

MID-DECEMBER
2003

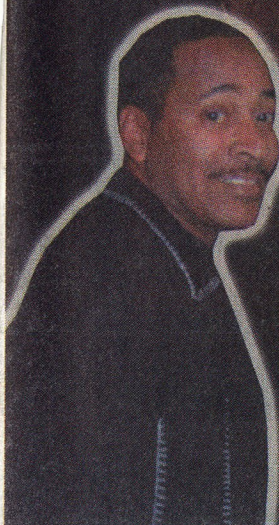
FAMILY

& friends

THE LION KING

A woman is the central focus, wearing a large, detailed lion's mane costume around her head and neck. She has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a pink top and a patterned, beaded skirt. Her right hand is resting on a lion's tail.

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14 1 & 6:30 PM	15	16 7:30 PM	17 7:30 PM	18 7:30 PM	19 8 PM	20 2 & 8 PM
21 1 & 6:30 PM	22 7:30 PM	23 7:30 PM	24 2 PM	25	26 8 PM	27 2 & 8 PM
28 1 & 6:30 PM	29	30 7:30 PM	31 7:30 PM			

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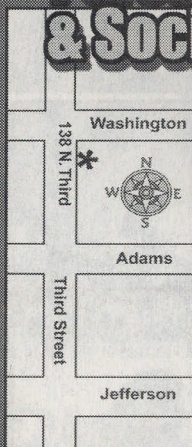
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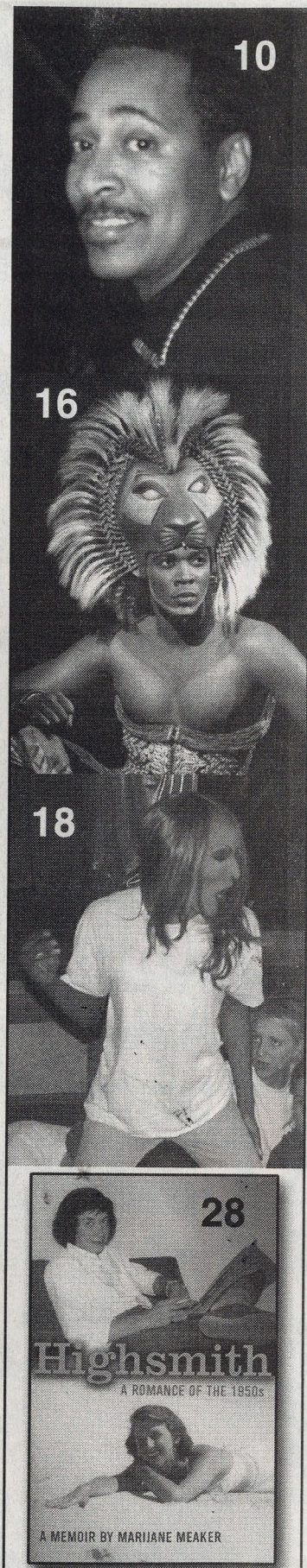
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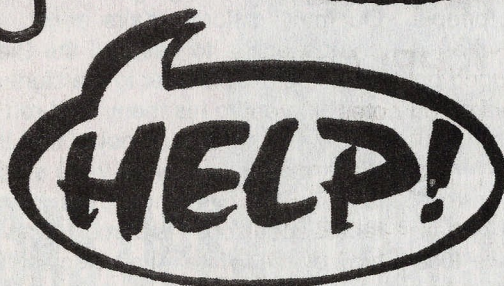
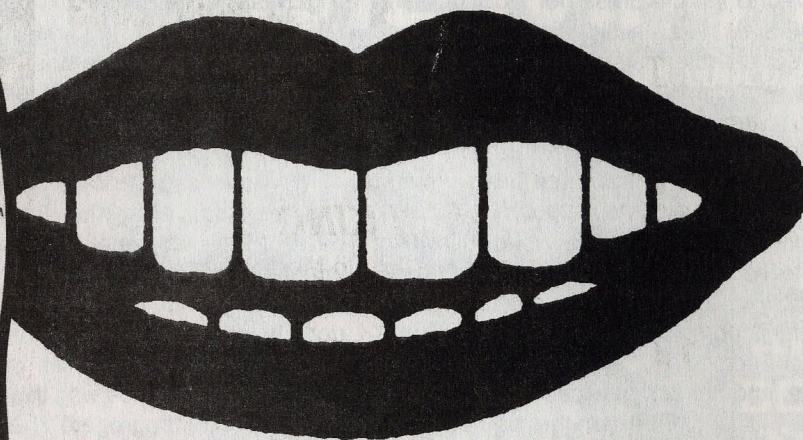
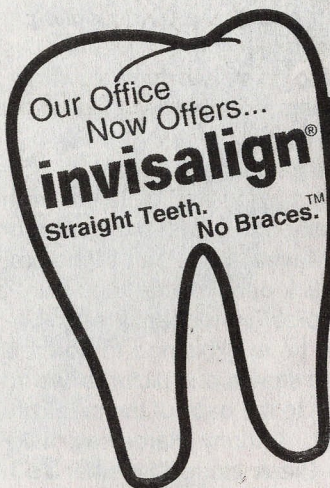
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Political Correctness: Good, bad or both?

We were recently attending a World AIDS Day event and were talking to one of the organizers of the event. It was sad to see this person stumble all over their words trying to be politically correct in referring to a young lady who had signed a waiver and volunteered to tell the press her story of being a person living with AIDS. At no time did this organizer use the word HIV-positive, but used terms such as self-identified, etc. We, being familiar with the "language," knew what she was talking about, but wondered if our mainstream colleagues would be confused.

Perhaps we, as part of a community where this virus first took hold, are just used to saying HIV, AIDS, positive, etc. But that doesn't excuse a primary organizer of a World AIDS Day event from appearing to be ashamed of saying the "words" about a disease that is now ravaging the heterosexual community, as well. But, even if this person wasn't ashamed, and was being merely politically correct, her PC language had rendered her statement ineffective, and her communication impotent.

We once heard the phrase, "One can be so heavenly-minded, that they are no earthly good." Sometimes, people can quote scripture and preach all day long, but when it comes down to it, they are ineffective in doing any good on earth, especially for those in need of a comforting word, a hot meal, clean clothes or the knowledge that they are empowered by Jesus Christ.

We think that can apply to the world of political correctness, as well. Sometimes, we get so wrapped up in syntax, connotations or alternate meanings of words that we lose sight of the purpose of being politically correct in the first place. Being politically correct overrides the reason for speaking in the first place, to communicate.

Of course, using words to hurt someone, be profane or just plain rude is just that, rude. Political correctness police are not needed when people speak out of hatred and evilness. Common sense tells us they are wrong.

We often deal with political correctness issues here at

Family & Friends.

We were recently asked by one person not to make reference to specific "minority" communities in one story. However, we felt that we needed to address all our readers, regardless of race, about the subject matter of the article. We felt that a pattern of addressing everything to the white population and adding the brief statement, "minorities are welcome too," was wrong. We felt to do so was to marginalize a group of our community members and that was wrong. We are all equal in our Memphis GLBT community.

We have had a couple of people, who are white, suggest that we stop putting the "Black stories and pictures" in the back of the magazine. We totally agree with the concept of integration. But, then it hit us. Maybe that is part of the problem, letting white people tell black people what they want or don't want. Hasn't that been a problem for centuries?

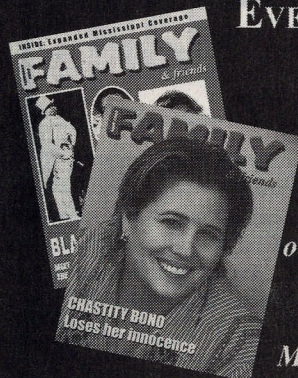
Let us go on record, as we have explained to so many, when we started receiving those stories and pictures, we had no intention to "segregate" them to the back of the magazine. Our multi-cultural affairs editor, Anthony Hardaway, asked and asked us to keep all the Black stories together so he would be able to refer to the stories and pictures easier when reaching out to his many "chil-ren." So we agreed.

One friend of ours noted that the Tuskegee Trials, where Black men with syphilis were studied over several decades, is perceived by some as a subject that is not politically correct to speak on. It is perceived as a victimization of the Black man by the White man for scientific purposes. And you know what, it probably was. And we now know how foolish our white forefathers were in their poor scientific ways. However, the truth of the whole situation needs to be told ... good or bad. We need to talk about it so that the unknown and falsehoods which create fear are exposed. It is said, you shall know the truth and it will set you free. Let us discuss it for

See And Your Point, page 12

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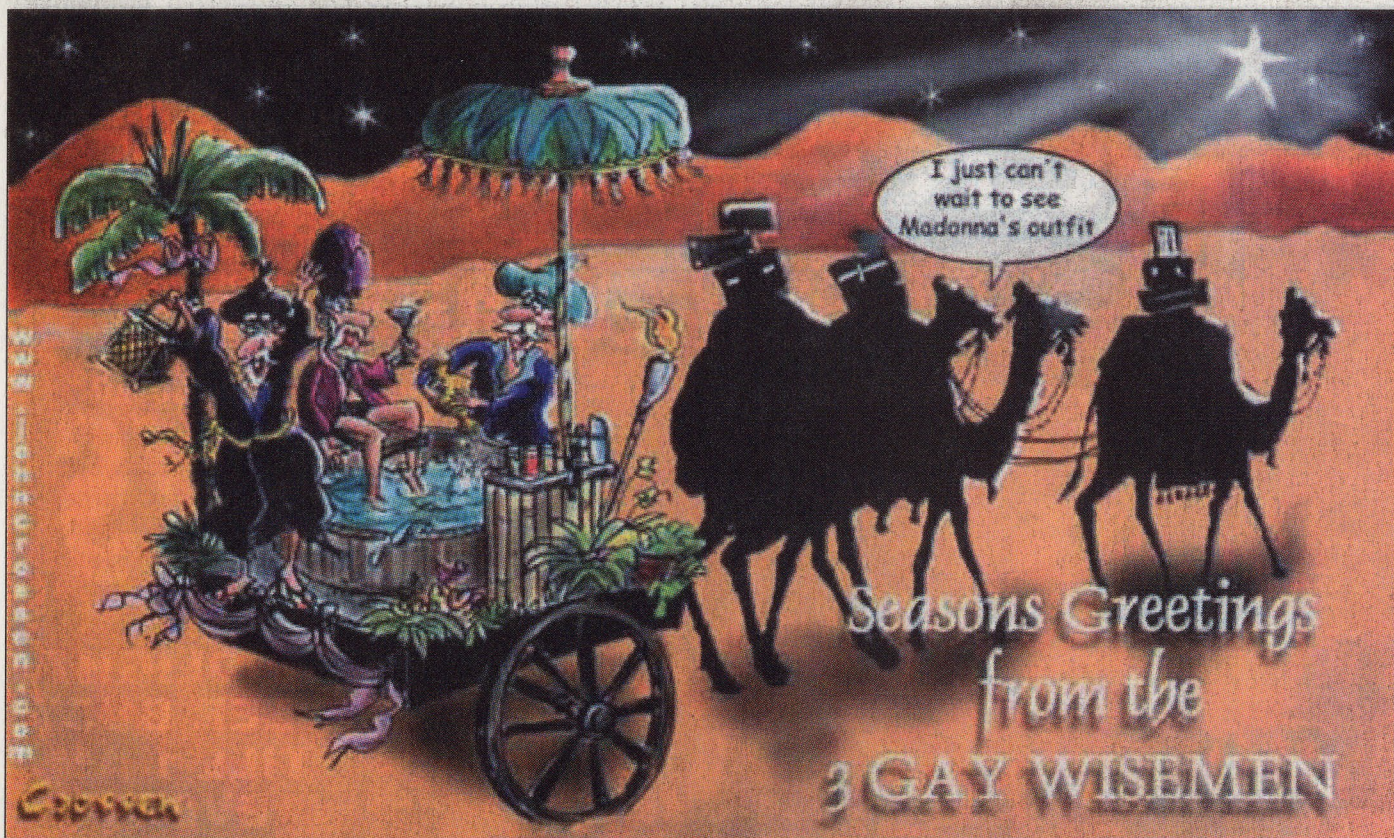
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Memphis club owner looks back at his life

By ANITA MOYT, managing editor

Once there was a young boy. He was walking to the corner store with his father one day. His daddy nudged him, "Hey, that little girl up there is looking at you." The little boy, suddenly overwhelmed, sat down on the street curb and started to cry. A tall man passed by the pair as the father tried to comfort his son, not knowing what the problem was. The little boy looked up at the passerby and said, "He's cute." With that the father marched his young son home where he promptly disciplined him with a lesson that "boys like girls and girls like boys" and a whipping to boot.

Terryl Buckner, now 42, was in the fourth grade when he realized his same-gender-attraction. Buckner grew up in South Memphis, near Mississippi & Walker Avenues.

"In high school I was very popular," Buckner told *Family & Friends*. "I was one of the biggest flirts, both with boys and girls. I was the class clown. But I was very quiet in the classroom. I was very shy in school. ... All the girls in school liked me. But I wouldn't date them.

"In 1979 I came out," Buckner continued, divulging a not-so-funny-at-the-time recollection. "It was a year before I was to graduate high school. My friend kept a diary with lots of details. He also had a girlfriend on the side. She got hold of the diary and read it and spread (what it said) all over campus. Me, my friend, everyone whose name was in the diary and the girl who got hold of the diary all got called to the principals office. It was a mess!"

Once outed, Buckner was amazingly bold about being a gay senior at Carver High School.

"In 1980, I went to the (senior) prom with my boyfriend, Darnelle," Buckner said. "Everyone's mouth just flew open. I had two weeks left in school. I had already passed so I didn't care what they said. It was over for me."

Buckner went on to cosmetology school where he became a licensed nail technician. Buckner today owns Visions Hair and Nail Spa.

Buckner, also the owner of Club Allusions Entertainment Complex, located at 3204 North Thomas in the Northgate Shopping Center, was familiar with the gay club scene from an early age.

"I was underage," Buckner confessed. "Back then, 18 was the legal drinking age. It was how you carried yourself and who you were with that got you in the bars. If you were with (known) trouble-makers, you couldn't get in the clubs. When I was 16, Lady Ruby befriended me and she introduced me to the club scene."

So, how did Buckner get started in running his series of gay clubs during the past couple of decades?

"I was a bartender at a straight club on Beale Street," Buckner said, explaining his first job in the club world. "I watched the way they ran the club; it was a great attraction for me.

"I worked in a clothes store for 12 years," Buckner said, explaining his daytime job. "(I also) managed Pure Passions. The owners of Pure Passions also owned a club called the

Groove Train at 227 Monroe. That club eventually closed due to a death at the club. I went to the owners and negotiated to open up Club Escape at (that location). They gave me \$300 petty cash. I asked the beer company to hold my check from that Friday to Monday. I had to clean up that place real good. I opened up on Saturday night. It was standing-room-only; we did so well.

"As time went on, (I felt) the owners got greedy; they wanted to put me on a salary and the rest of the money from Club Escape went to the owners," Buckner said, explaining how he transitioned to his next club, Club N-cognito.

"It took a month to locate a building and it took every dime I had," Buckner said. "I found 338 South Front and opened up Club N-cognito in 30 days. I had a friend, who is my partner here (Club Allusions) now and borrowed money from him. We had a successful eight years at Club N-cognito. Then we decided to move to, of all places, to Frayser, and opened Club Allusions."

Seeing a need for the black gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community members to have a safe and welcome place to celebrate Gay Pride each June, Buckner also established Memphis Black Gay Pride, which is now part of

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Terryl Buckner

Memphis club owner

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The International Federation of Black Prides. The weekend includes not only events at the club but Sunday is set aside for a picnic at Te-To-Tam Ranch, which is totally rented out for the "kids" to have a safe place to go and have fun.

During the years, one Memphis gay bar owner, Sharon Wray, owner of The Madison Flame and The Jungle, has been an inspiration to Buckner.

"I knew Sharon Wray from (her former bars) the Pendulum and Psych Out but I didn't actually meet her until I managed Club Escape," Buckner recollected. "I looked up to Sharon in the club industry; she was different than other club owners and she would sit down and talk with me. She said I was the new kid on the block. She welcomed me into the gay community. We can work together. When she goes through things, I kinda go through them with her. ... She is my gay mother if I have one."

Buckner did tell us things are not always as they appear. He feels responsible for those "kids" who find a welcome place at Club Allusions. He also feels those "kids" don't know the whole story of his life.

"A lot of kids put me on a pedestal," Buckner said, explaining one of the things he finds troublesome. "My life is not what people think it is. I can be in the midst of 1,000 people and be so lonely. I don't think I'm all that."

"I had a loving family who gave me everything," Buckner said, explaining how similar his life has been to many who have frequented his clubs. "As I got older, though, I wouldn't go to them for help. I was in the streets making money and addicted to cocaine and selling it. I was homeless for a time, living out of my car."

"The kids don't know me and they don't know about me killing myself and not going home," he continued. "I was doing what many (club) kids are doing now. I was living here and there."

So what happened? How did a homeless man go to owning Memphis's premiere black gay club?

"I was sick and tired of being sick and tired," Buckner said. "I left the whole scene for six months and checked myself into a treatment facility. When I came back, I knew I had to do something. So I began Club Escape. I was basically getting my life in order when Escape opened."

So, what is Buckner's business, if not life, philosophy?

"I don't do people wrong because I don't want people to do me wrong," Buckner said. "... When I opened the club I said I wanted it to be safe and my employees nice. I didn't want a mean staff. I knew how I wanted to be treated and that is how I treat others." Buckner also noted that, as a business owner, he has to remain neutral when there are disagreements and altercations at his club. "I have to be neutral and can't take sides."

"Some don't want me to do good," Buckner said, acknowledging the dark side of running any business.

"There is so much jealousy in the gay community," he continued his thoughts. "We hate each other so much and don't tell each other we love unconditionally. We need to stick together. ... Kids take life as a joke. But we went to work and paid the bills. Two days a week we acted a fool. A lot of kids drop out of school and follow the wrong crowd. ... And the older generation kicks (talks bad about) the younger gay

community instead of trying to help."

For those who claim Buckner has not given back to the gay community, Buckner had these comments.

"I never wanted to be on the front," Buckner said, explaining that the public may never be aware of all that he has done for the Memphis gay community, especially the Black GLBT community. "What I do is not to be publicized. I hold a lot in and I tell it to God and leave it alone," he said. "I can't take the chance of telling someone and risk them telling others. I don't have to boost and boast. I keep it personal and private."

And that leads to another topic of concern for Buckner, the changing face of AIDS.

"Kids take the 'new disease' (HIV) as a joke," Buckner commented. "They think, 'I am too fine and sexy for this disease.' They have no fear. They haven't seen their friends dying of AIDS like we did. I've lost so many to AIDS and to tragic deaths. (It should be noted that Buckner footed the bill to bury more than one of these deceased friends.) ... Many in junior and senior high school are so curious. They are exposed to so much on TV and in songs. They are willing to try anything. Some are not telling the truth (that they are HIV positive) and that is how it (HIV) is being spread around. ... Many are not thinking ... they still aren't having safe sex."

"It is important that (we) tell these kids to go to school and get something out of life," Buckner admonished. "I don't want to sell sex. I want Allusions Entertainment Complex to be a place to party and educate. Anthony 'Lady Bug' Hardaway is here every weekend handing out condoms."

Tiona Kouvosier is the show manager for ladies' night on Friday at the club. She also holds a special place in Buckner's heart.

"Two 'kids' I really know and who love me unconditionally are Armani and Tiona Kouvosier," Buckner said. "They are real special. I never took the 'gay family' thing serious, but when they got married (I finally did). Tiona had asked that I walk her down the aisle and give her away. I didn't think she was serious. But she kept asking me if I had got my tux and things. ... They love me and look up to me. I enjoy spending time with them."

So, where does Buckner's real (blood) family fit into the picture now?

"My real (blood) family accepts Armani and Tiona and anyone I bring to the house," Buckner said, explaining how supportive his family has been for him. "My mother is a queen. She accepts all my friends."

And, what about that daddy who disciplined his young son so many years ago?

"My dad, who is now deceased, once said to me, 'I love you and no matter what you want to be, be the best you can.' He was old school and showed his love. He didn't often say he loved me, but I knew it."

And perhaps it is the lesson Buckner's sister is teaching her children, one that is so different than what the young Buckner heard, one many of us would be wise to heed.

"My sister taught her children (my nieces and nephews) not to judge - you don't want people to hurt your feelings, so you don't hurt their feelings," Buckner told us. "Even if you don't agree, answer for yourself."

See Memphis club owner, page 78

ZACKIE ACHMAT and the organization he founded, Treatment Action Campaign, have been nominated by the American Friends Service Committee for the NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. Gay and HIV-positive, Achmat refused to take certain AIDS drugs until they were widely available to millions of fellow South Africans. He is credited with initiating South Africa to respond to its AIDS plight.

It was good to see SHIRLEY last month at CROSSROADS, where she spent many years bartending. Shirley now resides in New Orleans.

Speaking of CROSSROADS, if we were giving out MOST HOLIDAY-SPIRITED DECORATION awards, this bar would win hands-down. The cabaret bar is filled with decorated trees, tinsel and multi-colored lights, rivaling the annual Enchanted Forest display.

Family & Friends was invited to the soft opening of SENSES, located at 2569 Poplar Avenue in the building formerly occupied by Amnesia. The new owners have spent literally millions of dollars to renovate this building into a "California-style" bar. The employees were friendly, the food was tasty and the drinks plentiful. Although the pool is long gone, the club boasts four bars in one.

As reported last month, USNA OUT filed documents on Nov. 11 with the NAVAL ACADEMY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION in Annapolis, Md., to be the first-ever gay chapter of a U.S. service academy alumni association. The Alumni Association has since denied the 32 member-USNA OUT organization to be part of their organization.

Speaking of military, the SERVICEMEMBERS LEGAL DEFENSE NETWORK reported that two generals and one admiral came out to the *New York Times* on Dec. 10, for the first time. BG Keith Kerr, CSMR (Ret.), BG Virgil A. Richard, USA (Ret.) and RADM Alan M. Steinman, USCG (Ret.) are the highest ranking military leaders to reveal that they are gay.

Family & Friends sends out a heartfelt Get Well wish to Ruth Ann and to Myrna Drake.

Happy Birthday wishes go out to Angela Lamb and Butch Valentine.

The opening of THE COLISEUM is set for New Years Eve. Don't miss it. SHANE TRICE has done a magnificent job of more than doubling BACKSTREET MEMPHIS's space to make it THE place to go for a great show, dancing, talking and relaxing.

Thanks to LESLIE for her hard work with MYSTIC KREWE OF APHRODITE. We understand that she has stepped down as president of that organization. And, the infamous B.J. HEFNER, a founding member of Aphrodite, also submitted her letter of retirement from the group. Thanks, B.J., for all your hard work and for "picking those pockets" for so many well-deserved causes throughout the years.

With MARDI GRAS coming up soon, in February, there are now more opportunities to celebrate the masked ball season. There should be three different balls this year, one by THE MYSTIC KREWE OF MEMPHIS UNITED, one by the NOBLE KREWE OF HATHOR and, we are assuming, one by THE MYSTIC KREWE OF PEGASUS.

Ok, the race is on. Now is the time to REGISTER TO VOTE OR UPDATE YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION if you have moved. Check out page 50 for more information on how. Remember, your vote DOES count. Way too many elections lately have been won by only a few hundred votes. Again, your vote does count and is needed more than ever.

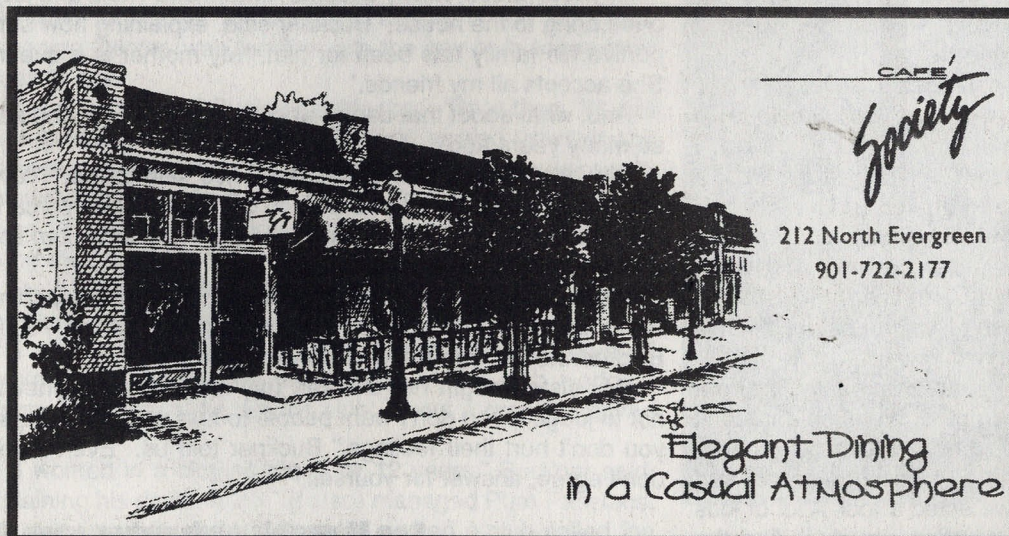
On a completely different note ... did anyone catch the MATCHBOX 20 concert last month at The Pyramid? We sure did. It was one great show, especially from the fourth row. It was our son's first rock concert, and he had a blast.

And Your Point

from page 6

what it was. Let us talk about the harm and the hurt that the Tuskegee Trials caused, as well as the creation of an avoidance by African-Americans to participate in clinical trials today.

That same friend shared with us that he felt that sometimes, political correctness simply stops the dialogue between races, individuals, whatever. We totally agree. Thanks Ernest.



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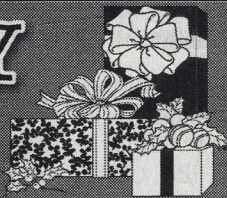
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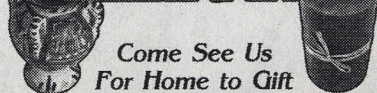


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MGLCC gets holiday gift: a \$5,000 grant

By ANITA MOYT, managing editor

The Gill Foundation has awarded a \$5,000 grant to the Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center (MGLCC).

According to information supplied by MGLCC President Len Piechowski, there are five initiatives associated with this grant.

"Initiative 1) To attack our internalized homophobia and to offer opportunities to improve our self-concept, we requested funds for the Lavender University," Piechowski wrote to *Family & Friends Magazine* in a Dec. 9 email. "We intend to offer a college-like curriculum of courses that will aim to improve self-esteem through education and inspiration. Lavender University will consist of course offerings regarding building self-esteem, gay history and tool(s) for daily life. The funding will be utilized in paying professional instructor stipends and for the purchase of necessary class supplies."

The second initiative deals with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) youth.

"Initiative 2) To support our marginalized GLBT youth we requested funds to assist in our efforts with our youth group and with other youth outreach," Piechowski wrote. "To provide temporary housing and meals for abandoned youth — hotel accommodations pending assessment by social workers. To fund ongoing recreational activities for our 25-person youth group ... bowling, movie nights, retreat weekends. To

furnish stipends for an accredited youth counselor who will function as advisor and occasional assistant to MGLCC on issues of legalities, parental interface and youth development. To initiate a 'Safe Schools Project' with the Memphis Public School system. Unfortunately the stories Memphis gay youth tell today are not so different than those told by us 30 years ago. This project will be developed in partnership between MGLCC and school professionals."

The third initiative deals with the "racial divide in our community."

"Initiative 3) We (sic) funds to help narrow the racial divide in our community by funding diversity initiatives," Piechowski continued. "The racial strife afflicting the Memphis community has had an unfortunate impact on the Memphis gay community, as well. To build bridges we wish to conduct two intercultural get-togethers at MGLCC inviting the various predominantly African-American gay groups in our city, (and) conduct one major Intercultural Showcase entitled 'Children of the Rainbow' with presentations, entertainment, art exhibits and other activities planned and conducted with cross-cultural participation."

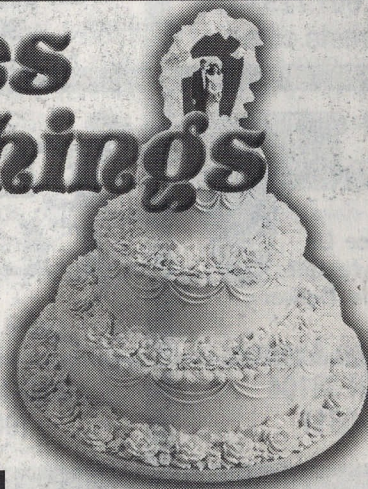
"Initiative 4) We currently offer Friday Night Coffee Houses and Saturday Night at the Gaiety (gay and lesbian movie night) as alternatives to the bar scene for recreation and

See MGLCC, page 19

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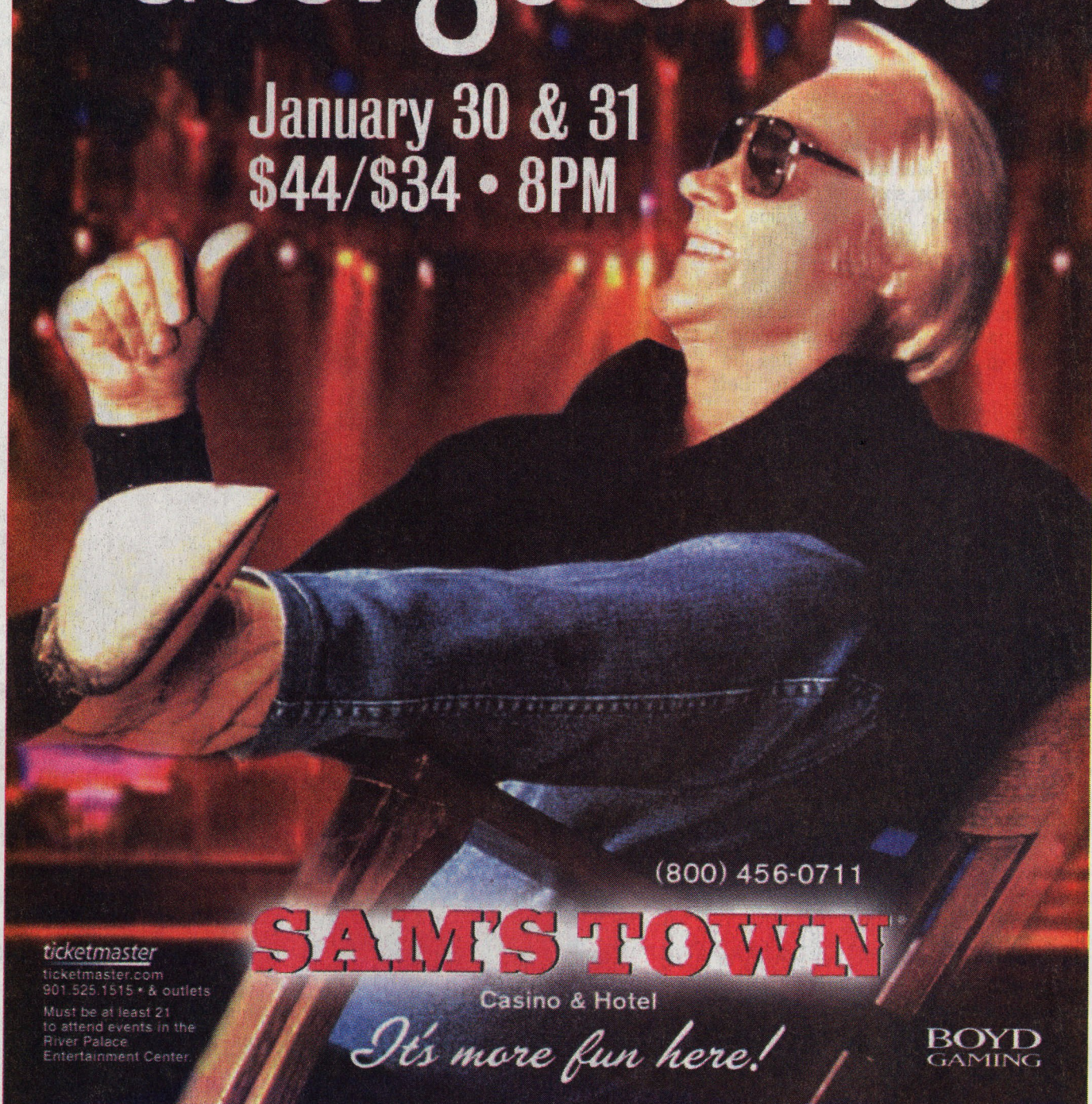
*"I'm not gay ...
but I'll wear a tight T-shirt!"*

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THE LION KING

by Kevin Shaw, staff writer

Now in its sixth sold-out year in New York at the New Amsterdam Theatre, *The Lion King* is the winner of six Tony Awards, including Best Musical; eight Drama Desk Awards; six Outer Critics Circle Awards; the New York Drama Critics award for Best Musical; the Evening Standard Award for the Theatrical Event of the Year; two Olivier Awards; a Theatre World Award; the Astaire Award for Outstanding Choreography; two Drama League Awards, and a Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album.

Now the show is in Memphis for an extended run and *Family & Friends* was excited to catch up with one of the performers from the show, openly gay actor John Renshouse, and a standby for the roles of Scar and Pumbaa, to talk about his experience with perhaps the biggest tour to ever hit the Orpheum.

F&F: We asked the Disney representatives if we could speak to one of the gay performers from the show and I was wondering how they tapped you for this interview?

Renshouse: They suggested me? I guess I'm one of the leading gay people in the cast.

F&F: Was there an actual election?

Renshouse: (Laughing) I guess so ... It used to be another guy who played Pumbaa – he would get all the gay magazine interviews, but now I seem to be getting them.

F&F: So, you do this a lot? Well, congratulations.

Renshouse: This is my third "gay magazine" interview.

F&F: How long have you been with this tour?

Renshouse: I've been with them now, for uh, well gosh, almost two years now, good Lord! The tour started rehearsing in February of 2002, and that's when I started with it.

F&F: Where are you originally from?

Renshouse: I'm originally from Kansas City. I'm sort of an anomaly in that



Futhi Mhlongo
as Rafiki

See *The Lion King*, page 17

The Lion King

from page 16

most of the cast is out of New York or L.A. I had a friend, a school chum of mine, who was playing Scar (the role originated by Jeremy Irons in the animated film) on Broadway and I went to see him there and at the time he had just gotten cast as Frankenfurter in a version of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in New York. We started talking about who was going to replace him and he said, "Boy, you'd be great for this part!" He hooked me up with the casting people and six months down the road I auditioned for them and they hired me for the tour. This is my first experience with being in a "big, Broadway musical!" Ironically, one would have to classify me as a "non-singer."

F&F: Really? You're not a singer?

Rensenhouse: Nope. Well, I am now! Scar has two songs in the show, but for the role of Scar, the producers are very intent on hiring a non-singer. What they want is an actor, more than a singer and they want an actor who has a pretty extensive Shakespearean background, which I do have. But, I actually have a vocal coach who has helped me learn to sing.

F&F: So, how does that feel, going from Shakespeare to doing something like this? Do you feel like you are "selling out?"

Rensenhouse: Oh, I do! And it's a beautiful thing! The pay is significantly better.

F&F: So, you cover two roles? Scar and Pumbaa? How often do you go on?

Rensenhouse: Well, it comes and goes in waves. I'd say I average getting on once or twice a month. I'll probably go on once or twice while we're here in Memphis.

F&F: What's the difference between an understudy and a standby?

Rensenhouse: An understudy is usually in the show performing one role, but is prepared to step into a larger role if needed, while a standby is not actually in the show at all until they step into the larger role.

F&F: You've been a standby for these two roles for two years now? Isn't it time to step up full time in the larger role?

Rensenhouse: (Laughing) Well, I have to admit I struggle with that. As it stands, I have a pretty good job. Performing eight shows a week is very taxing. I only have to go on once or twice a month.

F&F: So, you have to go on sometimes at short notice. What's the shortest amount of warning you had before you had to take the stage?

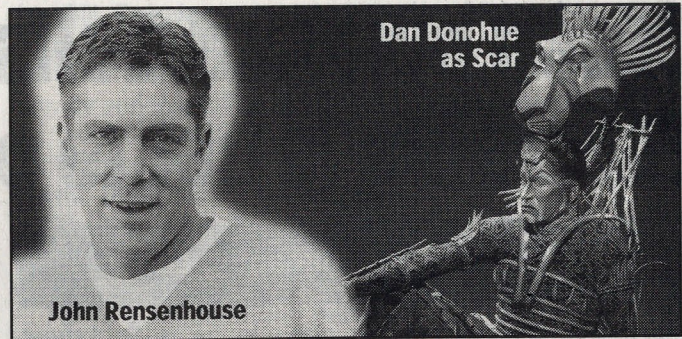
Rensenhouse: Ten minutes. In the first year of the tour, the actor playing Pumbaa had severe back problems and his back would go out during the song, "Hakuna Matata," just before intermission. He'd come offstage and say, "I can't go back on," and we'd have the intermission, thank God, to get me in costume and make-up to go on in Act. II.

F&F: So, you have to be backstage at the theater every night, in case they need you to go on?

Rensenhouse: I do. I do.

F&F: How do you pass the time day in and day out?

Rensenhouse: Well, I try and have projects that are somewhat mind-expanding. I've read a few big books, but it seems most of the time is taken up with chatting and visiting and whatnot with the people backstage. Now, here in Memphis,



John Rensenhouse

Dan Donohue
as Scar

after each performance, we're collecting donations for Broadway Cares: Equity Fights AIDS, and my job is to count the money the next day during the show.

F&F: Is this your first trip to Memphis?

Rensenhouse: No, I was here 18 years ago with a show ...

F&F: (Interrupting) Eighteen years ago?! My God, how old are you? Was it back during Vaudeville?

Rensenhouse: (Laughing) God, I'm afraid so. ... No, I'm 48 years old.

F&F: Well, you look great! You must go to the gym.

Rensenhouse: God, honey, you've got to! I was here with a production of *Noises Off*, that ran at the Orpheum Theatre. I did all the classic touristy stuff back then. But, this time around, we've already been bowling at Jillian's and had high tea at the Peabody. I love Memphis!

F&F: Now, it's time to dig into some personal stuff. ... Are you able to have a relationship, being you've been on the road for two years?

Rensenhouse: Well, yes, I am! I have a, oh should we say, a boyfriend, back in Kansas City who I've been with for almost four years now.

F&F: How do you do that living on the road?

Rensenhouse: Well, although I'm 48 years old, I'm sort of new at long-term relationships and this is my first one, and it seems to work best when we have some distance between us. His work allows him to fly out and join me in various cities about once a month, for four or five days and it seems to work well. I guess, in this case, absence sort of makes the heart grow fonder. The distance somehow makes the relationship easier. Call it "relationship lite."

F&F: So, forget how successful this show has been on Broadway and around the world, why should gay people go out and see this show?

Rensenhouse: Well, come on, it's a musical with fabulous costumes!

F&F: Point taken.

Showtimes for *The Lion King*, playing at The Orpheum Theater, 203 South Main Street, now through Jan. 4, 2004, are Tuesdays through Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 1 and 6:30 p.m. Tickets, which range in price from \$22.50 to \$82.50, are available at The Orpheum Box Office; Davis Kidd Booksellers in Laurelwood Shopping Center at 387 Perkins Road Extended, and at all Ticketmaster locations. Tickets also are available by phone at (901) 525-3000 or (901) 743-ARTS or online at www.orpheum-memphis.com. Orders for groups of 20 or more may be placed by calling (901) 525-7800, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Much awaited Coliseum at Backstreet Memphis is set to open New Year's Eve

By ANITA MOYT, managing editor

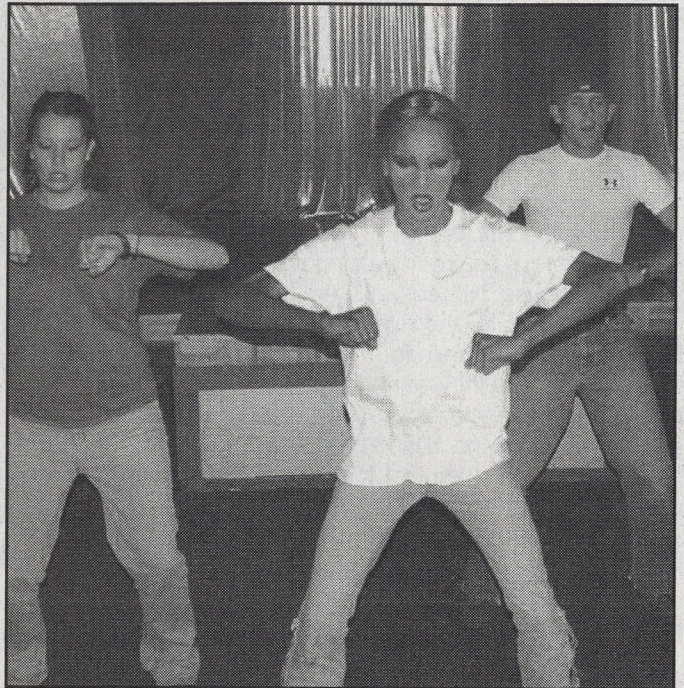
On New Year's Eve, the place to be is Backstreet Memphis, located at 2018 Court Street. Why? The doors to its expansion, so named The Coliseum, are scheduled to open.

This is not just a renovated dance floor or a room that was redecorated. With the massive remodeling and design work of the space adjacent to the existing Backstreet Memphis, the space which formerly housed the Jewish Community Center's gymnasium at one time, a skating rink at another time and a business that put signage on large trucks most recently, the additional 14,000 square feet of usable space and 45 foot ceilings will bring the Memphis GLBT community, if not Memphis at large, a multi-functional area that will house the largest and most high-tech dance floor in the South and the largest concert venue of any night club.

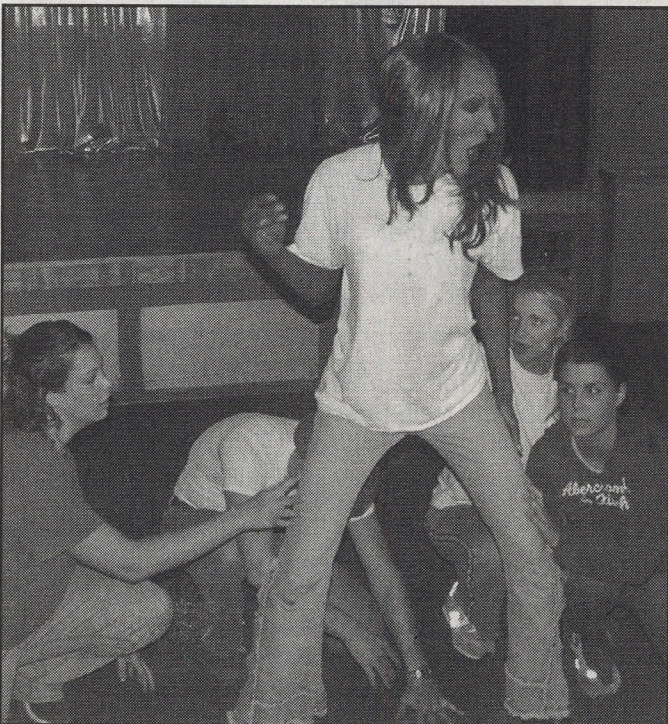
In order to make the best use of the total space, plans are to convert the existing show bar at Backstreet to a jazz bar; the existing dance bar will become a show bar and the dance bar moves to the Coliseum. The Coliseum also sports a new DJ Booth, elevated seating areas and a separate men's private bar. The existing Backstreet patio will be remodeled and a gift shop added, as well.

Why the name?

"It is so big it feels like a coliseum," Shane Trice, owner of Backstreet Memphis/Coliseum and Metro Memphis told *Family & Friends Magazine*. "Nothing will be the same. It is the



Demonica Santangelo with The Club Kids rehearsing



most drastic renovations and most money (I've) ever spent."

The facility also will be available for rent for special events and fundraisers.

...

With the expanded nightclub comes an expanded show-cast, full production numbers and structured routines.

We caught Demonica Santangelo and Marilyn Monet, two of the regular performers at Backstreet Memphis, practicing one Tuesday night at Backstreet. With them were backup dancers, The Club Kids – Lucky, Nicky, Briana and Zoe.

"Drag has lost its touch in this area," Santangelo told *Family & Friends*. "We are using the Coliseum as an inspiration."

Santangelo said she enjoyed doing the choreography for the numbers.

"It helps me get back to the teaching I use to do," she said.

Seamstress Sarah Deen is fashioning the costumes for the numbers.

Santangelo also invited nuances to the stage for amateur night.

"Show up and sign up for amateur night on Thursdays at Metro and on Sundays at Backstreet," she said.

"I think it will hit Memphis like a hurricane," Santangelo said about the opening of The Coliseum.

Backstreet Memphis/The Coliseum is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday, from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.

For more information, call 901-276-5522 or go online to www.backstreetmemphis.com.

from page 14

community building," Piechowski said, explaining the fourth of the initiatives. "Our Friday Night Coffee Houses are in need of an infusion with quality entertainment. Locally-known performers would provide an added draw for our community to participate in alternative entertainment venues in a drug- and alcohol-free environment. We requested funds to pay for entertainment."

The final initiative deals with the annual National Coming Out Day.

"Initiative 5) Finally, we requested funds to help to fund activities associated with National Coming Out Day (NCOD) to help to build a more positive image of our community in the city of Memphis," Piechowski wrote. "Our Eighth Annual Outflix Gay and Lesbian Film Festival will show the best of international GLBT films. The Outflix Film Festival extends over a seven-day period and uses local movie theaters, churches and the MGLCC itself as venues. Our Second Annual Memphis Gaymes Competition ... our very own Gay Games will be held with gold, silver and bronze medals awarded in the following categories: softball, volleyball, bowling, running, 'drag races,' and competitions for the athletically-challenged (in) our community."

The original press release, dated Dec. 3, from MGLCC stated, "The terms of this funding take the form of a challenge grant to the center. ... The (MGLCC) is challenged by

the Gill Foundation to raise another \$5,000 from other sources during the next 12 months. Such fundraising efforts are part of the current MGLCC strategic plan and are already underway. The amount of \$2,500 will be released to the MGLCC from the Gill Foundation upfront and the remaining \$2,500 will be released immediately upon successful completion of the challenge."

"The Gill Foundation did not specify how the grant money was to be divided amongst these programs," Piechowski wrote. "The MGLCC Board will make that decision."

Family & Friends asked Piechowski if the \$5,000 in matching funds that the MGLCC is required to raise would be used for the same purpose as the monies from the Gill Foundation.

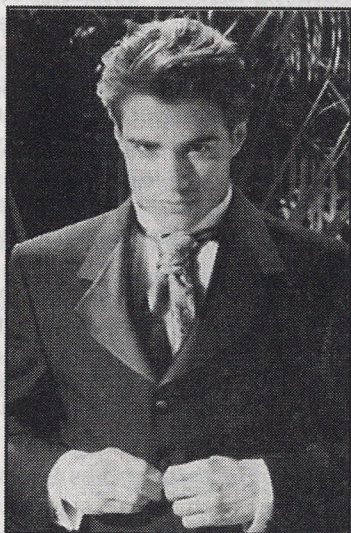
"No," Piechowski responded. "The Gill Foundation did not specify how we should use the money we raise. Any incremental monetary donations will be considered matching funds."

Finally, Piechowski explained how MGLCC is held accountable by The Gill Foundation for the grants it receives.

"As is the case for most grant funds," Piechowski concluded, "a detailed end-of-the-year report is required explaining successes and challenges in reaching our program goals."

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MGLA noted 30th anniversary in November

By ANITA MOYT, managing editor

In November, 2003, The Mississippi Gay & Lesbian Alliance (MGLA) celebrated its 30th anniversary.

In 1973, a group of ladies, in and off campus at Mississippi State University in Starkville, began to meet in homes. The following year, they began meeting at a Unitarian Church in Jackson, Miss.

"What I've been told by a friend of their's," Eddie Sandifer, President of the MGLA, told *Family & Friends Magazine* in a telephone interview, "was the founding two women were listening to me talk on the radio while they were in their car. I was saying (in 1973), 'It is time to come out.' And the two of them did. They told their husbands they were lesbians, separated and divorced. Donna's husband was a professor on campus at Mississippi State."

Those two women went on to form the Mississippi Gay Alliance (the original name of MGLA).

"The purpose of the organization was to let people know there were other gays and lesbians out there and there was a safe place to meet," Sandifer said. "They also had a small library."

However, when the Mississippi Gay Alliance tried to place an announcement in the Mississippi State University college newspaper, they were turned down. Remember, this was almost 30 years ago.

"The college newspaper refused to run an announcement of their meetings," Sandifer said. A lawsuit was filed with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union. *Mississippi Gay Alliance v. State of Mississippi* went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"Both Donna Mayher and (myself) appeared in federal court for the Northern District of Mississippi as part of the lawsuit," Sandifer continued. "The state attorney general subpoenaed all of the records and everything we had in our library at that time and they still have those records to this day. The state also tried to get us to give a list of our members but we refused and the judge ruled in our favor based on an Alabama case."

However, in the long run, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the State of Mississippi (representing Mississippi State University).

"They (the U.S. Supreme Court) ruled that the editor of the college newspaper had the legal right to refuse any paid or free announcement," Sandifer said. "They claimed we did this for publicity."

Although that was not the intention for filing the lawsuit, publicity was what they got.

"We got publicity that we would never have gotten by merely running the original announcement in the college newspaper," Sandifer said. "I got calls from as far as away as London, England."

And the original purpose of MGLA still stands ... someone to talk to.

"We get calls from all over the state. People need encouragement and someone to talk to. I still answer the phone."

And out of that brave organization founded by two women 30 years ago, many fruitful branches have come forth.

"Some of the things (our members) have done over the years is to found the Gray Panthers of Jackson," Sandifer said, "found a house for AIDS patients; established the HIV & PWA projects; established the Metropolitan Community Church of Jackson; started PFLAG of Jackson, and incorporated a newsletter, 'This Month In Mississippi.'"

In addition, the MGLA was the first to send people for the United League of North Mississippi to protest the actions of the KKK in Tupelo and Okalona, Miss.

"We had the largest contention of people protesting outside in New Orleans against Anita Bryant," Sandifer continued, referring to one of the early anti-gay, right-wing celebrities. "We also protested against her in Hattiesburg, Miss., when she appeared at the Baptist College there. They cordoned off that campus like we were going to raid it."

The MGLA also supported the United Farm Workers at one point, supporting the removal of lettuce and grapes that were picked by nonunion workers.

"Several MGLA members got on the board of the Mississippi Health Systems Agency," Sandifer continued. "They met and reviewed proposals for the construction of new hospitals and nursing homes and the purchase of equipment costing more than \$200,000 for hospital and nursing homes. The agency could accept or deny the proposals."

One area where the MGLA has remained active the most is in the area of HIV/AIDS resources.

"In 1985, when we started with HIV/AIDS patients, the health department referred people to us, as we were the first to work with HIV/AIDS patients," Sandifer recollected. "Between 1985 and 1992, we served more than 700 clients. There were three houses where we took care of and housed AIDS patients. The Sandifer House in Jackson; the Selph House in Ocean Springs, and the Bay House, in Bay St. Louis." However, as the years have passed and the treatment of HIV/AIDS has evolved, the need for those houses passed and each was closed.

Additionally, MGLA helped early on in transporting HIV/AIDS clients to not just doctors appointments, but to trial studies throughout the South.

"MGLA would drive patients all over the state, including Shreveport, La., and Birmingham, Ala., medical centers, to new trial (HIV/AIDS) treatments centers," Sandifer said. "The state health department across the state requested help from MGLA."

And the work of the MGLA has not gone unrecognized.

Gays in Mississippi, *Gays in the South* (by James Sears), and *Gays in America* (by Neil Miller) each contain significant material on the MGLA, and Sandifer, in regard to their historical significance in Mississippi's history.

"I'm an activist who happens to be gay," Sandifer said in closing. "My suggestion to the other organizations in Mississippi or anywhere is if you are going to get support you have to be involved in everything everywhere. That includes all movements for social justice and equality, not just the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement. Be an activist who happens to be gay."

Family Research Council's town gets PFLAG

By ANITA MOYT, managing editor

A new chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) has been formed in Tupelo, Miss. Jason Strauss, 24, is the organization's first president.

Strauss has worked with both the community center and pride events in Akron, Ohio, where he used to live. Strauss is presently employed by Wal-Mart in Tupelo where he is a customer service manager and also is the store's Children's Miracle Network chairman.

"...I'm here (Tupelo) to stay for now," Strauss told *Family & Friends*, "and hoping to make a difference in the gay community here because it seems as if they are behind in the times and that life for gays here is so much harder than other areas of the country."

Strauss explained the steps the newly-formed organization has taken so far.

"We have turned in paperwork," Strauss said, "and got back confirmation that we can start a chapter. ... The former people who tried to start a (PFLAG-Tupelo chapter) have been helping us with contacts.

"At the present, we are trying to get a variety of people to get the group started," Strauss continued. "It is mostly younger gay youth now. ... For starters we are looking for people to bring the group together. After that, we will delegate authority and get the group running. ... We are getting it organized right now."

According to Strauss, so far there are about 15 individuals who are part of the new PFLAG-Tupelo.

"We have started advertising in the *Daily Journal* (Tupelo's daily newspaper)," Strauss said, explaining the group's attempts to get the word out about the new organization. Strauss noted that Rumor's, a GLBT bar in Tupelo, has been very supportive of the organization and will be the site for a fundraiser for PFLAG-Tupelo during the early part of 2004. They also are contacting local churches to increase their exposure to the public. Strauss added that several websites have been advertising their chapter, including gaytupelo.com and GLBA of Ole Miss's website.

"We started a book and video drive for a lending library,"

Larry Timmerman

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Strauss said, explaining one of the projects the group has already gotten off the ground.

With the anti-gay, right-wing Family Research Council also calling Tupelo home, we asked if he thought that would pose a problem.

"I don't see any problems," Strauss replied. "We have a lot of involvement with the *Daily Journal*. Its education director, Mack Spenser, is the secretary for this chapter. This is a positive thing."

For more information on PFLAG-Tupelo, call Strauss at (662) 566-2282, email him at Alliance22Boi@aol.com or write him at 115A Issac Drive, Tupelo, MS 38801. The group also has a communication group online at groups.yahoo.com/group/PFLAGTupelo.

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STRAIGHT UP, BUT NOT STRAIGHT

BY J. SHANE WILSON, MS, NCC, LPCC

Dear Straight Up:

My ex keeps phoning at all hours of the day and night causing problems for my new lover and me. Most recently, he called while we were enjoying a "hot session of togetherness." This seemed to upset my new boyfriend. I'm afraid that he will get upset and call off our relationship. What do I do?

Heck of a Mess

Dear Mess,

Ummm ... let's see! You could always get an unlisted number, activate call-block or take extreme measures and file harassment charges against your bothersome ex/pest. But I have to wonder why he is still calling if you've made it perfectly clear that you no longer want anything to do with him.

As for it being a bother to your boyfriend ... HELLO!!! Why are you answering the phone in the middle of a "hot session of togetherness" anyway? Thank God for Caller-ID. Is your new boyfriend that boring that you have to interrupt the steam to answer the phone? Maybe your ex wasn't so bad after all.

Stephen Pair

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Here's a few more tips: Turn off the phone and violate your newly found lover! If it's important, the caller can either leave a message, or in the case of your ex, surely call back!

...

Dear Straight Up,

About four years ago I was working out at a local fitness center. A guy in the locker room was checking me out but at the time I hadn't done anything with a guy. I really wanted to do something with this guy real bad but was just too nervous. He hit on me several times over the next couple of years at the center, but I still never acknowledged him. I eventually made small talk with him but still nothing happened. When I finally got up enough nerve to hit back on him he wasn't interested. He no longer works out there but I have seen him out in public twice with his wife. I contacted him over the phone and through email. He told me that he isn't into that but I know he is. I can't get this guy out of my head so what can I do? I would like to just mess around with him just once.

Crazy Jake

Dear Crazy Jake,

What can you do? Well, you could continue to seek ways to attract this man's attention or you could move on with your life.

Wake up and hear the kettle (its been boiling long enough). When he wanted to ride the wave with you, you were "nervous." Now that you want to rock the boat, he doesn't have time. Regardless if he is spending time with his wife and 2.5 children or making time at another gym with fellow workout buddies, my question is, "What are you doing?"

You admit to knowing that he is married, which makes me question if the desire to be with him is one of convenience rather than desire. While you are off chasing him, take time to see if someone's chasing you. Obsessing over this minute man isn't getting you any closer to that ultimate boat ride. I suggest you cut your losses, and the next time you think someone wants to sail away with you, throw out the net and reel that sucker in!

If all else fails, you could always change hobbies. I hear there's plenty of eye candy at the tennis courts. Good luck and let me know how it works out.

J. Shane Wilson has a master's degree in the counseling field from The University of Memphis. He presently is a Licensed Professional Counselor residing in Houston, Texas. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the magazine. For serious problems, seek professional help. Send questions to Family & Friends, P.O. Box 771948, Memphis, TN 38177-1948, or email them to FamilyMag@aol.com.

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HRC launches website to support marriage

Resolute in its efforts to engage millions of fair-minded Americans in the fight for civil marriage equality, the Human Rights Campaign has launched a website called Million for Marriage at www.millionformarriage.org.

Visitors to the site will be able to sign a petition supporting the right of every American to marry and to send emails asking friends and family to get involved in the campaign.

"Millions of Americans already believe that equal protection under the law means equal civil marriage rights for every loving and committed couple. It's time to make those millions of voices heard," said Seth Kilbourn, HRC's national field director. "This website gives us the opportunity to do just that – and to get those who care about us involved in this fight, as well.

"Just minutes after our Supreme Court ruled that gays and lesbians should be treated with equal dignity under law, opponents of equality stepped up their shameful attacks on our families," Kilbourn said. "But the majority of Americans are on our side, believing that gay and lesbian Americans deserve the same rights and protections under law as other Americans. We need to mobilize that majority and to shore up the legal security that every family deserves."

Without the right to a civil marriage, same-sex couples: can be denied the right to visit a loved one in the hospital; must pay federal income taxes on a partner's health insurance; must pay estate taxes when a partner dies; receive no Social Security survivor benefits, despite paying payroll taxes just like their straight co-workers, and are left without a multitude of other critical rights and protections. According to a 1997 General Accounting Office study, there are more than 1,000 benefits, rights and responsibilities provided on the basis of marital status in federal law. There also are hundreds of state-level benefits afforded to married couples.

Visitors to the website will be able to sign onto the following pledge, which HRC will use to prove the level of support for marriage equality in the United States.

"I do support the right of EVERY American to marry, including gay and lesbian couples. I believe that marriage and other civil rights protections are essential to making all families, including gay and lesbian families, safer and more secure. By signing this letter, I pledge to be one of a million Americans who will support all efforts to make civil marriage for gay couples a reality in our country and to oppose any attempt to continue discriminating against gay and lesbian individuals and couples," the letter on the website reads.

In addition, visitors to the site will be able to take action against the anti-gay constitutional amendment and find other ways to get involved in the fight for civil marriage equality.

To sign onto the petition and learn more about this issue, visit www.millionformarriage.org.

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OVER MY SHOULDER EDITORIAL BY PATRICIA PAIR, PUBLISHER

If the President of the United States can attempt to change the U.S. Constitution in an effort to deny rights and freedoms to GLBT Americans, then I think I can propose a change to one of our country's greatest, and at times controversial, pledges, The Pledge of Allegiance.

This isn't something I just thought of over night. It's something I've been mulling over for a couple of years now. It first hit me out of nowhere, as most good ideas tend to do, while standing in the cafeteria/auditorium of Sea Isle Elementary School as a school program for parents got underway.

A child from the stage instructed us to, "Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance." There I stood next to my partner of six years, Anita, shoulder-to-shoulder with obviously heterosexual parents of other third graders. We all placed our hands over our hearts, as we so dutifully learned to do in kindergarten without question (that would come years later), and began to recite those patriotic words from memory.

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic, for which it stands, one nation, under God, in divisible with liberty and equality for all." These are the words that came out of my mouth, but because it was standing-room-only, I don't think anyone noticed my deviation except me.

I hadn't planned it. I hadn't even thought about it. It just came out like words out of an innocent child's mouth at the worst possible time.

I don't really know what came over me or why I instantaneously decided or subconsciously chose to delete the word "justice" and replace it with "equality," but I did it.

In recent years we've heard a lot about the Pledge of Allegiance, mostly about how it shouldn't be recited in schools across the country in an attempt to maintain a separation of church and state. But that's an argument I won't go into at this time.

I've often thought about the word change, and in all my pondering I came to a few realizations. One, that I had no real clue to the origins of the Pledge; two, that I wasn't quite sure why we say it in the first place, and not because it mentions "God," but because of the other words sandwiched around the word, which seems to continue to stir emotions on both sides of fences across America. And, last but not least, that idea of equality being included in the Pledge wasn't a novel one.

After a bit of research on the Internet, I satisfied my curiosity as to the history of the Pledge. According to Dr. John W. Baer on the website history.vineyard.net/pledge.htm, "Francis Bellamy, a Baptist

minister, wrote the original Pledge in August 1892. He was a Christian Socialist. In his Pledge, he is expressing the ideas of his first cousin, Edward Bellamy, author of the American socialist utopian novels, *Looking Backward* (1888) and *Equality* (1897) ... Francis in his sermons and lectures and Edward in his novels and articles described in detail how the middle class could create a planned economy with political, social and economic equality for all. The government would run a peace time economy similar to our present military industrial complex."

The Pledge was first published in the September 8 issue of *The Youth's Companion*, the leading family magazine and the *Reader's Digest* of its day.

"He (Francis) considered placing the word 'equality,' in his Pledge, but knew that the state superintendents of education ... were against equality for women and African Americans," Dr. Baer wrote.

The original Pledge read as follows: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." This, of course, is different than the Pledge we learned as children.

The first change to the Pledge occurred in October 1892, when the word "to" was added to read, "I Pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic..."

The next change took place in 1923 and 1924, when the National Flag Conference, under the "leadership of the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution, changed the words "my Flag" to "the Flag of the United States of America."

The third change occurred in 1954, when the words "under God" were added by Congress after a campaign by the Knights of Columbus.

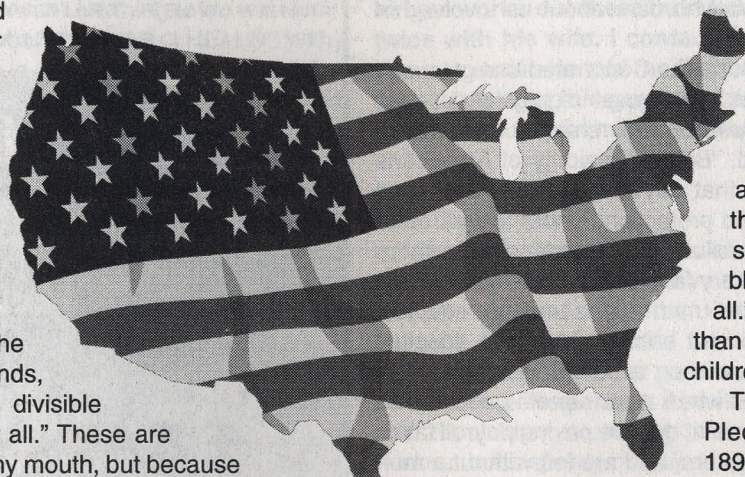
Dr. Baer also wrote, "If the Pledge's historical pattern repeats, its words will be modified during this decade."

He gives two possible changes:

1) "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic, for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, born and unborn."

2) "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic, for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with equality, liberty and justice for all."

In the years since that day in the elementary school cafeteria, I have continued to replace the word "justice" with "equality" every time I recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Why replace the word "justice?" Because not everyone receives justice in this country, but, come to think of it, we don't have equality either.



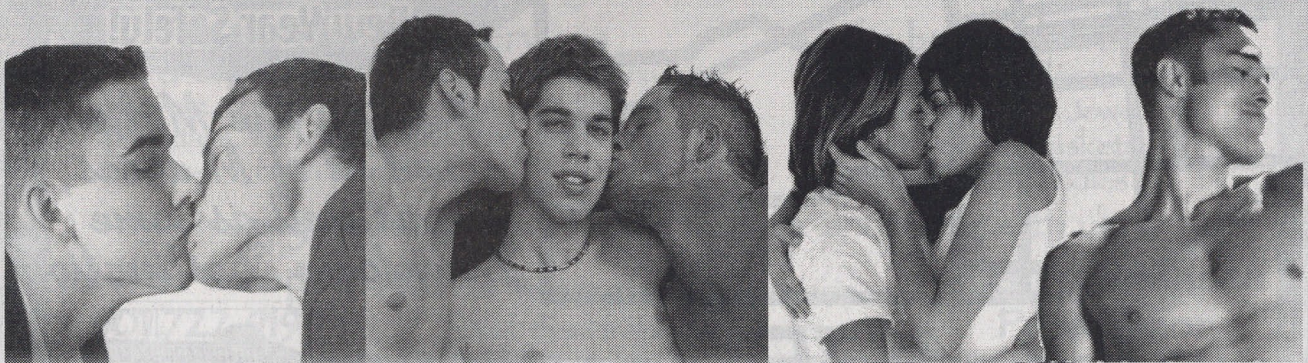
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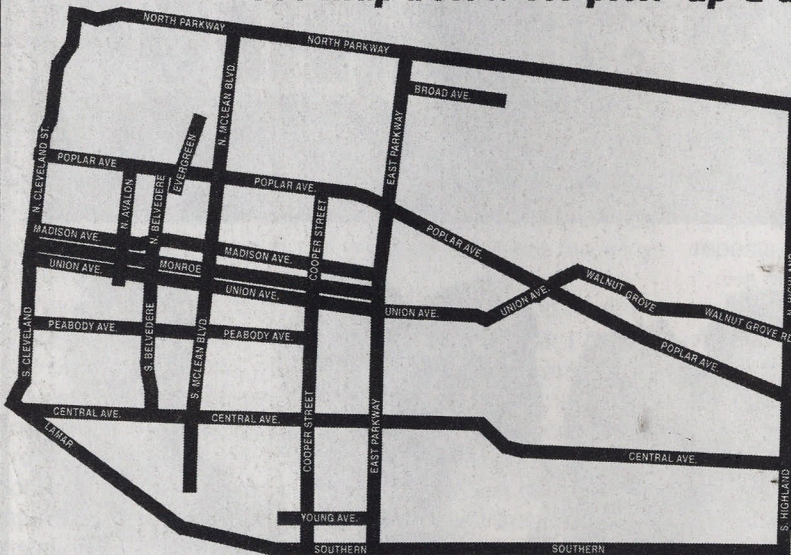
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Trans folks needed for project

Rhonda Factor is a doctoral student in psychology at the University of Vermont. She is seeking subjects for a research project on transgender individuals and their siblings.

To qualify, one must identify as transgender, have a sibling who does NOT identify as transgender, and both must be over the age of 18.

This doctoral dissertation is designed to illustrate the various ways individuals experience and express their gender identities. This project is designed to explore similarities and differences by comparing experiences of those identifying as transgender and their "conventionally gendered" siblings.

The survey administered to the sibling will simply be entitled "The Family Project" and will not focus on gender identity. In fact, it only asks about sex in the conventional way. Therefore, individuals will NOT be "outed" by sending a survey to their siblings.

Those interested need to email the following information to Rhonda.Factor@uvm.edu:

1. Your name, address and email (include the name your sibling knows you by, if it is different from your name as listed here).
2. Your sibling's name, address and email. (If more than one sibling, the one most likely to respond. If more than one is likely to respond, the one closest in age.)
3. Other sibling's name, address and email. (Another sibling that can be contacted in case the first one does not respond.)

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When Good Girls Go Bad: A Motor City Thriller

By Therese Szymanski
Bella Books Inc. 2003
BellaBooks.com
266 pages, paperback
mystery



"Victoria was onstage, in her street clothes. Enigma was again playing over the speakers. Victoria looked right at Brett, sending heat flaming through her, pulling her all the way into the auditorium. Victoria slowly began unbuttoning her blouse and pulling it off. She seemed to be stripping just for Brett, again.

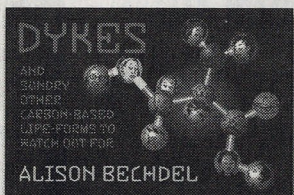
"Brett wanted her so much it was a physical ache. She could almost feel exactly what Storm – no, Victoria – would feel like in her arms. She wanted to bury her head in Victoria's hair and breathe her scent and feel the warmth of her body pressed against her own.

"Brett took a deep breath, trying to calm herself, and leaned back against the wall with her eyes closed. But in her mind's eye, she could see Storm moving to the mysterious music. She tried to focus on other things to overcome this reaction: someone was out there, on the streets, knocking off strippers, hookers, her girls." –Introduction

Other titles by Szymanski: *The Higgins Mysteries/Motor City Thrillers: When Evil Changes Face* (a Lambda Literary Award finalist), *When the Dancing Stops*, *When the Dead Speak*, and *When Some Body Disappears*.

Dykes and Sundry Other Carbon-Based Life-Forms to Watch Out For

By Alison Bechdel
Alyson Books 2003
www.Alyson.com
154 pages, paperback
comics



"Perhaps it's trite of me to observe that it seems like just yesterday when I drew my first 'Dykes to Watch Out For,' but 1983, does indeed seem like just yesterday, if only because today seems so much like 1984, as I write this in the Orwellian fog of Bush's Second Gulf War.

I'll try to put the 'shock and awe' bombing campaign and the latest newspeak from the Homeland Security Department out of my mind for a moment, and turn my attention back 20 years to what's starting to look like the halcyon days of the Reagan administration.

It was a transitional period, after Anita Bryant and before *On Our Backs*. "I was two years out of college, with no visible ambitions in life beyond being a full-time lesbian – a highly gratifying, if not particularly lucrative, occupation. But I felt rich with revolutionary resolve." – From the Introduction.

For 20 years Bechdel has produced the widely-syndicated cartoon strip, "Dykes To Watch Out For." *Dykes and Sundry Other Carbon-Based Life-Forms to Watch Out For* is the 10th book in the series of compilations of the funny, time-sensitive and social commentary rantings of Mo, Clarice, Louis (formerly Lois), Sparrow and Toni.



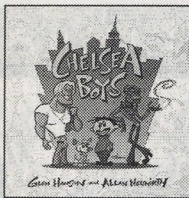
Highsmith: A Romance of the 1950s

A memoir by Marijane Meaker
Cleis Press 2003
www.Cleispress.com
206 pages, paperback
biography

Patricia Highsmith, author of classics such as *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *Strangers on a Train*, was a writer who defied simple categorization. Gore Vidal called her, "One of our greatest modernist writers."

To young novelist Marijane Meaker, however, Highsmith was more than a role model. Shortly after the two met in a New York City lesbian bar, they became lovers and embarked on a two-year romance amidst the Bohemian set of Greenwich Village and the literary crowd of Fire Island. There, the pair navigated the underground lesbian scene, lunched with literary stars like Jane Flanner, shared intimacies and gossiped with abandon. Written with wit and brassy candor, *Highsmith: A Romance of the 1950s* is a revealing look at a controversial icon of popular American fiction.

Marijane Meaker is the author of more than 40 books. She also is the acclaimed young adult novelist M.E. Kerr. ("One of the grand masters of young-adult fiction." – *New York Times Book Review*.)



Chelsea Boys

By Glen Hanson and Allan Neuwirth
Alyson Books 2003
www.Alyson.com
109 pages, paperback
comics

Chelsea Boys is the first collection of Glen Hanson and Allan Neuwirth's popular syndicated comic strip that appears in magazines and newspapers throughout the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. The strip follows the often outrageous antics, wild sexcapades and everyday heart-breaks of three gay roommates who are as different as can be and living together in the heart of New York's trendy Chelsea neighborhood: cuddly Nathan, a short, neurotic, 40-something native New Yorker; gorgeous, buff Sky, a naive, yet deeply-spiritual, art student raised on a farming commune in Canada, and the fabulous drag-diva Soiree, who masks her inner pain with a rapier wit and flamboyant style.



Maybe Next Time
by Karin Kallmaker
Bella Books Inc. 2003
BellaBooks.com
246 pages, paperback
romance

Sabrina Starling doesn't need love. She has worldwide fame as a brilliant concert violinist, houses on three conti-

See Gay-themed Books, page 29

Gay-themed Books

from page 28

nents and endlessly available women for company. Nothing can shake her – except the memory of her very first love.

"I hate that thing!" It was Jorie who shouted those words about the only constant in Sabrina's life – her violin. Jorie, her childhood love. Her true love. After relinquishing all hope of a life with Jorie, Sabrina immersed herself in the music and the violin that Jorie hated – blind to everyone and everything, including the unhappiness that was leading her down the path of destruction.

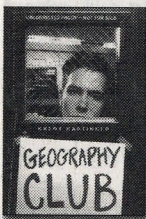
Sidelined at the pinnacle of her career due to a nagging wrist injury, Sabrina finally finds the one woman who could free her from the memory of those magical Hawaiian nights with Jorie. Except that this time, Diana, the object of Sabrina's desire, is deeply in love with Pam, her partner of 18 years.

Kallmaker, who has been referred to as the Undisputed Mistress of Lesbian Romance, also wrote the bestsellers *In Every Port*, *Touchwood*, *Watermark*, *Embrace in Motion*, *Frosting on the Cake* and more than a dozen other titles, including the fantasy *Tunnel of Light Trilogy* written as Laura Adams.



Finding H.P.
By Julia Watts
Alyson Books 2001
www.Alyson.com
165 pages, paperback
fiction, coming of age

Life in a small Kentucky town is slowly suffocating 16-year-old Heavenly Faith Simms (H.F., for short). Raised by her loving but extremely religious grandmother, H.F. is a tomboy and a misfit. She has never felt she belongs anywhere, especially when she falls in love with the smart, beautiful daughter of a college professor. So when she finds her mother's address hidden in a drawer, she sets out to start a new life in Florida with the mom she has never known. When she hits the road with her best friend, Bo, in his scrap heap of a car, their journey awakens them to the realization: There's a life waiting for them that is very different from what they have known.



Geography Club
By Brent Hartinger
Harper/Tempest 2003
An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers
www.harperteen.com
226 pages, paperback
fiction, coming of age

"I was deep behind enemy lines, in the very heart of the opposing camp. My adversaries were all around me. For the time being, my disguise was holding, but still I felt exposed, naked as if my secret was obvious to anyone who took the time to look. I knew that any wrong action, however slight, could expose my deception and reveal my true identity. The thought made my skin prickle. The enemy would not take kindly to my infiltration of their ranks, especially not here, in their inner sanctum.

"Then Kevin Land leaned over the wooden bench behind my

locker and said, "Yo, Middlebrook, let me use your shampoo!"

"I was in the high school boy's locker room at the end of third period P.E. class. I'd just come from the showers, and part of the reason I felt naked was because I was naked. I'd slung my wet towel over the metal door of my locker and was standing there all goosebumpy, eager to get dressed and get the hell out of there. Why exactly did I feel like the boys' locker room after third period P.E. was enemy territory – that the other guys in my P.E. class were rival soldiers in some war-like struggle for domination? Well there's not really a short answer to that question." – From Chapter 1.



With You in Spirit
By Steven Cooper
Alyson Books 2003
www.Alyson.com
218 pages, paperback
mystery

"My father's body was found floating facedown in the waters off Chappaquiddick. Naturally, everyone eyed the bride and assumed a Kennedy did it." Well, perhaps not everyone, as Graydove Hoffenstein, the Native-American Jewish heir to a parking meter empire discovers after his mother, Celeste Garrison Hoffenstein, is arrested and sentenced to life in prison for the murder of her husband, Colin Lightfoot Hoffenstein. But Gray believes in Celeste's innocence, as does his sister Chaka, who arranges a seance at the family's Martha's Vineyard home with renowned psychic Brenda Cloudholder, who arrives – with her seeing-eye cat – in a Yugo driven by her spookily Lurch-like chauffeur, Dervava. So begins Steven Cooper's rollicking tale of love, murder and phantoms, where skepticism meets spiritualism, ghosts communicate using lemons and Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive," and family eccentricities hold the key to just about everything. Cooper's debut novel is charming and uproarious.



When the Children Get Together
By R. Bryant Smith
Ishai Books 1999
Available for \$14 plus \$3.50 p&h to
R. Bryant Smith, P.O. Box 3916,
Jackson, TN 38303,
Email: RBryantSmith1969@aol.com
166 pages, paperback
fiction

Do you remember your first time? *When the Children Get Together* will take you down memory lane as the brothers of Omega Phi Theta, a high school fraternity, take you into their world; a world founded upon unity, brotherhood, loyalty, shared secrets and first experiences.

Melvin and Bradley will take you into their world of crushes, cliques, cruising and close encounters as only they can. *When the Children Get Together*, will take you back to your first kiss; your first road trip, your first broken heart and yes, even your first drag show.

When tragedy befalls one of the group, the children get together to recommit to what brought them together in the first place – brotherhood.

Female couple escorted from high school dance Letter from ACLU gets school district to allow same-sex couples at events

In response to a letter sent by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on behalf of two girls who were marched out of a high school homecoming dance by police, the Sublette County (Wyoming) School District has agreed that same-sex couples will no longer be excluded from school dances.

"This is a terrific victory for the lesbian and gay students in our school," said Amanda Blair, a senior at Big Piney High School in rural western Wyoming. "From now on, all students, not just straight students, will be able to enjoy school dances. It's good to know that you can make a difference by standing up for what's right."

Blair, an honor student who participates in swimming, band, basketball, track and choir, had listed a female friend as her homecoming date when she signed up for the Sept. 12 dance. School officials told her that same-sex dates aren't allowed at dances. Blair is heterosexual, but she and her friend decided to attend together in order to help lesbian and gay students in her district who may want to bring dates to school dances in the future. When Blair and her date arrived at the dance the next evening they were met by local police officers, who then escorted them off the premises without any explanation.

"We are very pleased that the school has decided to follow the law and do right by its lesbian and gay students," said Linda Burt, executive director of the ACLU of Wyoming. "It's unfortunate that Amanda and her date were so brutally

excluded from participating in this year's homecoming dance. But by coming forward and standing up for their rights, they have made the school a better place — especially for the lesbian and gay students who now know their school won't exclude them from dances because of who they choose to date."

The Sublette County School District's assurances that students can bring same-sex dates comes in response to a letter the ACLU sent to district officials on behalf of Blair and her date. The letter, citing a 1980 federal case in Rhode Island, pointed out that students have a constitutional right to bring same-sex dates and demanded that the school allow them to do so. In the Rhode Island case, *Fricke v. Lynch*, a federal judge ruled that students who want to bring same-sex dates to school dances are not only protected under the free expression provisions of the First Amendment, but that schools must take steps to ensure their safety when they do bring same-sex dates to school dances. In the 23 years since *Fricke* was decided, students throughout the U.S. have brought same-sex dates to school dances without incident.

"We are especially glad that we were able to resolve this issue without litigation, thus sparing the students the pain and the school the expense," said Ken Choe, a staff attorney with the ACLU's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project.

For more information, go online to aclu.org.

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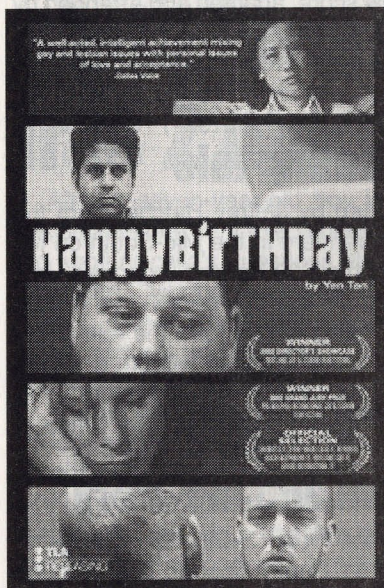
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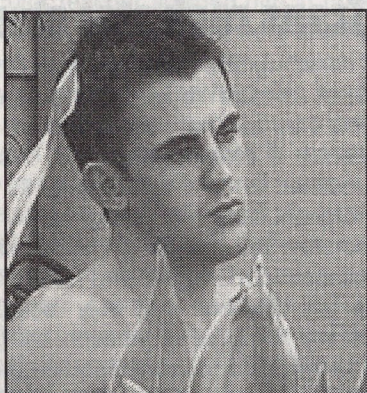


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Happy Birthday follows five very different people who each face a personal crisis of self-acceptance on their birthday. Among the many remarkable features, the film projects a multiculturalism within the gay community that is rarely seen on film.

The characters include: an overweight gay man whose success as a diet pill telemarketer belies his shame and isolation; an ex-gay minister who preaches conversion therapy by day and watches gay porn by night; a lesbian who seeks solace over a breakup by trying to revive an unrequited college crush; a young Taiwanese lesbian who must hide her identity from her visiting old-world mother, and a gay Pakistani whose possible deportation could threaten his life, and who must rely on his lover's porn work to pay his legal bills.

"I see birthdays as a time to evaluate what we have done so far, and what we would like to do," said Yen Tan, *Happy Birthday's* filmmaker. In each story line, characters are faced with decisions that could dramatically change their lives; some are well-familiar landmarks, like coming out to a parent, while others may seem trivial, like deciding to hit the dance floor, but are in fact no less transformative.

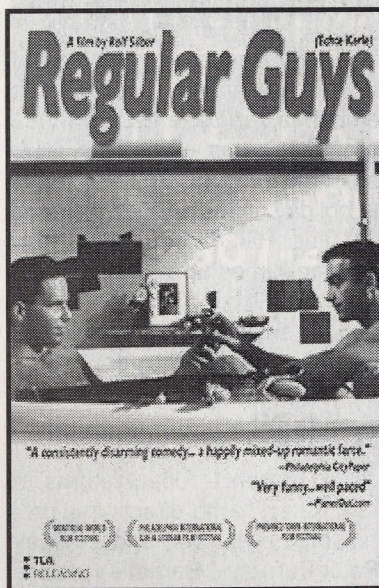


"Sometimes, it's the little step we take that allows us to grow," Tan said.

Born in Malaysia and a graduate of Drake University, Tan made *Happy Birthday* in his home town of Dallas with a cast of local actors.

"It was difficult to find actors who were willing to play gay roles. This is Texas, after all, but it's still ironic, considering the film deals with ignorance and homophobia."

Happy Birthday has played at film festivals in Athens, Sydney, Washington, D.C., and Toronto, and it won the Jury Prize for Best Feature-Gay Male at the Philadelphia International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. It also won the first New Directors Showcase Award at the Portland GLBT Film Festival.



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 major retailers
 \$24.99 DVD/\$39.99
 VHS

Regular Guys follows the travails of a tough Frankfurt cop who gets drunk after losing his girlfriend and wakes up the next morning naked and in bed with another man.

Shot in Frankfurt and Cologne, *Regular*

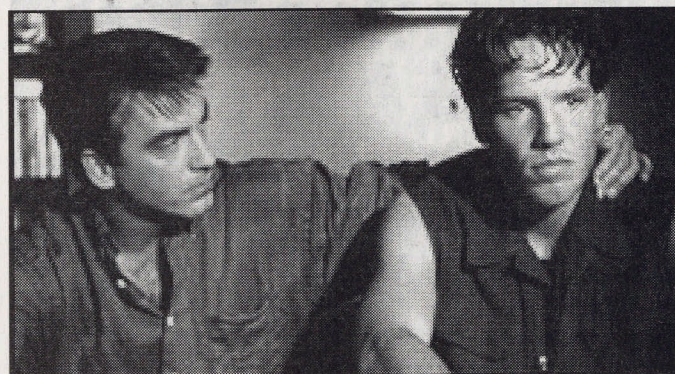
Guys screened at general and gay/lesbian film festivals across the world, including Auckland, Chicago, Manila, Montreal, Philadelphia and San Francisco, before enjoying a successful theatrical run in its home country, Germany.

Regular Guys is an outgrowth of Filmmaker Rolf Silber's experiences living as the "token straight man" in a gay group house.

"The movie describes a kind of limbo," Silber said. "You don't know where or who you are anymore."

The film stars German film and television star Christoph M. Oht as Christoph, a macho cop who discovers his girlfriend in bed with another man, only to be thrown out of their apartment. The next morning he finds himself in an alcoholic stupor and in bed with a total stranger, both of them naked. With no where to go he moves in with the man, Edgar (Peter Mergmann). Edgar, who is gay, quickly falls in love with Christoph, to the amusement of everyone at his police station. Life gets even more complicated when a beautiful but tough woman (Carin C. Tietze) joins Christoph's team that's investigating a car theft ring, and he discovers that Edgar may be involved in the thefts.

Silber studied at the German Film & Television Academy and co-founded Frankfurter Filmproduktion. He has worked extensively in both film and television, creating feature films, documentaries, TV dramas and children's programming.



Satirical elf is at Circuit Playhouse

The Santaland Diaries, by David Sedaris, is on stage at The Circuit Playhouse, 1705 Poplar Avenue, now through Dec. 21. Award-winning Memphis actor Dave Landis (2002 Ostrander Award for Best Actor in a Drama - *Amadeus*) stars in this one-man play as Crumpet the Elf in this wickedly funny look at the absurd side of the holiday season. *The Santaland Diaries* is directed by Ann Marie Hall (*Sylvia*, *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*). Showtimes are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults; \$18 for seniors; \$16 for students and military personnel, and \$12 for children. For tickets or more information, call (901) 726-4656.

Peter Pan flies at POTS

Playhouse on the Square, 51 South Cooper, returns to Neverland now through Jan. 4. Karen Lamb directs this production of *Peter Pan*, with Courtney Oliver and Lindsey Roberts sharing the role of Peter Pan. Kyle Barnette reprises his role as Captain Hook; Angela Groeschen is Wendy and Michael Ingersoll is Smee. Tickets are \$26 for adults; \$18 for seniors, \$16 for students and military personnel and \$12 for children. The Pay-What-You-Can performance is set for Friday, Dec. 26, at 7 p.m. For showtimes, reservations or more information, call (901) 726-4656.

Childhood classic staged

Running at The Circuit Playhouse, 1705 Poplar Avenue, now through Dec. 22, is *Babes in Toyland*, a nursery rhyme neighborhood where a gaggle of Mother Goose characters make their lives. Directed by Karin Barile Hill, *Babes in*

Toyland features a fresh new score, adapted and arranged by Paul Seiz. Showtimes for *Babes in Toyland* are Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults; \$18 for seniors; \$16 for students and military personnel, and \$12 for children. For more information or reservations, call (901) 726-4656.

TM presents haunting tale

Turn of the Screw, adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher from the story by Henry James, will premiere in the Mid-South on the Next Stage at Theatre Memphis, 630 Perkins Extended, Jan. 9 to 24. Joanne Malin directs. In this two-person tale of suspense and horror, Pamela Poletti will perform the role of the haunted governess, and Michael Gravois will bring all the other characters, real and imagined, to life. For more information or tickets, call the Theatre Memphis Box Office at (901) 682-8323.

Shaw directs love and life story

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change is on stage at Playhouse on the Square, 51 South Cooper, now through Jan. 4. This musical comedy revue, directed by *Family & Friends*'s own Kevin Shaw, hits close to home for anyone who has ever fallen in love, been married or simply suffered the trials and tribulations of the ever-popular "first date." Showtimes vary. Tickets are \$28 for adults; \$18 for seniors; \$16 for students and military personnel, and \$12 for children. The Pay-What-You-Can performance is set for Sunday, Dec. 28, at 7 p.m. For showtimes, reservations or more information, call (901) 726-4656 or go online to www.playhouseonthesquare.org.

Trans rock star story to be staged

Hedwig and the Angry Inch is set for Jan. 9 through Feb. 1, at TheatreWorks, 2085 Monroe Avenue. As part of the P.O.T.S. at The Works Series and media sponsored by *Family & Friends Magazine*, this award-winning musical is destined to be a cult classic. Its remarkable score tells the poignant story of a young man who searches for love after a botched sex change operation only to become a rock and roll queen. "In the whole long history of rock musicals, *Hedwig ...* is the only one that truly rocks," commended *the Rolling Stone*. For more information, call (901) 726-4656 or go online to www.playhouseonthesquare.org.

Orpheum readies for *Les Mis*'

Les Miserables, the legendary award-winning musical, returns to the stage at The Orpheum Theatre, 203 South Main, Jan. 20 to 25. Based on Victor Hugo's classic novel, *Les Miserables* is an epic saga that tells the story of fugitive Jean Valjean, who is pitted against the cruel and self-righteous Inspector Javert in a lifelong struggle to evade capture. Showtimes are Tuesday through Thursday at 7:30 p.m.; Friday at 8 p.m.; Saturday at 2 and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 1:30 and 7 p.m. Tickets, which range from \$17.50 to \$75 each, are available at the Orpheum Box Office; Davis-Kidd Booksellers in Laurelwood Shopping Center; at all TicketMaster locations; by calling (901) 525-3000, or going online to www.orpheum-memphis.com.

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School disciplines child for saying he has 2 mommies

After a seven-year-old boy was scolded in front of his classmates and sent to a school behavioral clinic for answering another child's questions about his lesbian mothers, the American Civil Liberties Union issued a letter to the school on Dec. 1, demanding that the school expunge the boy's disciplinary records and stop restricting him from talking about his family with other students.

"I was concerned when the assistant principal called and told me my son had said a word so bad that he didn't want to repeat it over the phone," said Sharon Huff, the second-grader's mother. She added, "But that was nothing compared to the shock I felt when my little boy came home and told me that his teacher had told him his family is a dirty word. No child should ever hear that, especially not from a teacher he trusted and respected."

Marcus McLaurin was waiting in line to go to recess on Nov. 11 at Ernest Gallet Elementary School (Youngsville, La.) when a classmate asked him about his mother and father. He responded that he didn't have a mother and father; instead he has two mothers. When the other child asked why, Marcus told him that it was because his mother is gay. The other child then asked what that meant, and Marcus explained, "Gay is when a girl likes another girl."

Upon hearing this, Marcus's teacher scolded him in front of his classmates, telling him that "gay" is a bad word and he should never say it at school, then sent him to the principal's office instead of letting him go to recess. The following week the school required Marcus to attend a special behavioral clinic at 6:45 in the morning, where he was forced to repeatedly write, "I will never use the word 'gay' in school again."

"To tell a seven-year-old that he can't talk about his family not only makes that child feel confused and hurt – it violates his Constitutional right to free speech and equal treatment," said Ken Choe, a staff attorney from the ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project who is handling the matter. "At the ACLU we often deal with schools that mistreat gay children and children who have gay parents, but this is beyond the pale."

On a student behavior contract form that Marcus had to fill out and give to his mother about the incident, Marcus wrote that the thing he did wrong was that he "sed bad wurdz." A handwritten note at the top of the form from Marcus's teacher further explains: "He explained to another child that you are gay and what being gay means." On a behavior report form signed by the assistant principal, the teacher wrote, "Marcus decided to explain to another child in his group that his mom is gay. He told the other child that gay is when a girl likes a girl. This kind of discussion is not acceptable in my room. I feel that parents should explain things of this nature to their

See School discipline, page 39

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Where The Girls Are



*Season's Greetings
& Happy New Year
from the staff at The Madison Flame*

Posters create awareness of kids with GLBT parents

COLAGE, an organization that engages, connects and supports people to make the world a better place for children of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) parents, has introduced its Respect All Families poster series, a set of two educational posters created by youth with GLBT parents to raise awareness about GLBT families.

"We made posters to create positive images and promote visibility of families like ours," said the youth behind the poster project, "to fight the homophobia we face in our schools and communities, and to counter the isolation and prejudice that youth with queer parents often face. We hope that by raising visibility, the posters will make it known that families like ours exist and flourish. We also want to tell other youth who have queer parents: 'You are not alone; there are others like you.'

"We hope these posters will open the minds of students who have not met diverse families like ours. While our main goal in creating the posters is to educate and spark dialogue, we are also happy that the posters give us the chance to express the pride we have in our families and in the GLBT community."

With the posters, COLAGE also presents two new resources: The Respect All Families Action Guide and Tips for Making Schools Safer for Youth with LGBT Parents. The first provides ideas and resources for youth groups, COLAGE chapters, schools and other groups that would like to use the posters to promote awareness in their community.

Kids can ring in new year at CMOM at noon December 31

Children have never had more fun celebrating New Years than at The Children's Museum of Memphis, located at 2525 Central Avenue, on Wednesday, Dec. 31, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Kids get in the spirit of the New Year as they ring in 2004, by counting down to noon in the museum's "Time Square" exhibit.

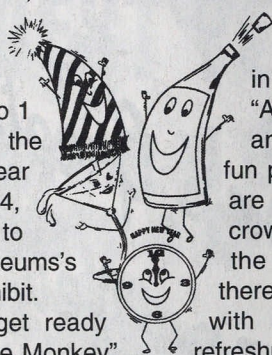
Children can get ready for the "Year of the Monkey" by making party hats, noise-makers and other crafts. Festivities also include karaoke, balloon animals, face painting, clowns, a strolling costumed character and other entertainment. Just before 12 o'clock noon,

everyone joins in a parade and marches to the museum's "Time Square" exhibit for the countdown to the

"New Year." Everyone joins in the old favorite, "Auld Lang Syne" and then catches fun prizes as goodies are tossed into the crowd. To finish off the celebration, there's a dance party with a variety of refreshments!

The event is free with museum admission which is \$6 for children, ages one to 12 and for seniors, ages 62+, and \$7 for adults.

For more information, call (901) 458-2678 or go online to www.cmom.com.



The school guide, also created by youth with GLBT parents, aims to educate and provide practical tools to teachers and educators who would like to improve the environment for youth with GLBT parents in their school.

For more information or to find out how to get posters for your community, contact Meredith Fenton, COLAGE program coordinator at (415) 861-5437, ext. 102 or email her at Meredith@colage.org.

Theatre Memphis sets spring dates for programs

Theatre Memphis, located at 630 Perkins Extended, has set the dates for its Spring 2004 educational programs for children and young adults.

KidsWagon is a special six-week intensive drama camp which culminates in fully-mounted public performances of *Charlotte's Web* and *The Wizard of Oz*. It is held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

After School Special is a six-week weekly drama class focusing on the fundamentals of the theatrical arts culminating in an original work created by the class. It is held on Mondays from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Itty Bitty Academy is a six-week drama class for little ones. Classes are targeted toward independence, decision-making, cooperation and movement. Classes are held Mondays from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

The schedule of sessions are as follows:

KidsWagon: *Charlotte's Web*, Jan. 31 to March 7, \$150

KidsWagon: *The Wizard of Oz*, March 27 to May 2, \$150

After School Special Session 1: Jan. 26 to March 1, \$100

After School Special Session 2: April 5 to May 10, \$100

Itty Bitty Academy Session 1: Jan. 26 to March 1, \$100

Itty Bitty Academy Session 2: April 5 to May 10, \$100

For more information, call the Theatre Memphis's office of education and outreach at (901) 682-5261.

Grandparents, seniors honored at CMOM with free admission

Grandparents and senior citizens, ages 62+, are celebrated at The Children's Museum of Memphis, 2525 Central Avenue, during the month of January 2004. Presented in conjunction with Senior Services, seniors and grandparents receive free admission to the museum in January.

Special activities planned include Toy Making with John Thomas, Saturday, Jan. 24, 11:30 a.m.; Grand Art: My Glasses are Fun!, Saturday, Jan. 31, 11 a.m., and Granny Gertie's Story Time Adventures with Patricia Carreras, Saturday, Jan. 31, 11:30 a.m.

For more information, call (901) 458-2678 or go online to www.cmom.com.

IMAX film features Jane Goodall, chimps

By KATIE HIESTAND, staff writer

Presently featured at the Union Planters IMAX Theater, located in the Pink Palace Museum, 3050 Central Avenue, now through March 5, is the film, *Jane Goodall: Wild Chimpanzees*.

The film's narrator gives a brief history of the world's most famous female scientist, Jane Goodall's, conservation and research with the wild chimpanzee population on the island of Gombe, as well as describes the present plight of man's closest living relative.

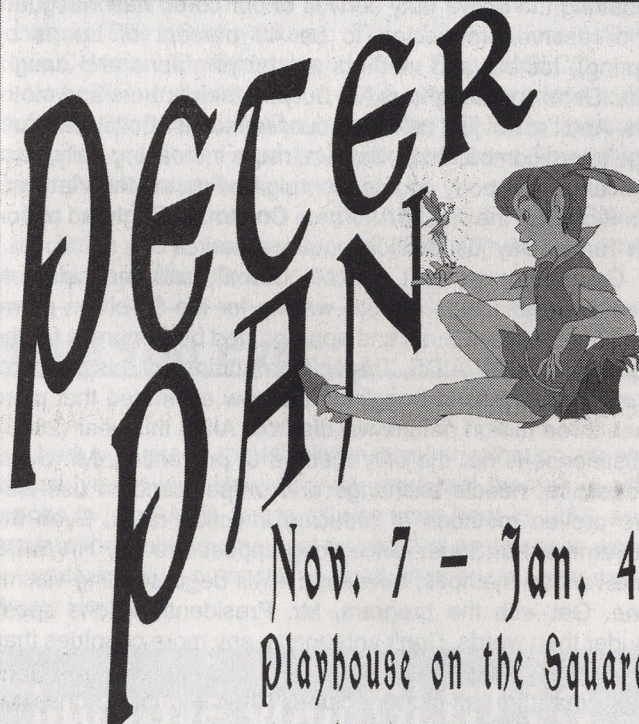
Goodall began her work in 1960, in her mid-20s, with no formal education or training, under the direction of well-known anthropologist and paleontologist Dr. Louis Leakey. She soon proved herself more than capable, producing good quality field notes that secured her future there. Within the first few years, she made a startling discovery that would change the way both humans and chimps are defined; she observed chimps intentionally making tools by stripping branches to fish termites out of logs for a delicious snack.

The film hits the highpoints of her long and fascinating career, with high quality footage of the chimps, the African landscape and other animal inhabitants, as well. From her story, the lives of the chimpanzees are explored, with emphasis on their present plight leading, unfortunately, toward possible extinction.



The film is appropriate, as well as enjoyable, for all ages. Even youngsters who can't follow the story will enjoy the footage of the chimps and other species; older kids and even adults will find education in the midst of a delightful journey into the wilds of Africa. One brief scene depicts a fight between chimpanzees, but is filmed so that it is not graphic and should be okay for younger viewers. Overall, quality movie clips and an engaging story line make for a strong film that should entertain and educate the whole family.

Tickets are \$7.50 for adults; \$7 for seniors, and \$6 for children. For showtimes, which vary, call (901) 763-IMAX. For more information or tickets, call (901) 320-6362.



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HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ...

EDITORIAL BY JIM EASTER

- Why Methodist University Hospital wants to close the maternity unit of its Union Avenue location? Surely it is not because of decreased demand for OB/GYN services. It appears that the already financially-strapped MED will now inherit an even bigger burden. Can the MED survive? I surely hope so. Be prepared for increased taxes to assist in keeping this much needed hospital and affiliated clinics open.

- What is the difference between a liberal and a conservative? According to one U.S. Senator, a liberal wants information in order to make intelligent decisions; a conservative wants ammunition to bolster his preconceived notions.

- Where to spend your vacation next summer? I would suggest P-Town (Provincetown), a virtual gay enclave at the tip of Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Forget British Columbia, Ontario or Vermont. By May 18, 2004, the legislature of Massachusetts will have taken whatever action necessary to conform to the state's Supreme Judicial Court ruling that same-sex couples must now have access to "... the protections, benefits, and obligations of civil marriage ...". P-town has many B&Bs, inns, hotels and motels that cater to the gay tourist, in addition to inexpensive restaurants that specialize in seafood, among other delicacies. A ferry plies the waves from Boston to P-Town during the summer.

As you might have guessed, the cultural wars of religions, moral and ethical convictions have already begun. Rick Santorum (R-Penn.), the moralizing U.S. Senator, has said that *Lawrence v. Texas* did not represent the country heading down a slippery slope, but going off a cliff. He's bitching about the 4-3 vote of the unelected Bay State Supreme Court. What about the 5-4 vote of the unelected U.S. Supreme Court, which selected Bush as President?

Massachusetts has always been on the cutting edge of technology; it now is way ahead of the curve when it comes to social policy. Thank you GLAAD, Lambda Legal and the seven couples who sued the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Same-sex couples there now enjoy equal protection under the law.

- If a new edition of *Webster's Dictionary* will feature a picture of John Ford next to the definition of "arrogance?" When will the voters of Senate District 29 wise up and elect someone else?

- Why 50 percent of all lawyers (dentists and doctors, too) graduated in the lower half of their class?

- What's happened to the sports segment on local TV newscasts? Many of us are not willing to pay extra to get ESPN or Fox Sports.

- Why virtually unregulated monopolies like Time Warner Cable and MLG&W have service that sucks? And you can't even get through to them on the phone to complain. Or why they can raise rates when it suits them? Time Warner's rate increase usually means additional "Praise-the-Lord-and-Send-Money," "Buy-This-at-Home" or more re-run only channels. MLG&W boasts its rates are cheaper than other locales. So what? We don't live elsewhere! After some political posturing, a rate increase was approved by the City Council. That is just like the pay increase Mayor Herenton

got – at first they rejected that idea, too.

- Why the White House cannot find the person who leaked information to correspondent Bob Novak, who then outed the wife of career diplomat Joseph Wilson as a CIA operative? The investigation started in July.

- Why NBC continues to air 39-, 45- and 48-minute shows during prime time? Must be to boost its ratings against the competitor's more popular offerings. And why do the TV networks' Sunday morning news shows all seem to have the same talking heads blathering on, saying the same thing to four different moderators on four different shows? Sure is boring.

- Why the four Roman Catholic bishops of Massachusetts were so adamantly opposed to the recent court ruling? Were any of them among the prelates who, along with retired Cardinal Law of Boston, covered up priestly sexual abuse of adolescent boys?

- If your children or grandchildren in middle and high school are being taught by teachers actually qualified to teach specific subjects? Sixty-eight percent of the math instructors in 22 underperforming schools do not have the proper certification. Perhaps employees and board of education members of the Memphis city schools should cease making personal calls on their cell phones and earmark the taxpayer savings for the continuing education of unqualified teachers.

- Who, a long time ago, said, "In peacetime, sons bury their fathers; in wartime, fathers bury their sons." The statesman/philosopher was right ... then. Times have changed. Due to planning for the aftermath of our invasion of Iraq requiring the active duty service of our co-ed national guard and reserves (projected to be 40 percent of troops by Spring), fathers and mothers are burying sons and daughters. Sons and daughters are burying their fathers and mothers. And I'm not just talking about Americans. Collateral damage to noncombatant civilians in Iraq is increasing daily, reminiscent of the body counts promulgated during the Viet Nam conflict. Was the visit of Air Force One to the Baghdad airport on Turkey Day just political poultry manure?

On another warfront, the U.N. Global Fund and the World Health Organization are still waiting for the \$3 billion promised by President Bush and appropriated by Congress for the fight against HIV/AIDS. The epic proportions of this pandemic disease are mind-boggling; it is now estimated that more than three million people will die from AIDS this year (2003). Abstinence is not the only method of prevention, Mr. Bush. Education, needle exchange and proper condom use also are proven methods of reducing infection rates. Even the government of South Africa, long opposed to any HIV/AIDS intervention methods, now says it will begin treating victims free. Get with the program, Mr. President. Actions speak louder than words. Don't antagonize any more countries than you already have.

- What the half-century club is? It is a public, nonsexist, nonracist, noninvitational, nondues-paying, nonfund-raising, nonchartered, nonorganizational group of people who have attained 50 years of living. Once that milestone has been

See Have You Ever ..., page 37

Bluff City Sports holds its awards banquet

The annual Bluff City Sports Association awards banquet was held Nov. 15 in the Magnolia room of the Side Street Grille. More than 100 people attended this year's event, which was presided over by Charles Billings. The following awards were presented:

Spring 2003 League: 1st Place Tie – Locomotion and Bushwackers, 3rd Place – Young Ave. Deli Barflies.

Fall 2003 League: 1st Place – Neons; 2nd Place – Young Ave. Deli Barflies, 3rd Place – Bushwackers.

Summer Slam Tournament: 1st Place – Bushwackers; 2nd Place – Locomotion, 3rd Place – Young Ave. Deli Barflies.

Commissioner's Award: Tonya Shropshire, for her summer softball clinic and for excellence in coaching, training and teaching.

Special league awards for All Stars: Chris Brower (Bushwackers); Thomas Brower (Bushwackers); Lesley Jones (Barflies); Lisa Royar (Barflies); Jerry Lewis (Locomotion); Dan Monk (Locomotion); Will Batts (Outfielders); Chris Funke (Outfielders); Tim Armour (Outfielders); Heidi Williams (MGLCC), and Andy Eiskamp (MGLCC).

Voted by their teammates, the following individuals received the Most Valuable Player award: Michelle Homer (Barflies); Jenny Doza (Bushwackers); Rick Herrera (Locomotion); Shey Pate (Outfielders), and Opal Schwantz (MGLCC).

Voted by their teammates, the following individuals received the Most Improved Player award: Jon Jackson (Barflies); Jonathan Ellis (Bushwackers); Tim Maness (Locomotion); Kevin Coleman (Outfielders), and Cindy Cady (MGLCC).

New officers, elected Dec. 1, 2003, who were added to the Bluff City Sports Association council are Will Batts, assistant commissioner; John Foard, treasurer, and Tonya Shropshire, player development/field supervisor.

For more information about the Bluff City Sports Association and its league play, call (901) 461-0891 or email memphisgaysoftball@yahoo.com.

Have You Ever ...

from page 36

reached, you are automatically a member although no one will ask you to join. However, you have met the age qualifications to join AARP. So, to all who were born in 1953, welcome to the club! You may not be as good as you once were, but undoubtedly, you're still as good once as you ever were. Happy Holidays!

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School discipline

from page 33

own children in their own way.”

“Of course, we believe that parents should be the ones who talk with small children about things like sex, but Marcus McLaurin’s school seems to think that he was talking about sex when all he was talking about was his two mothers,” said Joe Cook, executive director of the ACLU of Louisiana. “The fact is that there are children of lesbian and gay parents in schools throughout Louisiana, and those children have the same right as any other children to talk about their families.”

In its letter to the principal of Ernest Gallet Elementary School, the ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project and the ACLU of Louisiana demanded “that school officials refrain from taking further disciplinary action against Marcus because he informed a classmate that his mother is a lesbian; expunge all records of any reference to such disciplinary action; give assurances that they will neither engage in such censorship and discrimination in the future nor retaliate against either Marcus or Ms. Huff, and offer apologies to both Marcus and Ms. Huff.” The letter further puts school officials on notice “not to destroy or alter any document related to this matter ...”

On Dec. 3, Lafayette Parish’s school superintendent, James Easton, said there would be no apology.

“An apology is not due,” Easton said. “The child was not singled out because his parent is gay, the student was disciplined for behavior problems.”

The Lafayette School Board convened on Dec. 11 to investigate the incident and formulate a response.

For more information, go online to www.aclu.org/LesbianGayRights.

...

Comment from Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG):

PFLAG is appalled and saddened at the news that in Youngsville, La., at Ernest Gallet Elementary School, a second grade teacher punished seven-year old Marcus McLaurin for telling another child that his mother is gay. As parents, family members and friends of gays and lesbians and their children, we are horrified that any child would be told his family is bad and punished and humiliated in public for mentioning his mothers are gay to a classmate.

Legislation like the Equal Protection Clause of 1996, and Equal Access Act of 1984, guarantee students protection against harassment and discrimination for GLBT issues. Unfortunately, this has not saved children like Marcus from persecution. As a society, we put our trust in our teachers, the adults hired to educate and care for our students. And so it is particularly shocking to confront the reality that it was the very teacher that Marcus has always liked and, most importantly trusted, that held his family up to ridicule.

“As an organization that values diversity and celebrates the family – in all its myriad forms – PFLAG chapters across the country work each day to make our communities, and especially our schools, safe and welcoming for all,” said Sam Thoron, PFLAG national president. “We strongly urge the faculty of Ernest Gallet Elementary School to think about the true definition of family, to reject hurtful bigotry and to work to make their school an environment of education and support for all students.”

MGLCC to host alcohol-free New Year’s Eve Party

The Memphis Gay & Lesbian Community Center, located at 892 South Cooper, is offering an alcohol and drug free environment to ring in the new year.

The New Year’s Eve Party begins at 10:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 31. Fun, food and entertainment will be provided.

For more information, call (901) 278-4297.

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(615) 343-2958 (TDD) • (800) 273-9595 (TDD)

E-mail: carole.moore-slater@vanderbilt.edu

Website: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/findse.html>

This office provides information about disability supports and community services available to individuals, families, and agencies in TN.



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AT ONE MORE!
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SOUTHERN GENTLEMEN'S
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**WISH TO EXTEND A VERY HEART-FELT THANK YOU
TO THE FOLLOWING FOLKS WHO HELPED MAKE THIS
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RICK MORGAN
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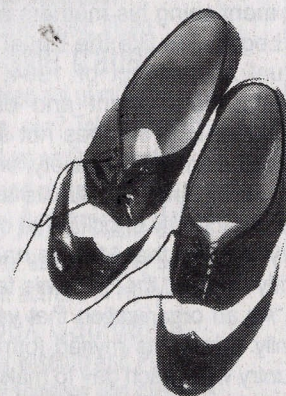
**KEITH RIGGINS
JOYCE WILLIAMS
JEAN WOODARD
ANDREA ZUCKER**



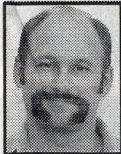
YOUR HOSTS

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LEE BRAY
BILLY BUCHANAN
ERIC GAITHER
ROY L. GORDON JR.
JAMES E. KNIGHT JR.**

**CHARLES LATHAM
GENE MCCOWN
CHRIS MILLER
MICHAEL STACK
STEPHEN SWORDS
JON WHITBY**



**THANKS TO YOU, CHILDREN INFECTED & AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS
WILL HAVE A WONDERFUL, HAPPY HOLIDAY**



QUOTE / UNQUOTE BY REX WOCKNER

"I, myself, have no interest in getting married and quite enjoy the law as an excuse. I just want to be a slut and not pay any alimony."

— **Openly gay BBC America talk-show host Graham Norton to Palm Springs's *The Bottom Line*, Sept. 19.**

"Ronald Reagan was the opposite of a gay-basher. (There was) a stink when Nancy Reagan invited her interior decorator and his boyfriend to stay overnight at the White House. Some of the social right was upset when he (allowed that). That's how opposite he was of the tyrannical, judgmental figure he is portrayed in this (miniseries "The Reagans"). He was a guy from Hollywood. He dealt with gays all his life. He was not a homophobe and a bigot."

— **Columnist Jim Pinkerton on Fox News Watch, Oct. 26.**

"Without baring flesh, exchanging fluids or even shedding blood, 'Will & Grace' has become the craftiest, if not the most radical, show in the history of network television — though not merely for its unabashed depiction of gay existence, or the risqué, multi-entendre-filled dialogue its writers slyly sneak under the censors's radar. 'Will & Grace' is revolutionary for something so utterly conventional it would warm the hearts of bubbes and zeydes across America's urban landscapes: sliding a portrait of a 21st-century Jewish American's life into a sitcom about a gay man and his best gal pal."

— **Kera Bolonik writing in *The Nation*, Nov. 17.**

"You couldn't put this in a book — nobody would believe it."

— **New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg Nov. 7 after five transgender students from the Harvey Milk gay high school were arrested for impersonating undercover vice cops dressed as female prostitutes and demanding money, credit cards, ATM cards and PIN codes to let their victims go free.**

"Prince Charles is in the middle of a gay-sex scandal and media frenzy that just won't quit. ... Butler-turned-biographer Paul Burrell says he has an audiotape describing a sexual encounter between Prince Charles and a male aide."

— **USA Today, Nov. 11.**

"They (my parents) were, to put it mildly, not at all happy about me doing the show. Now, they're pissed off when we run reruns. They're fans. My mom emailed me an Andrew Sullivan column about gay marriage, in favor of. And she was sending it around to her friends. It was a huge evolution. My mother was affected by the show in the same way that a lot of people seem to be."

— **"Queer Eye for the Straight Guy's" Ted Allen to the *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 18.**

"(It) has been like finding a missing sibling. He is an

extraordinary man with extraordinary depth. I have seen his soul and it is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen."

— **Rosie O'Donnell on Boy George, to *The New York Times*, Nov. 13. She is producing *Taboo*, George's new musical.**

"The (Kinsey scale) ones and twos have of course always been around, but in the past 10 years, their time may have finally come, as their 'incidentally homosexual' side has a new forum in which to emerge. These are guys who'd rarely if ever thought about coming on to other men in a steam room, let alone ventured into a gay bar. If not for the Web, which many of them with whom I've chatted say facilitated their 'first time,' a lot of these men believe they'd not have ever done it with another guy — and they have no plans of ever coming out as gay or even as 'bi.'"

— **Columnist Michelangelo Signorile, *New York Press*, Nov. 11.**

"We are not more evolved than we were in the Dark Ages, politically or spiritually. So there's nothing to say, and no one has an alternative, no other plans have been given a chance to work. ... I just feel I live in a country where, and even I'm guilty of this — I'm like, 'As long as I can shop, everything's fine.'"

— **Singer Meshell Ndegeocello to the national lesbian magazine *Curve*, December issue.**

"We don't believe in gays. I can't stand them."

— **Joe Jackson, Michael Jackson's father, in an interview with the BBC, Nov. 13.**

"When Sir Ian McKellen was lobbying then Home Secretary Michael Howard about the controversial Section 28, which forbids the promotion of homosexuality in schools, Mr. Howard asked for the actor's autograph for his children. With a smile on his face, but with his lobbying having failed, McKellen said he wrote: 'F*** off, I'm gay.'"

— **BBC News, Nov. 14.**

"My mom has a rainbow bumper sticker on her car. She's determined to do her part for gay visibility in unincorporated McHenry County, Ill., despite the fact that there aren't any gay people in McHenry County to visualize. My mother almost paid a high price driving a gay-identified car: Last summer she and my stepfather were nearly driven off the road by a couple of men screaming, 'Faggots!'"

— **Author Dan Savage writing at Salon.com, Nov. 19.**

Quotes compiled by Rex Wockner, who has reported news for the gay press since 1985. His work has appeared in more than 200 gay publications. He has a B.A. in journalism from Drake University, started his career as a radio reporter and has written extensively for the mainstream media, as well.



FROM THE FRONT ROW BY KEVIN SHAW

Charles Dickens's heart-warming family favorite returns to Theatre Memphis's (TM) Lohrey Stage, 630 Perkins Extended, this holiday season for the 26th annual production of *A Christmas Carol* now through Dec. 21.

The much loved story of Ebenezer Scrooge, Jacob Marley, the Cratchit Family and Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future is told by the cherished cast of characters from an adaption of the Dickens tale by out director J. Noble, managing director of ShoWagon, TM's professional touring troupe. Noble joined the TM staff in 2002, as Director of Education and Outreach, and this will be his second time to direct this crowd-pleasing favorite. Last Christmas he directed the daytime one-hour student version of the classic tale presented by ShoWagon.

This year's production features all the figgy pudding and every humbug, and incorporates some new ideas as well, especially with the music that will be sung throughout the show. This particular stage adaptation gives a closer look into Scrooge's past, and sheds light on why he became the man he did.

Family & Friends recently contacted the director by phone to get the latest on this production, as well as any news regarding the departure of TM's Executive Producer Ted Strickland.

F&F: So, just what is the latest on the recent firing of your executive producer?

Noble: I'm not sure there's much left to tell. You probably know as much about it as I do.

F&F: I doubt that. When can you tell us about why he was let go or the plans for Theatre Memphis's future?

Noble: The board just decided to not renew his contract, which was up in October. I can refer you to all the local press articles as to why the board made this decision because I was not actually privy to the process. In the interim, I will act as the temporary artistic director until the position can be formally filled. I think the board is going to take their time to fill the position because they feel like the theater is in a safe position right now and for the foreseeable future.

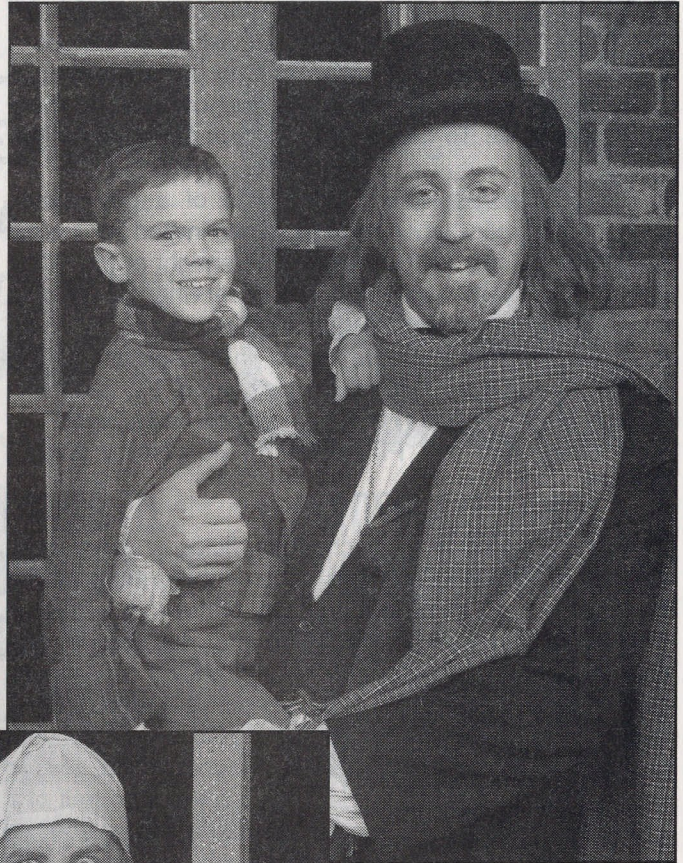
F&F: So, the future is still bright for Theatre Memphis?

Noble: Oh, absolutely! I think the energy around here is very strong and positive. There are a lot of talented, dedicated people here and we're just trying to move forward.

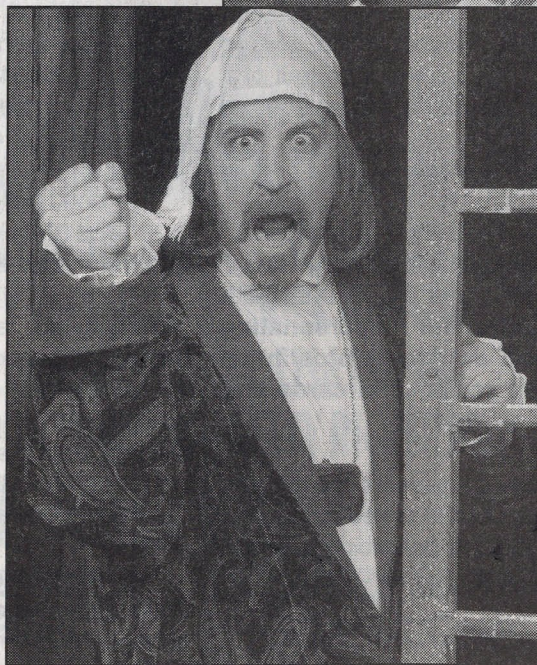
F&F: So, let's talk about *A Christmas Carol*. Have you directed this show before?

Noble: Last year, Ted Strickland had directed the evening version and I directed the matinee version, which ShoWagon does ...

F&F: (interrupting) Which version was better? I'm teasing ... don't answer that!



TOP: Tiny Tim and Scrooge in Theatre Memphis's 26th annual production of the Charles Dickens family classic *A Christmas Carol*. LEFT: Scrooge at his window.



Noble: It was a very difficult process because, although the set was essentially the same, there was no coordination in casting or staging, etc., between the two shows. It was very hard on all of us. So, out of that, we decided to have the ShoWagon cast perform in both the daytime and night-

time productions.

F&F: How does this production compare with other versions of *A Christmas Carol* at Theatre Memphis?

Noble: I recently read a short story called *What Christmas Means When We Get Older*, which Dickens wrote about these angels that come to visit Christmas festivities, but the humans they visit are totally unaware of them. It was a real sweet and respectful quality to the short story. So, I decided

See Front Row, page 43

Front Row

from page 42

to use the ShoWagon actors as these angels among us that propel the story of *A Christmas Carol* forward through narrative theater technique and music. This is unlike any version Theater Memphis audiences have seen before. Rather than taking elements of the original *A Christmas Carol* script, I took elements from the original novel. I was concerned that past productions of this show had become almost like a "pop-up book" – that you go in there and bury the scene with costumes, followed by another scene with costumes – and it didn't seem anyone was taking care to nurture the story. This production is still about the joy of Christmas, but it's also about what happened if this man (Scrooge) creates an absence in the world by removing himself, then this child (Tiny Tim) will die. That's what I wanted to show by giving the actors some material to chew on.

F&F: Is it still a musical?

Noble: It's a play with music. The music is used to weave the scenes together. Some music is less popular, but this is combined with some Christmas standards.

F&F: Is the bed still going to float?

Noble: We got rid of the bed ...

F&F: (Gasping in horror) Oh my God!

Noble: I know, I know. ... But, instead we came up with the stage having a huge rotating centerpiece, which is comprised of multiple levels and staircases. We have characters spinning and flying and everything. This is still a magical show, there's just no bed. This is still a show for adults and children. I've added a nativity pageant with lots of kids and puppets and music. It should be a real neat experience for everyone who sees it. The story is still there regardless which version from the 26 past years you've seen before. No matter what changes we've made, we can't abandon Tiny Tim still saying, "God bless us everyone!"

Showtimes for *A Christmas Carol* are 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays; 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 2 p.m. Sundays. Additional shows are set for Saturday, Dec. 20, at 3 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 21, at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$25 for adults; \$12 for students, ages 12-18 and with valid college ID, and \$8 for children under 12 years of age.

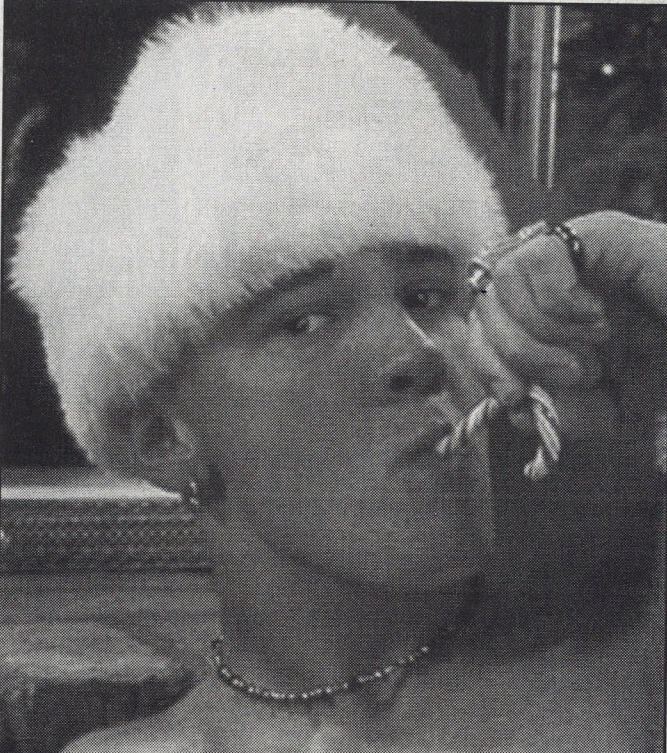
A one-hour children's version of *A Christmas Carol* also is on the Lohrey Stage now through Dec. 19. Performances are every Tuesday through Friday at 9:45 and 11:45 a.m. Tickets are \$6 for children and \$8 for adults.

Those attending a performance of *The Lion King* at The Orpheum Theater (see page 16), can present their *Lion King* ticket stub and get one free child ticket for *A Christmas Carol* with an adult ticket purchase for *A Christmas Carol*.

Also, a \$3 discount can be received off the price of a ticket to *A Christmas Carol* by bringing a new, unwrapped toy for a child, age three to 17, for donation to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Memphis.

Family & Friends Magazine is a proud media sponsor of *A Christmas Carol*.

For more information, call the Theater Memphis Box Office at (901) 682-8323.



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HIV/AIDS EDUCATION 101

Question: How long does it take for HIV to cause AIDS?

Answer: Since 1992, scientists have estimated that about half the people with HIV develop AIDS within 10 years after becoming infected. This time varies greatly from person to person and can depend on many factors, including a person's health status and their health-related behaviors.

Today, there are medical treatments that can slow down the rate at which HIV weakens the immune system. There are other treatments that can prevent or cure some of the ill-

nesses associated with AIDS, though the treatments do not cure AIDS itself. As with other diseases, early detection offers more options for treatment and preventative health care.



Reprinted from the website of Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Center for HIV, STD and TB Preventions at www.cdc.gov/hiv/pubs/faq.

HIV/AIDS TESTING SITES & INFORMATION

Memphis & Shelby County Health Department

814 Jefferson Avenue, Room 221

7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday to Friday

Testing conducted on teens, ages 13 and up, without parental consent. HIV Test Cost: FREE

For more information, call (901) 544-6808

Memphis Regional Planned Parenthood

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8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday

FREE OraSure testing for ages 13-24

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Friends For Life & The Positive Living Center

1384 Madison Avenue / 1000 South Cooper

Call Friends For Life for dates and times

FREE OraSure • appointments may be required

For more information, call (901) 272-0855

New Directions Inc.

4466 Elvis Presley, Suite #310

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday

Appointments Required

HIV Test Cost: FREE

For more information, call (901) 346-5497

Agencies provide HIV counseling and testing at various health fairs and community events throughout the year.

AIDS News in Brief

- HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson, who was in Zambia on Dec. 1 to mark World AIDS Day, said that the world is "losing th(e) war on HIV/AIDS." — *San Francisco Chronicle*, Dec. 2.

"We appear to be losing the fight against AIDS at the moment," Thompson said. "We need to redouble our efforts. This war has more casualties than any other war as we are losing three million people every year." — *Knight Ridder/Contra Costa Times*, Dec. 2.

- Former South African President Nelson Mandela said that the HIV/AIDS stigma is keeping people from being tested

and seeking treatment, adding, "That is a tragic mistake because when you do that, you make the people that are suffering feel like they are not human beings. Many will die because of feeling less than human."

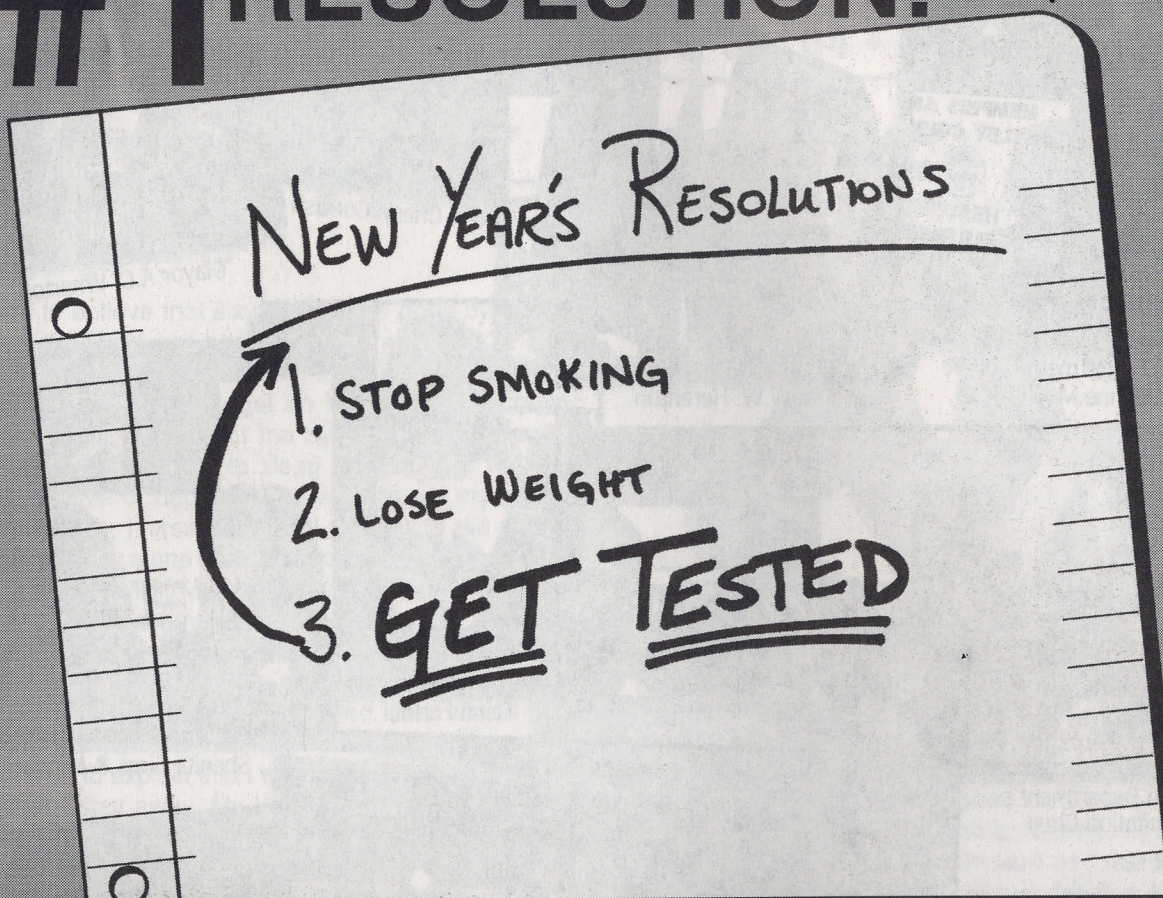
— *AP/Columbia State*, Dec. 1.

- The Vatican, on World AIDS Day, issued a statement "strong(ly) defen(ding)" the Roman Catholic Church's position opposing condom use, saying "fidelity, chastity and abstinence" are the most effective ways to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS in a "pan-sexualist society." Cardinal Javier Lozana Barragan, president of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, said, in a five-page statement, "We have to present this as the main way for effective prevention

New feature: check out "And the candidates said," page 49, for the comments on HIV/AIDS by those running for the office of President of the U.S.A.

See AIDS News. Page 48

Make Getting Tested Your **#1** NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION!



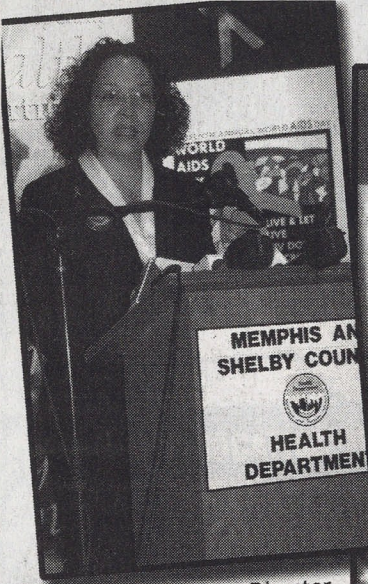
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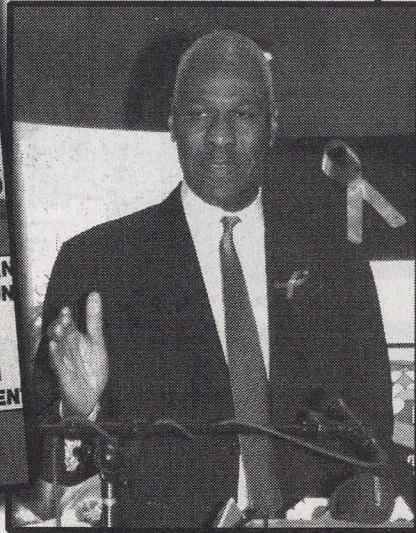
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FAMILY ALBUM WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVANCE



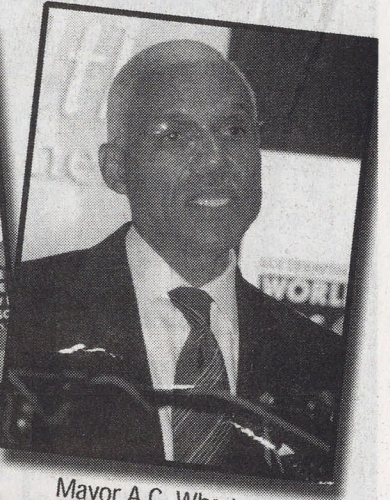
Health Department Director
Yvonne Madlock



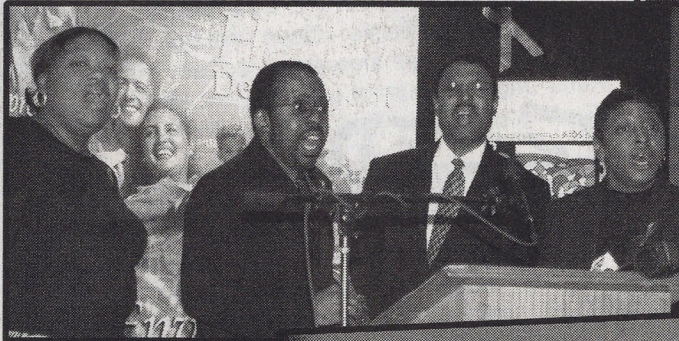
Mayor W.W. Herenton



Rev. Cheryl Cornish



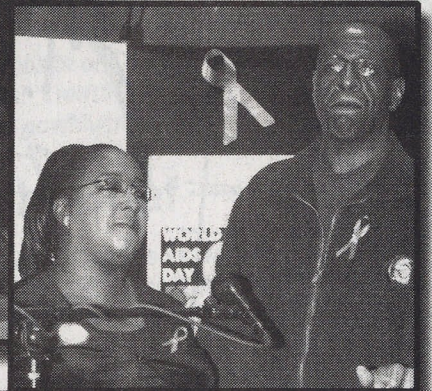
Mayor A.C. Wharton



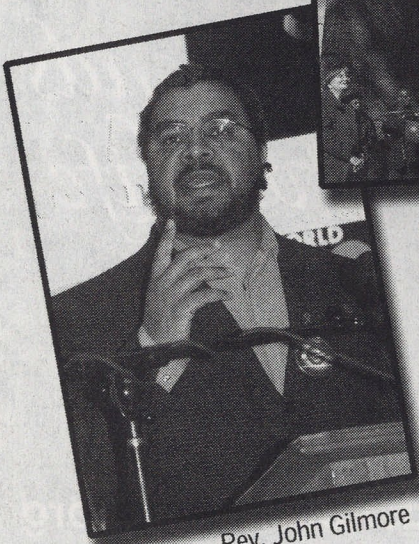
Health Department's
Sanitation Choir



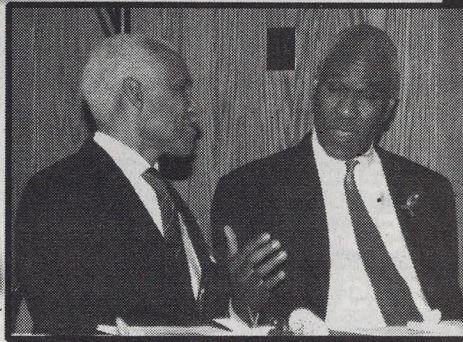
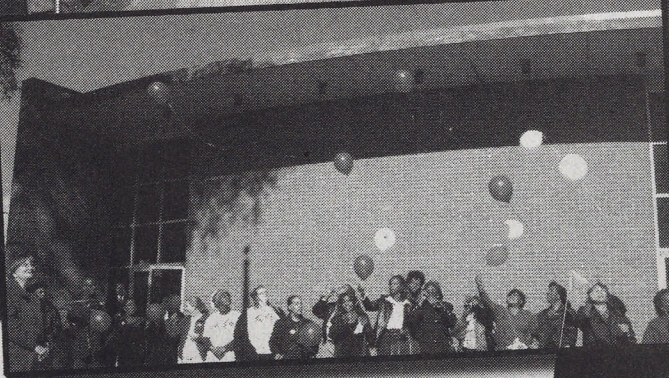
Gena Fortner



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FROM THE INSIDE

BY TOM ADKINS

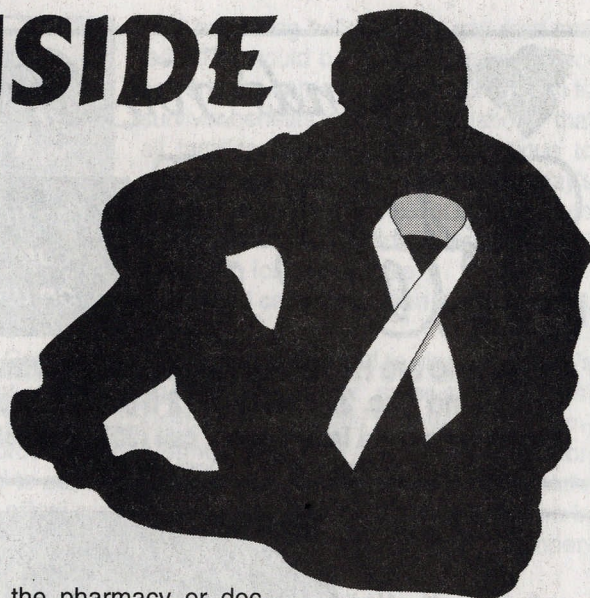
It's hard to believe that six weeks have gone by since I got my results. There has been a lot of time to think and do some research on my new illness. It seems like only yesterday that I decided to go get an HIV test. I was really scared and wasn't sure what the outcome would be. For two weeks I found it hard to sleep wondering if the test would be positive or negative. I went in to get my results and sure enough, it was positive. I wanted to die at that very moment. How alone I felt. How could I possibly tell my partner and my family. My partner would surely leave me and my family would never speak to me. It had to be the worst day of my life.

I told my partner and he was very supportive. My family was a totally different story. As expected, they turned their back on me and said they didn't want me around the grandchildren. I tried to explain that I would not hurt them but they insisted that I stay away. My heart was broken and there was nothing I could do about it. Maybe I shouldn't have told them. Maybe I should have waited until I got sick or something before taking such a big risk. It is done and I have to find a way to deal with this.

I did my follow up visit and had my CD4 and my Viral Load checked and much to my surprise I wasn't in as bad a shape as I thought I was. My doctor was very supportive and positive but let me know that this would not be an easy process to maintain my health. Since my CD4 was so high, we decided to start with Combivir and see how I did on that. I am on Acyclovir for the rest of my life and will be taking retrovirals forever. My doctor is very optimistic. I wish I could be the same.

The day I started the regiment, I was very nervous and every little thing I felt in my body made me panic. I was sure I would get very sick and throw up or something crazy like that. How would I explain this sudden change with my health? Would the people I work with figure out what is wrong? Would I loose my job? Well, much to my surprise, I did very well and have now adjusted to these medications. If only my mind would adjust.

I live in fear every day that someone will find out or see



me in the pharmacy or doctor's office and put two and two together. The agency who gave me my results offered me several services to help with this but I am afraid to be seen there also. I need someone to talk to but all I have is my partner and he is awaiting his results and is just as scared for himself as I was for myself.

Every time I cough, I am afraid that this is it. I am going to die. I wish I had the nerve to talk to someone who can help me. But for now I think I can handle it and I will deal with everything as it comes. The doctor says that if I do what he advises me to, I will be fine. Is he sure? Can I trust what he says?

Every day I think that I will just stop taking the medications and I will be fine. But, this little voice in the back of my mind keeps telling me to keep taking these pills. Everyday. Twice a day. For the rest of my life. It is hard to remember to take these. For now I will listen to the little voice and see what happens.

To be 23 years-old and to be in this situation is something I never thought would happen to me. If only I would have paid attention to those speakers who talked about safe sex. If only I would have used a condom no matter what. I would not be in this situation. I can't sleep at night worrying about everything. I have begun to pray for answers and hope that things will get easier. One day at a time is all I can tell myself. I feel fine and hope it stays like this. I will keep you updated.

from page 44

of infection and spread of HIV/AIDS, since the phenomenon of AIDS is a pathology of the spirit." — Reuters, Dec. 1.

• The number of syphilis cases reported in the United States increased more than 12 percent from 2001 to 2002, marking the second straight year of an increase in the number of cases, according to CDC statistics published in the Nov. 21 issue of the agency's "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report." — *Washington Post*, Nov. 21.

• Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, on Nov. 14, in St. Louis, called on inmates at a

medium-security prison to voluntarily undergo HIV testing. ... About 200 inmates ... voluntarily lined up to undergo HIV testing. — *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Nov. 15.


• According to Drs. Robert Klitzman and Ronald Bayer of Columbia University in their new book, *Mortal Secrets: Truth and Lies in the Age of AIDS*, HIV-positive individuals' failure to disclose their HIV status to sexual partners — either intentionally or unintentionally — is "a significant but underreported factor in the continued spread" of HIV in the United States. — *The New York Times*, Nov. 25.

• Administrators at Scott County High School in Georgetown, Ky., on Nov. 21, asked an area HIV/AIDS service group, the Lexington, Ky.-based AIDS Volunteers, not to display four brochures at a health fair at the school. The brochures either contained information about "safe sex" or were targeted at gay or lesbian teenagers. — *AP/Louisville Courier-Journal*, Nov. 23.

• Health officials from the District of Columbia — which has the country's highest AIDS prevalence — announced on Dec. 1, World AIDS Day, they plan to distribute free condoms, latex dental dams and female condoms in 50 dispensers to be installed in select government offices frequented by D.C. residents. — *Washington Post*, Dec. 1.

• Children who were born with HIV and who are now becoming teenagers are facing the difficult situation of telling people about their HIV-positive status. — *AP/Lexington Herald-Leader*, Nov. 23.

For more news on HIV/AIDS, go online to www.kaisernet-work.org.



The first cup's on us!

Those who are HIV-Positive (and their partners) can attend Dec. 22 and Jan. 12 from 6 to 8 p.m
For location and information, call (901) 272-0855

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AND THE CANDIDATES SAID ... BY REX WOCKNER



"No, I would not."
 — Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Edwards when asked Nov. 9 on TV's "Meet the Press:" "If a gay couple goes to Canada and is married legally and returns to the United States, should that marriage be honored here? If you were governor of a state, would you be supportive of that?"



"We have had (same-sex) civil unions in this state (Vermont) for three years, and as far as I can tell, it hasn't hurt anybody's marriage."

— Presidential candidate and former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean to Los Angeles's *Lesbian News*, November issue.



"It is time for President Bush to end his alliance with homophobic bigotry once and for all and speak out against the Republican Party's hostile election year attempt to amend the United States Constitution to include a ban on gay marriage. Throughout our history, the Constitution has been amended to afford expanded rights to disenfranchised citizens, not to unfairly single out a particular

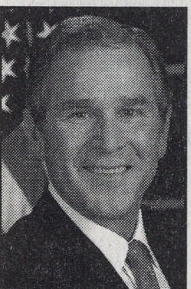
group of Americans by limiting their rights."

— Presidential candidate Dick Gephardt in a Nov. 8 statement.



"I support civil unions so that gays and lesbians have equality and full rights under the law. ... Currently, most of our laws enacted rights and responsibilities to only heterosexual families and explicitly exclude same-sex couples from enjoying those same rights and responsibilities. It is in the best interest of our country to promote stable communities and families, this includes both heterosexual and same-sex families. ... I believe same-sex couples deserve the same federal benefits, rights, privileges and responsibilities as opposite-sex couples."

— Presidential candidate Wesley Clark in a Human Rights Campaign questionnaire, Nov. 12.



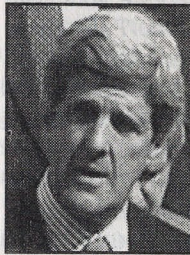
"Marriage is a sacred institution between a man and a woman. Today's decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court violates this important principle. I will work with Congressional leaders and others to do what is legally necessary to defend the sanctity of marriage."

— President George W. Bush, Nov. 18.



"Although I am opposed to gay marriage, I have also long believed that states have the right to adopt for themselves laws that allow same-sex unions. I will oppose any attempts by the right wing to change the (U.S.) Constitution in response to today's ruling, which would be unnecessary and divisive."

— Democratic presidential candidate Joe Lieberman, Nov. 18.



"I have long believed that gay men and lesbians should be assured equal protection and the same benefits — from health to survivor benefits to hospital visitation — that all families deserve. While I continue to oppose gay marriage, I believe that today's decision calls on the Massachusetts state legislature to take action to ensure equal protection for gay couples."

— Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, Nov. 18.

"As Governor of Vermont, I was proud to sign the nation's first law establishing civil unions for same-sex couples. Today, the Massachusetts court appears to have taken a similar approach to the Vermont Supreme Court and its decision that led to our civil unions law. One way or another, the state should afford same-sex couples equal treatment under law in areas such as health insurance, hospital visitation and inheritance rights."

— Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean, Nov. 18.

"While I support civil unions for same-sex couples, I also support the right of states to make decisions regarding the protections afforded same-sex couples. I do not support gay marriage."

— Democratic presidential candidate Dick Gephardt, Nov. 18.

...

And From Our Files ...

THE CANDIDATES ON HIV/AIDS

Retired Army General Wesley Clark, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in recognition of World AIDS Day, recommended that the United States double its spending on Global AIDS and other diseases to \$30 billion over five years.

— Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel*, Dec. 2.

Other Democratic presidential candidates, including former Vermont Governor Howard Dean and Sens. Joe Lieberman (Conn.) and John Edwards (N.C.) also said they would commit to spending \$30 billion for global AIDS if elected president.

— *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, Dec. 2.

Letter from Bush confusing to folks at MCC

On Oct. 14, a letter signed by President Bush was received by the predominately gay and lesbian Metropolitan Community Church Los Angeles to congratulate them for their 35th anniversary.

The Los Angeles congregation is the original body of the MCC, one of the world's largest gay organizations, which was founded by open gay Rev. Dr. Troy D. Perry in 1968. Today, MCC consists of 300 local churches in 22 countries with 43,000 members. The MCC claims to perform more than 6,000 same-sex weddings each year.

"I send greetings to the members of Metropolitan Community Church Los Angeles as you celebrate your 35th anniversary," the letter from the president read. "Faith plays an important role in the lives of many Americans, offering strength and guidance for the challenges of each new day. By encouraging the celebration of faith and sharing the message of God's love and boundless mercy, churches like yours put hope in people's hearts and a sense of purpose in their lives.

"This milestone provides an opportunity to reflect on your years of service and to rejoice in God's faithfulness to your congregation," the letter continued. "In the days ahead, may your community continue to grow in faith and friendship.

"Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a memorable celebration," the letter concluded.

Ironically the letter was written during the anti-gay "Marriage Protection Week," an effort endorsed by

President Bush and organized by such Religious Right leaders as Jerry Falwell, Dr. James Dobson, the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Family Association to deny equality under the law to gays and lesbians.

"Marriage is a sacred institution, and its protection is essential to the continued strength of our society," the President wrote in his proclamation endorsing "Marriage Protection Week." "Marriage Protection Week provides an opportunity to focus our efforts on preserving the sanctity of marriage and on building strong and healthy marriages in America."

Both Rev. Perry and Rev. Neil Thomas, senior pastor of the MCC Los Angeles, expressed their confusion over the opposing letters sent the same week by the President of the United States.

"President Bush was wrong in this endorsement of a week dedicated to denying equal rights to gays and lesbian," Rev. Perry said. "And while we appreciate the sentiments he expressed on MCC's anniversary, the President has sent a very mixed message that makes his effusive praise of MCC's 35th anniversary all the more puzzling."

"How does one denounce the right of gays and lesbians to marry in their churches," Rev. Thomas concurred with Rev. Perry, "and suggest they are incapable of having healthy marriages in one moment, and in the next rejoice in God's faithfulness to a gay and lesbian congregation that performs such same-sex marriages?"

In a White House press conference WorldNetDaily correspondent Les Kinsolving asked the President's press secretary, Scott McClellan, about the disparity.

"...When requests are sent in," McClellan answered, "...and churches all across the country send in requests for greetings - and I think that it was a standard greeting that was sent out, that's been sent out to, I think, more than a thousand churches since the President has been in office and some over 300 in the last year."



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Don'tAmend.com activists come together in an attempt to stop anti-gay amendment

DontAmend.com activists, including Robin Tyler and John Aravosis (organizer of the successful StopDrLaura.com campaign), have come together, organizing to stop an anti-gay marriage constitutional amendment and push for full, equal marriage rights for all consenting adults in the United States. President Bush has declared his support of the anti-gay constitutional amendment and said he is taking all steps necessary to "codify" the legal entity of marriage as limited to the union of one man and one woman.

Working with local and national organizations, such as Marriage Equality California and Marriage Equality USA, DontAmend.com activists plan a two-pronged offensive:

First, campaigning in all of the states to get people from all walks of life – public officials, religious figures and other community leaders – to sign public commitments opposing the anti-gay marriage constitutional amendment.

Second, launching a pro-active, pro-equal marriage campaign of local educational events; protests of anti-gay officials and other activities, culminating in a nationwide day of rallies and other events for same sex marriage on Valentine's Day, Saturday, Feb. 14, 2004.

"Using the Internet the way we did with the successful Stop Dr. Laura campaign, we will use the DontAmend.com website to keep people informed of the latest developments

in the struggle and as a clearinghouse for local activities around the country," said DontAmend.com co-founder Robin Tyler. "More than that, we will work to mobilize our community and allies in the national day of action to push back the anti-gay constitutional amendment and push on for equal marriage rights for all consenting adults."

For more information, go online to www.DontAmend.com or contact Tyler at RTDontAmend@aol.com.

Locally, Neshoba Unitarian Universalist Church, located at 7350 Raleigh-LaGrange Road in Cordova, is inviting gay and lesbian, as well as straight couples, to support civil marriage for gay and lesbian couples, by participating in a community-wide service that will include the renewal of vows by both heterosexual and homosexual couples Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, 2004.

"Gay and lesbian singles and couples need and want full recognition and inclusion in civil society," said Rev. Jean Rowe, pastor of Neshoba Unitarian Universalist Church. "Civil marriage rights are a civil right. And civil marriage rights are the only way that couples who have made a lifelong commitment can fully protect themselves and their children."

Couples who wish to renew their commitment or others who are willing to help plan the ceremony and reception should call Rev. Rowe at (901) 266-2626.

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10 **Molly's La Casita**
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13 **Barksdale Restaurant**
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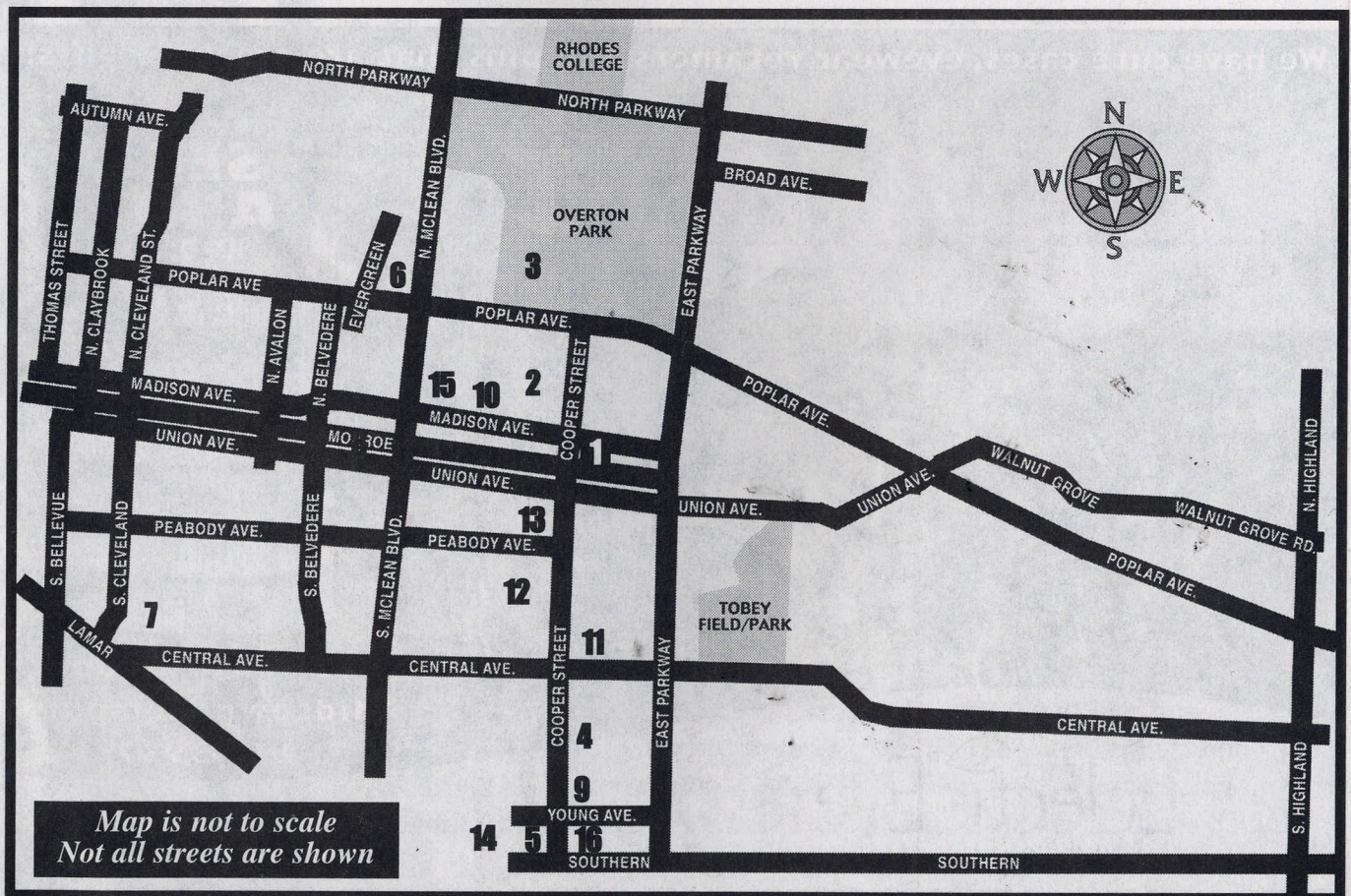
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DINING OUT IN THE HEART OF MIDTOWN MEMPHIS

A RESTAURANT REVIEW BY LAER GIB RETAE

DINING OUT

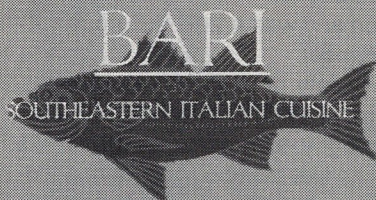
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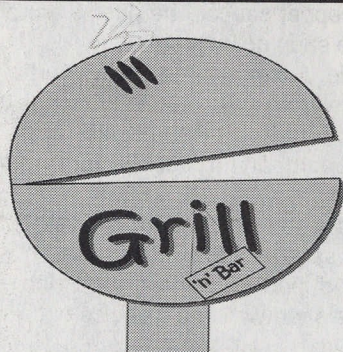
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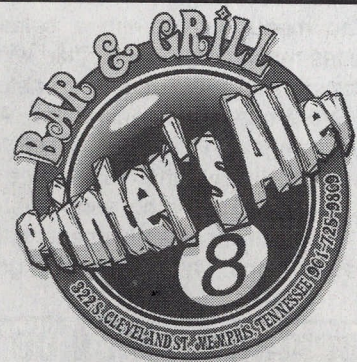
should be advised that the downtown location is a notch above the midtown location, especially food-wise. While the midtown location's business has seemingly been strong as an evening spot to have a few drinks, it is certainly not a place you would want to take a date for a good casual dinner, as you would probably be there looking to find a date. Face it, the midtown location could simply be classified as a pick-up bar with food, and good pizza. The downtown location changes all of that and is a completely different concept in and of itself.

The location is easy to find and for those climbing in years, you may remember a little hole-in-the-wall bar that existed on and off, known as the South End. That's the location! For those of us who were under the legal drinking age or in college at the time, the South End was one of the places you went on

See, Dining Out, page 54



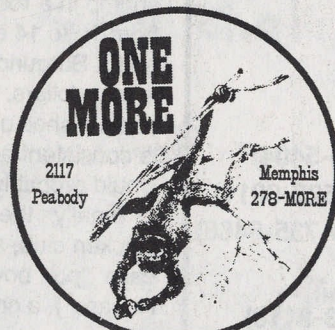
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Dining Out

from page 53

a Friday or Saturday night to see a band play and drink, legally or illegally. Who would have ever guessed that the little hole-in-the-wall could be transformed into a nice place for adults to drink and eat.

In any event, the first time I walked in the place, with memories of the South End in mind, I was astounded at the renovation the place had undergone. The owners of the Monkey intend for this place to be a success and their efforts and investment should pay off. This place won't be a success just because of the renovation, sure people like to eat in a decent place, but it will be successful because of the whole package.

The atmosphere is similar to other mid-level bar/restaurant establishments of the nature similar to a Huey's or Friday's (oops, it closed), but this Monkey has a distinctly downtown atmosphere of its own. Unlike some of its competitors in this type of market niche, the Monkey offers some quality food items that are beyond your typical burger crowd claim of "best" burgers in town.

The menu begins with a selection of appetizers that includes mushroom caps stuffed with spinach and artichoke hearts in a garlic Alfredo sauce or stuffed with lump crabmeat and Swiss cheese in garlic butter. Also on the appetizer list are hot wings and a shrimp cocktail. We had the hot wings, a shrimp cocktail and the mushrooms stuffed with spinach and artichoke hearts. The hot wings were as good as any others I've had at similar establishments and the stuffed mushrooms were also good. The shrimp were good and were true jumbo

shrimp, as opposed to what some places try to pass off as jumbo shrimp, and were as fresh as anything else you can normally get in this city. The appetizers are priced between six and eight dollars.

The Monkey also offers a "Trolley Car Crisp", which could be classified as an appetizer or small meal. The

Trolley Car Crisp is a flour tortilla with a topping that is broiled. We had the New England Trolley Car Crisp, which is a flour tortilla topped with lump crab meat and a creamy remoulade sauce and cheese. It was delicious and has no room for improvement. We look forward to trying the other crisps, which are the Florentine, with a spinach and artichoke and cheese topping; the Santa Fe, with a grilled chicken, corn, black bean and cheese topping, and the Bluff City, with a pork tenderloin, barbecue sauce and Mozzarella cheese topping. The Crisps are priced between six and eight dollars.

For the health conscious, the Monkey offers a variety of salads, including a grilled chicken Caesar; a country club, consisting of mixed greens with fresh bacon, tomatoes, turkey, Monterey and cheddar cheese; a grilled shrimp salad, and, finally, an Angus salad. The salads are priced from seven to 10 dollars. Also available is a side salad, house or Caesar, for four dollars. We had the Angus salad, which is beef tenderloin, blue cheese crumbles and spiced walnuts on a bed of mixed greens. This salad is a meal, perhaps not really for the health conscious after all, but it's definitely a winner for a hungry salad lover. The Angus beef tenderloin was cooked to perfection and was a truly generous portion of tenderloin for any salad/meal.

The Monkey has a variety of entrees, including a 12- or 16-ounce prime rib, filet mignon, pork tenderloin, a chicken kabob, grilled orange roughy, fried grouper, crab cakes and grilled shrimp. We had the filet mignon (Angus) cooked medium and, on this occasion, the Monkey could have held its own with most steakhouses in Memphis. The entrees are priced between 14 and 21 dollars.

The Monkey also has some Italian-style pasta dishes and two soups. The pasta dishes include Pasta Primavera; a Chicken Parmesan, and a Shrimp Pero, which is blackened shrimp in a roasted red pepper sauce. The pastas are priced from 10 to 14 dollars. The soup options are a crawfish bisque and a Burgundy vegetable. A cup is three dollars and a bowl is four dollars. Unfortunately, we were unable to try any of the pasta dishes or soups on this trip, but if the quality of the food is consistent across the board, and it probably is, then those would probably be good dishes, as well.

Finally, the Monkey's sandwich menu consists of the chicken club, a prime rib sandwich (the "Beef Eater"), a crab cake "po" boy, a roasted port tenderloin sandwich ("The Havana"), a grilled veggie sandwich and a choice of three dif-

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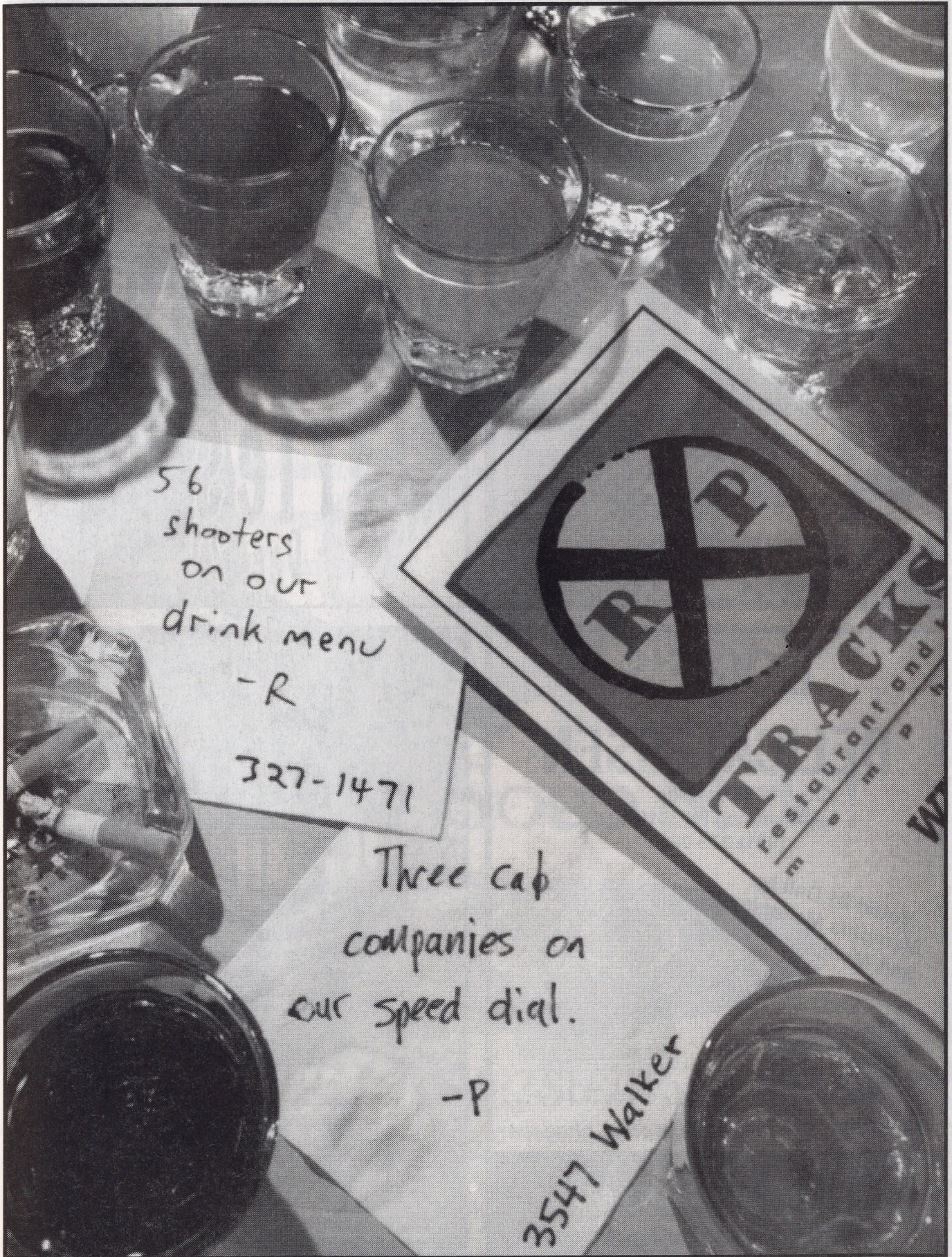
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See Dining Out, page 59



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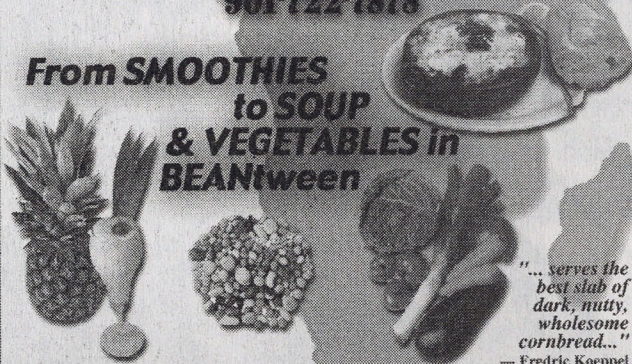
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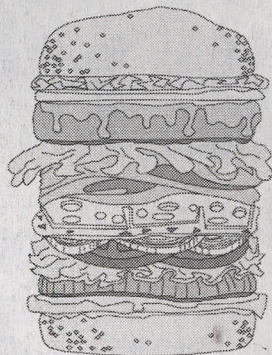
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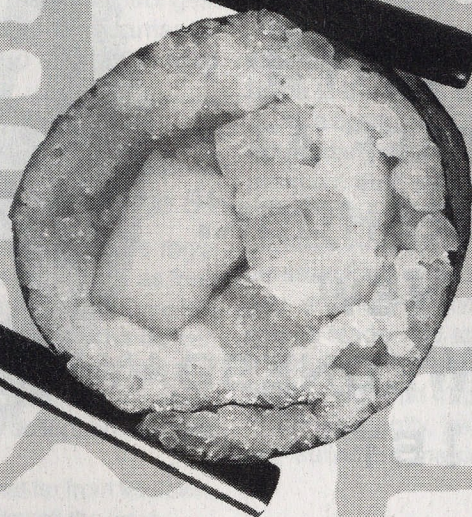
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Is the Black, gay man really ready for marriage?

An Editorial by K. Godfrey Easter
guest writer

Recent news accounts pertaining to same-sex marriage would seem to indicate that our nation's leadership appears nervously restless during this holiday season. It's as if being temporarily positioned in the eye of a hurricane. But this political storm of the century will not soon dissipate. That is, not until the legal ability of same-gender-attracted (SGA) couples throughout America to enjoy similar benefits already afforded traditional married couples, has come to pass. However, even after that fateful day has finally become a yesterday, one question will remain constantly in my thoughts, "Is the black, gay man really ready for marriage?"

According to a recent CBS News/*New York Times* poll, mainstream black America represents perhaps the strongest opposition (63 percent) to legalizing same-sex marriages. Although appalled by the poll's results, no sharp pain filled

my chest cavity, no unusual sensation shot down my left arm. Because, for most gay and lesbian individuals of African descent, as is also common among most blacks overall, the opinions of our religious leadership still heavily impact the level of our personal self-esteem, social dignity, or ability to self-love, and also – the direction of our public vote.

In one hypocritical breath, black mainstream churches teach that God's love and grace is unconditionally available for everyone. Then while exhaling that same breath, our families, both domestic and religious, are encouraged to continue tossing its gay and lesbian loved ones to the wolves.

Because of the two-faced teachings of our religious leaders, and its adverse impact translated into everyday living, many black, SGA men are still horrified of being labeled as "gay." Popularly phrased as being "on the down-low," traditionally married, yet nevertheless gay men (many of them religious), prowl through adult Internet chat rooms realizing their inward intentions via secret rendezvous. Once satisfied, they return home to the social safety net of their wives or girlfriends.

As a black, gay Christian, I often see first hand how we are still written off as social and spiritual misfits because of a few misinterpreted sentences written on sacred, stone pads and tailored to yester-year's culture. As opposed to other progressive American cultures, African-America still resides in Jurassic Park when it comes to the fundamental validity of its gay and lesbian community. Therefore, waiting for black church leadership to validate its own SGA population is like waiting on the Whitehouse to tell America the real reason we went to war with Iraq.

Consequently, before most black, SGA men will be properly suited for marriage we must, ourselves, deal candidly

Dining Out

from page 54

ferent burgers, all made with Angus beef. We had the regular burger with cheese and fries. The fries were fries, as fries go, and that's about it; other than for a fast-food McDonald's junkie, who goes anywhere just for fries anyway. The burger, however, may be the *Flyer's* next "Best of the Best," but only if enough midtown voters venture to this neck of the woods. The sandwiches are priced from six to 10 dollars and include fries or a side.

Come on, drive it, taste it, it's really not that far from Midtown. Besides, pretty soon you can take the Trolley all the way!

See Ready for marriage, page 61

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Lesbian sorority welcomes members, women to join

On March 23, 2003, Robin Thompson-Barkley became the first member and president of the Beta Epsilon Chapter of Beta Phi Omega Sorority Inc.

Beta Phi Omega originated in Tallahassee, Fla., with five founding "diamonds."

According to a press release from the Memphis chapter, Beta Phi Omega Sorority Inc. is a sorority that is strongly geared toward awareness, pride, love, joy, prosperity, community involvement and lesbian victory. Community involvement includes AIDS awareness, March of Dimes, breast cancer awareness, safe sex seminars and black lesbian pride events, among others.

Five members were added to the ranks of Memphis's Beta Epsilon Chapter on Nov. 2: Tonya Rhodes, Natasha Williams,

Jennifer Lake, April Blair and Dwanyel Griffin.

Although this sorority caters to feminine lesbian women, it does not discriminate against bisexual or heterosexual women, or any race.

The Beta Epsilon Chapter is looking for hard-working, intelligent, respectful women to help make the Beta Epsilon Chapter a strong force in the Memphis gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

Those interested in being considered for membership should fill out an online application on the national website at www.betaphiomega.net.

For more information, call Thompson-Barkley at (901) 281-0830 or email her at betaepsilonchapter@yahoo.com.

FROM THE MAIL ROOM LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Just to clarify

We appreciate your well-written article concerning the St. Jude HIV vaccine. This is a complicated subject to understand and describe. There are a few areas that I would like to clarify for the reader that may have been confusing in the article.

viral load. Vaccine stimulates the immune system to make antibodies. These antibodies become memory cells that help the cells to remember to respond when exposed to infection later in life.

Wes (McComas) is participating in a Phase I study, not a Phase III study. This type of study evaluates the safety of a vaccine. It is not designed to be effective

or prevent infection. There are three separate Phase I studies in our project. The first study is near completion and the study Wes is participating in is half completed. We hope that the third part of our study will receive approval by the

the study" to have positive antibodies.

We look forward to all interested participants contacting us. Again, thanks *Family and Friends* for helping to inform the public about the St. Jude HIV vaccine trial. We are trying to make a difference in the pandemic of HIV/AIDS for future generations.

**Nanna Howlett, MSN, PNP
St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital**

MGLCC makes apology

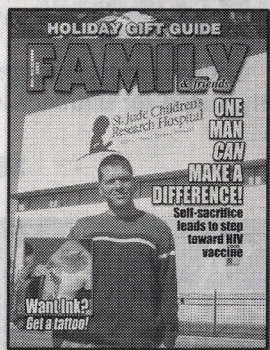
MGLCC (Memphis Gay & Lesbian Community Center) is sorry that Michael Riley felt excluded from the center after his services as a volunteer were turned down. It is true that Len Piechowski notified him that he would not be scheduled as a volunteer and gave him the reasons that MGLCC board members (not Piechowski himself) felt made him unacceptable as a prospective volunteer. MGLCC does not guarantee that anyone who attends a volunteer training workshop will be asked to serve as a volunteer.

There were never any negative feelings toward Mr. Riley. He is welcome to come to the center and join in community events.

**Jon Devin
MGLCC, Director of Volunteers**



We appreciate your well-written article concerning the St. Jude HIV vaccine.



The use of (the term) "zero viral load" is misleading. The appropriate term is non-detectable viral load. This means the virus is still present but in such a small amount that the test can not detect it. As you said, "the infected individual is able to infect another person when they have a non-detectable viral load."

Memory cells are not associated with

FDA in 2004. A Phase III study is designed to see if a vaccine prevents infection. That step in our project can not be done until all three parts of our vaccine are tested for safety. We hope our Phase III study will be ready to begin in 2005.

We have had other volunteers on the small-pox "arm" of the protocol have positive antibodies after vaccination. Wes was the first person on this "arm of

Please keep letters brief and to the point; we reserve the right to edit all letters as deemed necessary. Letters must include the home address and phone number of the writer and should be sent to Letters To The Editor, *Family & Friends Magazine*, P.O. Box 771948, Memphis, TN 38177-1948; faxed to (901) 685-2234; or emailed to FamilyMag@aol.com. No anonymous letters will be printed, however, should the writer request that his or her name be withheld, and be able to provide good reason for such request, we will consider listing the author's name as "withheld, but on file." We will not print letters that are vicious, hate-filled, threatening or libelous in manner. The opinions expressed by the authors of these letters are not the opinions of *Family & Friends Magazine* and do not represent the publication in any way, shape or form.

Ready for marriage

from page 59

with that Goliath of a demon called religiosity, passed on to us by the well-intentioned, yet wayward religious teachings of our youth. We must realize that self-honesty, and self-respect must be regarded as being far more worthy of securing than being permitted to preach that Sunday morning sermon, or being able to direct that choir. This may entail uprooting ourselves from traditional family or church environments, or other ties that tend to socially, spiritually or psychologically bind us, at least until our mainstream brothers and sisters have returned clothed, and in their right mind.

One fact is unmistakably obvious. American's black religious leaders represent the primary hosts spreading homophobia (fear and ignorance) throughout our culture like this year's wretched, winter flu virus. And until our nation's black religious and community leaders are at least willing to seek to understand the fundamentally spiritual and social validity of each SGA individual, discussing the legalization of gay marriage with them will be like attempting ... to purchase a home with no money down, while having terrible credit.

We must be willing to fight our own good fight of faith, drawing upon that mustard seed of substance present within our own, uniquely blessed community, and in each of its gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender inhabitants. Because at the pace mainstream black America is moving, even once gay and lesbian marriage has been made legal (and trust me – it

will be), black, SGA individuals will only be recognized by its mainstream religious leaders as – legally married, but still social and spiritual misfits.

Presently residing in of Georgia, K. Godfrey Easter is a social and spiritual activist, and the author of *Love Lifted Me: In Spite of the Church*. More information about this author and his book can be found online at loveliftedmenetwork.com.

IMAX Film Festival is slated

It's time for the 5th annual Memphis IMAX Film Festival featuring six great films shown Jan. 16 through Feb. 17 at the Union Planters IMAX Theater, located in the Memphis Pink Palace Museum, 3050 Central Avenue.

The film lineup includes *Everest*, an adventure to the top of the world's highest mountain; *Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West*, an arduous expedition to find the Northwest Passage 200 years ago; *Pulse, A STOMP Odyssey*, a larger-than-life look at the innovative performances of the rhythmic group Stomp; *Journey into Amazing Caves*; *Jane Goodall's Wild Chimpanzees*, an experience in the world of chimpanzees with the foremost authority on chimps, and *Coral Reef Adventure*, a look at amazingly-colorful South Pacific coral reefs.

Admission to each film is \$7.50 for adults; \$7 for seniors, and \$6 for children (ages three to 12). The film festival is held on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and on Mondays, Jan. 19 and Feb. 16, only.

For a complete show schedule, tickets or more information, call (901) 320-6362.

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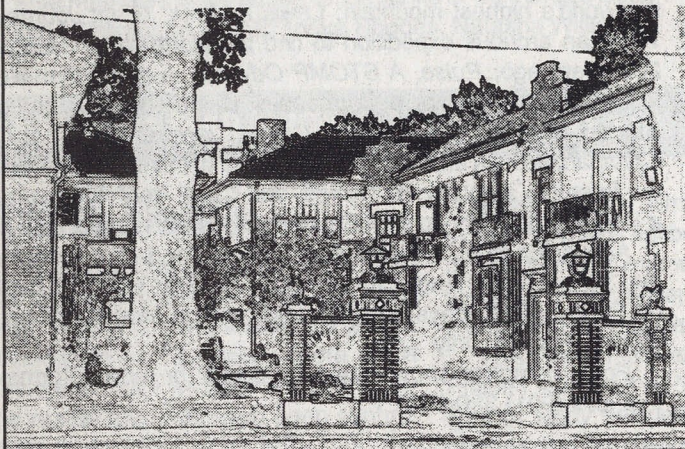
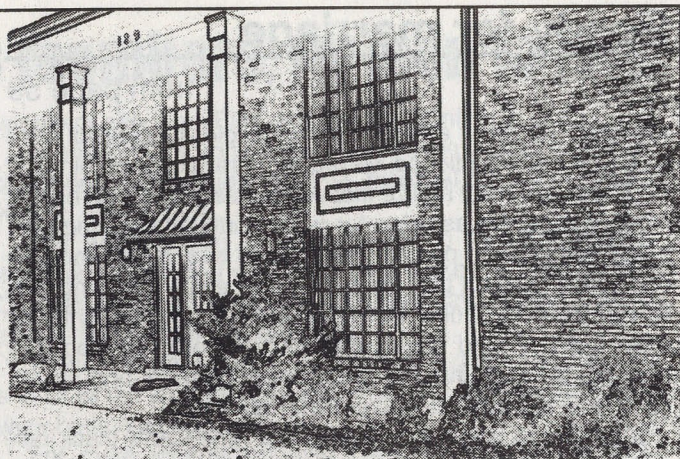
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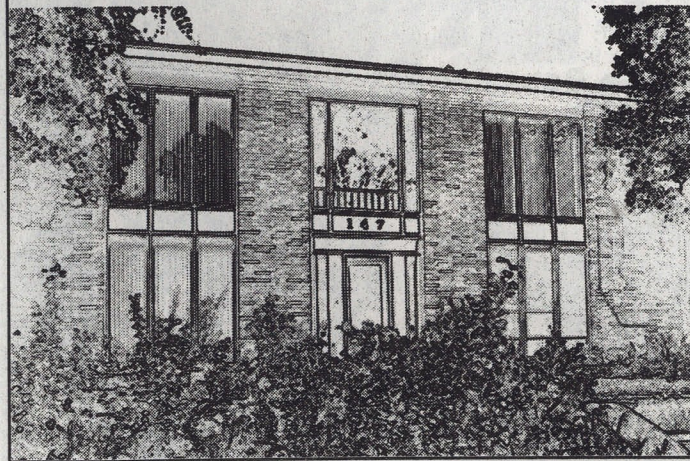
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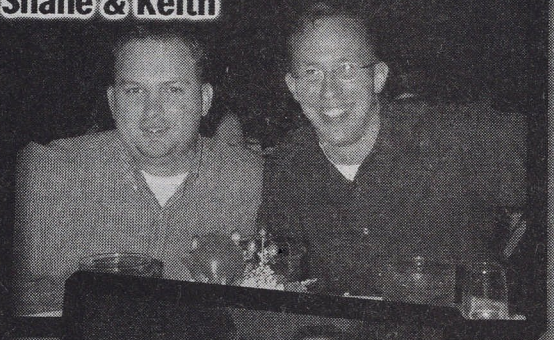
**Lesley, Jon,
Monte, Jana,
Tonya &
Davian**



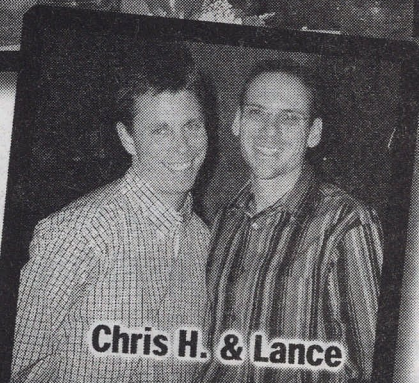
Tori, Tonya, Ken & Jana



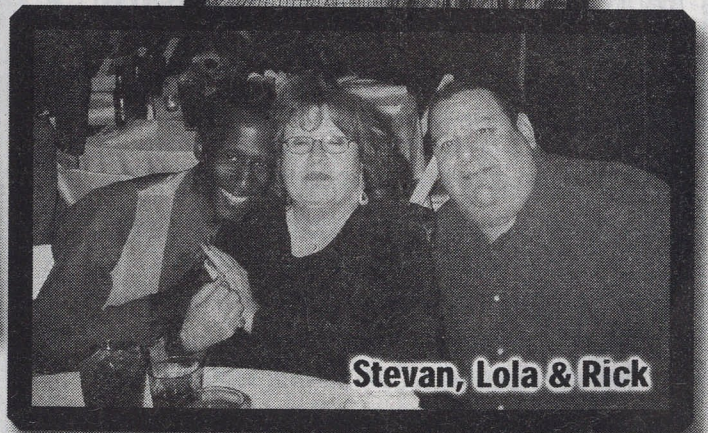
Shane & Keith



**Monte, Jon, Andy,
John, Greg &
George**



Chris H. & Lance



Stevan, Lola & Rick

Photos Submitted by Steve Birkla



PASSIONATE ABOUT PETS BY KATIE HIESTAND

Happy Holidays to you and your furry friends. Now that the mercury is dropping and the holiday season is upon us, it is a good time to consider some things regarding Fido or Fluffy. I just want to highlight some issues to keep in mind during the next few months.

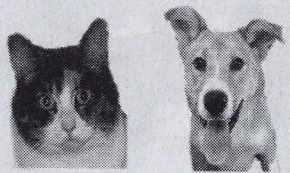
Some of you have pets that either, out of preference or necessity, spend some time outdoors. When it gets cold, it is vital to provide shelter to keep them warm and dry. Whereas during the summer months your main concerns are providing shade and a place to escape the rain, warmth now enters the equation, as well. Fully enclosed doghouses or similar structures are the most popular, with straw or hay as bedding. Old towels and blankets also may be used, but whatever you choose, check daily to insure it is clean and dry. Dogs and cats are both susceptible to frostbite, particularly on their ears and feet, so make sure they have a way of getting out of the elements. One other thing that helps is to try to get a shelter that is at least slightly raised off the ground; that helps to keep furry feet off the wet ground and may make keeping the shelter clean and dry a little easier.

Especially regarding cats, since they generally are not contained by a fence, providing shelter for them at your house is important. If you don't, they will likely go off someplace and find it themselves; if they find what they perceive as a better offer someplace else, you may just lose kitty.

Water is another requirement, but one that is easy to overlook once the days get cooler. Heat stroke may not be a concern this time of year, but pets can and will become dehydrated if they don't have adequate sources of water. Once the temperatures drop even more so that we are experiencing freezing, check daily to make sure your pet's water source is not frozen. During the course of a day, a dog or cat will not likely be able to take in sufficient water from a frozen source, which during just a few days can prove quite harmful.

While you have probably heard this before, it definitely warrants repeating. Be very careful about leaving antifreeze anywhere your pets can get to it. Although some of the newer ones may be more pet-friendly, the regular stuff is highly toxic but tastes great to dogs and cats – a deadly combination. Always dispose of it completely; clean up any spills immediately, and keep this in mind if on a walk you come across an unknown liquid that your dog seems particularly keen on getting into. If you suspect, even the tiniest bit, that your dog or cat may have gotten into antifreeze, take them immediately to the nearest veterinary hospital or after-hours emergency clinic. Antifreeze poisoning is fatal if not addressed immediately; once the animal begins to show symptoms, it is too late.

See Pets, page 65



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Pets

from page 64

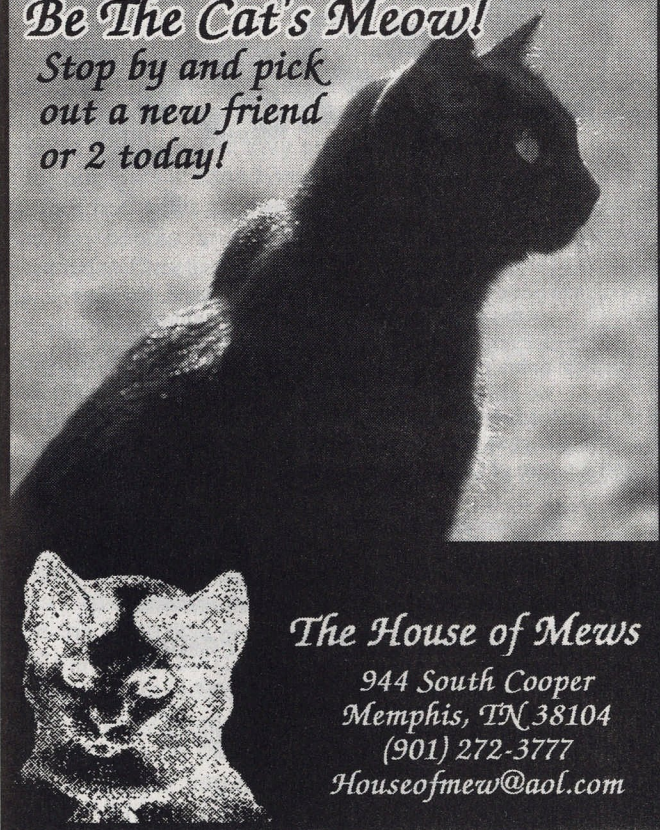
It was suggested that I mention giving pets as gifts. If you are considering giving your two-legged kids a pet for Christmas, talk to them beforehand to make sure they are ready to help with the care, and be prepared to do whatever they don't get around to. It's really sad when we see ferrets, hamsters or guinea pigs that weren't taken care of properly because they were the child's responsibility. If you are considering a pet for your partner, talk to them first, make sure they are ready and want one, then go together to pick it out. Finally, if you were thinking about getting a pet for someone who is not an immediate member of the family, then don't do it. Pets bring with them much responsibility, and if you aren't able to provide it yourself, never put it on someone else. Also, oftentimes people get a pet in an attempt to make someone who has recently lost one feel better; never do this. For some people the loss of a pet may require a real period of grieving; a gift of a new pet is not always helpful in this. When the person is ready, they can then go out and find their own next best friend. Gifts are great and pets are great, but pets as gifts are not.

And remember ... dogs have masters, cats have staff.

The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the magazine. For serious problems, seek professional help. Send questions to Family & Friends, P.O. Box 771948, Memphis, TN 38177-1948, or email them to FamilyMag@aol.com.

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Federal Marriage Amendment now in both houses

The anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment, an attempt to change the constitution of the United States to deny gay and lesbian couples the right to marry, has now been introduced in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate

This is the first two steps required to add this language to the Constitution of the United States. The next step is for both the House and the Senate to pass the resolution by a two-thirds majority vote. If that happens, then the resolution must be ratified by three-fourths of the states – either by a statewide vote or by the state legislature.

On May 21, 2003, U.S. Representatives Marilyn Musgrove (R-Colo.) and co-sponsors JoAnn Davis (R-Va.), Ralph Hall (D-Texas), Mike McIntyre (D-N.C.), Colin Peterson (R-Minn.) and David Vitter (R-La.) introduced HJ Resolution 56 to the U.S. House of Representatives. The resolution read: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution nor the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups." On May 21, 2003, the HJ Resolution 56 was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary and on June 25, 2003, the resolution was referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution.

At press time, there were a total of 107 co-sponsors to this bill, including Representatives Lincoln Davis (D-Tenn.), Zack Wamp (R-Tenn.), John Boozman (R-Ark.), Charles Pickering Jr. (R-Miss.), Gene Taylor (D-Miss.) and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.)

On Nov. 25, 2003, S.J. Resolution 26 was introduced to the United States Senate by Sens. Wayne Allard (R-Colo.); Sam Brownback (R-Kan.); Jim Bunning (R-Ky.); James Inhofe (R-Okla.), and Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.). Similar to the House resolution, the proposed amendment read: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution, nor the Constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups." The amendment was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary on Nov. 25.

At press time, there were a total of five co-sponsors to this bill, with Senator Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) adding his name to the list on Dec. 9.

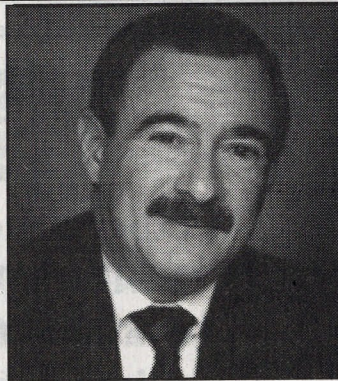
...

Comment by The Human Rights Campaign:

"Our Constitution has guided our nation since the incep-

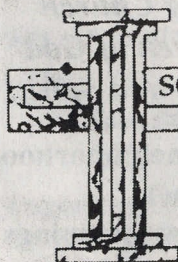
See Marriage, page 70

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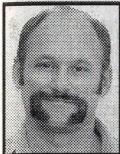
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WOCKNER WIRE BY REX WOCKNER

Wiggle Room

If some Massachusetts politicians have their way, including the governor and attorney general, the state will end up with Vermont-style gay civil unions rather than same-sex marriage.

Opinions vary on whether, given the wording of the Supreme Judicial Court's decision, the legislature could get away with that cop-out.

I slogged through the decision and I'm siding with the folks who maintain that only the expansion of marriage itself will satisfy the court. Those who disagree with me maintain the court never directly said that denying same-sex couples access to marriage is unconstitutional but rather that denying same-sex couples access to the protections, benefits and obligations of marriage is unconstitutional.

However, I think the opinion needs to be read as a whole. It is chock-full of very strong language and indeed, in one spot, does directly state, "The (state government) has had more than ample opportunity to articulate a constitutionally adequate justification for limiting civil marriage to opposite-sex unions. It has failed to do so. The (government) has offered purported justifications for the civil marriage restriction that are starkly at odds with the comprehensive network of vigorous, gender-neutral laws promoting stable families and the best interest of children. It has failed to identify any relevant characteristic that would justify shutting the door to civil marriage to a person who wishes to marry someone of the same sex."

I've always been an optimist when it comes to societal and court-driven progress on gay issues. Some of my friends and colleagues play the role of pessimist and never count even hatched chickens until they are full-grown.

My optimism is based on experience. Despite the fact that you can find news stories about bad things that happen to good gay people, and despite the fact that wigged-out, fundamentalist Christian and pasty, Republican cavemen know how to get the media to pay attention to their rantings, the overriding reality these days is that the majority of openly gay people in the U.S. live their lives unmolested by Christians, Republicans, bigots and haters.

Most of us, most of the time, are accepted by the straight people we interact with daily and our homosexuality, if it is an issue at all, is merely a matter of mild curiosity or even envy – since nearly everyone thinks gays have more fun, more money, more sex, cooler houses, nicer things and better taste.

As I have said before, the U.S. gay movement is closing in on the finish line. Not only is "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" the hottest thing on television, but now a supreme court has said, "Sure, you can get married. What were we thinking before anyway? Bad us."

And this is on the heels of THE Supreme Court having said: "Of course you have a fundamental right to love and dignity and hot sodomy. What were we thinking before anyway? Bad us."

The fundies will continue to kick and scream but the avalanche of history is decidedly against them. I don't believe any constitutions are going to get amended. No one is going to push you back in the closet. Nobody is going to take away the rights we've already won, and I think that includes the right to get married in Massachusetts about 163 days from now.

In a nutshell, there just ain't no way to stuff the gay genie back in the bottle. It's too late. Too much has happened. Too many people that we've come out to know and love us.

—However

My optimism does not, however, mean I think we should ignore the Federal Marriage Amendment that has been introduced in Congress.

Even if it has only a five percent chance of passage, we must rally to kill it because the present wording, in addition to banning same-sex marriage, might also undo city and state domestic-partner and civil-union laws.

The amendment states: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this constitution or the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

The phrase "the legal incidents thereof" could be problematic since extending the legal incidents of marriage to same-sex couples is exactly what Vermont's civil-unions law and California's domestic-partnership law do.

On the other hand, the word "require" seems to moderate this concern. It doesn't say states can't confer the incidents, just that laws can't be construed as requiring that the incidents be conferred.

But if that wording makes it into the U.S. Constitution, do we really want to trust judges all across the nation to consistently interpret "require" and "legal incidents thereof" in our favor?

We must battle this amendment not only to leave the door open for same-sex marriage, which is coming soon, but also to eradicate any risk to the hundreds of local and state laws that already confer on same-sex couples various spousal rights and obligations.



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Stonewall Democrats to sponsor forum on candidates January 24

The Memphis Stonewall Democrats will sponsor a forum and discussion on the Democratic presidential candidates on Saturday, Jan. 24, at 2 p.m. at the Memphis Gay & Lesbian Community Center, located at 892 South Cooper.

The candidates' positions on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender and other issues will be compared and discussed. Representatives of the various candidates are invited to participate and make the case for their candidates. Anyone wishing to represent a specific candidate should contact Jim Maynard at (901) 327-2677 or email him at mphsstonewalldem@yahoo.com.

For more information, go online to www.geocities.com/mphsstonewalldem.

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Massachusetts court ruling for gay rights

On Nov. 18, a 4-3 ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court found that the Massachusetts marriage statute violated same-sex couples' right to due process and equal protection under the state constitution. The Court ruled that the statute must cover same-sex couples and remanded the case to a trial court, ordering it to remedy the constitutional violations in the Statute. The Court also gave the state legislature 180 days to consider how it may bring state law into compliance with the decision.

This decision is the culmination of the case, *Goodridge v. Department of Health*, which commenced in the Superior Court Department on April 11, 2001.

The same day as the ruling was handed down, Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney immediately went on the defensive and stated that he was against the ruling and would do all he could to stop marriage licenses from being issued to same-sex couples, including changing the state's constitution to do so.

There is much debate as to the interpretation of the Supreme's decision. Can a civil union suffice or is the word "marriage" to be taken literally? On Dec. 11, the Massachusetts Senate sent a civil union bill to the state Supreme Judicial Court and asked if the legislation conforms with the court's decision.

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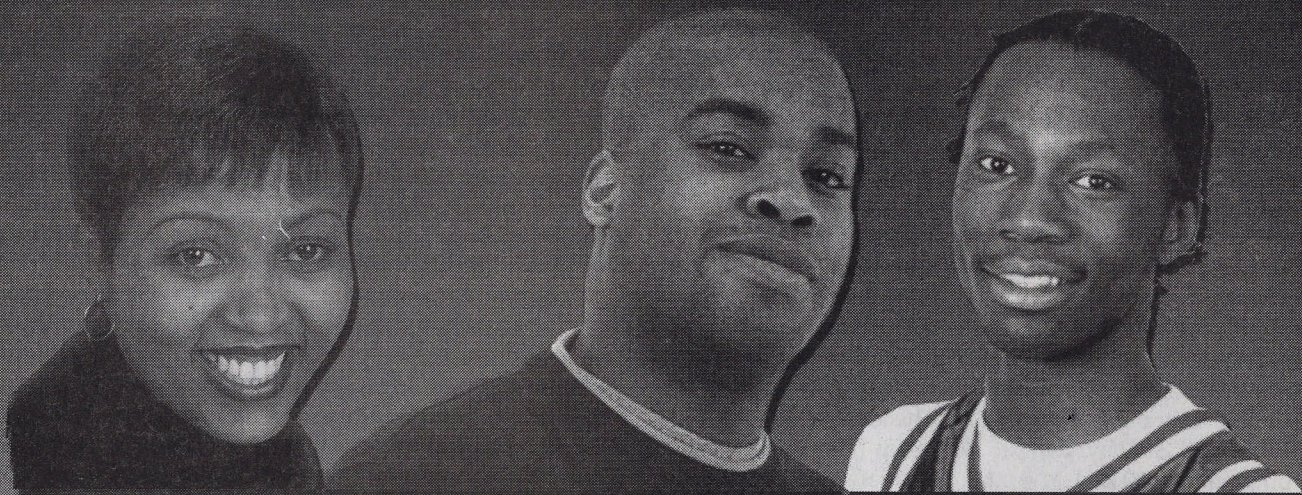
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Handel's *Messiah* at Lindenwood

Lindenwood Concerts will present Handel's *Messiah*, Part the First by its chamber orchestra; The Gary Beard Chorale; soloists; Chris Nemecek on harpsichord, and Gary Beard conducting on Sunday, Dec. 21 at 11 a.m. Tickets are \$12 each and are available by calling (901) 458-1652. Lindenwood Christian Church is located at 2400 Union Avenue at East Parkway.

Gardens subject of exhibit

"The Changing Garden," with more than 175 paintings, prints and drawings by more than 100 artists, depicting European and American gardens of the past four centuries, are on display at The Dixon Gallery and Gardens, located at 4339 Park Avenue, now through Jan. 11, 2004. Admission to the museum is \$5 for adults; \$4 for seniors (60+), and free for students and children. The museum's hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call (901) 761-5250 or go online to www.dixon.org.

Lecture and gallery tour slated

R. Craig Miller, curator of "U.S. Design: 1975-2000," now on display through Feb. 29, 2004, at The Brooks Museum of Art, located in Overton Park, will offer a lecture on this show, including a critical assessment of American architecture, decorative design and graphic and industrial design during the last quarter of the 20th century. The lecture will take place at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 25. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors (65+) and \$2 for students with ID. For more information, call (901) 544-6200 or go online to www.brooksmuseum.org.

Opera set at Orpheum

The Marriage of Figaro, a favorite among Mozart opera lovers, will be staged by Opera Memphis at The Orpheum Theater, 203 South Main Street, Friday and Saturday, Jan. 30 and 31, at 8 p.m. The Marriage of Figaro is a comedy of errors. Tickets, which range from \$20 to \$75 each, are available by calling (901) 257-3100 or going online to www.operamemphis.org.

Holiday laser light show continues

The Sharpe Planetarium, located inside the Memphis Pink Palace Museum, 3050 Central Avenue, presents its annual Holiday Laser Spectacular, now through Jan. 4, 2004. The songs of the season delight the ears while images and patterns produced by the Planetarium's multi-color laser system dazzle the eyes. Unique lighting effects and photographic images enhance the production. Admission is \$4.25 for adults and \$3.75 for seniors and children (ages three-12). For showtimes or other information, call (901) 320-6362.

American arts and crafts at NOMM

"Collection Squared Plus One" is on exhibit at the National Ornamental Metal Museum, located at 374 Metal Museum Drive, now through Feb. 1, 2004. Five collectors share their collections of American arts and crafts silver; contemporary art jewelry; historic European ironwork for hearth and kitchen; 18th century British silver and early American craft tools. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Admission is \$4 for adults; \$3 for seniors (62+), \$2 for students and free for children. For more information, call (901) 774-6380 or go online to www.metalmuseum.org.

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Marriage

from page 66

tion of our country," said Human Rights Campaign Executive Director Elizabeth Birch. "This is a reprehensible misuse of the Constitution – a document that, since the Bill of Rights, has only been amended sparingly and only to expand individual rights and protections. This amendment goes much further than denying the right to marry, it would also deny tax-paying Americans things as fundamental as Social Security survivor benefits and the right to visit a loved one in the hospital. These senators are engaged in an explosive and dangerous election-year game that could quickly race out of control, particularly when our nation is facing other critical issues such as an uncertain economy, threats to our homeland, the safety of our troops in Iraq and skyrocketing health care costs. This point won't be lost on American voters either, who overwhelmingly reject attempts to use the Constitution for such a shameful purpose."



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Paragon

Happy Holidays

FROM THE PARAGON

DECEMBER 25

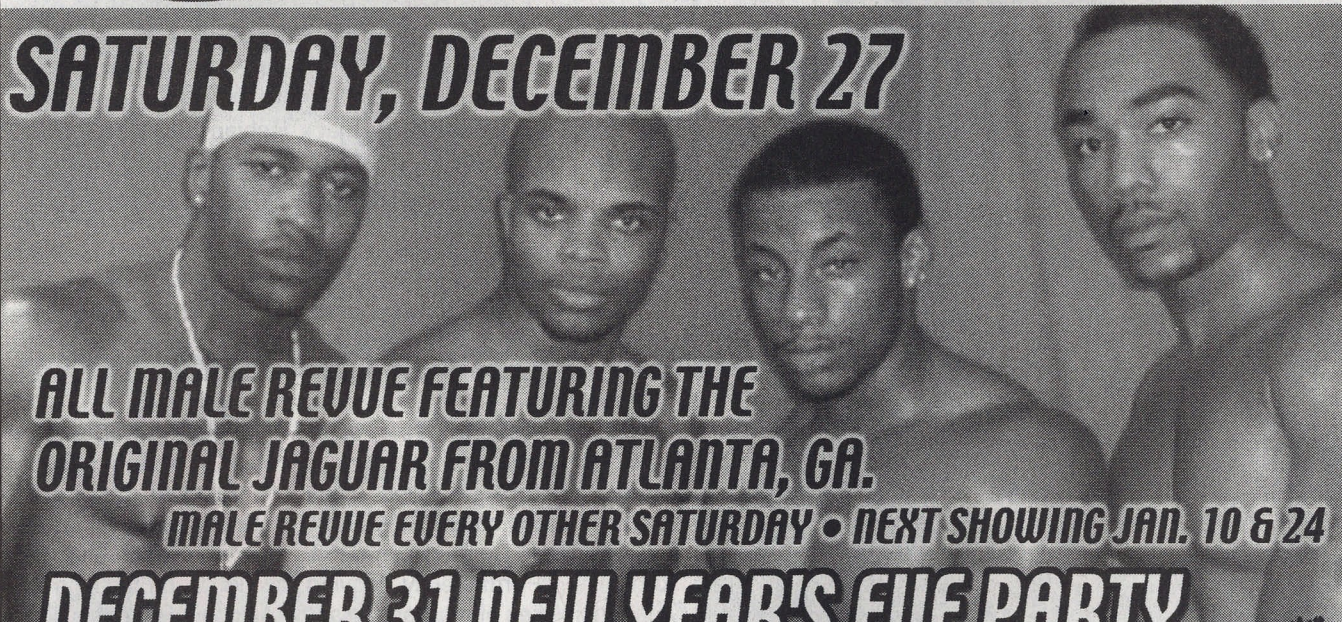
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January 30, 2004

8 p.m.

at THE CANNON CENTER



photos by Roy Volkmann

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Support GLBT rights

National Black Justice Coalition launches new national campaign

The National Black Justice Coalition, an ad hoc group of African-American gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community leaders, has come together to advance a new national campaign to generate support for the civil rights of GLBT people, and to call upon African-American civil rights organizations and political leaders to take a strong position against the proposed discriminatory Federal Marriage Amendment.

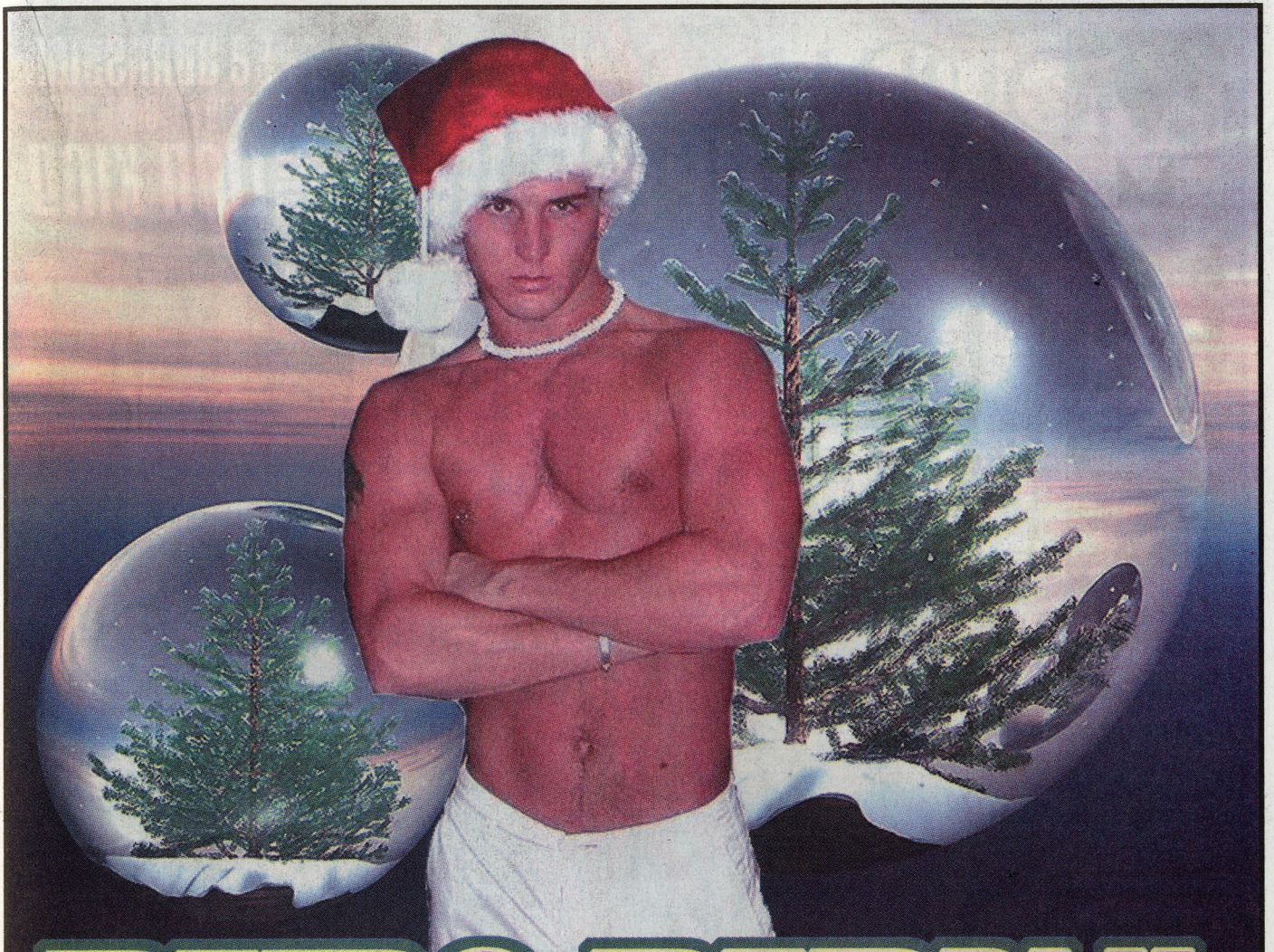
These leaders announced a major fundraising drive and a targeted ad campaign to generate African-American support for marriage equality. The coalition plans to spend at least \$100,000 placing ads in black media outlets to help build support and awareness for the issue and also will launch a website on the issue.

The group includes Ken Reeves, City Councilor, Cambridge, Mass.; Rev. Michael Moore, God's Living Spirit Church; Donna Payne, Human Rights Campaign; Keith Boykin, bestselling author; Mandy Carter, Freedom to Marry Steering Committee and Southerners on New Ground; Alicia Toby and Sandra Heath, black lesbian couple from New Jersey, and Dr. Alvin Williams and Nigel Simon, black gay couple from Washington.

"We wholeheartedly support the important work of the National Black Justice Coalition," said Human Rights Campaign Executive Director Elizabeth Birch. "The coalition gives a voice to African American same-sex couples, and those who stand with them, in opposition to the deeply discriminatory Federal Marriage Amendment, and all that it stands for."

"Some members of the radical right are trying to use the issue of same-sex marriage to drive a wedge between African-American families. They are trying to play politics with the black community, and we are not going to let that happen," said Donna Payne, HRC's senior constituency field organizer. "Permanently denying the rights, protections and responsibilities of marriage to same-sex couples in this country does nothing to strengthen our families."

"The (National Black Justice Coalition) is a welcome and essential step to counter the organized campaign of the religious and political right to use 'gay marriage' to pit the African-American community against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community," said National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Executive Director Matt Foreman. "The people and organizations who are behind this callous manipulation are masters at using wedge issues to divide America. If you take their hoods off, you'll see the same faces who vehemently oppose affirmative action, strongly support capital punishment, gleefully ridicule welfare recipients and consistently block hate crimes and non-discrimination legislation."



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December 5 - 21 on the Lohrey Stage

One of the most beloved Christmas stories in the world makes its 26th appearance at Theatre Memphis. And, in the spirit of holiday giving, we're offering you a special deal this year. Bring in your ticket to *The Lion King*, playing at The Orpheum, and you'll get a free child's ticket to see *A Christmas Carol* with the purchase of an adult ticket. Merry Christmas to every one.

www.theatrememphis.org

Box Office is Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday

The Gathering provided night of education, fun

There was good reason for Anthony Hardaway, Terry Buckner and the staff of Friends For Life to all be quite proud earlier this month as The Gathering got into full swing at Club Allusions.

The Gathering was perhaps the largest educational event geared towards African-American same-gender-loving individuals in the Mid-South ever put on by Friends For Life.

Shortly after The Gathering got underway, it seemed the free event, which also featured free food, and the outstanding celebrity lineup put together by Hardaway wasn't going to be enough to attract folks out at such an early hour. However, by the time the show got underway, which apparently started according to "drag time," some 150 people had filled the club.

Buckner and his staff did themselves proud with the food, no doubt about that. And, our hats off to Cakes & Things for that wonderful and tasty cake that served as the centerpiece for the dessert table.

I can definitely guarantee that everyone in attendance came away from the evening having learned a thing or two, thanks to the entertainers. I know I did. Only two days after World AIDS Day, the entire evening carried a message of education, awareness and prevention regarding HIV/AIDS.

As I said earlier, the show got off to a late start, but opened with a musical production number performed by the Club Allusions show cast, followed by the reading of a poem to get everyone in the appropriate mood.

The first of the four main performers to take the stage was Smithsonian photographer Greg McNeal of Los Angeles. McNeal shared his life's story, as well as selected pieces of his work.

Next up was Memphis photographer Shari L. Walker, who because of recent foot surgery, stood and spoke from her seat, while several volunteers displayed selected pieces of her work from the stage.

Artist Otis F. Richardson followed Walker and explained how he got started drawing and then shared a few pieces of his work, including images that have been used in books and advertising campaigns, such as the "Rubber Brothers" poster featured in the Family Albums on pages 76 and 77 of this issue.

While the photography and art were certainly inspiring and captivating, nothing could have prepared the audience for the one-man performance by Chicago Hall of Famer Earnest E. Hite.

At times a bit raw and shocking in language, Hite's performance cut through political correctness and brought the reality of HIV/AIDS to center stage. Perhaps Hite's most moving piece was his portrayal of Jamal, a Black man with a wife, a girlfriend, a best friend (who he's in love with) and a "nigga," as Hite called him, noting that Jamal is, of course, on the "down-low."

The evening's performance was rounded out with musical performers, pictures of whom also can be found on pages 76 and 77

The Gathering was sponsored by Friends For Life (www.FriendsForLifeCorp.org) and Goldsmith's/Macy's, with participation by MBSGLA, *Family & Friends Magazine* and Brothers United of Tennessee.

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Entertainment Complex

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BEER BUST

9:30 to 11:30 pm

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FAMILY ALBUM FRIENDS FOR LIFE'S THE GATHERING



FRIENDS FOR LIFE'S THE GATHERING **FAMILY ALBUM**





WHAT'S THE 'TEE' LADYBUG? BY ANTHONY HARDAWAY

Let me thank everyone for a very successful event on Dec. 3 at Club Allusions. Everyone that I have talked to has asked me when Friends For Life will do another "Gathering," as such. Everyone did a great job. Good looking out, Butch, Judy Jean and Bo Kelly.

Brothers United Network of Tennessee International Convention was blessed with many national SGL artists. Good fellowship, food and family were all good ingredients for this time of year. Uncle Max, Rodney McCoy, Greg, Otis, Earnest, Carlton and Royce shook the place with their gifts as artists. Our President of The International Federation of Black Prides, Earle Fowlkes, is being seen in the South all the time. That's a good leader for you. And speaking of good leaders, Dwayne Jenkins, founder of Brothers United, is to be commended on the work he is doing for the young brothers and sisters, as well as for the city of Nashville.

Don't forget to make someone else feel special this holi-

day season. If someone crosses your mind, send them a card, email or even call them. Share a video/DVD with someone you know who cannot get out as much and watch it with them. Hug someone 30 seconds longer and smile at them at the end. That's what the holidays are all about.

And, as always as we prepare for 2004, Happy Pride, Chil-ren, Happy Pride!

NTAC sponsoring survey on trans, gender-variant folks

The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) is sponsoring a study to collect reliable statistical data about trans- and gender variant-identified persons.

The Community Needs Assessment Survey is under the supervision of Claremont Graduate University. Elizabeth Green, a graduate student at Claremont, is conducting the survey.

This study is open to anyone residing in the United States, with a particular focus on collecting demographic and experiential information about gender variant-identified persons. The study is seeking at least 1,500 responses from the greater United States transgender community.

Participants must be at least 18 years old and self-identify as a part of the gender variant community (including, but not limited, to transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc.). The survey is comprised of 75 questions and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete; surveys are 100 percent confidential.

For more information or to receive hard copies of the study to fill out and mail in, email Elizabeth Green at elizabeth@trans-academics.org or the NTAC research committee at research@ntac.org.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Armani and Tiona Kourvoisier celebrated their 5th Wedding Anniversary with a special celebration Nov. 21

Memphis club owner

from page 11

Besides staying busy with Club Allusions, Buckner can be found in the hallways of the courthouse during the daytime as a licensed bail bondsmen for Nationwide Bail Bonds. He also does catering on the side. He is a faithful member of Christ Missionary Baptist Church on South Parkway where he also enjoys working behind the scenes catering, sponsoring children to go to camp and serving on the church's bereavement team.

Buckner's partner of eight years, Tony, is the friendly face you can often see when you pay your cover to enter Club Allusions Entertainment Complex.

GOT NEWS?

Send us your birth, wedding, obituaries
(901) 682-2669
FamilyMag@aol.com

CLUB ALLUSIONS

Entertainment Complex

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Celebrates The Holidays

ALLUSIONS' CHRISTMAS BASH
Begins Christmas Night, Dec. 25, with one
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Dec. 26, the LADIES OF MEMPHIS
Will Host One Sensational Show Just for
The Ladies!

Dec. 27, AFTER-CHRISTMAS BASH
The Bash Will Feature the ALLUSIONS Show
Cast, Guest Entertainers, Male & Female
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Dec. 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY
Doors open at 9 p.m.
Complimentary Champagne, Party Favors and
Hors d'ouvers catered by All Star Hot Wings.
And, of course, our FABULOUS
"Count-Down" Show to Welcome in 2004!



Charlie, Mandy, Matt and Billy

Mary and Lois

Jim, Stephen and Eric

Michael, Richard and Chris

Sandy, Barbara and Bill

Jason, Stuart, John and George

Bryan and Franky

Terry and Shelia

Tadd and Matt

Mike and Mac

Gena & Chris

J.C. and James

Brian and Mike

Kevin and Leslie

San and Ken

Bryan

Nancy, Felicia, Cynthia, Remy and Yvonne

Andrea and Deborah

Randy and Brandon

SOUTHERN GENTLEMEN'S HOLIDAY GALA **FAMILY ALBUM**



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Billy and Charlie

Cliff, Dennis and Tony

Dennie and Karen

Butch and Mark

Charlie and missing bride

Rick and Larry

Kelly, Lisa, Mallory and Mary

Jack and William

Jo and Felicia

Melinda and Teresa

Sheena and Sherian

Charlie and Jeff

Jewell, Janie and Jimbo

Patricia, Richard and Elona

Girls of The Venus Mission

Steve, Kellie Ann, Ronnie, Odie and Justin

Joe and Brian

Bryant, Linda, Kay and Betty



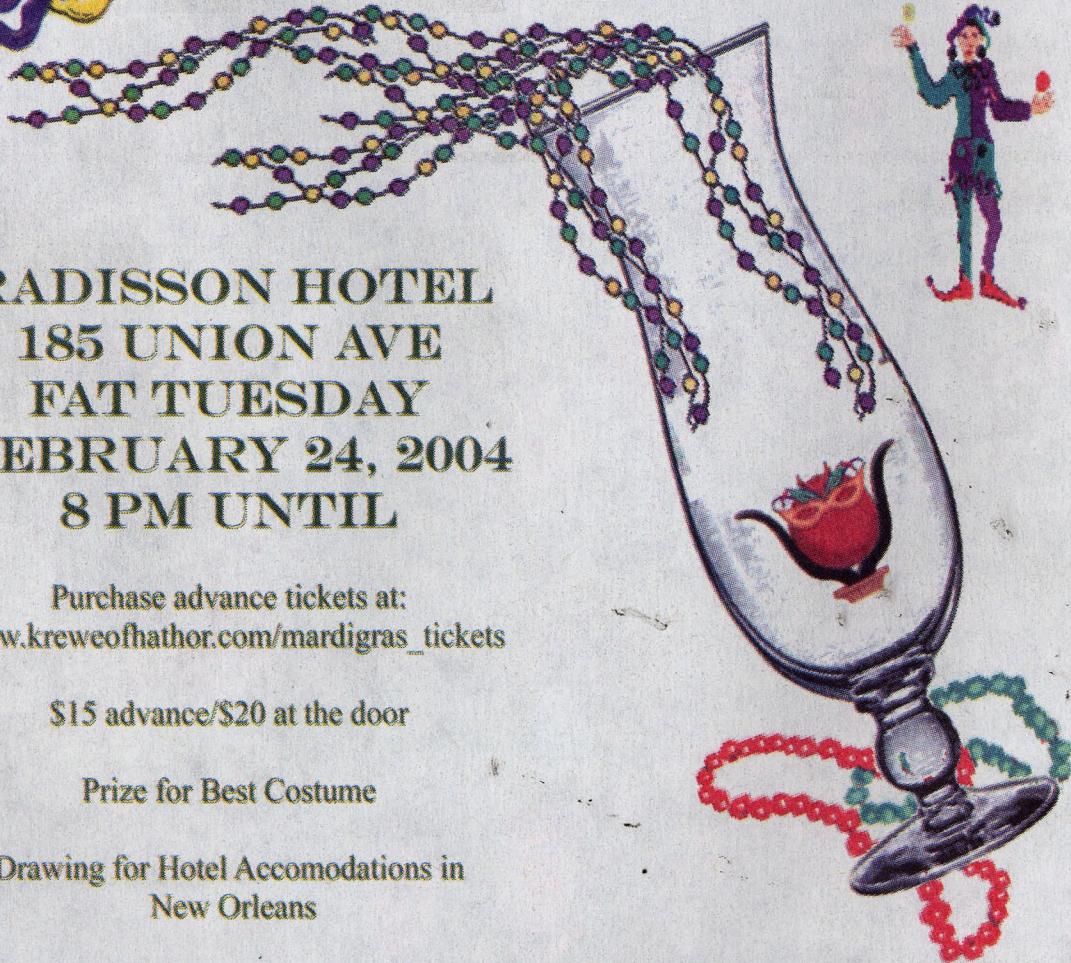
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MEMPHIS BAR & THEATER GUIDE

Bars & Clubs

- 1** **Backstreet Memphis**
2018 Court Street
(901) 276-5522
- 2** **Crossroads**
1278 Jefferson
(901) 276-8078
- 3** **Crossroads 2**
111 North Claybrook
(901) 276-1882
- 4** **J-Wags**
1268 Madison Avenue
(901) 725-1909
- 5** **The Jungle**
1474 Madison Avenue
(901) 278-4313
- 6** **Lorenz/Aftershock**
1528 Madison Avenue
(901) 274-8272
- 7** **Madison Flame**
1588 Madison Avenue
(901) 278-9839
- 8** **Metro Memphis**
1349 Autumn Street
(901) 274-8010
- 9** **Allusions (inset)**
3204 North Thomas
(901) 357-8383
- 10** **One More**
2117 Peabody
(901) 278-MORE
- 11** **The Pumping Station**
1382 Poplar Avenue
(901) 272-7600
- 12** **Paragon**
2865 Walnut Grove Rd.
(901) 320-0026

- 13** **Printer's Alley**
322 S. Cleveland
(901) 725-9809

Theaters

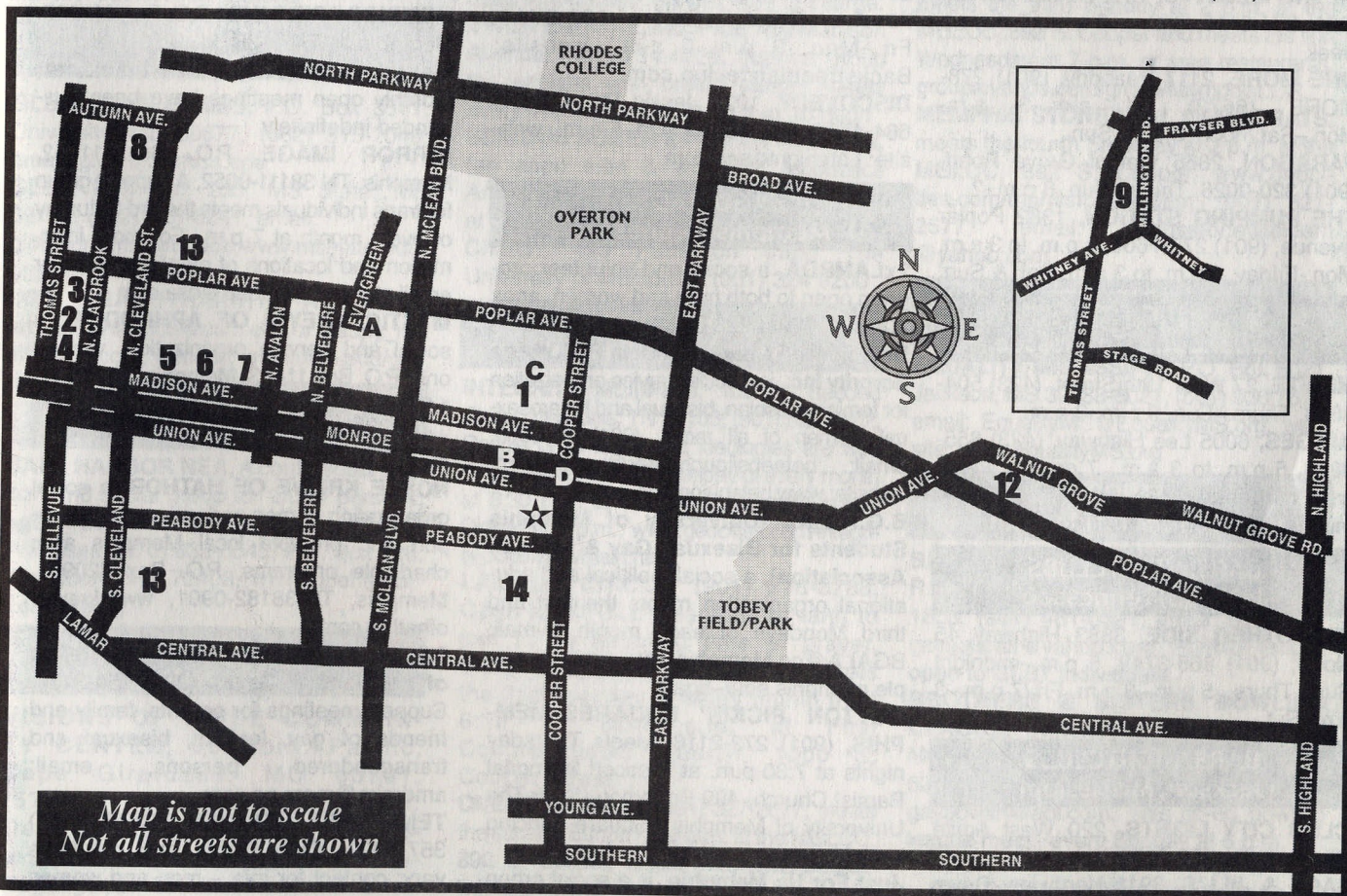
- A** **Circuit Playhouse**
1705 Poplar Avenue
(901) 726-4656
- B** **Emerald Theatre Company**
2085 Monroe Avenue
(901) 722-9302
- C** **Malco's Studio on the Square**
2105 Court Avenue
Movie Hotline: (901) 681-2020
- D** **Playhouse on the Square**
51 South Cooper
(901) 726-4656

NOT ON MAP

- The Orpheum**
203 South Main Street
(901) 525-3000
- Theatre Memphis**
630 Perkins Extended
(901) 682-8323

GLBT Retailers

- ★ **INZ & OUTZ Cards & Gifts**
553 South Cooper
(901) 728-6535



BARS/NIGHTCLUBS Memphis, Tennessee

ALLUSIONS, 3204 North Thomas in the Northgate Shopping Center (in the back), (901) 357-8383. Open at 9 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

BACKSTREET MEMPHIS, 2018 Court Street, (901) 276-5522, Fri. & Sat. 8 p.m.-6 a.m., Sun. 8 p.m. to 3 a.m., www.backstreetmemphis.com

CROSSROADS & CROSSROADS 2, 1278 Jefferson & 111 North Claybrook, (901) 276-1882, Noon-3 a.m., 7 Days A Week

J-WAG'S, 1268 Madison Avenue, (901) 725-1909, Open 24 Hours A Day, 7 Days A Week

THE JUNGLE, 1474 Madison Avenue, (901) 278-4313, 4 p.m.-3 a.m. Mon. Fri./3 p.m.-3 a.m. Sat. & Sun.

LORENZ/AFTERSHOCK, 1528 Madison Avenue, (901) 274-8272, open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

MADISON FLAME, 1588 Madison Avenue, (901) 278-9839, 7 p.m.-3 a.m. Wed., Fri. & Sat./5 p.m.-? Thurs.

METRO MEMPHIS, 1349 Autumn Street, (901) 274-8010, 6 p.m.-3 a.m., 7 days a week

ONE MORE, 2117 Peabody, (901) 278-MORE (6673), 11 a.m.-3 a.m. Mon.-Sat./noon-3 a.m. Sun.

PARAGON, 2865 Walnut Grove Road, (901) 320-0026, Thurs.-Sun. 8 p.m.-?

THE PUMPING STATION, 1382 Poplar Avenue, (901) 272-7600, 4 p.m. to 3 a.m. Mon.-Friday, 3 p.m. to 3 a.m. Sat. & Sun.

BARS/NIGHTCLUBS Chattanooga, Tennessee

MI-NITE, 27 West 19th Street, (423) 504-3650, Thurs.-Sun. 9 p.m.-3 a.m.

IMAGES, 6005 Lee Highway, (423) 855-8210, 5 p.m. to 3 a.m., 7 days a week, www.mirage-complex.com, Email: mirage_complex@hotmail.com

BARS/NIGHTCLUBS Jackson, Tennessee

THE OTHER SIDE, 3883 Highway 45 North, (901) 668-3749, 5 p.m.-midnight Sun.-Thurs., 5 p.m.-3 a.m. Fri./7 p.m.-3 a.m. Sat.

BARS/NIGHTCLUBS Jackson, Mississippi

CLUB CITY LIGHTS, 220 West Amite Street, (601) 353-0059

JACK & JILL'S, 3911 Northview Drive,

(601) 982-JACK (5225), 9 p.m.-? Fri. & Sat., website: www.jacksonbars.com

JACK'S CONSTRUCTION SITE (aka JC'S), 425 North Mart Plaza, (601) 362 3108, 5 p.m.-? 7 Days A Week, website: www.jacksonbars.com

BARS/NIGHTCLUBS Meridian, Mississippi

QC DISCO, 125 Russel Drive, (601) 484-4111, 8 p.m.-2 a.m. Thur.-Sat., 6 p.m.-? Sun., email: QCDisco@aol.com

BARS/NIGHTCLUBS Tupelo, Mississippi

RUMORS, 637 Highway 145, (662) 767-9500, 8 p.m. -1 a.m. Thurs. - Sat., email: rumors@futuresouth.com

BARS/NIGHTCLUBS Hot Springs, Arkansas

OUR HOUSE, 660 East Grand Avenue, Hot Springs, Ark. (501) 624-6868, Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m. to 3 a.m., Sat., 7 p.m. to 2 a.m.

BARS/NIGHTCLUBS Little Rock, Arkansas

BACKSTREET-LITTLE ROCK, 1021 Jessie Road, (501) 662-2744, Fri.-Mon. 9 p.m.-5 a.m., website: Backstreetdanceclub.com.

DISCOVERY, 1021 Jessie Road, (501) 664-4784, Sat. only, 9 p.m.-5 a.m., website: Latenightdisco.com

SOCIAL Memphis, Tennessee

2xLAMBDA, a social and volunteer program open to both men and women, ages 20 to 29, (901) 223-3331

Beta Epsilon Chapter of Beta Phi Omega Sorority Inc., is a social service organization for feminine lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual women of all races, (901) 281-0830, email: betaepsilonchapter@yahoo.com, website: www.betaphiomega.net

B.G.A.L.A., (University of Memphis Students for Bisexual, Gay & Lesbian Association), a social, political and educational organization meets the first and third Mondays of each month, e-mail: BGALA@cc.Memphis.edu, www.people.memphis.edu/~bgala

COTTON PICKIN' SQUARES-MEMPHIS, (901) 272-2116, Meets Thursday nights at 7:30 p.m. at Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, 499 Patterson (Near The University of Memphis), Square dancing social group

Just For Us Memphis, is a social group

welcoming single or partnered lesbians ages 18+. Some gatherings are designed specifically for members and their children, (901) 268-1903, email: justforus-memphis@yahoo.com

LIFE IN THE MEDIAN, a program of the Memphis Gay & Lesbian Community Center, is open to men and women in their late 20s and beyond. (901) 857 8523

MEMPHIS AREA GAY YOUTH (MAGY), P.O. Box 241852, Memphis, TN 38124, (901) 335-6249, Peer support group for 13- to 21-year olds dealing with gay, lesbian, bisexual & gender issues, www.gaymemphis.com/magy

MEMPHIS BEARS, 1066 Wrenwood, Memphis, TN 38122, (901) 323-4773, Meets the 2nd Saturday of every month at The Pumping Station, 1382 Poplar Ave., at 10 p.m. • MEN ONLY, Email: info@memphis-bears.com, www.memphisbears.com

MEMPHIS GAY & LESBIAN COMMUNITY CENTER, 892 South Cooper Memphis, 38104, (901) 278-4297, town-hall meetings every other month; Thurs-Fri, 6 to 10 p.m.; Sat and Sun, 2 to 10 p.m. and Mon, 6 to 10 p.m.

MEMPHIS PRIDE INC., P.O. Box 111265, Memphis, TN 38111-1265, email: Memphisprideparade@earthlink.net, Monthly open meetings have been suspended indefinitely

MIRROR IMAGE, P.O. Box 11052, Memphis, TN 38111-0052, A support group for trans individuals meets the 3rd Saturday of every month at 7 p.m., For more information and locations of meetings, write or email at memphisgroup@usa.com

MYSTIC KREWE OF APHRODITE, a social and service organization, women only, P.O. Box 11483, Memphis, TN 38111-1483, email: aphroditemem@yahoo.com, website: www.geocities.com/aphroditemem

NOBLE KREWE OF HATHOR, a social organization of men and women who support and promote local Memphis area charitable programs, P.O. Box 820901, Memphis, TN 38182-0901, www.krewe-ofhathor.com

P.F.L.A.G., (Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays), (901) 754-3136, Support meetings for parents, family and friends of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, email: amdrake@mem.po.com

TENNESSEE LEATHER TRIBE, (901) 357-1921, Club nights and meetings vary; contact for info - men and women

RAINBOW DIRECTORY AREA GLBT RESOURCE GUIDE (CONTINUED)

welcome, www.tnleathertribe.org, email: info@tnleathertribe.org

TSARUS MEMPHIS, P.O. Box 41082, Memphis, TN 38174, (901) 276-4132, Levi-leather club meets the 3rd Saturday of every month at The Pumping Station, 1382 Poplar Avenue, at 10 p.m. • MEN ONLY, Email: info@tsarus.org, website: www.tsarus.org

MEMPHIS BLACK SGL ALLIANCE, 28 North Claybrook, Memphis, TN 38104, (901)274-0163, Cultural, educational, community awareness organization.

MGLCC BOOK CLUB, a program of the Memphis Gay & Lesbian Community Center, 892 South Cooper, meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. email: bmooddy@mem.net

SOCIAL Knoxville, Tennessee

LAMBDA STUDENT UNION, a social and educational organization for GLBT, questioning and straight students at The University of Tennessee-Knoxville, 315 University Center, Box 315, 1502 West Cumberland Ave., Knoxville, TN 37996-4800, lambda@utk.edu, website: web.utk.edu/~lambda/

SOCIAL Mississippi

GLBA OF OLE MISS, P.O. Box 3541, University, MS 38677, (662) 915-7049, email: glba@olemiss.edu

GLBF, P.O. Box 233, MS State, MS 39762, (662) 325-8241, email: glbf@org.msstate.edu, www.msstate.edu/org/glbf

USM GAY/STRAIGHT ALLIANCE, email: GSAlliance@usm.edu or thespy_ms@yahoo.com, website: www.usm.edu/gsa

SOCIAL Arkansas

SAFE HARBOR NEA, A confidential support and social group for GLBT persons, ages 25 and under, in northeast Arkansas, (870) 932-6545, P.O. Box 226, Jonesboro, AR 72403, www.safeharbornea.com

SOCIAL Missouri

VISIONS OF PRIDE COMMUNITY CENTER, 30 North Pacific, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701, (573) 651-6220, email: DeltaDyke@aol.com, home-town.aol.com/deltadyke/myhome-page/gaypride.html

WHOLENESS Memphis, Tennessee

FEAST FOR FRIENDS DINNER, (901) 272-0855, Dinner is served the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month at St. John's United Methodist Church, Bellevue @ Peabody, beginning at 6 p.m.

MEMPHIS REGIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD, 1407 Union Avenue Extended, 3rd Floor (901) 725-1717, HIV & STD testing, gynecological preventive care

MEMPHIS HIV FAMILY CARE NETWORK, 880 Madison Avenue, Memphis, TN, (901) 545-8265, Free comprehensive, supportive services and voc/rehab services to the HIV-positive

NICOTINE ANONYMOUS MEETING, Saturdays 10 a.m., Christ United Methodist Church, 4488 Poplar Avenue. (901) 278-6234

THE POSITIVE LIVING CENTER, 1000 South Cooper Street, Memphis, TN, (901) 726-6022 • Tuesday-Saturday, noon to 8 p.m. Provides opportunities for persons affected by HIV/AIDS to manage the disease in a holistic manner, free of charge.

YWCA ENCORE, MedPlex, 880 Madison Avenue, (901) 754-4356, Support group for lesbians with breast cancer meets every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to noon

SERIOUS SOBER OPEN AA MEETING, (an open men & women's Alcoholics Anonymous meeting), Meets each Friday at 8 p.m. at Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, 499 Patterson (near The University of Memphis), (901) 324 9200

SPIRITUAL Memphis, Tennessee

INTEGRITY MEMPHIS, 102 N. Second Street, Memphis, TN 38103, (901) 525 6602, People of all faiths and ideologies are welcome, Meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at Calvary Episcopal Church. Dinner at 7 p.m., www.geocities.com/integrity_memphis/main.html

LAMBDA CIRCLE, (901) 278-6786, Open to all GLBT persons of faith to join in an affirming time of prayer, Bible study and discussion., Meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 1000 S. Cooper Street.

QUEER DHARMA, (901) 327-2677, meets the second Sunday at 2 p.m. at the MGLCC, 892 S. Cooper, email: jmaynard2@earthlink.net, www.dhamaramemphis.com

SPIRITUAL Other Locales

CAMP SISTER SPIRIT, P.O. Box 12, Overt, MS 39464, Feminist education/cultural/retreat center, www.campsisterspirit.com, email: sisterspir@aol.com

MCC OF THE RAINBOW, 5565 Robinson Rd. Ext., Ste. Q, Jackson, MS 39204, (601) 372-6644, Sunday Service at 11:30 a.m.

POLITICAL Tennessee

MEMPHIS FREETHOUGHT ALLIANCE, an association of atheists, agnostics and secular humanists, meets the third Sunday at the Memphis Public Library, 3030 Poplar Ave., Room C, call Jim Maynard at (901) 327-2677, email: memphisfreethought@yahoo.com, www.geocities.com/memphisfreethought.

MEMPHIS LESBIAN & GAY COALITION FOR JUSTICE, P.O. Box 241363, Memphis, TN 38124, (901) 327-2677. Email: mlgcj@yahoo.com, website: www.geocities.com/mlgcj.

MEMPHIS LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS, meets the third Sunday at 2 p.m. at the MGLCC, 892 S. Cooper and meets the first Wednesday at 7 p.m. at area restaurants, groups.yahoo.com/group/MemphisLRC.

MEMPHIS STONEWALL DEMOCRATS, meets the fourth Saturday at 2 p.m. at the MGLCC, 892 S. Cooper, www.geocities.com/mpsstonewallem, (901) 327-2677, email: mpsstonewalldem@yahoo.com

POLITICAL Mississippi

EQUALITY MISSISSIPPI, P.O. Box 6021, Jackson, MS 39288-6021, (601) 936 7673, email: EqualityMS@EqualityMS.org, website: www.EqualityMS.org

SPORTS Memphis, Tennessee

BLUFF CITY SPORTS ASSOCIATION, P.O. Box 41803, Memphis, TN 38174 1803, (901) 461-0891, email: memphis-gaysoftball@yahoo.com, Softball league open to GLBT individuals.

BROTHERS & SISTERS BOWLING LEAGUE, Winchester Bowl, 3703 S. Mendenhall @ Winchester, (901) 722-5236 or (901) 465-4371. Email: memphis-gaybowlin@aol.com. This co-ed bowling league meets every Sunday at 6 p.m.

See Rainbow Directory, page 86

RAINBOW DIRECTORY (CONTINUED)



**(901)
274-0163**

**Creating a
village/haven
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FRONT RUNNERS MEMPHIS, Memphis's first gay and lesbian running club, meets twice a week, Info@FronrunnersMemphis.org, www.FronrunnersMemphis.org.

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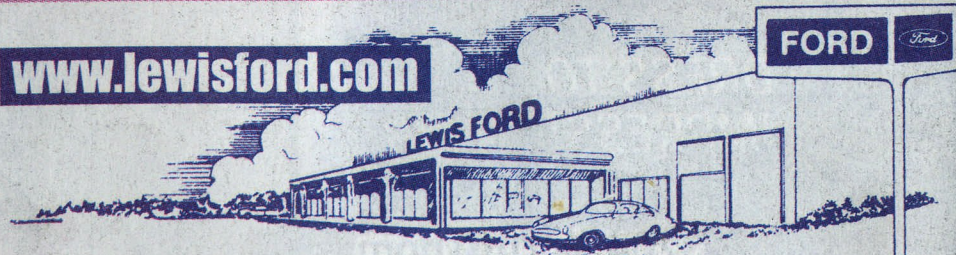
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