-12. 1/2 Price on everything. Renegades practice night.

Friday

Start your weekend at Charlies. Sunburst Squares practice night.

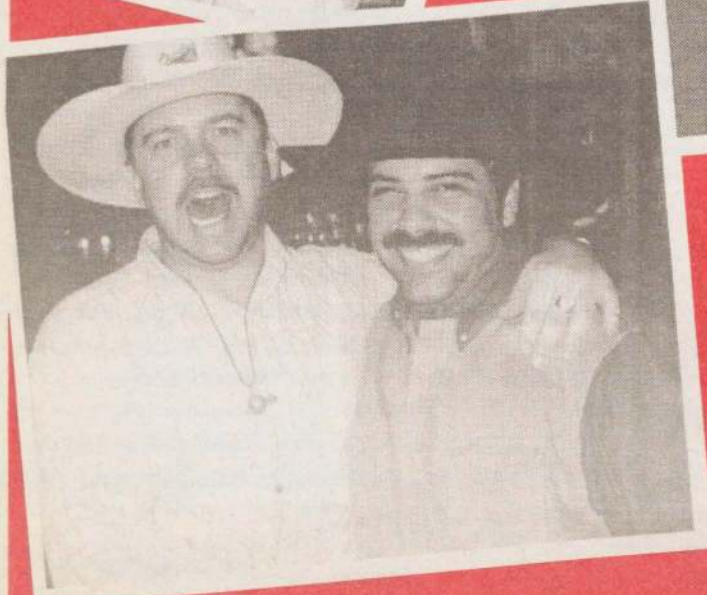
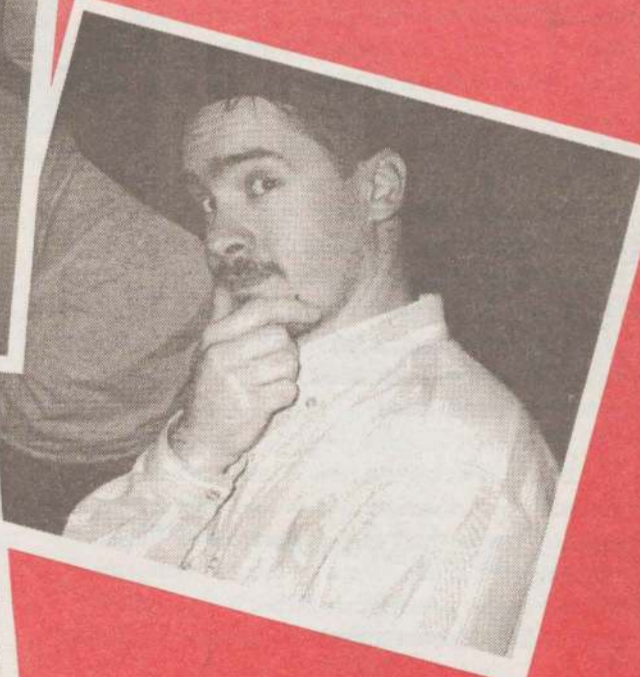
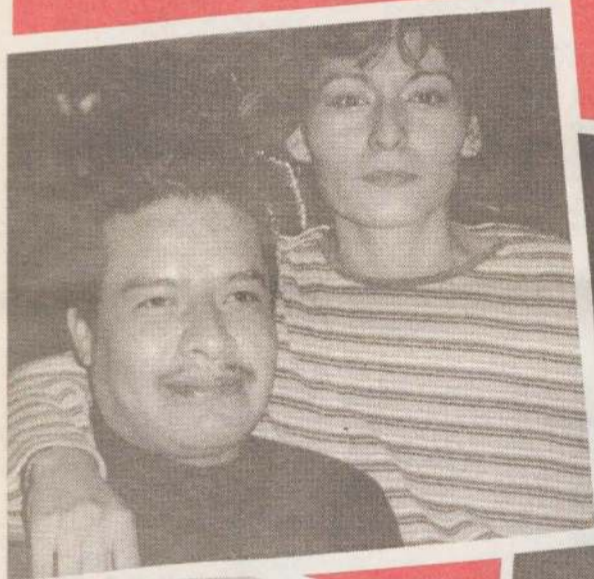
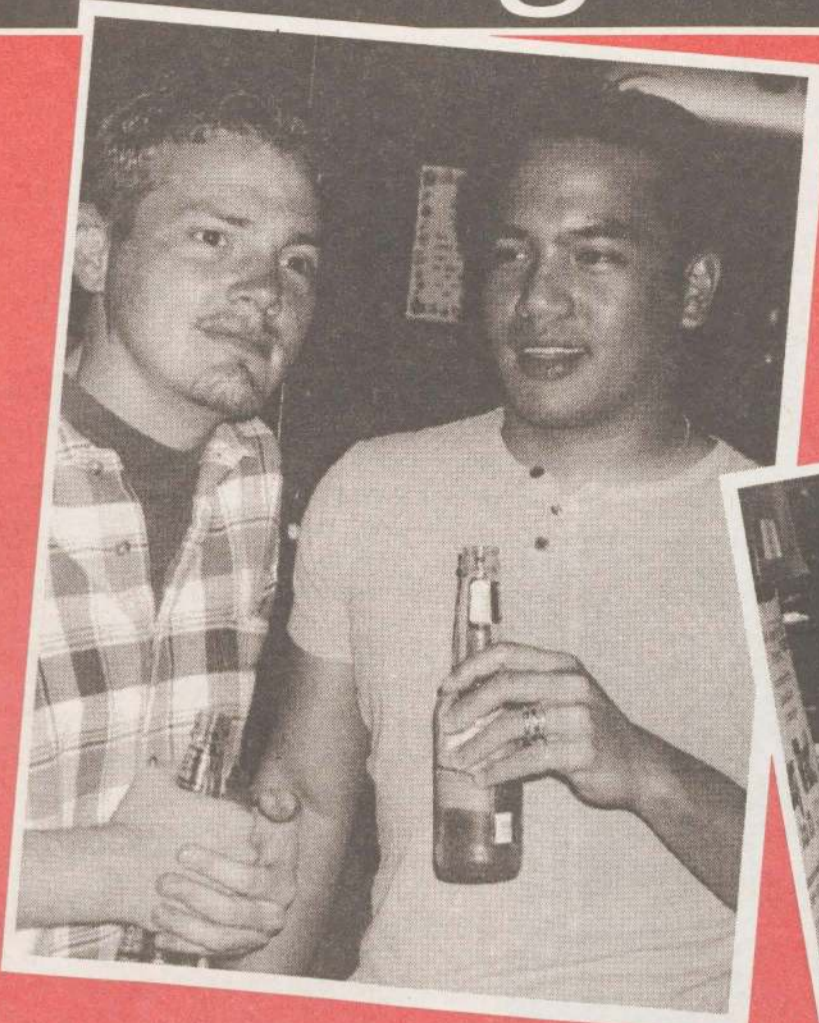
Saturday

\$1 well drinks, 12-7pm. Free pool/darts 3pm. Dance lessons with Marque at 7:30pm.

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Seeing / being scene



Charlie's
Latin Night

ASU prof. pens off-Broadway hit

continued from page 1

émigré who became a US citizen is enjoying his successes and making the most of the current wave of acceptance for his writing. "But I don't like to categorize my work, and I have written in a lot of different styles," he says.

"When I first began performing the monologues that became *Men on the Verge...*," he explains, "people compared me to Spalding Gray and Eric Bogosian." But unlike Gray or Bogosian, he also writes in other styles including family and political dramas, allegorical plays and even light, romantic comedies. He also prefers to have another actor perform the monologues he has written, especially when the actor is as talented as Pire.

"I was so excited when I saw this kid act," Reyes says. "Felix was at a workshop in LA, and I called the director and said, 'I found someone who can play this part, so that I won't have to do it myself. The director checked him out and agreed with me right away. Felix is not only very talented, but he's also very buffed and cute!'"

After his initial success in the play's LA run, Pire went on to win the New York Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Solo Performance, and nearly every prominent, East Coast reviewer has applauded the young actor for his stage presence, depth and charisma.

The *New York Times* said, "Felix A. Pire doesn't have a false moment in this glorious... play." The *Village Voice* called Reyes' writing, "pretty, unerringly witty and unabashedly gay," adding, "The collaboration between Reyes and Pire is so perfect." New York's largest Spanish-language daily, *El Diario*, said, "There is a new star in the firmament, and his name is Felix A. Pire, in the excellent piece *Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown*." The *Advocate* said "Pire is on the verge of stardom" and called the play "wonderfully written."

Men on the Verge... was produced at the Celebration Theater of Los Angeles and at Theater Rhinoceros in San Francisco before opening in New York. In LA, the production was nominated for four Ovation Awards by Theater LA, and won for Best Play in a Smaller Theater and Best Writing of a World Premiere Play in 1994. It was also a finalist in the PEN Center West Literary Awards.

Other plays by the new Tempe resident include *The Seductions of Johnny Diego* which was recently performed at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, and *Chilean Holiday* which premiered at the prestigious Actor's Theater of Louisville's Humana Festival of New American

Plays in 1996. His newest play, *Departing the Divas*, also has a gay theme. It is a finalist for a 1997 PEN Center West Literary Award.

"This is a great time for gay plays in America," Reyes says, "because we've finally gotten past only producing those gay plays where the coming-out story is the whole focus of the plot. Now, we can explore other areas of gay life, and these newer gay plays portray people with real lives and real situations beyond just that one-dimensional coming out subject. And they really get into the humor of gay men. Much of what I'm writing has that kind of humor."



Felix A. Pire as Paco, a Phoenix restaurateur, in *Men on the Verge*...

But not all of Reyes' plays have gay characters or gay themes. One new play, *A Southern Christmas*, is a romantic comedy that takes place in Santiago in 1970. The play tells the story of a nine-year old Chilean boy living with his single aunt and is set against a mixed political background. *A Southern Christmas* recently won the Third Annual Hispanic Playwriting Contest, sponsored by Arizona Theatre Company with Centro Cultural Mexicano de Phoenix.

"I draw from both memory and desire," says Reyes. "I take my experiences and then I exploit them for dramatic purposes. The writer's job is to take his own life experiences and come up with something universal. A final result with enough truth that it connects with an audience, and yet not so very personal that only a few people will relate to it— that's the trick."

And he says it can take many readings with a lot of changing and experimenting before the playwright achieves that balance. *Men on the Verge...* developed over the course of several years. Reyes wrote the first two monologues when he was still in college. He first performed an early version of *Men on the Verge...* at an international gay and lesbian theater festival in Phoenix in 1993. He calls it a funny coincidence that he premiered what has become his best-known work at a festival in the place he now calls home.

"I heard there was an opening for someone to teach playwriting at ASU," he says. "So I applied right away, and I got the job." Reyes grew up in

Washington, DC, then moved to LA where he attended high school and college. He received a Masters of Fine Arts in Theater from the University of Southern California, San Diego in 1990. He is beginning to feel at home in Tempe, he says, and appreciates the support he's gotten from the University here, both as an openly gay instructor and as a new face in the theater program.

"There is a lot of potential for exciting theater in the Phoenix area," he says. Though he hears the gay community's frequent complaint that Phoenix is very conservative, Reyes believes there is plenty of room for cutting-edge theater here. He says changes are already taking place to some degree. "People have to support what we have, like some of the really interesting things they do at Planet Earth." The Central Phoenix theater company he mentions is known for producing original, provocative and often gay themed plays.

One thing he misses from Los Angeles, he says, is the kind of after hours theater scene that is popular with the gay community in Southern California. "I would like to see a late-night, cabaret scene develop here," he says, "if some of the gay clubs would present that kind of thing and you could get the community to support it, like they do in LA, that would be a positive step. It's a great way to try out new plays and for the performers to try new things."

The prolific writer takes pride in his work but "doesn't make a big deal" of his recent string of theatrical successes, rave reviews and writing awards. He has not visited the 47th Street Theater since *Men on the Verge...* opened there on March 19, preferring to keep track of the box office by phone. When asked why he isn't out enjoying himself at New York cocktail parties and hobnobbing with other gay theater intellectuals on the East Coast, he just laughs and says, "I have other things I need to do."

Those "other things," he says, include working on new plays and a busy summer filled with readings and adjusting works-in-progress. There will be a reading in Phoenix in July of his play *The Hispanic Zone*. It is another series of comic monologues on immigrant Latin families adjusting to life in the US with "some of the gay experience thrown in— it has a little taste of everything."

Asked whether he would even be writing plays if he still lived in Chile, Reyes sighs. "Who knows?" he wonders. "I probably could not be writing plays about gay men, and I certainly couldn't be as political. Much of my work has a slant that would probably not be approved of by the Chilean government, though I understand the political and artistic climate is getting a little better there."

Reyes says he is looking forward to the upcoming year at ASU, when *Departing the Divas*, his new play about a border guard with a penchant for gowns, will be performed here as part of the University's 1997-98 season.

Meanwhile, the audience for the off Broadway production of *Men on the Verge of a His-Panic Breakdown* continues to grow. Both gay and mainstream publications have called the play a must-see, and the current run is open-ended.

"That means it will play New York as long as it keeps making money," the writer laughs. "And so far, it is doing pretty well."

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Out of Town:

Denver by night

By Andrew Collins, HeatStroke Contributor

A strength of Denver's nightlife is its tremendous variety. Depending on what you're looking for, you can take any of several distinct routes for an ideal night on the town. In general, the only drawback you'll find is that restaurants, lounges, and discos are nowhere close enough together to tour on foot. Taxis and public transportation are a less-than-practical way to get around, meaning you'll probably have to drive among venues.

For dining, you'll find plenty of great options. If you and your partner are here on somebody's expense account - or it's a special occasion and you don't mind plunking down big bucks for dinner - drive about 15 minutes east of downtown to Tante Louise, a venerable and gay-friendly institution that predates the age of overly trendy theme restaurants and places a premium on romance and at-your-every-whim service. The menu adroitly blends contemporary American with updated country French cuisine.

Denver's revitalized LoDo neighborhood (as in Lower Downtown) is a good source of tasty fare at more reasonable prices. A favorite among young artsy queers is the City Spirit Cafe, a wacked-out-looking beer hall and eatery that looks as though Pee Wee Herman had a hand in its design. Come to nosh on cheap pasta, healthful veggie dishes, and a few Mexican specialties. The city's top bargain, however, is the old-fashioned saloon at McCormick's Fish House and Oyster Bar, which is in the swank old Oxford Hotel. During two daily happy hours (one before and one just after the dinner rush), the bar offers a surprisingly sophisticated menu of light dishes for a couple of dollars apiece—the mussels and fish tacos are particularly good.

For a decidedly gayer dining experience, head to South Broadway, a few blocks south of downtown. Many queer businesses have opened along this unprepossessing stretch in recent years, especially as the once downcast LoDo has gone upmarket. A favorite haunt among homos and heteros is Club 404, a low-key eatery that specializes in one of Denver's trademark dishes: juicy steak. While Club 404 won't give the owners of Morton's of Chicago any reason to fear, it does offer some of the least expensive red meat in town. Another hub of South Broadway's gay social scene, Basil Ristorante Italiano offers freshly made pastas at fair prices. The cigar room is a big hit with lesbians. Aubergine, an intimate but informal French Mediterranean bistro, is not far from South Broadway and has plenty of wonderful dishes under \$10.

Berlin looks back at 100 years of gay rights movement

BERLIN (AP)

Hundreds of thousands of gays and lesbians march each year around the world in parades commemorating the 1969 riots at New York City's Stonewall Inn that galvanized the gay rights movement.

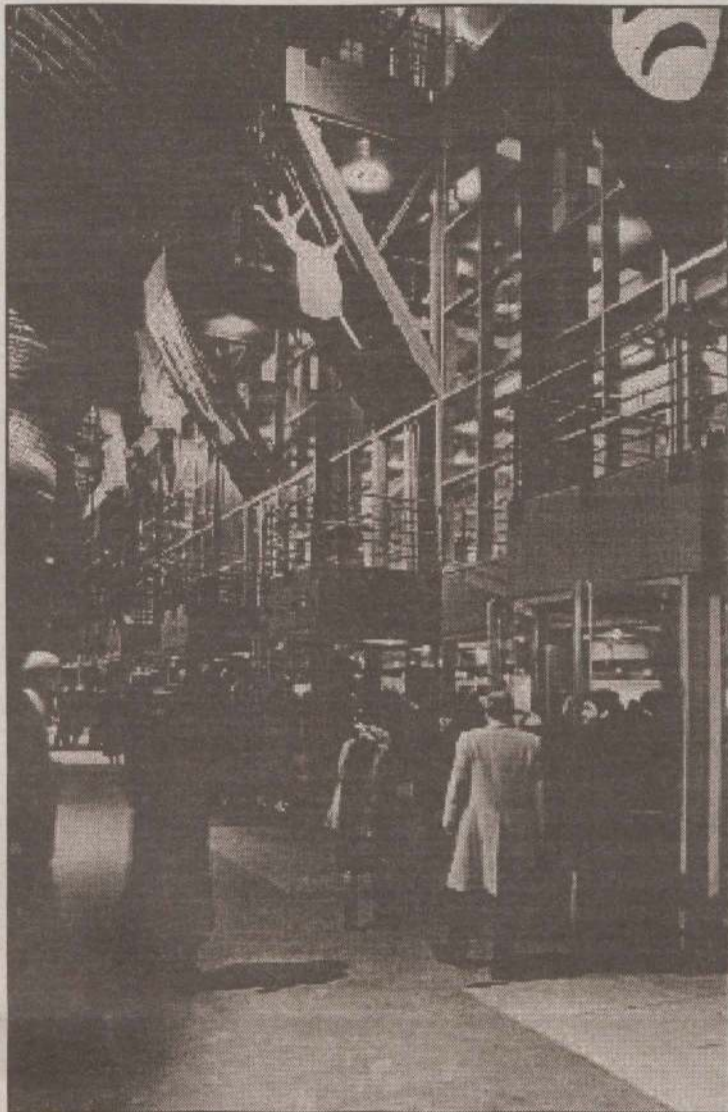
Yet many historians say the modern struggle for acceptance and an end to discrimination actually started 100 years ago — in Berlin.

A summer-long exhibit at the Academy of the Arts, *Goodbye to Berlin? 100 Years of the Gay Rights Movement*, documents the events since May 15, 1897, when Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld founded what many believe is the world's first gay rights organization in his Berlin apartment.

With 1,400 exhibits, the show chronicles the early efforts of Hirschfeld's Scientific-Humanitarian Committee to have homosexuality decriminalized.

It also covers the flamboyance of 1920s Berlin, followed by the "Terror and Persecution" of the

Visitors should plan to dedicate at least a night of their stay to Denver's first-rate, although somewhat unsung, theater and music scene. Some of the top events are held at the high-tech Denver Performing Arts Complex, which is the second-largest such space in the nation (trailing only New York City's Lincoln Center). The city also has several acclaimed repertory theaters.



Take in a show at the renowned Denver Performing Arts Complex, the second-largest such facility in the U.S.

For cocktails, the after-work set settle at The Grand, an elegant cocktail bar with a huge stone fireplace and a friendly bunch of guppies. Both welcome men and women, but the Grand is mostly guys. Another rather recent option is the Snake Pit, a very Seattle-ish GenX-inspired club with alternative music and a grungy crowd to match.

Women are welcome at most of the boys' bars but also have a few popular clubs largely to themselves. Just west of downtown, the Elle is a high-energy mostly lesbian dance bar that's open Wednesday through Sunday and always packs a hip crowd - the Saturday-night go-go dancers are

pretty spicy. Right on Capitol Hill, the Denver Detour is more casual, with a big draw earlier in the evening; plenty of guys like it here, too. Ms. C's, a great women's country-western dance bar, is a good 20-minute drive east of downtown, but kd lang devotees find that it's worth the trip. Alas, Three Sisters (aka "Six Tits"), one of the longest running women's bars in the country, closed its doors last October.

Later in the evening, most of the guys and a decent number of women end up at one of the major dance clubs, such as Proteus - a slick-looking disco with polished-wood dance floors, several elegant seating areas, and a diverse crowd; or Charlie's, Denver's hot spot for line-dancing and two-stepping, and also a good place for a casual dinner. More recently, the once-famous '80s disco, Tracks, was reopened by its original owners in a great space right behind Coors Field. Saturday's high-energy parties are frantically popular; Fridays and Sundays are also big.

As for sleazier venues, Denver has a few of these, too. Cruisy guys pile into the Compound most nights for great dancing and a low-attitude, racially mixed crowd—this is a very fun nightclub if you're in the mood. The Triangle, for the serious leather crowd, has a big after-hours following and a notoriously frisky basement. And Midtowne Spa is the more popular of the town's two gay bathhouses.

Andrew Collins is the author of Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA, three recently released gay guides covering the West Coast, and forthcoming gay guides on New York City, South Florida, and Amsterdam. He can be reached care of HeatStroke or at OutofTown9@aol.com.

The Little Black Book (Denver's area code is 303):

Aubergine (225 E. 7th Ave., 832-4778). Basil Ristorante Italiano (30 S. Broadway, 698-1413). Charlie's (900 E. Colfax Ave., 839-8890). City Spirit Cafe (1434 Blake St., 575-0022). Club 404 (404 Broadway, 778-9605). Club Proteus (1669 Clarkson St., 869-4637). Compound (145 S. Broadway, 722-7977). Denver Detour (551 E. Colfax Ave., 861-1497). Denver Performing Arts Complex (14th and Curtis Sts., 893-4000). The Elle (716 W. Colfax Ave., 572-1710). The Grand (538 E. 17th Ave., 839-5390). McCormick's Fish House and Oyster Bar (1659 Wazee St., 825-1107). Midtowne Spa (2935 Zuni St., 458-8902). Ms. C's (7900 E. Colfax Ave., 322-4436). Snake Pit (608 E. 13th Ave., 831-1234). Tante Louise (4900 E. Colfax Ave., 355-4488). Tracks (2975 Fox St., 292-6600). The Triangle (2036 N. Broadway, 293-9009).

Nazi era, the rebirth of the movement in the United States and Europe up to today's AIDS crisis.

Portraits by gay artists David Hockney and Andy Warhol of gay writers Christopher Isherwood and Truman Capote mix with newspaper clippings, police reports, old photos and video clips.

"The exhibit gives us a chance to put this day (the Stonewall riot) in a historical perspective," said exhibit director Andreas Sternweiler. "Without the past, you can't define yourself today."

On June 28, marchers parading through the heart of Berlin passed a stage with actors dressed as historical figures, including a concentration camp prisoner branded with the pink triangle the Nazis forced homosexual inmates to wear.

James Steakley, a professor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and author of "The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany," estimates tens of thousands of homosexuals died in Nazi concentration camps.

After the war, the harsh Nazi law criminalizing homosexuality remained on the books in West Germany until 1969.

"People had to live in fear of being arrested when they openly stated that they were gay," says museum spokesman Albert Eckert. "That meant that most of what had been in the second World War or before tended to be forgotten."

One gay concentration camp survivor, who kept the reason for his imprisonment a secret for decades after the war, came to Berlin to speak about his experience and participate in the weekend celebrations.

"You have to keep working so that it doesn't return — Nazism and fascism," said Pierre Seel, 74, of Toulouse, France.

"On the one hand we have more freedom today. On the other, when you see how the politics are going, then the work isn't finished."

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k.d. lang speaks: her art, technique, & sexuality

NEW YORK (AP)

It was a long way from the cowboy bars of Western Canada.

Dressed in a sleek, pinstriped suit, k.d. lang was working a swanky party in her honor on Central Park South in Manhattan. Tuxedoed servers offered up caviar. Madonna sat at a table making small talk with friends.

lang stood under a spotlight holding a microphone, in front of her long-time piano player. She sang a half-hour's worth of songs from her new album, *Drag*.

She looked right at home, soaking up the big-city audience's adoration. lang began her career fronting a turbo-charged band that shook up the country establishment and has evolved into one of her generation's premiere torch singers.

Along the way, she became an icon in the gay community. Her eyes still getting used to the morning light, lang sat by the empty bar of a Manhattan hotel for an interview.

Q. You reportedly were not happy with how your record company got behind your last album, All You Can Eat. Do you think that's why it didn't do as well as Ingenue, or was it because it wasn't your best work?

lang: That's just artist bitterness, I think. You can't win them all. I think it's my best work in certain aspects but not my best in other aspects. Every record has its ups and downs... It was a really big record for me personally, for personal transition reasons. It's over now. It's still a good

record and I'm proud of it. It's still there. People can still buy it.

Q. How much work goes into keeping your voice in shape and improving your singing style?

lang: It's a 100 percent, lifestyle-encompassing process. It's everything that I do. It's being extremely disciplined. It's being not-so-disciplined that you feel burdened by it. It's understanding that there's always room to improve. It's understanding that it's a huge responsibility to have a voice, both mentally and spiritually and compassionately — something you have to pay attention to and do your very best. I really do see it as a gift.

Q. Do you take lessons when you want to master another style? How do you study it?

lang: The only classical training I had was when I was in college. Now when I want to study a style, I listen to it and think about it and try it somewhere in my car — somewhere private. I really just listen and try to study the emotion of it and the essence of it.

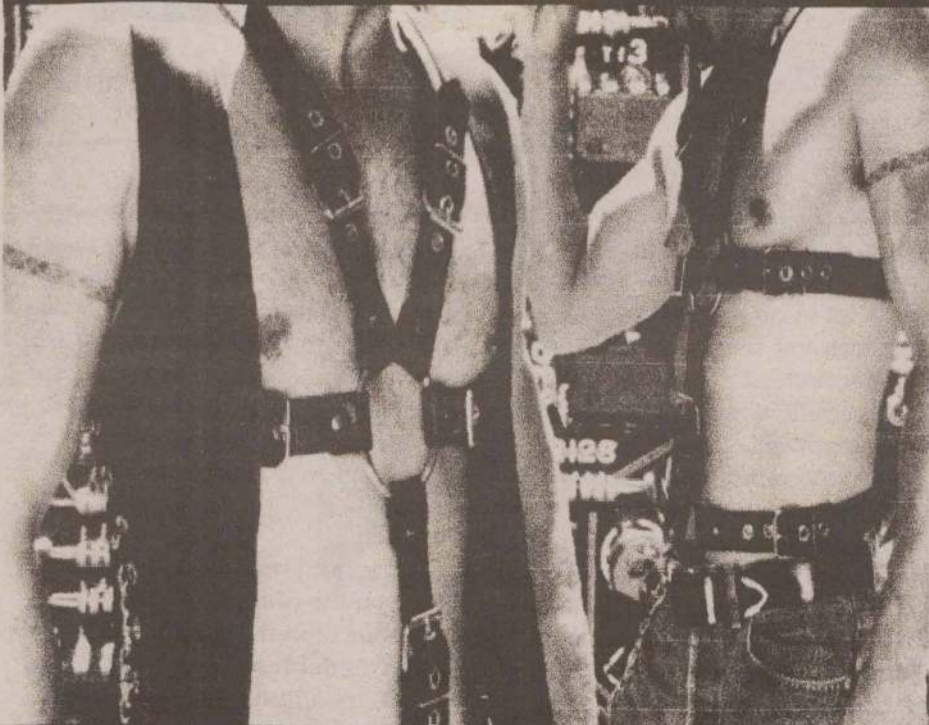
Q. What was it like to participate in the coming out episode of Ellen?

lang: It was fun. I've known Ellen for six or seven years so for me, it was more like supporting the person, supporting Ellen, my friend, to come out.

Q. What's been the fallout from your own decision to come out? Any regrets?

lang: No regrets, total emancipation. It was a totally positive experience.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON



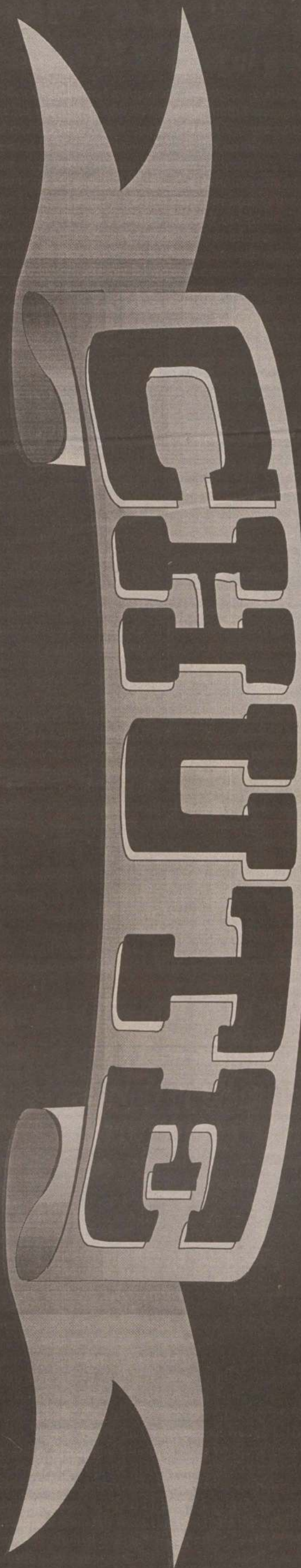
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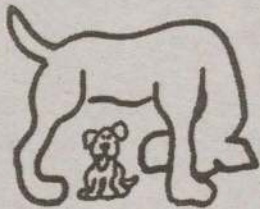
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Dear Cowboy,

I am a 19-year old guy about to go into the military in the Fall. When I enlisted over a year ago, I didn't really think about sex or anything like that.

Since then, I have had a couple sexual experiences with men. I guess I would describe myself as bisexual. If I join the service, I am afraid of what might happen if anyone finds out. Sometimes I want to change my mind and not go. But a big part of me still wants to join for all the reasons I signed up in the first place. Anyway it's too late to back out now without causing a huge mess. I don't want to hurt anyone. What should I do?

Signed, Can't Even Sleep

Dear Sleepless,

If you have to ask, don't go. The first thing you ought to do is call a recruiter's office (anonymously or using an assumed name) and find out exactly what the repercussions will be if you change your mind now. There are a few loopholes that can get a fresh recruit dismissed before he even mounts up, and you need to know for sure if letting the cavalry in on this secret is one of them.

Then, you'll need to decide whether you want to pull that particular card out of your hand at this point, or if you think you can keep your poker face "straight" for at least

four years. If you do go ahead with it, you'll either have to repress those same-sex urges, or give into them and spend a lot of time lying to your bunkmates and sneaking around on your superiors. A double life isn't easy, especially when the US government is involved.

Get some counseling to help you get a grip on the bi/straight/gay issue, and talk to some gay vets for their ideas and tips on a stint in the military. Many gay men and women have had (and continue to have) great military careers, but there is a price to pay. Contact one of the community agencies and ask if they can help you find someone to talk to.

Dear Cowboy,

Since my lover and I moved in together a year ago, we have both gained about 20 pounds and it is all his fault. When I was single, I never cooked at home (I can't) and I watched what I was eating all the time. Now he insists on cooking us dinner at home every night.

He's a great cook but he's stuffing

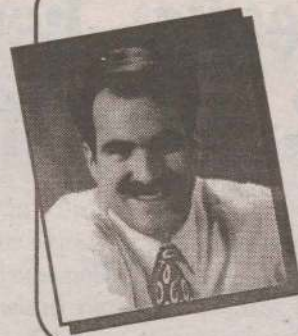
us with tons of butter and huge portions. He says that's the only way he knows how to cook. I want him to learn some low fat recipes but he says that makes food boring and that it's expected for married couples to gain a little weight. How can I get him to put us both on diets?

Signed, All New Pants

Dear Pants,

Sorry, but you can't lay all the blame on the camp cook for your own poor fit in the saddle. Instead of bitchin' about how much butter is in the pot, try a little gratitude for having someone around who can stir up the stew and heat the beans when you're hungry. Eat whatever he puts in front of you, and diet when you're alone, like at lunch and snack times.

If his helpings are too heaping, tell cookie how wonderful the grub is and then stow some away for the trail. It's your mouth, so you're responsible for what goes into it. You are a lucky cowpoke to have found a buddy who's willing to stuff you until you are full.



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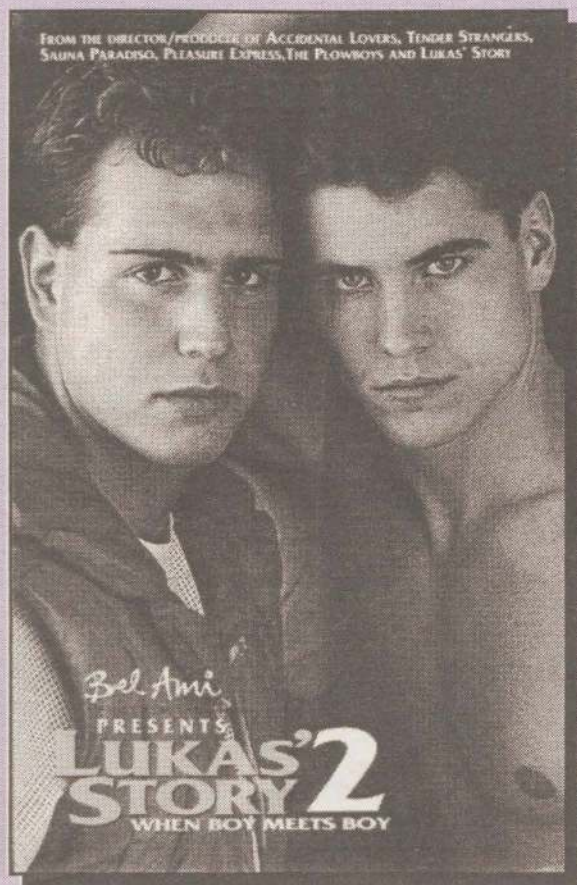
Karyn Riedell

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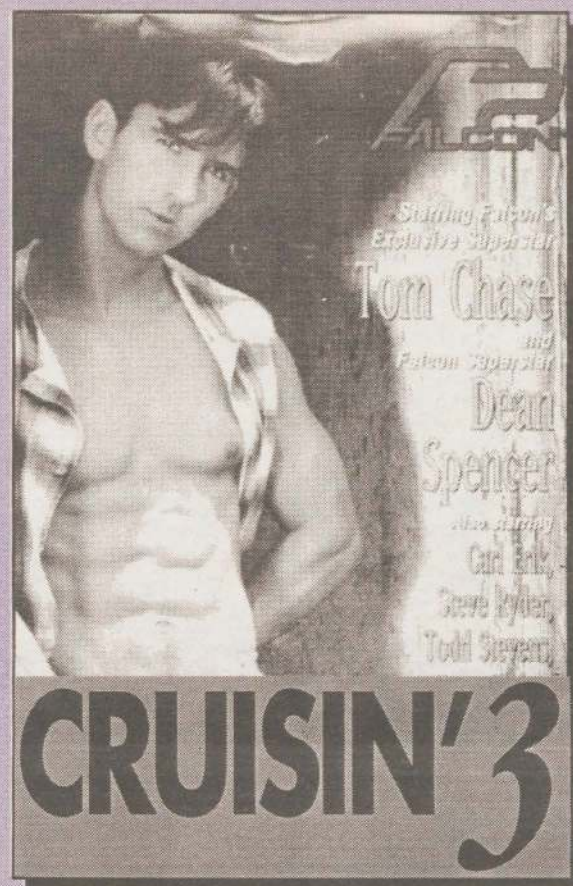
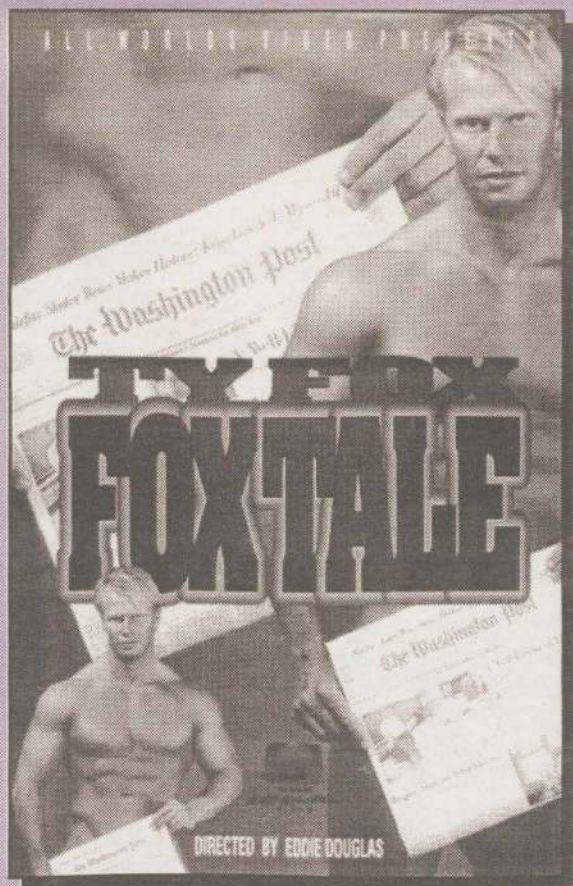
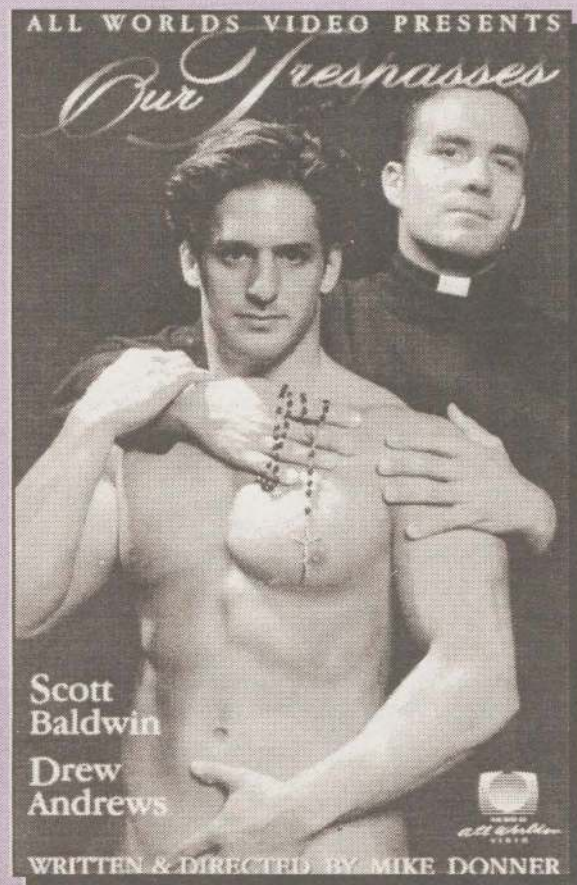
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Phoenix 277-2121

L**ibations**

1. Ain't Nobody's Bizness
3031 E. Indian School
Phoenix 224-9977

2. Apollo's
5749 N. 7th Street
Phoenix 277-9373

3. BS West
7125 5th Avenue
Scottsdale 945-9028

4. Cash Inn
2140 E. McDowell
Phoenix 244-9943

5. Charlie's
727 W. Camelback
Phoenix 265-0224

6. Country Club
4428 N. 7th Ave.
Phoenix 264-4553

7. Cruisin' Central
1011 N. Central Ave.
Phoenix 253-3376

8. Desert Rose
44301 N. 7th Ave.
Phoenix 265-3233

9. Foster's
4343 N. 7th Ave.
Phoenix 263-8313

10. Fundy's
15601 N. Cave Creek
Phoenix 493-5123

11. Harley's Club 155
Harley's Too!
155 & 125 W. Camelback
Phoenix 274-8505

12. Incognito
2424 E. Thomas
Phoenix 955-9805

13. JC's Fun One
5542 N. 43rd Ave.
Glendale 939-0528

14. Johnny Mc's
138 W. Camelback
Phoenix 266-0875

15. Marly's
15615 Cave Creek
Phoenix 867-2463

16. Nasty Habits
3108 E. McDowell
Phoenix 267-8707

17. NuTowne
5002 E. Van Buren
Phoenix 267-9959

18. The Park
3002 N. 24th Street
Phoenix 957-6055

19. The Pumphouse
4132 E. McDowell
Phoenix 275-3509

20. Roscoe's
4531 N. 7th St.
Phoenix 285-0833

21. 307 Lounge
222 E. Roosevelt
Phoenix 252-0001

22. TRAX
1724 E. McDowell
Phoenix 254-0231

23. The Wave
998 E. Indian School
Phoenix 266-5640

24. Wink's
5707 N. 7th St.
Phoenix 265-9002

S**taples**

25. Arizona Alternatives
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Phoenix 840-5990

26. Astro — Vintage Modern
Furnishings
2403 E. Osborn
Phoenix 957-8770

27. The Barn Adult Shop
5021 W Indian School
Phoenix 245-3008

28. Book Cellar - 8 locations
4029 E. Washington
1020 S. 24th Street
1838 Grand Avenue
3420 S. Central Avenue
2103 W. Camelback Rd.
402 W. Hatcher
1421 E. McDowell Rd.
6527 N. 59th Avenue

29. Castle Boutique-4 locations
5501 E. Washington
300 E. Camelback Rd.
8802 N. Black Canyon
8315 E. Apache Trail

30. Chemistry
4532 N. 7th Street
Phoenix 277-8625

31. Dwellings
24 W. Camelback
Phoenix 248-4959

32. Obelisk Books
24 West Camelback
Phoenix 266-Book

33. Movies on Central
4700 N. Central #121
Phoenix 274-0994

T**ubs**

34. Chute
1440 E. Indian School
Phoenix 234-1654

35. Flex
1517 S. Black Canyon
Phoenix 271-9011

C**ulture**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

O**utdoors**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

88. South Mountain Park &
Preserve
10919 S. Central Ave.
Phoenix 495-0222

Finding it in Phoenix

