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Covering the Space and Treasure Coasts

Issue #069, August 2008



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- Aug 9th: Susan Whitney
- Aug 16th: BJ Stephens
- Aug 23rd: BEACH PARTY
- Aug 30th: LABOR DAY WEEKEND: WORK PARTY with SPIKEY DYKEY

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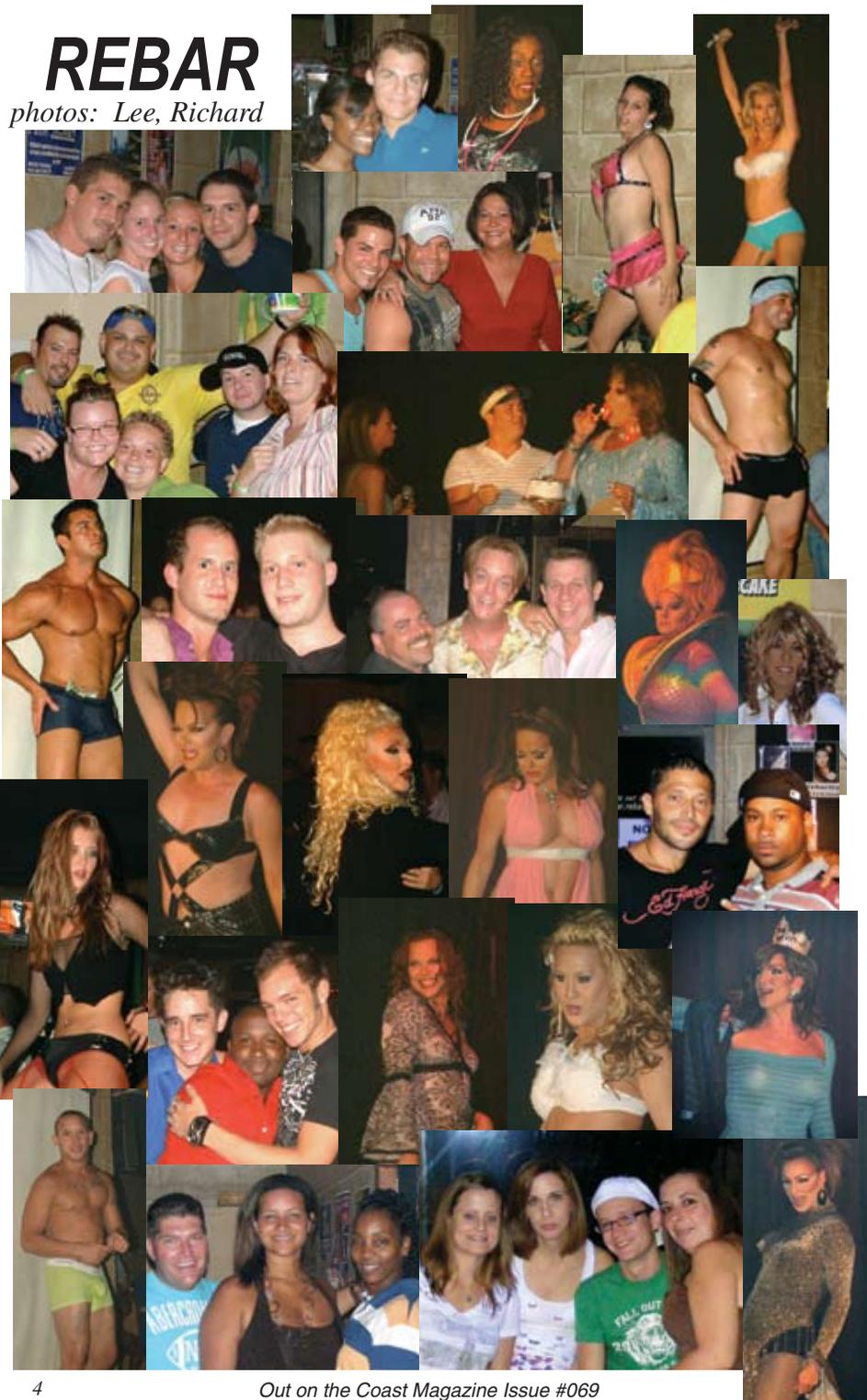
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July 31, 2008

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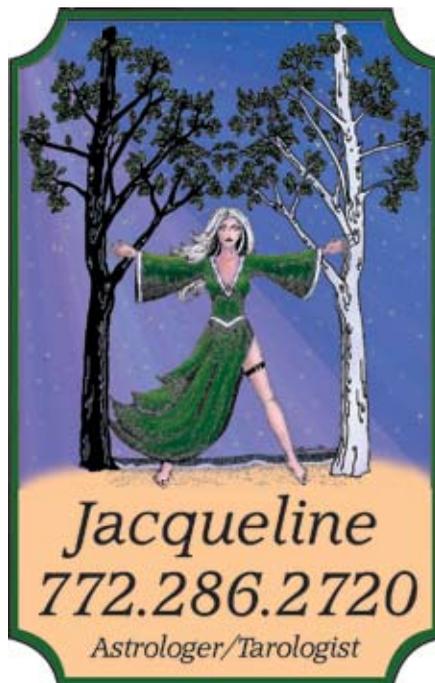
The mighty lion this month starts off with a roar! Leo brings a solar eclipse and new moon on the 1st, enabling us with a renewed sense of creativity. By the 6th, you'll see practical applications to your vision as Venus goes into Virgo. However, with Mercury and Mars following Venus, you'll also be able to bring these ideas into physical form. Keep moving in that direction because on the 16th, the full moon and lunar eclipse in Aquarius will bring a little drama to the situation. Once the new blue moon in Virgo arrives on the 30th, all the drama will cease and you'll see the fruits of your labor.

Aries *March 23 - April 22* Maintain your focus and visualize your dreams. With your Sun squaring Jupiter and all the transiting Leo planets, life will be in constant flux. Don't let the timing of things throw you off; be both vigilant and steadfast and eventually you'll get to where you want to go. All you have to do is know your desires.

Taurus *April 23 - May 22* Live everyday as if there was no tomorrow! Enjoy your friends and

social life and don't let anyone push you. This is a time for you to experience new adventures and to rekindle bonds with those around you. Anticipate something special, especially the week leading up to the full moon on the 30th.

Gemini *May 23 - June 22* You're almost through the challenges that were brought into your life around the 1st of June. After the 19th, when Mars goes into Libra, you'll find life will discover its own balance and you'll be able to go



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back to your normal multitasking.

Cancer *June 23 - July 22* "Just the facts..." should be your motto this month. It's to your benefit that you take the emotion and drama out and get to work, especially with your health and fitness. Set new boundaries and start a new routine; see the facts behind the challenges in your life and find practical ways to fix them.

Leo *July 23 - August 22* Rejoice and enjoy your Solar Return! With the first full Moon and eclipse in your sign, you'll definitely get the recognition you've been looking for. However, it may not come from where you thought. This month you're in charge. Use this time to go for what you want. Do it in a practical manner.

Virgo *August 23 - September 22* 'Work smart, not hard' should be your motto this month. Your creative juices are flowing; use them and don't over analyze your thoughts. The first solution

is usually correct and right now you have the ability to act upon it. Seize the moment and you'll find great power. Use it wisely, not selfishly.

Libra *September 23 - October 22* This is a dual month for you. The beginning of the month you'll feel like nothing is going your way. However, watch out for the new Moon and eclipse on the 16th, because at this point everything will move into hyper-speed. Relax and finish those details, because the second half of the month you'll have little time to do anything but what's in front of you.

Scorpio *October 23 - November 22* You're cognitive abilities are heightened right now. Use this time to take care of those details you previously neglected. You'll find you can move through them quickly. Health issues may arise for you at this time, so pay attention to your body. This is also a good time to continue with a good program for your well-being.

Sagittarius November 23 – December 22 You're wondering where you stand this month. Well, you are right where you should be. Don't let your doubts and fears get to you. You know the facts, so go with them. All else is an illusion trying to see if you will take a stand for your truth.

Capricorn December 23 – January 22 With so many planets in Virgo, you'll be torn between your health and your hyper-critical side. Nothing is ever urgent. Don't try to push anything; have the courage to change the things you can, and the serenity to accept the things that you cannot. The rest is not your responsibility.

Aquarius January 23 – February 22 As water flows around obstacles, you should flow too. Don't force anything. Take a step back and relax. Be sure to take some time and unwind, because after the new moon and solar eclipse on the 16th, all will start to fall into place and you'll be able to work more efficiently.

Pisces February 23 – March 22 With Mars, Venus, the Sun, Mercury and the 2nd full Moon all in Virgo this month, it will be obvious what you need to do. Don't hesitate! Act upon it now. You'll find things will fall into place more quickly than you thought, even though there will be a lot of drama attached to it.

For those who want to know: You've heard the expression, "Once in a Blue Moon." This month we have a Blue Moon. It is when there are either two new moons or full moons in one month. What does this mean for us? We are being emotionally empowered to follow our true self. With the two moons in Leo and Virgo, the energy allows us to truly see our child-like self and to follow what that might reveal. ▼

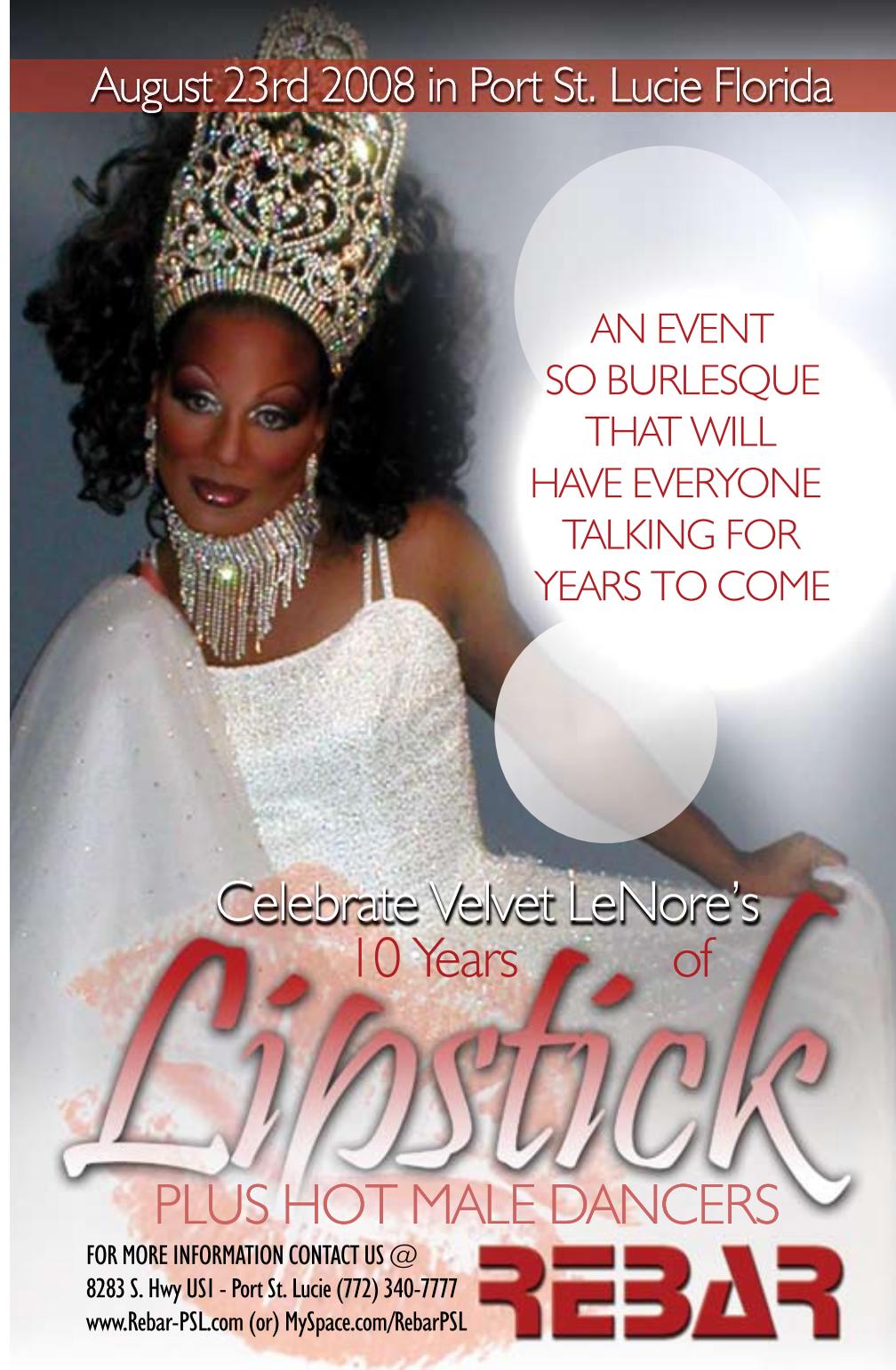
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with Miss T

The final tally for the Project Response benefits is over \$9,000 - the impressive totals raised by **Kelli Randell**, **Cold Keg** and **REBAR** led to some outside corporate donations bringing the grand total up to the point that the costs for next year are nearly covered. Perhaps Project Response will be able to send more kids impacted by HIV/AIDS to summer camp. Hats off to Harry for coordinating the events. It's inspiring to see what our community can do when we all work together.

Speaking of working together, did you see Velvet and Shelita's finale at the **REBAR's** Vegas nite Saturday? Wow, what a great production number! When Velvet gets her crew all working together the result is spectacular. And **REBAR** has the performance space to accommodate large groups of performers. There'll be lots of performers showing up every Friday in August for **REBAR Idol**. Velvet will lead judge and is the person to contact if you're interested in going for the gold, or rather the \$500 cash and Caribbean Cruise for two first prize. Check out the ad on page 13 for all the details and plan to stop in to see some newcomers show off their talents.



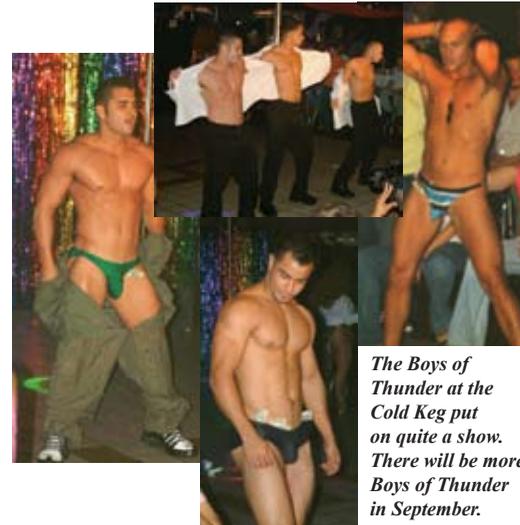
Shelita Cox and Velvet LeNore and company tear it up

Up at the **Cold Keg** there's a newcomer dealing Texas Hold 'em on Saturdays. Jeff, not Jeff of Mike and Jeff - the other Jeff, started dealing on Saturdays, reviving the popular afternoon event. Turn out the first Saturday was great, so if you want a seat without having to wait to rotate in, make sure you're there at 4 pm. Or just stop in for some good company and a chance to chat up those waiting to rotate in and those who busted out. At the **Cold Keg** August features girls' night out. July The Boys of Thunder for the men (although there women out that night, too) so for the girls Sharon and Joe have booked Spikey Dykey and the After Midnights: Vita Devoig, Ivy and Teddy D. It will be a fabulous show and the guys can look for more Boys of Thunder in September.



Saturday Texas Hold 'em is back at the Cold Keg with your dealer, Jeff (top, second from right, rather than Jeff top right)

There's more coming from **The Living Room**, too. Gay Bowling was a hoot with nearly 40 people showing up to bowl, hang out and have a good time - you can be sure they'll be doing it again soon. But first up is the return of **Gay Skate**. That's right, **Gay Skate** is back on August 21st at Galaxy Skateway in Melbourne. Like everything else, costs have gone up forcing admission up as well to \$8. You



The Boys of Thunder at the Cold Keg put on quite a show. There will be more Boys of Thunder in September.

still get the free entry token for **Cold Keg** so that makes admission a real deal. This time around there'll be a guest DJ and more surprises. So all you who enjoyed **Gay Skate** in the past, come on out for a gay old time in Melbourne!

Any time you need something, please check out our advertisers first. For instance **Alternative Connection** in Palm Bay, right next to FIT, is your source for smoking supplies and piercing by experienced, friendly people. Stop in, check it out and I'm sure you'll find something you need.

And if you check our directory closely you'll notice that Lambda AA in Melbourne has added a second meeting so they now meet on both Wednesdays and Saturdays at 7:30

pm the Unity Church, 1745 Trimble Rd., Melbourne. They also have an email address now: Lamba.AA@earthlink.net and a new 24 hour hotline: 321-724-2247

The Sober Rainbow AA group in Vero is now s now an official group of AA. The meeting has been averaging mid 20's attendance and is now approaching its 8th Month of existence. They meet on Thursday nights at 7:30pm at the Unity Church, 950 43rd Avenue, Vero Beach. You can reach them at TheSoberRainbow@aol.com or 772-538-8068

Finally, for sports women in St. Lucie or Martin Counties, you might want to check out the Greater Palm Beaches Women's Slow Pitch Softball League is accepting registration for individual players or teams for their Fall 2008 Season. The league is currently in its fourth season offering Women's softball to the Community. A charity each season is also selected which the women contribute to. Past charities were MCC/PB Food Bank, Adopt A Cat Foundation & Abused Women's Thrift Store & Shelter. The league is a member of the Amateur Sports Alliance of North America which runs the National Gay & Lesbian Softball World Series. For more details: Email us at raynboleague@aol.com . Meet new friends and get some exercise!!

Gay Rights Tidbits: it looks like the right wing "Christians" are preparing for defeat in their anti-gay rights efforts, or at least hedging their bets. Consider the following tidbits gleaned

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from the web:

The first Muslim to be elected to the United States Congress has given very public support to gay rights. In a statement on his website Keith Ellison, who has represented the Fifth Congressional District of Minnesota in the House of Representatives since January 2007, said: "I am proud to join Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin and Congressman Barney Frank today in launching the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus." Ms Baldwin and Mr. Frank are the only openly gay people in Congress. "I am honored to join this caucus because of my lifelong commitment to fighting all discrimination," said Mr. Ellison. "I believe when my gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender neighbor suffers from discrimination, then I suffer, and so does our whole community. "Every member of our society contributes to the health, wealth and generosity of our community. Only when we recognize, protect, and, celebrate that will we realize all our citizens' potential." Congressman Ellison's November 2006 election, with 56% of the vote in a four-way race, made headlines around the world. His district covers the city of Minneapolis. He is the first African American elected to the Congress from Minnesota, as well as the first Muslim American to be elected to the US Congress. The LGBT Equality Caucus was formed last month. It wants the extension of equal rights, the repeal of discriminatory laws, the elimination of hate-motivated violence, and improved health and well being for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

And this: Most of the leaders of Christian Dominionism are . . . old. Reading their propaganda one would think America's youth are embracing evangelical doctrine, fundamentalist ideology and Dominionist ideas. They're not. In fact, America's youth is moving in exactly the opposite direction and have been for some time. An October 2006 *New York Times* article reported the exodus:

Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers

Despite their packed megachurches, their political clout and their increasing visibility on the national stage, evangelical Christian leaders are warning one another that their teenagers are abandoning the faith in droves. . . .

Their alarm has been stoked by a highly suspect claim that if current trends continue, only 4 percent of teenagers will be "Bible-believing Christians" as adults. That would be a sharp decline compared with 35 percent of the current generation of baby boomers, and before that, 65 percent of the World War II generation. . . .

The board of the National Association of Evangelicals, an umbrella group representing 60 denominations and dozens of ministries, passed a resolution this year deploring "the epidemic of young people leaving the evangelical church."

And this: Is American Family Association founder Donald Wildmon preparing to concede in the war against gays?

"If we lose California, if they defeat the marriage amendment, I'm afraid that the culture war is over and Christians have lost," the Evangelical leader told columnist Bill Berkowitz. "I've never said that publicly until now," Wildmon added, "but that's just the reality of the fact. California is a big dam, holding back the flood" in the "culture wars," Wildmon asserted, "and if you take down the dam in California, it's going to flood 49 other states." Secularism, he said, "will replace Christianity as the foundation of our society," leading to a "cultural decline."

And this: In a letter last month, Bishop Marc Handley Andrus of the Episcopal Diocese of California directed his clergy to "encourage all couples, regardless of orientation, to follow the pattern of first being married in a secular service and then being blessed in The Episcopal Church."

The bishop's missive illustrates what a tangled web we have woven when clergy intone "by

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Spiritually Speaking

The ancient prophet Isaiah once said that God has hidden from the people, but I trust God and place my hope in God. God is real, no matter how we feel. It is easy to believe in God when things are going great in our life. But circumstances are not always pleasant.

What do we do when God seems a million miles away? Sometimes friendships are tested by separation and silence. You might be divided by physical distance or there might be other situations that prevent you from communicating with your friends. It is a fact of life that you won't always feel close to God.

We sometimes experience tests in order to show what we are really made of. Do we always expect God to bail us out of our problems or do we take the responsibility for our own actions? St. John of the Cross referred to these times of spiritual dryness, doubt, and estrangement from God as "the dark night of the soul." Henri Nouwen called them "the ministry of absence." A. W. Tozer called them the "ministry of the night." Others have called these times "the winter of the heart." Mother Theresa referred to the times when "God is silent." Even King David had times when he complained about God's apparent absence. Psalm 10:1

– Why are you so distant, God? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? And again, in Psalm 22:1, 2 – My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away from helping me, so far away from the words of my groaning? My God, I cry out by day, but you don't answer – also at night, but I find no rest.

God has promised to never leave us. To the ancient Israelites the message was that God is the one who is going ahead of you. God will be with you. God won't abandon you or leave you. But the children of Israel felt alone as they traveled through the desert.

God has not promised that we would always feel the presence of God. There are times when it is as if God hides from us. This is a normal part of the testing and maturing of our friendship with God. Every one goes through a time of testing at least once in their lifetime.

The Book of Job is the story of a time of testing. Job said, "If I go east, God isn't there.

If I go west, I can't find God. If I go northward, where God is at work, I can't see God.

If I turn southward, I can't see

God. I can't find God because God knows the road I take.

This feeling of abandonment is a time of testing – a test of faith. Will you continue to believe even when you don't feel the presence or visible evidence of God in your life?

Too often we seek an experience with God rather than seeking God. We look for a feeling. God is always present even when we are not aware of God, and God's presence cannot be measured by mere emotion.

The situations that will stretch our faith most will be those times when life falls apart and God is nowhere to be found. It's okay to tell God exactly how you feel. God can handle your doubt, anger, fear, grief, confusion, and questions.

Regardless of circumstances and how we feel, we should hang on to God's unchanging character. God is good, God loves me, God is with me, God knows what I am going through, God cares, and God has a plan for my life. Trust God to keep the promises. God is real, no matter how I feel. In the Book of Hebrews in the Christian Scriptures, we find these words: "For God has said, 'I will never leave you; I will never abandon you.'"

As life seems to get more complicated, it is important to keep our faith. It is important to remember that God's presence

in our lives is not dependent on whether or not we feel God's presence. ▼

The Rev. Dr. Jerry L. Seay is a former pastor in the Assemblies of God. He has been a pastor in the Metropolitan Community Churches since 1989. He and his life-partner of thirteen years, Mike Lufriu, moved to Brevard County to start the East Coast Metropolitan Community Church. East Coast MCC meets in Melbourne at 1603 S Wickham Rd, every Sunday at 5 p.m. for a traditional service and at 6:30 p.m. for a contemporary service. Services in Port St. Lucie/ Ft. Pierce are at the Shriner's Club, 4600 Oleander Ave, every Sunday at 10 a.m.

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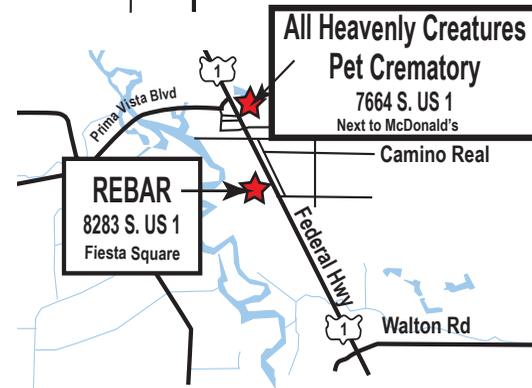
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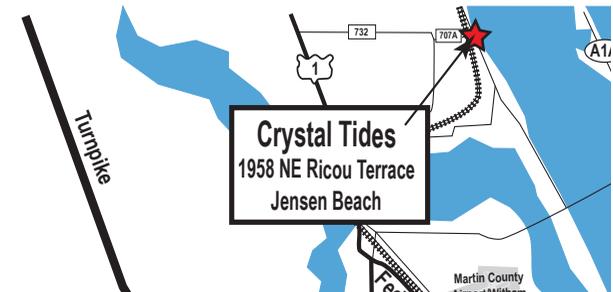
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continued from page 12

the power invested in me by the state.”

Because the Episcopal Church doesn't sanction same-sex marriage - but gives the option of blessing the union - the bishop appears to be seeking a way to bless all couples while distancing the church from legal arrangements sanctioned by the state.

“There are a lot of benefits in getting out of the legal marriage business,” the Very Rev. Brian Baker told The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee in reaction to the bishop's letter. “This way the clergy and the couple can focus on the spiritual blessings the church has to offer and not the political stuff.”

And this: Arkansas' social conservatives suffered a bit of blow this week. The Family Council Action Committee confirmed that it fell about 4,000 signatures short of the 61,794 needed to put a gay adoption ban on this November's ballot. Though they missed their deadline, they've been given a 30 day extension to meet their mark:

One reason the group has had difficulty gathering the signatures is because the measure is more complicated to explain than the anti-gay marriage amendment it successfully petitioned to put on the ballot four years ago. The Family Council group submitted about 200,000 signatures for that proposal and voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment that defined marriage as only between a man and a woman.

And, finally, this: In a 25-page opinion issued Thursday, Judge Robert A. Greenberg said advocates for a 2007 law that prohibits discrimination against transgender individuals in housing, employment, cable television service and transportation were too late in challenging the signatures collected by Citizens for Responsible Government and certified by the Montgomery

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IN THE NEWS

For current headlines see our website: www.ootcmag.com

FT LAUDERDALE—Anti-gay slurs spray-painted on three homes and a car in Wilton Manors are being investigated as a hate crime, police spokesman David Jones said. This is the first time this kind of vandalism has happened in the area and it appears to be random. The words words “gay” and “fag” were painted on adjacent houses and a car. Three other cars were streaked with spray paint.

While two of the homes are inhabited by gay male couples, the third house is home to a heterosexual couple.

Wilton Manors has a significant homosexual population. An estimated 40 percent of the adult men living there are gay, according to a Florida Atlantic University study. Police have not identified any witnesses or suspects.

FORT LAUDERDALE—The Broward County School Board passed the strongest anti-bully policy in the state according to an Equality Florida press release. The policy contains a full list of prohibited forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination, including targeting victims based on their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Equality Florida spearheaded an eight-year coalition effort to pass a statewide bullying bill. The new law (HB 669) requires school districts to develop and enact anti-bully policies by December 1, 2008, and it requires that those policies to protect all students.

With its passage of the new policy, Broward becomes the statewide leader in addressing the epidemic of bullying and harassment in Florida's schools.

“This is the ideal policy that other schools should replicate. By fully listing all forms of prohibited harassment, Broward County is making crystal clear what the legislature has repeatedly said, that all students must be equally protected,” said Nadine Smith Executive Director of Equality Florida. “Not only does this policy provide the

best protection for students and teachers, but it also protects the school district by demonstrating that they are fully complying with the law.”

During the 2008 legislative session, bill sponsors stated that school districts must protect all students from bully and harassment, including bullying based on disability, race, gender, gender identity, religion and sexual orientation. Any school district that does not protect all students equally will be breaking the law and at risk of losing their safe schools funding.

Equality Florida is Florida's only statewide human rights organization dedicated to the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Through education and advocacy, the organization is committed to building a state of equal rights for all Floridians, inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

TAMPA—Barack Obama's Campaign for Change officially hit the ground with the grand opening of the Florida headquarters in Tampa, more offices will be opening soon all across the state. They are preparing for a closely contested race across Florida, and July 19th started Obama Campaign for Change Florida Kickoff Canvasses at locations all around the state. Get more info at fl.barackobama.com.

WORLD WIDE WEB—The trend in business relations has been towards an acceptance and welcoming of gay and lesbian clients and appreciation of them as customers. This may be because of the perception that product loyalty is particularly strong in gay consumers or because businesses generally believe that moralistic rants drive away not only gay customers but also those who love them.

However Insure.com, an online insurance purveyor, has been hosting articles that make false and defamatory statements about gay men and women.

continued on page 22

There's Power in Our Pride.



Participate in the largest LGBT Community Survey in history, and help demonstrate the growing Power in Our Pride.

Everyone who completes the survey by Sept 14, 2008 will be entered into a drawing to win one of FIVE iPod Shuffles or the Grand Prize of TWO free airline tickets from/to any of the participating airline's destinations in the 48 continental U.S. States, plus Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. Restrictions apply.

Survey begins August 14 visit www.ootcmag.com for link

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Tremendous strides toward full equality have been achieved by our communities over the past decade. There's Power in Our Pride. Power to make a difference:

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- Demographic reports also influence marketing investment. Virtually absent until recently, we now see a growing variety of products and services represented in gay media, celebrating our diversity. Ads keep LGBT publications and websites in business, serving their communities with independent news and information.
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- Taking an annual pulse on market trends through surveys helps demonstrate the LGBT community's growing power, and influences positive change.

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Insure.com is a publicly traded company with an advisory board ranging from a former US Senator to executives with various companies, including AT&T. The company is a major sponsor of Bill O'Reilly's radio talk show and Bill gives voice to their commercial.

In addition to selling insurance, they provide information about the insurance industry. Joe White, an employee and company blog contributor, wrote two pieces in which he claimed that "being gay" was a health risk, and not just a minor one.

In an article on the business website entitled *Top five ways to kill yourself and get away with it*, White lists the number one way to kill yourself:

"1. Being gay. A gay lifestyle is by far the biggest risk to life expectancy that goes unrecognized by insurance companies. The question has been considered by multiple studies, and the gay lifestyle is universally acknowledged to decrease life expectancy. A conservative estimate is that a gay lifestyle takes away 8-20 years from the average lifespan.

In other words, living a homosexual lifestyle has health risks at least as severe as smoking (by some estimates even more), but due to the sensitive nature of the issue, life insurance companies don't charge different rates for gays. So gays save money on life insurance at the same rate they die young."

White bases his Number One self-killer information on another insure.com article he authored, *Gay men die 20 years younger*.

Part of the bases for White's wild claim is an extrapolation from a 1997 study from Robert Hogg entitled *Modeling the Impact of HIV Disease on Mortality in Gay and Bisexual Men*. It was based on research performed in Vancouver from 1987 through 1992. The question that they were trying to answer was not the mortality of gay men, but rather the impact that HIV might have on the gay population.

White acknowledges that this study was of HIV positive individuals but then says something curious: "Many who read the study, however, understood it to categorize

the gay lifestyle as inherently hazardous."

The persons who read some inherent hazard into sexual orientation are anti-gay activists and writers. In fact, this so annoyed the authors that they responded to the claims of anti-gays with a letter of clarification.

Mr. White did not rely solely on the Vancouver study (with selectively eliminated information). He also based his claims on anti-gay crusader Paul Cameron.

In 2005, Dr. Paul Cameron, the President of the Family Research Institute, published a study in Psychological Reports that confirmed a 20-year life expectancy gap for actively gay men.

Those who are familiar with Cameron and his followers know that these claims are fraudulent. But others relying on White's claims might not know that Dr. Paul Cameron has been thoroughly discredited.

He has been dropped from the American Psychological Association, condemned by the Nebraska Psychological Association, the American Sociological Association, and the Canadian Psychological Association and been barred from presenting himself as an "expert" in at least one courtroom. And even the anti-gay fringe disavowed Cameron after he lauded Rudolph Höss, the camp commandant of Auschwitz, and his efforts to eradicate homosexuality.

White takes the outdated Vancouver study, combines it with Cameron's bogus "research" and declares: "this revised estimate would establish the life expectancy of gay males to be at least 20 years below average."

This classifies gay men with a graver risk of mortality than smokers and the obese—perhaps the highest mortality risk for any demographic its size.

Many factors impact life expectancy - genetics, diet, exercise, smoking, drugs and alcohol, stress, marital status, poverty, and many many more. And there are likely to be some characteristics that result from the social patterns found more often in the gay community. However, it is not known if enough gay persons share enough stereotypical characteristics that these presumed risk factors impact the gay population as a

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whole.

Robert "Bob" Bland, the CEO of Insure.com was informed that his company was hosting articles that were factually inaccurate and based on the work of an anti-gay activist that had been discredited.

Bland responded that because the articles were based on third party studies and not original research they would require time to do fact-checking. He did not pull the articles.

The Top Five Ways to Kill Yourself article is no longer at the web address. But those persons wishing to find fun insurance facts can still read that gay men die 20 years sooner, on average, than straight men.

WASHINGTON, DC—The U.S. Census Bureau will not count couples who marry legally in California and Massachusetts as married spouses in its 2010 Census reports because federal law does not recognize such unions. The agency will amend the responses of gay and lesbian couples who report they are married to read "unmarried partners," but will retain in its records their original answers.

WASHINGTON, DC—Marriage – HRC has hit the million mark! They are up to **1,003,118** signatures on their Million for Marriage petition.

WASHINGTON, DC—Both houses of Congress have approved a sweeping global AIDS relief bill that includes language repealing a 1993 U.S. immigration law that prohibits HIV-positive visitors from entering the country and bars most foreigners with HIV from obtaining legal immigrant status.

The bill, which renews the highly popular

U.S. foreign aid program known as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) now goes to President Bush, who has said he plans to sign the legislation.

The ban originated in 1987, and was made into law by Congress in 1993. Public health community efforts to get the ban removed when Congress reformed U.S. immigration law in the early 1990s proved ineffective. While immigration law currently excludes foreigners with any "communicable disease of public health significance" from entering the U.S., only HIV is explicitly named in the statute.

The amendment to repeal the HIV travel ban was included in a larger bill to provide increased funding to fight HIV/AIDS worldwide.

Even after Bush signs the plan, however, the Department of Health and Human Services must repeal its internal ban.

WASHINGTON, DC—On June 26, a historic hearing on transgender workplace rights was held on Capitol Hill. HRC Business Council members Diego Sanchez and Meghan Stabler were key contributors.

WASHINGTON, DC—A draft regulation was leaked from the Department of Health and Human Services that would undermine women's access to birth control and basic health care needs.

This proposal would create unnecessary obstacles for women seeking contraceptive services and most alarming the draft regulations confuse contraception with abortion by redefining abortion to include commonly used FDA-approved methods of contraception, such as oral contraceptives and IUDs.

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By redefining FDA-approved methods of birth control as abortifacients, the HHS definition of abortion is at odds with widely accepted science and with the government's own definition that pregnancy begins with the implantation of a fertilized egg.

If these regulations are implemented it could actually increase the need for abortion by making it more difficult for women to access the contraceptive services they need to prevent unintended pregnancy. This draft regulation would cause immeasurable harm to the 17 million women who rely on publicly funded contraceptive services.

CHICAGO—The National Radio Hall of Fame didn't hear gay activists' calls. GLAAD, Truth Wins Out and others balked when news broke that anti-gay Evangelical leader James Dobson had been nominated for Hall of Fame entry for his long-running Focus On The Family show. GLAAD President Neil G. Giuliano released the following statement: "For 20 years James Dobson has used his expansive, well funded media platform to perpetuate false and misleading information which contribute to putting gay and lesbian families in harms way. GLAAD urges the media to scrutinize and shed light on Dobson's record of inaccurate claims about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and include an in-depth analysis of his distorted and defamatory statements."

HOUSTON, TX—The congregation of Grace Lutheran Church, located in the heavily gay Montrose neighborhood have called Lura Groen to be their pastor. In ordaining Rev. Groen, Grace has challenged the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's long-standing rule that only celibate gays and lesbians may be pastors. While limiting participation by Rev. Groen in some ECLA activities, the

denomination is not actively punishing the Grace congregation. This working together to work out a mutually agreeable arrangement is in marked contrast to the activities of the Anglican Church with the ill will over gay clergy leading to an apparent split in that church.

HOLLYWOOD, CA—The Family Equality Council and the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) urges community members to contact FX Networks to express their concerns about a defamatory claim by an anti-gay activist that appeared, unchallenged, in the June 24 episode of **30 Days**.

30 Days, FX Networks' original series produced by Morgan Spurlock, "examines social issues in America by immersing individuals in a life that requires them to see the world through another's eyes," according to the show's website. In 2006, the series won a GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Reality Program for the "Gay/Straight" episode.

During the June 24 episode, entitled "Same Sex Parenting," Kati, a woman who opposes gay and lesbian parents and their families, lives for 30 days with gay parents Dennis and Thomas and their four adopted sons. The episode includes the personal stories of kids raised by lesbian and gay parents.

The episode also features a defamatory statement by Peter Sprigg of the Family Research Council, an anti-gay activist organization, who claims: "Homosexuality is associated with higher rates of sexual promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases, mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, and child sexual abuse, and those

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are all reasons for us to be concerned about placing children into that kind of setting." While there is no credible scientific research that backs Sprigg's claim - and much that disputes it - the episode presents his assertion as if it were fact and offers no credible social science experts or child health authorities to challenge Sprigg's assertion. FX Networks, however, refused to remove the defamatory content or, at minimum, address it during the course of the episode.

"This is an episode of **30 Days** that GLAAD would have liked to support for its commendable effort to share the authentic story of everyday lesbian and gay parents and their families and the opposition they face in trying to provide a stable and nurturing home for their children," said GLAAD Senior Director of Media Programs Rashad Robinson. "However, FX Networks' insistence on airing - and refusal to correct the record on this defamatory misrepresentation makes that impossible. It is unacceptable that FX Networks and its parent company 20th Century Fox would provide a platform for the inaccurate and dangerous claims of anti-gay activists - misinformation that can put gay and lesbian parents and their families in harm's way."

SAN JOSE, CA—A committee in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has approved changes to a translated version of a document of the Reformed Christian faith - changes opponents say are a smokescreen effort to remove a negative reference to homosexual behavior.

PC(USA) commissioners and delegates at their biennial General Assembly went into nearly seven hours of debate on overtures, or resolutions, that called for changes to the 1962 Miller-Osterhaven translation of the Heidelberg Catechism. Much of the controversy revolved around a reference to "homosexual perversion" that is not found in the original German text.

Opponents of the current translation say the original text and all subsequent translations do not contain any reference to homosexuality and are seeking for a more historically faithful and accurate translation.

Opponents of the change charge that

the attempt at retranslation is not about history and honesty but ideology and a homosexualist agenda. Other supporters of the current Heidelberg version pointed to the church's longstanding condemnation of homosexuality.

SACRAMENTO, CA—California's "Save Our Kids" Campaign have announced that they have given up on their efforts to overturn California's Senate Bill 777. Signed into law by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger last October, SB-777 provides an array of anti-discrimination and anti-bullying protections in California's schools.

An earlier attempt by opponents to force a referendum fell short, which led them to start a petition drive to put an initiative on the ballot. Now that this effort has failed, the Save Our Kids Campaign has announced that they will instead concentrate on passing a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage.

This follows similar failures in attempt to roll back anti-discrimination measures in Maine and Oregon.

BOSTON, MA—Massachusetts, the first state to legalize gay marriage, took another step toward full equality:

The Massachusetts state Senate passed a bill granting married same-sex couples equal Medicaid benefits, gay rights group MassEquality reported.

Gov. Deval Patrick is expected to sign the bill, which was passed by the state House on July 15.

The lawmakers' actions defy the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which bans legally wed same-sex couples from receiving federally provided benefits such as Medicaid, the "safety-net" health care program administered by the states.

Supporters say Massachusetts can circumvent federal law by using only state dollars to pay for gay couples' benefits.

The move will especially benefit senior citizens, who face eviction and poverty under the current laws, say activists.



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County, Maryland, Board of Elections to force the issue onto the county ballot.

An attorney representing the county elections board could not be reached for comment.

"In America every citizen's voice counts and the court affirmed that today," said Amy Smith, litigation counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, a conservative Christian nonprofit representing CRG. "The political agenda of an activist group cannot be allowed to disenfranchise the voters of an entire county," she said. "The referendum simply allows the people of Montgomery County to decide the issue, but apparently Equality Maryland doesn't want the people to be heard."

"I am clearly disappointed, but I think there may be an opportunity in another court level to see another ruling that is perhaps more favorable to my side," said the law's sponsor, County Councilwoman Duchy Trachtenberg (D-At large) of North Bethesda. "If indeed the referendum makes its way on the ballot, then I am still quite confident the voters of Montgomery County will reject discrimination." The law was to have taken effect in February, but was interrupted by CRG's challenge. The critics argue the law would allow men dressed as women access to women's bathrooms and locker rooms. CRG collected thousands of signatures for a referendum.

Attorneys representing Equality Maryland and others say the state Board of Elections erred in certifying the signatures. The elections board had told the critics that they needed 5 percent of active voters to place the repeal on the November ballot instead of 5 percent of all registered voters.

"For me, this means that as of this moment I am still without any federal, state or county legislative or civil rights protections as a county resident," said Maryanne A. Arnow, a transgendered woman in Germantown. "I will also have to endure a continued campaign of stereotypical misinformation that has been previously provided by opponents of this bill."

While on one level most of the above is good news, showing the pendulum swinging back toward acceptance, or at least tolerance, the last two show that the radical right is searching for a new bogeyman. They thought gay adoption would be next but it turns out that issue is much harder to sell than the radical right thought it would be - probably due in a large part to the loss of traction on gay marriage. So now they're going after transgender rights, calling up a new "pervert" for the "good, loyal, Christian American" to be afraid of and to persecute. We can only hope they fail.

You can do your part by talking to anyone you feel comfortable discussing equal rights with or by getting involved with an equality group or other political group. Do something, talk to just one person. We're starting to get momentum so if we all push together now we can get the ball rolling to full equal rights for us all. And who knows, in the process we might reclaim some of the rights that have been eroded over the last 20 years.

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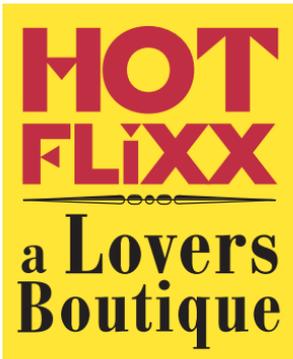


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