



Q • Voice

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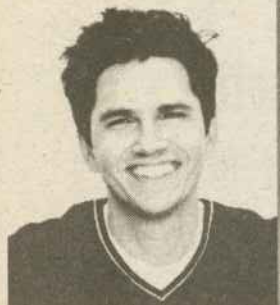
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Bob

Interview by Jorge Cabal

Blessed with a quintessential American name, comedian Bob Smith offers a unique, whine-free perspective on growing up gay in America. Smith's new book, a collection of essays titled "Openly Bob" has received rave reviews and covers a wide field of topics from lesbian ventriloquist dummies to Newt Gingrich.

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Shop 'till You Drop!

Photos: Jorge Cabal, Styling: BJ Daniels,
Models: Megan, Joe, Nova and Jonah
Clothing & knicknacks courtesy of Survival Revival.



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Suzzane Westenhoefer Questionnaire

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Gritty Granduer

by Waswo

New York's Hotel Chelsea holds a long tradition for sheltering writers, musicians and artists. Seeking both history and ambiance, Waswo spends the weekend in a suite rumored to have once housed Janis Joplin. Did Sid Vicious kill his girlfriend in this very room? Has Madonna been between these sheets?



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Joni James

by Jim Andrews

Hot! Hot! Hot! That describes the reaction to the soundtrack for the film "LA Confidential." Joni James original recording of "How Important Can It Be" highlights the CD and Q•Voice has the interview.

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On our cover:
Ho, Ho, Homo
Model: Jim, Photo: Jorge L. Cabal

NEXT Q•VOICE: Deadline: December 11 • Appearing: December 18

Montel Williams Sued for Harassment

Talk show host **Montel Williams** is being sued for sexual harassment by his former executive assistant, a homosexual who claims Williams subjected him to "sexually offensive conduct."

The suit by **Ernesto Medina**, claimed that Williams ridiculed the employee over his sexual orientation, gave him embarrassing "sex toys" and grabbed his buttocks. Medina worked for Williams for seven months in 1994-95.

A Williams spokesman, said the syndicated talk-show host "vehemently denied" the charges.

Medina's lawyer filed a federal lawsuit in New Jersey last year on behalf of female employees who charged that they were groped by Williams and subjected to his lascivious comments.

Two women later withdrew from that suit, and a judge dismissed the claims of two others.

Thieves Steal Van Damme's Queer Flick

Is the sight of **Jean-Claude Van Damme** playing a gay man enough incentive to steal a movie?

That's a question the West Hollywood sheriff's office must answer after someone broke into a storage area and stole the only print of "Monaco Forever," Van Damme's 1985 feature film debut.

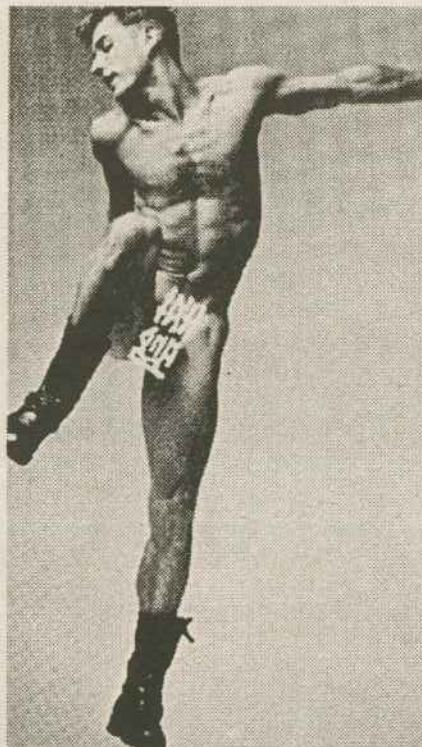
Van Damme appears briefly in the 30-minute short film as a man driving a red 1955 XK150 Jaguar. He picks up the main character.

The performance may now have van-

ished forever. Film-makers say that not only is the print gone, but the negative, which was stored at the now-defunct United Color Lab, also has mysteriously disappeared.

Underexposed

New York Magazine reports that Chronicle Books had to give its latest publication a curious stamp of approval to get it past Japanese customs. **Dance Ink: Photographs**, a collection of photographs of famed dance legends like



Merce Cunningham and **Twyla Tharp**, includes a picture of choreographer **Lance Gries** dancing naked.

The risqué art shot got the books printers, who are located in Japan, up in arms: Japanese regulations prohibit exporting images of full-frontal male nudity. Co-editor **Patsy Tarr** decided to run it anyway — but superimposed with

the Japanese word for "penis" over Gries's privates.

"It's short," says Tarr, referring to the Japanese character. "Just a couple of brush strokes, so it covers Lance very adequately."

Truman Capote: The Tiny Terror

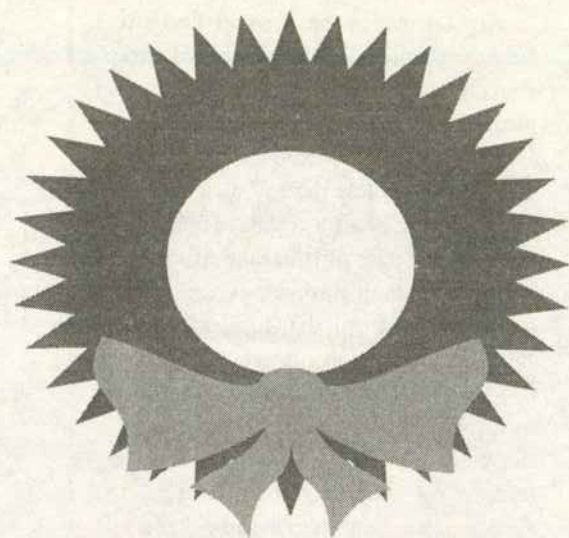
"I'm an alcoholic I'm a drug addict ... I'm a homosexual ... I'm a genius." That's how **Truman Capote**, the famous writer once summed up his life. Brutally honest, outrageously witty and openly homosexual, Capote had a style all his own. A style that made him an American icon.

A&E Network presents a premier **Biography** that tells his story as candidly as he might have himself. **Biography: Truman Capote: The Tiny Terror** makes its World Premier on A&E Network on Wednesday, December 17 at 7 p.m. CST.

Biography is followed by the new **American Justice: Murder "In Cold Blood"** at 8 p.m. CST, which tells the whole frightening story of the notorious massacre, complete with new interviews with the investigators, journalists and attorneys involved in the case—and the actual audio confession by **Richard Hickcock**.

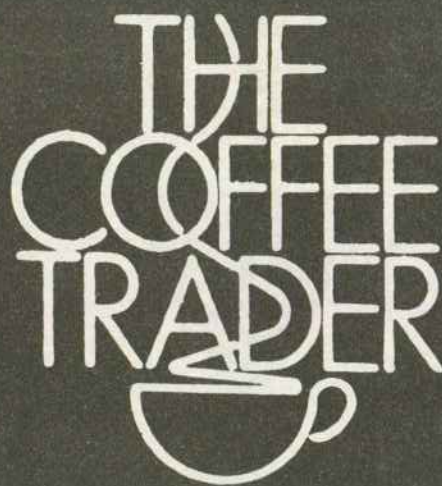
George Plimpton, whose current book about Capote has made headlines with revelations about the writer's alleged romantic relationship with one of the **In Cold Blood** murderers, is among the friends — and ex-friends — who relate their favorite and most insightful memories on **Truman Capote: The Tiny Terror**.

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Letters

Fetish Show Fetish

To the Editor—

Writer Richard Waswo took the right track when he addressed the question of censorship in his feature (Indulgence of the Rat Fink Mob) in your November issues. After viewing the 3 day sink-hole at Gallery H20 (who put this mess together anyway?), I came away chuckling that the whole thing (with the possible exception of one Volske painting, one of Laird Knight's black and white photographs, and a piece by Tom Holleran) deserving even less attention than the "quick glance" which painter Volske refers to in describing his own work.

But that approach ignores viewers who may actually appreciate careful craftsmanship and art that, at the very least, informs. Walls wallowing in balls, penises, vaginas, and assorted body parts thrashing and thrusting do not an art

show make, though they may make for a swell Halloween bash. And had there been say, only a dozen pieces (of exceptionally crafted balls, penises, vaginas and assorted body parts sweating and thrusting) then viewers would have at least an exhibit worth more than a quick glance.

Censoring art is a dumb idea, but not censoring it just for the sake of not censoring it, is even dumber. Writer Waswo wisely pointed out that local artist Matt Fink declined to exhibit in this particular show. It indicates that Mr. Fink has outgrown the adolescent need to show his work at any cost, and is in effect, 'censoring' who he hangs (out) with. And yes, perhaps in the future, the talented Mr. Fink will even —gasp!— sell a few pieces to discerning collectors.

Judith Ann Moriarty
Milwaukee

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Quips and Quotes

I Thought David Hasselhoff Was a Lesbian...

"My goal is to be the first out lesbian on Bay Watch. I'll do anything to get on Bay Watch. I'll even get a boob job. But I want to be careful about the risk factor, so I've found a lesbian clinic that uses tofu implants."

—Dyke comic Marga Gomez to Kansas City's Pitchweekly.

That's 26 Times Too Many!

"A study done in the Des Moines public schools showed that the average high school student hears anti-gay comments like "dyke" and "faggot" a stunning 26 times a day, and that teachers who witness such incidents do nothing a shocking 97 percent of the time. The results of this kind of behavior for gay and lesbian students is terrifying."

—Martina Navratilova to the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network

It's a Good Thing...



"Country music fans might give me goosebumps, but what really frightens me is the Martha Stewart collection from K-Mart. I've had nightmares where Martha tries to get me to cross over and shop in the K-Mart Zone. 'Come into the blue light,' she beckons. "It's a good thing!"

—Columnist Michael Beaumier in the Windy City Times.

Sour Grapes?

"Those who are HIV positive are given all the energy and resources our community has at its disposal. Those who are not HIV positive are given condoms and pamphlets."

—Columnist Brad Fraser in the Canadian national magazine Fab.

How About an AIDS Bedspread?

"My first objection to the Quilt is simply this: placing the epidemic within the context of this mythically pure colonial history is part of the way we sanitize the victims of AIDS, enshrining them within this cluttered museum of tacky folklore so resonant with wholesome patriotic feelings and nostalgia for a simpler agrarian America. This whole process of purification implies that AIDS victims are indeed truly guilty of something, namely, for having sex, and need to be sanitized, need to be cleansed in

a warm bath of colonialist kitsch. Few of your readers, I hope, are going to buy this. In short, there is a very thin line between the Quilt and guilt."

—Daniel Harris, author of *The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture*, in an interview taped by Visual AIDS for World Without Art Day, Dec. 1.



Too bad... I would have given you the Oscar

"I didn't use a stand-in. But it's a trick."

—Actor Mark (Don't call me Marky) Wahlberg on the scene in the film *Boogie Nights* where he displays his large penis, to the Associated Press.

Hey! What About Wonder Woman?

"Gay women ... are so loyal because Xena is the first strong, kick-ass woman on TV."

—Actress Lucy Lawless (*Xena: Warrior Princess*) to Los Angeles' Lesbian News.

A Newspaper Cometh

"The appearance of the New York Blade News [the Washington Blade's new NYC weekly] will mean bad things to some people who thought they had the Manhattan gay media market under control. It will mean that readers will have a choice between publications that specialize in PC-lesbigaytrans drivel and a real newspaper. And if history can be our guide, miscreants like [writer Larry] Kramer will have a harder time gaining unfettered platforms for their, ahem, views."

—Jeff Epperly, editor of the Boston gay newspaper Bay Windows.

Compiled by Rex Wockner and our crack news sources around the world. Seen a good quip or quote? Send it to us at Quips and Quotes, Q•Voice World Headquarters, P.O. Box 92385, Milwaukee, WI 53202, or e-mail to qvoice@aol.com

The Casual Observer

by Ed Grover

I hopped the Amtrak going north the Thursday after I got the phone call from my sister. Aunt Ursula was going to Taos to be with Zöe, who had flown back to her studio the beginning of October. Ursy had placed the farm in the care of her Sheepshead playing buddy Walter. The old Packard was being checked out, gased-up, and loaded. She was leaving the following Monday.

Ursy was there to meet me when the train pulled in. Her voice boomed: "I told Nan I'd getcha, ainna. 'B'sides I wanna talk to ya, personal like, ya know." We put my stuff in my sister's car and rumbled off with Ursy jabbering a mile a minute: "You know why I'm going, don'cha kiddo? I remember when you went all funny over that fella in New York; now it's my turn. It's been hell these past few weeks being away from Zöe now that I found her, and besides, I'm spendin' too much of my "hard earned" on phone calls.

As we sped along, I asked how they had met and was told that it had been during the spring at a mutual friend's farm near the upper Kickapoo River Reserve. "I go over a lot to see these two gals. One weekend there was Zöe—up for a visit. Nan don't have no idea of what it's all about."

I told her to think about that again. My sister has been dealing with me being out for 40 years. Ursy looked at me, shrugged and said, "Like she says ... 'Oh, well!' And anyway I'm goin', so that's that. Walter will keep the place safe 'till we both get back in the late spring. We want to be out of there before the tourists get there. It gets as bad as the Dells on a nice day."

The car swerved; she almost hit a deer. Ursy yelled at no one in particular: "Damn fool critters! Don't never have a gun when I need one," and then went on with, "Yer brother-in-law's in Montana stockin' up the larder for winter anyway. He'll probably come back with a truckfull. Birds too—all in ice and plucked clean as newborns!"

I asked what she was going to do while Zöe was welding. She snorted and said, "Well, I'll do what do I do best. I'll hunt and cook and lift stuff for her. I'll have my own car, so I'll take a look around. There's got to be some sort of critter I can shoot at. I know it snows there; it's up near them mountains, so there's no use makin' a garden." I asked about the dogs. "I'm takin' Sally with me to keep me company. Them others and the cats will survive if I know about it. Walter'll feed 'em."

Finally, we pulled into the drive and went in to hot coffee and freshly baked currant scones, dripping with butter. Ursy picked up the gray cat and headed toward the living room to watch the football game while my sister and I exchanged

knowing glances. "She thinks you don't know," I whispered. My sister laughed and said, "After knowing you, I can spot 'em a mile away. What is it you call that ... gaydar? Well, I must have it too. Anyway, I'm happy for her. She's been alone far too long. Zöe seems very fond of her, and that's all I really care about."

I learned all I needed to know about Zöe while the game was blaring away. She's a retired art teacher. She's a sometimes vegetarian and an over-enthusiastic environmentalist. She lives on an old adobe rancho some eight miles southwest of Taos, between the Rio Grande Valley and the *Sangre de Cristos* Mountains. She makes the most outrageous sculptures you can imagine using found objects; everything is welded and wired together on steel armatures. I saw pictures and some of them are bigger than she is.

Ursy is also sending a truck full of "finds" that Zöe wants: some deer and cow skulls, lots of antlers, some old rusted tractor parts, the old outhouse seats, some fencing and part of a granite outcropping that she had blasted loose from the side of a cliff one afternoon.

Also going are all of Aunt Ursy's softest doeskins. These are going to be made into matching outfits by a local woman artist. I can just see Ursy dressed in quasi-Native American/Western getup and a Concho belt studded with silver and turquoise, and some sort of sombrero. She already has a silver and turquoise bracelet about three inches wide (the engagement present?).

Zöe on the other hand will look splendid. She's a small woman with permanently-tanned skin and the look of an antelope that has been startled while grazing. When she isn't wearing denim, she fancies supple leathers and suede's with hand-knit sweaters, an occasional Indian blanket — and of course, all her jewelry.

The days passed quickly with many trips over to see the barn where there will be a studio; they plan to introduce Zöe's work to the unknowing populace of Wisconsin. Maybe you'll see them at one of the many art fairs we have. Just look for two old lesbians in lots of denim, doeskin and Indian jewelry.

The big day arrived. We both hugged Ursy and wished her God's speed. Sally barked a lot. As the car pulled out of the drive, it began to snow. Aunt Ursula was on her way ... with no regrets. She turned left and headed south.

My sister grinned and said, "As long as you're here, I figured we could make some cookies." I said we might as well — everything seems to be about right for a happy holiday season for some folks we know.

MEDIA MARRIAGE

Poet and videographer Christina Zawadiwsky knows the passion of commitment. For over six years she has steadfastly produced *Where the Waters Meet*, a local access television program focusing on the arts.

"To this date I have filmed, narrated, and edited about four hundred programs in this series. I do these programs because I want to facilitate a voice for artists in all genres. Because artist concerns are by and large

excluded from mainstream television."

Without financial reward, Zawadiwsky has lugged heavy video equipment, spent hours interviewing both local and national figures, and has endured the tedium of endless sessions in the editing booth.

For her efforts, Zawadiwsky has garnered numerous awards. Two national awards and fourteen local awards have won her the reputation as a dynamo at MATA channels 14 and 47. Most recently she has won a \$1,500 Milwaukee County Art Futures Award for *Christina Zawadiwsky's Cinemoems*, currently on display through December 4th at Cardinal Stritch College.

"These video poems are autobiographical in one sense, but in another sense they are universal. They

aren't narratives, but they *are* little dramas and comedies. I use a MX12 Digital AV Mixer to work with the coloring and speed of the images. It's like making a continuous painting, the image is always changing."

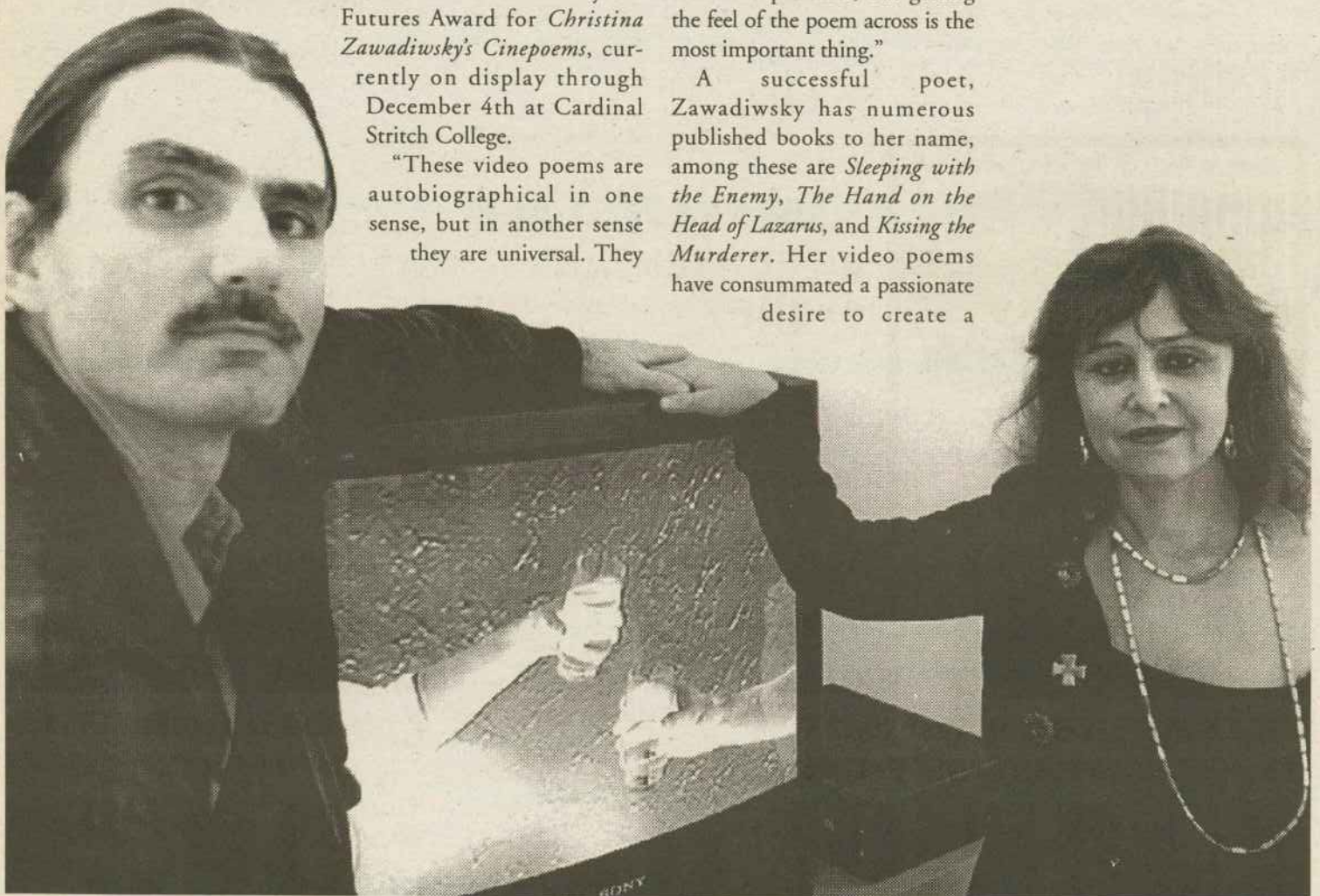
Assisting Zawadiwsky is musician and boyfriend Joe Ross. "I'll write ten to fifteen short guitar pieces for just one line in a poem," says Joe. "We then select the one we want to use. Our poetry videos are really many little pieces making a whole. We sometimes disagree and have to make compromises, but getting the feel of the poem across is the most important thing."

A successful poet, Zawadiwsky has numerous published books to her name, among these are *Sleeping with the Enemy*, *The Hand on the Head of Lazarus*, and *Kissing the Murderer*. Her video poems have consummated a passionate desire to create a

marriage between poetry and video. The results are perhaps her best work to date.

"I can't say enough about local access television! MATA allows you to be totally creative and free. All you have to be is eighteen years old, live in the City of Milwaukee, and go down and join!"

Story & photo by Waswo



2,000 MARCH IN BUENOS AIRES

Two thousand marchers turned out for Buenos Aires, Argentina's Sixth Lesbian, Gay, Transvestite, Transsexual and Bisexual Pride Parade Nov. 1.

Several other cities were represented as well, including Rosario, Tucuman, Jujuy, Cordoba and Montevideo, capital of neighboring Uruguay. Among the 50 marchers from Rosario were members of the new group Mothers, Fathers and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

The parade began at historic Plaza de Mayo and ended in front of Parliament.

"A kiss-in was staged to repudiate all forms of institutional violence against GLTB people," correspondent Alejandra Sarda reported via e-mail. "It ended up being a joyful demonstration of our free-going, boundaries-blurring natures, with

everyone kissing everyone — journalists and heterosexual allies included."

Like in the old days in the U.S., TV crews fixated on drag queens. "But they took the opportunity to denounce the brutal treatment they receive from policemen all across the country," Sarda said.

KAZAKHSTAN LEGALIZES GAY SEX

Kazakhstan's new criminal code does not prohibit gay sex, Amnesty International reported last week.

"Same-sex relations between consenting adults is no longer a criminal offence," the group said. "Article 121 in the new criminal code only punishes 'non-consenting' homosexual relations, including with the use of force and with a minor."

Several other former Soviet republics also have deleted their version of the Soviet-era gay-sex ban.

5,000 PROTEST AGE OF CONSENT IN SYDNEY

More than 5,000 protesters descended on the New South Wales Parliament House in Sydney, Australia, Oct. 22 demanding that the age of consent for gay sex be reduced to 16, which is the legal age for straight sex.

The rally came on the eve of the first reading of the Crimes Amendment (Sexual Offences) Bill 1997, which would end the discrimination.

Stevie Clayton of the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby called on closeted gay parliamentarians to "pay your dues," provoking the crowd to chant "Out them, out them."

Parliamentary debate on the matter resumes in mid-November.

SOUTH AFRICA OKs LESBIAN INSEMINATION

South Africa has OK'd artificial insemination of single women, including lesbians. The change to the Human Tissue Act, announced by Health Minister Nkosazana Zuma, resulted from a Human Rights Commission case filed by three unmarried women. The old regulations restricted insemination to women whom presented written permission from their husbands.

BRITISH VETS OBJECT TO GAY COMMEMORATION

The Royal British Legion denounced the London gay group OutRage! Nov. 2 for laying pink carnations at the Cenotaph Memorial.

OutRage!'s "Queer Remembrance Day," in honor of gays who served and died in the military, preceded by one week Britain's official Remembrance Sunday commemoration.

"Actions of a political nature at a national memorial, especially at a time of remembrance, are bound to be distasteful to many people," the veterans' group said. "It is also bound to offend many former soldiers."

Britain bans homosexuals from its armed forces but the policy likely will be struck down as a result of lawsuits winding their way through both the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice.

UKRAINIAN MEDIA IGNORES GAY MAGAZINE

The new Ukrainian gay magazine *Our World* sent a free copy to 81 media outlets and only got one bite back.

"The magazine has appeared absolutely

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unclaimed by the mass media," said Editor Andrei Maimulakhin.

In other news, the Ukrainian gay magazine *One Of Us* has split into two publications after the publisher, the Demetrios agency, and the editor, Leonid Nefedovich, had a falling out. The last issue of the magazine was distributed free to 43 gay organizations across the Ukraine and others in Belarus and Moldova.

Our World magazine may be ordered from P.O. Box 62, 348051 Lugansk, Ukraine. E-mail: editor@ourworld.lugansk.ua

CANADIAN ANGLICAN BISHOPS APOLOGIZE

Canada's Anglican bishops apologized in late October for having been nasty to gays but then went on to insult them.

A pastoral statement issued at the bishops' national convention said: "The story of the Church's attitude to gay and lesbian people has too often been one of standing at a distance, even of prejudice, ignorance and oppression. All of us need to acknowledge this and to repent for any part we may have had in creating it."

But the statement added that gay candidates for ordination must "shape their relationships so as to provide a wholesome example to the people of God. Exemplary behavior for persons who are not married includes a commitment to remain chaste."

GROUNDBREAKING EXHIBIT MOVES TO WEB

The Berlin Art Academy's groundbreaking exhibit "100 Years of the Gay Movement" has moved to the World Wide Web.

The three-month-long, \$1.15-million show attracted over 80,000 visitors. The URL is <http://www.gayactivism.com>.

DUTCH HALT AIDS FUNDING

The Netherlands Ministry of Health, Well Being and Sport has ended its financing of AIDS research, withdrawing 8.6 million guilders (US\$4.3 million) in funds.

Spokeswoman Wendy Reijmerink said the research had been funded "far longer" than other "special projects" and now it's time for AIDS researchers to compete for grants like other biomedical investigators. The Dutch AIDS Fund has appealed the decision to Health Minister Els Borst-Eilers.

ARGENTINE PENSIONS DELAYED

Argentina's recent decision to pay widow/widower pensions to surviving same-sex partners has yet to result in any payments because of heavy pressure placed on Social Security Secretary Carlos Torres by right-wing politicians and the Catholic Church.

"The widower's pensions are in danger," said activist Rafael Freda. "Torres is under pressure for having granted them so he is trying to delay everything. We are trying to exert social pressure in order to grant the payment of the pensions."

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Blessed with a quintessential American name, comedian Bob Smith offers a unique, whine-free perspective on growing up gay in America. Smith's new book, a collection of essays titled "Openly Bob" has received rave reviews and covers a wide field of topics from lesbian ventriloquist dummies to Newt Gingrich to bringing your boyfriend home to your father's funeral.

Smith tours the country with his comedy act and has written for *Funny Gay Males*, *Roseanne's Saturday Night Special*, MTV and HBO. Smith is set to star in a new gay sketch-comedy series for Showtime.

Raised in Buffalo, he now lives in California with his boyfriend, Tom. Milwaukee was a recent stop on his book tour. On a bright fall afternoon, I met Smith at the Pfister Hotel, we talked about his book, his politics and what his mother doesn't know about him.

JC: What motivated you to write your book?

BS: I basically wanted to write a funny book, but then in the writing, it sort of evolved as [I] wrote it. I didn't want it to be a joke book; I knew that ahead of time. I was an English major in college and I read a lot. I tried to write something that I thought was kind of substantial.

JC: There is a theory that most comedians come from a dysfunctional background...

BS: I think it's very true, in general. I also have a thing that most comedians are from an outsider point of view, whether it's Jewish, Black, Hispanic or women. I think gays and lesbians are the last group to be sort of included in that. The dysfunctional thing — I definitely came from a really bizarre background. I'm the third son, so you're also in that position in the family where you observe things, and I've always been a smart-ass, basically.

JC: Was writing this book like therapy, did you see it that way at all?

BS: No, I didn't. I've done all that therapy stuff. In the broad sense writing is ... What's kind of interesting is you find out a little better what you really think about things. Then there's also the fun element in it. You come up with a really funny idea or a good play on words; that's great. It makes my day. I can't wait to tell my boyfriend Tom, "Oh, you know what I thought of today? This is really funny!"

JC: Are you political?

BS: Yeah, I think I'm political. I feel very political and cer-

tainly my views have evolved over the years on gay rights and gay issues. I'm in favor of us having any right straight people have. I also thought it was just a funny play on words, and I liked that it was a very clean, short essay.

I took one idea and said "All right, he's comparing being gay to being an alcoholic." Whereas I'm like, "That's totally insane, but being homophobic is like being an alcoholic." I was doing all the word plays and getting all the ideas out of it in a nice, short two-and-a-half pages. So, that was fun; it was more like a little craftsmanship thing.

The editor actually said, "Well, Newt Gingrich, is he really in the news or anything?" But my goal is always that theoretically if you read this book in fifty years, you could still laugh and enjoy it. I think there's always going to be stupid politicians and it doesn't matter if no one remembers Newt Gingrich. It's just the idea of comparing being gay to being alcoholic. That essay should still theoretically work.

It may sound pretentious, but I always think that I don't want it to be a book that you read and it's out of date six months later because all the jokes are so topical. I always try to think in the long view; it makes it more interesting, I think.

JC: Do you have a favorite chapter?

BS: Actually, I really like "Hurricane Bob." The one on heart-failure about my family is really good. And then one I like (but probably no one else does), is the bird watching. I wanted to see if I could write about something that I realize no one else has any interest in. I wanted to see if I could write about something that I knew was funny and the characters were funny — that was going to more of a character-driven piece — and make it interesting.

I'm also interested in environmental things and nature, so that's a personal favorite, [even though] I realize that it might not be anybody else's. I liked the one about moving to New York. I think I'm happy with all of them for different reasons. There's one or two that I would wish I had a shot to redo, because now I [would] sort of redo them a little differently. But they're still funny and good. I talked to the editor and he said, "You're just too fussy." My boyfriend Tom said I would be going to the bookstores and try to change the words in the books with a pen. You have to let go at some point.

JC: Have you let go?

BS: No, but I'm getting there. I've let go in the sense that it's published and there's nothing you can do — it's in print. We're getting really good reviews like the *Lambda Book Report* and *Publishers Weekly* and all these good things.

JC: What did Tom think about it?

BS: He really likes it. What's so amazing to me is that [when] I would let him read these essays — and he gave me a lot of advice on different ones — he never asked me to

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cancel anything. Sometimes he would laugh out loud and go, "Oh my God, I can't let the flea-market one ... Or, I'd make a joke about his parents spending thousands of dollars on his acting training, so he could save \$2.50 on a Archie's jelly glass or something; he thought that was hilarious. He really likes it.

JC: Is he supportive?

BS: Yes, he's very supportive. He tells people he thinks [the book] is hilarious. What was good was that he had read all the stories so many times — or most of them — and then, when the book was all done, he read it again and was still laughing.

JC: On the performance side, when it's time for you to face an audience, do you have a special ritual that you go through, or do you say something to yourself mentally to prepare?

BS: Yeah, definitely. I always try to be very focused and sort of think about it — get my head into thinking about the performance, totally. I go over what I'm gonna do. I make sure that I go on stage with a lot of energy — for me — it might not seem like it to someone else, but you know, I'm very low key.

There's no specific lines or anything, but I do go through sort of a little "Don't bother me." Even if it's only like ten or fifteen minutes before I just get my head together and look over my notes. I always keep a little set list of what I'm gonna do. Many times there's one or two new jokes I want to tell, like the newest one I put in last week.

I was thinking about this idea of being politically correct — and I had already talked about that in my act — and then I thought of the next thing to drive straight people crazy will be: "I don't want to be called gay anymore. I want to be called Sodom-American." That's been getting a good laugh. That cracks me up, too. "I'm Sodom-American. You got a problem with that? Don't call me gay!" It's a silly little joke, but you live for your little new joke.

JC: Do you have a mental first-aid kit that you apply if you feel the audience is not responding the way you're expecting them to?

BS: I'll always try to take into account what they're laughing at and maybe how long. If I need to give out a little more energy, I sort of



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juggle things in my head. It's like, [I think] maybe I'll try this. Will they see me? You try different things, and just move to different material.

There are times when you [can] try everything and it doesn't work and other times when it's so easy that it's unbelievable. I've had standing ovations to half the audience walking out. I did a show in St. Louis a few weeks ago in a 700-seat theater and it was the first time I ever got a standing ovation after the set — it was great! But I also performed in Seattle in a 250-seat comedy club and half the audience walk out. I was a straight comedy club. I don't let either one go to my head.

JC: How do you keep yourself motivated?

BS: Every performance is a different show. It's a unique event, or it should be theoretically — you just don't want it to be "there I go, performing again." In Seattle I had no control over [it] so I did the best I could. I actually gave a really good performance, because it made me angry but, still, it was a nightmare. There's no way you can underestimate it.

JC: There's another chapter in the book — the Bird watching chapter — "Ma Nature." There was a line that I wanted to find out if it still rings true? Is your relationship with nature still "a source of amused astonishment."?

BS: Yes. Definitely! The newest one was the one in Santa Fe where I went hiking with those guys. That was sort of a tie-in with that. What have I done recently? I went to Palm Springs with Tom for a weekend in the summer. There was this one nature reserve and I went at dawn--early in the morning. It was nothing particularly amusing, but it was just great.

There was one dead tree with thirty vultures in it sunning their wings as the sun came up. They all turned their heads and look at you like you're lunch or something. I don't do it that often but when I do I always find something interesting.

JC: Why is Hollywood so homophobic?

BS: There definitely is a tendency to say, "All right, he's a gay guy and that's all he can do is gay comedy." In writing it's the

same way. I wrote for Roseanne's sketch show last year and I wrote almost 45 sketches and out of those sketches only three had any gay subject matter. I'm still the gay writer on that show.

What was good about that was that I made friends with straight writers who subsequently hired me for the *MTV Video Awards*. I'm a really good joke writer, and it has nothing to do being gay. Dennis Miller used some of my jokes.

I do think there are opportunities now for more gay and lesbian stories to be told. They're new stories and they're interesting. I have an idea for a movie that I'm going to try to get made, so we'll see.

JC: You mentioned MTV. How was that experience for you?

BS: It was the funniest two weeks. It was really a great job. What was great about it was that they do the *MTV Video Awards* at Radio City Music Hall. In the dress-rehearsal I saw Smashing Pumpkins and Alannis Morisset. They all come in to do their concert and you're sitting there with 25 people in perfect center seats. It was like getting a private concert. The one thing about MTV is kinda hilarious because it's so ... In a weird way it's so serious, but so superficial a thing — it's almost all style over substance.

I was there two weeks ahead of time to write up jokes. They told us (usually three or four writers) to write for the presenters. We knew Dennis Miller was going to be the host, so we all wrote some jokes just to give to him.

The presenters kept changing. We were supposed to have Sylvester Stallone, but he never showed up. You'd give pages and pages to all these celebrities like Jenny McCarthy and Sharon Stone. We each had an area of the stage and our celebrities that we had to deal with; we'd go over the copy with them so they were happy with it. It was a big, glamorous, silly kind of thing. It was fun.


JC: Do you see the gay and lesbian community making progress, not only socially, but in the entertainment business?

BS: Yeah, I do think we're making progress. What's interesting is that everyone said if

Ellen comes out it will probably kill the ratings of the show. The show is one of the best rated shows on ABC right now. It's like, number four in the demographics for the eighteen to forty-nine audience. It's really strong and it's very funny and it's a much better show [now] that she's out. It's not the end of the world and that proves that it doesn't have to be — there's an audience out there for stories about gay people.

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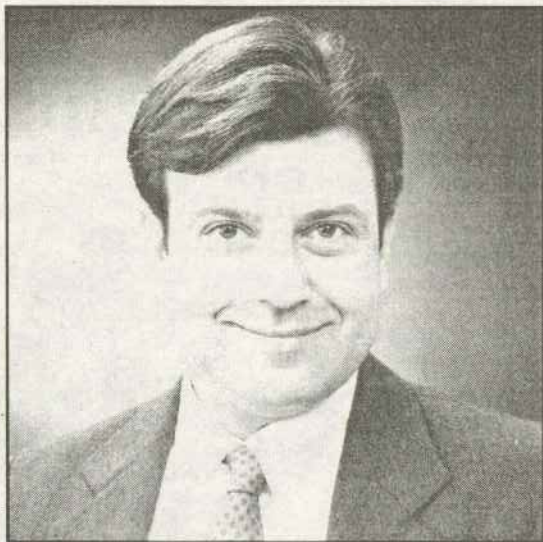
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I think it's about time.

We still have a long way to go on gay marriage and gay youth. All these right-wing fundamentalists think that's horrifying that you're going to teach about homosexuality in schools. I really feel strongly that gay teenagers need information too. There are reports that 25 or 33 percent of those kids commit suicide because of problems relating to their sexual orientation. They need people out there to give them information so they can avoid doing that.

I think it's up to the gay community to keep bringing these things up. Like the gays in the military — we've had setbacks, but at least people are discussing it. I think we have to really speak up front. The more people come out — and you know you influence your friends and your families — I think it makes a big change with everyone coming out to themselves

There are parents now who are members of P-FLAG. A friend of mine told me that her mother started a P-FLAG chapter in their small town in Alabama. That's like the parents are coming out now — the parents of gay children.

In my book I talked about my father telling people "I have a gay son," which, coming from that typical macho guy thing, he would never tell me that he did that. I'm really proud that he did it and it's great. That wouldn't have happened if I hadn't given my parents the opportunity to know about my life.

JC: Do you find that gay males tend to be vain? Is that a preoccupation of gay males?

BS: I don't even need to think

about that. All men are vain. Even the straightest out-of-shape guy takes pride in wearing an expensive three-piece suit. It's just that vanity takes many different forms, and that's OK within boundaries. I sometimes play with how Tom and I are, but if I make any generalizations about gay men, I'm fairly careful — in the book — to say "some gay men." We're a hugely wide, diverse community and I try to avoid *stereotypical* remarks.

Even though Tom and I do go to flea-markets and collect junk, that's us, you know. It's also a significant part of many gay men I know, but there are also many gay men who couldn't give two raps about it. Whenever I try to do anything I try to make it specifically about me. [There may be] one or two generalizations, but...

JC: Do you feel that the stereotypes in Hollywood about gay and lesbian people are becoming less and less, or is it more diverse?

BS: What's bad about when they stereotype is that I find they only do a one-note [picture] and the people are not as interesting as they are in real life. I have different portraits of what I would call *big queens* in my book, but the thing is that in Hollywood, a big queen is this effeminate man and he's usually just one way. It's a very narrow kind of portrayal. I make this distinction that being a big queen is about having flamboyant enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the thing that's off-putting. It's like someone who could get so excited about anything from Madonna to their body, or whatever.

That's interesting and those are real characters. Even drag

queens are presented one way and usually they're more interesting in real life. I like that a drag queen can be totally into Marilyn Monroe and maybe smokes pot all the time and has a eating disorder. It's just that [Hollywood] is too one-note and it's not interesting and it's unbelievable to me.

JC: You mention in the book that there are queens that are non-gay, like the people who worship Elvis Presley.

BS: The people who like Elvis are *big queens* about Elvis. They're the flip side of the gay men who worship Judy Garland — and to update it — Madonna. It's just the same. My feeling is that if you're worshipping some dead celebrity, you've got a little problem no matter what your sexual orientation is. So get a life (laughter)!

JC: Can you tell me something about yourself that nobody else knows? And, maybe if your mother would pick up this interview and read it she would say, "Oh my God, I didn't know that about him."

BS: Let me see. Well, I can't give you my deepest dark secrets. How about I think about sex a lot more than people would assume I do?

JC: Is there a lot of compromising in your line of work?

BS: No. It's the one great thing about stand-up, you write the jokes, you control 'em, so that's great. That's what I love about stand-up, you're the writer, producer and performer. As for the book, we definitely edited the book and I rewrote stuff. Ultimately the editor kept saying, "It's your book."

I worked for Roseanne on *Saturday Night Special* and while there were a few things that sort of went beyond my control, there was one sketch that got on the very last show; by then we knew we were canceled. It was a film parody called *Republican Pictures Presents: I Was a Teenage Homosexual*, and it's done in black and white like a 1950s horror movie. A kid in high school is in the school laband he's experimenting with homosexuality. He drinks a potion and he turns gay! It's totally over the top and it's done like a coming

attraction.

That came out with no compromises. I think it's really funny and the performances were great. That was good and I was glad to get something out of it that I felt was exactly what I wanted. You can do that in TV, so I do see that being possible.

JC: Do you have a favorite performer that you've learned from?

BS: I loved Woody Allen and Lilly Tomlin in high school and college as stand-up comics. In a weird way I've learned a lot more from watching my friends perform. It's just how they bring their energy to something or tell a story. I think they've been a bigger influence on me in the long run. I have a lot of friends who are standup comics. It's not that you copy them, but you can learn story-telling techniques or just technical things that are interesting.

I have a friend Judy Gold, who's a comic. She always gives 100 percent for every performance. She's great and I've seen her perform a zillion different times. When she feels sick or somethings not going well with her life — I mean, we're friends — she still gives a great show. I admire that.

JC: What's your philosophy? Do you have a philosophy of life?

BS: I was telling someone else that — you get into all your religious values — I try to treat people well and fairly, but sometimes I don't. One sort of saving grace for me — one trait I have that makes me think I can be a good writer is that I'm curious. I'm curious about a lot of different things, about different people.



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TAP DOGS At The Riverside Theater

Tap Dogs, the irreverent, rocking theatrical experience that turns tap upside down on an industrial, construction-site set, will play a limited engagement of 8 performances only at Milwaukee's Riverside Theater from December 16 to December 21, 1997.

Tap Dogs has become an international award-winning sensation since its premier in Australia in 1995, having played sold-out engagements in over 100 cities around the world. *USA Today* announced "Tap Dogs and unleashed genre." *The Los Angeles Times* claimed "few dance experiences are as passionately connected to the here and now," and New York's *Time Out Magazine* called them "a high-voltage tap

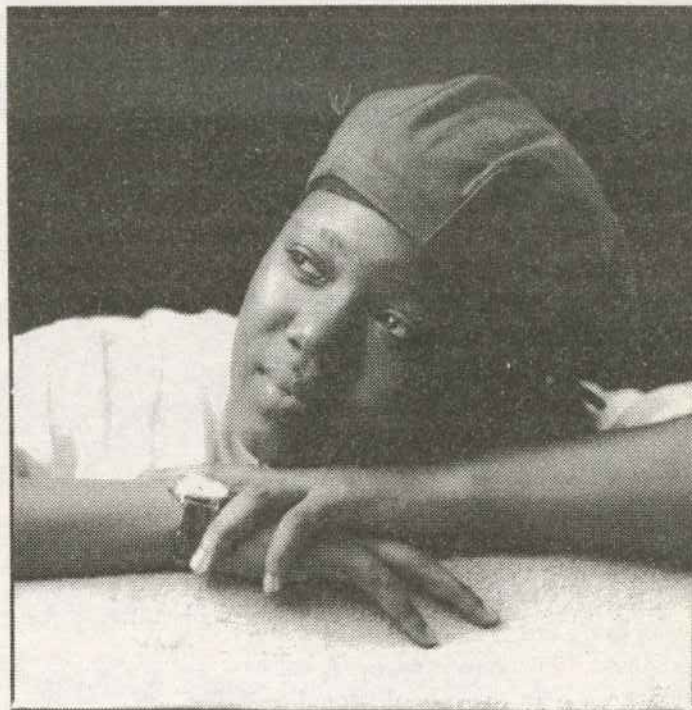
Gay Youth Featured in New Photography Book

In Adam Mastoon's recently released first book *The Shared Heart*, we find "a stirring combination of photography and narrative [that] joins exquisite portraits of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people with powerful stories about their lives."

There are athletes, painters, class presidents and performing artists who recount experiences that are as diverse as their backgrounds. "One young man recounts his religious family's struggle to accept his gay identity."

A young Asian female tells of the formidable task she goes through to reconcile her bisexuality with her Asian-American heritage. "Others tell of long afternoons in the library devouring books that assured them that they were not alone."

Elton John says, "*The Shared Heart* is a celebration of young people facing the challenges of growing up lesbian, gay, and bisexual and living empowered lives. Through this book, we begin to know these extraordinary young adults as human beings rather than as stereotypes or statistics..." This book invokes a celebration of self-respect and pride that comes from recognizing and being who we are. (William Morrow publishers, ISBN: 0-688-14951-6, \$25).



—Dominique, age 17. Photo: Adam Mastoon

sensation. A hell of a good time."

Tap Dogs made its North American debut in Montreal in August, 1996, and played to enthusiastic audiences and critical acclaim on a limited tour of North America prior to New York City, where it opened at the Union Square Theater in March of 1997. A parent company continues to perform there. Dien Perry earned a 1997 Drama Desk Award nomination for "Best Choreography" and the show has recently been honored with a 1997 Obie Award.

The show was created and choreographed by Dien Perry, and features a cast of the best tap dancers from Australia and the U.S. Tickets range from \$14.50 to \$38.50, and can be purchased in person at the Riverside Theater Box Office and at all TicketMaster locations. Groups of 15 or more should call (414) 276-4545.

Milwaukee Chamber Theater Giftwraps "Beyond The Fringe"

Milwaukee Chamber Theater continues its 1997/1998 season with the timeless, hilarious British comedy *Beyond The Fringe* December 6, 1997 through January 4,



From Left: Chris Flieller, Bo Johnson, Mondy Carter.
Photo by Tom Fritz Studios

1998 in the Studio Theater of the Broadway Theater Center. The cast includes known Milwaukee comic actors Chris Flieller, Bo Johnson, Mondy Carter and Jack Forbes Wilson.

Beyond The Fringe launched the careers

of Alan Bennett, Peter Cook, Johnathan Miller, and Dudley Moore. They created the hilarious revue for the 1960 Edinburgh Arts Festival, and later starred in the opening in London's Fortune Theater in 1961. and premiered in New York in 1962. The play has inspired such creations as *Monty Python*, *Saturday Night Live*, and *In Living Color*, among many others.

Montgomery Davis, who will direct this

production, describes it as "a wacky and witty kaleidoscope of high and low comedy that transcends its University origins." Ticket prices range from \$24 to \$49, and are available at the Broadway Theater Center box office, 158 North Broadway or by calling (414) 291-7800. \$15 student tickets, \$2 senior discounts and group rates are also available.

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UWM Theater Presents "You Can't Take It With You"

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Professional Theater Training Program in the School of Fine Arts will present one of the most popular American comedies ever written, George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's *You Can't Take It With You* from December 4 through December 20 in the Fine Arts Theater, 2400 East Kenwood Blvd.

Winner of the Pulitzer prize for drama in 1936, the play tells the story of young lovers from two very different families: Alice of the bohemian and eccentric Sycamores, and Tony of the straight-laced and proper Kirbys. Their romance blossoms in spite of fireworks explosions, G-

men on the prowl and other screwball antics. Amid the laughter, this sweetly romantic work will remind audiences of the importance of following their dreams.

Tickets are \$16 adults, \$12 students for Friday and Saturday evenings, and \$14 adults, \$10 students for week nights and matinees. For tickets and more information call the Fine Arts Box Office (414) 229-4308. There will be a First Friday Talkback after the December 5 performance.

Cream City Chorus "Home for the Holidays"

Traditional Christmas music is the fare at the Wisconsin Cream City Chorus' holiday concert this year. "Home for the Holidays" will take you back to memories

Florentine Opens Season With La Boheme

The Florentine Opera, Milwaukee's grand opera company, will open its 1997/1998 Season with Puccini's "blockbuster" opera, *La Boheme* for four performances on November 21, 22, 23, and 25, 1997 in the newly renovated Uhlein Hall of the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts.

One of the world's most performed and adored operas of all time, *La Boheme* is considered a masterful opera that depicts the life and loves of a band of bohemians in mid-19th century Paris. On a freezing Christmas Eve, Mimi and Rodolpho meet and fall in love while they and their bohemian friends struggle with poverty, love and death. The warmth and fervor of the artist's garret, the Cafe Momus and the Barrier d'Enfer all come alive on stage in this magnificent opera.

To meet the high demand for tickets, the Florentine Opera has added a non-subscription performance on Tuesday, November 25 at 7:30 p.m. *La Boheme* will be sung in Italian with English supertitles projected above the stage for all performances. Tickets range from \$20 to \$90 and can be purchased by calling the Marcus Center box office at (414) 273-7206.



of voices raised in praise and celebration, including many of the standard and most beautiful songs of the Christmas season. The concert marks the first major performance under the direction of Ken McMonagle, who assumed the role of Music Director in September.

"Home for the Holidays" will be held at 3 p.m., Sunday, December 7 at St. James Episcopal Church, 833 W. Wisconsin Avenue. Tickets are \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door and are available at BESTD Clinic, M&M Club, and AfterWords Bookstore. Tickets are also available from chorus members or by contacting the chorus office at (414) 344-WCCC; or by mail to PO Box 1488, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1488.

Skylight Opera Theater Presents *BoyGirlBoyGirl*

The Skylight Opera Company Theater announces that the Miller Cabaret Sries will present *BoyGirlBoyGirl*. This vocal quartet is comprised of Milwaukee singer/actors L. Thomas Lueck, Jack Forbes Wilson, Laura Neuser and Michaela Chaconas. They [erforma a wide-ranging musical repertoire spanning the decades of the 1930's and 1940's to the present day.

Piano accompaniment will be performed by Josh Schmidt. Audiences can enjoy *BoyGirlBoyGirl* after each Friday and Saturday performance of *Gus and Dolls* which runs November 28 through December 21. *BoyGirlBoyGirl* is sponsored by Miller Brewing Company and is free and open to the public.

Trading Post to Metropolis: Milwaukee County's First 150 Years

A must-have publication for Milwaukee history enthusiasts, *Trading Post to Metropolis: Milwaukee County's First 150 Years*, is once again available at the Milwaukee County Historical Society. This 420 page book has an extensive index and

100 photos. It sells for \$18, plus tax.

This publication describes the history of Milwaukee County's growth from a fur-trading center to a modern urban metropolis. It is edited by Ralph Adermann, and is composed of six sections written by local scholars and historians deeply interested in Milwaukee County history and metropolitan problems.

This valuable reference volume, first

published in 1987, commemorates the County's 1985 Sesquicentennial observance.

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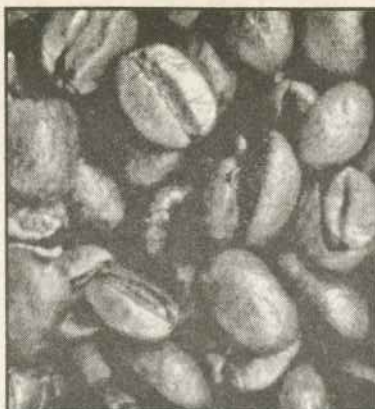
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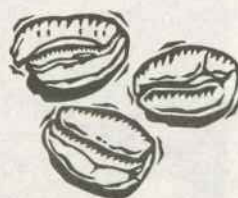
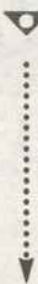
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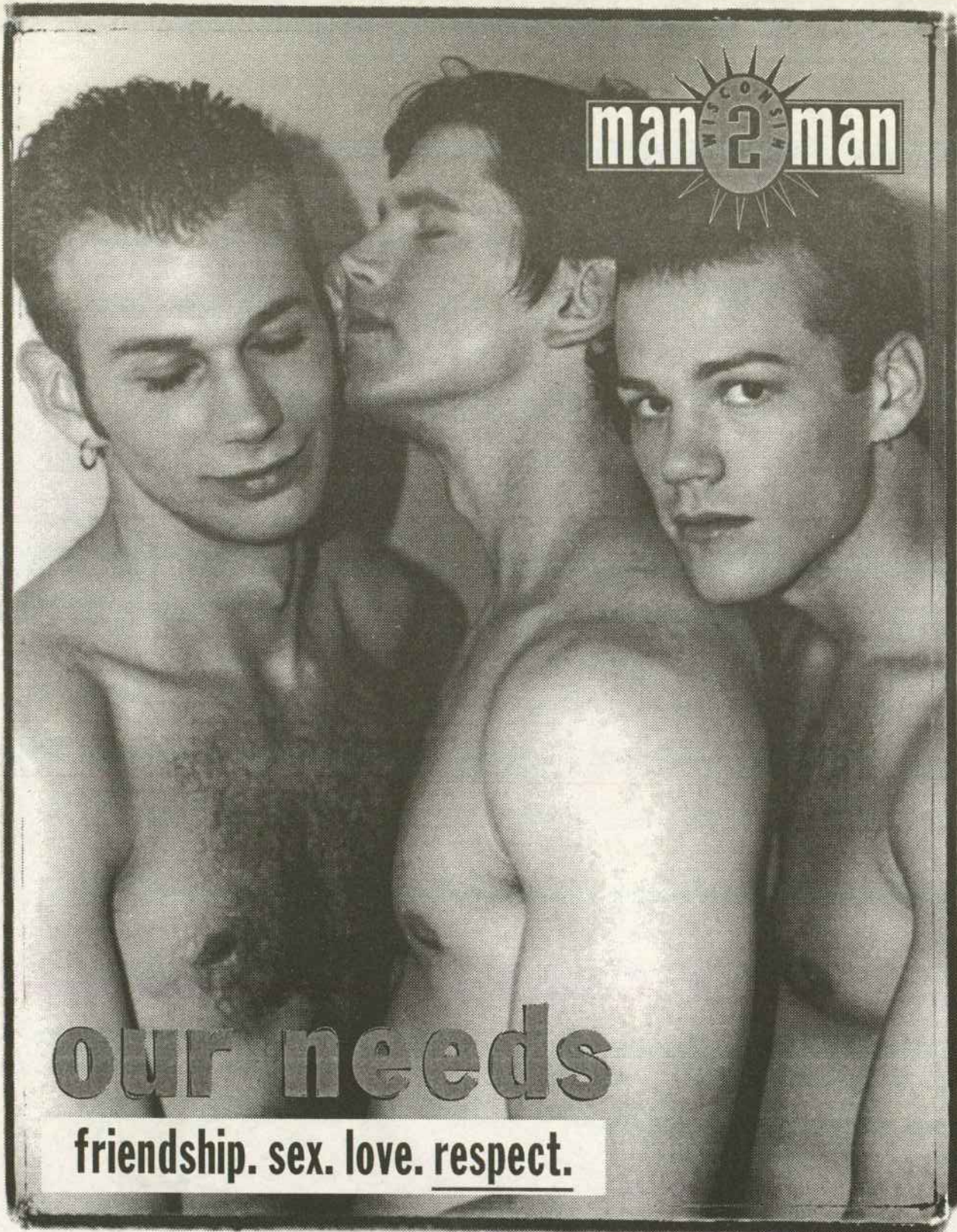


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2. True or False: I am often mistaken for kd lang.

3. True or False: Suzanne Westenhoefer loves cheese.

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4. The one thing I will never do on a first date is....

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5. The best advice I ever gave someone is...

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6. The most important television program today is (and why)....

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7. The best thing about visiting Milwaukee is....

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11. I would rather work with...

- a) Ellen
- b) Rosie O'Donnell
- c) Janet Reno
- d) Barbara Stanwyck
- e) Other:

I MEAN EXCEPT THAT SHE IS DEAD.

12. I never eat...

- a) meat
- b) eggs
- c) leftovers
- d) with my hands
- e) Other:

SEAFOOD OF ANY KIND... ICK!!

13. The most pressing issue in the world today is...

- a) Breast Cancer
- b) Homophobia
- c) My Career
- d) Kate Mulgrew's new hair-do
- e) Other:

IS CANDACE BERGEN GAY.

14. I get most of my news from...

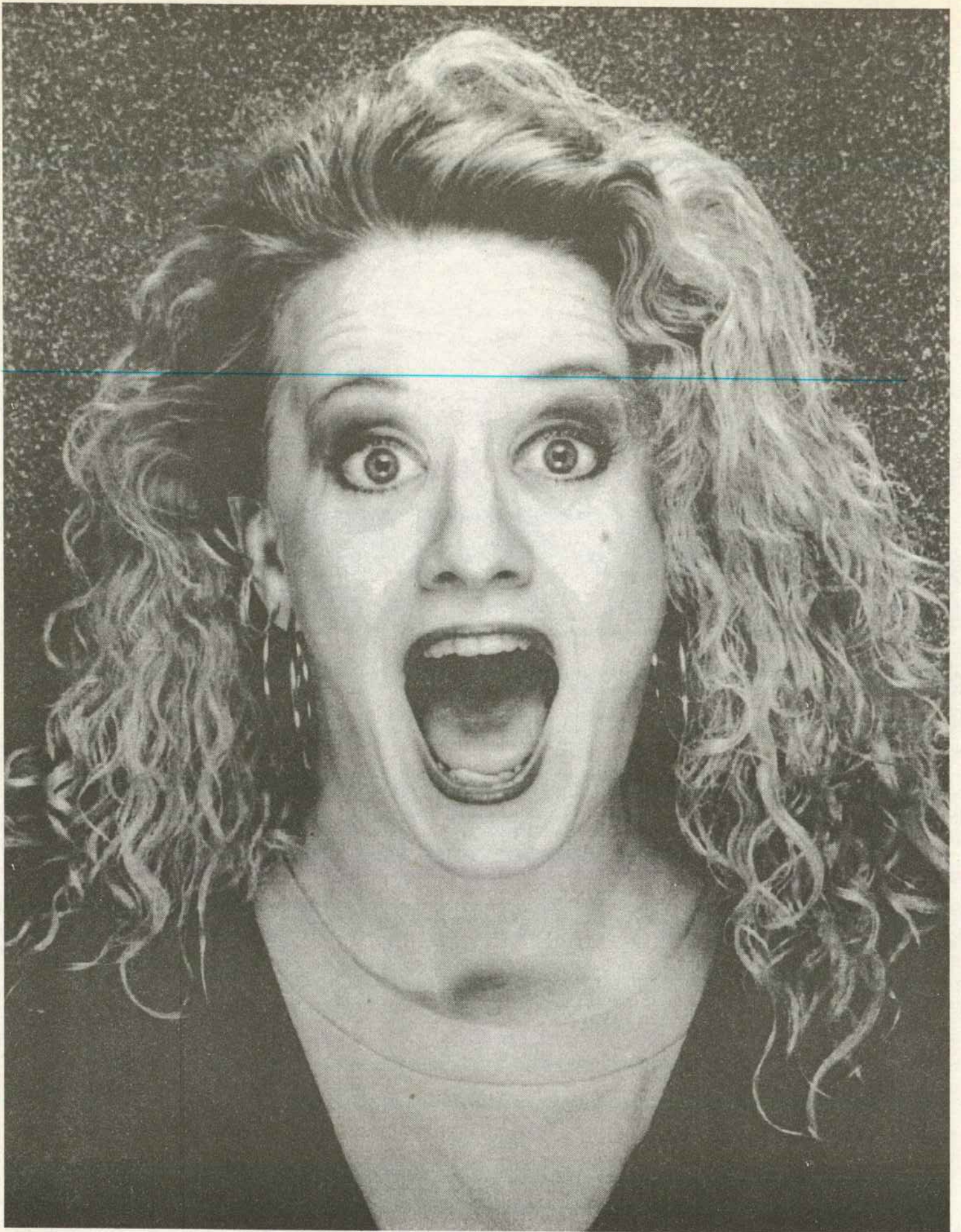
- a) Television
- b) The Advocate
- c) The Internet
- d) Q-Voice Magazine
- e) Other:

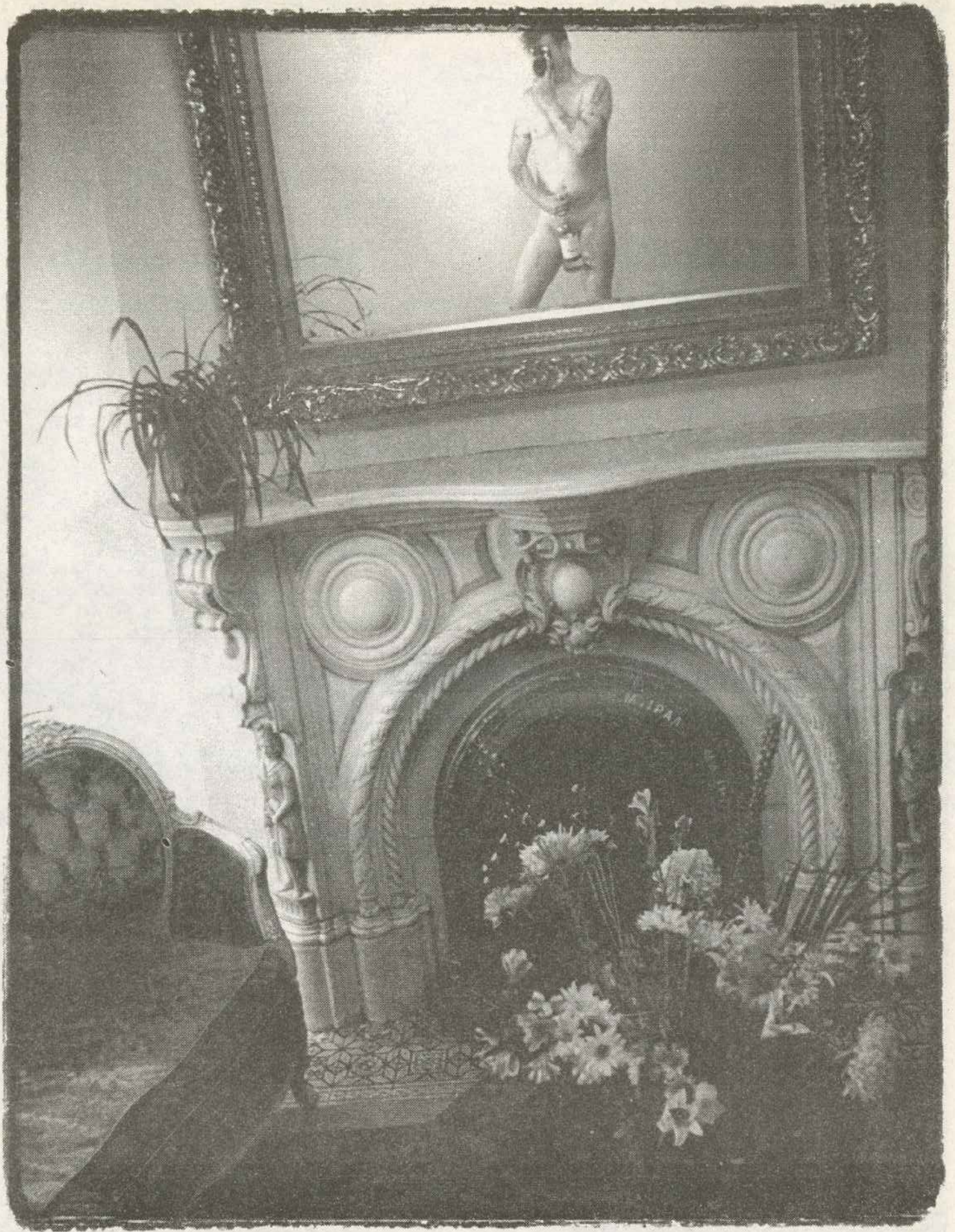
MY GIRLFRIEND WHO LIVES FOR TOM BROKAW @ NBC.

15. Please draw a self-portrait in the space below:



Comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer will perform at Milwaukee's Centennial Hall at 733 North 8th Street in Milwaukee on Saturday, November 22 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$19 at the door.





New York's Hotel Chelsea holds a long tradition for sheltering writers, musicians and artists. Mark Twain slept here, as did Aaron Copeland and Jimi Hendrix. Seeking both history and ambiance, Waswo spends the weekend in a suite rumored to have once housed Janis Joplin. Did Sid Vicious kill his girlfriend in this very room? Has Madonna been between these sheets?

Gritty Grandeur

Just last night I was chain-mouthing Marlboroughs and sucking Pinot Grigio straight from the bottle. No wonder I never make the "A" list on the cocktail party circuit. This morning there is an empty bottle, a full ash tray, and a throbbing headache.

The telephone is ringing somewhere. Reluctantly I let warm air escape from under warm sheets. I'm standing chilled and naked as I answer the phone, a streak of sunlight pouring in on crumpled blankets. It amazes me that I could have been sleeping in such bright light.

It's the desk clerk. His voice is both apologetic and firm.

"I'm very sorry sir, but there are two prop stylists from the *Rosie O'Donnell Show* here to measure your room. If you don't mind, they'll need to come up in a few minutes. They're shooting a segment on Monday."

I hesitate. Looking around the room I see strewn clothes, messed sheets, empty bottles and dirty glasses. Tommy isn't in bed. There is the sound of running water coming from the bath.

"Give us ten minutes." I reply.

I pull on trousers and hobble to pull back the shower curtain.

"What?" Tommy asks incredulously.

"Prop stylists!" I repeat.

It takes a few moments for us to grasp reality. We are at the Hotel Chelsea, and anything can happen.

I fly around dumping ash trays, clearing tables, and straightening beds. The blinds of the bay window are pulled, and the Hudson River is seen glistening between concrete towers and bill-

boards. Tommy has draped on his robe and sits blank-faced at the edge of the bed.

There is a knock on the door and a hotel manager enters with a bearded man and a smartly-dressed woman. They thank us for allowing the intrusion, then pull out tape measures, and busily start measuring windows. The furniture is appraised, with the bearded man making swift notes on pads of paper.

"We'll have to get rid of these blinds and use the sheers," the smartly-dressed woman announces. "Can we get that leopard skin couch into this room? I think it would look great with the fireplace."

"This vanity table is magnificent," the bearded man asserts.

"Is this the same one Madonna used? Rosie's going to love it!"

The hotelier raises his head in a slight nod. The prop stylists jot down a few additional notes, thank us once more, and make their exit.

Tommy still sits a bit dazed on the bed. "Well, I've never been woken up like *that* before!"

The Hotel Chelsea seems to creep into the biographies of nearly every creative personage who has ever spent time in Manhattan. Built in 1882 as an elegant residential hotel for artists, it was once the tallest building in New York. Renters were enticed by ten-room apartments with stain glass windows, fireplaces, mahogany cupboards and thirteen-foot ceilings. Its red brick facade and florid iron balconies still form an imposing presence on West 23rd Street.

During the Depression the grand suites of the Chelsea were cut

Story and Photo by Waswo

into smaller rooms for the housing of transients. The hotel developed a reputation for seedy grandeur. By the 1960's it had become, in the words of Patricia Morrisroe, "a psychedelic Coney Island for creative geniuses and freaks."

Rock musicians have adored the thick walls that allow for noisy composing. Jimi Hendrix, John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Janis

Joplin, and Sid Vicious all called the hotel home. Joni Mitchell's popular song *Chelsea Morning* was composed in one of the suites. More recently Jon Bon Jovi has written *Chelsea at Midnight*.

Virgil Thomson composed *Lord Byron*, the first American opera, while staying at the hotel. Playwright Arthur Miller enjoyed the casual comfort of the Chelsea. Reportedly, he

had become tired of the pretention at the Plaza. He disliked feeling like he had to put on a tie just to pick up his mail.

Struggling rock poet Patti Smith once carried her deathly ill boyfriend, Robert Mapplethorpe, into the lobby of the Chelsea. Begging hotel manager Stanley Bard to allow them free rent in exchange for artwork, they were given a small room. The soon to be famous odd couple made some of their first important connections within the Chelsea's lobby.

Today, there are 250 units that consist of some 400 separate rooms. The Hotel Chelsea is one of the few hotels in New York that cater to both residential and transient customers. There are an estimated five hundred people in the building at any given time.

Vestiges of the hotel's gilded age are still to be found: a magnificent dark-paneled lobby complete with mammoth fireplace, a grand ironwork staircase that rises ten floors, and the occasional stain glass window, marble fireplace, or mahogany cabinet.

Tommy and I had reserved a small room with balcony. Upon our arrival we were told that "a Russian entertainer" refused to vacate the room, and consequently we had been "bumped-up" to a premier suite. The suite was more expensive, but was given to us at a bargain rate.

The desk clerk made reassurances as to the room's value. "Madonna filmed in this room, gentlemen, as did Isabella Rossellini. Janis Joplin once lived in it."

The suite consists of kitchen, bedroom, bath, guest bed, and huge living area centered around a marble fireplace. Gorgeous antique furniture mingles with oddly-painted rock-and-roll tables. It very well seems like a place Janis Joplin could have once called home.

Stanley Bard can't help but name-drop. He has worked at the Hotel Chelsea for nearly forty years, and has managed the venerable institution for over thirty. "We probably have the most intellectual clientele of any hotel in the world," he states proudly. "Almost every room has housed a person of world-renown at one time or another."

Bard looks thinly energetic behind a mas-

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sive wooden desk. His hair is slicked back and he sits erect in an immaculate grey suit. As if looking for clues, he scrutinizes my tape recorder with dark eyes. Above us, an elaborately painted ceiling retreats beneath a century-thick skin of nicotine.

"My father use to run this hotel. My mother would drag me down here to see him. I feel like I've been a part of this hotel my entire life. I could talk for weeks about the Chelsea Hotel!

"First of all it is a literary landmark. People like Mark Twain, Eugene O'Neill, Dylan Thomas, O'Henry, Edger Lee Masters ... they all lived and worked here. Contemporaries like Arthur Miller and William Burroughs loved this hotel. Arthur C. Clark wrote *2001* and *2010* here."

Bard's hands chop the air in excited punctuation. As the litany of Hotel Chelsea luminaries continues, he extends his fingers as if keeping count. When Stanley Bard drops names it can sound like a cascade of marbles falling on a hardwood floor.

"In the old days we had people from the artworld like Sargent and Arthur Dove. Willem DeKooning stayed here. More recently we've had people like Julian Schnabel, Rauschenberg, Christo. Larry Rivers is a good friend of mine. I was at a show of his just the other night. It just opened at Marborough Gallery.

"The people who stay here are not just guests of the hotel. They are very dear friends. Andy Warhol was a friend of mine. He used this hotel to film *Chelsea Girls* because *Vivre* and the other actresses were living here. *Chelsea Girls* is just one of many movies shot in this hotel.

"Woody Allen has used the hotel quite a bit for films. Christian Slater did films here. *Bed of Roses* was the last, I think.

"Jane Fonda was staying here while she filmed *Klute*. She called herself *Chelsea* in one of her films. She took that name from the hotel, and the film worked to popularize it. Hillary Clinton's daughter Chelsea is named after this hotel. Whether she's aware of that, I don't know!"

The Hotel Chelsea's front lobby is a minor treasure trove of art. Next to the fireplace a huge Larry Rivers canvas competes for attention among equally impressive paintings and sculpture.

The ten-floor staircase is lined with paintings. The Chelsea Hotel has had a tradition of occasionally accepting artwork in lieu of rent.

"I've been collecting my entire life. I know the entire artworld. Karl Appel, who use to stay here, just came by. He was looking to put up a few of his friends. The nice part is that people always leave with a good feeling. Even if they have moved up to larg-

er studios and apartments, they continue to use this hotel to board their friends."

A newspaper clipping hangs framed near the front desk. The history of the Chelsea is given in detail, but large strokes of red pen blot out selected paragraphs. The murder of Nancy Spungen by Sex Pistol Sid Viscous remains, for Stanley Bard, a blood red splotch on his

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NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

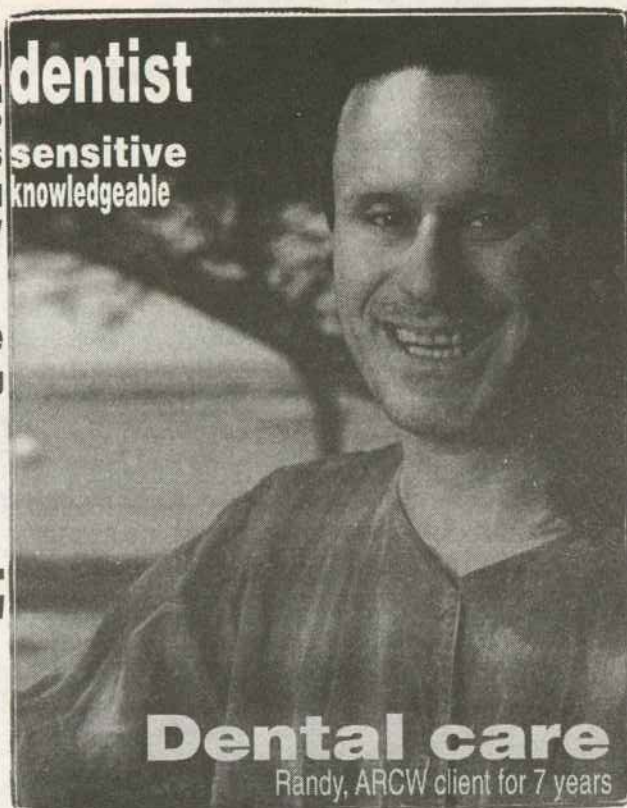
STATE _____

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establishment's reputation.

Bard steadfastly refuses to give room numbers. "People are always asking for specific rooms. It becomes a problem. Most of the numbers reported in the media are wrong, anyway."

But not knowing room numbers means a guest can imagine the stabbing death of Nancy Spungen most anywhere. "Sid stayed in a lot of different rooms when he was here," says Bard. "After the failed double-suicide I banned him from the hotel. He later committed suicide in the East Village."

I return to the Janis Joplin suite, only to be stopped at the door. A burly Japanese man dressed in a dark suit is stretching out a hand. His hair is shoulder length, and there is an intense look in his eye. The door to an adjoining room is open, and the smell of oil paints reeks in the hallway.

His name is Hiroya. A thirty-two year old artist who lives and works in the Hotel Chelsea. His tiny room only holds a bed, a sink, and a small dresser. Canvases are stacked to the ceiling, and drips of paint adhere to the carpet like stalagmites.

He explains that he has lived in the Chelsea for nearly a year.

"I use to have a studio in TriBeCa, but it became too expensive."

He eagerly shows me his work. One by one large black compositions are dragged into the sunlit stairwell for me to see. Dark work, textured and inscrutable.

"I make ceremony paintings. In my paintings I am inside my casket. I am already dead."

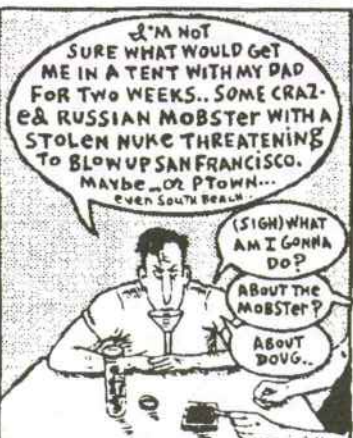
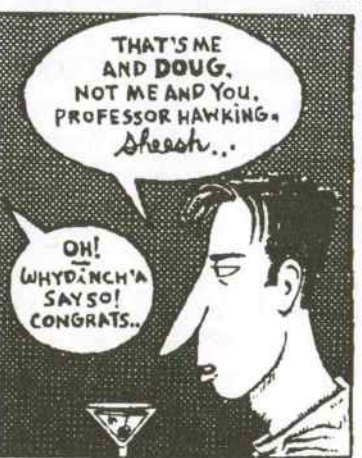
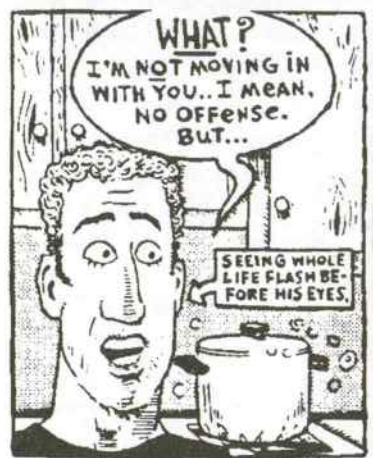
I nod, as if I understand, pretending hard not to appear puzzled. Is Hiroya crazy? A genius? Am I perhaps standing next to a future celebrity?

Back in the suite, I discover a fresh bouquet of flowers sitting upon the cocktail table that stands in front of the fireplace. Tommy has bought the assorted blooms across the street, and has carefully arranged them. He is smiling and busily writing at the vanity table. He quietly waits for me to notice the floral gift. His grey hair and contented face are reflected by three ornate mirrors. Madonna he's not. But angelic he is. ▼

The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green

Fishing for Answers...

The Guys Consider Our Hero's Current State of Marital Disarray



by Eric Orner

Joni James

by Jim Andrews

"The most original girl singer who ever made a record."

"The singer whose songs the world falls in love to."

"The most exciting singer performing today."

"Who? Never heard of her."

In her remarkable journey as one of the top record-sellers of all time—more than a hundred million albums and singles sold worldwide—; as an international concert, theater and supperclub performer; and as the singer of dozens of Gold and Platinum record hits, among them some of the most significant popular songs of the second half of the century, Joni James has heard it all.

Recently mostly she hears how wonderful she is and how much she means to people's lives. Or she hears that someone has never heard of her.

That's the way it goes for Joni, mostly because after two decades as M-G-M Records' top star, as the best-selling recording artist on military posts around the world, as a constantly-in-motion international performing attraction, she quietly exited show business to care for an ailing husband and rear their two young children.

Joni's nearly two decades as a wife, mother and neighbor in a beautiful French Normandy-styled chateau in Beverly Hills, California (the neighbors included Lucille Ball, Jack Benny, Ira Gershwin, Jimmy Stewart and Rosemary Clooney), were years she enjoyed every bit as much as those at the pinnacle of show business fame.

She and her husband-career director-conductor Anthony Acquaviva became beloved as normal people in a glamorous and prestigious but abnormal community. Their Italian dinner dances, with Joni

doing the cooking for an entire week and the Acquaviva children MichelAngeo and Angela Mia presenting roses to the ladies as they entered, became coveted invitations ("What did I do wrong?" one Hollywood grande dame asked Joni once, "We haven't gotten an invitation lately").

Those years living the quiet life resulted in several generations of music lovers not knowing who Joni James was, while several other generations continued to covet her recordings—which on the resale market had climbed to about \$100 for a mint copy—, wonder where she had gone, and patiently wait for her reappearance.

That reappearance finally came a decade ago, when Tony Acquaviva died, still a vital artist and businessman, after 20 years battling constant medical emergencies resulting from devastating diabetes. Though Joni had not thought of making music again, the continuing interest in her recordings—the masters of which she and Acquaviva visionarily had acquired from M-G-M — and pleading inquiries about when she would be performing again inspired her to emerge from private life.

And now she is back, looking and sounding much the same, enjoying terrific response to the albums she has released on compact disc both in the United States and abroad, all remastered in digital stereo under her personal supervision and including the justly-famed brilliant cover art and photography which accompanied her original albums. And she is performing here, there and everywhere to packed houses and standing ovations. Her appearance last year at Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center was chosen New York City's Concert Event of 1996.

James is singing the hits which have sold millions and millions of records world-

wide—"Why Don't You Believe Me," "Have You Heard," "Your Cheatin' Heart," "My Love, My Love," "How Important Can It Be" (currently featured in the movie "L.A. Confidential" and a major attraction on the successful soundtrack C.D.), "There Goes My Heart" and many, many others—but also singing some of the newer ballads she has found worthwhile. And doing an "after hours" jazz set showing a whole different side of her talents. She also is recording new music.

Though James has never thought of herself as making a comeback—"I never felt I was away," she reflects—she is delighted to find her concert audiences include not only her eternally faithful family of fans but new friends too—Yuppies, Generation Xers, college students and even some teenagers. Her international fan club headquartered in Chicago includes thousands of members from 9 to 99.

"It all overwhelms me," she says. "It certainly is something no one could have planned. I love the feeling at concerts of sharing music we love with longtime fans and new friends."

She tends to perform with young musicians on stage with her, explaining, "It's never been in my nature to be nostalgic or look back. I'm always lookin' for something new. Even as a child, I tended to bore easily, and I still am always searching for the next innovation."

As a child, growing up in Chicago, Joni learned early how to survive and triumph over adversity. Her real name is Joan Carmella Babbo and she comes from a large and loving Italian-American clan which still brings her back home regularly for birthdays, weddings and just-spending-time-together. Her father died when she was 4-1/2, leaving two younger children

and another on the way, and her petite and pretty mother Mary reared the little family with little money but a lot of love.

James attended Catholic schools on charity wearing hand-me-downs and got her first taste of show business at age 9 in a Chicago Park District summer program. Her first love was ballet, and she pursued it with a vengeance. Repeatedly offered vocal scholarships she was perplexed and frustrated. But eventually she did become a singer, famous for her uniquely intimate voice and confessional style and for not only performing a song brilliantly but truly living it.

Her performances in Milwaukee and Wisconsin go back to the years before she began making records, when she worked at summer resorts and in small clubs. After she seemingly overnight became the top record seller in the nation she appeared at the top theaters and fairs. Her fans, legendary in show business for their loyalty and protective attitude, were thrilled to find that as her star rose higher and higher Joni remained the same unspoiled, thoroughly natural girl.

"It's been said I'm in show business but not of it, and I take that as a compliment," she says.

James has always enjoyed a large gay following, right from the beginning of her record career when neither the word or the subject was mentioned publicly. Having been involved in the arts since her preteen years, gay people were part of her natural landscape, both unremarkable to have as friends and unremarked upon.

Though an international traveler and having homes in New York City, Chicago, California and Florida, tiny brown-haired, brown-eyed James clearly has remained a Midwestern girl, thoroughly unaffected and with no hidden agendas and a Lady with a capital "L." Journalists are forever trying to discover the secret of her success, or what makes her so unique as a person and an artist, or what makes her tick. "All I can say is what you see is what you get," she says. "I guess I've never been very good at hiding who I am or what I am thinking. My life truly has been an open book."

Now that book has a new chapter. She recently married a longtime friend, Gen. Bernard A. Schriever, USAF Ret., one of the authors of the United States space program, and they are at home in a beautiful estate in Washington, D.C. The marriage doesn't mean she will disappear again, as Schriever has been of the most significant influences in Joni James going back on stage again. Besides recording and completing a highly-anticipated autobiography, James is currently scheduling a string of important concerts internationally.

Everywhere she appears long lines of fans form to greet her. Each person has his or her own story about the place of Joni James and her music in their lives.

"I find it truly an awesome responsibility to live up to people's expectations," James reflects, "and I hold that responsibility close to my heart."





Another Barbra Book

Barry Dennen Tells All & Then Some

Interview by William Attewell

Lately, Barbra Streisand seems to have everything she could possibly need. Her new CD, "Higher Ground" has just hit the streets, her romance with James Brolin remains in high gear, and then, of course there's another new book. Barry Dennen, a gay man, lived and slept with Barbra Streisand during her early career in New York City. Recently, I spoke with Barry about Barbra, and why the world needs another Barbra book.

WA: Have you seen *In & Out*?

BD: Yes.

WA: And how many times have you seen *Funny Lady*?

BD: I had to sit through *Funny Lady* once (laughter). It's so over the top, and it seems to borrow an awful lot from *Funny Girl*, don't you think. I'm not a Barbra person. It's just that very early on she and I lived together, and had a little affair. I put together her first club act for her, which got her going.

WA: What do you think your book [has] that the other books on Barbra don't have in [them]?

BD: My book isn't a biography. It's a memoir, and it only treats the few years that we were together.

WA: So why did you write it?

BD: In 1992 Jim Spada's biography of Barbra came out. Jim's an old pal of mine. *Vanity Fair* printed an excerpt and it was all about my relationship with Barbra.

When I saw it I thought — you know — I should be writing about this. I know all the

stories, and all the little anecdotes that I've really never told to anybody.

About the same time, Barbra gave me a series of long telephone calls. She told me she didn't have any money. I said, "I know how you can make a lot of money — do concerts." She got very frightened and said, "No, no, no, no. I can't do that."

I talked to her for hours and hours about doing concerts. I told her they could put up security gates, and no one would be able to get near her, nobody would have a chance of attacking her or hurting her in any way. Then we talked about her stage fright, and I talked her through that. I said, "Yeah, you're gonna have it, you'll have stage fright." And then I said, "But ... the minute you get out there you're gonna love it."

A few months later she announced her famous New Year's Eve Concert in Las Vegas at the MGM Grand, I think it was. I thought, gee, this all feels very familiar. This feels like [it did] back in '59-'60, when I first met her, and I was giving her all this advice, and my fix on what she should do. Those two events combined inside me to determine me to write my own book.

WA: Barbra got her idea for her concert series from you?

BD: Not completely. I imagine a lot of people had talked to Barbra about singing again. I can't honestly say that I was the one who did that.

I think I was the first one who said, "Now wait a minute. Let's go through this step by step, and let's talk about what you're frightened about and let's and how you can get over that." I mean, I took a *lot* of time talking to her about how she was going to be feeling. I said, "Yeah, you are gonna be feeling that way; that's very scary. There's probably is some nut out there who wants to be the man who killed Barbra Streisand — like the man who killed John Lennon."

She said, "You're scaring me. You're scaring me." And I said, "Well, Barbra, let's face this. What can we do to make sure nobody with a weapon gets near you?"

That's when I came up with the idea of using the security gates and all that shit. I don't know whether the concerts were coincidental, or not.

WA: Is there anything that you wish you hadn't included in the book?

BD: I went back and forth and wondered about whether I should include the sexual sit-

uations. I was certainly in love with Barbra, and I think she was in love with me.

I decided that it would be dishonest if I didn't put them in. I made them as discrete as I could.

WA: When I read [in your book] that Barbra said this and said that, — I know I can't remember what somebody said ten days ago. When you quote Barbra as saying, "How are my tits?" I sort of go, gee...

BD: Well, obviously I didn't tape record all our conversations while we were living together. I remember the incidents very, very clearly in terms of the feeling of them, and the emotionality of them and what happened during them. I remember all of that. I would just try and go back, and close my eyes, and see if I couldn't hear her voice.

WA: How is your relationship with Barbra now?

BD: The last time we spoke was on May 1st when my book had to go to press, and I wanted her to give me [permission] to use some quotations to be included in the book. I didn't want to paraphrase her. I thought the way she wrote was really charming and there wasn't anything romantic or purulent in them; it was really all about work.

That all became the last chapter of the book. That's the last time I heard from Barbra. I doubt that I'll hear from her again.

WA: Why do you say that?

BD: Because I think she is cheap. They used to say that Greta Garbo would drop her friends whenever they said anything about her to the press. I can remember Katherine Hepburn dropping Garson Kanin when he was the first one to reveal in a book that Hepburn and Spencer Tracy had had a long and loving affair. She dropped him as a friend. Now, Hepburn is happy to yammer on about it for hours. At that time she said she would drop anybody who talked about her in the press. I think Barbra feels the same way ... it's interesting that you haven't brought up any gay issues.

WA: I guess my interest was really Barbra... unless going out with Barbra turned you gay... that would be news.

BD: I don't want to promote any stereotypes.

For The Ears

Review by Jorge Cabal



Barbra Streisand
"Higher Ground"
Columbia

On several occasions I have said to friends and family, that I would never review a Barbra Streisand film or musical endeavor, simply because it is very difficult for me to be objective. I grew up listening to this woman's voice. She filled my room and heart with music, and brought comfort through my adolescence. Her voice made me quiver. Her albums were my escape from reality, my way of regrouping and starting anew. But listening to "Tell Him" being sung by Celine Dion and Barbra brought back happy thoughts, and I believe that's the heart and purpose of "Higher Ground." So I decided to tell as many people who would listen!

Each track on "Higher Ground" is accompanied by a liner note by Barbra about the song, making it very personal. Each track has an emotional depth that will remind those "Barbra" fans of her early work-not over produced or rehearsed. This is a relaxed, top-notched Streisand. The tracks that are most impressive include "Higher Ground" with inspiring lyrics; "At The Same Time" sung with background vocals Phillip Ingram, Alex Brown, Lynn Davis, Jim Gilstrap and The Carol Lombard Children's Choir; "Tell Him" the duet with Celine Dion, two "delicioso" voices-a perfect melt of harmony; "On Holy Ground" sung with a choir, and an impressive vocal interpretation that reinforces Ms. Streisand's enormous vocal talent; and "If I Could" dedicated to Jason, her son,

gives us a peek at a loving mother's heart, and you can hear a crack in Streisand's voice illustrating a great deal of emotion. This is a woman who is in the peak of her vocal talent, and she is radiant.

"Higher Ground" on Columbia is joyous; and to appreciate the beauty of this effort is to forget that this is Barbra Streisand the media created "personality" only guilty of being an artist who really cares about her work-a perfectionist! "Higher Ground" is elevating for the ears!



Carly Simon
"Film Noir"
Arista

When I first heard that Carly Simon was going to record a CD of old standard songs inspired by the silver screen days of Bogart, Bacall, and Dietrich: I was skeptical. I said, "Eeeck! What is it about these female vocalists that when they reach a certain age that they feel compelled to interpret old pop standards?" Surely, not Carly Simon whose forte is her natural ability to write exquisite story-telling songs!

So I listened to "Film Noir," and I was enchanted. I began to be seduced by the image of Marlene Dietrich in a smoke filled night club, surrounded by pale pink mirrors, crooning these songs.


On "Film Noir," Carly Simon collaborates with renowned singer-songwriter Jimmy Webb. Webb contributes as producer, arranger, conductor and pianist. "Spring Will Be A Little Late


This Year," has Simon and Webb harmonizing in an electric, dulcet, and somewhat melancholic duet. Simon explains "It was an idea that came to both of us at pretty much the same time, this film noir idea.


"We started out being very strict about the songs we chose, making certain that they were from film noir movies. Then we began to look at songs that were evocative of the sentiments of the film noir genre. Songs such as 'I'm A Fool To Want You' and 'Don't Smoke In Bed' are examples of the songs that are not specifically from films but which should be and could be, Carly continues."


Some of the scores that jump out and make a splash to the ears are "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" done in an up tempo beat-frisky and as memorable as Annie Lennox's version in "Red, Hot and Blue"; "Lili Marene" has Carly in a low raspy voice reminiscent of Dietrich in the 1930 Paramount film "Morocco"; "Laura" is haunting, and Carly's voice evokes the cinematic essence of these songs; and "Don't Smoke In Bed" has traces of a woman scorned by infidelity. Carly Simon is ready for her close up in "Film Noir." "Film Noir" is a cinematic treat for the ears!



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SUMMER STUD Good looking, down to earth, very well built, 36 year old, Bi, White male, 6'2, 185lbs, with Brown hair and Green eyes, seeks in shape men, 18 to 35, for fun. If you're Bi curious, or new to the scene, that's a plus. Experience is nice too. I'm pretty available all summer. (Adams) #2936

HEAD OF THE CLASS I'm a very good looking, White male, 5'9, 135lbs, with Blond hair, Blue eyes, and a swimmer's build. Unfortunately, I'm very inexperienced and need someone to teach me. I hope you're between 18 and early 20's, with a fit body. (Antigo) #8922

FREE IN THE FOOTHILLS Boy, am I glad to be back in the foothills. I just returned from Atlanta where I realized that city life ain't for me. I'm a good natured, laid back, White male, 25, 6ft, 180lbs, looking for friends and, eventually, a relationship. I'm a farm kid who loves the country and can't deal with the fast pace, and insincerity, of the metropolis. (Baraboo) #3027

BOY NEXT DOOR This discreet, professional, White male, the boy next door type, masculine, attractive, and in shape, 27, seeks guys around my age for fun times and hot encounters. I'm open minded and safe, 6'1, 180lbs, with Brown hair and Blue eyes. I like to go out and party on the weekends. (Eau Claire) #6956

ALL SYSTEMS ARE GO This 19 year old, White male, wants to get to know other guys, under 30. In my world, everything is go. I like men who are intelligent, humorous, and compassionate. (Eau Claire) #3074

ATTENTION SENIORS! This nice looking, fit, Bi, White male, 26, gets into giving oral pleasure, and erotic, full body massages, to well endowed, senior males, in their 60's, 70's, and 80's. If you're interested in a discreet get together with a clean, safe, horny guy, who wants to give you pleasure, give me a call. I can travel throughout south central Wisconsin. (Janesville) #9607

PROVE MEN ARE BETTER This very well endowed, Bi, White male, 6'2, 220lbs, with a hairy chest, needs to find another well hung guy, to prove to me that it's more fun with men. I'm totally new to this but am all jacked up for it. I can last for hours. (Madison) #8776

FOOT IN MOUTH Do you have a foot fetish? I sure do. Let's talk about it. (Milwaukee) #31763

SAUT... AND PIERCE My varied interests include cooking, farmer's markets, body piercing, and alternative music. This attractive, 25 year old, White male, 185lbs, seeks other Bi, or Gay, White males to have fun with. (Madison) #2891

FOOT PATROL This masculine, White male, has a strong, pronounced foot fetish. I love servicing and being serviced by other men who share this interest. I'm also into footgear, especially boots. (Milwaukee) #9501

CAN'T GET ENOUGH I'm looking for some interesting and sexy people to meet. I like anything hot and intense. This 19 year old, White male, 5'10, 180lbs of muscle, has Blond hair and Green eyes. I can't wait to get it on. (Milwaukee) #9332

SECRET CIRCLE This Married, Bi, White male, 50, with a husky build, seeks other Bi, Gay, Married, or otherwise available men, for pleasurable, passionate fun. I'm seeking ongoing friendships with other clean, healthy guys. I can get away whenever I want and I need some companions. Age, race, and size aren't important. (Milwaukee) #9450

BACK TO THE BOYS Newly Divorced, White male, 5'11, 240lbs and losing weight, seeks guys to have fun with. I smoke, am a social drinker, and can't wait to catch up on what I've been missing. (Milwaukee) #8973

INEXPERIENCED SLAVE Slave to be, looking for an older master. I'm a 32 year old, White, professional, Bi male, eager but inexperienced. I want to be a good slave. Show me how. (Milwaukee) #8966

FOREVER YOUNG I'm a very young looking, 25 year old, White male, 5'11, 145lbs, with Brown hair, Brown eyes, and good looks. I wanna meet other guys, 18 to 27, for fun. (Milwaukee) #8835

THE LOOK OF LOVE I'm looking for a tall, masculine guy, over 6ft, either Black or White, who has varied interests. I'm a 46 year old, White male, who's kind, loving, and enjoys nice people and good sex. I'm the type who prefers a quiet night at home. I'm very oral and into kissing, hugging, and making love, not just having sex. (Milwaukee) #8741

MASTER ME This good looking, masculine, well endowed, White male, 31, 6'2, 185lbs, with Blond hair, seeks a master into serious bondage and discipline, light S&M, creative humiliation, and occasional crossdressing action. I'm also into nature, nudism, movies, and more. I'm sweet, sincere, honest, loyal, and can't wait to meet you. (Milwaukee) #8395

AT MY EXPENSE This good looking, fun loving, passive male, seeks a dominant, aggressive top, who likes to enjoy himself at the expense of another person. I'm into leather, bondage, and slavery. I'm all yours. (Milwaukee) #8045

OUTGOING HOMEBOY I'm looking for a sensitive someone who likes to explore sexually. I hope you're an outgoing person who's also a bit of a homebody and who enjoys entertaining friends. (Milwaukee) #8391

PARENTAL UNIT WANTED I'm an attractive, clean shaven, submissive, 24 year old, White male, 6'3, 190lbs, with Blond hair and Green eyes. I love older men. I need a father figure who can help me when I've been bad and show me what to do. I'll bet you know all the right ways to punish me. (Milwaukee) #8423

I'M CUMIN TO TOWN Good looking, versatile, Black male, 26, 6'3, 210lbs, seeks other masculine, versatile guys, 25 to 45, over 6ft, for good times. I live in Chicago but visit Milwaukee frequently. (Milwaukee) #8511

BARBER OF BODS I specialize in body barbering work. If you'd like to experiment in full, or partial, body shaving, or would like to have some hair trimmed, let me hear from you. No request is too unusual. (Milwaukee) #17826

SLOPPY PHONE FRIEND Phone sex gets me off. How about you? Don't you need to let your tongue flow freely? I have a great imagination and I'm always horny. (Milwaukee) #2647

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION I'm a spontaneous, romantic, Gay, White male, in my 40's, who's young at heart. I have Brown hair, Green eyes, and mustache. My interests include the outdoors, movies, moonlit walks, quiet times at home, and all the good stuff. I'd like to meet a Gay male, any age, to share friendship, love, life, and happiness. (Wausau) #5768

WOW ME IN WAUSAU I've never been with a guy before. I guess I've pushed the idea from my mind but, suddenly, the desire has come over me and I can't wait any more. I'm a nice looking, good natured, 22 year old, White male, hoping you call right away. (Wausau) #3108

SUPERIOR STUD Good looking, fit, masculine, White male, 27, 5'7, 170lbs, with Black hair and Brown eyes, is into the outdoors, working out, camping, hiking, hunting, snow mobilizing, 4-wheeling, concerts, movies, and road trips. I'm easy going and am sometimes a bit shy. I'd like to meet guys with similar characteristics for fun times. Please be in the Phillips, Ironwood, Superior, Minocqua area. #9481

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NEVER ENOUGH FRIENDS This active, Gay, White female, 23, seeks other Gay, White females, 21 to 45, for friendship. I enjoy sports, going to movies, and just relaxing at home. Let's get to know each other. (Milwaukee) #7181

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Review by Tim Nasson

"Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil"

"Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil" the book, even according to director Clint Eastwood was very difficult to translate to the big screen.

"If I had had it my way the film would have been over four hours long, instead of the two and a half it is," he said during an interview in NYC a couple of days ago. "Nonetheless, I am happy with the way the film adaptation turned out, especially since author John Berendt (who also did interviews for the film) was pleased with the outcome."

That being said, I can now talk about the film, "Midnight..." which manages to capture many elements and characters from the *New York Times* best-selling non-fiction book, but also leaves a whole lot out or more so, rearranges the time period in which certain events occurred.

For those not among the cultural elite, among the millions who have helped keep gay author John Berendt's diary of his days in Savannah during the early 1980's, on the best seller list for over three years, a little insight into the story.

John Kelso (aka John Berendt) played by John Cusack,

(enough John's?) is a magazine writer from NYC, who comes to the picturesque Southern city to write about a lavish Christmas party hosted by one Savannah's most prominent and colorful (read gay) citizens, Jim Williams (Kevin Spacey, in the role that undoubtedly will garner him a second Oscar).

The towns inhabitants include a man who walks an invisible dog and another who walks flies glued to thread that continuously buzz above his head. There is also voodoo priestess Minerva, not mentioned in the book until halfway through, but who is the first character we are introduced to in the film. One can neither forget the grand empress, most beloved drag queen of Savannah, The Lady Chablis (as herself), who surprisingly is very good in her role, adding well needed comedic moments to the story of a murder gone awry.

This, one of the many instances in which the book and film differ drastically. No hint is made of any murder until page 169 of the 388 page book. In the film, the eccentric characters are quickly paraded through the town and then boom, Jim Williams is charged with murdering his hustler boyfriend, played by hunky British actor Jude Law (currently opposite Ethan Hawke in "Gattaca").

The film even changes Kelso's homosexuality to heterosexuality. In the film he falls in love with Mandy (played by Eastwood's daughter Alison).

In the book, even the mansions of Savannah are given personalities along with their names. The film tries to recreate the bizarre town in which many people call a world unto its own, yet doesn't quite perfect it as well as Berendt does. (Berendt had a chance to adapt the book for the screen but passed.

With Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons being the most anticipated for high quality films, delivered by top-notch talent, "Midnight..." pretty much succeeds. The acting and directing are impeccable as is the cinematography and set designs. The most obvious fault is the mish-mash of the screenplay adaptation. Thankfully, the book is only a bookstore or shelf away.



Lady Chablis stars as herself in Clint Eastwood's adaption of "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil"

Review by Ed Grover

Openly Bob
by Bob Smith

Funny lesbian, Kate Clinton says Bob Smith "... tackles straight material and makes it his own." In this series of wickedly entertaining essays nothing and no one has been spared author/comedian Bob Smith's gimlet eye.

We get the *skinny* on Bob's hometown: Buffalo; his mom and dad; looking for his first apartment in New York City; cruising the gay bars; his first jobs (including cater-waiting and the wild queens who run the services). Along the way in an essay called "Pink Elephants," politics is not overlooked. Bob's comments on Newt, and his quip on a gay Republican is wonderful: "A white square wearing a pink triangle!"

There is a very funny chapter called "Ma Nature." It's about one of his hobbies: bird watching. In the Central Park Rambles, where the group he is with searches for a Painted Bunting that was spotted the day before, we are introduced to everyone. The descriptions of the birders, which includes one very dishy queen named Martin, are priceless. The comparisons between identifying birds and identifying the gay men who also cruise the area are right on.

In another essay called "Remembering the Alamo," Bob goes to a family wedding in Florida with his lover Tom. They stay with Tom's parents at their home in an adult retirement community called Rancho Verde; it's built around a golf course. There are wisecracks about golf carts and *oranges and guilt*. Bob says there is a "strange blend of marketing and witnessing." It seems that a lot of the churches in Florida promote both items.

Riding in Tom's parents' Lincoln

Town Car, and trying not to snigger as Tom's parents point out that "the construction workers aren't wearing shirts because it gets so hot by 8 o'clock," is priceless. There is more than a little back-seat-thinking going on.

The wedding day dawns and that whole episode — from getting up early to get dressed, then driving there, and the reception (which includes someone collapsing and dying while doing the Macarena), is very funny.

There are remarks on gay marriage and domestic partnership. Bob says that one way to ensure that gay marriage is legalized is to have all the gay men who work as waiters, caterers, florists, hairdressers, clothing designers and priests just stop helping straight people with their weddings.

There are some comments made about being an in-law and being included in the family. They end up with a parting gift of a check for an upright vacuum cleaner, because Tom's parents have never bought them anything as a couple—and, they need one. We also hear all about going flea-market shopping to look for the "treasures" he and Tom collect.

In "Hurricane Bob," there are hundreds of quotable one-liners to remember on such subjects as Provincetown, dykes, drags, and body piercing. We hear about the house he and Tom lived in while they were there. We get the "show-must-go-on" attitude of Lois, the alcoholic lesbian owner of the club who classifies acts as *Moneymakers* or *You Suck!* She insists that he work the night after Hurricane Bob raged outside, never missing the chance to make an extra buck.

There is a funny and depressing chapter called "The Dark Side of the Honeymoon". It's all about couples counseling and a horrible "lost weekend" workshop for gay couples that he

and Tom attended.

We go with Bob and Tom to Santa Fe, New Mexico to visit a friend, Michael, and learn Bob's views on environmental correctness, the Anasazi Indians, arrowheads, pottery shards, and snakes. Bob openly likes nature and everything that goes with it. Long walks and birdwatching are among his favorite ways of getting in touch with himself. And, he never knows what may turn up along the way ...maybe material for another essay or something he can use in his stand-up comedy act.

In the chapter called "Heart Failure," after his father dies of a heart attack, he gets a phone call from his sister and we hear about his mother's remark: "Just because you're coming home for your father's funeral doesn't mean we can't have fun." They do! The account of his father's death brought on by alcoholism, the revelations of a truly dysfunctional family, and the funeral are a hoot. Of course, we get to hear all the gossip about the friends and relatives who have come to say goodbye.

Above all, and throughout the essays, there is love and understanding from his and Tom's parents. Bob finds out that his father has bragged to his friends about him and has shown the tape of his comedy work in the local bar, proudly admitting "I have a gay son."

After the funeral when a friend comes up and asks his mother if he and Tom are her sons, she replies: "Yes, they are." Now that's acceptance. Read *Openly Bob* and have a laugh or three. (Wiesback-Morrow, ISBN: 0-688-15120-5, \$23)

Juicy Bits

by W.W. Wells III

Be Thankful

Every year around this time, as our country celebrates the wonders of the Holiday season, Americans reflect upon their lives through Santa-stained glasses and give thanks for everything they have to be grateful for. While we're at it, I figured it's as good a time as any for Gay Americans to do the same. To help get you started, here are twenty-some queer things every gay person can be thankful for...

Be Thankful... that even if you're not comfortable coming out of the closet at work, you can at least be gay in front of your pets.

Be Thankful... you can't become gay just by watching TV otherwise most gay men would end up acting like Uncle Arthur on *Bewitched*.

Be Thankful... that at least your sexual fantasies don't have to be sensitive and politically correct.

Be Thankful... that a difficult break-up does have its advantages. In fact, most states now allow the emotionally crippled to park in handicapped zones.

Be Thankful... that only a small percentage of gay men actually ever become as bitchy as Bette Davis or Nancy Reagan.

Be Thankful... that no matter how wonderful he is in bed, you don't officially have to ask him to be your roommate for at least six months, unless of course he's Antonio Sabato, Jr.

Be Thankful... your new boyfriend doesn't want to get matching commitment rings in pierced nipples.

Be Thankful... most gay men don't think their half empty bottle of lube would make a cute knickknack and proudly display it on a coffee table, right next to a three year stack of *Raunch Magazine*.

Be Thankful... you're smart enough to realize your not a bonafide "Leather Man" just because you own a bomber jacket and your watch has a leather band.

Be Thankful... when a men cruises you so heavily his eyes start to hurt. This either means you've still got your looks or possess some unusual physical characteristic he finds very exciting and which perfectly matches his favorite fetish.

Be Thankful... you've never mistaken tanning gel for lube, otherwise you'd probably end up looking like a scene from *Boogie Nights* crossed with a Coppertone commercial.

Be Thankful... that you've had enough sensitivity training to finally understand that lesbians are not speaking a foreign language.

Be Thankful... that you can finally say hello to hot man without checking out his basket, or mentally undressing him. Unless of course, this man is Antonio Sabato, Jr. In which case, if you don't cruise him, you must be dead.

Be Thankful... that your boss never figured out it was you who misdialed and accidentally left a sexually explicit message meant for Antonio Sabato, Jr on his Voice Mail.

Be Thankful... you are mature enough to ask for what you want in bed. But don't get so carried away that you come prepared with written instructions and diagrams more complicated than the manual to your VCR.

Be Thankful... you've never had yourself waxed, shaved pierced or tattooed while drunk. To those who have, you have my condolences.

Be Thankful... you know that the difference difference between love and lust is the same as difference between five and ten inches and you've got a lot of people in lust with you.

Be Thankful... that even after five years together, your partner still gets the urge to take off his clothes when ever you smile at him.

Be Thankful... you don't believe every hot, attractive male celebrity is gay just because you've never seen them announce on Oprah! they are 100% heterosexual.

Be Thankful... you're not straight, otherwise you'd think Home Improvement is the funniest damn show on TV and couldn't understand all the fuss about Antonio Sabato, Jr.

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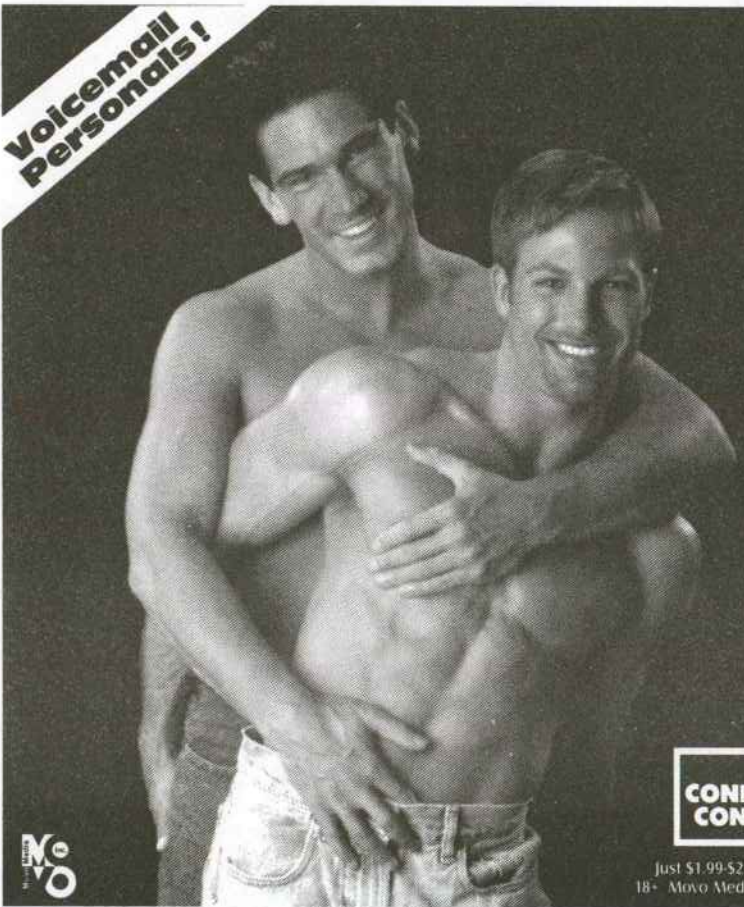


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